

HBH 801

Chapter 801 Never Marry Again

Veronica made her stance very clear and severed all hopes for Mateo ever to make her his. At the same time, her statement shocked everyone at the table, causing them to gaze at her in unison.

"You're not going to remarry?" Crayson cried out exasperatedly. "That's ridiculous!" Even Hayley wasn't having it. "Anyone can choose to stay single, but not you."

"Matthew Kings is dead, and you intend to be a widow? What are you, a fool?" Destiny sassed while Mateo implored, "You're still young, Roni. How can you not remarry? You still have a wonderful life ahead of you, so don't dwell in the past."

After listening to their words, Matthew drooped his eyelids and headed to the yard. All that mattered was Veronica's stance.

Meanwhile, Veronica put her spoon down and looked icily at Hayley, who was sitting right across from her. "I didn't come to the hidden clan for the throne or because you're my birth mother; rather, my children's lives would be at stake if I don't comply. I will help you reclaim the throne, but I will not stay," she bellowed. "My mind won't change. Not now, not ever. Also, you can forget about finding me a suitor here in the hidden clan, for I will never fall in love with your kind—even if my last choices are between them and Bloomstead's beggars."

"That's because..." she drawled. "I don't belong here."

your mother like

head at Crayson with her usual graceful smile before

forced, but... she

upstairs to study while Mateo sat on the couch with

do you, Madam Hayley? I mean, Roni made it

hopeful and enthusiastic the night before, but who'd have thought he'd wake up to his burning passion drowned

sip, Hayley put down her coffee, then said slowly, "Veronica and Matthew were deeply in love with each other, and he just died not long ago, so it's only normal that Veronica can't come out of the

lit

won't possibly lie to you, now, will

great. You treat me the

look at you. I've been treating you like my own ever since you

While the two discussed Veronica inside, Matthew, who was taking a drag at the door, overheard their entire conversation, and his gaze turned sub-zero.

Upstairs, Veronica was studying when her phone rang. It was a call from Xavier, who had asked Veronica for her number at the banquet.

"Hey, Xavier," she greeted.

However, nothing came from the other end for a moment before Xavier's concerned voice sounded,
"How were you last night?"

"I'm alright. What's up?"

"Really? You were alright? Was your liquor last night really fine?" Though Dominik had already given him the answer at the palace last night, Xavier still didn't believe him.

Meanwhile, Veronica fell silent, not answering him.

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"I know you don't trust me or want to reveal anything to me, but I just want to make sure you're okay. Bye." Disappointed, Xavier ended the call quickly.

Veronica lost the mood to study after being disturbed by the call and thus began fiddling with her phone when a notification popped up.

She and Matthew had cracked their phones after purchasing them, and they were set to English now.

It was a concise message from Matthew. 'The antidote is in the handkerchief.'

It was the handkerchief she had deliberately poured some of the drink onto the day before and taken out with her in her pocket after placing it into a plastic bag.

It was just a guess, but who'd have thought the drink was really spiked?!

perhaps, she did all she could to make a deal with them to achieve success through double-dealing—she was very insecure,

got it.' Veronica typed, then thought for a second and added a

Knock, knock, knock!

a knock at

Veronica put the phone down and opened the door to find Mateo standing behind it with books in his hands, ready to

pretty big, half of it could be divided into a study area. For convenience's

her, she suddenly thought it wasn't

how about we—" Just as she suggested doing the lessons in the study,

you too." Matthew's checkered flannel and mundane disguise made him look

icily at him, having been startled

clan credits out of him the day before,

it. Consider them my lesson fees," said Matthew as he pulled 20,000 hidden clan money he had been tricked out of, Mateo immediately reached his hands out, but Mateo extended his hand with a 'no money, no

However, Matthew didn't yield to his threat. Instead, he turned to the staircase and bellowed, "Master Waylen, Young Master Mateo says he isn't willing to teach me."

Crayson's real name was Waylen Elrod, and Matthew was currently playing the role of a servant. Thus, he could only address the former as Master Waylen.

"Mateo?!" Crayson's warning immediately came from downstairs.

Grimness immediately enveloped Mateo's face as he glared daggers at Matthew, only to find the latter chuckling foolishly. "Hehehe, Master Waylen said I don't have to give you money since I serve this family. In that case, I think I won't give it to you," said the man with a straight face as he put the money back into his pocket, causing Mateo to froth at the mouth.

Matthew's mischievous side was one that Veronica had never seen before, and she couldn't help wanting to chuckle.

"Fine!" Mateo shouted toward his grandfather, who then replied, "Iron has been tasked to keep Veronica safe from now on. You must see that his hidden tongue is fluent."

This arrangement made Mateo so livid that his face flushed from anger. However, he dared not complain.

Though she was amused, Veronica fought back her laughter and suggested, "Let's go to the study. My room can't fit all three of us."

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"As you wish, Miss Veronica," said Matthew as he quirked a brow and smirked at Veronica—behind Mateo's back, of course.

Mateo, on the other hand, was feeling indignant. However, since it was an order from his grandfather, he had no choice but to oblige. "Come on, let's get moving," said the young man exasperatedly.

"Hold on, let me get my stuff." With that, Veronica headed back inside to grab her pen, notebook, and study materials before following the two to the study.

The massive study was located on the west of the second floor, and it was filled with shelves full of books of various genres from the hidden clan, Castron, Destor, and many other countries. There was such a wide variety that it was practically a mini library.

books, the remaining one-sixth was the lounge area, which was fully furnished with a work desk and a couch among many other things. As two balconies

corridor to shout toward Crayson, who was chatting with Hayley on the first floor. "Master Crayson, I'm studying with Iron. Can you please ask

first, and I'll have them bring it
before returning to the
for now, Veronica beckoned Matthew to move things around. "Let's move
do." Matthew nodded in acknowledgment, then proceeded to sort the desk
books in his hands. "We learned how to pronounce the 26 alphabets yesterday, so we're going to learn a
few simple words and dialogues today,"
Veronica as she flipped to page ten. Matthew obliged as
their words out loud. For a moment, it felt as though time had rewound
Mateo began feeling thirsty, and he put the book down, announcing, "Continue memorizing the words
while
"Alright, sir."

During lessons, Veronica would refer to Mateo as 'sir', but once classes were over, she'd return to calling
him Mateo, distinguishing work and study very nicely.

With that, the young man headed out, closing the door behind him as he left.

As new words were introduced, Veronica tried to memorize them with agony, but Matthew closed her
book up suddenly. "Well, isn't someone studious? No wonder you were a straight-A student."

The young woman frowned upsettingly as she turned her head to Matthew, only to find his head
propped up against the desk with his right arm. Though his face looked average under the disguise, the
mediocrity couldn't suppress his innate nobility.

"We're in the middle of a class here. Focus. Otherwise, things will get very problematic if I still don't
know hidden tongue," Veronica chided, then mused, Can you please focus? What are you trying to do?

Lo and behold, Matthew put his left arm on her shoulder and pulled her into his arms while grabbing her
chin with his right to plant a kiss on her lips.

Chapter 804 Plotted Against Mateo

Veronica's heart pounded, and she thought kissing under such circumstances was nerve-racking yet
thrilling, for it felt like they would get caught any second.

That said, she didn't fight it but let Matthew kiss her as he pleased. At that moment, all she could smell
was Matthew's unique scent, and it intoxicated her.

It wasn't after two minutes that Matthew finally released her. "Your face is pretty flushed," he couldn't
help teasing when he saw how bashful she looked. "Are you not worried Mateo will notice it when he
comes back?"

At that, Veronica buried her face in her hands, panicking. "Is it that bad?"

"Come on, this isn't your first rodeo. How can you still be shy about it?" "Says the guy trying to swallow my mouth. I could barely even breathe."

"It's on you for being a dummy. Don't pass the buck." Matthew flicked her forehead lightly. "There aren't cameras in here. You don't have to be nervous. It's not like I'm going to eat you up."

Creak...

door opened, and Mateo came in with a cup of

had thought he'd come in to find the two fooling around or slacking off, but to his surprise, they were sitting upright,

returned to his seat, leaning lazily against the executive chair as he read a book while listening to the two

to realize Veronica's left hand and Matthew's right

a ball as he

against Mateo's watchful gaze, Veronica tried to wriggle her hand out, but very quickly, she realized it would be a

words down. You can only sear the words in your brain after reading and writing them over and over again, or they will never come to you," said Mateo

didn't seem to have too much patience with the two. In fact, whenever he looked at Matthew, his gaze to master it in just half a year. One might assume he had a knack for language or was even gifted at it. However, the truth was that no one knew just how much blood, sweat, and tears he had put into achieving

"Got it."

"Alright."

the two pulled out their

other hand, Mateo became tired from sitting, so he adjusted the back of the executive chair and

After making himself comfortable, he placed a book on his face and drifted off to sleep.

Meanwhile, the couple continued scribbling their newly learned words, but sometime later, there came muffled snores. The two reflexively stopped and looked in the direction of the sound to find Mateo dead asleep, and the two smiled as they exchanged a glance.

Pulling another mischief, Matthew held Veronica's chin as he leaned over to kiss her lips, causing her to tense up at once. She was so shocked that her eyes widened with fear, worried that Mateo would suddenly wake up and catch them in the act.

While struggling, she kept her peripheral gaze on Mateo worriedly, feeling as though her heart would jump out of her chest at any second.

After successfully shoving Matthew away, she placed a book in front of her face and turned her head to glare daggers at Matthew. "Are you crazy?! You and I will be dead meat if he catches us!" she whispered.

"Relax, he won't be waking up anytime soon," Matthew answered composedly, baffling Veronica. "He won't? Why?"

"There's a little something in his coffee."

As for what this 'little something' was, Veronica got a pretty good picture even if Matthew kept his lips sealed.

Chapter 805 She Likes Matthew?

"I can't believe you did that." Veronica wasn't sure if she should be amused or worried by what Matthew did. "I have to master the language quickly, or things will be troublesome in the future."

"I didn't say you should stop, did I? I'll teach you."

"You?" Veronica's eyes lit up as she remembered how Matthew managed to master the hidden tongue within a very short time. Realizing there must be some sort of trick to do so, she became excited. "Great. Tell me, what's your secret to mastering the language so quickly?"

The man chuckled in response. "There's no secret or trick. The only way to do it is to memorize." "No tricks? How did you manage to master it so quickly, then?"

"That's because..." Matthew lifted a finger and tapped her nose. "Your hubby's smart." Veronica chuckled, amused by his smug look. "How come I never realized how vain you are?"

to readjust your daily schedule. From now on, your classes start at 6.00AM and end at 3.00PM. It'll be followed by martial arts practice. We have limited time,

the timetable on the table. "Wake up at 6.00AM, end

her signature graceful smile. "We

took a mouthful of food and chewed slowly. "Well,

Veronica could return to her studies. "Master Waylen, Madam Hayley, Dominik,

asked Crayson with furrowed brows and hands behind his

servant glanced at Veronica. "They're

"Who said they could come

Veronica disregarded everyone and headed outside.

a good idea for her to go out. Hence, she headed upstairs to observe the situation outside the window prevent the Ledgers from

you." Mateo followed behind Veronica, worried

After exiting the living room and traversing the yard, Veronica found the Ledger siblings standing outside through the fences very quickly.

"Yes?" she looked plainly at the siblings after stepping out of the yard.

"I've brought Liam over to apologize to you." Dominik had always been steady and wise, and people would find him sagacious in how he carried himself.

"What I did the other day was rude. I'm sorry," Liam apologized agonizingly with a tilted head. It was evident the young prince had come against his own will.

Eleanor, however, stretched her neck and looked into the house, seemingly finding something before finally asking, "Murphy, where's your little sidekick?"

Veronica was then reminded of what Matthew had told her—Eleanor had discovered his real identity. That said, the princess' abnormally keen interest in him gave Veronica a less-than-likely idea...

She can't possibly have feelings for Matthew, can she?!

Women had pretty accurate gut feelings, after all.

Chapter 806 Nemesis

Nearly instantly, Veronica's gaze toward Eleanor became defensive.

The princess had stunning exotic features, to begin with—just a little makeup would already make her a bombshell. Her beauty was one of sexy yet not sultry, as her every action reflected her confidence and sophistication in her beauty.

Even Veronica had to admit that she paled slightly next to Eleanor despite believing she was beautiful as well.

"No clue. Do you need him for something, Your Highness?" Veronica snubbed Liam's apology automatically and put all her attention on Eleanor instead.

him, seeing that he's a pretty

She has always been like this. She has been practicing

you!" Liam shot Veronica an

the

to that issue, so she said, "You didn't mean

two, "Do you have anything else? If not, I'm going back

spoke up, seeing that

only normal that she felt indignant when she was already asked to

wanted to

their rudeness, Your Highnesses. We are most certainly honored that you'd visit us," said Crayson with a smile

asked contemptuously because he genuinely didn't

nodded a greeting. "You must be the

clan decades ago, Waylen had served as the chief minister, a position equivalent to a nation's prime

What was more, because he excelled in governing and assisted the former head of the clan in leading the nation to prosperity, he became revered by many.

"I've heard so much about you, Master Waylen. What an honor it is to meet you," greeted Eleanor with a slight nod.

Though both regarded the other party as a nemesis, window dressing still had to be done. After all, the Ledger Clan claimed to tolerate the Elrods in public, so they would spare the latter even if they were the formerly hidden clan monarchy.

"To think Your Highnesses still remember this old man. Hahaha," Crayson guffawed, then shot a disapproving glance at Veronica. "What happened to your manners? Why didn't you invite Their Highnesses inside? Do you want people to criticize me for being discourteous?"

"It's all me. Roni has nothing to do with this." Mateo defended Veronica, probably because he didn't like seeing Crayson reprimand her.

"Alright, enough. Please come in." Crayson invited the Ledger siblings inside and then led them to the living room.

As everyone took their seats on the couch, the servants went to get refreshments.

Just then, Matthew came out from the kitchen wearing an apron. It seemed that he was working away in the kitchen a second ago.

"Iron!" Eleanor's eyes lit up at once. "What is this that you're doing?"

Chapter 807 Eleanor Ledger

Eleanor's question was purely out of curiosity. Suspicion stirred within everyone when Eleanor kept asking and mentioning Iron since arriving at Elrod's residence. That said, none expressed their bafflement.

Crayson, on the other hand, answered with a chuckle, "Iron is a Bloomstead chef that I hired specially to take care of Miss Veronica's diet."

"Is that so? Then he must be an amazing chef." Eleanor smiled, then requested, "I've heard so much about Destorian food and culture but never had the chance to visit. I wonder if we have the privilege to try Destorian food?"

Dominik frowned subtly but said nothing as he maintained his usual composure. Liam, on the other hand, nodded in agreement. "I've also heard all sorts of praises about Destorian food. Miss Murphy, seeing that we're all friends here, can we stay for lunch?"

Mateo turned them down mercilessly as he couldn't show up too suddenly, so I'm afraid we only have food for so many." as their private chef, feel bad for Matthew, so how could she easy. I'll call and have them deliver some ingredients I really spell

Crayson shot a piercing gaze at him, and the came back into the house with a handful of coriander. Many flowers and plants had been planted in the yard, the couch and waved at Matthew while approaching him. "Miss Murphy told me your cooking is as amazing as a state banquet chef. Can my honor to receive your recognition,

"Haha, you're being too modest." Eleanor beamed. "I can't possibly freeload either. How about I follow you into the kitchen and learn a thing or two from you?"

"I don't think that's a good idea, Princess Eleanor." Crayson stopped her, thinking it'd be a disaster if she followed him to the kitchen.

Though Dominik felt humiliated and also thought Eleanor wasn't behaving like herself, he still maintained a calm composure for pride's sake. "Just let her be, Master Waylen. Eleanor has always been inquisitive since she was a kid. Sorry for troubling you."

Of course, Crayson couldn't say anything more when Dominik had put it that way. "Hahaha," he guffawed obsequiously. "I've long heard Princess Eleanor is erudite and knows a thing or two about many subjects. Now that I'm seeing it for myself, I must admit she is studious. I'm very impressed."

Veronica didn't know how much genuineness was in Crayson's flattery, but when she saw the elder glancing shrewdly at Eleanor, she knew Crayson had his guard against Eleanor.

"You're too kind, Master Waylen. Eleanor isn't as impressive as you put it." Dominik smiled amiably.

The Ledger siblings each had unique personalities. Dominik was steady, wise, and gentle. Eleanor might look quirky and harmless, but she was actually cunning and artful. Liam, on the other hand, was all muscles and no brain. He wore his heart on his sleeve.

Chapter 808 Be My Master

As the conversation in the living room continued, Eleanor followed Matthew into the kitchen and even closed the door behind her.

While Matthew cleaned and gutted the fish professionally, he monotoned sarcastically, "You want everyone to know you show me favoritism, don't you, Your Highness?"

He suddenly thought Eleanor was a difficult one, and it made his head hurt. "I naturally won't reveal your identity when I've promised you that. But what other people think is not my business."

'I, Princess of Eleanor of the hidden clan, am only responsible for keeping my mouth shut. It's not my problem if other

Eleanor had

left. All she could see was his drop-dead gorgeous face every time she closed her eyes in bed. Thus, she luggered

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Prince of the hidden clan, Liam naturally wouldn't be willing to apologize to Veronica. Eleanor see Matthew from the get-go. However, she started regretting after seeing Matthew's his true face to the world? Oh, what a

give you my thanks, then," quipped Matthew inattentively as he

no need to. I'll take the feast as your gratitude, so you better make it nicer and hope that I'll eat a little more." It was as though she couldn't make out his underlying

I'll be your sous-chef. You can also

a tilted head. "Say, Iron, how about I become your disciple? You're going to teach me how

"No." Matthew turned her down without even a split second of hesitation.

Of course, Eleanor expected his rejection, so she smiled seductively and reminded him, "You know you can walk in and out of the palace as you wish if you become my master. It'll benefit you and even Veronica."

He paused for a second when he heard Eleanor's words but returned to gutting the carp silently.

The princess' smile widened as she had a good guess as to what was running through Matthew's mind. At that, she patted his shoulder lightly. "It's decided then. How are you planning on making the fish, Master Iron?" She got into character in a snap.

Meanwhile, in the living room, a red flag was raised within Veronica when Eleanor still hadn't returned from the living room after such a long time.

"I'm going to see if we have enough food for all of us," she announced and headed straight to the kitchen without caring what the others thought.

Eleanor's cheerful laughter came from inside the kitchen when Veronica arrived at the door, causing her heart to skip a nervous beat and her hand at the doorknob to pause.

After a moment of hesitation, she still decided to open the door, only to find the princess thoughtfully wiping the sweat off Matthew's forehead with a handkerchief. "You're sweating, Master Iron. Let me wipe it off you."

Matthew found Veronica standing in the doorway the second he turned to his side with a sharp knife. At that, he shifted his gaze to Eleanor...

Chapter 809 I Will Support You in Spirit

Matthew pressed the knife against Eleanor's handkerchief and gently pushed it aside. "Don't think for a second that your botched acting can drive a wedge between us."

As a man, especially a husband, of integrity, he naturally wouldn't worry Veronica would misunderstand, and he had utter faith in their love.

On the other hand, Veronica's sliver of worry disappeared instantly after hearing Matthew's words. I've let my imaginations run wild, haven't I?

With that, she entered and closed the door behind her with a smile. "Are you looking to change your cup of tea, Your Highness?"

Made livid yet amused by the couple's counterattack, Eleanor threw the handkerchief into the trash can and quirked her brow. "Well, this is no fun. Can't you guys even pretend to be mad at each other for one second and amuse me?"

defused the awkwardness in a snap, and her straightforwardness left a good

could be so

Matthew smiled as they exchanged a glance. Then, he returned to sorting the fish out while Veronica lowered her head, letting the

Iron is my master now. Hands-on learning will

toward Veronica as

and challenge, but she still jeered with crossed arms, "You do know the difference between defeat and jealousy, don't you? I suggest you better be prepared

going to

why should I

might do

As long as you have the confidence to do it, I'll be with you in spirit." Veronica turned around with deflated balloon, feeling defeated for a long time before glaring at Matthew with a feigned contemptuous snort. "I have all the time in the world to make you mine, and you guys will rue belittling me

"There's a word for being overconfident," Matthew said plainly as he ran the tap water over the carp. "Conceit."

"I've been conceited all my life, so what more another?" With that, she grabbed the vegetable aside and asked, "How should I prepare this vegetable? I don't know what to do."

"Remove the ends and see if any worms have gotten into it. If there is, throw it aside."

"That's it? Well, that's quite easy, isn't it?" Eleanor nodded, then concentrated on prepping the vegetable.

Meanwhile, outside, Liam asked Veronica when he saw her returning, "What is my sister doing in there? Why hasn't she come out?"

"Princess Eleanor's thirst for knowledge is as intense as a lost man in the Sahara, so she asked Iron to become her master, and now, she's learning how to cook from him," the young woman answered as she took a seat. With that, she grabbed a cup of tea and instantly felt relaxed when she smelled the aroma.

"Eleanor made Iron her master?!" Liam shot right out of his seat in disbelief. "This is absurd! She's the princess of the hidden clan! The monarchy name will be tarnished if this gets out!"

For the longest time, Liam had a problem with Iron and wanted to give the man a solid piece of his mind. But now that he had become Eleanor's master, there was no way Liam could teach Iron a lesson anymore.

The poor prince's face was still blue and black from being belabored by Matthew the night before.

Chapter 810 Overconcerned

That said, Eleanor thoughtfully covered up the injuries on his face with concealer before they headed out, saving the young prince from being ridiculed in public.

"Liam!" Dominik lectured. "No honest job is too lowly to deserve respect. Eleanor has always been inquisitive about new things and is happy to learn from others. You should learn that from her."

"I—Hmph!" Liam snorted upsettingly, then flumped back onto the couch as he mocked, "Well, you're the big brother. Whatever you say goes."

you brothers sure are close. You two remind me of my younger self. My temper was exactly like Prince Liam's." Crayson thought out loud, then said, "You guys chat. I

deferentially as he got up,

she heard the doorknob turning. At that, she looked up to find Crayson approaching her.

lunch here, and Eleanor actually made Iron her cooking teacher.

doubt she wants to bribe him and

you put it that way, we should use him well." The elder, too, devised a

Let's observe

downstairs, so I'm afraid you'll have to

it." Hayley made

made a table full of Bloomstead's specialties for

to eat when Eleanor suddenly stood up. "Wait, my master made the lunch himself.

Veronica wished for Matthew to join her at the table,

On the one hand, she worried Matthew's cover would be blown, and on the other, she couldn't find the proper excuse to let him join them.

Her overconcern would undoubtedly blow his cover.

Now that Eleanor had made the request, Veronica echoed, "Yes. Princess Eleanor is right."

"He's just a cook, so how can he join us?" Liam disapproved, causing Eleanor to shoot a nasty glance at him. "Are you saying a chef is lowly, Liam? Might I remind you he made everything that's on this table? Also, Iron is my master now. I won't let you disrespect him!"

The princess was rather intimidating when she pulled a stern look and behaved like a true monarch.

At that, Liam quirked his lips and snorted disdainfully, saying no more. It then dawned on Veronica that Liam had zero say in front of Dominik and Eleanor.

"Master Iron, come. Sit next to me." With that, Eleanor patted Mateo's shoulder. "Do you mind scooching over so Master Iron can sit here?"

Dominik sat on Eleanor's left, Mateo sat on her right, and Veronica sat right across from her.