

## Love Spell 631

### Chapter 631

Bianca was furious. It was Wanda's birthday, and she had already prepared a gift for her. Yet, Brenton refused to let her leave the place.

"Go to hell, stupid Brenton. I hate you!" Bianca shouted at the guards stationed downstairs.

"How dare you curse me?"

Brenton entered her room with a darkened expression.

Bianca retorted defiantly, "So what? You deserve it! You're illegally detaining me!"

Brenton placed his hands behind his back and sighed.

"I had planned to allow you to attend Ms. Wanda's birthday party, but now I'll have to reconsider."

"No! Kind Brenton, I was wrong! I shouldn't have cursed you. I won't do it again. You're the best caretaker in the world!"

With that, Bianca rushed downstairs.

It was 6:00 pm. The phonograph in the living room played soft, melodic music, announcing that Wanda's birthday party had officially begun.

The table had various dishes and over ten types of exquisite beverages. All the ingredients and drinks had been brought by the Murray family.

Wanda's classmates and a few peers from the rehabilitation hospital sat at one table while the Murrys and Thompsons sat at another.

Shein stood with a glass of red wine and said, "Today is my daughter Wanda's 18th birthday. First, I'd like to thank my in-laws-"

"Dad," Wanda interjected, her brows slightly furrowed at the mention of in-laws.

She wondered when she had agreed to marry Finn.

With a smile, Shein asked, "What's the matter?"

Wanda stared at him silently, her displeasure evident.

Skyler chuckled and smoothed things over, "Let's save the in-law talk for now. I'm a few years older than you, so let's skip the formalities. Just call me Skyler."

Shein glanced at Wanda and sighed inwardly at her lack of manners.

He then continued, "Then, I'd like to thank Skyler for such a well-"

"I think Wanda should deliver a speech herself," Skyler interrupted Shein.

Since Finn organized Wanda's birthday party, Skyler thought it fitting for Wanda to thank him herself.

Rosalie smiled and chimed in, "That's right, Mr. Thompson. Wanda has turned 18 today, so she should express her gratitude to her parents for raising her."

"Indeed. Wanda, are you ready for your speech?" Shein asked.

"Yes, I am," Wanda replied confidently as she stood up to deliver her speech.

"On this special day, I sincerely thank you all for attending my birthday party. First, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents for giving me life. Your love and dedication have been the driving force behind my growth, and I will never forget it. Next, I'd like to thank Mr. Murray\_ "

"Finn organized this party himself. I had nothing to do with it," Skyler interjected while smiling.

"Well then. Thank you, Mr. Murray Junior-"

"Oh, that sounds a bit formal, don't you think?" Skyler interrupted again.

Feeling slightly embarrassed, Wanda said, "Thank you... Mr. Finn?"

She was unsure how to address Finn. Referring to him as "Mr. Murray Junior" seemed too rigid, while calling him "Finn Murray" felt disrespectful.

After some thought, she settled on "Mr. Finn".

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"You can call me whatever you like," Finn responded.

He shot her a gentlemanly smile, feeling both warm and sweet inside.

Wanda forced a smile and continued, "Thank you, Mr. Finn, for organizing this elaborate birthday party. I also want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Murray for attending despite their busy schedules..."

After expressing her gratitude to everyone present, Wanda raised her glass and said, "Thank you all for celebrating my coming of age with me. Cheers!"

Josie was momentarily stunned, a hint of confusion in her eyes. Although she knew Wanda was turning 18, she hadn't realized it meant she was officially an adult.

She marveled at how time had passed. In the blink of an eye, her daughter had grown up before she could spend more time with her.

This also meant that Wanda would soon be engaged to Finn. After graduating from university, Wanda would marry Finn and become a wife and eventually a mother.

Josie lowered her eyes, her mind racing with thoughts. She suddenly thought of Rosalie, who held no real power despite managing several companies. To put it bluntly, Rosalie was like a puppet controlled by the Murray family. Josie wondered if Wanda might end up in a similar situation if she married Finn.

With an inward sigh, Josie couldn't help but worry about her daughter's future.

Zachary was also in a slight daze as he realized that his younger sister, who used to cling to him, had grown up. Wanda had become more distant since he intervened in her relationship with Carlisle. It had been a long time since she had affectionately called him "Zac". He wondered where his sweet younger sister had gone.

"Let's all raise our glasses and wish Wanda a happy birthday!" Skyler called out, lifting his glass in a show of generosity.

Everyone raised their glasses in unison and said, "Happy birthday, Wanda!"

Despite her joyous smile, Wanda's eyes were tinged with a hint of sadness. She couldn't explain her depressed emotion, so she assumed it was due to her parent's decision to sacrifice her happiness in exchange for the expansion of their business empire.

The dinner began. Wanda joined Christine and her group for the meal. Bianca ate heartily, her mouth smeared with grease. Christine and Phoebe were impressed by the dishes served.

When dinner started to wind down at around 7:00 pm, the sound of a helicopter's rotor blades resounded from outside.

Skyler frowned and asked, "What's going on? Why is there a helicopter landing here?" Maple Hill was a no-fly zone, and all aircraft were prohibited from flying over it. Skyler was worried that one of the government departments might be coming to inspect Maple Hill. Finn smiled politely and said, "That must be the helicopter I arranged."

Skyler felt slightly relieved. With his cousin's connections, the Murray family could request exceptions to the no-fly zone. However, he wondered what Finn needed the helicopter for.

"Excuse me. I need to go fetch something," Finn said, smiling gently before striding outside. Skyler leaned closer to Rosalie and asked in a low tone, "What did our son buy?"

Finn had personally invited Michelin-starred chefs from abroad to cook up a storm for Wanda's birthday party. Skyler wondered what else Finn had prepared.

Rosalie shook her head, replying, "I don't know."

Moments later, Finn returned holding a massive bouquet of roses. Each bloom was vibrant and striking, with layers of petals like delicate artwork, emitting a captivating fragrance that seemed to fill the air with romance.

Dressed in a pure white suit and standing tall, Finn held the 999 roses tenderly. He entered the room slowly, resembling a prince from a fairy tale.

The scene struck a chord with Phoebe and Christine, who were both single, leaving them visibly moved.

Finn approached Wanda, smiling warmly as he said, "Wanda, this bouquet of 999 Freedom Roses was specially ordered from Aquador. They symbolize free and passionate love. On this special day, I'd like to confess my feelings for you. Wanda, will you be my girlfriend?"

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The room fell into a dead silence, with everyone wearing different expressions.

Lily, Christine, Phoebe, and Bianca were taken aback. Despite Finn's elite status, they had hoped to see Wanda with Carlisle, with whom she had once shared a sweet romance. If Wanda accepted Finn's roses, it would mean the end of her relationship with Carlisle.

Finn's parents were visibly relieved. Finn had never shown much interest in women, but now he was taking the initiative to confess his feelings. It seemed as though he had indeed grown up.

At the same time, Queenie and the heiresses at the rehabilitation hospital felt envious of Wanda, while Shania felt anxious.

After all, Shania was the person who had rooted for Wanda and Carlisle the most. She had great faith in Carlisle and was confident he would eventually build a vast business empire. Shein took a sip from his teacup, a smile spreading across his face. Since Wanda no longer remembered Carlisle, he was confident Finn would win her hand with his charm and romantic character.

Wanda stared blankly at the large bouquet of roses.

This was Finn's third confession. He had confessed to her privately the first two times, but she had declined him, citing her age as the reason.

Now, Finn had chosen to confess in front of their parents, leaving her with no easy way to refuse him.

As her mind was in turmoil, Wanda kept recalling the scene of Carlisle dragging her into the restroom and kissing her forcefully.

"Accept him, Wanda."

Zachary broke the silence.

Queenie chimed in, "That's right. Mr. Finn has never fallen for a lady before. You're his first love!"

"Go on. Accept him," Brenton urged, cheerfully smiling.

The patients followed suit. Wanda was caught in a dilemma, her eyes welling up with tears. Shania secretly texted Carlisle: "Start now!"

Carlisle, who was warming himself by the fire with a few village officials at Cycas Village in Maple Hill, was startled by the message.

It was only 7:00 pm, and he had instructed the villagers to set off the fireworks at 8:00 pm. He couldn't possibly start them right away.

However, he knew Shania must have a good reason for her message.

Thus, he instructed the village chief, "Chief, tell everyone to start the fireworks now!"

The chief turned on the PA system, tested the microphone, and announced, "Testing 1, 2, 3... Folks, please start setting off your fireworks now!"

Carlisle also grabbed some fireworks and headed outside.

At this sight, Wendell and his men, who were smoking nearby, quickly extinguished their cigarettes and went to help.

Meanwhile, at the birthday party, Wanda took a deep breath and reached for the roses with trembling hands.

She couldn't reject Finn. Otherwise, she might offend the Murrays and get her parents into trouble.

Finn was about to hand Wanda the 999 roses when the sky suddenly lit up with a spectacular burst of fireworks. Skyler saw the display through the window and assumed Finn arranged it.

He then instructed Brenton, "Open the door, Mr. Karsh."

Brenton opened the front door as directed, revealing the colorful sky.

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The fireworks began in one direction and eventually filled the entire night sky, displaying a dazzling array of colors.

Although the fireworks were launched a distance away from the rehabilitation hospital, with fireworks coming from every direction, their illumination completely lit up Maple Hill. "Wow, this is amazing!" Bianca exclaimed, almost tripping as she rushed outside excitedly. Wanda, who was also a fan of fireworks, hurried out to see the colorful display.

"Silly boy, what are you still waiting for? Go out and watch the fireworks with Wanda."

Skyler chuckled before asking, "By the way, how many fireworks did you buy?"

With a stunned expression, Finn replied, "I-I didn't prepare any fireworks."

"Who else could it be if it wasn't you?"

Skyler's smile froze.

With a smile, Shania chimed in, "It was me. This is my birthday gift to Wanda."

Shein and Josie stared at Shania skeptically, finding her claim hard to believe.

"That's why I arrived here yesterday. It was to prepare this surprise for Wanda," Shania said, smiling beautifully.

Josie didn't buy it.

However, knowing that it wasn't the time to question Shania, Josie smiled and said, "I should've known. Otherwise, why would a busy person like you come to Yorksle a day earlier? That's really thoughtful of you, Shania."

Shania sighed and said, "I've been so occupied with work for the last few years that I haven't spent much time with Wanda. Today is her 18th birthday. As her aunt, I felt obligated to do something special for her."

Somehow, Josie felt that Shania's tone was laced with irony, as if the latter was implying something about herself.

With a faint smile, she asked, "Are you trying to make a point about me, Shania?"

Shania silently took a sip of her red wine in response. Shein slightly frowned, feeling that something didn't add up. He questioned how Shania knew about Maple Hill in the first place. "How did you find out about Maple Hill then?" Skyler asked, his eyes narrowing.



Shania was startled, not knowing how to explain. She had been utterly clueless about Wanda's whereabouts until she attended this party. The address of the rehabilitation hospital wasn't written on the birthday invitation either.

Josie calmly replied, "I told her about it."

"We had an agreement," Skyler reminded her, his expression icy.

Josie said apologetically, "I'm sorry. I thought it was alright to tell someone I trust the most.

Before Skyler could say anything, Finn quickly interjected, "Let it go, Dad. We will be a family soon, so we shouldn't strain our relationships."

Skyler gulped his wine, sensing something amiss.

Meanwhile, Wanda stood in the garden outside the villa, captivated by the fireworks blooming across the night sky. The colorful display was beautiful and enchanting.

She thought it was the best birthday gift she had ever received.

As the sky lit up with more colors from the fireworks, Finn stood a distance away with the bouquet in his arms. He wore a puzzled expression.

He wondered if Shania was indeed the person who had prepared these fireworks. Judging by the display, the fireworks seemed to have been set off from at least four villages. The scale was almost comparable to a New Year's celebration in the city, costing about a million dollars.

Christine and the others were also watching the fireworks outside.

Phoebe marveled, "I've never seen so many fireworks in my entire life, not even during New Year's in my hometown!"

With a hint of disappointment, Christine remarked, "If only the fireworks were closer to us!" Lily gazed at the fireworks, pondering, "Carlisle, this was from you, wasn't it?"

The fireworks show lasted for half an hour. As the fireworks gradually diminished, Wanda's smile faded as well. She was indeed fond of fireworks and would have been over the moon if anyone else had prepared such a show for her-anyone but Finn.

When the fireworks finally ended, Maple Hill was once again enveloped in darkness.

Wanda approached Finn and asked, "Did you prepare these fireworks?"

Wearing a complicated expression, Finn shook his head and gently said, "It was from your Aunt Shania."

"Aunt Shania?"

Wanda's eyes widened in disbelief. She hurried into the living room, her eyes reddening. "Aunt Shania! Thank you so much for the gift. I love it so much!"

Wanda threw herself into Shania's arms. Shania gently hugged her niece and whispered something in her ear. Wanda was stunned upon hearing it.

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"Thank you, Aunt Shania. This is the best gift I've ever received!"

Wanda hugged Shania tightly, tears streaming down her face.

"There, there, put away those tears. It's your birthday today, so no crying allowed!"

Shania gently patted Wanda's back. Wanda was moved to tears, but Shania knew it wasn't because she was very touched. It was because she had just discreetly revealed to Wanda that the fireworks were Carlisle's gift to her.

Skyler noticed Finn standing motionlessly with the bouquet, so he asked, "Aren't these flowers for Wanda? Go give them to her."

"Flowers! I want flowers!"

Suddenly, a girl in pigtail braids rushed over and snatched Finn's bouquet, spinning happily with it and rubbing her face into the flowers.

"My flowers!"

Finn snatched the bouquet back from the girl, only to find that most of the roses were damaged by her careless movements. He sighed helplessly.

"Mr. Karsh, whose child is this?" Skyler asked sternly.

Brenton whispered in Skyler's ear, explaining that the girl was the daughter of Zurford State's deputy leader.

Skyler's face twitched.

"What's her condition?"

Brenton replied after swallowing hard, "Intermittent psychosis."

Skyler waved his hand dismissively and instructed impatiently, "Get her to the medical department now!"

"All the doctors are off today—"

"Then send her back to her villa and have her housemaid keep an eye on her," Skyler said coldly, suppressing his anger.

If it had been any other patient, Skyler would have kicked them out of the rehabilitation hospital without hesitation.

Feeling a prickling sensation on his scalp, Brenton quickly dragged the girl out.

Bianca, hiding among the patients, smiled contentedly.

She was the only patient who loved hanging out at others' villas. While others might see the patients as abnormal, Bianca knew that these patients came from influential backgrounds and that all of them would be cured of their illnesses one day.

She was confident that, in the near future, the connections she gained there would be valuable for her revenge.

The girl earlier was Fiona Cox, the daughter of the deputy leader of Zurford State. Despite knowing each other for only a short time, Bianca had already mingled well with her.

In fact, Fiona wasn't experiencing an episode earlier but was merely putting on a show that Bianca had scripted for her during the fireworks.

Suddenly, Skyler's phone vibrated in his pocket. He pulled out his phone and found a text message from his mistress that read: "Skyler, I'm back!"

Noticing Skyler's anger had eased a little, Rosalie was certain the former had received a text from his mistress.

However, she feigned ignorance and asked gently, "Who sent you a message? Was it Benedict?"

Skyler, who was just pondering how to excuse himself, seized the opportunity and replied solemnly, "Yes. Dad wants me to meet him in the study."

Rosalie gently smiled.

"Then you should go home first. I can take care of things here for you."

After briefly hesitating, Skyler nodded.

"Thanks. I'll leave it to you then."

He then turned to Shein and said indifferently, "Something's come up, so I'll excuse myself for now, Shein."

Shein quickly rose and said, "I'll see you off."

"No, thanks. Stay here with your daughter. It's her birthday, after all."

With that, Skyler left.

Before getting into his car, Skyler murmured something to Brenton outside. Brenton nodded in acknowledgment.

Skyler got into his car and immediately made a call.

"Boss."

"Look into the villages that released those fireworks. I want to know everything about it." "Yes, boss."

As soon as Skyler ended the call, a call from an unknown number came through.

"Who's this?"

Skyler answered the call.

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Heston's voice came from the other end of the line.

"Skyler, about tonight's fireworks... Don't look into it and let it go!"

"Why?"

Skyler frowned, puzzled.

"Just do as I said. I won't lead you astray," Heston said before hanging up the phone.

Skyler was left dazed in the car, not understanding why Heston had forbidden him from looking into the matter. He wondered who had arranged them. Could it be someone with an inferior background?

However, he didn't dwell on the matter for long, anxious to meet his mistress and have fun that night.

As he leaned back and hummed a tune, his phone rang again. Time time, it was from his father, Benedict Murray.

"Hello, Dad."

Skyler sat up straight.

"Come to my study now."

Benedict's aged voice came through the phone.

"Dad, I'm at my future daughter-in-law's birthday party," Skyler replied lightly, wanting to meet his mistress, who had just returned to Yorksle.

"If I don't see you by midnight, don't bother coming back to meet me again!" Benedict stated coldly before ending the call abruptly.

He had five sons, and each of them was impressive in their own right-except for Skyler. If Skyler hadn't given him a remarkable grandson, Benedict would have kicked that good-for- nothing out of the family ages ago.

It was time for Wanda to cut her eight-layered cake. Christine and the others gathered around her, singing her a birthday song.

Shein downed a few drinks in frustration, feeling glum. Although Wanda had no memories of Carlisle anymore, she didn't seem interested in Finn either.

He wondered why his daughter was so foolish. The Murray family had a long history and was the ideal family that countless women aspired to marry.

Josie's expression was troubled. It seemed that she would have to talk to Wanda about it. If Wanda refused to accept Finn, Thompson Group might soon collapse.

It was already midnight when Carlisle and the others returned to Glamor Hotel.

"Boss, I'm still worried," Wendell confessed, sitting on the couch.

Their operation had many flaws that could lead back to them if the Murrays sensed

something was amiss.

Sitting on the couch, Carlisle chuckled.

"Don't worry. Tyler just texted me, saying that someone has contacted the Murrays, preventing them from looking into tonight's fireworks."

"Got in touch? More like ordered them around!" Wendell exclaimed, his eyes widening in disbelief.

Carlisle was also puzzled.

"This person must be influential, perhaps more powerful than Theodore. Maybe they're from the army!"

Lounging on the couch with crossed legs, Francis lit a cigarette and puffed.

"You've always been the one helping others. It's about time someone showed up to help you instead."

"I must find out who this person is one day," Carlisle remarked, curious about the mysterious helper.

Feeling his worries fade, Wendell's mood lifted.

He stood up and said, "Anyway, mission accomplished! Time to have a good drink!"

Carlisle chuckled.

"Okay. I'll order a roast lamb from the front desk!"

When they devoured the entire roast lamb and finished their drinks, it was already 2:00 am.

Carlisle took a hot shower, ready to hit the hay. He picked up his phone beside the pillow and found an unread message. He remembered seeing the sender's number somewhere before. Carlisle suddenly realized it was the number Christine had given him.

He quickly clicked on the message and found only two words written: "Thank you!"

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A smile spread across Carlisle's face.

He wanted to call Wanda but worried she might already be asleep. Instead, he decided to send her a message:

"Wanda, I've been waiting for the right moment to tell you how I feel. That's why I never confessed my feelings when we were together. I had planned to set off millions of fireworks at Riverland on your 18th birthday and confess my love in front of the entire school.



"I never imagined things would turn out this way and you'd be sent away. Since I missed my chance to express my feelings for you, tonight's fireworks shall serve as your birthday gift and my confession of love. Even if you no longer remember me, my love for you will last forever."

Carlisle reread the message, finding it a bit childish and cheesy. Nevertheless, it conveyed his feelings for Wanda. He pressed the send button and delivered it to her.

Unbeknownst to him, Bianca was holding the phone at that moment. After reading the message, she felt goosebumps all over. When Wanda emerged from the bathroom in her nightgown after her shower, she noticed Bianca rubbing her arms.

She asked curiously, "Do you feel cold?"

Bianca looked at Wanda and said, "Carlisle sent you a long, cheesy message that gave me goosebumps!"

"Huh?"

Wanda was puzzled. Drying her hair with a towel, she walked toward the bed and said, "Let me see."

"I suggest you don't. You might not be able to get any sleep tonight!" Bianca teased, tucking the phone under the pillow.

"Let me have a look!"

Wanda threw the towel aside and jumped on Bianca to tickle her. Unable to tolerate the tickling any longer, Bianca handed over the phone. When Wanda read the message, she blushed fiercely.

Bianca leaned over and asked, "It's really cheesy, isn't it?"

"Yeah, incredibly!"

Wanda nodded firmly, her face still red. Yet, she couldn't take her eyes off the message, and her smile widened. Even though she had no memories of Carlisle, she didn't find the message repulsive

but rather heartwarming. Wanda pressed the button to reply and began composing a message. However, she abruptly stopped when she thought about the Murray family.

Bianca knew Wanda well enough to understand her concerns and gently comforted her, " Don't worry, Wanda. Everything will be alright. If it comes down to it, you could always elope with Carlisle!"

"Elope? You've been watching too many dramas!" Wanda said, playfully poking Bianca's forehead.

Bianca replied thoughtfully, "I know you're concerned about your parents, but have they considered what you want? I wonder if they see you as their daughter or just a means to their ends."

Wanda was left speechless. Although her parents rarely spent time with her due to their busy work schedules, they had been loving parents who had provided her with a good life and education.

She could never bring herself to hate them.

Finn returned to Grand Summit Estates and went to Benedict's study. Benedict usually turned in early, but on that day, he hadn't gone to bed even at 3:00 am.

"Grandpa," Finn greeted him gently.

"So, what do you think of Wanda?" Benedict asked warmly.

"She's perfect," Finn replied, lowering his head.

"Do you like her?" Benedict asked, his expression tinged with mixed feelings.

"Yes!"

"Then go win her over. Show her what you've got," Benedict responded, his smile faint.

Finn looked at Benedict, confused about why he was being urged to win her over, considering that their marriage had been arranged since childhood.

Benedict pulled the black bear fur coat tighter around him and said with concern, "Not long ago, Wanda was involved with a business genius, Carlise Zahn. He grew his business from scratch to 800 million dollars within three months."

"800 million dollars in three months?" Finn exclaimed in disbelief, his face turning pale.

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The Murrays were a family of business prodigies, but Finn questioned if anyone could amass such wealth in just three months.

Benedict's voice was measured as he said, "Women tend to admire strength. If you can achieve what Carlisle has, Wanda may reconsider her feelings for you."

Finn staggered back.

"I... I can't do it."

"Can't and won't are two different things," Benedict retorted.

"You're retreating before you even try. I'm disappointed."

With his coat draped over his shoulders, Benedict headed for the door. Finn gritted his teeth.  
"Grandpa... I can do it."

He felt that if the person Wanda liked could do it, so could he. Finn vowed to prove himself superior to Wanda's affections.

Benedict paused at the door, his face softening a bit.

"I'll give you ten billion in seed money, which will give you a head start on Carlisle. If you can maintain a higher turnover than him within a year, I'll give you an 18% stake in Golden Happiness Group."

"Deal."

Finn nodded with determination. With ten billion in capital, he had no excuse to lose to Carlisle.

"But stay out of the Riverland market," Benedict warned.

"Why?"

"Thompson Group and Yuriel are in fierce competition. Now Aurora Holdings is also involved. Riverland's market will soon be split three ways."

Benedict had only briefly researched Carlisle but was already predicting Riverland's future landscape. He felt that the young man named Carlisle was quite extraordinary, much like someone he knew.

At 7:00 pm that evening, as fireworks lit up the autumn sky above Maple Hill, Benedict received a phone call. The caller, who identified himself as Xavier, warned that the younger brother of a comrade was setting off the fireworks.

If the Murrays harmed that person, Xavier would retaliate against Heston.

Benedict asked, "Who is your comrade's brother?"

"Classified. Are you sure you want to know?"

Benedict didn't press further. After all, Xavier was a name he'd heard of before.

The caller continued, "My comrade's brother is engaged to the girl you like. Are you using your family's influence to harass others?"

"I only had a verbal agreement with the Thompsons. Whether those two kids end up together is not my problem!"

Xavier's tone became playful.

"Let Finn compete fairly with him. As a parent, you shouldn't favor the strong over the weak.

"But don't you do the same? We're the weaker ones around you."

The Murrays were formidable in business, but Xavier made them seem insignificant.

"Am I bullying you?" Xavier asked.

"Does that Thompson girl like Finn? I'm just helping my comrade's brother get a fair shot, that's all."

The series of questions left Benedict speechless. He found the caller to be right. He was simply giving Carlisle a chance.

It was Wednesday, December 21st, during the winter solstice when Carlisle bought a ticket back to Riverland. When he exited the airport, he spotted Logan and Hank, each holding a tulip as they looked around.

Logan's complexion was rosy, her eyes sparkling with allure. Then he turned to Hank, who had red marks on his neck, and his face exuded newfound confidence.

It seemed as if they had finally come together.

"Welcome home, Mr. Zahn," Logan said, presenting the tulip.

Tulips symbolized nobility and elegance, a respectful gesture to a leader.

"I never thought you'd be the one to send me flowers," Carlisle teased, accepting the bouquet.

"Am I the first one you've given flowers to?"

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As Carlisle spoke, he couldn't help but glance at Hank.

Logan pursed her lips and replied, "The first person I ever gave flowers to was my dad. I always send him flowers on Father's Day!"

"You work fast, don't you?"

Carlisle gave Hank a wry smile. Hank rubbed his nose, embarrassed.

"It was purely accidental."

Hank had been feeling down the past few days. Logan worried it might affect his work, so she took him to the club after hours to relieve some stress. Hank tended to get drunk when he was upset. Ultimately, both of them had a bit too much the night before. Then something inexplicable happened.

"An accident?"

Logan's bright eyes dimmed slightly as she repeated Hank's words in her mind. It turned out that the previous night had been nothing more than an accident.

Carlisle noticed Logan's subtle change and turned serious.

"Ms. Cooper is far more attractive than your ex. She's also quite capable. Every year on Father's Day, she gives her father flowers, which shows her devotion. You won't encounter another woman like her that easily!"

"I'm just afraid she won't be interested in me."

Hank scratched his head awkwardly.

Logan was the CEO of Govan Technology Limited. In her professional attire, she exuded confidence and charm. Compared to her, Hank's usual disheveled appearance made him seem out of place. Logan often teased him about his lack of grooming and joked that he couldn't find a girlfriend.

So, after their intimate encounter last night, Hank assumed it was a one-night stand fueled by alcohol.

"Do you think you understand women well?"

Logan shot Hank a glance before turning on her heel and walking away with determined strides. Hank looked puzzled.

"What does she mean?"

Carlisle rolled his eyes.

"It means she's interested in you!"

"Then why did she run off?"

"Because you need to chase after her, damn it!"

Carlisle felt like kicking him. He wondered if Hank's brain was only wired for computers.

After a moment's hesitation, Hank hurried after Logan.

Francis pulled up in the Rolls-Royce from the parking lot. Wendell and the others were stunned by the luxurious car. Wendell insisted on experiencing what it felt like to drive a Rolls-Royce, so they switched drivers three times on the way back to Willow Grove.

Once they parked, Francis went to buy cigarettes. Wendell and the rest followed Carlisle back to the apartment.

Inside the apartment, Carlisle made a call to Selena.

"Mr. Zahn..."

"Ms. Johansen, would you mind coming to Willow Grove?" he asked.

"I'm downstairs. I'll be right up!"

"Great!"

Carlisle had only informed Sean of his return. It seemed that Sean had already spread the news.

A knock sounded at the door five minutes later, accompanied by Selena's voice. "Mr. Zahn..."

Wendell went to open the door. But when it swung open, he froze. Standing there was an elegantly poised figure-a woman in professional attire. Her long, glossy black hair flowed like silk, and her delicate features radiated warmth. Her smile was like a gentle breeze, captivating and inviting.

## Chapter 640

"Hello..." Selena greeted Wendell.

Her warm smile revealed her dimples. Although she exuded an air of mature charm, she appeared somewhat playful and cute then.

"Hi... Hello..."

Wendell tensed up, and his heart rate increased noticeably.

"I'm Mr. Zahn's secretary, Selena. I'm here to report on the work progress."



Selena had reviewed the security department's staff records and noted that Wendell, who had never worked at Aurora Holdings, was appointed security manager. He was likely Carlisle's personal bodyguard.

Wendell nervously stepped aside, allowing her entry.

"P-please come in..."

Wearing a gentle smile, Selena stepped into the living room. Wendell took a deep breath, savoring the lingering scent of her perfume.

"Wendell's such a creep..."

"I think so too, but Ms. Johansen is really beautiful. She'd make a great sister-in-law..." Kevin and Zack whispered to each other.

Just then, Francis walked in with a grave expression.

"All of you, step out. Don't disturb the boss' work."

Wendell noticed Francis' serious expression and understood that something was up. The group followed Francis to the staircase.

"What's going on?" Wendell asked in a low voice.

"The convenience store and fruit stand outside have been replaced. From their behavior, they seem to be underground figures!"

Francis' face grew more solemn. Wendell frowned.

"Does the boss have any enemies?"

Francis pulled out a cigarette and lit it nonchalantly.

"Jalen and Titan have had conflicts with the boss before. I suspect Jalen sent these guys."

Given the time that had passed, Jalen should have figured out who had abducted his daughter.

Wendell took a cigarette from Francis' pack, lit it, and asked, "What are you planning to do? Are we really going to get involved in this underground conflict?"

Francis took the unlit cigarette from Wendell's mouth and said flatly, "Leave now if you don't want to be involved. No one will stop you."

"Protecting the boss' safety is our duty!" Wendell stated firmly.

Francis stuffed the cigarette back into Wendell's mouth and lit it.

"We just need to ensure the boss' safety. How he handles Jalen and his gang is his business."

Meanwhile, in the living room, Selena updated Carlisle on the company's status. "Alumni Network's registered users have surpassed seven million. We've secured six brand ads, and the revenue from these ads over the past 12 days is approximately 1.95 million dollars."

With six ads and 12 days of revenue totaling only 1.95 million, the earnings were modest. At a rate of ten cents per click, Alumni Network could earn 350 thousand per ad if half of the users clicked.

"Can we increase the ad rate?" Carlisle asked.

"Currently, the cost-per-click rates for Wikipedia, EA, Ubisoft, and The Sun are all 20 cents. Although Alumni Network is new, it's growing rapidly, so raising the ad rate to 20 cents shouldn't be a problem," Selena replied.

"Also, have Sean add a feature on Alumni Network where users earn five cents per ad viewed.

Carlisle remembered that in his previous life, many apps allowed users to earn money by watching ads. That strategy could boost user engagement.

Watching one ad earned five cents, two ads earned ten cents, and if Alumni Network ran 20 ads a month and users watched all of them, they could earn one dollar. Although it might seem small, in a time when many families were still struggling, every penny counted.

The period from 1994 to 2000 was a phase of national poverty alleviation. During these six years, many impoverished areas had only managed to secure basic needs.

With only four years having passed since then, while these areas might have enough to eat, living conditions were still challenging, and wages were low. Carlisle believed most users would be inclined to watch ads for extra income.

Selena's clear eyes sparkled with insight.

"This idea is indeed good... If Alumni Network has 50% of users who dislike ads, this method could engage at least half of that 50%. That's 1.75 million users. Each user clicking on one ad would generate 175 thousand dollars, and with 20 ads, the total would be 3.5 million dollars. And that's just a rough estimate based on the previous rate."