

Back to the Past: Breaking the Love Spell

#Chapter 91 - Read Back to the Past: Breaking the Love Spell Chapter 91

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Bob went back to his bedroom to get the money.

Hank nudged Carlisle's arm and asked in a low voice, "Carlisle, what were you thinking? You sold him the equipment for only 100 thousand dollars!"

"Like I said, we're friends now," Carlisle replied with a smile.

Hank had mentioned that Bob owned a cell phone manufacturing plant.

Carlisle's grand plan was to get ahead in the age of smart technology. He believed there would be plenty of opportunities to do business with Bob in the future.

Hank reluctantly lit a cigarette and muttered, "Whatever, as long as I get my share of 30 thousand.

Heath, who had just tossed one cigarette to light another, forced a smile at Hank. "Hank, there's a reason for Carl's actions. We just have to trust him."

At that moment, Bob came out with a plastic bag full of cash and placed it on the computer desk. "Here's the 100 grand. Count it if you want."

"Mr. York, you're a big-time boss. We trust you!" Carlisle said and shoved the money into Hank's hands.

Hank's initial displeasure vanished as he looked at the crisp new bills. A hundred thousand wasn't too shabby, and his share would bring him closer to the 50

thousand dollars he needed for a dowry.

The rest of the transaction went smoothly.

Bob equipped himself with the Heavenly Sword and the Memory Ring, which increased his stats considerably.

"Why don't you rest here for a while? I'll have someone drive you back when it's daylight." Bob offered, his eyes glued to the computer screen but still mindful of his guests.

Carlisle smiled politely. "We have things to do tomorrow, so we won't keep you, Mr. York. May I have your business card?"

"Of course, we're all friends here." Bob pulled a card from his desk and handed it to Carlisle. "Feel free to stop by anytime for a chat."

"Will do!" Carlisle accepted the card with a smile.

The trio left the hotel and hailed a taxi back to Riverland.

By the time they got back to their rental, it was 7:00 am.

Sitting on the couch, Carlisle began to divvy up the money. "Without Hank's cheating, we wouldn't have made this 100 thousand dollars, so Hank gets 30 thousand. Heath and I will take 20 thousand each, while Owen, Benjamin, and Sean will get ten thousand each."

"Why should they get anything? They slept like logs!

While Hank was happy with his share of the money, he felt that Benjamin and the others hadn't done anything to deserve a share.

Carlisle chuckled. "We're a team. If there's money to be made, we all make it together."

Heath gave a thumbs up. "I've never admired anyone more. You're the first person I really admire. You've got vision. You're gonna make it big one day!"

Seeing Heath's reaction, Hank held back any further complaints.

Carlisle took out his cell phone and called Ivan.

now was in Ivan was part of the Makers of Chaos guild and knew Carlisle's true identity, so a little hush money order.

Ivan was having breakfast in his Internet cafe. He looked distracted.

The guild leader had announced to the group that he would reward eight thousand dollars to whoever found "Bygones_b_bygones".

Eight thousand dollars was half a year's salary for an average person.

He wondered if he should turn Carlisle in for the reward.

The classic Nokia ringtone interrupted Ivan's thoughts.

He looked at the screen. It was Carlisle calling.

"Carlisle, our guild leader has put an eight thousand dollar bounty on your head!"

"As long as you keep quiet, he'll never find me," Carlisle assured him.

Ivan was silent as he hesitated.

The Heavenly Sword Carlisle had sold him had earned him 50 om thousand dollars. He didn't want to betray

Carlisle.

Just then, Carlisle spoke up. "Send me your bank account, and I'll wire you ten thousand."

"Are you serious, Carlisle?" Ivan was taken aback.

"I sold the equipment for 100 thousand dollars, but only kept 20 thousand for myself. I'll give you ten

thousand."

"You sold the Heavenly Sword and, the Memory Ring for only a hundred grand?" Ivan was indisbelief, wondering if Carlisle realized the true value of those items.

"Well, they weren't from a clean source. I'll sell them for as much as I can!"

"Fair point. Better than losing everything to the developers."

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After a brief exchange, the call ended.

Ivan sent Carlisle his bank account information. Given their real-life acquaintance and the generous share of ten grand Carlisle offered, Ivan sided with him.

True to his word, Carlisle went to the bank and completed the transfer.

Back at the rental, Hank was busy fine-tuning the multiboxing software while Heath tirelessly set up new accounts.

"Okay, done!" Hank declared, taking a sip of Chardonnay.

Heath handed Hank a notebook filled with the new accounts' information.

Soon all ten accounts were successfully logged in.

Next, Hank activated an auto-grind script and a speed booster hack. As he watched all ten accounts level up simultaneously, a grin appeared on Carlisle's face.

But just then, all the accounts were forcibly logged out.

"What the hell? What's going on?" Heath asked nervously.

Hank tried to log back in, only to be greeted with a system maintenance message.

"Don't worry, it's just routine maintenance!" Hank leaned back in his chair with his legs crossed. He blew a strand of hair out of his eyes. "After this update, I bet my cheats won't work anymore!"

Heath handed Hank a cigarette. "With you as our ace, who needs to worry about updates?"

Hank lit the cigarette and took a deep drag, yawning. "I'm going to take a nap. Call me when the maintenance is done!"

"Heath, you should get some rest as well!" After pulling an all-nighter, Carlisle felt fatigue set in.

"I'm not tired!" Heath grinned, feeling very energetic after receiving his share of twenty thousand.

Carlisle lay down on the sofa and fell asleep.

Heath, with a cigarette dangling from his mouth, copied the multiboxing software and hacks from Hank's computer to the other computers. Then he logged onto "The Mystical Journey's" game forum to do some research.

When Sean and the others woke up, Heath dragged them into learning about the game as well.

Meanwhile, at Islo Clothing, Lethan sat in his office. His face darkened as he looked at the photos on his desk.

They were all explicit pictures of his wife and his close friend, whom he considered a brother.

Lethan's face paled, and his hands shook as he opened the video attached to the email.

After watching the unbearably steamy video, he clenched his teeth so hard that they made a grinding sound.

He couldn't believe his usually pure and Innocent wife could behave so wildly in bed.

Just then, there was a knock at the door.

Lethan put the photos away, turned off the computer screen, and said calmly, "Come In..."

A woman in a suit entered the office. She had a gentle smile on her face and was charmingly sweet.

"Honey, I'm going on a business trip to Fairville. Can you get John to drive me there?"

"Fairville is pretty far. You won't be able to come back tonight, right?" Lethan said Indifferently.

Quinn Bailey lowered her eyes, seemingly guilty. "Yeah, I probably won't be back until tomorrow night."

Lethan slammed his hand down on the table. His eyes reddened with anger as he roared, "Quinn, how long are you going to keep deceiving me?"

The sudden outburst startled Quinn. She looked at Lethan, at a loss for words. - honey.... what's wrong with you?"

"Mr. Warbane, what's happening?" John heard the commotion outside and rushed in.

Lethan opened the drawer, pulled out a stack of photos, and viciously threw them in Quinn's face Quinn and John were stunned when they saw the scandalous photos.

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Quinn's face was drained of color.

Questions flooded her mind. How could this happen? Where did Lethan get these photos?

She was so close to taking the final step and officially becoming the finance manager. That was all she needed to finalize her plan.

However, at the most crucial moment, everything fell apart.

She wondered why Lethan had hired a private investigator if he had complete confidence in her.

"Quinn, don't you want to explain yourself?" Lethan asked with a voice full of pain.

Quinn cried, tears streaming down her face. "Honey... These... These photos are fake... They're photoshopped. You have to find the person who's framing me!"

"Mrs. Quinn is right. These photos are all fake. Boss, I've been with you for six years. I would never do that with Mrs. Quinn. You have to believe me!" John pleaded, his voice shaking.

"So you're aware you've been working for me for six years.

Lethan walked over to John. His eyes were no longer gentle but filled with icy coldness. His years in power made it impossible for John to look him in the face.

"Look at me," Lethan ordered coldly.

John immediately raised his head to meet Lethan's gaze. He felt his defenses crumble.

"Boss... This is all my fault!" John fell to his knees and slapped himself in the face.

Quinn stumbled backward as she realized it was all over. All her plans were ruined.

"Do you have anything to say, Quinn?" Lethan closed his eyes.

Quinn took a deep breath and said, "At this point, I have nothing else to say." Lethan chuckled bitterly.

As he turned to his desk, John's eyes flashed with a hint of madness. He reached behind him and drew a dagger, lunging at Lethan. Lethan saw John's movement through his glasses and dodged the attack just in time.

Lethan looked at the dagger in John's hand in disbelief. "John, are you trying to kill me?"

"You brought this on yourself!" John's eyes glowed with madness as he lunged at him again.

"Security... Security!" Lethan chouted as he dodged John's attacks.

Quinn watched helplessly.

John was fit, so Lethan was no match for him. After a brief struggle, Lethan ended up with several cuts on Chapter 93

his arms.

Fortunately, security arrived in time to save Lethan's life.

Outside the company, a white Audi slowly came to a stop.

Shein and Wanda got out of the car. Zachary followed suit with his hands in his pockets and a blank expression.

"Zac, did you and Queenie have a fight?" Wanda asked cautiously.

"Nope!"

"Then why the long face?" Wanda was confused.

Zachary was usually a cheerful person, but today, he was unusually glum.

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Zachary sighed. "Well, I got into a fight last night and lost almost 200 grand worth of equipment. Can you blame me for being down?"

"You got into another fight? Aren't you a professional at this game???" Wanda teased.

Zachary looked frustrated. "It's not my fault the other gxy used cheats!"

As they talked, the three of them reached the elevator lobby.

Five security guards emerged from the elevator, escorting a tightly bound John.

Quinn followed behind.

"Isn't that Uncle Lethan's driver?"

Wanda's eyes widened as she saw Quinn's hand bound repen "Abhodine with anyon

"Auht Quinn..."

Quinn-kept her head down, not daring to meet the gaze of Lethan's family.

"Dad, what's going on?" Zachary was also shocked.

Shein offered a weak smile. "We'll ask Lethan about it later."

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The three of them arrived at the chairman's office.

Lethan was busy tending to his wounds, which were quite uncomfortable with his injured arm.

Wanda quickly stepped forward and grabbed the disinfectant out of Lethan's hand. "Uncle Lethan, what happened to you? Let me help you bandage the wound!"

"Wanda, Zac, Shein..." Lethan greeted them with a desperate voice.

"Let's go to the hospital first," Shein said calmly with his hands behind his back.

Half an hour later, they arrived at the best public hospital in Riverland.

Zachary pressed Lethan for details of what had happened, and Lethan told them the story of his wife's affair.

Wanda was furious. "This is unbelievable! After all you've done for her!"

Then Lethan remembered Wanda's classmate, Carlisle.

He wondered how Carlisle knew about his wife's affair with John. He even knew that they were planning to embezzle company funds.

Lethan called the finance department on his phone.

"Mr. Warbane..."

"Check if Quinn has approved any large transactions recently!"

"Okay, Mr. Warbane. Please give me a moment,"

After about three minutes, the voice on the other end said, "Mr. Warbane, there's a three-billion-dollar project waiting for your approval."

"Alright, I got it... Lethan hung up, his heart still racing.

Three billion. That was the entire fortune of the company.

If Quinn had taken that money, Islo Clothing would have gone bankrupt, His wife's affair could put the company out of business. He felt like he was being pushed to the edge of a cliff.

Lethan clutched his phone tightly, his eyes blazing with anger. "Quinn... You're ruthless!"

Shein looked at Lethan with a complicated expression. "Remember your promise."

With that, he got up and left.

"Uncle Lethan, what promise did you make?" Wanda and Zachary had no idea of the adults' business.

Lethan was embarrassed. "Children shouldn't worry about adult matters."

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Zachary's phone rang.

It was an employee from the Legendary Tale.

The employee told him the cheater had been banned forever, but the two pieces of equipment were irretrievable.

"Damn it! What kind of shitty game is this? I spent so much money, and this is how you treat your customers?" Zachary exploded in anger.

At the bedside, Lethan looked at Wanda and asked, "Wanda, is your classmate from Riverland?"

He speculated that Carlisle might have overheard Quinn and John's conversation, hence his knowledge.

"He's from Rainville, and we went to the same high school!"

"Really?" Lethan couldn't believe it.

If Carlisle was from Rainville and was Wanda's classmate, then he should be a freshman.

The new semester at Riverland University had only started three days ago, and during those three days, Quinn and John were almost always in his sight. So, it was unlikely that Carlisle had overheard their conversations.

However, if that possibility was ruled out, it only made things more confusing.

"Uncle Lethan, did Carlisle come to see you yesterday because of Aunt Quinn's affair?"

Wanda asked

curiously.

"You didn't know?"

Wanda blushed. "No, I didn't want him to know about our relationship, so I didn't ask."

"Do you like him?" Lethan teased with a half smile.

"Like who?" Zachary returned after ending the call.

"What do you mean 'like'? You must have heard wrong!"

Zachary turned to Lethan. "Did I?"

Lethan nodded.

Zachary scratched his head. "I'm just so angry. When I find that bastard, I'll break his legs!"

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Carlisle woke up sneezing. He rubbed his nose and muttered, "Wanda must be thinking about me!"

As if on cue, his phone rang. He was sure it was Wanda calling him, Carlisle excitedly picked up the phone, but his smile froze when he saw it was from a familiar, nameless contact.

It was Sarah calling. Carlisle answered indifferently, "What is it?"

"Carlisle... I've made my decision."

"What have you decided?" Carlisle was confused. He wondered what Sarah was up to now.

Sarah gathered all her courage and said, "I want to have a relationship with you. I want to be your girlfriend!"

After observing Kelvin for the past two days, she concluded that Kelvin had no redeeming qualities other than having a father who made a hundred thousand dollars a year.

Kelvin wouldn't spoil her with treats every day like Carlisle did, nor would he text her regularly to check on her.

Most importantly, Kelvin's looks couldn't compete with Carlisle's. Her roommate even asked why someone as beautiful as her would go out with Kelvin. In high school, Carlisle chasing her made her the envy of all the girls in school. Sarah missed those days terribly.

Last night, she had a heart-to-heart with Sienna. Sienna agreed that Sarah should be with Carlisle.

So today, she worked up the courage to tell Carlisle.

Carlisle was stunned, but then he chuckled. "Sarah, have you lost your mind? You should call your therapist!"

Carlisle... You..." Sarah's eyes widened in disbelief. She couldn't believe that such cold and heartless words came from Carlisle.

"I already have someone I like, so please don't bother me again." With that, Carlisle hung up.

Sarah was with Sienna at a nearby cafe. She immediately burst into tears. "Sienna, Carlisle has changed. He doesn't like me anymore. What am I going to do?"

"I think he's just testing you. After all, you hurt him before. Think about it. If he didn't care about you, why wouldn't he block you on MSN?" Sienna held Sarah's hand and comforted her.

Sarah thought for a moment and found Sienna's words reasonable. "What am I supposed to do next? I've never chased a guy before!"

"Treat him like how he treated you before!" Sienna sipped her coffee and smiled.

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Sarah recalled Carlisle's humble attitude and frowned. "I don't want to be that modest!"

"Then I can't help you. I've never been in a relationship before, and I wouldn't stoop that low. Love shouldn't come through humility!"

Sarah bit her lip as tears welled up in her eyes. They could fall at any moment.

Sienna sighed under her breath. "Maybe you should just give up on him. With your looks, you can get any man you want."

"Other people want me for my looks. I've just realized that only Carlisle cares about me," Sarah said after shaking her head.

Some time ago, Kevin had taken her to a hotel.

He wanted to spend the night with her. Even a fool could see what he was after.

Sienna looked at Sarah with a complicated look on her face. She found her friend increasingly hard to understand.

"Wow... What kind of car is that? It's so beautiful!"

A couple of girls at the next table suddenly looked out the window.

Sienna and Sarah were also drawn to look.

There was a convertible sports car parked on the side of the road below.

A well-dressed senior gave them a disdainful look. "What a bunch of uncultured people. They don't even recognize a Porsche!"

"Porsche?"

"I've never heard of it. Have you?"

"Me neither. I only know BMW, Mercedes, and Audi!" a couple of the girls whispered to each other.

Sienna whispered to Sarah, "Have you ever heard of Porsche?"

Sarah shook her head in confusion. Her family wasn't poor, but they weren't wealthy either. Her dad's car was a 20 thousand dollar used Suzuki Alto.

The senior student nonchalantly remarked, "The price of this Porsche Carrera is 2.8 million dollars!" "Whoa..."

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The surrounding students exclaimed in amazement.

Many of them pulled out their cell phones to take pictures.

"Oh my God, a car that costs 2.8 million? Is there really a car that is that expensive in the world?"

Sienna's eyes almost popped out of her head. The price of the car completely overturned her worldview.

Sarah looked at the luxury car with fiery eyes and clenched her fists. "Enna, I've found a criteria for my future boyfriend!"

"Have you given up on Carlisle?*

"Could Carlisle ever make enough money in his lifetime to afford this car?"

Sienna smiled cunningly. "With your looks, it wouldn't be impossible for you to snag a rich guy!"

Back at Carlisle's studio, maintenance on The Legendary Tale was complete.

All previous cheats and scripts were now ineffective.

After downing a bottle of Chardonnay, Hank quickly wrote a new script and cheating software.

Carlisle was amazed.

Writing cheats was second nature to Hank. He was truly a genius.

The five of them sat in front of their computers and logged into their secondary accounts.

Heath suddenly said, "Carl, let's name our studio!"

"How about Dragonaire? It means our future-a dragon soaring through the sky!"

Carlisle let out a smile. "Dragonaire is a nice name."

"I'll design a logo. Who knows, it could be a business one day!"

Hank grabbed a notebook and pencil and started sketching.

Carlisle's smile indicated ambition, "Make it look good. Our company could go international one day!"

Everyone's eyes were on Carlisle as he made that statement.

Hank's hand shook slightly as he held the pencil. "Let's get the studio off the ground before we make any big plans!"

Gold farming studios were profitable, but with so many existing now, the m price of equipment and materials had plummeted. Plus, Carlisle's high salaries made huge profits hard to come by.

"Hank, do you have to be such a killjoy?" Sean replied irritably. Every e startup heeds a goal, right? Carl's

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alming high, and here you are, raining on his parade?"

Hank took a sip of Chardonnay and replied, "I'm straightforward. I call it like I see it. Dreams are great, but reality is often cruel."

Sean was about to retort, but Carlisle gave him a warning look.

Benjamin leaned back in his chair with a cigarette and said solemnly, "I think Carl and Sean are right.. Ambition is what separates someone from the average. Carl said he'd help us make our dreams come true!"

"I'll wait and see," Hank said with a shake of his head, then continued to draw.

Just then, Carlisle got a call from Wanda.

"Carlisle, what are you doing?"

"I'm at the studio!"

"I was going to ask you out for coffee today, but we have a family reunion tonight, so let's do it tomorrow!"

"Sure, I'll buy you two cups tomorrow!" Carlisle said with a laugh.

"Hehe, you said it! My brother's here. We'll talk later..." Wanda quickly hung up.

Before Carlisle could put the phone down, another call came in.

It was from Lethan, the president of Islo Clothing.

Carlisle grinned as he guessed that Lethan had solved his crisis.

After pressing the answer button, Lethan's tired voice came through. "Carlisle, thank you!"

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"It seems your crisis has been averted..." Carlisle said with a slight smile.

"Yes, my wife will walk away without a penny, and John's attempted murder will get him at least five years in prison." Lethan's voice was somber. After a pause, he asked, "But I'm curious, how did you know all this?"

"That's not important. What's important is that I saved you!"

"True. Are you free for dinner tonight?" Lethan offered. He'd like to repay Carlisle.

"I'm pretty tied up right now. Maybe another time."

Lethan, a billionaire businessman, was a connection Carlisle wouldn't let slip away easily.

Hank's earlier words were quite realistic.

The studio could make money, but making much money wasn't easy. It would be even harder to make enough money to enter the era of smart technology.

That was why Carlisle had to bring in investments. Lethan and Bob were both good investors.

Sean brought some fast food: "Time for dinner..."

Hank and the others were busy playing on their computers.

Sean handed each of them a portion of fast food and said with a smile, "Guys, let's eat first, then we'll continue!"

Carlisle also started to eat his fast food in front of the computer. Each of them had at least eight pieces of chicken.

Heath flicked away his cigarette butt and said in a deep voice, "Carl, why don't we just use hacks to loot the pay-to-win players' gear? We'd make a lot of money that way!"

"Let's keep it real and steady. You can't hang around the riverbank without getting your shoes wet. We'll play it safe."

Heath smiled sheepishly. "I was just throwing it out there!"

After dinner, Carlisle planned to head back to campus.

As he reached the campus gates, he received a call from an unknown number.

"Hello, who is this?"

"Carlisle, it's Cameron!"

"Oh, it's you. How did your sister's surgery go?"

"Very well, I really owe you one!" Cameron's voice was choked with emotion.

Without the thousand dollars Carlisle and Ivan had scraped together, his sister wouldn't have made it.

"It's great that she's okay. Do you have enough money?" Carlisle asked with a smile.

"We have enough. I'm looking for a job right now. As soon as I make some money, I'll pay you back double!"

"You don't need to look for a job. Come to Riverland and join my team!"

"But... aren't you in Riverland for school? Cameron was confused.

"I'm planning to start a game account farming studio for 'The Mystical Journey.' If you know anyone, bring them over, and we'll work together!"

"Account farming?" Cameron was unfamiliar with the term. His understanding of "farming" was manual labor on the farm.

"It's hard to explain right now. Just come over. Call me when you get to Riverland University!"

"Okay, I'll come tomorrow!" Cameron trusted Carlisle's words completely.

After ending the call, Carlisle bought some necessities and returned to the dormitory.

As he pushed open the door, he heard the sound of a metal bed shaking.

Damn... In broad daylight?

Shaking his head, Carlisle lay on his bed and scanned the current cell phone market.

They were still using 2G networks, and Android hadn't been developed yet. To make a globally popular full- a screen smartphone, he'd have to develop a home-grown system comparable to Android.

Android was an open-source operating system based on the Linux kernel architecture, while iOS was a closed source operating system eWhite based on the UNIX system architecture.

The first phone with the iOS system was released in 2007, and the first phone with the Android system was released in October 2008.

To compete with those two giants, the smartphone era had to be fully launched within two years.

Just then, Daniel Scott emerged from under the covers, sweating profusely.

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Daniel was startled to see Carlisle lying on the bed opposite him. "Holy crap, Carlisle... When did you get back?"

"About three minutes ago," Carlisle replied nonchalantly.

"Damn, you're lying!"

"Oh?" Carlisle grinned. "What mischief have you been up to?"

Daniel's face turned red with embarrassment. "What are you talking about?"

Carlisle chuckled at his answer. "Isn't it obvious?"

"Believe what you want." Daniel smiled awkwardly before tossing the tissue he was holding into the trash car Carlisle put on his shoes and left the room, leaving the unpleasant smell of the dormitory behind.

He decided to move out tomorrow and find a new place to live. The dormitory environment was simply unbearable.

Carlisle went to the roof to call Hank. He intended to recruit some programmers from him to form a research and development team.

They would first have to develop an operating system to create a smartphone. However, there was the cost of research and development.

Carlisle pinched the bridge of his nose and decided against calling Hank.

The cost of research and development, along with salaries, was a challenge.

The profits from the studio probably wouldn't be enough to cover the research and development costs.

Just then, Carlisle's phone rang. It was his mother.

Carlisle quickly answered the phone, "Hello, Mom."

"Son, you don't have class today, do you?"

"No classes on the weekend!" Carlisle replied with a soft smile.

Hilda then said, "You little rascal, did you not even think to call when you are on break!"

"Hey, I've been a little busy!" Carlisle laughed awkwardly, realizing he hadn't called home since he started college.

Hilda didn't press further. Instead, she asked, "How's school? Have classes started?"

"Not yet. It'll probably start next week!"

"Son, have you seen Owen lately?" Hilda inquired suddenly.

Chapte

"Owen... He's... He's with mol"

Hayley must have realized that Owen wasn't at school and asked Hilda to check with Carlisle.

To ease Hayley's worries, he had to come clean.

"Were you the one who told him to go there?" Hilda's tone had turned icy.

"Yes, it was my idea!"

Hilda lost her temper. "Do you know how worried his mother was? She was on the verge of calling the police!"

"Mom, Owen skips class every day to go gaming. He's not learning anything useful at school. It's better for him to earn money with me than to waste time there!" Carlisle explained.

"You... You're still in school, aren't you?" Hilda's voice carried a hint of panic, fearing that Carlisle had abandoned his studies.

"I've started a game studio, and Owen works there. I'm still going to school, so it won't affect my studies!"

Hilda felt somewhat relieved.

"Can a game studio make money?"

"Don't worry, it definitely can. Talk to Mrs. Woods and tell her to relax. Besides, I'll have Qwendall

"Alright, I trust you."

Hilda remembered Carlisle's confidence about getting into Riverland University, so she believed his studio would make money, too.

After a short pause, Hilda added, "Your grandfather's birthday is tomorrow. Remember to call him, okay?"

"Ah... Grandpa's birthday..." Carlisle's pupils shrank sharply as he suddenly recalled a news article he had seen at his grandfather's birthday party in his previous life.

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"I knew you'd forget, so I thought I'd give you a heads-up!" Hilda said with a teasing smile.

"Got it, Mom. I've got to go now, but I'll call you when I can, okay?" Carlisle quickly ended the call and made his way downstairs.

In his previous life, Carlisle used to spend his birthdays at his grandfather's place. On that particular night, Riverland TV Station aired a major news report.

The wealthiest person in Riverland, Yuriel, spent 80 thousand dollars in a local antique shop in Rainville. He snagged an original Galloping Horses painting by Harold Delacruz. Later, he flipped it for a staggering 3.86 million dollars.

Carlisle hailed a cab. "To Rainville, please!"

"Rainville?" The cab driver raised an eyebrow. "I don't usually do long-distance trips..."

Carlisle grinned. "How about three hundred dollars?" he asked.

After a moment's hesitation, the cab driver shook his head. "It's not about the money. My wife is about to give birth in the hospital, and I'm afraid I won't make it back in time!"

Carlisle got down from the cab. Just then, another cab pulled over by the roadside.

Wanda stepped out of the cab. "Carlisle..."

Her eyes lit up when she saw Carlisle.

"Is your family dinner over already?" Carlisle asked with a light chuckle.

"I left early, Are you heading back to your studio? Mind if I tag along?" Wanda suggested with a smile.

"I need to make a quick trip to Rainville," Carlisle said.

"At this hour? What's going on in Rainville?" Wanda inquired.

"I've got some things to take care of. You should head back to school," Carlisle explained.

"I'll come with you!"

"This..." Carlisle hesitated.

Wanda immediately put on a pitiful expression.

Carlisle sighed and said, "Okay, get in the car."

When the driver heard that both of them were going to Rainville, he chimed in, "Rainville's quite a distance, you know. The fare won't be cheap."

Carlisle responded, "Three hundred dollars. Deal?"

The driver pondered for a moment. "Will you be coming back? If I return empty, three hundred dollars. won't be much profit."

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Wanda chimed in, "Of course, we'll come back. How about six hundred dollars for the round trip?"

The driver grinned broadly. "Deal! Let's hit the road!"

Carlisle and Wanda sat in the backseat.

Wanda kept her head down, her heart inexplicably racing.

Carlisle leaned back with a slight frown.

The painting was priced at 80 thousand dollars, but Carlisle had less than 20 thousand dollars on him. He pondered whether he should ask Wanda for money.

"Carlisle..."

"Wanda..."

At that moment, both of them spoke simultaneously, locking eyes with each other. "You go first..."

Again, they spoke up at the same time. Blushing, Wanda whispered, "I was just wondering what you're planning for tomorrow?"

Carlisle smiled gently. "How about I show you around Rainville tomorrow?"

Wanda pouted and replied, "I've spent three years in Rainville. I've seen all there is to see."

Carlisle took Wanda's hand and said, "But you haven't explored it with me."

Wanda glanced at their joined hands, her cheeks flushing uncontrollably as her heart pounded against her

chest.

Realizing they were in a taxi, she quickly withdrew her hand.

Carlisle's expression faltered for a moment, and he looked out the m window with a hint of disappointment.

Seeing this, Wanda felt a pang of regret and immediately grabbed Carlisle's hand again.

This time, Carlisle was taken aback. Had she just willingly taken his hand?

Blushing deeply, Wanda asked, "You called me earlier. What did you want to say?"

Carlisle squeezed Wanda's soft, delicate hand and grinned. "Wanted to borrow Some money from you,"

he said.

Wanda's hand was incredibly soft, like a handful of cotton.

Chapter 100

Chapter 100

A wave of emotions swept over Carlisle, making him want to pull her into his arms.

"How much do you need?" Wanda asked with her head lowered. She felt her palms sweating under Carlisle's intense gaze.

The cab driver cleared his throat and said, "Miss, be careful. Don't get scammed!"

Carlisle raised an eyebrow and threatened, "Could you just drive? We're paying for a ride, not a chat. Do you want the fare or not?"

The driver shrugged. "Hey, is it even proper for you to borrow money from a lady?"

Carlisle felt a blush creeping up his cheeks. If it weren't for the circumstances, he wouldn't have wanted to ask Wanda for money either.

Wanda puffed up her cheeks and retorted, "My boyfriend is-starting a business. It's normal that he needs money!"

Carlisle looked at Wanda in surprise. Did she just admit he was her boyfriend?

The driver rolled his eyes but didn't argue further.

If it weren't for the fact that Wanda seemed naive, he wouldn't have bothered to say anything.

Fuming, Wanda said, "Carlisle, let's get out. We're not riding with him anymore!"

Carlisle nodded, took out a bundle of crisp hundred-dollar bills, and handed one to the driver, "Stop the car. This is for the fare, no need for change."

The driver was momentarily stunned. Then, he chuckled nervously and said, "Sorry for what I said earlier. I didn't mean any harm. It was just a friendly reminder!"

Carlisle said calmly, "Don't judge without knowing the whole story. You might offend someone easily that way."

"Got it, got it. I won't do it again!" The driver smiled apologetically.

Carlisle squeezed Wanda's hand gently and said, "Don't be upset. The guy was just trying to help."

Wanda pursed her lips and nodded, her eyes involuntarily drifting to their entwined hands.

Leaning closer to Wanda, Carlisle whispered, "Wanda, you said I was your boyfriend, didn't you?"

Wanda's eyes widened at his tease, and she jerked her hand back. "Y-you... I didn't mean... When did I say that?"

"Maybe I'd misheard." Carlisle sighed as if disappointed.

"Yes, that's right. You've definitely misheard," Wanda said with a blush.

She had only blurted out that sentence in a moment of panic.

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Carlisle couldn't help but smile at the shy Wanda. She practically treated him like a boyfriend but was still too shy to admit it.

However, love was a delicate matter. It was best to let it develop naturally.

Besides, there were people secretly trying to keep him away from Wanda.

Until those obstacles were dealt with, he needed to maintain some distance from her.

By midnight, Wanda had drifted off to sleep.

Carlisle carefully rested her head on his shoulder to make her more comfortable.

They reached Rainville around 3:00 am.

The cab exited the highway, hitting a bumpy, pothole-ridden road.

Wanda woke up groggily and asked, "Are we there yet?"

Carlisle nodded. "We still have a little way to go before we reach the town."

Wanda nestled back against Carlisle's shoulder and drifted back to sleep. As she closed her eyes, she realized they were practically leaning against each other.

Since she was already treating him like a boyfriend, Wanda wrapped her arms around Carlisle's arm and continued sleeping.

A faint smile appeared on Carlisle's lips as he glanced down at Wanda.

At 4:30 am, the cab pulled up outside a hotel.

Carlisle booked two rooms while the cab driver chose to stay in the car and sleep.

The next day at 8:00 am, Carlisle knocked on Wanda's door. After waiting for a while and having no response, he dialed her number.

"Sorry, the number you have dialed is switched off..."