

## Love Spell 661

### Chapter 661

Selena looked neither happy nor unhappy. It seemed as if accepting Kyle was a very mundane matter.

Sophia stole a glance at Selena, and when she saw how calm her sister looked, she couldn't help asking in a low voice, "Selena, don't you like him?"

Selena thought for a moment and laughed softly. "I no longer have any desire for love.

Getting married is just finding someone to spend your life with."

Sophia pursed her lips and said, "If you don't like him, don't say yes. I'll keep you company when you're old. I'll always be there for you."

"You silly thing... I like him, alright?" Selena ruffled Sophia's hair fondly.

The day Sophia was born, their parents had gotten into a car accident on the way to the hospital.

Passersby had sent them to the hospital, but they were beyond help. Luckily, the child in her mother's womb had been saved.

The driver who had caused the accident bore full responsibility, and Sophia and Selena's grandparents received an ample amount of compensation fees. After that, they wrote a memorandum of understanding and did not press further charges on the driver.

Selena was 12 at the time, but she was mature for her age. She could not accept her grandparents' forgiveness of the driver who had caused the accident. She ran away from home with Sophia, who was just a month old, and went to live with her maternal grandparents.

Her maternal grandparents preferred boys to girls and hadn't treated the girls' mother, Alicia Jennings, very well. Naturally, they weren't fond of their granddaughters either. Luckily, Selena and

Sophia's uncles felt sorry for them and gave them a sum of money every month for their living costs.

Selena was determined to succeed. She would study late into the night every day with Sophia in her arms. She maintained top grades at school and was guaranteed a place at Harvey University.

She went abroad to study and returned to take up a position as a high executive. In a very short period of time, she became the board secretary of a listed company because of her outstanding abilities.

The year that Sophia went to high school, Selena bought her a villa and hired a nanny to take care of her. She had managed to provide her sister with a carefree life.

Selena felt that Sophia was the most important person in her life.

Now that Sophia had grown up, she would probably start dating and find a boyfriend to care for her in Selena's place.

Therefore, it was time for Selena to leave her.

Kyle saw Selena walking toward them, and he smiled gently. "Selena..."

Selena smiled and nodded. "It's been a long time."

They had met three years ago.

Selena had been riding a motorbike home after work when her brakes failed, and she had ended up rear-ending a BMW. The driver had been extremely aggressive and demanded that Selena compensate him.

Selena hadn't bought a car of her own, but she didn't lack money. Just as she was about to ask how much it would cost, Kyle got out of the car and told her that she didn't need to pay anything.

He even asked considerately if she was injured.

Selena's knee had been grazed, so Kyle insisted on taking her to the hospital. That was how they had met.

Selena could tell that Kyle was attracted to her, but she could not muster up any interest in men who were younger than her.

She told Kyle she would not date anyone until Sophia entered university. She had expected Kyle to give up, but he promised to wait until Sophia went to university before dating.

He had persevered for three years.

He must really like her.

Sophia was now grown up as well.

It was time for Selena to find a partner for life.

It would save her from getting teased by Sophia's classmates for being an old maid.

"It's been a while." Kyle smiled gently and said to Sophia, "Sophia, cover your sister's eyes."

Sophia turned to look at Selena, who nodded and closed her eyes.

Sophia covered Selena's eyes with her hands.

Kyle raised his hand and made a sign.

Immediately, a dozen people rushed over and set up lit candles in a heart shape around them.

It always got dark faster in winter compared to summer.

It was around 6:30 pm, but the sky was already dark, which made the heart-shaped candle formation extremely conspicuous.

"Wow! Look, Christine! Someone's making a confession!" Phoebe grabbed Christine's arm and swung it excitedly.

Christine looked dismissive. "After I saw Carlisle give Wanda fireworks that cost one million, I think confessions like this are lame."

## Chapter 662

"You're right. Let's go to the private room. Gareth asked us to play cards with him." Phoebe grabbed Christine and ran toward the hotel.

They had just stepped foot in the hotel lobby when Christine got a call from Carlisle. "Mr. Zahn?"

"Don't speak to me in such a formal way. Call my name or Carl."

"Alright, Carl!" Christine's eyes curved into half-moons as she smiled.

"Tell Gareth that I'll be late." Carlisle was planning to go and have a few drinks with Sharon first.

Sharon had immediately thought of Carlisle upon visiting Riverland for the New Year.

He did not want to disappoint her.

After hanging up, Carlisle suddenly turned to Wendell and said, "Wendell, are you interested in Ms. Johansen?"

Wendell was slightly startled. He immediately pretended not to know what Carlisle was talking about. "Huh? What kind of interest?"

Carlisle shrugged. "Forget that I asked."

Francis was driving. He said in a measured tone, "Boss wanted to give you a hand, but you're a coward who won't admit it. You might as well stay single forever..."

Wendell immediately became agitated. "Boss, i-is it possible? I don't have good looks or money!"

Carlisle looked at Wendell and his plain, honest face. He smiled and said, "It's going to be tough."

Selena was over 30, but she was pretty and had taken good care of herself. She had soft skin and looked as if she was only 25 or 26. The most important thing was she was highly educated and could speak six different languages. She had pretty much reached the pinnacle of her career. It was hard to say whether she would be interested in a rough and ready man like Wendell.

Women like Selena were the ideal candidates for prestigious families. With a woman like that who could take care of the household well, the family would prosper without any effort.

Wendell sighed. "I knew it. Even the boss says so. I'd better not try to reach beyond my league. It's called being self-aware."

Carlisle patted Wendell's shoulder. "Don't be discouraged. I'll try and set the two of you up sometime."

Carlisle suddenly enjoyed the feeling of being a matchmaker.

He had done it with Sean and Lily, Tyler and Jasmine, as well as Hank and Logan.

When all those couples married, he was determined to have the first toast at their weddings. Carlisle thought of himself and Wanda.

He had sent her many cheesy messages, but she hadn't even replied to a single one of them.

Bianca had sent him a reply instead. "Wanda is particularly focused on books about finance right now. She told me in secret that she wants to earn lots and lots of money to stand up to the Murrys, so you'd better buck up and earn big money, too!"

That message caused Carlisle to make all his workers work overtime on New Year's Day.

At the plaza outside the Imperial Hotel, there were about 40 to 50 people gathering around to watch the confession take place.

The truth was that they had all gotten ten dollars to come and liven up the atmosphere. Kyle held 99 pink roses and smiled as he said, "Sophia, you can let go now."

Sophia laughed and uncovered Selena's eyes.

There were several people watching already.

Kyle took a deep breath and looked intensely at Selena as he confessed his feelings to her. "Selena, from the moment I met you, my world took on new meaning. You're the most beautiful miracle in my life, and you're irreplaceable to me. My heart beats for you, and my eyes only look at you. I'll protect you for a lifetime with all the love I have. Please... Please be my girlfriend!"

## Chapter 663

Kyle's eyes were sincere and earnest.

He looked eager, and there was a look of nervous anticipation on his face, like a youth who had just tasted love and was confessing to his first crush.

Selena's eyelashes fluttered. She stared at the roses Kyle was holding, looking dazed.

"Say yes!" Someone in the crowd began clamoring, and everyone soon followed.

"Say yes, say yes, say yes!" Selena heard Sophia's voice in the crowd.

She sighed inwardly and smiled as she took the roses from Kyle. Her red lips parted softly, and she said, "I accept."

"Kiss her!" The crowd changed their chant.

Sophia had been clapping, but the smile dropped off her face at once.

Hadn't Selena just agreed to be his girlfriend?

Were they really going to kiss right away?

Her uncle had told Sophia that until the age of seven, Selena had been the one who raised her.

When she was just one or two years old, Selena had carried her around while doing homework.

Sophia did not have the love of a mother or a father, but she had her sister's love.

The moment she got into high school, Selena bought her a luxurious villa and even hired a nanny to do her laundry and cook for her. Even though only elite families were born with a silver spoon in their mouths, Selena had given her the same luxurious life through her own efforts.

She had spoiled Sophia thoroughly.

Now, Selena was going to be with some other man.

Would Sophia lose her sister's love?

However, Selena was already 31 years old, and it was the right time for her to get married.

After all, their uncles were always worried about Selena not being married.

Sophia felt very conflicted.

She wanted Selena to have a family of her own, but she was afraid that she would lose Selena's love.

Kyle walked over to Selena with a spring in his step. He asked her in a deep, husky voice, "Selena, may I?"

Selena closed her eyes gently.

There was a flash of joy in Kyle's eyes, and he immediately bent down to kiss Selena's soft, red lips.

"Damn! Wendell, get him!" As soon as Carlisle finished speaking, Wendell burst forward with a snarl like a tiger that had broken free of its chains. He pushed the crowd aside and

sent Kyle flying with a kick.

Wendell was six feet tall and 108 pounds. There was not a single ounce of fat on his body. He was all muscle.

Even a bull would have been felled by his kick, let alone Kyle, who was thin and lanky.

The crowd's jaws dropped when they saw what had happened.

Sharon and Sophia covered their mouths, their eyes bulging.

"Aargh!" Kyle's arm had been broken. He clutched his arm and rolled on the ground in agony.

Selena opened her eyes and stared at Wendell in shock.

Sophia walked up to Wendell, looking annoyed. She opened her mouth to yell at him but stopped when she saw Wendell's face. "What are you doing here?"

Selena had opened her eyes. She looked coldly at Wendell. "Why did you hit him, Wendell?"

"I told him to." Carlisle walked out of the crowd with Francis.

Selena was startled once more. "M-Mr. Zahn..."



Sharon and Sophia were both flabbergasted.

Carlisle?

Sharon blinked. "Carl, you... You're a chairman?"

Sophia looked at Selena and asked, "Selena... You work for him?" She knew perfectly well how much Selena earned annually.

Chapter 664

Selena earned five hundred thousand dollars a year.

The older brother that Sharon had gotten herself could pay Selena five hundred thousand a year.

How rich must Carlisle be?

Carlisle said to Wendell, "Bring Mr. Carrington over here!"

Wendell walked over and grabbed Kyle's tie before yanking him to his feet. He dragged him over to Carlisle like a dog.

Veins were throbbing on Kyle's forehead. He stared at Carlisle and gritted his teeth as he said, "It's you!"

Carlisle cocked his head and smiled, saying, "I didn't expect to see you in Riverland either, Mr. Carrington."

Selena looked at the two of them in confusion.

Did they have a feud with each other?

Kyle asked coldly, "Have I offended you in any way? Let me go and get lost. I won't pursue this further. Otherwise, I'll have my lawyer press charges!"

Carlisle looked at Wendell with a smile playing about his lips. He asked, "Wendell, are you afraid of getting arrested?"

Wendell's tough features were determined, and he said firmly, "No."

He hesitated when it came to asking women out, but he had the guts to take responsibility and go to jail. Even if Carlisle hadn't said anything, he would have rushed over to stop Kyle from kissing Selena.

Selena couldn't help herself. She asked, "Mr. Zahn, do you have a feud with him?"

Kyle was the son of the owners of Wonder Corporation.

In Riverland, Wonder Corporation was the kind of organization that could crush both Gabriel and Thompson Group put together.

Aurora Holdings did not have enough power or influence to go against Wonder Corporation yet.

"I don't have a feud with him." Carlisle stuck his hands in his pockets and narrowed his eyes as he said, "I just don't like him. He thinks he's all that just because he has money, and he tried to humiliate my friend with money."

Selena looked doubtful. "Are you mistaken, Mr. Zahn? I've known him for three years, and he's always kept a low profile."

Carlisle laughed and asked, "You've known him for three years, but you don't know he has a girlfriend?"

Selena looked at Kyle in shock. "Is what Mr. Zahn said true?"

Although she couldn't say she liked Kyle very much, she hadn't been opposed to him before this. If he had confessed to her while having a girlfriend, she would be disgusted.

Kyle shook his head vigorously. He suppressed the pain in his arm and said, "Don't believe him, Selena! He's lying to you! I've never had a girlfriend!"

Selena laughed bitterly and shook her head. "I can't think of why Mr. Zahn would lie to me." Aurora Holdings did not lack talent. With five hundred thousand a year, Carlisle could easily get a better and more capable secretary. The best capital groups in the country only paid their board secretaries around four hundred thousand a year. Carlisle wouldn't be making up a lie like this just to keep her as an employee.

Carlisle said to Selena, "Ms. Johansen, tell the information department to give you everything they have on Kyle. I'd like to see how many women he's deceived."

"Alright." Selena assented and took out her phone to call Solomon.

Kyle's eyes turned ferocious. "I'll kill you!"

He exerted his entire strength to break free of Wendell's grip and leave, but Wendell's arm felt like it was made of steel. No matter how hard he tried, he could not break free.

Carlisle waved his hand. "Let him go."

Wendell finally let go of Kyle.

Kyle looked coldly at Carlisle before disappearing into the night without looking back, still clutching his right arm.

Sharon ran over and took Carlisle's arm. She asked in a small voice, "Carl... Does that man really have a girlfriend?"

Carlisle smiled slightly. "She even goes to the same college as the two of you. Her name is Amaris, and she used to be my friend Hank's girlfriend. Last month, when Hank went to Yorksle on a business trip and met up with me, we happened to bump into Amaris and Kyle."

"Hmph! You must be lying to Selena!" Sophia still could not believe that someone as gentlemanly as Kyle would do something like that. She took out her phone to make a call, and she put it on speaker.

Someone picked up very quickly. "What's the matter, Sophia?"

"Ida, don't you have a roommate called Amaris?"

"Yes. Why are you asking?"

"You don't need to know about that. What's the name of her boyfriend?"

"Which boyfriend?"

"Uh... Does Amaris have more than one boyfriend?"

"She has two. One's called Hank, and they've known each other for three years. The other is a wealthy heir. I think his surname is Carrington..."

"Kyle!" someone in their dormitory called out.

"Oh, right. His name is Kyle. You have no idea how often Amaris shows off about how much money her boyfriend has. We've had it with her!" Ida said, her tone filled with disdain and exasperation.

Chapter 665

"No, he... How could he be two-timing?" Sophia felt as if her world had come crashing down.

"Well, not really. Half a month ago, Amaris dumped her boyfriend of three years. He's the one with no money."

"Oh my, it's true that birds of a feather flock together! How disgusting! Alright, that's all I wanted to say. Happy New Year." Sophia hung up.

When she thought about how she had tried so enthusiastically to set up Selena and Kyle, she shivered.

Hadn't she been pushing Selena into a trap?

"Selena, I'm sorry!" Sophia dove into Selena's arms and burst into tears.

Selena ruffled her hair and comforted her. "It's not your fault. I must not have been in my right mind. I've known him for three years, but I never realized that he had a girlfriend..." "He's a scumbag!"

"He's a beast in the guise of a man!"

"He's an asshole!"

"He's a total jerk!"

Sharon began cursing at Kyle using all kinds of words, even Caulitornan. She pinched Carlisle hard on the arm.

"Ouch!" Carlisle took a sharp intake of breath and pulled his arm away. "You're the jerk! Have I offended you somehow?"

Sharon finally came to her senses and stuck her tongue out cheekily. She said playfully, "I'm sorry, Carl..."

Carlisle rolled his eyes. "Alright, let's go and eat. I've got another gathering to go to later." "You're eating with us, Mr. Zahn?" Selena was slightly surprised.

"Can't I?"

"It's our honor." Selena laughed softly. She made a gesture of invitation. "After you, Mr. Zahn."

Carlisle walked ahead of them.

Behind him, Selena asked Sophia, "How did you get to know Mr. Zahn?"

Sophia told Selena about Sharon's relationship with Carlisle.

Selena knew Carlisle had gone to Yorksle for 20 days to see Wanda. He had probably gotten a fake identity, which just happened to be Sharon's older brother, Howard. That was why the two of them had become brother and sister. It was part of the act.

"Selena, Sharon says she'll always think of Carlisle as her brother. Do you think I have a chance with him?" Sophia whispered in Selena's ear.

Selena's brow furrowed slightly, and she flicked Sophia's forehead. "Stop thinking of

something so unrealistic. Mr. Zahn has a girlfriend, and he loves her very, very much. Apart

from that young lady, no one else will ever have a place in his heart."

Selena often went to Carlisle's apartment to report about work.

Carlisle's desk was covered with photos of Wanda, and his desktop wallpaper was also a photo of Wanda.

He even had four framed photos on his desk at the office.

He had two on the left and two on the right, all four of them of Wanda.

It was clear that Carlisle was deeply in love with her.

"Awww... I was just joking!" Sophia rubbed her forehead, pouting.

Carlisle led Francis and Wendell to Selena's private room, where they had a few drinks.

Carlisle treated them as friends when they weren't at work.

In front of outsiders, Francis and Wendell would always play the role of bodyguards perfectly.

After they had celebrated with Sharon and the others, Carlisle brought them to Gareth's room.

The moment he reached the door, he got a call from Sean. "Carl, it's New Year's Day. Shall we have a few drinks?"

"Come to the Imperial Hotel. I have plans tonight."

## Chapter 666

"Oh damn! I can't get to the Imperial Hotel. We're at Wonderland Steakhouse. There are too many people here, so we probably won't be able to get away," Sean said.

"Let's meet some other day, then." Carlisle hung up and pushed the door open.

The moment he entered, he was greeted with a strong fragrance.

Carlisle's vision focused, and he inwardly gasped.

There were two enormous round tables with approximately 30 people seated around them.

Apart from Gareth, they were all women of all shapes and sizes, but none were unattractive. Gareth was wearing a very eye-catching red suit.

He propped his chin in his hands, making the Rolex on his wrist very conspicuous.

"Hello, Mr. Zahn!" The crowd greeted Carlisle.

Gareth had already told them who they were waiting for.

He had said that Carlisle was the boyfriend of the founder of Swiftfunds Financial Investments, Wanda.

He was also the CEO of Aurora Holdings.

"Hello everyone." Carlisle nodded at them.

He strode over to Gareth and sat down, saying in a low voice, "You're living the life, Gareth! No wonder I haven't seen you for the past couple of days. You've just been hanging out at Swiftfunds Financial Investments, haven't you?"

Gareth looked sideways at Carlisle and said irritably, "Your girlfriend isn't around, and the other two shareholders have classes. If I don't hold down the fort as the main

shareholder, there'll be chaos at the office!"

Carlisle looked sideways at Christine and asked, "Has Wanda given you shares?"

"Yes. Ms. Thompson has given me and Phoebe five percent in shares each." Christine lowered her head guiltily.

Gareth had spent 30 million to get his shares. According to the cost at which Gareth had bought the shares, the five percent she owned was worth 7.5 million.

"We didn't want to take it, but Ms. Thompson threatened us and said she would stop being friends with us if we didn't accept," Phoebe mumbled as she hung her head, looking like a child who had done something wrong.

Phoebe and Christine were from the countryside, and 7.5 million was an unimaginable amount to them.

In the current era, the average salary per year for people in the countryside wasn't even up to three thousand dollars.



The entire village would have to grow crops for decades to earn 7.5 million.

Carlisle was Wanda's boyfriend, and they felt that what belonged to Wanda also belonged to Carlisle.

That was why they felt as if they were being accused by their boss.

"No, I was just asking. Why are you behaving like that?" Carlisle was amused. Why were they acting like he was scolding them?

He paused, and his expression softened. He smiled and said, "Wanda established the company. You and Phoebe managed it from the start alongside her, and you'll be founding members in the future. It's perfectly logical to give you shares."

"Alright, it's a festive occasion. Let's not make things so tense!" Gareth interrupted and changed the subject.

He said to Jenny, "Ms. Robson, tell them to serve the food."

"Alright, Mr. Spencer." Jenny got up and went out.

Carlisle asked, "2004 has come to an end. How much revenue did your company generate last year?"

Christine and Phoebe both hung their heads and said nothing. Gareth took a moody sip of tea.

Carlisle immediately knew what it implied. He smiled slightly and asked, "Are there many clients who are overdue on their loans?"

Christine sighed. "Currently, our company has around three hundred thousand registered users. In November, we had one thousand five hundred clients take out loans, and we loaned out about 23 million in total.

"They were all short-term loans, but when the payment date came, we couldn't get in contact with most of the clients. Some of them keep dragging it out. They even threatened us and said they

wouldn't pay if we didn't increase the interest rates. Some clients even told us directly that they won't pay!"

Carlisle glanced at the female staff present. "So you hired all these people to demand payments?"

Christine nodded. "Yes, but it hasn't been very effective..."

Carlisle frowned slightly. Big data wasn't being discussed yet, and there wasn't even a system in place for credit reports. It would be difficult to get back those overdue loans.

The waiters began to serve the food.

Gareth could tell that Carlisle was equally stumped, so he waved a hand and smiled as he said, "It's the first festival of the new year. Let's eat and drink well and not talk about work." Carlisle ignored Gareth and continued asking, "What does Ms. Thompson think?"

## Chapter 667

Wanda was the one who had suggested peer-to-peer lending.

In an era when the Internet wasn't widespread yet, Wanda had already thought of the idea. It showed how perceptive she was about Internet finance.

However, Wanda lacked experience and had neglected to carry out risk control assessments. She was too naive and trusting.

However, in this era, it wouldn't be easy to do risk control assessments either.

Carlisle had been reborn, so he managed to think of a solution. However, it wasn't a very kind solution. He would not want to use it unless he had no other choice.

He also wanted to see how Wanda would handle this business crisis.

Phoebe looked at the feast laid out before her, but she didn't have much appetite. She puffed up her cheeks and said in resignation, "Mr. Spencer told us not to tell Ms. Thompson..."

Carlisle turned to look at Gareth. He knew Gareth didn't want to stress Wanda out, and he felt a warm feeling in his heart.

Gareth's eyes glinted. "Have you had enough? Let's eat! Why are we talking about irritating things like work when we're supposed to be celebrating? It's just 30 million! I've spent more than that at bars in the past few years!"

"Alright, alright, I'll stop talking. Let's eat!" Carlisle was amused. He picked up his cutlery and started eating.

At the private hospital in Maple Hill, Yorksle, all the villas had been brightly decorated to welcome the first holiday of 2005.

Wanda sat quietly at the table in her study. She held a mug of warm milk in her hands as she read a book called "Human Nature".

The book was written entirely in Clindonese, but Wanda had been able to read Clindonese with no difficulty at all since she was in high school. It did not present a challenge to her.

"Even abysses have their bottoms, but men's hearts are hard to fathom. Greed and selfishness are the basis of human nature. Swiftfunds Financial Investments is getting more and more clients, and we're loaning out up to 20 million. Will all of these clients be able to pass the test?" she said out loud to herself.

Wanda's long eyelashes fluttered slightly, and there was a worried expression on her delicate face.

"Wanda! Wanda!" Bianca suddenly rushed into the room, looking panicked.

Wanda had been deep in thought. She jumped and patted herself on the chest as she said accusingly, "What are you doing? You scared me!"

Bianca rushed over to Wanda and gulped before saying, "Wanda, I just heard a secret!"

Wanda took a sip of warm milk and said in amusement, "Have you been eavesdropping through the walls again?"

When Bianca first arrived at the hospital, she had been diagnosed with autism and depression.

Now, she spent all her time climbing up trees and over walls with a few boys in the hospital who were her age. She often went to the hospital department at night to eavesdrop through the walls.

Not long ago, she had heard a few doctors in the medical department discussing the fact that the 80-year-old hospital director had been impotent for 60 years.

The next day, the news spread all over the hospital, and the hospital director was so angry that he did not appear for three days.

"I heard them discussing your follow-up treatment." Bianca's throat was dry.

She snatched the warm milk from Wanda and gulped it down before wiping her mouth and continuing, "You've got instrumental treatment scheduled for 15th January. This treatment is for adjusting your neurons. They'll adjust the neurons in your brain so that the ones that have been suppressed can never be connected again!"

Bianca's eyes bulged as she asked, "Wanda, do you understand what that means?"

Wanda lowered her head in silence. She knew exactly what Bianca meant.

After the treatment, she would never be able to recover her memories with Carlisle.

Wanda felt very conflicted. She did not know how to describe what she was feeling. Christine and Phoebe had told her many things about Carlisle, but she had no memory of it. She felt as if she were listening to a bunch of made-up stories.

She thought she could fall in love with Carlisle again after hearing the stories. In the end, she realized Carlisle was still very unfamiliar to her.

How could she describe a feeling like that?

It felt as if she was standing in front of a stranger she had never met while her best friends told her that the stranger had been her boyfriend in the past.

They had told her sweet stories about them, and while Wanda could imagine how it had happened, it could not change how she felt about Carlisle and how unfamiliar he was to her. When Bianca saw that Wanda was silent, she asked, "Wanda, what do you think?"

Bianca had been greatly touched by what Carlisle had done for Wanda. She did not want to see them get broken apart.

## Chapter 668

"What can I do? I'll just have to accept my fate." Wanda propped her chin up in her hands. There was resignation and a slight irritation in her voice.

Bianca took a packet of chocolates from the shelf of snacks next to the desk. She stuffed one in her mouth and began chewing. She said in a muffled voice, "Wanda, shall we escape?" Wanda didn't even bother to look up. She said tiredly, "Even a fly wouldn't be able to get out of here. How could we possibly escape?"

Bianca took another piece of chocolate and stuffed it into Wanda's mouth. Her teeth glinted as she said sweetly, "We just have to think of a way!"

There was one thing she hadn't told Wanda.

The troops stationed outside had all been withdrawn.

The number of security teams at the hospital had also been reduced.

Gareth left after drinking until 8:00 pm.

Carlisle did not have a good alcohol tolerance, and all the women at the company couldn't drink much.

If he wanted to drink properly, he'd have to go to Hank.

Carlisle sat dizzily in the back of the car and called Lethan. However, no one picked up.

He called Shania.

No one picked up either.

He thought about the fact that he hadn't called his parents to wish them well yet, so he called Gordon.

"Hello? Carl?" It was noisy on the other end of the phone. Gordon appeared to be at a party. "Happy New Year, Dad!"

"Happy New Year to you, too!"

"Where are you, Dad?" Carlisle asked, smiling.

"We're eating at Helena's! They're having a farewell party today!" Gordon had had a few drinks, and his voice was slurred.

"They've bought a house?" Carlisle asked.

Gordon lowered his voice and said, "Yvette bought it for them. It's a big, three-story villa that's around eight thousand square feet in size. It cost 1.2 million! Yvette's had a hard time over the past few years, but they've resolved all their misunderstandings."

Carlisle's lips curved slightly. "That's good. I knew Yvette must have had her own difficulties."

Gordon laughed and said, "You're just a kid. What would you know? By the way, the weather reports say that the temperature will drop within the next few days. Remember to buy yourself some sweaters and jackets to prepare."

Carlisle felt warm and fuzzy. He smiled and said, "I know. Remember to keep warm too. Buy a few more heaters and keep them at home!"

"We got a shipment of heaters for the convenience store. You don't have to worry about your mother and I. Just take good care of yourself, and don't let us worry about you!"

"Alright." Carlisle ended the call and called Lethan once more.

There was still no one picking up.

At the CEO's office in Thompson Group, Lethan, Shania, Josie, and Zachary were seated around Shein's office desk for a family meeting.

Shein sat at the head of the table, and he looked weary. His eyes were bloodshot, and his normally neat hair was tousled.

He looked sternly at Lethan and said, "Lethan, the Hermes inspection team will arrive in Riverland tomorrow. Are you confident that you can get this collaboration?"

Chapter 669 "Shein, I..."

Lethan had no confidence at all.

Islo was a mature domestic brand that focused on quality and fabric, and it was still inadequate in terms of innovative designs.

Gabriel's Fashion Breeze focused more on design and innovation. Its design department had two designers who had been lured back to the country from abroad with high salaries.

If Hermès were looking for an original design manufacturer, Islo would be confident that they could play the part. However, the partner Hermès was looking for needed innovative designs. Islo's design

team was filled with talents who had been discovered from university exhibitions of their disciplines, but making Islo a well-known domestic brand was already the limit of what they were capable of. It would be a losing battle to make them compete with Fashion Breeze's design team.

Josie lowered her eyes. She was very disappointed with Lethan's performance. Her younger brother didn't even have the courage to try.

"Sh-Shein..."

Shania tentatively raised her hand as if she had something to say.

Shein smiled through his exhaustion.

"Go ahead."

"Actually, Lethan and I-"

"Shania!"

Lethan's brow furrowed.

He figured that Shania was probably planning to tell them about Holly Fisheries. However, they weren't even sure if there would be a cold snap or not. If Shein and Josie discovered they had invested one billion dollars in Holly Fisheries, they would be scolded thoroughly.

Shein's eyes glinted.

"You were going to tell me that you still have Holly Fisheries as a trump card, don't you?" Lethan and Shania's eyes widened simultaneously. They were surprised that Shein already knew about that.

Josie rolled her eyes at them.



"Holly Fisheries has been making such a commotion that there probably isn't anyone in Cascade State who does business and doesn't know about it. Did you think that we didn't know just because we didn't ask you about it?"

From October to November of the previous year, every construction company in Riverland joined in to build greenhouses for Holly Fisheries. Holly Fisheries had rented large areas of land in each region, which had also drawn a lot of attention. Sheldon had even called Shein to discuss the matter.

Shania laughed awkwardly.

"Josie, Shein, you're not angry, are you?"

"What do you think?"

Josie huffed coldly.

"You've really grown too big for your boots. How dare you invest one billion dollars in aquaculture?"

Lethan and Shania both feared Josie. When they saw that she was in a temper, they both hung their heads and held their breath.

Shein said slowly, "It's good for young people to have their own ideas. Having the courage to invest one billion in a field that we've never stepped into is good. We can't limit ourselves to what we're familiar with. The times are moving, and the market is changing. If we don't have the courage to try new things, we'll be eliminated by the market eventually. That's why I told you not to interfere in their project."

Shein took a sip of tea to wet his throat and continued, "Let's get back to the topic at hand. Lethan, to tell you the truth, if we don't secure this collaboration with Hermès, Fashion Breeze will use Hermès to boost their status and soar to success. Gabriel will also use this opportunity to attack Islo Clothing. Islo Clothing's brand is a big threat to Gabriel. He even planted a pawn by your side because he wants to destroy the company completely!" Lethan's pupils constricted.

"Is Gabriel ready to attack you openly?"

Shein shook his head and said, "Not for now. However, Islo Clothing is one of our trump cards. If this ace of ours falls, it'll affect both our families. So we must do our very best and think of everything we can to get this collaboration with Hermès!"

"I'll... I'll do my best!"

Lethan immediately felt very stressed. His hands bunched into fists on the table.

Shein picked up the teapot and poured tea into the teacups.

He said, "Two years ago, one of the Casmanian designers at Chanel returned to the country. He graduated from the Clindon College of Fashion and won the Gold award five consecutive times for his Chanel handbag designs. If we can find this expert designer, Islo might have a chance to compete against Fashion Breeze."

"Where did he go after he came back?" Lethan asked quickly.

"Would I need to mention this if I knew?"

Shein picked up his teacup and continued drinking tea.

"Even getting this bit of information took a lot of effort!"

"Aren't you asking me to look for a needle in a haystack?" Lethan muttered.

"I've got photos of some of the pieces designed by him. You can look for it on the Internet."

Shein pulled open a drawer and extracted a thick envelope, which he tossed onto the table. Lethan opened the envelope and examined the photos. After all, he had been working in fashion for many years.

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Lethan only had to take one look to be completely amazed by the unique designs.

He murmured, "This designer's pieces perfectly embody what it means to be truly original and to lead the trends!"

Zachary took some of the photos and looked at them. After a moment, he frowned slightly. "Why do I feel like I've seen these designs somewhere before?"

Lethan and Zachary looked up abruptly and simultaneously said in surprise, "Carlisle!"

Shein put down his teacup and yawned, saying, "Let's end the meeting here. Josie, come out for a walk with me."

Josie got up silently and followed Shein out.

Lethan immediately took out his phone, only to see that he had three missed calls. They were all from Carlisle. Thus, he returned the calls.

After several busy signals, Carlisle picked up and sleepily said, "Mr. Warbane..."

Lethan's throat was dry.

He said eagerly, "Carlisle, where did you get the suit that you wore at the contract signing ceremony at Imperial Hotel the other day?"

Carlisle yawned and said, "You won't be able to buy it! I got a friend to make it for me especially!"

"Your friend? Can you give me his number?" Lethan asked excitedly.

Carlisle hesitated. He figured that Lethan had probably discovered Leon's identity. Wanda hadn't been able to persuade Leon at all despite talking to him until her voice was hoarse. Carlisle didn't think he could remain friends with Leon if he continued to bother him.

"Carlisle, you have to help me! Islo Clothing is in big trouble..."

Lethan told Carlisle about the company's current situation.

After hearing the entire story, Carlisle faintly sighed and said, "I'll ask for you, but don't get your hopes up."

"Alright. We have to do everything that we can!"

Lethan smiled bitterly and said, "Oh, I was in a meeting earlier and didn't get your calls. Can I help you with anything?"

"How much fish has Holly Fisheries stored up?"

"80 thousand tons!"

"Can we get 100 thousand tons within the next two days?" Carlisle asked seriously.

The freshwater fisheries of Cascade State were ranked fifth in the entire country. In 2004, the fishery industry had produced about one million tons. 100 thousand tons was only ten percent of Cascade State's annual production volume. The remaining 90% would probably suffer a loss of half its volume.

That was only Cascade State. Carlisle anticipated that it would probably be worse in other regions.

If he could get the aquaculture industry to prepare for disaster in advance, they might be able to reduce their losses.

"We can, but we don't have enough funds right now, and we don't have enough greenhouse bases either. We've even rented 20 thousand acres of ecological fish ponds from 15 fisheries to store our fish!"

"How about if I invest another 150 million? Try your best to get as many fish as possible within the next few days."

Carlisle decided to invest the 150 million that he had received from Yvette.

"Is the cold snap coming?" Lethan asked, his eyes narrowed.

"Yes. It's going to be here around the fifth. You should spread the word as far as possible and convince all the aquaculture companies to carry out protective measures."

"Uh... Forget that. I had someone do that last month, and he was arrested that very same day for making up rumors and instigating panic. He was charged with endangering public order!