

Go After 1441

Chapter 1441

Santiago's gaze was fixed on Raeleigh. He raised his hand to hold her face and pulled her into his arms. He bit his lip as he murmured, "Let's all be reborn here in our next life."

She raised her head to look at him and tried to push him away, but he trapped her in his embrace. She struggled for a while before she was able to escape.

"I'll take you out to have fun." He had taken her to a crowded place, and they had played for a whole day before going back. At night, she was so hungry she could barely walk. Santiago found a place nearby and they ate a bit there. After the meal, he took Raeleigh somewhere else. She couldn't even tell how far they had gone, considering how sleepy she was after eating.

It was completely dark after dinner. Raeleigh asked Santiago if he wanted to go home although it was so late. He smiled and said, "I have plans with Jacky. If we don't go back, then he'll have to come back."

She didn't reply to that.

She followed Santiago without a word. She followed him wherever he went.

When they got into the car, she asked, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah."

Santiago started up the car and left Waverly Village when Raeleigh suddenly noticed a problem. She hadn't done anything in the past two days. All she did was eat, drink and have fun.

They didn't drive fast on the way back, but there were barely any cars on the road. Raeleigh kept looking into the rearview mirror, and every time she saw that there were no cars behind them, she was a little worried. It was too strange.

Even though it was dark, there wasn't a single car. Wasn't it weird?

After observing for a while, she finally became impatient. She asked Santiago, "Why isn't there a single car?"

"Are we not in a car?" He was amused. Raeleigh impatiently retorted, "You know I'm not kidding, so why are you like that?"

"Everything will be fine." Just as he said that, several cars suddenly appeared in front of them. Raeleigh immediately thought it was strange. "Why are there so many cars?"

Santiago's face darkened. "Weren't you hoping to see some?"

"When did I say that?"

She looked around. "Didn't Jacky send people to protect us? Why isn't anyone here?"

"He had to go kidnap someone. Do you think he would leave anyone behind?" Santiago was deliberately scaring Raeleigh. Her heart sank. "Jacky went to kidnap someone?"

“He had already wanted to do it before the New Year, but in the end, his target was switched out with someone else and Rossie ended up being kidnapped instead. Now, he wants to go get revenge.”

“Then what are you doing in Waverly Village?”

Raeleigh was a little confused. Santiago smiled. “I won’t tell you.”

“Are you kidding me? You’re seriously doing that at a time like this?”

“Get down.” Santiago pushed her head down. He took a coat from the back and covered her with it, then he quickly sped through the cars that were trying to block them. The cars immediately turned around and came towards him. Raeleigh felt uncomfortable lying on her stomach and wanted to get up but Santiago told her not to move, so she could only lie on the ground motionless.

She didn’t know how long they had been driving before they suddenly stopped. Raeleigh assumed everything was over with, so she struggled to get up, only to see that there were a dozen guns pointing at them from the outside.

She was shocked. She looked at Santiago beside her only to realize that one of his arms was covered with blood. He was applying pressure on the upper part of his shoulder.

“Santiago...”

“I’m fine.” Beads of sweat formed on his forehead. She was busy trying to take a look at his wound. Santiago said, “No matter what happens, don’t cry.”

Raeleigh was stunned for a moment. “Aren’t you in cahoots with Jacky? Your injury must be fake.”

Santiago rolled his eyes at her. “Are you trying to piss me off?”

“Are you hurt or not?”

She stared at his bleeding arm as she questioned him loudly. Santiago pursed his somewhat pale lips and did not reply.

Santiago turned around and looked at the people outside the car who were not going to leave any time soon. “Who are you?”

“Get out of the car.”

The gunman aimed the gun at his forehead, forcing him to get out.

Raeleigh got out of the car without waiting for Santiago.

Looking at the people in front of her, she asked, “Who sent you here?”

They couldn’t have been sent by Santiago. The only person she could think of was Jepherson.

However, some of them pointed their guns at Raeleigh. She was shocked and regretted getting out of the car. But if these people had bad intentions, they would have forced her out anyway.

Santiago tried his best to open the door with his uninjured hand and got out of the car.

He glanced at Raeleigh. “Come here.”

She walked towards him. The gunman who was threatening Santiago saw her doing so and immediately fired a shot in front of her. She trembled with fear. Santiago growled, "I'll rip you to shreds."

Raeleigh gritted her teeth and walked towards him. When the man saw the sinister look in Santiago's eyes, he didn't dare fire again.

She walked over to his side. He took a look at her and asked, "Are you scared?"

Raeleigh shook her head. "No."

"Okay."

"What's going on?"

Raeleigh didn't think these people were playing around. Santiago was injured. If they were Jepherson's men, why would they attack him for real? They would be doomed once they returned.

On top of that, Jepherson was not involved in the underworld. How could there be so many people there? If it were Zorion or Jacky, it might be plausible, but how could they ever hurt Santiago?

"It might be a trap. There's a traitor in Jacky's nest who colluded with outsiders to get rid of me."

Santiago only needed a glance to know if the people in front of him were his own or not. He would have known the moment he saw them. Plus, he was injured now.

Raeleigh pursed her lips. "How could this happen? What about our people?"

"If they wanted to set us up, of course they would have made preparations. You're usually smart, so why are you so dumb at such a key moment?"

Raeleigh was speechless. Who exactly was dumb now?

He was already injured, yet he was still holding on.

"Don't talk too much." She was rather upset. She glanced at Santiago then looked at the people in front of her. "What do you want? Do you want to kill us, or do you want our money?"

She only had those two possibilities in mind as she stared at them. Santiago was injured, and she wanted to protect him.

He didn't expect Raeleigh to say something like that. It showed how calm she was.

"We're not looking for you, we're looking for him."

The gunman pointed at Santiago. He was about to pull the trigger and end Santiago's life. Raeleigh moved in front of Santiago and shielded him. She grabbed the muzzle and raised it above her head.

"Since you want to kill him, why don't you kill me first? Let's see if you can kill both of us with just one bullet."

"Get out of the way!" Santiago yelled.

Raeleigh held the pistol tightly as if she didn't hear him. She continued, "My fiancé is Xanthus Osteen. The Osteen family has an incredibly strong foundation abroad, with thousands of contacts. He can crush you to pieces in under a minute."

"Santiago is the second son of the Harvey family, and his brother is Jepherson Harvey. Jepherson isn't a member of the underworld, but anyone evil is an enemy to him. He's like a ghost who is determined to get his revenge."

The others looked at the person whom Raeleigh was holding. It was obvious that he was the leader. Raeleigh felt that she had found the right person.

Chapter 1442

Without hesitation, Raeleigh glanced at the people around her with a sharp gaze.

"Everyone knows Jepherson's biggest weakness is his younger brother, Santiago; he means the world to him. If you kill Santiago, Jepherson will chase you to the end of the world. Not even your family, wives, and children will be spared."

Raeleigh stared at the person in front of her. He was amused. "If Jepherson really loves this brother, there's no way he wouldn't have sent anyone."

"Even if you want to plot against him, you'll fail miserably. Santiago is known for his arrogance; he will not tolerate being protected."

Raeleigh continued, "Jepherson loves me, but he let Santiago have me because he knows he likes me too. His actions have already shown how important their brotherhood is."

"Even if it is not... Jepherson will not allow you to harm his family; he will investigate and take down the murderer."

"You're saying if we kill Santiago, we'll die too?"

"And do you think it's worth it for all of you to die with him? You're in it just for the money, I'm sure. We have money; isn't it better to exchange it with us?" Raeleigh still held the attacker's gun. He looked somewhat tempted but quickly smiled and said, "Since Jepherson isn't easy to deal with, he will seek revenge for the smallest grievance. There's no way he'd let us take his money and disappear."

"That's your business. I'll give you two choices. One, take our money and leave; retire and live the life you want and want for nothing."

"Everyone has a dream; I don't believe your dream is to kill for other people."

"Since it isn't, wouldn't you want to take the money and go back to your family?"

Everyone fell silent. Raeleigh continued, "The second choice is to kill Santiago and me. But Jepherson will kill you before you get the chance to leave this place."

"Although he doesn't have a gun, Zorion does. The Harvey and Atkinson families have always been close friends. Don't you think your lives are hanging by a thread?"

“You sure have your way with words, woman. Too bad we don’t buy this. We have our rules; we take the money and do as we’re told. No questions asked.” Humored, she replied, “In that case, I’ll give you money; kill the people who hired you. I’ll give you as much as you want.”

“As much as I want?” The man smirked. “How much money do you have?”

“How much are you being paid to kill Santiago and me?” Raeleigh asked. The man raised his hand, and she looked over. “Five million?”

The attacker did not answer. Raeleigh laughed mockingly. Though it was just a smile, everyone around her was growing agitated.

“Don’t tell me that’s all they gave you.”

With that, everyone fell silent. Raeleigh said, “With one phone call, I’ll be able to transfer five million dollars into everyone’s account.”

“Three ...”

“Don’t talk.”

Someone spoke up, but the man across him gritted his teeth and squinted. He gave in in the end.

He glanced at Santiago, who had remained silent the entire time. “Why aren’t you talking? Stalling?”

Santiago said amusedly. “I don’t have money; if anything, it’ll have to come from her.”

“Then I’ll kill you.”

“Go ahead.”

Santiago was unruffled.

Raeleigh said, “If you want the money, I want him alive.”

“I’m surprised; for such a young age, you know so much about love. Who...”

“I’m young, not an idiot. Having Santiago is like getting half of the Harvey family. Compared to the little money I give you, Santiago is a treasure cave.”

Raeleigh said with confidence as if it was true. Staring at her cold gaze, the surrounding people grew fearful.

They believed it.

The attacker thought for a moment and asked, “How long until our plane arrives?”

“Another three more hours.”

“Do you have enough time?” He asked Raeleigh. Raeleigh looked at all of them, “Although the number is a little big, the bank procedure is very simple. It’s just that the amount is quite a lot. I need to make an appointment an hour in advance.”

“You dare fool us?” He pressed the gun against Raeleigh’s head, leading her to stare at him. “If I do, you can kill me. You won’t be able to leave so easily, even after getting the money. I’m giving you a choice here; I just want some medicine to save Santiago. I’m sure you can see he has severe bleeding; I’m afraid he will die.”

“You’re just a woman; why do you do so much for him?”

“How would you understand? You’re not me.” Raeleigh said indifferently, and one of the men smiled sinisterly, “Boss, I want to have a try.”

Santiago had remained unruffled until he heard what the man said, and his face darkened in an instant, glaring daggers at him.

The man froze for a moment, but he still wanted to get close to Raeleigh.

Raeleigh was not like Santiago. Even though he was injured, he could still kill. Seeing that he wanted to make a move, she grabbed his hand and glanced at him, signaling him not to move.

“Try if you want, but do you want money or woman?” Raeleigh asked. However, the attacker didn’t reply but pointed his gun at Raeleigh and said, “We want money.”

“You can have all the women you want with the money. Besides, we have something important to do; we don’t have the time to waste with you.” With that, the attacker looked over coldly at the man who was looking lustfully at Raeleigh.

Raeleigh said, “So? I make a call; you take the money, and off you fly.”

“Okay, make the call.”

The man took the gun away and fired it at an empty spot.

Raeleigh looked at Santiago and took out her phone to call Jepherson. It didn’t take him long to answer.

She said as soon as the call connected, “I’m Raeleigh, Raeleigh Osteen, I want...”

Raeleigh pointed as she counted the number of people and made a definite number. “I want sixty million dollars in twelve shares, each transferred to an account. Complete it in the shortest time, and...”

Raeleigh looked around. “Don’t tell anyone about this, including my parents. You must transfer the money to each bank account within an hour. Otherwise, I will reconsider where I save my money.”

Jepherson took a deep breath and got into the car.

“The bank will need the account number.”

“I will text you.”

“I’ll prepare it right away.”

“Okay.”

Raeleigh hung up and looked at the man in front of her. “He is getting it ready now; I need your account numbers.”

With that, the attacker gave her an account number, and Raeleigh typed the numbers into her phone.

But that was all he gave, not another, and said, "Give me five million dollars first. I want to know if you really have the money."

Raeleigh looked at him. "I'll give you five million more."

With that, she called Jepherson again and told him to transfer the attacker ten million dollars.

Chapter 1443

"Ten million. Put it into this account. I want to see the money immediately."

Raeleigh hung up right after she instructed. However, the attacker still didn't trust her; he took Raeleigh's phone to check. It was a hidden number, and the caller ID was empty.

Santiago had also only noticed the number on Raeleigh's phone was left blank.

Doubtful, the attacker called again with his phone.

Jepherson answered but remained silent. The attacker asked, "Is this the bank?"

"I'm the manager; how can I help?"

The driver was a little surprised when he heard Jepherson's words. He looked at Jepherson from the rearview mirror and dared not even huff when he saw his ice-cold eyes.

"I have a sum of money that I want to deposit into your bank, but I forgot your banking code."

"Capital City – Darcy Bank."

"Thank you. It's too late today; I'll go there tomorrow. By the way, is this the bank's number? This is my friend's phone."

The attacker said courteously.

"This is a private number, not the bank's. If you need it, I can tell you; we have an official service line. This number is only for internal and VIPs. May I know who's on the line?"

"It's fine. I'll go there tomorrow."

He hung up the phone and looked at Raeleigh. "Call them again; I want to see how they transfer the money into my account."

With that, she called Jepherson again. He stared at the phone and waited for thirty seconds before answering, leading the people around her to wonder if something had gone wrong. However, she was composed the entire time.

Raeleigh questioned immediately when the phone connected, "What the heck are you doing? Why did it take you so long to answer the phone? My friend needs the money to save his life. Do you want me to withdraw all my money?"

Jepherson wore no expression. "I'm doing some inter-transactions. This is a lot of money; the bank has to mobilize it first."

"If so, how many have you mobilized?"

"Half." While Jepherson was talking, the attacker grabbed Raeleigh and put the phone on speaker so that everyone could hear what Jepherson said.

"First transfer ten million to the account I've told you. The account is three... the owner is..."

Raeleigh finished, and Jepherson asked, "Do you not need the rest anymore?"

"Why are you asking so much? Just do as I say. I'll send you the other account numbers later. Transfer the money in accordance with the order I sent. Five million dollars to every account."

"First, you said sixty, and now another five. I..."

"I'm raising funds."

"We'll arrange it as soon as possible."

"Good."

Raeleigh hung up the phone and looked at them. "Check your phone. I believe you'll receive a notification soon."

"It seems that you do have some money."

"We definitely have money; it's only a matter of figure. Santiago and I are only worth five million. How ridiculous."

Raeleigh wore a scornful look. As the attacker looked at her, his phone beeped, and he turned to his phone. The others also went to him. The attacker then turned back to her and said, "I will let you go. Give five million to each of my men and make sure we leave unscathed. What happens here stays here."

"No problem, but you have to give me some medicine." Raeleigh turned to look at Santiago, who had been looking at her.

After a while, the man told his subordinates, "Bring them the dressing and medicine."

"And get your accounts ready."

With that, someone hurried to get Raeleigh the first aid kit. She then helped Santiago into the car and asked, "Are you holding on okay?"

"Yeah."

She turned to those men. "Give me the account numbers; I will send them in first."

Raeleigh was quick. Without any hesitation, she sent all the details to Jepherson, then got into the car, started the engine, and turned the heater on. After that, she took off Santiago's clothes and treated his wound.

Some of the men looked at Raeleigh and commented, "She's a rare one, that girl."

"We don't have that kind of luck; we aren't stinking rich. Haven't you heard that it is all for money?"

“But still.”

.....

Santiago leaned against a chair and stared at Raeleigh. “You’ve got guts.”

“Does it hurt? Don’t sleep.”

He had lost a lot of blood; the bullet was deep in his shoulder. Raeleigh panted lightly as she looked at Santiago’s pale face and said, “I’m going to take the bullet out; bear with it.”

“Okay.”

Raeleigh looked outside, “Give me a knife and a lighter.”

Another batch of money was transferred; they were more convinced that Raeleigh was serious. After all, no one would joke with that much money.

After she got the knife and lighter, she immediately handed Santiago the car ornament. “Bite on it.”

With that, he looked at her unpleasantly. “No.”

Raeleigh rolled her eyes at him and took off her shirt to let him bite on it, but he refused again.

Raeleigh had no choice but to pat Santiago down, remembering he had a dagger with him.

Sure enough, she found it.

Raeleigh took it out, and someone immediately pointed a gun at Raeleigh. However, she wasn’t bothered.

“Bite on the hilt.” He finally opened his mouth. Raeleigh said as she used a lighter to sterilize the knife, “Unbelievable. You’re still choosy at a time like this.”

But no matter what she said, he just stared at her silently.

Raeleigh raised her head. “You’re finally quiet.”

If it weren’t for his gagged mouth and his injury, he wouldn’t be so quiet.

After she sterilized the knife and put down the lighter, she glanced at Santiago, looking grim, “Bear with it.”

Santiago was still unresponsive as if he wasn’t the one being treated.

Raeleigh took a deep breath and pressed her hand on his shoulder while the tip of the knife cut deep into his shoulder. Santiago closed his eyes slightly as sweat dripped down from his forehead. She said, “Do you remember the first time we met?”

Santiago’s mind was clouded; he felt as if he was in another world, but when he heard Raeleigh’s question, he slowly opened his eyes again.

He looked at her and recalled the first time they met. It was so clear, as though they had just met yesterday.

Raeleigh said, "Would you have fought for my hand if it weren't for the existing brotherly love in this competition?"

Santiago slowly looked in Raeleigh's direction. She nudged the bullet with the tip of the knife, and the sweat on his forehead dripped furiously. However, she continued, "If your brother didn't exist, can I marry you?"

He stared at her as the bullet popped out of his wound. With that, she threw the knife away and immediately put pressure on his wound with her clean shirt. He let go of the knife he was biting onto, moving slowly to hug Raeleigh as he rested his head on her shoulder. Though he was breathing heavily, the corners of his lips curled into a smile.

Chapter 1444

Raeleigh held back her tears and slowly pushed him away. Santiago leaned against the car as she applied medicine on him, then bandaged the wound and helped him put on his clothes.

Wiping the sweat off his forehead with a shirt, she looked outside and said, "Thank you."

Her gratitude got everyone outside stumped.

"You sure are a strange one; we kidnapped and even hurt you. Why would you thank us?"

"It's not your fault. You guys did it to survive."

Then she stepped out of the car and moved Santiago further inside, then cushioned a pillow under him. Closing the door shut, she was about to leave when Santiago stopped her and said, "Leave it open."

With that, she reopened the door and stared at him as he propped himself up.

"I'll be fine."

"Don't make me yell at you." He stared at her, his eyes unfathomable.

"Alright."

She then turned to the attacker. "Has all the money been sent to your account?"

"Two more," he replied. She thought for a moment and said, "You guys should leave ASAP; I'll send you off."

"We may have met by chance, but why would you still treat us like this when you didn't gain anything from us?"

Everyone stared at Raeleigh as she said, "You're all fugitives and have nothing to offer me, but you've done me great help by helping me keep him alive."

"I'll be able to regain the money I lost today, but not a life."

"I'll send you off."

With that, she entered the car, and they didn't stop her. Then she stuck her head out of the window and looked at them. "Get in; I'll drive."

The man hesitated for a moment but still got in the car. Raeleigh waited for the man to get in before turning around to close the door on Santiago's side. She looked at him and said, "Hang on; we'll head to the hospital after they leave."

Santiago remained silent, staring out the window impatiently.

"Do you have any painkillers?" Raeleigh asked the attacker. He took a bottle of painkillers from his pocket and handed it to her. "Take this; we usually take it when we're injured. The pain will go away in ten minutes."

Raeleigh accepted the bottle and glanced at it before shaking out some pills, feeding them to Santiago. However, he spat them all out.

Exasperated, Raeleigh glared at him and tossed the pills into her mouth. She got out of the car and walked toward him. "Are you going to take them or not?"

Only then did he accept the painkillers and took some of them.

Seeing that, she spat out the pills in her mouth, then went back into the car and drove away.

It was oddly quiet in the car; the man in the passenger seat was dead before they arrived at the airport.

Raeleigh stared at the body in surprise. Then, she noticed the bullet hole in the window.

She looked out and saw that the other cars behind her stopped abruptly; a few of them had even turned over the road.

With that, she pulled over to take a look; the few cars behind her were in a miserable state.

She walked over only to be confounded by the sight; all the people in the car were dead.

Then, she turned around to see many cars surrounding her's; there was even a helicopter hovering in the sky. How could that be possible?

A black car pulled over, and the door swung open. Seeing Jepherson come out as his gaze fixed on her, she pursed her lips and rushed to him, the wind whistling past her ears. She stopped before him and asked, "Why did you kill so many people?"

"It's not me. They're internationally wanted; as soon as I transferred the money to the accounts you gave, Interpol came to me, and they wanted me to work with them."

Jepherson said as he looked inside the car, then opened the door and looked at Santiago; their eyes met. He bent over and helped Santiago out.

After entering his car, Jepherson said to Raeleigh, "Get in."

Raeleigh obeyed.

After she got in, she saw there was another young man; he looked younger than Jepherson.

She reflexively looked over at Jepherson, wanting to ask if he was supposed to protect her.

The young man was handsome, and he had an extraordinary charisma.

But before she could say anything, Santiago spoke, "You sure have staged this well. Let me guess; you're going to hog all the merit again."

Lenold's serious look broke into a smile as he looked at Santiago. "Don't get me started on this. I don't understand you at all. Why can't you stop living life on the edge?"

"You know, many people with serious illnesses are begging to live a little longer. Why don't you cherish your life?"

Lenold Matthews was a wunderkind. He had learned to solve cases from Albie Williamson since he was a teenager. Due to his sharp mind and professionalism when handling cases, he was selected to join Interpol at a young age. Because of this, his family, including Albie Williamson, moved there with him.

If not, others wouldn't even get a chance to become the Director of Public Security Bureau in Capital City.

When they were children, Lenold and Santiago often fought with each other. Lenold was a fighter back then and loved to find trouble with Santiago. Because of this, Santiago held a grudge against him. However, Lenold left not long after.

After that, they seldom fought, but they still despised each other.

On the contrary, Lenold was highly respectful toward Jepherson, but he rarely interacted with him.

Santiago chuckled, "I thought you were dead."

Raeleigh turned to look at him in surprise. Although he sounded indifferent, there was a hint of hostility in his tone.

Lenold said to Raeleigh in amusement, "Nice to meet you, Raeleigh. I'm Lenold, a lieutenant of Interpol. I'm amazed by your quick-wittedness, obviously much smarter than some people."

Raeleigh at Lenold's hand; she was about to shake his hand but changed her mind after hearing his remark.

"Nice to meet you."

Raeleigh replied as she moved to sit beside Santiago. Wiping the sweat off Santiago's face with a towel, she said to Jepherson, "Santiago needs to go to the hospital."

"Yes."

Raeleigh was unaware that they were heading to the hospital.

Lenold leaned against the car and looked at the three people, his lips curling into a smile. "Interesting," he said.

Santiago shut his eyes, but Raeleigh held his hand and said to him, "Don't sleep, Santiago."

She took out her phone and called Xanthus. Although he wasn't an expert in this field, he was all she trusted.

They arrived at the hospital shortly. Raeleigh was the first to get off the car. The doctors and nurses helped Santiago to the bed, and Raeleigh followed them to the emergency room.

Jepherson stood behind as he watched Raeleigh and the others while Lenold got out of the car. Their families had been close, so they would always hang out until Lenold left. Sometimes they would even be thrown into the woods and be messed with by the adults.

Hence, they had a strong bond.

“What’s going on with your family? Is she your girlfriend or Santiago’s?” Lenold asked in amusement as if he was enjoying a show. Jepherson glared at him and said, “Do you want to lose your merit?”

“C’mon, I’m just kidding,” Lenold hurriedly explained. Jepherson continued, “You’d better not joke about this kind of thing, lest you want to say goodbye to your achievements.”

“Are you threatening me?”

Jepherson walked over and said, “Remember to return the money to me.”

“Don’t worry. I’ve already sent it to you.”

He was not greedy for money but merits.

Chapter 1445

When Raeleigh arrived outside the emergency room, the doctor came up to stop her. She let go of Santiago and looked over at Xanthus as he came over. “I don’t know if I did it right.”

Xanthus chuckled, “You’ve always been capable, Raeleigh.”

Jepherson came in as they talked, Lenold following behind him.

“Lenold, this is Dr. Osteen,” Jepherson said. Lenold recalled for a moment, then said, “You’re the world-renowned Dr. Osteen?”

“And you are?”

“I’m Lenold. No need to pay attention to me.”

Lenold smiled then turned to Jepherson. “I’ll stay and wait for him to come out.”

Jepherson paused and turned to look at him. “You don’t have to; your presence will only infuriate him. Just go, and don’t come if there’s nothing important.”

“You really baffle me, you know that? How can you shoo me away?” Lenold complained, but it was futile. Jepherson glared at him and warned, “You have ten minutes to get lost before I give you a farewell gift.”

“Then in ten minutes I...”

“Five minutes.”

“Then in five...”

“Three minutes.”

“Fine, I’ll go.”

Lenold then walked out without looking back and disappeared.

Raeleigh was worried about Santiago, so she didn’t have time to think about other things. As for Jepherson, he sat on one side of the room.

She made sure no one else was around before sitting down next to him and asked, “I thought someone...”

“I already sent them back. I was careless; they were supposed to guard against Santiago, but I didn’t expect them to set us up.”

He glanced at Xanthus, who seemed uninterested in the matter. But for Raeleigh’s sake, Xanthus said, “Who’s behind this? My family’s man followed Raeleigh, but they couldn’t get into Waverly Village. Jacky has the area strictly guarded; not just anybody could get in. They must’ve long thought about the location.”

The reason Xanthus rushed over was also that his man couldn’t reach Raeleigh. He had been waiting for her call.

“There’s a mole, and he’s working with the outsiders.” Jepherson leaned against the wall, then lifted his head and said, “Raeleigh, stay with me. Don’t go anywhere else. Leave the rest to Jacky.”

“Who was it?” Xanthus continued to ask. Jepherson replied, “Flynt contacted him. But he’s dead; we have no evidence against him.”

“You let Flynt escape on purpose? Why?” Xanthus asked as he stood on one side. He was aware of this.

“I do not wish the Cole family to expand their power in Capital City. Capital City is a great taboo of the industry, and many of us compete for it.”

“The Cole family’s dereliction of duty in Capital City had caused them to lose their prestige. Although we intend to take them down, it doesn’t mean we want to end them.”

“A long time ago, Brooklyn came to Capital City with his subordinates. Among them were my family, the Harvey family, and my mother’s side, the Morris family, as well as the Xanthe family and the Perry family...”

“Anyhow, Brooklyn had single-handedly groomed these families. I’m a younger member of my family, so I must respect him.”

“The Harvey family will never forget their roots. Even if the Cole family had done us wrong, we wouldn’t be heartless.”

“We would never drive them to the edge.”

“Besides, the Cole family is no longer what it used to be. It would be good if they could make a concession; I won’t force them into desperation, as long as they don’t make any trouble.”

"I know how you feel about Santiago; you're going to let them off this easily?" Xanthus could not comprehend Jepherson's actions. As an older brother himself, he knew very well that Jepherson would never let the matter go just like that.

Jepherson looked at him and said, "If we hand this over to Interpol, they will obliterate the Cole family. However, it will only remain as a personal grievance if this stays in Capital City. At least the Cole family will be fine."

"What do you mean?"

Jepherson hissed, "No one can hurt Santiago. No one."

He said with a murderous gaze, and Xanthus felt his blood run cold.

"What are you going to do to Flynt?" Raeleigh asked.

Jepherson did not reply.

But Raeleigh knew he wouldn't let the matter end just like that.

...

Meanwhile, in the hospital Flynt had been admitted to.

"Who's there?" Flynt heard noises from outside the ward as he lay in bed and thought the men had returned. He shook his head in frustration. Didn't he tell them not to come back and leave immediately? Why did they come back?

Just then, the door swung open, and someone came in.

Flynt froze for a moment. He was a stranger, looked about twenty years old, handsome and tall. He wore a set of black clothes, and a pair of huge sunglasses shaded his face, revealing only the cold sneer on his face.

Flynt instantly got out of bed. His leg had healed completely, and his reflexes were much faster than ordinary people.

"Who are you?"

"Jepherson asked me to come. He wanted me to bring you a message."

The man walked up to Flynt as he spoke. Flynt sneered. "You're Jepherson's man?"

"This is not important. I'm here to deliver the message." The man closed in on Flynt as he spoke. Flynt pulled out his pistol and hissed, "Do you think you can do anything to me?"

The man replied disapprovingly, "I think you will die in a very ugly way."

"Then..."

"Bang!"

Flynt's pistol fell onto the ground, and blood dripped down his arm while the man was still standing straight in front of him.

His face grew pale, slowly turning his gaze to him. "Who are you?"

"It is not your place to know."

"My men have failed?" Flynt stared at him intently.

"That's none of my business; I'm here to rip off your arm."

The man went closer as he spoke, and Flynt crouched down to retrieve his pistol. But before he could, the man sent a kick to his abdomen and knocked him off balance. Then, he swiftly grabbed Flynt's wrist and yanked it with only his bare hands. Just like that, Flynt's right arm was separated from him.

"Ah!" Flynt wailed in agony, then fainted and collapsed on the floor. Blood flowed from his shoulder, staining his clothes red.

Jared Robertson stared at the arm in his hand and turned to leave.

...

An hour later, Santiago came out of the emergency room. The doctor appeared relieved as he wiped the sweat off his forehead. Fortunately, it was nothing serious. The medical staff only had to manage his wounds with simple procedures, but he had lost a lot of blood.

When Jepherson saw Santiago coming out of the emergency room, he stood up and walked toward him. Raeleigh followed suit.

"Mr. Santiago is doing fine now; he was treated in time. He'll be fine after a while."

Santiago slowly opened his eyes, then looked at Jepherson and Raeleigh, a smile blossoming on his face. "I won't die so easily."

"Shut up." Jepherson shot him a glare and turned to Raeleigh. "I'll order someone to prepare the necessaries. You stay here and take care of him; he'll need to watch what he eats the next few days."

"Alright, but what about you? Aren't you staying?"

Raeleigh looked at him, confused. Jepherson hesitated, then replied, "I'll be here during the day, but I can't stay the night. I have other matters to tend to."

"So you..."

"Don't ask." Raeleigh immediately shut her mouth and turned to look at Santiago, who was still looking weak. "Are you feeling better?"

"What do you think?" He asked in return. She didn't know what to say.

Chapter 1446

Although Raeleigh was upset that Santiago got injured and hospitalized again, she kept her thoughts to herself.

Santiago was still weak, and she couldn't care less about lecturing him, but she sat aside looking harsh the entire time.

She had been silent since Jepherson left, and Santiago, on the other hand, only laid in bed and kept his eyes closed.

Xanthus did not leave the hospital that night either; he stayed with Raeleigh. After this incident, he grew even more alarmed. He thought he might need to hire a few bodyguards if this went on.

“Raeleigh,” Xanthus whispered, worrying about Raeleigh as she refused to take a rest.

She looked at him and said, “Yes?”

“You should take a rest.”

Raeleigh looked at the time and realized it was already late at night. She stole a glance at Santiago, then went to the bed next to his.

“These men were too rampant. Why did they do this?” She asked as she lay on the bed.

Xanthus sat down on the chair and looked at her. “Where there are good people, there are bad ones too. There’s no reason behind their actions, and it’s incomparable.”

Raeleigh fixed her gaze on him as she said, “I thought they would leave once they receive the money.”

She truly believed so. Although it might sound too far-fetched to exchange such a huge amount of money for her and Santiago’s lives, she thought nothing was more important than staying alive.

She could regain the money lost, but it would be the end of them if they were dead.

It was just that she didn’t expect so many people to lose their lives in one go. Human lives matter more than money. Now that those men were dead, what would happen to their families?

She had trouble falling asleep again.

At this moment, Jepherson was on his way to Waverly Village.

Jepherson’s car came to a stop as a black car approached them. Jepherson’s driver glanced at the rearview mirror and noticed that it was a sports car. Suddenly, the sports car threw a wooden box out, and Jepherson’s driver swiftly stepped on the brake, then steered the car around slowly and steadily as they came to a halt.

The man in the passenger seat got out as soon as they pulled over. He glanced at the sports car as it whizzed past them before turning to the wooden box.

It was arm lengthed, rectangle, and it looked like a box that stored scrolls.

He bent down and picked the box up. He wouldn’t hand it to Jepherson without examining it first. Lifting the lid, he glanced at the content, and his face fell.

He turned around and looked at Jepherson before he closed it and brought it to him.

“Mr. Jepherson.”

When he presented the box to Jepherson, Jepherson instructed, “Open it.”

The man hesitated for a moment before he did as he was told. Jepherson stared at the arm in the box, then looked away. "Throw it down the mountain."

"Yes, Sir."

With that, the man walked over to the roadside and chucked the arm away.

After that, he washed his hands and returned to the car, resuming their journey to Waverly Village.

When Jepherson and his men arrived at Waverly Village's border, about a dozen cars drove past them on the right lane. It seemed like the two fleets of cars competed against each other as they rushed toward Waverly Village.

On one side of the lane were the Harvey family's cars, while the other belonged to the Atkinson family. It was definitely no small matter for both families to appear on the same night, at the same time.

The twenty-plus cars sped, fast as lightning, making Rossie dizzy. She sat beside Zorion as she stared outside the window, her cheeks rosy.

Zorion was also looking better by the day, and his body was recovering speedily.

The driver thought it strange. How could a woman help Zorion regain his health so quickly? It seemed like Zorion was infatuated with Rossie.

Zorion closed his eyes, looking to be asleep. He and Rossie kept a distance as she preferred to sit on the side, and he didn't want to disturb her either. He was already happy to be able to look at her from a distance.

Soon, the cars entered Waverly Village's border. Ten cars surrounded the border, and a few people waited outside of it. Jepherson and Zorion's vehicles slowly came to a halt, ten cars following behind them each.

When the cars finally halted, Jacky's men immediately approached them. Jepherson and Zorion's men stood in front of their cars.

"Jacky is waiting inside. Please, Mr. Harvey."

"Jacky has been waiting inside, Mr. Atkinson, please."

Jepherson got down from the car, straightened his suit, and buttoned it up. At the same time, one of the men brought him a coat. Jepherson shot a glance at Zorion and entered Waverly Village before him.

Zorion grabbed a red faux fur coat and helped Rossie put it on. "Put this on. It's cold outside," he said.

Rossie obeyed his instructions while one of his men gave him a black coat. With that, they went into Waverly Village with Rossie behind him.

When they entered the village, a staff member led them to Jack Town Hotel.

A few people stood at the entrance of the brightly lit hotel.

Although it was a public holiday, everyone was still working. The villagers knew something was happening in Jack Town Hotel.

They heard someone was going to be punished for breaking the rules, but none of them dared to approach and only watched from a distance.

When Jepherson arrived at the hotel's entrance, the guard at the door raised his hand to stop him. "I'm sorry, Mr. Harvey, we'll have to do a pat-down."

Jepherson handed his coat to his men and raised his arms to permit the guards to frisk him.

After that, he entered Jack Town Hotel.

Zorion took off his white gloves, handed his coat to his men when he reached the entrance and raised his arms for the guards to do the same.

Then, he held Rossie's hand, about to enter the hotel when the guards immediately blocked his way. "I'm sorry, Mr. Atkinson. We have our rules here; no one enters before they're patted down."

Zorion's face fell. "You dare?"

"We have female guards."

The guard brought a female guard over as he spoke. The female guard apologized to Zorion, "Sorry, Mr. Atkinson."

"Hmph. No one touches her; ask Jacky to come out." his face fell.

Someone came out from inside the hotel. He glanced at Zorion and said, "Mr. Atkinson, please don't make things difficult for us. Rules are rules; we must obey them."

"I'll wait for you outside." Rossie turned around and returned to the car. Since Zorion didn't want anyone touching her, she would not go in.

Zorion's face darkened as he walked into the hotel.

They were greeted by a vast front hall as soon as they entered Jack Town Hotel. All the furniture was neatly arranged against the wall as an altar sat in the middle.

Jacky stood in front of them, tending to the altar while someone knelt on the ground. Zorion could tell with a glance that it was Logan.

Chapter 1447

A few men about Jacky's age sat on both sides. There were no elders among them.

It was apparent they were men Jacky had taken under his wing.

Chairs had been arranged neatly on both sides, but the four chairs at the front were empty.

"Mr. Harvey and Mr. Atkinson." Jacky turned around to look at Jepherson and Zorion as the two of them stood side by side in silence.

"Please." Jacky gestured for them to sit on the left side, and Jepherson took a seat, Zorion following suit.

Then, Jacky spoke, "For many years, the residents of Waverly Village lived in harmony. Although we are part of the country, we've always had our set of rules."

“Men are not allowed to commit adultery, and women are prohibited to steal or engage in prostitution. This is the first rule I had set. Brothers cannot fight each other, and villagers cannot bully each other. There are more than a dozen rules in total, one of which is no rebellions.”

“Before this, I had always regarded Logan as my brother. But when I brought another friend to visit, he conspired with outsiders and intercepted us on the way, nTristany killing my friend.”

“I, Jacky Scott, have never done a friend wrong. Jack Town Hotel will not sit back and do nothing.”

Everyone was silent. Jacky walked up to Logan, who was kneeling, then said, “Logan and I grew up together, and I treated him as my brother. He would never do such a thing by chance.”

“With all parties here today, I will not beat around the bush either. Logan betRhysed me because of a woman named Rossie Lautner.”

“What do you have to say for yourself, Logan?”

Jacky lowered his gaze and stared at Logan. Logan laughed. “There’s nothing to say. My fate is sealed. Do whatever you want.”

Jacky looked around, and someone came up, presenting three knives.

Looking at Zorion, Jacky said, “It happened in the Atkinson family’s territory; they definitely will not sit idly by. One knife...”

Zorion remained silent.

“Someone in the Harvey family got hurt; they definitely will not take this lying down. One knife...”

Jepherson did not speak.

Jacky focused his gaze on Logan and continued, “Waverly Village would like to apologize for that person. One knife...”

None of the attendants spoke.

“These three knives will put an end to our grudges. It’s up to fate whether he survives this or not. Any objections?”

No one spoke; Logan’s eyes were fixed on the ground.

Jacky threw a knife on the ground and barked, “Come on.”

Logan lifted his head and looked at Jacky as he reached for the knife. He plunged it directly into his chest but merely let out a muffled groan. Everyone in the room stared at him.

“Huff...” Logan’s breathing grew labored after the stab, sweat gathering on his forehead.

But he was still kneeling.

Jacky grabbed the second knife and threw it on the ground. Logan barely managed to pick up the knife before thrusting it into his chest for the second time. This time, his body wavered, and he almost lost his balance.

Without hesitation, Jacky threw the last knife onto the ground. Logan held the knife firmly and stabbed it into his chest once more before collapsing.

Jacky announced, "The grudge will now end after three stabs. Everyone, please leave."

Jepherson stood up and strode towards the exit. Zorion did the same, taking a glance at the dying Logan before he left.

They returned to their cars and left Waverly Village.

Jacky ordered his men to close the door after they left. He turned to look at the unconscious Logan and said, "From today onwards, Logan is no longer one of Jack Town Hotel's members, but he was born and raised here; no one is allowed to bully him. The past is in the past. I'm warning you; if I find out any of you disobey me, don't blame me for turning my head against you."

No one spoke. Then, Jacky said, "You are dismissed."

Everyone got up from their seats. They were all sons of the wealthy from various industries in Waverly Village, all under Jacky's command. Jacky had assigned them to be in charge of different areas of the village, and they were required to be present whenever there was an incident.

The door closed once more after everyone left. With that, Jacky turned to look at Logan and bent down to help him up.

Logan had blacked out; Jacky had already arranged for a doctor in the back room so he could immediately be treated. However, the doctor said, "Jacky, I'm afraid it's not going to work. All three knives had caused real damage to his vital organs. Even if he survives, he would be crippled for life."

Jacky stood beside Logan and replied, "Better than being dead; I'll support him if he is crippled."

With that, he left, waiting at the door the entire night while the doctor tried his best, and thank the heavens Logan managed to survive.

When Jacky checked on Logan in the morning, the doctor told him Logan's life was no longer in danger.

Staring at Logan as he lay on the bed, Jacky ordered, "Have someone look after him. Tell me when he wakes up."

"Yes, Sir."

Jacky left the room and walked out of the house after putting on a black puffer jacket, smoking a cigarette as he walked down the street.

He arrived at the village's entrance without even realizing it. To his surprise, Jepherson and Zorion hadn't left, and Jacky paused when he saw their cars outside.

Jepherson got out of the car. Jacky threw away the cigarette butt in his hand and stood inside the village, staring at Jepherson as he came over. On the other hand, Zorion remained inside his car.

"What happened?" Rossie asked.

"There's a traitor in Waverly Village. He set Santiago up."

“You guys are here to settle scores with Jacky?” Rossie asked. Zorion replied, “This isn’t about settling scores with him, but taking a clear stance.”

“What stance? What does it have to do with him? Don’t you think it’s cruel for you to drive him into a corner? Everyone makes mistakes; aren’t you guys doing this just so that he would make a statement? The only people who could bet Rhys him can only be someone close to him. Do you think it’s okay to let him hurt his brother?”

Zorion stared at her and said, “You don’t understand men’s thinking.”

“Are you going to kill me if I bet Rhys you?” Rossie thought Zorion was cruel; it had nothing to do with gender but personality.

“Even if we don’t come, Jacky would still have done the same. Waverly Village functions just like Capital City; they have their rules. He needs to establish his power and uphold justice.”

Rossie stared at him and said nothing; he wasn’t wrong.

Pursing her lips, she turned her head away, looking elsewhere.

Suddenly Zorion said, “If we hadn’t been together, I would have thought...”

“You would have thought what?”

Rossie’s face was full of curiosity. Zorion glanced at her and said, “Nothing.”

With that, the car fell silent.

Rossie looked out the window and placed her hands against the glass like a child eager to see the outside world.

Zorion crossed his legs and commented, “You may go out if you want to. You won’t be in danger.”

She turned around and looked at him. “I don’t intend to. I’m just curious what they’re talking about.”

Zorion raised his eyebrows. “You may go down and listen.”

Rossie didn’t reply.

She leaned against the door and fidgeted with her hands. Zorion stared at her hands and suddenly felt uncomfortable; his thoughts ran wild.

Chapter 1448

“We also share part of the blame for what happened,” Jepherson said. Jacky laughed, “It has nothing to do with you; it’s my own fault. You should go; I’ll visit him in a few days. I have to wait for Logan to wake up.”

“People make mistakes, but no one deserves to die for them. He lost his head for a moment.”

At that, Jacky returned to Waverly Village, disappearing from Jepherson’s sight in no time.

Jepherson looked back at Zorion, then entered the car and returned to Capital City.

Zorion's car followed behind his.

When Jepherson was back at Capital City, he did not return to his home but instead to the Cole family.

The car came to a stop, but Jepherson did not come out. Later, he went back home. Zorion returned to his home. When he entered the house, Tetsuo informed him someone from the Cole family had come and sent an invitation to a meal the next day.

After accepting the invitation card, Zorion opened it and scanned through the content before handing it back to Tetsuo. "Did they send it at night?"

"They sent it at one o'clock."

He stopped in his tracks and turned around to look at Tetsuo. "Did something happen to Flynt?"

Tetsuo seemed confused. "I don't understand what you mean, Mr. Zorion."

"Forget it."

Rossie walked behind Zorion as they entered the villa.

Zorion headed straight upstairs, and Rossie followed suit.

After closing the door, he grabbed his pajamas and went to take a shower. Rossie, too, took her pajamas but went to another room to shower.

Stunned, seeing that Rossie was not in his room after he came out of the bathroom, he went outside to search for her, and Tetsuo told him that she was in another room.

When Zorion entered her room, she had already showered, changed her clothes, dried her hair, and was already sound asleep.

He walked over to Rossie, tucked her in, and left after switching off the lights. When the door shut, Rossie opened her eyes and stared at the door before flipping the light switch back on.

She didn't know why, but ever since she left Zorion, she never had a good night's sleep. She could only rest with the lights on at night, and she would feel insecure when she turned off the lights occasionally.

To her surprise, during their stay together this time, she could fall asleep even when they did not share the same bed.

She stared at the ceiling with her eyes wide open, finding it ridiculous now that she thought about it. Even though he was a monster, he was better than nothing. Sometimes, the pain kept her sane. At least she still had someone by her side; it would be a tragedy if she was all alone.

The moment Zorion came out of her room, he heard the sound of a flipping switch. He turned around and stared at the light from the door gap but still walked away after a moment's hesitation.

...

Brooklyn was alarmed in the middle of the night. Ronard rushed into the room, walked over to Brooklyn, and whispered something in his ear. Brooklyn slowly turned to look at him and asked, "Where's Elina?"

“She’s throwing a tantrum.”

“Hmph, pathetic.” Brooklyn hated when women cried and made a fuss.

“What else to do but send him abroad to recuperate now that he had lost his arm. He’ll only be an embarrassment if he stays in Capital City. I didn’t expect him to be this useless.”

“But it seems like our time in Capital City has come to an end; we’ve lost our foothold here.”

“I don’t understand, Sir?” Ronard hesitated. Brooklyn asked, “Who sent out the invitations?”

“It’s Mr. Colston.”

“Colston?” Brooklyn recalled the Cole family had a few young ones; however, he could only remember a few.

Flynt had many younger brothers, and they all had different interests. Some liked to play around; some liked to sing, and a few liked to gamble. Most of them did not engage in honest work, and because of that, Brooklyn was not fond of them.

Then there was Colston. He loved reading and would come to Brooklyn occasionally.

Brooklyn asked, “How much younger is he than Flynt?”

“One year younger.”

“Why did he take the initiative to come forward this time?” Brooklyn asked again, his voice full of curiosity.

Ronard replied, “I heard there is a girl in his place. He wanted to see you a few times because of her, but he didn’t get the chance to.”

“Maybe he improvised this time, taking a risk, leading him to cross the line.”

Brooklyn glanced at him and said, “He’s bold. How dare he send out invitations using my name for a woman! If it weren’t for her, I’m sure he wouldn’t have bothered. It seems that he has already seen through the lies and deceits in this house. He knows that the more capable he is, the worse his life would become, so he kept his abilities hidden.”

Ronard didn’t say anything. Brooklyn continued, “Go, have Colston come over, and tell him to bring that woman too. I want to have a look myself.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Ronard immediately went to carry out his duties. Shortly, Colston came. He entered the room and walked over when he saw Brooklyn.

“Greetings, Grandpa.”

Colston lowered his head as he spoke. Brooklyn stared at him for a while, then thought of something and asked, “What were you thinking when you invited Zorion and Jepherson over? Why are you doing this?”

“Grandpa, I’ll answer your second question first. The reason is that I want to see you.”

“Everyone in the family knows those with lowly statuses will never get a chance to see you. I was born outside of the family by a concubine, and the Cole family took me in after my mother died when I was two. Although I received formal education just like the other children in the family, I have undoubtedly no status here.”

“I initially wanted to live a decent life with my own family and a stable job.”

“But I never thought even my girlfriend would be bullied because of my lowly status.”

Brooklyn was taken aback. “Who bullied your girlfriend?”

Colston replied, “Nirvan and Kieffer.”

“They bullied your girlfriend?” Brooklyn’s face fell. “Summon those two brutes.”

“Yes, Sir.” One of the servants hurried off.

Brooklyn waited until the servant left, then asked, “How did they bully her?”

“I knew Louisa from college. I brought her here because I wanted her to see my home. With my status in the family, I don’t have to bring her to you; it doesn’t matter if she stays at my place.”

“But when Nirvan and Kieffer saw her, they harassed her. I was furious, so I quarreled with them.”

“They told me I have no status in the family, don’t have a mother to back me up either, and I have no say in my own marriage. If they told you about this, Louisa would only become their plaything.”

Brooklyn let out an angry snort upon hearing Colston’s words. “This family is getting worse day by day. They have completely destroyed our family’s reputation; how much more shameless can they get?!”

While Brooklyn cursed, two men came in with Louisa behind them.

Brooklyn never liked flirtatious women, so he was surprised to find Louisa gentle and quiet.

“Ronard, please invite Miss Louisa to take a seat.”

It was a great honor to be welcomed by Brooklyn. Thus, Ronard hurriedly grabbed a chair and invited Louisa to sit down.

But Louisa only thanked Ronard, then moved to stand beside Colston quietly.

Although Brooklyn didn’t like her attitude, he still endured it because the Cole family needed Colston right then. As for Louisa, it was a matter for another day.

Chapter 1449

Brooklyn coughed twice and let out a cold snort. Then, he looked at Nirvan and Kieffer and asked, “Do you know why I called you two here?”

Both of them didn’t reply. After a long silence, one of them glanced at Colston and said, “Is it because of what we joked about with Colston’s girlfriend last time?”

Amused, Brooklyn said, "Good that you're not dumb. Since you know, I can get down to it. From now on, you are grounded; you're not allowed to go out nor receive any money until the day Colston becomes the head of the family and decides to release you. Otherwise, get the hell out of the family."

Colston lowered his gaze; Brooklyn was declaring him the future head of the Cole family.

However, he didn't feel happy about it. He merely wanted to stand up for himself. He thought Nirvan and Kieffer had gone too far, but he did not expect to be dragged into the vortex.

"We're sorry, Grandpa."

"Grandpa, you..."

"Leave. Just the sight of you two upsets me." Brooklyn dismissed them casually. Colston stared at Brooklyn, his gaze remained lowered, and there was not a trace of emotion on his handsome face.

Then, Brooklyn looked at him and said, "Colston, what do you think about Flynt's matter?"

Colston hesitated for a moment and replied, "As the saying goes, forgive and forget. Although we're a reputable family here, some of us have ruined the family's reputation and status these years. As a result, the Cole family is no longer respected by others."

"The Cole family's era has slowly come to an end, and a new era is about to come."

Ronard was breathless with anxiety. He couldn't believe Colston had the guts to say such things, not afraid of angering Brooklyn.

However, Brooklyn was not angry but smiled and said instead, "You sure don't disappoint me. You're courageous and resourceful. Then tell me, what should we do next to maintain our foothold in the Capital City?"

Colston hesitated for a moment and replied, "There is only one way. We must retreat in order to advance and maintain the family's reputation."

Brooklyn muttered to himself and chuckled, "You're right; you're smarter than them. The greatest mistake is to fight a hopeless battle; the loss will outweigh the gain."

"When you're not strong enough, keep silent and defeat the enemy in one strike when you're capable enough."

"If I'm in charge, what can I do?" Colston asked.

"What do you want to do?"

Brooklyn smiled; no one has probably dared think so. Even if they did, they wouldn't dare to bring it up. However, a concubine's son, Colston, must've suffered a lot in his years of living in the Cole family.

But he already knew to stay humble and keep a low profile at a young age. Such maturity was rare.

Because of this, Brooklyn decided to give him a chance.

"No one dares to go against the leader," Colston blurted. Brooklyn's heart skipped a beat, and he wondered where he was going with it.

Brooklyn coughed, and Ronard hurriedly brought the spittoon over. After clearing his throat, Brooklyn turned to look at Colston and said, "Tell me, what do you want to do?"

"I don't want to do anything. I only want to be with Louisa. But if I have to pay the price for that, I will serve the Cole family willingly. I can wait until you finish training the new head of the Cole family, and during this time, I will do my best to reinstate our family name."

Colston's eyes were fathomless as he looked at Brooklyn, his attitude indifferent. Brooklyn spaced out a little, falling silent for a moment. It was as if he could see his third son, Flavian, in Colston.

After a long while, Brooklyn asked, "Tell me, is the Cole family not worth staying? Why don't you want to stay at all?"

"Grandpa, you know very well that the Cole family manor is just like the royal palace. Once one enters, they can never escape; even if they do, they will leave a different man."

"Such treacherous life does not suit me. I'm not too fond of this kind of environment, and I don't wish my children to grow up into boastful and secular people."

"They will not compete for fame and wealth, nor will they fight for power and self-interest, living a life full of deceit."

"I wish to live an ordinary life, and for my children as well."

Brooklyn laughed, "If you don't have fame, wealth, status, or power, what else can you do?"

"Aren't you fighting now because of a woman?"

"After enduring humiliation for twenty years, you're going to give up everything you built?"

"That's different. Since I can take the liberty to send out the invitation, it means I have already thought of a way out. What's the worst thing that can happen if you don't give me an opportunity?"

"Louisa doesn't have a family. She grew up like me, living in an orphanage. If something were to happen to me, I'm sure she would follow."

It was apparent Colston had already thought of a way out. Still lost in thought, Brooklyn couldn't help but think of Flavian.

Colston was a chip off the old block. He had Flavian's personality and temper, always stubborn and unwilling to give in.

Brooklyn's heart twinged as he reminisced about the past. He really wanted to do it once more, throwing the pair standing in front of him out. However, he was too old, and he had no one to rely on. He thought his sons must have hated him for being a busybody; none of his remaining sons stayed by his side.

He no longer had the strength to chase Colston away.

"I will give you three years. If you can restore the Cole family's name and gain a foothold in Capital City within three years, I will grant you two wishes," he said.

Colston replied, "Thank you for your kindness, Grandpa."

"I'm doing this for the Cole family. From now on, only I can intervene in your decision. Of course, since I have been bedridden for a long time, I may no longer be aware of what is happening outside. Besides, this is your time. I am too old to keep up with you, so I will step back and only talk to you occasionally. I will not criticize you for your actions. Feel free to do whatever you want."

"In that case, I'll tell you my first wish."

Colston's words humored Brooklyn, "You haven't completed your task yet."

"I'll take the deposit first," Colston said. Brooklyn thought for a moment and said, "Alright then, tell me."

"I wish to marry Louisa. No one can bully her once she joins the Cole family as my wife. She will be the mistress of the Cole family within these three years, helping me manage the matters and conduct the insides of the Cole family manor."

"Only then can I be at ease dealing with the affairs outside."

Brooklyn spaced out a little once more. He didn't expect Colston to be more decisive and challenging than Flavian; he was no all show and no go.

Brooklyn stared at Louisa calmly and asked her, "How old are you now?"

Louisa answered, "I'm twenty."

"Twenty past your birthday?"

"Yes."

"So you go to college?"

"Yes, I'm in college."

"Alright, I'll grant Colston's wish to marry you. Ronard, announce that they will move in here and continue to stay here after I pass."

Ronard stared at Brooklyn and wondered if it meant he was promoting Colston.

Chapter 1450

Jepherson stared at the invitation in a daze. After putting it down, he went to take a rest. The following day, after breakfast, he went to visit the Cole family.

The Cole family had decorated their home with lights and ribbons. When Jepherson just got off the car, he immediately sensed that something was not right; the Cole family seemed to be celebrating something.

Upon entering, Jepherson saw a couple standing at the door waiting for them. Seeing him, Colston led Louisa to Jepherson.

Although Colston was not a significant figure in the Cole family, Jepherson knew who he was.

He had already investigated all the members of the Cole family, so he knew people like Colston.

He was among the Cole family's fifth generation, Brooklyn's great-great-grandson, the same generation as Flynt.

However, Flynt was of noble background, the first wife's son, while Colston's father was of collateral kin; as his grandmother was a concubine, his father was barely acknowledged. Colston's mother was also a concubine, and Colston wasn't even born inside the Cole family.

A memory flashed across Jepherson's mind. The Cole family took Colston in at two when his mother had passed away because of illness.

His father was already not favored and even got another wife after his mother's death; it was a miracle the young child could grow up with no one to rely on.

Jepherson was slightly moved to see Colston before him, knowing he was no simple man. The Cole family had a long history in Capital City, and many talented individuals were in hiding; it would not be easy to force them to retire.

"Mr. Harvey," Colston greeted as he walked over, his tone neither haughty nor humble, and he had an imposing air about him.

Jepherson smiled. "Colston Cole?"

"That's me." Colston smiled warmly. He had always been an amiable man. Jepherson's eyes were calm as he tried to conceal the emotions inside him.

The Cole family would never allow any ordinary man to welcome their guests, and Jepherson knew Colston was no ordinary man. He observed Colston smile and wondered if he was honest or only pretending.

"Colston, you are too polite. I came in a hurry today, so I didn't bring any gifts for Old Master Cole. I hope you don't mind."

Colston immediately said, "Please, don't worry. It was abrupt of me to send the invitation at such a late night; forgive me for my lack of courtesy. Please come in, Mr. Harvey. It's cold outside."

"Alright." Jepherson stepped forward without hesitation, all under his control.

Colston was aware that if he didn't win this battle, there would be nothing left between him and Louisa.

He turned back to look at Louisa and said, "Louisa, please stay here and wait for Mr. Atkinson."

"Alright."

Louisa was wearing Colston's clothes. They didn't have time to put on nice clothes because everything happened all too suddenly, but they didn't care about it either.

Jepherson's eyes gleamed when he overheard their conversation, but he pretended that he didn't hear them.

The girl, Louisa, was Colston's weak spot.

Jepherson and Colston entered the main hall. After they settled down onto their seats, Ronard dismissed the other people in the room and tended to them himself.

It didn't take long for Zorion to arrive at the Cole family's manor. He got out of the car and straightened his clothes, then turned around and stretched out a hand to Rossie. She withdrew her hand after getting out. Looking around, she asked, "Where is this?"

"The Cole family's manor," Zorion said as he looked at the entrance. Louisa walked out, dressed in Colston's shirt he wore to school. There was nothing showy about her outfit, but Zorion frowned when he noticed her calm demeanor, then glanced at the people around her.

He wondered if something was about to change in the Cole family.

Louisa walked toward the entrance and greeted Zorion and Rossie, "Welcome, Mr. Atkinson."

She nodded at Rossie and smiled politely, then looked at Zorion and said, "Colston is with Mr. Harvey. He specifically asked me to wait for you two here. Please, come in."

Louisa gestured for them to enter and walked forward. Rossie stole a glance at Zorion as he strode forward. The three of them walked into the main hall together.

When they arrived at the door, a servant came up and helped take their coats while Louisa invited them into the house.

Colston immediately stood up to welcome Zorion when he saw him.

"Mr. Atkinson."

Zorion sized Colston up; although they were about the same age, he did not know who Colston was.

He saw Jepherson drinking tea calmly from the corner of his eyes, then asked directly, "Who are you?"

"I am Colston Cole, seventh son of the fifth generation in the Cole family."

Zorion thought for a moment, then said, "I've never heard of you."

"I'm not worth mentioning in the Cole family, so it's understandable if you have never heard of me. Please have a seat, Mr. Atkinson," Colston said, gesturing at the empty seat beside Jepherson on one side of the square table. As he hadn't expected Zorion to bring someone along, he motioned for Louisa to arrange a seat for Rossie. Louisa sat beside Colston on the other side of the table, and there was no seniority between them.

Colston turned to look at Louisa and said, "Louisa and I go to college together; she's a sophomore. She has an amazing knowledge of tea. Today's a big day for us; we're legally married. So, this gathering is a private wedding invitation."

Jepherson sat unmoving, and Zorion raised his eyebrows. "Interesting."

Louisa began to make tea while Rossie watched quietly as if she was learning, but in fact, she was also well-versed.

After Louisa served them tea, Colston went straight to the point.

“I’m honored to have you two here today. I believe you know very well why I invited you here.”

Jepherson and Zorion did not speak. Colston continued, “I’m a nobody in the Cole family, so I do not have a say in my own marriage.”

“But Louisa and I are in love, and we do not wish to be separate from each other.”

“Hence, I had to take a risk and assume some responsibility when my family’s in trouble in exchange for our happiness.”

“The Cole family is currently in troubled times, and it is collapsing.”

“I’m aware that our family has lost its reputation, but the two of you are beginning to rise in Capital City.”

“So, I invited you two here today, hoping to befriend you. What do you say?”

Zorion turned to look at Jepherson. Jepherson cooled his cup of tea and took a sip.

Zorion, too, did the same. If Jepherson weren’t going to speak, he wouldn’t either.

Rossie sat aside, unmoving. She was already experiencing insomnia. Drinking tea would only make it worse.

“How may I address you?” Louisa asked. Rossie replied, “Lautner.”

Louisa said, “Miss Lautner, do you have difficulty falling asleep at night?”

Zorion was drinking his tea when the two women spoke. Looking over, although the intention was clear, he was willing to try as long as it would help Rossie.

Rossie answered, “Yes, a little.”

“Will you let me help you, Miss Lautner?” Louisa asked. Rossie turned to Zorion, and he asked, “How?”

Setting down the teacup, he stared at Louisa intently.