

Chapter 995 Cross-age Friends

Maia's eyebrows arched in surprise as she fixed Loraine with a meaningful gaze. Her lips curled into a knowing smile. "Not many folks around here know about Shepherd. Have you ever heard this song? Have you heard this song before?"

Loraine's eyes clouded with nostalgia. "Yes, it's the final track from Shepherd's debut album, isn't it?"

Memories flooded her mind, memories of a time when the band was just finding its footing. The melody was still rough around the edges but over time, they polished their sound, honing it to perfection.

Little did Loraine expect to encounter this song again in the quaint home of an aging artist.

Impressed by Loraine's keen recognition of the song's origins, Maia's demeanor shifted slightly, a touch of seriousness mingling with her gentleness. "How do you know that? Are you a fan?"

A shy smile graced Loraine's lips as she toyed with the idea of revealing her true identity. Perhaps a bit of boasting wouldn't hurt, especially if it endeared her to Maia and bolstered her forthcoming favor requests.

She cleared her throat and hummed a few snippets of the tune before launching into a brief rendition.

Her voice, unlike the grainy texture of the phonograph, resonated with professionalism, showcasing maturity and

precision in every note.

Maia's eyes sparkled with surprise as she gazed at Loraine. At that moment, she realized Loraine was none other than Alice, the lead singer of Shepherd!

Modestly, Loraine acknowledged her past connections abroad. "I was fortunate to meet like-minded friends during my youth. It's truly an honor to be appreciated by someone like you."

"So you really are Alice!" Maia's sigh carried a tinge of regret. "To think Shepherd disbanded after the Kitay concert... Meeting the lead singer today is unexpected."

Grateful for Maia's admiration, Loraine expressed her thanks humbly.

A joyful laugh escaped Maia's lips. "Your band's spirit and energy spoke to me. You lot were a breed apart. But there's room for improvement in your vocals, like..."

Loraine absorbed her feedback eagerly, jotting down notes. After all, she'd been away from the music scene for some time and was eager to absorb every nugget of wisdom the seasoned artist had to offer. She sought Maia's guidance on various vocal techniques and professional nuances, eager to refine her craft.

Discovering Loraine's true identity, Maia's admiration swelled. To see her humble enough to learn, despite her past success, only deepened Maia's respect. And she didn't hold back, sharing her wisdom with Loraine as generously as she could.

When Vincent emerged with a tray of tea, he caught sight of them engrossed in conversation, their laughter bridging the gap of years between them like old comrades.

"Did I miss something?" Vincent asked, genuinely surprised. "I step out for a moment and suddenly I'm the odd one out."

What's the topic? Why does it feel like you're closer to my teacher than to me?"

Loraine burst into laughter. Maia shot a glance at Vincent and couldn't suppress a snort. "Well, if I had encountered such a remarkable student earlier, you'd be out of the loop."

Vincent's face twisted in mild bitterness as he muttered under his breath, "Ms. Watts, don't embarrass me..."

But instead of sparing him, Maia instead rubbed salt into the wound. "Loraine here by far outshines your niece. She's talented, and humble, unlike your niece, who crumbled at the slightest critique from me!"

Her tone softened as she turned an affectionate gaze towards Loraine. "I may be ancient, but seeing you makes me reconsider taking on another student. Ever thought about showbiz, Loraine? You've got the spark."

Caught between amusement and exasperation, Loraine didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Thank you for the offer, but I haven't considered it at the moment. I actually came here today with a different purpose in mind. I have a request."

Maia sighed wistfully, "Think it over. If you ever change your mind, my door is always open. Now, about your request, why don't you and Vincent join me for dinner first?"

Loraine readily agreed, suggesting, "How about I whip up some home-cooked dishes for us and we dine here?"

Maia nodded approvingly. This gesture not only ensured her physical well-being but also conveyed a sense of closeness, far more meaningful than dining out lavishly, especially given her status.

With no reason to refuse Loraine, Maia gently urged, "Go ahead, talk about your matter."

As Loraine hesitated, she retrieved a photo of a necklace. Just as she was about to speak, she noticed a flicker of recognition in Maia's eyes upon seeing the photo.

Maintaining her composure, Maia smoothly redirected the conversation. "Vincent, could you fetch some groceries, please?"

Vincent feigned offense, pressing a hand to his chest. "You're always putting me to work. What happened to my newfound talent as an actor?"

Rolling her eyes, Maia shot back. "If you're not up for it, forget it. But don't expect any of Loraine's cooking!"

Vincent's expression shifted, but he begrudgingly left the room in a huff.

As soon as Vincent was out of earshot, Maia's expression turned grave.

Sensing the shift, Loraine straightened up, her tone serious. "Ms. Watts, do you recognize this necklace?"

Maia sighed, shaking her head, "I may not know the necklace, but I recognize the gem adorning it."

She continued, her voice tinged with regret, "That gem is the Tear of the Sea, a reminder of my greatest regret, one I've never been able to reclaim."

