

## Love Spell 591

### Chapter 591

Patrick took out his phone and called his cousin. His cousin said he would have to check with human resources. After some time, he confirmed that there was indeed a worker named Howard in the storehouse who had been with the company for over a year.

Patrick relayed the information to Sophia, expecting her to mock him.

Instead, she calmly said, "Great! Does this mean I have a chance to be Sharon's sister-in-law?"

"Shameless!"

Patrick scoffed before turning on his heels and walking away.

In Aqua Grace's general manager's office, Norton showed Sharon and Carlisle some of the company's new products. Sharon's eyes lit up at the sight of the new hair accessories. They were all so exquisite. She was confident that they would sell well.

"Mr. Dixon, c-can I try one on?" Sharon asked eagerly.

Norton smiled.

"Of course, Sharon. With your natural beauty, you'd make a perfect model for our new products!"

Blushing, Sharon picked up a pink butterfly hair clip and put it on. The delicate clip looked like a real butterfly resting on a flower, adding a touch of playfulness and charm to her

appearance.

Sharon smiled happily as she looked at herself in the mirror.

She asked Carlisle, "Howard, how do I look?"

"Just fine," Carlisle replied nonchalantly.

"You're no fun. No wonder you can't find a girlfriend!"

Sharon rolled her eyes at Carlisle and continued to admire herself in the mirror.

Norton smiled and introduced the product, "This pink butterfly hair clip is called 'Fluttering Pink'. It's designed specifically for young women. Our goal is to allow our customers to show off their unique charm at the most affordable prices."

"How much does this 'Fluttering Pink' cost?"

"The retail price is about 15 dollars, the wholesale price is 12 dollars, and the production cost is seven dollars. If you become our agent, you can get it at the production cost," Norton explained.

"Does that mean I can make eight dollars a hair clip?"

Sharon gasped, then quickly covered her mouth, her eyes wide open.

Even Carlisle couldn't help but marvel at the high-profit margin of such a small hair clip. He thought the beauty industry was lucrative, and as living standards improved, women would spend more on their appearance.

After signing the contract, Norton had a company car take Sharon home. As soon as Sharon and Carlisle left the office, the door to the side room opened. Janet and Avaline appeared.

Norton nodded at them with respect.

"Ms. Dalton, I've done everything as you instructed."

"You don't mind me assigning you a new agent, do you?"

A rare smile appeared on Janet's usually stern face.

Norton shook his head quickly.

"Not at all, Ms. Dalton. I'm sure you have your reasons for this arrangement."

"Ms. Stafford, please take the confidentiality agreement to 10KFresh," Janet instructed.

"Yes, Ms. Dalton," Avaline replied before leaving the office.

Janet took Norton's seat and asked, "Have you heard of Alumni Network?"

Norton looked confused. He didn't understand why Janet would bring up Alumni Network, but he nodded anyway.

"Yes. It's very popular at universities these days. It's a successful social network."

"Alumni Network has become a national hit in just over a month, with over three million registered users. It's a very successful startup with immense potential," Janet commented.

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Norton understood the gravity of Janet's words. Golden Happiness Group was a significant investment company with holdings in hundreds of companies. Although Janet was now the director of the supervisory department, she had previously worked in securities analysis. Her high praise for Alumni Network indicated its immense potential.

Still, Norton couldn't quite understand what Janet was getting at.

Janet continued, "Sharon is the Caltopia College representative for Alumni Network. While that title doesn't mean much now, Alumni Network will likely offer support and benefits to encourage college students to invite new members in the future. As a representative, Sharon will gain social connections and followers, which are valuable assets."

Norton suddenly had an epiphany.

"You mean Sharon can sell products online?"

"I don't know how she'll sell them, but she's definitely someone worth nurturing," Janet replied, then got up and walked away gracefully.

Norton felt enlightened. At first, he had dismissed Sharon as just another student trying to make some extra money. After all, many students worked part-time for the company.

But he had overlooked Sharon's potential. A student at Caltopia College and a representative of Alumni Network were valuable credentials.

Meanwhile, Sharon and Carlisle were eating sandwiches at a local diner. Little did she know that her destiny was about to be quietly changed by the man who pretended to be her brother.

"Hey, Howard..."

"What?" Carlisle replied.

"Howard..."

"If you have something to say, just spit it out!"

"Howard, Howard, Howard..." Sharon teased.

Before she met Carlisle, she made 1.80 dollars per hair clip. After meeting him, she became Aqua Grace's campus agent and was able to get products at the lowest price to make much more. She considered Carlisle her lucky charm and couldn't help but wish he was her real brother.

"You're so annoying."

Carlisle glared at Sharon, but he couldn't hide a smile.

Carlisle was an only child. His cousin, Kelly, had always been at odds with him. While saving her life had changed her attitude, her words had never felt as genuine as Sharon's.

Just then, Carlisle's phone rang. It was Zoey.

"Congratulations! You passed the test."

Carlisle's face lit up.

"I did?"

He had guessed right—Aqua Grace was Janet's final test. He figured that the side room in the general manager's office probably allowed Janet to observe his interactions with Norton. From that, Janet was certain of Carlisle's identity.

"Yes, Ms. Stafford has the confidentiality agreement ready. Come to my office tomorrow at 8:00 am to sign it."

"Thank you, Ms. Miller," Carlisle said, feeling relieved.

After he hung up, Sharon called out, "Howard..."

Carlisle looked at her.

"What now?"

"Can I keep calling you my brother?"

Sharon smiled.

She felt that Carlisle was quite similar to her real brother, particularly in the way he had that helpless yet indulgent look whenever she was mischievous.

Carlisle took a bite of his sandwich and replied nonchalantly, "Call me whatever you want."

No one's stopping you."

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"You're the best, Howard."

Sharon giggled, the dimples on her cheeks showing.

"Finish your food before it gets soggy," Carlisle said smilingly before he continued with his sandwich.

Sharon nodded enthusiastically.

"Okay!"

Just then, a notification sounded from her phone. She looked at it and saw that it was a message from her classmate, Sophia.

"Sharon, does your brother have a girlfriend?"

Sharon frowned. She wondered about the reason for Sophia's question. Sharon wasn't going to let Sophia steal his attention if the latter was interested in Carlisle.

"Yes, he does. They've been together since they were kids!"

"No way. I don't believe you! Tell me you're joking."

"I swear I'm telling the truth!"

"This sucks. My love story has ended before it even started!"

"I'm having lunch with my brother. I'll talk to you later!"

Sharon smiled mischievously as she sent the last message.

Carlisle finished his sandwich without leaving any crumbs.

He wiped his mouth with a napkin and commented, "You look pretty pleased with yourself. Chatting with your boyfriend?"

"No way. I don't have a boyfriend!"

Sharon rolled her eyes at Carlisle. She had started to see Carlisle as a real brother and felt more comfortable around him.

She had been single her whole life, and her parents always reminded her to focus on her studies and wait until after college to start dating.

"I think Patrick likes you," Carlisle said while smiling casually.

"Patrick is helpful, kind, and an excellent student. He's a great guy, but I find him a little pretentious and vain at times," Sharon said, summing up her mixed feelings about Patrick

She had liked him before, but her opinion of him had soured after she saw him butt heads with Carlisle.

"Do you know anything about Patrick's family?"

Patrick's words that afternoon were laced with threat. It suggested that he came from a famous family.

Sharon shook her head.

"Not really. He never talks about his family."

Carlisle didn't push any further and went to pay the bill. Two sandwiches with extra avocado came up to a total of 16 dollars.

Sharon complained as they left the diner, "The sandwiches near campus are only three dollars-3.50 dollars with extra avocado. They're eight dollars here!"

"What's your monthly allowance?" Carlisle asked.

"200 dollars."

"200 dollars?"

Carlisle looked more closely at Sharon. Her down jacket was Balenciaga and her sneakers were Nike. The materials and craftsmanship seemed top-notch. Even if they were high-quality knockoffs, they had to be expensive.

When Carlisle first saw Sharon and her friends at the hotel, he immediately assumed they were wealthy.

Sharon noticed his doubt and blushed.

"These clothes and shoes are Sophia's sister's. She didn't like the way they looked, so she gave them to me."

"Is 200 a month enough?" Carlisle asked after nodding in understanding.

"Plenty!" Sharon replied proudly.

"I made over 300 last month selling hair clips. Soon, I'll be able to support myself completely!"

Carlisle felt a pang of pity as he saw Sharon's delighted smile.



Gareth was willing to spend a million for a concert, and Zachary would pay 15 thousand for a few seats. But Sharon was genuinely content with 300 dollars a month.

Carlisle hailed a cab, but Sharon stopped him.

"The bus is coming. Let's take that instead."

A taxi ride would cost over ten dollars, but the bus was only one dollar.

"The bus is too slow!"

"But the taxi is expensive..."

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"You're not the one paying for it..."

"But I lent you the money!"

"I'll pay you back eventually!"

Carlisle opened the door to the taxi and continued, "Now get in!"

Sharon suddenly realized that Carlisle seemed quite wealthy. She got into the back seat, and Carlisle closed the door and took the passenger seat.

The taxi began to move slowly. Meanwhile, the radio was playing a weather report.

"Yorksle will see moderate to heavy snow tomorrow morning through the night. The highest temperature will be 36 degrees Fahrenheit, while the lowest will be 18 degrees Fahrenheit."

Modern weather forecasts usually only cover the weather and temperatures for the next day. To get a three-day or week's forecast, one would have to tune into a special weather channel.

"Wow! Is it going to snow?"

Sharon sat up excitedly. Her face lit up with anticipation. Snow was a rare sight in Caulitorna.

"Man, that's a huge drop in temperature," the taxi driver exclaimed.

He then added with a frown, "It was 54 degrees today, but with this snow tomorrow, it'll drop all the way down to 18. It looks like I won't be able to drive tomorrow!"

The driver was a local and spoke with a thick accent. People in his line of work hated snowy weather.

Carlisle stared out the window, deep in thought. The big cold snap wasn't expected until January. The drop in temperature was just a small cold front. When the cold wave hit, the temperature would drop to around 0°F. "Remember to stay warm tomorrow!" Sharon reminded Carlisle from the backseat.

Carlisle nodded.

"You too. Make sure you dress warmly."

After dropping Sharon off at school, Carlisle returned to the hotel. Francis wasn't in the room.

Carlisle sat on the sofa and called Zoey.

"I was just about to call you!"

Zoey started before getting to the point.

"I just talked to Maisie. She agreed to take Wanda to pick up the supplies tomorrow."

"Thank you, Ms. Miller!"

Carlisle felt a weight lift from his shoulders. His biggest worry had been getting in but not seeing Wanda.

Zoey hesitated before adding, "Even though you passed the screening test, you still need to be careful tomorrow. Don't let anyone there find out who you really are, or the consequences could be dire."

"Yeah, I know. I simply want to see her."

"Remember to come by my office tomorrow to sign the confidentiality agreement," Zoey added before hanging up.

Carlisle realized that Zoey had been testing him since the day before. He figured that she had probably done some research on him. Unlike Janet, who only wanted to confirm that he was Howard, Zoey had probably looked into his real identity in Riverland.

"We'll grow old together and watch the snowflakes fall..."

While Carlisle and Sharon ate their sandwiches, he had disabled silent mode on his phone.

He pulled out his phone and saw that it was Hilda calling. Hilda had heard on the radio that it was getting colder in Yorksle, so she wanted to make sure Carlisle was dressed for it.

The first snowfall in Yorksle came earlier than expected. Carlisle got up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom and saw thick snowflakes falling outside the window.

The hotel's heating system kept the room toasty and shielded him from the cold.

After using the bathroom, he went out on the balcony and caught some snowflakes in his hand. They quickly melted the moment they touched his palm.

As he gazed at the snowy scene, Carlisle quietly sang "Rest of My Life".

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The snowflakes reminded Carlisle of the song he had sung at the bonfire party. Carlisle found himself missing Wanda again under the lonely moonlight as the season changed.

"I want to show you the world and tell everyone you're mine."

A deep voice came from behind Carlisle.

Jolted from his daze, Carlisle turned and glared at Francis.

"Can't you make some noise when you walk? You almost scared me to death!"

"It's not my fault that the carpet and these disposable slippers make it impossible to make a sound," Francis replied.

He was wearing a hotel bathrobe, holding a wine glass with some red wine in one hand and a half-smoked cigarette in the other.

"Did you just wake up, or have you been awake the whole time?" Carlisle asked as he looked at the slippers on Francis' feet.

"I didn't sleep."

Francis took a drag from his cigarette while simultaneously taking a sip of wine.

"Having trouble sleeping? Want to join me for a drink?"

"No thanks. I have a delivery to make tomorrow," Carlisle said, yawning as he headed for his bedroom.

He needed to be well-rested for his meeting with Wanda.

The next day, Carlisle got up for work at 6:30 am. Stepping out of the hotel, he shivered as the cold hit him. The temperature had plummeted since the day before.

The streets had turned into a winter wonderland, with snow covering everything and a biting wind that felt like needles on his face. People were bundled up in thick coats, while older people kept their hands in their sleeves for warmth.

Taxis moved slowly because of the snow. Carlisle, who was supposed to start work at eight in the morning, didn't get to the office until nine.

His first stop was to the human resources department to sign a confidentiality agreement with Zoey. The agreement required him to keep everything he saw and heard during the delivery in strict confidence.

After signing the agreement, Zoey warned Carlisle, "The snow may make transporting these supplies difficult and dangerous. Be careful out there!"

Regardless of the weather, Golden Happiness Group's supplies had to be delivered on time.

Carlisle returned to the storehouse to prepare the goods with Janice. The storehouse was essentially a food distribution center, with fresh produce arriving each morning.

The storehouse staff's job was to select the best products for storage. They prepared the goods according to the specified quantities when delivery orders came in. The process was similar to shopping in a store, with workers packing and sealing the selected items.

Wendell arrived at around 10:00 am with a small truck loaded with blankets, coats, and coal for heating. After a quick lunch in the cafeteria at noon, Wendell and his team left for Maple Hill.

At the rehabilitation hospital, Wanda sat by the window in her study, staring

absentmindedly at the snowy landscape outside. She still couldn't remember who Carlisle

was.

But last night she had a dream.

In the dream, she was walking along a lake with Zachary and Queenie. While playing with Queenie, she fell into the lake. Neither Zachary nor Queenie could swim, so they could only watch in panic from the lakefront.

Just when she thought she could no longer breathe, a handsome young man appeared out of nowhere and jumped into the water without hesitation to save her.

The boy seemed unfamiliar, yet strangely familiar at the same time.

"Wanda... Wanda..."

A sweet, melodious voice called from downstairs.

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"Bianca Yarnell..."

Wanda's eyes lit up.

She opened the window and said, "I'm here, Bianca."

A pretty lady in a pink cotton coat stood in the snow-covered yard outside the villa.

She waved and yelled, "Wanda, come down and play."

Bianca was also a patient there. She was 16 years old that year. She often sought Wanda out for walks and learned how to cook with Wanda and Maisie.

"Yeah. I'll be right there."

Wanda took her coat from her wardrobe, put it on, and left.

Maintaining a good relationship with Bianca was essential as she was the only one there who could send letters outside.

Moreover, Bianca was lively and cute. Wanda felt that playing with her was a joy.

Wanda took a pair of fluffy snow boots from the shoe cabinet on the first floor and put them on.

Maisie, who was cooking, reminded her, "It's cold outside, Wanda. Be careful not to catch a cold."

"I won't, Maisie. I'm not that delicate," Wanda replied, smiling.

She then left in a hurry.

Lately, besides studying, she had also been working out with a fitness trainer. That way, she wouldn't catch a cold easily.

She could feel the biting cold the moment she exited the villa.

"Wanda, let's make a snowman," suggested Bianca as she approached Wanda and took her hand.

The former then led her to the snow.

The two of them were soon crouched in the snow and began building a snowman.

Bianca blinked her wide eyes and stated, "Wanda, Finn hasn't seen you for days."

"I think he's overseas..."

Wanda's lips were slightly parted. She looked conflicted.

Finn had visited her thrice and had brought a carefully prepared gift each time. Even a fool could tell that he wished to pursue her.

Finn's background was impressive. He was indeed from a wealthy family. However, Wanda had no feelings for him.

She had also secretly resolved not to date anyone until she had figured out the matter with Carlisle.

Bianca made the snowman a head and said mischievously, "Wanda, do you not find him appealing?"

Wanda looked at Bianca and asked, "Do you know much about his family?"

Bianca couldn't help but laugh.

"I forgot to tell you that Finn's mother is my aunt."

Wanda's eyes widened in surprise.

"You're related?"

It was no wonder that Bianca could send letters outside then. She had ties with the rehabilitation hospital's owner.

"Yeah..."

Bianca nodded.

She asked Wanda with an odd look on her face, "Wanda... you... you do know about the Murrays, right?"

Wanda shook her head and replied, "I don't know them."

"Did you know that you and Finn were engaged as children?"



"What?"

Wanda stood up abruptly. She felt slightly disoriented the moment she stood up. Perhaps she had been crouching for too long or was shocked by what Bianca had just said.

"We were engaged as children? I was actually engaged as a child? Why didn't my parents ever tell me?" Wanda muttered, feeling lost.

She was taken aback to learn that her family already arranged her marriage.

She was against it. After all, marriage was for life, and she couldn't allow them to make such a decision on her behalf.

Moreover, childhood engagements had no legal effect.

She took a deep breath at that thought.

She then grabbed Bianca's hand and asked, "Bianca, are the Murrays really powerful?"

Bianca wondered if she should continue talking about the Murrays. Wanda seemed clueless, as her parents had kept her in the dark.

Bianca felt that it was slightly inappropriate to tell her about this instead.

Sensing Bianca's hesitation, Wanda added, "Even if you refuse to tell me, I'll find out about the Murrays sooner or later once I'm out!"

Bianca pouted.

She said somewhat reluctantly, "Alright. You don't need to look into them. I'll tell you..."

"The Murrays have strong connections within the business and political world. The family controls Golden Happiness Group and Apex Capital, both of which have more than a hundred billion in liquid assets," Bianca said succinctly.

Upon hearing that, Wanda couldn't help but take a sharp breath. Two companies that each had a hundred billion in liquid assets? How much non-liquid capital did they have?

She wondered if the Murrays' enterprises combined could be considered a business empire. They were the richest of the richest.

She was in disbelief that she had a marriage contract with such a family.

"Bianca... Food's ready!" a voice yelled from another villa nearby.

"Okay. I'm coming!" Bianca yelled in reply.

She then said to Wanda, "I have to go for lunch now. Let's go for a walk together when we collect supplies later.

Wanda snapped out of her daze and nodded unconsciously.

She then asked, "Is Brenton not here?"

Bianca giggled and replied, "He returned to his hometown."

The two went back to their respective homes for lunch.

Wanda was slightly distracted as she ate.

She couldn't accept the idea of a childhood engagement. It was the 21st century. She wondered how childhood engagements were still a thing.

Maisie noticed Wanda was preoccupied and asked gently, "Wanda, do you have something on your mind?"

Wanda shook her head and forced a smile before replying, "It's nothing!"

Maisie didn't press any further.

She smiled and said, "We can collect the supplies this afternoon. I'll take you along to broaden your horizons."

At Maple Hill, Wendell's small truck was stuck in the snow. Kevin and Zack Hensen pushed the back of the truck with all their might.

Even so, the truck did not move a single inch.

Kevin walked over to the driver's side and knocked on the window.

Wendell rolled down the window.

He exhaled and asked, "Can't you push it?"

Panting, Kevin shook his head.

"I think it's stuck in a ditch... and that ditch is frozen over, so the anti-slip chains aren't working."

Wendell immediately felt a headache coming on.

"You clear the snow. Zack, go find some stones..."

Dressed in a company issued coat, Wendell opened the door and exited the truck. Carlisle, also wearing a coat, threw on his jacket and followed Wendell out of the truck.

The road was between two mountains. There was a long slope ahead of them. It was completely covered in

snow.

The road formed a valley due to the two mountains. The bitterly cold wind howled like a beast, whipping

snow into their faces. It made Carlisle wince in pain.

He pondered if this was what the weather was like up north. He found it immensely cold.

Carlisle sneezed. He suspected that his piss would freeze if he decided to take a leak.

Kevin cleared the snow with his hands while Zack placed some stones into the ditch.

Carlisle was shivering as he walked over and asked, 'Need any help?'

Wandell shook his head and answered, "You better get back in the truck, boss. Your delicate skin is prone to frostbite."

Carlisle rubbed his arms and went back into the truck. The weather that day was harsh.

If it were merely snowing, then it wouldn't be too bad. But the cold wind felt like knives, and his ears were

numb. If he didn't get back in the truck, he might suffer from hypothermia.

Wendell and the others used to be soldiers and were part of the special forces.

Carlisle figured that the team must have trained in all sorts of harsh environments and should, therefore, be able to withstand this weather.

It took a full half an hour for the truck to get out of the ditch finally. Wendell climbed back into the truck, warming his hands with his breath.

Carlisle was somewhat embarrassed as he asked with concern, "Are you guys alright?"

Wendell nodded.

"We're... we're fine..."

He then pulled out a lighter from his coat pocket to warm himself up with the fire's heat. After a couple of minutes, his hands started to regain feeling. Only then did he continue driving.

However, the slope was very slippery.

The fully loaded truck couldn't make it up. It slid back a few feet, almost sliding back into the ditch.

"Kevin, Zack, get out and push the truck..." Wendell said through gritted teeth.

The slope was about 984 feet long. Getting past it would probably take another half hour. The temperature outside was at least 14 degrees Fahrenheit.

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But it felt colder than -4 degrees Fahrenheit under the harsh wind.

He had Kevin and Zack push the truck. For them, the next half an hour was brutal.

They exited the truck without hesitation. The truck finally moved forward, and they pushed it with all their might.

Carlisle's expression at that moment was solemn. He had just experienced how cold it was outside. Kevin and Zack had to push the truck in such an environment while he sat in it.

Carlisle was anxious.

He decided to help them and said, "I'll go help out as well...'

Wendell shook his head and laughed.

"We'll manage fine with just the two of them. So, relax!

"They're tough. They can handle such a trivial matter just fine."

Carlisle looked at the snowy scenery outside his window. It was slowly going backward.

He dared not move a single inch. He was afraid it might make the truck heavier.

About ten minutes later, the truck had gone up a third of the slope.

Wendell realized the truck would roll backward from time to time and knew Kevin and Zack needed to rest.

He stepped on the brakes and pulled up the handbrake.

He looked out the window and yelled, "Kevin, Zack, get in and take a break."

Kevin found a few rocks and placed them behind the wheel at the rear. He then got into the truck with Zack to warm up.

Their faces were pale, and their lips were blue. They appeared dazed.

Wendell rubbed Kevin's face and asked, "Kevin, are you ok?"

Kevin blinked and looked at Wendell. He then nodded.

Zack was in a better state compared to Kevin.

He took out a lighter and lit it for warmth, but the flame was too weak to chase away the bitter cold.

Carlisle recalled that the truck contained blankets and charcoal.

"Isn't there charcoal in the supplies? Let's use it to warm up!"

Wendell answered in a deep voice, "The blankets and charcoal are in the back."

Carlisle got out of the truck and opened the back.

The back of the truck was filled with food retrieved from Storehouse 8. These goods took up two-thirds of the truck. He would have to move it all out first to retrieve the charcoal.

However, it would be too strenuous, so Carlisle concluded that the plan wouldn't work

He suddenly had an idea. His lips curled into a smile.

A moment later, he made two oil lamps out of vegetable oil and two bowls. The wick was made of cotton meant for coats.

He placed four thick candle wicks in each oil-filled bowl. The four flames provided a lot of heat, and soon, Kevin and Zack warmed up.

"Why don't you guys rest after every five minutes?" suggested Carlisle.

"It's still early. It's alright as long as we can deliver the supplies before sunset."

"Won't it delay your meeting with Wanda?" asked Kevin.

"It won't," insisted Carlisle.

He couldn't ignore the well-being of his subordinates simply because he was eager to meet Wanda.

Once Kevin and Zack were thoroughly warmed, they continued pushing the truck

Five minutes later, they returned to the truck and lit the oil lamps for warmth.

It took two hours to cover 984 feet. One of the hours was used to warm themselves up.

Beyond the slope were 9.3 miles of flat road, ten corners, and two tunnels.

At 5:00 pm, the truck stopped by an arch bridge after driving through a forest.

A six to nine-foot-tall cement wall was 1640 feet across the arch bridge. On top of the wall was a barbed wire fence about three feet tall.

A few Jeeps were parked near the wall. There were even a few guards in camouflage.

Carlisle knew the place would have soldiers, so he wasn't surprised to see them.

Wendell drove across the bridge. Two of the soldiers in camouflage approached them immediately.

Wendell smiled and said, "We're here to deliver supplies to the rehabilitation hospital."

One of the soldiers approached and responded lowly, "You'll have to wait for a moment. A high-ranking official is currently inside. The road you'll need to take is blocked..."

Wendell lowered his voice and asked curiously, "How high-ranking is that official?"

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Wendell was instantly intrigued. He had seen his fair share of battlefield commanders. Even if he had never met them, he would have at least heard of them.

"That's enough. Don't ask any unnecessary questions. You wouldn't know who it was even if we told you," said the soldier as he glared at Wendell.



Wendell snickered as he returned to the truck.

"Are we not allowed to enter?" asked Carlisle.

Wendell replied in a low voice, "They said there's a high-ranking official inside. Their vehicles have blocked the road we have to take to the rehabilitation hospital."

"Are there any other roads besides the one we came from?" asked Carlisle.

He remembered the road they had taken had no other tire tracks on it and was filled with potholes. The truck would have gotten stuck if they hadn't been careful.

They could use a better route for the journey back if there were a better road.

"There are three other roads. However, those roads are closed all year round. As outsiders, we are only allowed to use the least convenient road.

"It would have been tolerable if it wasn't raining or snowing, but it just so happens to be snowing heavily right now. It truly is rather challenging."

Wendell took out a cigarette and put it in his mouth. He then lit the cigarette, looking rather upset.

The encampment had large bungalows that looked the same and some basic training facilities. The soldiers, dressed in camouflage attire, were currently assembling to train.

A man in a general's uniform was in one of the slightly spacious bungalows, drinking tea.

Based on the insignias on everyone's shoulders, the lowest-ranking soldiers were junior officers. However, the man seated at the head of the table had a general's insignia.

He was also the youngest of the group, appearing to be around 23 or 24 years old.

He had chiseled features and sharp eyes. He was merely drinking from his teacup, yet everyone present dared not breathe.

After he finished his tea, he put down his teacup.

He then looked expressionlessly at a middle-aged man and asked calmly, "Can you assume the position within three days?"

Heston Murray sighed helplessly.

He saluted and replied, "I will absolutely obey all orders from the organization!"

The young general nodded calmly before standing up to walk out of the room.

It wasn't until he left that the others in the room exhaled a sigh of relief.

One of them asked in a deep voice, "Heston, is this guy the real deal? How can he be a general at such a young age?" Heston shook his head.

"It's normal that you don't know him. After all, he's only been in the military for eight years. But if you have heard about his legendary experiences, you wouldn't think so."

A few junior officers looked at him with eager faces.

"What experiences? Tell us, Heston."

They were all curious about the legendary experiences that had earned him the rank of general at the age of 24.

Heston picked up his teacup on the table and took a light sip.

He said slowly, "His name is Xavier Larson. His foster parents raised him ever since his parents died when he was young. Due to poverty, he went abroad with one of his uncles after graduating from middle school.

"His uncle was impressive. He worked for a top mercenary group abroad. The group was short-handed then, so Xavier received peacekeeping assignments after just a week of training.

"During his four years as a mercenary, he fought countless battles and was very successful. When he was 18, he resigned from his senior position in the group and returned to serve his country.

"This incident drew significant attention to our country. After several highly confidential meetings, he was assigned to a special forces organization..."

Just as Heston recounted Xavier's legendary experiences to his colleagues, Wendell's truck passed through the encampment. They were 1.2 miles away from the rehabilitation hospital.

Maple trees flanked the road, and the ground was a mix of pristine white snow and red maple leaves. It was a very beautiful scene.

Carlisle, who was in the passenger seat, grew increasingly nervous. He constantly took deep breaths to calm himself.

At the rehabilitation hospital's entrance, security personnel were clearing the snow. The housemaids in the living quarters gathered with shopping carts as they laughed and chatted.

Bianca and Wanda stood together, whispering.

"A phone?"

Wanda stared at Bianca in disbelief. Bianca had actually managed to smuggle a phone in.

"Keep your voice down..."

Bianca's expression instantly turned nervous as she shushed Wanda. It would be the end of them if the security personnel overheard them.

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Wanda realized she was too excited and quickly covered her mouth. Given her current relationship with Bianca, she felt confident that the latter would lend her the phone. She would then be able to contact Christine and the others.

It had been over a month since they founded SwiftFunds Financial Investments. She was eager to know the company's status.

Maisie glanced at Wanda, feeling slightly uneasy as she did so. Her best friend had asked her to bring Wanda along that day to pick up the supplies, but she was not told about the reason behind the request.

Several loud honks immediately interrupted the housemaids' chatter. Bianca and Wanda both turned their attention to the entrance. A truck had stopped outside the gate.

Carlisle, who was in the passenger seat, immediately spotted Wanda, who stood inside the gate. He trembled all over, and his hands clenched into fists in his lap.

His lips trembled, and his eyes were tinged red with tears.

Wendell coughed twice, reminding Carlisle to control his emotions. He had already told Carlisle while they were on the road that the security personnel here were all retirees like him.

They had keen observational skills. Although it benefited them, they couldn't be too obvious. Kevin grinned and said, "Boss, Ms. Wanda is looking at you too..."

Carlisle looked toward the gate again and realized Wanda was staring in his direction.

However, Wanda wasn't wearing her glasses. The gate was 164 feet away, and because she was shortsighted, it was impossible for her to see him clearly.

Moreover, Wanda no longer remembered him. Even if she could see him, she probably wouldn't recognize him.

Bianca noticed Wanda staring at the truck in a daze at the rehabilitation hospital entrance. She asked curiously, "Wanda, what are you looking at?"

"I don't know why, but my heart suddenly started racing..." Wanda murmured.

"That's because you haven't seen outsiders for too long, resulting in social anxiety. When people with social anxiety see strangers, their heartbeats will increase," analyzed Bianca with hands behind her back.

"That's probably it."

Wanda tucked her hair behind her ear as it had been blown loose by the cold wind.

The delivery driver had conveyed a message from Carlisle last time, so Wanda had sent a letter through Bianca asking Christine about Carlisle.

Since Christine was her classmate from high school to college, Wanda figured the former would recognize Carlisle. Christine would then inform Carlisle about Wanda if she knew anything.

If the delivery driver knew Carlisle, he might deliver another message from him this time. Wanda stared at the driver's seat, hoping the current driver was the same as before.

At that moment, Wendell and his group got out of the truck. Colton checked their identities with his information sheet.

Beside Colton stood a stern-looking man in a suit.

"Guys, didn't you verify our identities before this?"

Wendell deliberately looked impatient.

Colton glared at Wendell.

"This is our job!" he retorted.

Wendell shrugged, then laughed sheepishly.

"Alright. I won't say another word."

Colton turned to the last page, which contained Howard's personal information. The man in the suit glanced at it as well. He noticed the information stated that the man was 21 years old. He furrowed his brow and asked, "You're 21 years old?"