

Illusions 651

Chapter 651

"Has he left yet?"

Three hours after undergoing gastric surgery, Remington Dashiell sat up in his hospital bed, looking up from his paperwork to ask in a deep voice.

Ray glanced at his wristwatch; it was nearing 10 p.m. But he was pretty sure that the two men who had visited Lizetta's room were still hanging around.

"Mr. Dashiell, you've asked that three times now. The doctor advised you to rest. You did just have surgery, after all..."

Ray wanted to add that seeing as he was currently a patient, perhaps he could act a bit more normal and not as if he was on some hospital stakeout. But meeting Remington's gaze, he found himself unable to voice those thoughts.

Changing tack, he stood up, saying, "Shall I go check by Mrs. Dashiell's room again?"

Remington's voice was cold as ice: "Visiting hours ended at 8 p.m

"That's true, but Dr. White has privileges here, being staff and all. And as for Mr. Madden, he did leave quickly after settling Mrs. Bernice Madden in. But he's been coming back every hour on the hour, bringing snacks for her. Perhaps it's because eating right before bed isn't ideal, so he stays to chat for a while..."

A shadow crossed Remington's face. "Hospital visiting hours are there so patients can rest. Should privileges allow someone to disregard these rules and disturb patients?"

His anger flared, and Ray thought it was impressive Mr. Dashiell had managed to hold it in for two hours already. It was almost 10 p.m., surely Mr. Madden and Dr. White couldn't be planning to stay the night? Ray hurriedly stood, "Of course not! I understand what you mean, Mr. Dashiell!"

Perhaps Lizetta had been sleeping too much these past few days. Upon waking, though weak and drained, her spirits were high.

After Jerome took Mrs. Madden home, he brought back a nutritious meal for Lizetta. Following Dr. White's advice for small, frequent meals, Lizetta ate in two sittings over two hours.

Jerome insisted on waiting until she

was done, to take the insulated food container back, making it easier to bring meals the next day. He said it was a task Mrs. Madden had strictly assigned to him. Lizetta didn't feel it was right to ask him to leave, but with Jerome sticking around, Dr. White promptly declared he was on night duty at the hospital. As it wasn't busy, he preferred the company to the quiet of his office

and decided to stay as well.

When a nurse knocked and entered, Lizetta had just finished eating, and Yolanda was cleaning up.

"What's up?" Yolanda asked quietly as the nurse entered. The presence of Hogan and Jerome caught her attention, and both men turned to look.

Dr. White was a known face around

was a

the hospital, a celebrity doctor whose looks and skills had garnered him countless admirers. The other man, said to be the CEO of a major corporation, also had an imposing presence that demanded attention.

The nurse, feeling the weight of their gaze, blushed slightly but managed to say, "Dr. Wilson's orders were for Ms. Gardenia to ensure she gets enough rest..."

In truth, the nurse's station had received a complaint from a family on the same floor, claiming that the noise from this room was disturbing their rest. Not daring to outright ask them to leave, she hinted at it instead.

Lizetta, propped up in bed, sighed in

relief upon hearing the nurse. She turned to Jerome and Hogan, "Thank you both for looking after me, but Yoli's here, and I'll be fine. You should both head back and rest.

And please, don't trouble yourselves to come back tomorrow

Catching Yolanda's eye, who nodded in understanding, she swiftly packed the cleaned dishes into a bag and handed it to Jerome.

"Mr. Madden, here's your insulated container. I can handle Liz's meals for now; I'm actually free these days."

Chapter 652

Jerome greeted Ms. Yolanda with a warm smile as he took the bag from her hands, nodding in appreciation.

"Thanks for your effort, Ms. Yolanda."

His words seemed to suggest an intimacy with Lizetta that wasn't there before. Yolanda internally rolled her eyes but responded with a smile and a nod, choosing not to add anything more.

Then, Jerome turned to Lizetta, "Make sure you get some rest."

"Will do."

Hogan chimed in, "Liz, I'll swing by tomorrow when I'm free to check on you."

Without waiting for Lizetta to respond, he looked over at Jerome and gestured with his hand.

"Mr. Madden, let me walk you out. I know my way around the hospital pretty well. I haven't taken any days off recently, so I've been here every day. I'm quite familiar with the maternity ward, so you can rest assured that Liz is in good hands. As her senior colleague, I'll make sure she's taken care of. You're a busy man, Mr. Madden; no need to come by all the time..."

The two men then left the room together.

Yolanda, having escorted them to the door and closed it, returned to Lizetta's bedside and couldn't help but chuckle at the visibly relaxed demeanor of her friend.

"Seems like juggling admirers isn't as fun as it sounds, huh?"

Lizetta let out an exasperated laugh and reached out to Yolanda.

"And you're laughing! I was giving you signals to help me out, and you just ignored them. Come on, I need to use the restroom!"

Seeing the urgency in her friend's request, Yolanda moved to assist her, letting out another chuckle.

"Maybe it was a miscalculation? Honestly, I think you'd be better off going back with Mrs. Bernice Madden. At least then you wouldn't be caught in a crossfire. Between Mr. Madden and Dr. White, I still think Mr. Madden is a better match."

The Maddens clearly favored Lizetta, and Jerome wasn't really the heir to the Madden estate, so the likelihood of facing a terrible mother-in-lawdike Hanna seemed slim. Moving to Tranquil Meadows and leaving behind the heartache of Zion City might not be such a bad idea.

Hogan's situation was different. The White family might not be as prestigious as the Dashiell family, but they were still well-off.

When the White family approached

the Dashiell family for a marriage

proposal, Hogan was

wheelchair-bound. Helen White didn't even bother to consult Lizetta before showing up, leaving no room for rejection. Perhaps Helen thought Lizetta marrying Hogan, even in his condition, was a step up. Now that Hogan has recovered, who knows what Helen is thinking.

If Lizetta did marry into that family, she might end up dealing with another Hanna.

Lizetta waved her hand dismissively, her smile tinged with bitterness. She was still healing from her wounds, far from ready to entertain such thoughts. Thankfully, the hospital's strict policies and the reminders from the nurses kept her from being overwhelmed.

Unknown to her, in the neighboring room, Ray let out a sigh of relief as he heard footsteps fade away.

"Mr. Remington Dashiell, they've left."

"I have ears," Remington replied curtly, placing the documents he had been holding all night on the table before lying down to rest.

Ray, internally rolling his eyes at the repeated inquiries, was interrupted by a notification on his phone.

Glancing down, he saw a video sent by one of his subordinates. Opening it, he was immediately greeted by the familiar screams of Stella. The video showed a scene in a club where Stella was being held down by two servants. A heavy-set woman, dressed lavishly, was cursing and stomping on Stella.

Ray looked up after a brief glance and said, "Mr. Remington Dashiell, we've received a response from Ms. West's side. Would you like to personally review the outcome?"

Remington, already lying down, didn't bother to look at the phone, showing no interest as he coldly responded.

"The club isn't far from Dashiell Hospital. She'll likely seek treatment nearby. Order that Dashiell Hospital will no longer accept the Wests for treatment."

Chapter 653

At the West family mansion.

Stella was carried into the house by two of the staff, her face bearing the clear marks of two slaps, with the extent of her injuries elsewhere yet unknown. The staff gently laid her on the living room couch, and Stella immediately felt a sharp pain in her lower back and abdomen.

"Ah! You useless fools, you're pressing on my injuries!" Recovering from the jolt of pain, Stella shrieked and pushed the staff away. The staff members, flustered, hurriedly said, "Miss, is it your back that's badly hurt? Quick, let's have Miss lie on her stomach."

Saying this, they, along with two other staff members, helped Stella turn over. This resulted in Stella screaming again, her face beaded with cold sweat from the pain. As the staff members fumbled to help her up, Stella nearly cried out, "Get away from me! Don't touch me!"

While the staff members stood around, uncertain of what to do, Martin, who had been asleep, was woken up by the noise and came downstairs. "What's all this racket?"

"Dad, I... I got beaten up. Dad, you have to find out who did this, we can't let her get away! I want her to kneel before me and pay back a hundred, no, a thousand times!"

"Someone call the doctor, now!" Martin barked at the staff, who hurriedly went to make the call. Only then did Martin turn to Stella, frowning. "Enough with the noise, what exactly happened?!"

Stella, clutching her abdomen and

whimpering in pain, tears streaming

down her face, finally managed to explain. She had heard that Lizetta had been taken away from the

Dashiell family estate earlier that evening and, feeling overjoyed, decided to treat herself to some spa time at the club. She wasn't getting any younger and, despite having suffered a lot in the past her skin still looked decent at a glance. But compared to the real heiresses and socialites, she was lacking. Not to mention, Lizetta had that radiant, flawless complexion. Stella had wanted to pamper herself, hoping that, one day, Remington would notice her beauty.

But just as she was falling asleep under the masseuse's hands, several women burst in. The leader was a hefty woman, weighing around 200 pounds, who stormed in, calling Stella a home-wrecker and a tramp, grabbed her by the hair, and yanked her off the massage table. She dragged Stella out of the spa, not giving her a chance to speak, and started beating her. By the time the club's security and Stella's driver managed to rescue her, the hefty woman and her group had already sped away in their car!

"Sobbing, Jeff took me to the Dashiell hospital, but they had just admitted a bunch of people with food poisoning and were too busy to see us. They wouldn't even let us in the door!"

Stella grew even angrier as she

recounted this, clenching her fists. "It must be because those doctors and nurses knew about Remington kicking us out of the hospital, they just wanted to kick us while we were down But Remington was just upset about losing his son; he wouldn't really hold a grudge! He definitely didn't know about tonight's incident with the nurses; even if he was mad, he wouldn't let them humiliate me like this!"

Once Remington cooled down, and she managed to win him over again, becoming the new Mrs. Dashiell, she swore she'd make those who had wronged her pay. They'd all be fired from the hospital if she had her way!

"Ah! It hurts!" Lost in her thoughts, Stella slammed her hand down on the couch, inadvertently aggravating her injuries, and screamed, her face contorted in agony.

Martin's gaze darkened. "Idiot! Did you ever stop to think why someone would attack you out of the blue?"

"How should I know? I've never even seen that fat woman before. She looks like a pig; what kind of man would she have that I would want to steal? I..."

Chapter 654

Tears streaming down her cheeks, Stella met her father Martin's mocking gaze and suddenly realized the gravity of the situation.

"Dad, are you saying that Remington had someone attack me tonight? To avenge that wench, Lizetta?"

The chilling thought made Stella shiver.

She shook her head, refusing to believe it. "No, Remington couldn't possibly be so cruel..."

Yet, Stella couldn't ignore the fact that she had been kicked repeatedly in the abdomen. And that was exactly where she had targeted Lizetta during their fight, focusing her attacks on Lizetta's abdomen and back, knowing she had just given birth.

It was eerily similar to how that hefty woman had attacked her tonight. And Remington had walked in on her assaulting Lizetta that day.

Suddenly, Stella's injuries seemed to hurt even more.

"Sir, the police are here."

Stella had been attacked at the beauty salon and had immediately called the police.

Her face lit up with hope. "They must have caught the culprit!"

It couldn't have been Remington! Maybe it was someone else, or perhaps that hefty woman had simply mistaken her for someone else.

But when the police entered, they informed Stella that the salon's surveillance was down, and it would take time to identify the assailant. The hefty woman had used a customer's card to enter the salon, a card belonging to Tracy, who claimed she had lost it two days before.

In short, the perpetrator had vanished without a trace, and though the police would continue to search, Stella sensed it was a pretext. With so many cases to handle, the likelihood of finding the assailant if not tonight was slim.

After the police left, Stella's tears fell even harder, clutching at Martin's sleeve.

"Dad, you have to get the West family on this. How could the salon's surveillance just happen to be down? I..."

Martin cut her off, his voice heavy.

"No point in looking. It won't help."

Clearly, if Remington was behind it, finding the person would be impossible; they could be out of Zion City by now.

Stella choked up. "So I just take a beating for nothing?"

Breathing was painful, and she feared her ribs were broken.

Martin's face was grim. "Lay low for a while."

Stella clenched her fists, her eyes burning with resentment and humiliation.

That night, the West family household was filled with Stella's sobbing and temper tantrums.

Hospital.

The next morning, Yolanda burst out of the bathroom, phone in hand, her face alight with excitement.

"Liz, have

this video; it's so satisfying, you could devour bowls of chili in one go!

Yolanda's smile faded slightly as gaze

fixed on Lizetta, who was on the bed, instinctive

gazing at her abdomen.

Lizetta looked out the window,

her delicate face serene yet

melancholic. Since waking up,

Lizetta had been weak but otherwise

normal, joking and laughing with

them making Yolanda almost forget that Remington mentioned Lizetta was suffering from postpartum depression.

Lizetta seemed a moment too slow to react, blinking at Yolanda before smiling softly.

"Yoli, what video were you talking about?"

Seeing her gentle, tender smile tugged at Yolanda's heart.

Chapter 655

Yolanda had stumbled upon a video circulating in the upscale Zion City socialite circles showing Stella being roughed up, and initially thought sharing it with Lizetta might cheer her up. But now, she felt keeping anything related to Remington and his circle away from Lizetta was perhaps the kindest act.

As Yolanda looked down to close the paused video, her fingers slipped, and the video blared to life.

"Ah! Help, get off... It wasn't me!"

Stella's screams immediately filled the air.

Yolanda could see the smile fade from Lizetta's face.

Regretting her lack of clarity, she quickly dimmed her phone's screen, intending to pocket it, but Lizetta had already raised her hand.

"I want to see."

With no choice, Yolanda walked over.

The video, filmed by an unknown bystander, only captured the back of the hefty woman assaulting Stella, but Stella, pinned and kicked on the ground, was visible in clear detail.

Lizetta watched intently, while Yolanda cautiously observed her, worried that the sight of Stella in distress might trigger unpleasant memories for Lizetta.

However, Lizetta remained calm throughout, her gaze as if watching an inconsequential clip.

Once the video ended, Yolanda tried to lighten the mood, "Really, it's nothing exciting. Her screams, so grating, you'd think it was a pig being slaughtered..." As Yolanda reached for her phone, Lizetta played the video again, looking up with a chuckle.

"Actually, it's quite satisfying, a real appetite booster."

Relieved, Yolanda said, "Well, in that case, let me get you some extra for breakfast. Don't let Ms. West's dramatic performance go to waste." Lizetta smiled lightly, nodding. Yolanda turned to serve up a hearty breakfast, while Lizetta's gaze lingered on the video, her mind racing.

She had noticed earlier; the places Stella was hit mirrored the bruises on her own body.

Now, seeing it again, she was even more convinced.

"Where did this video come from? Why was Stella beaten?"

Taking the soup bowl, Lizetta inquired.

Yolanda shrugged, "Remember the West family dinner I went to? I joined a socialite group there, and it popped up from that chat.

Who knows what caused it. The group's been buzzing, guessing maybe Stella did something

shameless, like seducing someone's husband. Not that she hasn't tried that before... Her vibe's too loud to miss, always flirting with married men..."

As Yolanda set up the hospital bed's table dishes and sweet beame she realized too late

buns

might have spoken out of turn again.

Head bowed in regret, she nearly bit her tongue.

"Don't bite!"

But Lizetta, seemingly reading her thoughts, leaned in and gently held her chin.

Yolanda looked up to find Lizetta setting down the phone, smiling.

"Yoli, I'm not that fragile. You don't have to be so cautious around me, really. Waking up yesterday, I realized how foolish I've been. I have so many true friends who care about me, dreams I haven't pursued, and t worth

so much life to live. It's not dwelling on the past for anyone! I believe Daisy would want her mom to be strong, and I will be!"

Yolanda's eyes teared up, and she hugged Lizetta tightly.

"I believe in you!"

Lizetta smiled, though the joy didn't quite reach her eyes.

That video, she knew, was someone venting on her behalf, returning the blows she suffered at the West family dinner with interest. And she was well aware of who knew her injuries well enough to do so.

Chapter 656

Here's the revised translation with cultural and contextual corrections to better suit an American audience:

But her heart didn't flutter in the slightest; she found it rather laughable.

It was too late.

Any attempt at making amends now meant nothing to her.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the hospital room door.

A nurse walked in, her arms filled with several flowers, wearing a broad smile.

"There's a new flower shop that just opened across the street. The owner is doing a promotion and sent over a bunch of free flowers to our ward this morning. Every room gets some. I've got a few for Ms. Gardenia as well."

"Thank you."

"That's a nice surprise. These flowers are quite beautiful."

Yolanda stepped forward to take the flowers as the nurse left. Turning to her roommate, she said,

"No wonder I saw a crowd around the nurses' station when I came back with breakfast. The place was buzzing with the scent of flowers. The owner sure is generous. Let me find a vase for these. You know, our room really could use a splash of color."

Saying this, Yolanda began rummaging through the cupboard for a vase.

Lizetta had been admitted to the hospital on short notice the night before, too late for anyone to think about bringing flowers.

Today, though, these flowers, albeit only five in number, were quite stunning and vibrant, bringing a touch of joy.

"They smell lovely. Let me wash the vase."

Yolanda indeed found a vase under the bedside table. Handing the flowers to Lizetta, she dashed off to the restroom.

Lizetta glanced down at the flowers in her hands, two yellow roses and three sunflowers.

Lacking fancy wrapping, they were, as Yolanda had said, fresh and beautiful. Every petal exuded vitality, brightening her mood. Lizetta smiled, gently stroking the petals, a hint of amusement in her eyes.

Next door.

"Mr. Remington Dashiell, the flowers have been delivered."

Ray entered as Remington was preparing to have his breakfast. If one looked closely, they would notice that the breakfast on his table was identical to the one next door at Lizetta's.

Yolanda had ordered a nutritional meal set from a reputable diner not far from the hospital known for its healthy meals.

But the meal delivered was actually switched by someone else for one that Remington had specially prepared, with cleaner, more nutritious, and tastier ingredients. "Did she notice anything?" Remington inquired.

"Not sure, I'll go check later. If the lady has put them up, it means she hasn't noticed. If the flowers are thrown out, then she did."

Ray replied with utmost honesty.

Remington, "....."

Maple Cottage.

The Maddens were also having breakfast at that time. Andrea was wearing a new dress she had bought while shopping yesterday, a light purple long dress that flattered her slim figure.

She had done her makeup early in the morning, her long curly hair cascading over her shoulders, making her look exceptionally delicate and tender.

She sat next to Nelson, coquettishly holding his hand.

"Yesterday, also bought gifts for grandma and grandpa. I used my brother's card, but the thought was all mine. After breakfast, let's go upstairs and I'll show you the surprise I've prepared."

Before Nelson could respond, Mrs. Bernice Madden frowned, "No, I need to go to the hospital to see Elsa!"

Andrea's smile froze, visibly upset.

Jerome, sitting across from Andrea, noticed the change in her demeanor. He tapped on his phone that lay beside him.

He had sent off a DNA sample for expedited testing the night before.

Judging by the time, the electronic report should be arriving soon.

Chapter 657

Ever since Andrea arrived in Zion City, her mood had plummeted. She had always been the cherished princess of the Madden family, doted on and indulged by everyone around her. Whether it was within the confines of the Madden household or throughout Tranquil Meadows, Andrea was accustomed to being the center of attention, the beloved heir to the Madden family fortune. But her arrival in Zion City brought an unexpected competitor: Lizetta.

Mrs. Bernice Madden, confusing Lizetta for Andrea, lavished her with attention, making even Nelson show special care towards Lizetta.

Jerome, too, was blatantly favoring Lizetta in a way that was hard to ignore.

All of this filled Andrea with a burning jealousy. She had been out shopping last night, her spirits high from her purchases. Yet, upon returning home, she found Mrs. Bernice Madden fussing over a meal prepared for Lizetta. Andrea mistakenly thought it was a late-night snack prepared for her due to her tardy return.

Andrea asked the servants to serve her some soup, only to be stopped by Mrs. Bernice Madden, who insisted everything was made for Lizetta and not for her.

The irony! Ms. Madden herself, denied a spoonful of soup in her own home!

Later, Jerome went out to deliver the meal to the hospital, returning well past 10 p.m. And now, Mrs. Bernice Madden was all set to visit the hospital again first thing in the morning, with Nelson and Jerome likely to follow.

The entire family seemed to revolve around Lizetta, a woman plagued by misfortune, which Andrea found utterly bewildering.

Losing her appetite, Andrea pressed her lips together, set down her utensils, and announced, "I've lost my appetite. I can't eat this."

As she stood up, Nelson, ever the peacemaker, gently pulled her back down, saying, "Now, now, you can't skip breakfast. Our Andrea is Ms Madden, the eternal princess of our family. How can you let such trivial matters shake your confidence, even feeling jealous of an outsider?"

Hearing Nelson refer to Lizetta as an outsider made Andrea feel slightly better, though she pouted, "But grandma has been so kind to this outsider lately, barely noticing me. I feel I like the outsider now. just want to be close to grandma again, but she's breaking my heart.

Her eyes welled up as she clung to Nelson's arm, her voice laden with grievance as she looked towards Mrs. Bernice Madden with longing.

Nelson, feeling sympathetic towards his only granddaughter, comforted her, reminding, "Have you forgotten how grandma spoils you the most? Who else has she given her precious collection to? Isn't the ruby necklace you're wearing one of grandma's special gifts to you?"

Grandma misses your mom a lot. Our Andrea is the most understanding and kind-hearted, can't you empathize with grandma?"

Mrs. Bernice Madden, a known collector of fine jewelry and gems, had always lavished Andrea with expensive gifts on every occasion. Over the years, these gifts had amounted to a fortune, the ruby necklace around Andrea's neck being one of such treasures.

Feeling slightly embarrassed, Andrea nuzzled against Nelson, saying, "Okay, okay, grandpa, stop teasing me."

She then walked over to Mrs. Bernice Madden, wrapping her arms around her and planting a kiss on her cheek.

Mrs. Bernice Madden, less than thrilled, swiftly rubbed her face after Andrea pulled away.

As Andrea resumed her meal, she

couldn't help but mention, "Ms.

Gardenia seems to be everywhere, helping me at the bar, assisting grandma at the airport, and even dancing in my brother's troupe. I

wonder if Zion City is just too small, onif she's somehow fated to be

intertwined with our family..."

Mrs. Bernice Madden, though confused, was well aware of the Madden family's standing in Tranquil Meadows. It wasn't uncommon for those seeking favor to attempt to win over the easily persuaded matriarch as a way to get closer to the Madden dynasty.

Chapter 658

Andrea's words hinted that Lizetta was no different from those people; the only difference was that Mrs. Bernice Madden had been thoroughly duped this time.

Jerome paused his dining and glanced up at Andrea upon hearing this. He had asked Horace to gather some old photos of Hans and Daisylin as a young couple just yesterday. But perhaps because Andrea had been pampered by the Madden family, with her air of arrogance and her face always perfectly made up, Jerome couldn't see any resemblance between her and the Gardners, a couple who seemed to carry the aura of the marketplace on their faces.

"Bro, why do you keep staring at me? Did I say something wrong?" Andrea raised her voice suddenly.

Jerome's gaze softened, and at the same moment, his phone rang. He glanced down to swipe his phone open, tapped into WhatsApp, and started scrolling. The next second, his finger abruptly stopped moving across the screen, his emotions fluctuating rapidly. Suddenly, he looked up at Andrea again, his lips curving slightly as he said, "You didn't say anything wrong. She indeed has a deep connection with the Madden family."

Andrea felt a chill in her heart, sensing a deeper meaning in Jerome's words that made her uneasy. She gripped her spoon tightly, wanting to delve deeper, but Jerome had already shifted his gaze towards Nelson and said, "Grandpa, there are some details about our collaboration with the Wind Group that I'd like to discuss with you."

"Let's talk in the study after breakfast," Nelson nodded in response.

After breakfast, Jerome stood up, assisting the old man upstairs. Mrs. Bernice Madden was still keen on visiting the hospital, despite the servants' attempts to dissuade her. Andrea approached, "Grandma, shall I accompany you to the hospital to see Elsa?"

Mrs. Bernice Madden's eyes lit up, nodding repeatedly. Andrea then told the servant, "I'll be out with grandma. Just let grandpa know if he asks." The servant agreed, and Andrea helped Mrs. Bernice Madden out the door.

Upstairs in the study, Nelson sat down and asked, "I thought the collaboration was going smoothly. What's the issue?"

Jerome didn't rush to answer.

Instead, he poured Nelson a glass of water and sent a WhatsApp message to their private doctor,

asking him to be ready to connect

over

at any moment. After receiving reply, Jerome finally turned to Nelson and said, "Grandpa..."

He hesitated, unsure of how to start, and debated whether he should just show Nelson the results of the paternity test. Considering Nelson's fondness for Andrea and fearing the impact might be too great for him knowing that despite his robust appearance, Nelson suffered from high blood pressure, and chronic headaches. This visit to Zion City was also for treating his

headache.

"It's not about the business, is it? You're hesitating so much... Let me guess, does it have to do with Liz?" Seeing Jerome's expression, Nelson took a sip of water and chuckled.

Jerome was momentarily moved,

thinking Nelson had sensed

something, only to hear him

continue "Have you taken a liking to

Liz, afraid I wouldn't agree? Don't

worry, even though I hoped you'd

marry into the family, if you're not interested in Andrea, I..."

Before Nelson could finish, Jerome cut in, "Grandpa, about marrying into the family, I'm willing now."

Nelson was taken aback. Jerome and Andrea had grown up under his watch. Andrea used to chase after Jerome, who nearly left the Madden family to avoid her. Why the sudden change of heart?

Especially since Jerome had clearly shown affection for Lizetta, it made no sense that he'd suddenly be willing to marry Andrea after having a love interest... Something didn't add up, and a glimmer of realization flashed through Nelson's mind.

Chapter 659

Nelson's hand trembled slightly as he held the glass, suddenly turning to look at Jerome with wide eyes.

"Grandpa, it seems you've thought of it too," Jerome said, leaning in to take the glass from the old man's hand and wiping the droplets of water off his backhand with a tissue.

Nelson, in disbelief, grasped Jerome's hand with force. "Could it be... Liz is the one? How is that possible?"

His voice quivered, but his mind flashed back to the first time he saw Lizetta, the shock he felt at her familiar appearance. And the inexplicable warmth he felt every time he saw that child. He also remembered the paternity test he had conducted for Andrea eight years ago.

"Grandpa, I secretly redid the paternity test. Here's the electronic version of the final result; you can take a look. The paper version will be delivered by Horace later."

Seeing Nelson had guessed, Jerome opened the paternity test report he had just received on his phone and pushed it towards him. "This one is the grandmother's and Liz's paternity test, confirming her as our granddaughter. And this one is the comparison between the grandmother and Nianwen's DNA, showing they are not related. I also sent a sample of your hair to be tested with Liz; though it's a bit more complex, the results will be out later."

As Jerome spoke, Nelson, trembling, put on his glasses and reviewed both reports carefully. His chest heaved, "So... Liz is Elsa's daughter, my granddaughter!" Nelson's voice was hoarse, seeking confirmation again from Jerome. Even after a lifetime of experiences, this truth still left him utterly disoriented.

Jerome nodded, and Nelson suddenly stood up, accidentally knocking over the glass of water. "Grandpa! Please, try to calm down," Jerome rushed to support Nelson.

Nelson felt dizzy, sitting down again with Jerome's help, but still insisted, "We must... go to the hospital! I need to see Liz immediately, no, my granddaughter, my own granddaughter!"

Nelson said, clenching his fist and

pounding the table. Thinking of Lizetta's experiences, knowing that the only Blood of the Madden family had been suffering outside, he was overwhelmed with guilt and

Love

self-reproach. His vision darkened, and his breathing quickened.

Jerome hurriedly soothed him, "Grandpa, we didn't know before, but now that we've found her, there's plenty of time ahead. You must take care of yourself so you can welcome your granddaughter home and uncover the truth to seek justice for her."

After giving Nelson his usual blood pressure medication, he gradually calmed down, waving off the visibly concerned Jerome. "I'm fine, you're right. I need to stay strong for Liz!"

Nelson thought of his wife, who, despite her confusion, recognized her granddaughter at first sight, longing for her. Yet he had been oblivious to his granddaughter's presence all this time, blaming himself for being the truly senile one, feeling he had let her down.

He closed his eyes, instructing in a hoarse voice, "We must keep this under wraps for now. How the child was switched, whether the problem lies within the Madden family, what happened with the fake paternity test years ago, we need to investigate thoroughly! And, find me a reliable psychologist. I need to know if it's right to tell Liz about this..."

Chapter 660

Jerome nodded in agreement, and after a brief discussion, the two made their way downstairs.

Nelson, not seeing the elderly lady around, immediately inquired with the housekeeper, only to learn that Andrea had taken Mrs. Bernice Madden to the hospital to visit Lizetta.

Nelson's brows furrowed instinctively. "Jerome, quick, let's head to the hospital too."

At the hospital room.

It came as a surprise to Lizetta when Andrea suddenly showed up with Mrs. Bernice Madden.

Mrs. Madden made herself comfortable beside Lizetta's bed and started chatting warmly with her, while a hint of chill flashed in Andrea's eyes.

Stepping forward, Andrea suggested, "Grandma, you're so concerned about Liz's health. How about I have Elva accompany you to consult Liz's doctor about when she can be discharged? Would that be alright?"

Mrs. Madden, eager to have Lizetta discharged and brought home, immediately nodded in agreement.

Andrea gave a knowing look to the maid, Elva, who then stepped forward to assist Mrs. Madden out of the room.

Lizetta didn't object but instead smiled at Andrea.

"Ms. Madden, you must have something to say, right?"

It was clear Andrea wasn't here just for a visit. Having sent Mrs. Madden away, Lizetta knew Andrea's intentions weren't friendly.

Without beating around the bush, Andrea said with a light smile, "Ms. Gardenia, I appreciate your straightforwardness, and I'll do the same. I hope Ms. Gardenia can understand boundaries and keep a distance from my family.

You may not be aware, but I came to

Zion City with my grandparents to seek medical treatment for my grandfather. That night, after rescuing you, my grandfather suffered from headaches and nausea for an entire day, and Grandma was so shaken she couldn't sleep well. They're old and went through all this trouble for someone who is neither family nor close friend. Do you think that's appropriate, Ms. Gardenia?"

Andrea's tone was confrontational, an undisguised accusation.

After finishing her piece, Andrea stepped forward, took a bank card out of her purse, and placed it on the blanket in front of Lizetta.

"There's \$50,000 in this card. Please don't get me wrong, Ms. Gardenia, this is a token of my gratitude for the help you provided at the bar that night. You could use it to hire a caregiver..."

Lizetta interrupted her with a smile, grabbing the card, "Ms. Madden's life is only worth a mere \$50,000? That's rather cheap."

Andrea was taken aback, clearly not expecting Lizetta to be so blunt.

With a sour expression, Andrea

retorted, "You look down on

\$50,000? No wonder everyone in Zion City says you're a greedy ghost who, despite being taken in by the Dashiell family, bites the hand that feeds you. Now that my

grandparents aren't here, you don't even bother to pretend anymore, do you?"

Lizetta, unprovoked, coldly tossed the card back.

"Look who's talking. Aren't you revealing your true colors too? Why else would you send Grandma Bernice away?"

The card hit Andrea and fell to the ground, her eyes nearly blazing with anger.

"Lizetta, don't push your luck. People who don't know their place end up disliked."

Lizetta simply smiled lightly, "Grandpa Nelson and Grandma Bernice are elders I respect and feel inexplicably close to. I'm grateful to them.

They are your elders, and I believe

they have the right to choose who

they wish to be close to. Do they know about this discussion? Do they agree? It's strange, Andrea, why do you seem to be so wary of me?"