

Back to the Past: Breaking the Love Spell

Chapter 231

“What do you mean?”

Wanda was a bit lost at what Lethan meant.

Lethan was about to explain when the conference room door suddenly swung open. Out stepped his old

high school friend, Yvonne Holder.

She quickly apologized, “Sorry to keep you waiting!”

Lethan smiled and said, “No problem. Let me explain. This is my niece. She urgently needs a personal

capital verification report, and I need one, too.”

Earlier at the Secretary of State’s office, he had registered a limited liability company called Holly

Fisheries.

Yvonne nodded and gestured. “Please, follow me to my office.”

Lethan and Yvonne went to her office to talk.

Meanwhile, Wanda was sitting nearby, texting Carlisle on her phone.

Wanda: “Carlisle, why did you take the day off today?

”

Carlisle: “Oh, I’m actually busy registering a company.”

Carlisle was having lunch with a few suppliers when he received Wanda’s message on MSN Messenger

and replied immediately.

Wanda: “Wow, what a coincidence! I’m going through the same process. How’s it going for you?”

Carlisle: “All good on my end. I’m just waiting to get the business license.”
confusion with a

Wanda expressed her puzzled emoji.

Wanda: “How did you manage to get it done so quickly? Doesn’t obtaining the capital verification report
take time?”

Lethan had previously mentioned that acquiring the capital verification report was quite cumbersome and typically required several days unless one had connections.

Carlisle replied with a toothy grin emoji.

Carlisle: “I have some connections at the bank.”

Wanda let out a frustrated sigh/

Wanda: “Ugh, I should’ve tagged along to the bank with you!”

Carlisle: “With your family’s connections, getting the capital verification report should be quick, right?”

Wanda: “Yeah, but the accounting department is tied up in a meeting, **so** it’s taking a bit longer.

Wanda: “So... what are you doing this afternoon?”

Carlisle’s heart raced when he saw her message.

Carlisle: “I’m pretty free this afternoon.”

Wanda: “Oh.”

Carlisle: "What's with **the** 'oh'?"

Wanda silently called him a big dummy and typed back, "Guess."

Carlisle chuckled softly and replied, "How about we go for a walk this afternoon?"

Wanda had been hoping he'd suggest something like that and eagerly responded.

Wanda: "Yes, yes, yes! That sounds perfect!"

Lethan and Wanda finally got their hands on the capital verification reports at 2:00 pm.

They headed over to the Secretary of State's office to wrap up the paperwork.

Wanda immediately messaged Carlisle.

Carlisle quickly replied, "I'm across the street from the Secretary of State's office, about two blocks down at the convenience store. I'll come meet you."

Stepping out of the Secretary of State's office, Wanda blushed as she asked Lethan, "Uncle Lethan, do you really think you can handle things with Aunt Shania?"

Lethan reassured her confidently, "Don't worry. Shania and I are on good terms."

Reflecting on it, he realized he owed Carlisle gratitude. Without Carlisle's Riverwatch Hotel, his

relationship with Shania would still be strained.

"Well... I'm gonna go find Carlisle then..."

With that, Wanda hurried off in the direction Carlisle had mentioned.

Carlisle and Francis sat outside a nearby convenience store, sipping drinks and snacking. As soon as Carlisle sent Wanda the message, he got up to meet her while Francis went to get the car.

A little while later, Carlisle and Wanda met in front of a shop called “Blossom Bridal”. Besides wedding dresses, the shop also offered photography and printing **services**.

Wanda was wearing a white silk dress that hugged her waist and flowed down to her calves. Her hair was styled in twin braids cascading over her shoulders.

Blushing, she looked down and softly asked, “So, where are we headed?” Carlisle took a step closer and wordlessly pulled her into a hug.

Wanda’s eyes widened in surprise.

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Wanda couldn’t believe they were really hugging on the street in broad daylight.

She couldn’t ignore the curious stares from passersby. Some cars even honked loudly.

Terrified, she squeezed her eyes shut, hoping that avoiding eye contact would make the situation less awkward.

Carlisle held Wanda close.

His tone was gentle as he murmured, “Wanda, I’ve missed you so much.”

Despite seeing each other daily during military training, they **had** to maintain a distance. It felt even more

difficult than not seeing each other at all.

Wanda reached out to encircle Carlisle's waist with her arms.

Her voice was choked with emotion as she whispered, 'I missed you too.'

She felt Carlisle's strong heartbeat and suddenly giggled.

"Why is your heart racing?"

Carlisle paused, then smiled. "Because my heart only races for **you**."

Looking up at Carlisle, Wanda asked, "Is that your way of confessing your feelings?"

Carlisle shook his head. "Not exactly..."

Frowning and pouting, Wanda said, "Then I don't want to talk to you anymore!"

She pushed Carlisle away and turned around.

Wanda couldn't help but find Carlisle clueless in love.

Carlisle approached Wanda with a playful grin. "Are you secretly hoping I'll confess to you?"

"No, I'm not!" Wanda retorted, turning away again.

Wanda's observation of Carlisle as the archetypal straight guy was evident.

"Why do I even need to say it myself?" she pondered. "As a girl, shouldn't I maintain some dignity?"

At that moment, a sophisticated-looking man, Leon, emerged from the bridal shop. There was a friendly grin on his face as he approached.

"Are you **guys** here for wedding photos?"

A glint of interest sparkled in Wanda's eyes, but she shook her head.

"We're still students..."

With a warm smile, Leon suggested, “You two are the first young couple I’ve seen since I opened. How

about this? Let’s make a deal.”

Intrigued, Carlisle asked, “What kind of deal?”

With a genial grin, Leon offered, “If you both are still together after college, I’ll gift you a set of **wedding** attire I’ve personally crafted, and I’ll capture your wedding moments for free!”

As Carlisle glanced at the elegant wedding dresses on display, a hint of surprise flashed in his eyes.

“Did you design all of these dresses?”

The wedding dresses showcased were unparalleled in beauty, boasting styles that far exceeded the domestic fashion design standards of the time. Carlisle found himself particularly intrigued by several sets of the slim-fit suits.

Leon first scrutinized Carlisle’s attire before turning his attention to Wanda’s dress.

With a slight furrow of his brows, Carlisle took Wanda’s hand and suggested, “Let’s go…”

Wanda also noticed Leon staring at her waist. She nodded and followed Carlisle as they prepared to leave.

Leon quickly stepped in front of them, his tone gentle and sincere.

“Please don’t misunderstand. I didn’t mean to offend your girlfriend!”

Carlisle’s eyes narrowed. “Then what did you mean?”

Carlisle stared at Leon with an intensity that was slightly unsettling.

Despite his casual clothes, it was clear he wasn’t just an ordinary college student.

Leon also found his girlfriend to be even more remarkable. Her dress was a unique design by Leon's

mentor overseas, crafted for a lesser-known brand. The brand partnered with premium fabric suppliers to honor his mentor's reputation.

This particular dress had only been on the market for three months, but its price had already shot up from

three hundred dollars to over two thousand dollars.

Leon's face softened with an apologetic smile.

"The dress your girlfriend is wearing was designed by my mentor. That's why I took a closer look. I **hope** you understand and forgive my curiosity."

"Is this dress expensive?" Wanda asked.

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As Wanda glanced down at her dress, memories flooded in.

It was a memento from her dad's trip abroad, supposedly bought from a street vendor.

She had mild social anxiety, so she preferred keeping a low profile at school.

She even rarely used the phone her brother had bought for her.

Leon appeared puzzled as he asked, "You don't know the price?"

Wanda shook her head and replied, "This dress was a gift from my dad when he returned from overseas.

"He mentioned he bought it from a street vendor. But just by looking at it, I can tell this dress must be worth quite a lot of money."

Upon hearing this, Leon smiled warmly and remarked, "It seems like you usually keep a low profile, which is why your dad was concerned about adding any pressure on you."

Eager for an answer, Wanda persisted, "So, how much is this dress really worth?"

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However, Leon hesitated and said, "Since your dad kept it from you, I won't disclose the price. Just remember, your dad cares for you deeply."

Wanda's expression soured slightly as she pursed her lips in displeasure.

Carlisle couldn't help but ask, "You seem to be a fashion designer, so why open a bridal shop?"

Wanda's dress was strikingly modern. It seemed like something that would stay fashionable for years to come.

Based on Leon's earlier remarks, Carlisle estimated that her dress was worth a hefty sum, likely in the thousands.

A designer capable of producing such a masterpiece couldn't be just anyone. Their students would be

eligible to work at big fashion companies

But in that day's tough economy, how many people would actually shell out thousands for a wedding

dress?

"My shop just opened. If you two don't mind, would you like to come in **and** have a look?" Leon suggested.

He was eager to welcome these potential customers warmly.

Carlisle turned to Wanda, seeking her opinion

Wanda responded softly, "I'll go with whatever you decide."

"Then let's go inside and have a look around."

It seemed like the perfect opportunity since it was still early, and Carlisle was also interested in getting to know this designer, perhaps even considering having a suit tailored by him in the future.

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The two followed Leon into the shop.

Near the window, they spotted a small round table with chairs arranged around it.

"Please, have a seat. Let me go grab some water for you," Leon said with a slightly awkward smile as he fetched two bottles of water from the fridge.

"We've just opened, so there's not **much** to offer you. I hope you don't mind."

"No problem," Carlisle reassured him.

Carlisle took the two bottles of water and handed one to Wanda.

Leon introduced himself, "I'm Leon Quinlan. I graduated from Clindon College of Fashion, where I

majored in fashion design and photography.

"After that, I got a job at Laneir as an assistant chief designer, thanks to my mentor's recommendation.

But I decided to quit and return to the country for personal reasons."

Carlisle noticed a hint of resentment in Leon's eyes as he spoke. He guessed that Leon might have had some issues with the higher-ups at the company.

"I'm Carlisle Zahn, a freshman studying e-commerce at Riverland University. This is my girlfriend, Wanda Thompson, who's also in the same department, Carlisle said, feeling it was only polite to introduce himself and Wanda since Leon had done so.

"You're the first and second people I've met since returning to the country. It's nice to meet you!"

Leon smiled and extended his hand for a handshake.

Carlisle shook his hand and replied "Nice to meet y
at you too."

After all, connecting with a senior designer could be beneficial.

Considering Wanda was Carlisle's girlfriend, Leon didn't offer his hand to her but politely nodded in her
direction.

With her big, puppy-dog eyes, Wanda asked, "Running a bridal shop like this must be tough to turn a profit. Have you thought about joining a clothing company instead?"

Carlisle scratched his nose and then unscrewed the cap of his mineral water bottle to take a sip.

He understood Wanda's implication. She was subtly suggesting connecting Leon with Lethan's company.

While it was a good idea, the chances of it happening were slim.

After all, Leon had studied at the prestigious Clindon College of Fashion and had experience as an assistant chief designer for an international brand.

Islo Clothing might have been a major presence in the domestic fashion scene, ranking in the top 20, but breaking into the international market was still a distant possibility.

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Leon shook his head, smiling gently.

“I’m not really into all the scheming and plotting that goes with joining a fashion company. I think a simple life is what I want.”

“But you’re still young. Your mentor would be disappointed to see you settle like this!”

Wanda’s voice held a mix of admiration and concern as she persisted.

She believed Leon’s talent could propel Islo Clothing to international **fame**. Despite Wanda’s earnest pleas, Leon’s smile remained unwavering.

“My mentor supports my decision.”

Visibly deflated, Wanda sighed.

“Alright then. I’ll respect your choice as well.”

Carlisle, lounging in his chair, chimed in, “You’re going **to** stick to what you said earlier, right?”

Leon nodded.

“Of course. I always keep my word.”

A mischievous smile played at the corner of Carlisle’s mouth.

“Then you’re definitely going to lose because we’re never breaking up!”

A blush tinged Wanda's cheeks. Her heart swelled with a newfound sweetness.

Although Carlisle hadn't explicitly confessed, his words clearly implied that he embraced her as his girlfriend.

Leon's grin broadened.

"I hope I'll be taking your wedding photos in four years!"

His words sparked a vision in both Carlisle and Wanda. Their eyes were drawn to the bridal gowns in the shop window.

Wanda's eyes lit up, already envisioning herself in a wedding dress.

"Hold on a moment, you guys. I'll grab you a gift!"

Leon picked up a DSLR camera/from the counter and disappeared into the workroom, closing the door

behind him.

"What kind of gift do you think it is? Wanda asked excitedly.

Carlisle shrugged.

"I have no idea..."

As Wanda admired the stunning photographs adorning the walls, she suddenly turned to Carlisle.

"Where should we go for a walk later?"

Carlisle was caught off guard and hesitated before asking, "Where would you like to go?"

His previous corporate life had left little room for romantic outings. Thus, he felt out of **his** depth in suggesting locations.

Chewing on her finger thoughtfully, Wanda's eyes danced with mischief before she suggested shyly, "How about... Yearning Island?"

"Yearning Island?"

Observing her **bashful** manner, Carlisle couldn't resist teasing, "Who are you yearning for?"

Wanda's cheeks deepened in color, and she playfully brandished her fist.

"Don't tempt me to hit you! You can believe it or not!"

"I believe you! I'm sorry!" Carlisle quickly capitulated with a sincere tone.

Smoothing her hair behind her ear, Wanda managed a small smile.

"

Seeing how well-behaved you are, I guess I'll just have to forgive you."

Almost immediately, Carlisle leaned in again.

He provoked her, "I dare to do it again!"

"You... you dare..."

Wanda stood, hands on hips, her posture defiant.

With a brazen glance, Carlisle commented, "Puff it up a bit more..."

"Pervert!" Wanda shrieked, covering herself.

The door to Leon's workroom creaked open, and both quickly composed themselves as if their playful exchange had never occurred.

Leon approached with a collection of photos and a broad grin.

"I took some photos of you two while shooting the wedding dresses!"

Carlisle accepted the photos. The photo on the top of the pile caught his eye immediately.

It captured him and Wanda gazing deeply into each other's eyes, resembling a poignant close-up from a romantic film.

It pictured a scene of the young couple **standing** entranced by one another on a bustling street.

In the photo, Wanda tilted her head slightly, meeting Carlisle's tender gaze as he looked down at her.

Their **eyes** locked, creating a bubble of intimacy that shut out the bustling street and passersby. The artfully blurred background emphasized how they existed solely for each other at that moment.

Wanda leaned closer, her eyes widening with awe.

"This photo is stunning!"

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Joy sparkled in Carlisle's eyes as he admired the photos.

Even Leon's candid shots held an artistic flair and showcased his keen eye for photography

The second photo showed Wanda and Carlisle in an embrace.

Wanda's arms were wrapped around Carlisle. Her body was nestled into his chest **as** she faced the bridal shop. A gentle smile played on her lips, clearly content in the moment.

Four photos were shot in total, but only two distinct scenes were captured.

Leon chuckled awkwardly,

"I hope you don't mind that I took these without asking..."

Wanda shook her head enthusiastically.

“Not at all. These are amazing!”

The photos were not only beautifully taken but also managed to capture tender moments between her and Carlisle.

She couldn't object to that.

Carlisle praised Leon, “Your photography skills are excellent. When Wanda and I visit Yearning Island later, we'd love to hire you to take more photos for us!”

Wanda looked at Carlisle. She was surprised and pleased. He had voiced her thoughts after seeing the photos on the wall precisely.

Leon hesitated slightly.

“Well, my rates are a bit on the higher side!”

Carlisle inquired, “How much?”

Leon held up his hand, splayed his fingers, and declared, “Five hundred dollars! Plus, you'd cover the travel expenses.

“That's quite a bit.”

Wanda frowned slightly, tugging at Carlisle's sleeve.

“Maybe we should just forget about it. Other photographers from photo studios only charge about two hundred bucks for a session!”

“We'll go with five hundred dollars!” Carlisle responded without hesitation.

He knew that even though modern cell phones were equipped with cameras, their 3000-pixel resolution often resulted in less-than-ideal image quality.

To him, spending five hundred dollars to capture their beautiful moments clearly was worth the investment.

Leon hadn't actually been keen to take on the **shoot**, so he had **quoted** a higher price, hoping to deter them.

Surprised by Carlisle's quick acceptance, he smiled reluctantly.

"Alright. Give me a moment to get ready."

He stood up to gather his equipment.

Wanda pouted, looking at Carlisle incredulously.

"His rates are really high. Are you crazy?"

Carlisle took her hand gently.

"We're creating beautiful memories, and their value transcends money."

Charmed by his perspective, Wanda gazed into Carlisle's deep eyes and agreed with a resigned nod.

"Fine. You've convinced me."

She then pulled out her phone and began snapping pictures of the photos on the table, her laughter filling

the air.

"Lily bombarded me with relationship goals last night, so today it's my turn!"

As they waited, Carlisle took out his phone and texted Lethan.

"Mr. Warbane, when is Wanda's birthday?"

A plan was forming in his mind.

He had initially intended to confess his feelings to Wanda that day and enlist Cameron and Owen's help

to create a special setting.

However, he realized that circumstances wouldn't allow them to be together immediately, even if he

confessed now.

Opting for a more memorable occasion, he decided to wait and confess his feelings on Wanda's 18th birthday instead.

He decided to confess at Riverland University, wanting to make it known to everyone there that Wanda **was** his girlfriend.

This second chance at life had taught him to seize every moment.

Lethan's reply came soon after.

"November 9th. If you're considering celebrating her birthday, I'd advise you to drop that idea. Her coming-of-age ceremony is going to be a big event at Riverland."

Carlisle texted back, "Alright. Thanks, Mr. Warbane!"

Lethan then shifted gears, sending another message.

"I've established Holly Fisheries. I'm currently planning to invest ten billion. You hold 20% of the shares

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"I wouldn't need that many shares. I might only invest 50 million," Carlisle texted his explanation to **Lethan**

His funds were limited. After this investment, he'd have only about 76 million left.

He also planned to spend 55 million to acquire **the** Xenos Factory, which would then require another 50 million for research and development.

He needed to reallocate 50 million from his initial investment In Holly Fisheries.

Lethan's reply came after a brief pause.

"No problem. We will give you 20% of the shares regardless of your investment."

He left the underlying condition of this arrangement unspoken—the cold wave Carlisle predicted would

significantly impact the southern fishing industry this year.

This was a massive investment, with all three investors nearly leveraging all their assets.

"Alright then. I'll invest another 50 million once I've sorted out my finances!" Carlisle typed back, feeling a surge of gratitude.

Lethan had clearly maintained his offer of 20% under considerable pressure from the other investors, solidifying his value as a trustworthy friend.

"Alright, lovebirds. We're ready to go!" Leon called out after having packed his equipment.

He was now equipped with a DSLR camera around his neck and a backpack.

Carlisle led the way to where Francis had parked the car.

Leon climbed conscientiously into the passenger seat, settling in.

Carlisle opened the car door for Wanda and chivalrously said, "Princess, please get in."

Wanda blushed deeply when Carlisle gallantly called her 'Princess'. Her annoyance was evident as she climbed into the car, her face turning a deeper shade of red.

Once inside, Carlisle announced, "To Yearning Island."

Wanda recognized Francis and couldn't resist asking, "Carlisle, is your driver now driving unlicensed?"

Francis replied with a deadpan tone, "I'm your boyfriend's personal driver now."

Wanda's eyes widened in surprise, and she turned to Carlisle.

"He's not joking, right?"

Carlisle shook his head and smiled.

"It's no joke. He really is my personal driver now."

Curious about Carlisle's newfound financial freedom, Wanda inquired, "How much did you sell that

painting **for**?"

Carlisle **responded** with a grin, "About eight million. Wanda was taken aback, her expression one of astonishment. "It's no wonder you spend so freely. You didn't even blink at five hundred bucks!"

Carlisle pulled Wanda into his arms and chuckled softly, "So you see, you don't need to start a business to make money. I can take care of you."

Wanda stiffened slightly in his embrace and whispered with her **eyes** downcast, "Can you behave when we're out in public? There are people around."

"I can't..."

Yearning Island, nestled on the outskirts of Riverland and in the middle of Cascade River, is a scenic spot accessible by boat **and** free to the public. work or

It was **a** favorite among Riverland residents who often strolled along Cascade River Road after w **for** couples to bring their partners for romantic outings. That day was a quiet Monday. Cascade River Road was less busy **than** usual, with students in classes and office workers at their desks, making the half-hour drive to the island smooth and uneventful.

When they arrived, Francis parked the car **and** said, "I'll wait for you guys outside."

Ever polite, Wanda suggested, "Why not join us for a walk since you're free?"

However, Francis lit a cigarette and silently walked toward the park outside without responding.

Wanda **was** feeling a bit flustered as she turned to Carlisle.

"Did... did I say something wrong?"

Carlisle gently squeezed her hand, offering reassurance with a soft voice.

"You didn't say anything wrong. Francis simply has his own issues."

Wanda intuitively felt that it might be related to personal matters **and** sighed softly.

"Then I must have touched a nerve. I'll go apologize to him later!"

"There's no need. He's not that easily offended."

With that, he led Wanda by the hand toward the entrance of the attraction.

Even on a weekday, the park on Yearning island buzzed with activity. It was predominantly frequented by groups of elderly people.

The old men s

sat on benches, intently listening **to** the news on their radios, while clusters of elderly women engaged in lively gossip.

Several of the women glanced at Carlisle and Wanda as they entered, their interest piqued..

“Oh! What a pretty young lady.”

“Her dress looks nice. I wonder where she bought it. I want to get one for my granddaughter...”

“Why don’t you go ask? I want to buy one for my granddaughter too!”

Wanda’s attire was a **hit** among the older crowd. Her conservative dress had a high neck covering her collarbone, hem falling to her calves, and sleeves reaching her elbows. It resonated with the vintage aesthetic preferences of these women.

Feeling the weight of their stares, Wanda withdrew her hand from Carlisle’s and blushed deeply.

Her cheeks turned the color of ripe apples.

Observing the scene, Leon commented with a smile, “Folks here are still quite conservative. In other countries, couples would openly embrace and hold hands on the streets.”

Carlisle responded with a wry smile.

He knew that public displays of affection would become more commonplace within the next decade.

However, he mused, it wouldn't even take ten years. Within four or five years, the attitudes of non- mainstream youths would shift to becoming very open about their relationships.

Despite the impending change, he found charm in the current, more reserved expression of young love.

"Young lady, where did you buy that dress?" one of the elderly women asked Wanda, her **tone** friendly and -curious.

"Oh, m—my **dad** bought it for me from abroad!" Wanda replied, a hint of nervousness in her voice.

"If you don't want to tell me, then say that you don't. What's with this 'bought from abroad' excuse? Acting like your dad is so rich!"

The woman's demeanor changed abruptly, her face souring as her words took on a biting tone..

Wanda tightened her grip on Carlisle's hand and remained silent, feeling the tension rise.

Carlisle bristled at the remark and was about to defend Wanda when she gently tugged at his hand.

"Let it go. There's no need to argue!"

Leon chimed in, "I've heard that older women here can be pretty harsh when they argue. They have

nothing better to do and all the time in the world to quarrel with you."

Carlisle reluctantly held back his retort as he remembered Leon's advice.

He had witnessed Hayley in similar disputes with neighborhood women. They could sit for hours, exchanging insults without a pause.

He had initially thought such relentless arguments were limited to village life, but Hayley's experiences proved otherwise.

"Falling in love at **such** a young **age**, they **have no** shame..."

"Exactly, if my granddaughter dared to date in school, I'd break her legs!"

The women continued, becoming more vocal in their disapproval. Carlisle and Wanda refrained from

responding.

The harsh words started to affect Wanda, her eyes beginning to redden with distress.

She wondered why these women were so concerned.

There were plenty of couples at the university. She didn't think they were doing anything out of the

ordinary.

"Carlisle, let's go!"

Having had enough, Wanda took the lead, firmly grasping Carlisle's hand and steering them toward the

park's entrance.

Carlisle gave one last expressionless look back at the women.

Their afternoon had been dampened by this encounter.

Suddenly, Carlisle noticed a kiosk next to the entrance.

A smile tugged at his lips.

"You guys go on ahead. I'm going to buy some water."

“I’ll come with you....”

Wanda also stopped walking.

Carlisle gently insisted, “There’s no need for that. You two go ahead!”

He then exchanged a knowing glance with Leon.

Guessing what Carlisle was up to, Leon smiled and said, “It’s almost closing time now, so it’ll get busier

soon. Let’s go in!”

Wanda nodded.

“Alright. I’ll wait for you inside!”

Once inside the park, Leon urged, “Let’s pick up the pace.”

Chapter

Wanda was slightly annoyed.

“Why are we rushing? Carlisle won’t be able to keep up with us.”

Meanwhile, Carlisle bought some snacks and bottled water. He then entered a nearby stationery store and bought a bottle of carbon ink.

He poured out some of the water and added some carbon ink to the bottle, shaking it to mix it evenly. Carlisle then picked up the bottle and threw it toward the group of elderly women.

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Carlisle deliberately aimed the bottle toward an open area to avoid hitting anyone.

One of the elderly women, puffing up with pride, boasted to the others, “I don’t know how many of those

like that young couple we saw that I've lectured. What future can they have without focusing on what's

Important at such a young **age**?"

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Just then, a splash of water landed near her, splattering onto the ground with a startling crash.

"Is it raining?" she muttered, touching her head, only to find her hand covered in black ink.

Realizing she was targeted, she turned toward Carlisle with a glare.

"You delinquent! You're in big trouble now!" she shouted, advancing toward him.

Carlisle threw another water bottle, but **as** the woman covered her head and crouched down, the bottle landed right in front of her.

The ink-water mixture splashed onto her face and stained her newly bought white blouse with black splotches.

Furious, she stood up and pointed at Carlisle.

"You scoundrel! Is there no law in this land?"

Her friends joined in the chorus of outrage, rising to their feet.

Carlisle continued to lob water bottles, sending the group into further panic. After the fifth bottle, he grabbed his snacks and ran.

"Stop, you scoundrel!" the woman yelled, giving chase.

Meanwhile, Wanda was about six hundred feet ahead. She paused to wait for Carlisle.

Leon urged, "We should keep moving..."

But Wanda shook her head.

“I’m going to wait for him...”

It was their first official date, and she wanted to stay by his side.

Carlisle soon came into view, sprinting around the corridor’s corner and glancing back at his pursuers.

The elderly woman, not giving up so quickly, had even called over several security guards.

As Carlisle approached, he shouted breathlessly, “Wanda, run!”

Wanda was puzzled and unmoved.

drun.

She wondered why she should run.

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She soon understood his instruction when she noticed the group of ink-smeared women chasing after

Carlisle.

She figured that Carlisle had retaliated against them.

“This fool... but an endearing one,” she thought.

Carlisle caught up to Wanda and grabbed her hand, urging, “What are you waiting for? Run!”

Holding down her skirt with her other hand, Wanda sprinted alongside Carlisle as he pulled her along, with Leon jogging to **keep** up with them.

Seizing the moment amidst the chaos, Leon took out his DSLR camera and almed to capture the rather absurd spectacle unfolding.

Ultimately, the difference in age and physical condition proved significant.

The elderly women couldn't keep up with the younger, quicker strides of Carlisle and Wanda, nor could they match Leon who maintained a steady jog ahead of them.

After a quick photo, Leon looked back and noticed the woman in the white blouse making another determined effort to catch up.

If word got out that the former assistant to the chief designer at Chanel was being chased by a group of elderly women, his reputation in this life would be utterly ruined.

Earning this five hundred dollars was proving to be quite a challenge.

Being a young woman, Wanda ran out of breath after less than 1500 feet. She stopped and bent over with

her hands on her knees.

She gasped, "Carlisle, I can't run anymore."

Carlisle was out of breath as well. He looked back and saw they had gained some distance from their pursuers.

He retrieved a water bottle from his carrying plastic bag and opened it.

He then handed it to Wanda.

"Let's take a break!"

As they caught their breath, Leon crouched down on one knee and snapped a photo.

Wanda gratefully took the water bottle, gulping down a few sips.

She looked up at Carlisle, who was visibly sweating from the chase and couldn't hold back a burst of laughter.

She quickly covered her mouth, directing any stray water to the ground instead of spraying it on him.

Carlisle was sipping his water. He looked at her with a puzzled expression.

“What’s so funny?”

Chapter 239

“I’m laughing because you look ridiculous!”

Wanda managed between giggles, crouching down in a fit of laughter.

Her earlier annoyance **had** dissipated entirely.

Watching her, Carlisle couldn’t help but smile as well. He took sips of his water to hydrate after their unexpected sprint.

Their moment of respite was interrupted by Leon, who approached with a serious expression.

“We need to go. They’re catching up!”

Carlisle and Wanda quickly turned around to see the group of elderly women resuming their charge. They all wore expressions of determination. Two security guards were among them, batons in hand.

Wanda’s laughter faded into concern.

“I can’t run anymore. Maybe we should just apologize?”

“I’ll carry you…” Carlisle offered immediately, handing her the bag of snacks before crouching down in preparation.

Wanda hesitated, biting her lip nervously at the thought of being carried..

Leon interjected with a chuckle, “He’s your boyfriend. What are you afraid of? I’m just a photographer, pretend I’m not here...”

Encouraged by Leon’s words, Wanda finally moved forward and carefully leaned onto Carlisle’s back.

Carlisle felt a surge of energy when he felt her softness pressing into his back..

Leon found the perfect angle and snapped a couple of photos.

Suddenly, they heard the elderly women’s angry curses behind them.

“You scoundrel! Damn, you! Stop right there!”

Leon glanced back and spotted one of the women wielding a brick.

His heart skipped a beat, and he quickly picked up his pace. He then jogged ahead to catch up to Carlisle

and Wanda.

When Carlisle and Wanda reached the dock, they hurried onto a diesel-powered wooden boat bound for

Yearning Island.

As Leon boarded, Carlisle urgently addressed the boatman.

“Please start the boat.”

The **boatman** was unfazed, saying, “I can’t set off with just three people. We usually wait for seven or eight passengers before leaving. Let’s wait a bit longer.”

Frustration flickering across his face, Carlisle pulled out 30 dollars and said, “I’m chartering the **boat**, Start it now!”

The boatman took the money but began to inspect each bill meticulously.

Carlisle's anxiety peaked.

"Stop checking! The money is real!"

Assured, the boatman grinned and finally agreed.

"Alright then. I'm starting it up now!"

He leaned over, grabbed the crank attached to his waist, and began the laborious process of starting the engine.

The boat rocked side to side, causing Wanda to grip Carlisle's arm tightly, fearful of falling into the water.

"Don't start the boat!"

The woman in the white blouse had caught up to them. She thudded down the steps toward them.

Carlisle looked at the boatman, desperation evident in his voice.

"Quick, start the boat!"

Frowning, the boatman muttered, "How did you guys get mixed up with this lot?"

"Come on! Start the boat! Do you want the money or not?" Carlisle said, having no time to explain further.

The elderly woman was too persistent. If they got caught, there would be no good end.

He was less worried for himself and more for Wanda.

Reacting quickly, the boatman grabbed the rope that tethered them to the shore, gave it a sharp tug to release the boat, and fired up the engine.

Only after the boat had moved a few yards did Carlisle finally breathe a sigh of relief.

He then stood up and taunted the elderly woman, “Old lady, you’re up in age. Try to accumulate some good karma!”

Wanda **was** sitting on a bench and couldn’t suppress a laugh. Although Carlisle’s actions were harsh, she found his protectiveness endearing.

Leon sat across from them, hooking his foot around the legs of a bench fixed into the boat, Leaning back slightly, he snapped another photo.

“You delinquent! I’ll be waiting right here on the shore. Let’s see if you dare come back!”

The elderly woman was so furious she nearly had a high blood pressure attack. With one hand on her hip and the other pointing at the river, she cursed so loudly that her voice cracked.

Leon pivoted his camera to focus on the elderly **woman’s** enraged figure, capturing her in full tirade.

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The boatman guided the boat further into the river. He then turned to Carlisle with a smirk.

“You’ve **really** done it now, young man. That woman is notoriously stubborn, and her son is a known tough guy. Don’t even think about returning to shore!”

Act Fast: Free Bonus Time is Running Out!

“Darn, are you serious?” Carlisle asked as he **stared** in disbelief, He had realized **that the** elderly woman was stubborn, but the extent of her obstinacy was unexpected.

He couldn’t help but wonder if she really would go to such lengths over their altercation.

Meanwhile, Wanda inquired quietly, “Is there another place **we** can disembark?”

The boatman shook his head,

*This is the only entrance and exit!”

Wanda’s face tightened with worry as she weighed their options.

Her **mind** raced to the possibility of arranging for an escape via helicopter through Shein, but she quickly dismissed the thought.

The repercussions of Shein discovering their date were too severe, especially for Carlisle.

She then contemplated reaching out to Lethan and Shania. She pulled out her phone and hovered over

Lethan’s contact.

Seeing her actions, Carlisle gently took her hand.

“What are you doing?”

“Calling Uncle Lethan for help,” Wanda replied.

“There’s no need to involve him. I can handle this,” Carlisle asserted.

“How are you going to handle it?”

“I have connections in that world, too,” he said calmly.

“You’re not supposed to hang out with those people!”

She remembered the menacing thugs she had seen at the ice rink a few days earlier and feared Carlisle was getting too close to such elements.

Carlisle reassured her gently while holding her close.

‘Don’t worry. I won’t be spending time with them.’

His involvement with Heath’s underworld connections was not a matter of choice but necessity, intended

only for self–protection and nothing more.

The sun began to set, casting a rosy glow over the river that bathed everything in warm light.

Wanda snuggled deeper into Carlisle’s arms. Her eyes were fixed on the twilight beauty of the western

horizon.

Upon reaching Yearning Island, which was about the size of a **soccer** field and equipped with a dam

downstream to prevent flooding, Carlisle led Wanda up the stairs onto the island.

Leon carried his camera and trailed behind them, capturing moments Intermittently.

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The island’s atmosphere was lively. With a wide asphalt road lined with vendors selling treats like cotton candy, lollipops, popcorn, and freshly squeezed juices. Even bike rentals were available.

Lanterns and fairy lights were strung from the trees. They were already lit even though it wasn’t fully dark yet, creating a festive and inviting scene.

“Carlisle, I want some cotton candy.”

Wanda's eyes landed on the colorful cotton candy.

A nostalgic memory surfaced of a similar outing with her mother, who had refused to buy her cotton candy, deeming it unhygienic.

"Sure. Let's go check it out!"

Carlisle led Wanda to the cotton candy stand, where the spinning machine, though looking a bit worn and dusty on the outside, produced pristine fluffy cotton candy.

The vendor was a seasoned man in his 50s. He expertly twirled a stick, wrapping the sugar strands around it before placing the finished product on a nearby hay bale.

Carlisle approached the vendor, noticing the absence of any price signage.

He decided not to inquire about it and instead requested, "Sir, two cotton candies, please!"

The vendor queried. "How much do you want to spend?"

Carlisle asked curiously, "What are the options?"

"There's a dollar, two dollars, five dollars, **and** the most expensive one is ten dollars," the vendor explained.

Intrigued by the pricing structure, Wanda asked, "Does the price determine the size of the cotton candy?"

The vendor nodded in affirmation.

Wanda smiled and said, "Then I'll have the three-dollar one."

Carlisle stroked his chin thoughtfully and then suggested, "How is a three-dollar one enough? Let's get

two ten-dollar ones!”