

Love Spell 621

Chapter 621

Tyler was 33 years old. Most of his friends' children were already running around, while he had never even touched a woman's hand. His parents were growing very anxious, and so was he. He had accomplished great things in his career, but he still hadn't settled down to have a family yet.

Carlisle raised an eyebrow.

"Your secretary is a pretty good choice. She seems like a good match for you."

Jasmine had teased Tyler about being single, obviously hinting that he should get himself a girlfriend. Tyler wasn't ugly, but he wasn't handsome, either. He just looked ordinary. However, not every woman felt that looks were important.

Tyler excelled in his career and had his own unique charisma. He was a 33-year-old single vice CEO who worked at Whiron International, a renowned company in Yorksle.

He earned at least 300 thousand dollars a year. A salary like that would surpass most of the population even decades from now.

Jasmine worked with Tyler every day, and they weren't far apart in age. Carlisle didn't believe that Jasmine wasn't attracted to him at all.

"Her?"

Tyler looked conflicted as he sighed.

"She's too pretty and always talks to our colleagues about handsome men. That must be her type of man. I don't think she'd like someone with my looks!"

He liked Jasmine, but he was afraid she would reject him, which would hurt his pride and make things awkward as they had to work together.

Carlisle laughed and asked, "Did she say that?"

Tyler nodded and said, "Yes! I've overheard her several times!"

Carlisle rubbed his chin.

"From my experience, she must be trying to get your attention."

Tyler looked startled. He gave Carlisle a strange look. After all, Carlisle was 18 and a first- year university student. He wondered what sort of experience Carlisle would possibly have. Carlisle could tell that Tyler did not believe him.

He laughed and said, "If you don't believe me, you can test her."

"How?"

"Do this."

Carlisle gave him some instructions. He had lived two lives, and the people in his current life were no match for him.

Although he hadn't experienced love in his previous life, he'd watched plenty of TV shows and videos and vividly remembered their stories.

After hearing the solution that Carlisle had presented to him, Tyler said half-disbelievingly, "W-will this work?"

"It will definitely work. The moment I saw the two of you, I could tell that you matched each other. I checked your fortune, too, and your destinies are certainly entwined. You were husband and wife in your previous life."

Carlisle was becoming bolder with the aid of alcohol. Tyler picked up his glass and gulped down a mouthful.

"Alright. I'll give it a shot."

He leaned over and said lowly, "Grandpa asked me to tell you that the roads in Yorksle haven't been repaired for a long time. If there are roads in Yorksle that are difficult for you to travel on, he can help you find someone to repair it!"

Carlisle immediately understood the underlying meaning.

He said solemnly, "When I have some free time, I'll pay him a visit!"

Theodore was sincere in helping him, which meant he had a strong ally in Yorksle. Carlisle felt that it was an ally that was strong enough to go up against the political connections of the Murrays.

However, he would not disturb Theodore unless he had no other choice.

At 3:00 pm, Carlisle said goodbye to Tyler and took Francis back to Glamor Hotel. Tyler told the driver to get his car and drive him back to the office as Jasmine sat beside him.

"Jasmine... A-are there any especially important meetings tomorrow?"

"No."

"Then... Is there any important event on the schedule for tomorrow?"

"No!"

Jasmine looked at Tyler in confusion. She wondered what was happening to him to make him stammer like that. He wasn't usually like that. She considered that Tyler might be feeling under the weather.

Worried that Tyler was sick, she asked tentatively, "Mr. Duvall... Are are you alright?" "I'm-I'm fine..."

Tyler wiped away the sweat on his brow and changed tack.

He took a deep breath to compose himself before casually saying, "Jasmine, you're not getting any younger. You need to think about settling down. Do you have anyone in the office that you're interested in?"

"You should take care of your own affairs first!"

Chapter 622

Jasmine was exasperated. She questioned how Tyler could concern himself with her affairs when he hadn't even settled his own.

"Jasmine..."

"What's the matter now, Mr. Duvall?"

Jasmine turned her head, only to see Tyler's slightly tipsy face suddenly leaning in very close to hers. It startled her, and she hastily shrank back.

She said nervously, "Mr. Duvall, you..."

Tyler said in a low voice, "Let's get married."

Jasmine was speechless with shock, and her eyes bulged. She wondered what he meant by that and considered if he had been drinking too much.

"Mr. Duvall, you're drunk."

She pushed against Tyler's chest with both hands as she spoke. She lowered her head, her face burning red. The light in Tyler's eyes dimmed, and he returned to his seat.

He said awkwardly, "I'm sorry. I did have a lot to drink today."

They were quiet for the rest of the journey. Finally, the car stopped outside the Whiron International office building.

The driver opened the door for Tyler, and just as Tyler was about to get out, Jasmine suddenly called out, "Mr. Duvall..."

"Yes?"

Tyler stopped and looked at her.

Jasmine blushed and said shyly, "Shall we... shall we go through the right process first?"

"I like things to be more straightforward."

Tyler knew that Jasmine wanted to start dating first. However, he did not want to waste any time. Jasmine pressed her lips together.

"Then... when should we get our marriage certificate?"

She gave in and was up to jump straight into marriage. She figured that they could marry first and fall in love later. After all, she had been working with Tyler for over three years and knew what kind of man he was. Although he could be blunt, everything else about him was fine.

Tyler was stunned. He questioned if he had heard her correctly-that she'd agreed. He was amazed that Carlisle had been right. Women were incomprehensible. He couldn't understand them at all.

Carlisle returned to Glamor Hotel and slept for a while.

At 5:00 pm, Wendell and the others came over. Carlisle told Wendell and the others his plan. Wendell's eyes bulged as he asked, "Will that work?"

Carlisle nodded and said, "Anything that can be solved with money isn't a problem!"

He had initially planned to have a massive celebration in Riverland for Wanda's 18th birthday. Now, she had no choice but to remain in that hospital with no freedom at all. Nevertheless, he wanted to give her an unforgettable memory for her 18th birthday.

For the next few days, Wendell was kept busy running to and from all the major fireworks factories while Kevin and Zack went to Maple Hill and visited the surrounding villages to give them gifts.

Within three days, Carlisle had spent one million dollars.

Grand Summit Estates was one of the few neighborhoods in Yorksle that were filled with villas.

The villas there were much more luxurious than those built in the 80s, 90s, or even the early 2000s. The villas were dotted neatly alongside a path lined with leafy green trees. Every single villa was unique, and it displayed how wealthy the Murrays were.

In the neighborhood's center was a vast, man-made lake. Luxurious yachts bobbed on the surface of the lake. Their sleek, snow-white bodies seemed to blend harmoniously with the azure-blue water.

Finn stood on the top floor of his private villa with a half-filled glass of red wine in his hand. He held a walkie-talkie in his right hand and spoke to someone.

"How are the preparations?"

"They're almost done. I guarantee that Ms. Thompson will never forget this birthday banquet!"

"Alright. You've worked hard!"

Finn hung up and raised his glass to take a small sip. In another villa, those in the direct line of descent from the Murrays were gathered.

The white-haired old man in the main seat frowned slightly and said, "Without Heston's men stationed there, will New Dawn Hospital be inspected?"

Heston said, "Raymond has spoken to the departments involved. They'll cover up anything to do with Maple Hill. He suggests we stop our experiments at the hospital just in case and transfer the data to the other laboratories."

The white-haired old man sighed. "That's the only thing we can do."

Chapter 623

Wendell and the others were at Glamor Hotel. They were gathered around a coffee table, eating roast lamb and drinking expensive whiskey.

Carlisle held a panoramic photo of Maple Hill with eight red circles drawn. Every circle was a village around Maple Hill, and they were all very close to the Maple Hill hospital.

The villagers in all eight villages had received 200 dollars in cash, and every family had a thousand dollars worth of fireworks stored in their homes.

These fireworks would be lit punctually at 8:30 pm on the 20th. After all, Wanda liked fireworks.

Carlisle had never officially confessed to Wanda because he had wanted to give her a confession she would never forget. He had wanted Wanda to watch a lavish fireworks display on her 18th birthday, after which he would confess to her as everyone at the university bore witness to his declaration of love. He wanted everyone to know that Wanda was the luckiest woman in the world.

Unfortunately, things had not turned out as planned.

In the two months that had passed since university had started, too many things had happened. He couldn't even attend Wanda's 18th birthday in person.

When he had delivered the supplies, Carlisle had seen the villages in Maple Hill on the way there. The idea of preparing an extravagant fireworks display for Wanda with the villages' help came to him then.

Carlisle raised his glass and said, "Thank you for all your hard work over the past few days. Cheers to all of you!"

"It was no trouble!"

"It's what we should do!"

"Thank you for your concern, boss!"

Everyone spoke simultaneously as they clinked their glasses and downed their drinks.

Kevin chortled and said, "You're so romantic, boss. This is a fireworks display that is worth more than one million dollars! I bet the entire city of Yorksle will be in an uproar!"

Zack held a leg of lamb and feasted happily on it.

"You're so sweet to Ms. Wanda, boss. She's sure to be touched!"

Wendell noisily gulped down two mouthfuls of whiskey, looking troubled.

Francis asked in confusion, "What are you worried about?"

At Francis' question, Carlisle, Kevin, and Zack also turned to look at Wendell. Suddenly, the

doorbell rang. Kevin went to open the door at once.

It was Tyler!

He was holding two bottles of Romanée-Conti.

"Oh, I see that you're already drinking!"

Tyler grinned as he walked in.

"Mr. Duvall!"

Carlisle got up to greet him.

Francis, Wendell, and the others stood up as well.

"Hello, Mr. Duvall."

"Don't be so formal! Let's all sit down."

Tyler waved a hand hastily and strode over to them.

Over his career in the business world, he had met many businessmen, and naturally, he had encountered many bodyguards as well. The men with Carlisle looked rough and ready. He noticed their eyes had turned sharp and wary the moment he entered. Clearly, they were there to protect Carlisle's safety, and they were just as professional as the bodyguards hired by renowned entrepreneurs.

Carlisle saw that Tyler was full of energy.

He smiled as he said, "You're positively glowing, Mr. Duvall. You must have had a good time over the past two days."

"You taught me well, Carl! On that very day, I moved on from my 33 years of life as a single man."

Tyler laughed as he placed the two bottles of Romanée-Conti before Carlisle.

"A few days ago, a friend sent me a crate of these bottles. They're from 1985. I'll give you two."

The price of a single bottle of 1985 Romanée-Conti was in the six figures. Carlisle had heard that the Romanée-Conti was the Rolls-Royce of wine. Older bottles of Romanée-Conti could even be sold for several million dollars, and some millionaires and billionaires bought them.

"Tyler, this wine is too precious," said Carlisle as he pushed the bottles of wine back to Tyler.

Tyler immediately frowned.

"Don't be a stranger. You've helped me a lot. These are my tokens of gratitude."

With that, he pushed the bottles back to Carlisle, who had no choice but to accept.

"Well, if you say so. Thanks, Tyler," Carlisle said with a wry smile.

Wendell and the others had never seen Romanée-Conti before. But if Carlisle, who was used to spending money lavishly, said it was too expensive, they assumed those wines were probably worth more than five figures.

Carlisle poured a glass of Smirnoff and handed it to Tyler, "Here's a drink to warm your stomach!"

Tyler accepted it with a hearty smile.

"Let's all drink!"

After a few drinks, Tyler praised Carlisle, calling him a modern-day love guru. When Kevin and Zack learned that Tyler had ended his 33-year-long bachelorhood the same day he took Carlisle's advice, they immediately urged Carlisle to give Wendell some guidance, too.

Glancing at Wendell, who still dwelled in his thoughts, Carlisle said, "Wendell, we're all friends here. If you've got something to say, just spill it out."

Wendell had once been a special force team leader, so whatever bothered him was certainly something significant.

Wendell downed his drink in one gulp and set the glass down.

"If we set off those million-dollar fireworks all at once, we'll attract the attention of the people at the rehabilitation hospital and half of the East District. If the Murrays look into this, our previous operation might be exposed!"

Kevin and Zack's expressions turned solemn as Francis' eyes narrowed. Carlisle picked up his glass and took a sip.

"I didn't think about that."

He had considered that attracting some attention shouldn't be a problem since he and Wendell had resigned and would return to Riverland after Wanda's birthday. Even if the Murrays discovered them, he still had Gareth's and Wade's protection.

However, upon reflection, he realized that while he might avoid trouble, the people who helped him cover it up might not be as fortunate.

Those include Janice, the mother-to-be who was still working despite being a few months

pregnant, Zoey, the main mastermind of the entire operation, the Lawson couple, the humble village teachers who had to run a few miles to work as private tutors after school to pay for their son's medical bills and Sharon, the Caltopia College student who had a bright future ahead and saw Carlisle as a brother.

The security personnel at the rehabilitation hospital were also involved. Wendell had mentioned that they were probably retired soldiers like him. Colton's father had liver disease, and he had agreed to Wendell's request in exchange for the surgery fees.

Carlisle had no idea what the Murrays might do to these people, but it certainly wouldn't end well. Lowering his head, he felt a little lost as he considered the possibility that his plan of setting off fireworks for Wanda might expose them.

It seemed he had only two choices left: to give up the fireworks for Wanda or to safeguard the people who had helped him. Anyone with even a sliver of conscience would undoubtedly choose to protect the people.

Feeling uncomfortable with the tense atmosphere, Tyler asked in confusion, "What are you all talking about? I don't understand a word."

Carlisle turned to him and replied bitterly, "I really could use some help now."

He thought he wouldn't need help from Gareth's grandfather, Theodore. But it seemed that he was now left without a choice. If even Theodore couldn't help him with this, he would have to give up the surprise he had prepared for Wanda.

"Let's hear about it," Tyler slowly said.

Carlisle was his matchmaker and the person who had saved Theodore's family. If Carlisle were in trouble, Tyler would use all his connections to help him.

Carlisle told Tyler his reason for coming to Yorksle and how he had sneaked into the Murray family's rehabilitation hospital. The more Tyler listened, the more astonished he became. He wondered how an 18-year-old student had managed to conduct such an operation. Carlisle was indeed a fearless teenager. If anything had gone wrong, they would all be finished.

There were troops stationed in Maple Hill. They had to pass through the military base to get into the rehabilitation hospital. If something went wrong, all involved personnel might be imprisoned if the military charged them with stealing military secrets.

After listening to Carlisle's account, Tyler slowly asked, "So you want to set off fireworks for your girlfriend and avoid being investigated by the Murrays, right?"

Chapter 625

"Yes. If there's no other way, I'll just have to give up the surprise for Wanda. It'll leave me with some regrets, though."

Carlisle took a sip from his glass, his eyes filled with melancholy. Tyler leaned against the couch and pinched the bridge of his nose. Shortly after, he sighed.

"I can't think of any perfect solution either. Let me give Grandpa a call."

With that, he went to the balcony with his phone to make the call.

Renaissance Apartment in the East District housed a group of retired elderly officials. All its residents had once held high and powerful positions during their careers. The security there was strict, with guards stationed every few steps outside the apartment.

It was 10:00 pm. While most of the residences had their lights off, one room on the eighth floor of the central building was brightly lit. The room was clean and simple, with portraits of great leaders hanging on the walls.

"Checkmate

"Checkmate again."

"Oh, I lost again..."

An elderly man and a young man played chess in the living room. Theodore, with a head of gray hair and a face full of wrinkles, was dressed decently and neatly. He wore a pair of reading glasses.

"You intentionally let me win again, didn't you?" Theodore asked, smiling faintly.

"I lost, and that's all that matters," Xavier, in his 20s, replied, his face devoid of expression.

He wore a slightly loose camouflage uniform.

"How's Zay doing there?" Theodore asked, taking a sip from his teacup.

Xavier calmly nodded.

"Pretty good. He even has a chubby son, your great-grandson."

Theodore's hand trembled as he locked his sharp eyes on Xavier and asked in disbelief, "What did you just say?"

Xavier rolled his eyes.

"Do you have to get all worked up?"

Theodore laughed heartily.

"Wonderful! Simply wonderful! Is that brat's wife from your side, too?"

Xavier nodded in response.

"His wife is really something. I can't disclose too much, but if everything goes well, you should be able to reunite with his family in a couple of years."

Xavier's words thrilled Theodore so much that he almost couldn't hold his teacup.

His eyes welled with tears as he said, "Finally, after nine years..."

Xavier then casually asked, "Any news about the matter I asked you to look into?"

"Everything's been verified," Theodore said as he set down the teacup with his trembling hands and got up to retrieve several documents from a drawer in the cabinet behind him.

"Coincidentally, your brother saved my entire family." Theodore remarked as he handed the documents to Xavier.

Chapter 626

Carlisle and the others had lost the mood to drink, their eyes fixated on Tyler's Nokia 7610. The room was deathly quiet, with only the ticking of the wall clock breaking the silence.

Around 11 o'clock, the phone finally rang, Carlisle looked at Tyler with great anticipation.

"Grandpa," Tyler answered the phone, feeling a bit nervous.

Given the conflict between Theodore and the Murrays, Tyler wasn't sure if Theodore could assist Carlisle in this matter.

"Sorry, there's nothing I can do either."

Theodore's helpless voice came from the other end of the line.

"It's okay. I understand," Tyler replied, his shoulders slumped.

After Theodore ended the call, Tyler turned to Carlisle, wearing an apologetic expression. Despite Tyler's silence, Carlisle could tell what Theodore had said from his expression.

Picking up his empty glass, Carlisle said, "Let's drink."

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Since even Theodore couldn't help, Carlisle figured he had no choice but to throw in the towel.

Tyler poured Carlisle some wine and softly said, "Grandpa's been feuding with the Murrays for decades. If this had happened two or three years ago, he could've easily handled it. But he's been retired for three years now and probably feels powerless against them."

In fact, Tyler suspected that Theodore was reluctant to waste his resources to help Carlisle to please his girlfriend. If the Murrays dared to lay a finger on Carlisle, Theodore would definitely mobilize all resources to support him.

Tyler also thought Carlisle was overdoing it. He didn't see the need to make such a fuss over a birthday. He recalled having only a simple meal for his own birthday before graduating from university.

"It's alright. I understand," Carlisle responded.

He smiled before taking a sip of wine and spearing a piece of roasted lamb with his fork before chewing.

Ever since his rebirth, he had developed a fearless attitude. He believed that his rebirth had made him the protagonist, granting him the ability to realize his ideas as long as he executed them.

This had indeed been the case as he had successfully grown his business from gaming equipment to owning several companies within just three months.

Consequently, he didn't see the Murray family as a fearful opponent, thinking he would surpass them sooner or later. However, reality had slapped him in the face, showing that even Theodore dared not offend the Murrays lightly.

He thought that perhaps Theodore felt Carlisle's actions were meaningless. Thus, Theodore refused to waste his connection and resources for him. Nevertheless, Carlisle knew what he was doing. Despite others' opinions, he remained convinced that his actions were meaningful.

After all, what fault did he have for wanting to give a memorable birthday to his beloved girlfriend? "So are we canceling the fireworks then?" Wendell asked, sensing that Carlisle intended to give up. He then reminded him, "I talked to a few fireworks vendors. They said we could return them for a full refund within seven days."

"No. We're not returning them," Carlisle replied firmly. He then rose and retired to his bedroom to rest.

As long as he kept his resolve, there would always be more solutions than problems. After all, solutions were created by people.

There were still two days until Wanda's birthday. Carlisle was confident he would come up with a solution if he stayed focused.

Carlisle lay down on his bed, feeling slightly tipsy. Suddenly, he received a call from Christine. "Carlisle, Phoebe and I received invitations to Wanda's birthday party. Did you get one?"

Chapter 627 "Invitation?"

Carlisle's eyes snapped open when he heard Christine mention receiving an invitation to Wanda's birthday party.

He was surprised that the rehabilitation hospital actually allowed outsiders to enter. He wondered why they'd do that and if they worried about their secrets being leaked.

"Who gave you the invitations?"

"Queenie did. She seems to have received one, too."

"I see. It's been two months since you last saw Wanda. She's going to be thrilled to see you at her birthday party," Carlisle remarked while smiling as he imagined Wanda's reaction when she saw Christine and Phoebe.

Christine continued, "I've been talking to Wanda over the phone these days. She's been asking about you a lot."

"You talked to her over the phone?" Carlisle asked in disbelief, surprised that Wanda was allowed to contact the outside world.

Christine explained, "Wanda made a friend there who managed to get a phone through connections. She contacted us with that phone."

The first time Wanda called Christine, they chatted until late at night. The next day, when Christine tried to call Wanda back, she was informed that the user's phone service had been suspended due to non-payment. Christine then topped up the phone's credit with 200 dollars.

In the following days, Wanda called Christine every night, asking about the company's situation and her relationship with Carlisle.

Christine also learned from Wanda that the two had met and that Wanda had asked Carlisle to forget about her.

When Christine asked Wanda her reason for doing so, the latter simply said she had no memory of Carlisle anymore and wanted to focus on learning as much as possible during her university years.

Despite Christine's persuasion, Wanda seemed to have made up her mind. Thus, Christine had no choice but to give up on convincing her.

"Can you give me her number?" Carlisle asked.

"Well..."

Christine hesitated because Wanda had instructed her not to give the number to Carlisle.

"It's getting late. You should get some rest," Carlisle said calmly, his tone devoid of blame.

"I'll send it to you on MSN Messenger."

Christine ultimately decided to give Carlisle the number. If Carlisle and Wanda broke up for good, Christine might never believe in romance again. Moreover, Christine still owed Carlisle her life. If it weren't for him, she would likely be long dead.

Carlisle received Wanda's number from Christine but didn't make the call immediately. Instead, he dialed Lethan's number.

"Carlisle, I was just about to call you!" Lethan answered instantly.

"What's up?" Carlisle asked.

Lethan lit a cigarette and worriedly said, "Will this cold wave ever come? Riverland had a bit of rain and snow yesterday, and the temperature dropped significantly. But it's still not enough to affect the aquaculture ecosystem."

"Why the rush? Winter won't reach the south until it's closer to November."

Carlisle understood Lethan's eagerness for the cold wave to arrive. However, from a humanitarian standpoint, he disagreed with Lethan's urgency.

Then again, Carlisle was a businessman, not a saint. With billions invested, he couldn't afford to worry about humanitarian concerns. This was human nature at its finest.

"The month is already halfway over, and the temperature in the north has dropped. How can I not be anxious?"

"We're heavily in debt to raise this one billion dollars. If this bet fails, it will take years to recover. With the rapid development these days, I'm not even sure if Islo Clothing can maintain its current performance!" Lethan said irritably.

"Take it easy. Just focus on breaking into aquaculture," Carlisle calmly reassured him.

Lethan extinguished his cigarette in the ashtray and calmed himself down before slowly asking, "So why did you call?"

"Did you receive an invitation to Wanda's birthday party?"

"I didn't, but Shania did."

"I'll ask Shania for help then." Carlisle hung up and called Shania.

Chapter 628

Carlisle planned to attribute the fireworks display to Shania. Since Shania was Wanda's aunt and deeply fond of her niece, it made sense to claim that she had spent over a million dollars on

fireworks for Wanda.

"You spent a million dollars on fireworks? That's very generous of you," Shania remarked, smiling wryly.

Given the cost of living and average wages, it would take an ordinary person over a hundred years to save a million dollars by collecting pennies. A million dollars could build a lavish mansion with luxurious decor, yet Carlisle chose to spend it on fireworks, a fleeting burst of beauty.

Nevertheless, Shania couldn't help but envy Wanda. No woman wouldn't appreciate a man willing to spend extravagantly for her.

Carlisle clearly understood romance.

By the time Carlisle finished his call with Shania, it was nearly one o'clock. His phone service had also been suspended due to unpaid fees. He didn't subscribe to a long-distance package, so the roaming charges were exorbitant.

It was a sunny afternoon on November 9th. The living quarters were festively decorated while the medical staff were all on holiday.

A red carpet was laid out on the road, and several million-dollar cars were parked on either side. Inside Wanda's villa, four chefs were busily preparing their specialties.

The people who attended included three members of the Murray family, Finn, Skyler and his wife, Rosalie Yarnell, five members of the Thompson family, Shein, Josie, Zachary, Queenie, and Shania, and three of Wanda's closest friends, Christine, Phoebe, and Lily.

Some patients from the rehabilitation hospital were also present, but Bianca was not among them. Two round tables were set up in the living room, with fruit platters, pastries, and red wine. Wanda was sitting on the couch, chatting with Christine and the others.

"Wanda, where's Bianca?" Christine asked curiously.

Recently, Wanda had frequently mentioned Bianca over the phone, discussing her unfortunate fate. Christine even felt her own past struggles with sporadic meals paled in comparison to Bianca's plight.

"Brenton forbade her from attending my birthday party," Wanda said with a pout, glancing at Brenton, who was chatting and laughing with her father outside.

Christine was puzzled.

"But all the patients here are your neighbors, right? Why would he prevent Bianca from coming?" Wanda looked over at Rosalie, who was sitting with Josie and Shania and began to understand Brenton's reasoning for keeping Bianca away.

Rosalie, in her early 40s, wore a black mink coat. Her neatly styled hair had a few gray strands showing, and her eyes held a hint of melancholy.

The mink coat seemed to act as a protective shell, showcasing her grace and elegance while concealing her inner vulnerability.

"Ms. Yarnell, is something bothering you?" Josie asked curiously.

Rosalie regained her composure and smiled.

"Just thinking about some work matters."

Although her primary reason for attending Wanda's birthday party was to meet her future daughter-in-law, she also wanted to visit Bianca. However, due to Skyler's heartless arrangement, she only managed to see Wanda and not Bianca.

Josie, experienced in dealing with many entrepreneurs, was adept at reading people but couldn't gauge the truth behind Josie's words.

She joked cluelessly, "We're involved in the same fields you're managing. If you're feeling overwhelmed, we'd be happy to help!"

Chapter 629

Shania, sitting next to Josie, shot a sideways glance at her.

She wondered if Josie was so eager to secure a deal from Rosalie. Regardless of the urgency, Shania didn't think it was wise for Josie to propose a collaboration under the guise of concern. She

wondered if Josie assumed that Rosalie, who came from an ordinary background and only rose into the upper class through marriage, could be easily deceived.

Rosalie had been with the Murrays for nearly 20 years. Even if she were inexperienced, the Murray family's resources would have honed her into a business expert.

With an apologetic expression, Rosalie whispered, "I'm not in charge of the business side, and the orders for the companies under my name are currently full. However, if there are any future plans for business expansion, I will certainly recommend you, Josie!"

Rosalie noticed that Finn was deeply fond of Wanda. If it were up to her, she would be willing to give some large orders to the Thompson and Warbane families to strengthen their relationship. However, the Murrays wanted to wait until Finn and Wanda were engaged before entering into a partnership.

"Please don't get me wrong, Rosalie. I'm only offering to help because I'm concerned you might be overworking yourself," Josie said, smilingly, though a trace of disappointment flickered in her eyes.

This was her first meeting with Rosalie. Although she knew her direct approach might risk Rosalie's opinion of her, she had no choice but to proceed in this manner because Thompson Group was at a disadvantage in their business competition with Yuriel.

Josie had initially thought that feigning a strained relationship with Shein would convince Yuriel to let his guard down, preventing him from targeting both families simultaneously. But Yuriel, as the wealthiest man in Riverland, had not been wary of the possibility of her and Shein joining forces against him.

Yuriel had almost monopolized 60% of the development rights in the Riverwatch District, while Thompson Group and the Warbane family's Windex Corporation only held a combined share of 30

%.

Yuriel had completely outpaced Thompson Group in the real estate sector. In the fashion and handbag industry, Yuriel's Fashion Breeze was closing in on Islo Clothing. In the internet sector, Yuriel's Wowlingo boasted 1.5 million registered users, compared to Thompson Group's Vision Door, which had only about 800 thousand.

Thompson Group was also falling behind Yuriel's company in other sectors. Overall, Yuriel held a significant edge over Shein in every area.

Josie knew that even if they integrated the resources of the Thompson and Warbane families, it would still be challenging to match up against Yuriel. She understood that rushing wouldn't help, but the situation demanded urgency.

The international luxury brand Hermès was about to enter the Cascade State market with plans to open three exclusive stores there. To attract customers, Hermès was seeking a partner to design a limited-edition, sophisticated handbag.

Eight companies were competing for this project, including Islo Clothing and Fashion Breeze. Josie knew Islo Clothing well and was aware that its design had stagnated.

Despite being established a few years after Iso Clothing, Fashion Breeze's unique design concepts and technological innovations had garnered industry attention, making Isolo Clothing's chances of winning the bid slim.

Collaborating with Hermès, a top international luxury brand, could significantly enhance a

company's visibility and market presence. If Fashion Breeze won the bid, Islo Clothing would fall from its leading position in the Riverland fashion industry.

Rosalie elegantly lifted her teacup and took a sip before gently asking, "I assume you've been under quite a bit of stress lately, Josie?"

Josie, whose family had been in business for three generations, had learned business etiquette from a young age. Her eagerness to collaborate with the Murray family indicated that their business in Riverland was facing some difficulties.

"Is it that obvious?" Josie responded while giving an awkward yet polite smile.

Rosalie gently said, "It's Wanda's birthday today. We should focus on making her happy. Business affairs can wait."

After becoming a member of the Murray family, Rosalie had gained everything she ever wanted-a luxurious home, expensive cars, and a vast fortune. Even her friends and relatives had benefited from her marriage.

However, she had lost her freedom and time and missed out on raising her own son. She disliked this version of herself, feeling like she had failed as a mother.

Josie had a similar situation. It was said that she handed her daughter over to a nanny shortly after giving birth and rarely returned home.

Yet, unlike Rosalie who was bound by the Murrays' restrictions, Josie had chosen her career over her daughter.

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The only person who had gained Rosalie's respect in terms of motherhood was her sister-in-law, Cheryl Baker, who managed to juggle raising her child and running the company.

Thus, Rosalie wanted Josie to spend some quality time with her daughter on her birthday.

Meanwhile, Shein was also attempting to seek help from Skyler. Yet, Skyler was shrewd enough to devise excuses to turn him down.

The head of the Murrays had stated that Thompson Group should not receive any aid from the Murrays until Wanda married Finn. After all, Thompson Group wasn't a small enterprise but one with a big appetite, craving endless help.

On the other hand, Finn was chatting with Zachary about games. Finn also played The Legendary Tale and spent a lot of money on it.

When he heard Zachary was the renowned Chaos_Hero, he exclaimed in astonishment, "So you're the one wielding the Heavenly Sword!"

Zachary sighed.

"Speaking of that, it was quite a hassle obtaining that sword..."

As the two discussed the game, Queenie, who was unable to join the conversation, felt out of place and decided to look for Wanda instead.

At the sight of Wanda approaching, Queenie smiled happily and greeted her, "Wanda!"

"Queenie," Wanda greeted her politely with a nod.

Turning to Finn, who was dressed in an extravagant white suit, she asked, "May I have a word with you?"

"Certainly!"

Finn nodded, smilingly. He then stood up and left with Wanda.

Wanda didn't beat around the bush.

"I want Bianca to join us at this party."

Finn's gentle smile slightly faded.

"I'm afraid that it would be a little hard to arrange. My dad doesn't want my mom to interact with Bianca. He claims it's for Bianca's sake."

Wanda's bright eyes dimmed.

"Forget it, then."

As she was about to leave, Finn quickly added, "I'll see what I can do."

He didn't want Wanda to be upset on her birthday.

"Thanks!"

Wanda turned back to him, a charming smile spread across her sweet, lovely face. Finn was momentarily lost in her clear, captivating eyes. He thought her smile was like dew in the morning, serene and gentle.

When Wanda returned to her friends, Finn finally snapped out of his daze. With a smile on his face, he walked toward his father.

Several security guards were stationed outside Bianca's villa. Typically, these guards wouldn't

patrol the living quarters, but Brenton had arranged for them to watch Bianca that day, making sure she wouldn't leave the villa.

Leaning out from the second-floor window, Bianca ate peanuts, throwing the shells at the security guards below.

"Take that! And that!"