

Luna & Joshua 161

Chapter 161

Luna frowned and gave a feeble smile. "How's that possible?"

She saw the news broadcast in the supermarket when she was there with Neil last night, and it showed that Aura had boarded the plane and even displayed a photo of her posing in front of her university in Ausland. That meant she could not possibly be in Banyan City anymore.

"It's true." Natasha sighed. She lifted her head as her red-rimmed eyes stared straight at Luna.

"Actually... Joshua isn't as good a person as he pretends to be. He faked the news about Aura going abroad. Even the images and footage of her boarding the plane and arriving at her university were staged."

Natasha broke at that moment as tears trickled from her eyes, and she dabbed her cheeks with tissue paper. She let out another sigh before she continued, "He's imprisoned Aura, truth be told. She's now locked up somewhere with people guarding her day and night. She can't escape."

Luna's brow furrowed upon hearing this ; she could not believe what she had heard. "That's impossible."

Joshua's unwavering faith and devotion toward Aura was something Luna had known as far back as

six years ago. According to what Luna knew about Joshua, he definitely would have chosen to send

Aura abroad instead of punishing her after discovering what she had done. What Natasha indicated

sounded ludicrous, and Luna did not believe that Joshua would imprison Aura.

"It's true!" Natasha sobbed as she clung to Luna's arm. "Ms. Luna, Aura is truly imprisoned

somewhere right now—she told me that herself. She somehow found a way to get in contact with me

without the guards knowing and told me that herself, but when I tried to contact her again, I couldn't get

through at all."

Her grip on Luna's arm tightened as she became more and more agitated. "You must know where she

is, don't you? You're the one who claimed that Aura tried to get rid of Nellie, and you're the one who

brought out the evidence. You must know what Joshua is planning to do to Aura!"

Natasha gazed into Luna's eyes, her face etched with distress and even a hint of anticipation. "I'm not

asking you to free Aura. All I'm hoping is that you... you can help me get to the bottom of this. Help me

find out who's trying to frame her. I know my daughter the best, and I know she'd never do anything like

this—not in a million years!"

Luna's lips twisted into a smirk as she removed Natasha's grip on her arm. "There's no such thing as Aura being framed, Mrs. Gibson."

"What about Luna?" Natasha raised her head to fix her gaze on Luna. "What if my eldest daughter is trying to frame her sister? What if Luna got Nellie to deliberately provoke Aura? That's even likely. I know that Luna hasn't returned yet, but what if she's doing this to frame Aura and get rid of her so she can get Joshua back?"

Luna closed her eyes at that. "Mrs. Gibson, Luna Gibson is also your daughter. Why are you so adamant that she's trying to frame her own sister? Why do you believe your daughter Aura, but you don't have a single shred of trust in Luna at all?"

Natasha's face paled when she heard Luna's pointed question. After a moment's hesitation, she lowered her head and replied, "I don't trust Luna because... because of what she did in the past. I don't think I can ever trust her again, after what she did."

"She claimed to have loved Joshua, that he was the only person she loved, yet in the end, she left with another man. She even faked a car accident.

Everyone was so worried about her ! She gave birth to her and Joshua’s children, but the only thing she did was send the kids back, and she didn’t even bother bringing the children back herself. She’s an irresponsible, cold-hearted liar... I don’t trust someone like her, ” Natasha spat.

Luna felt like her entire heart had been submerged in ice.

”Ms. Luna.” Natasha heaved a sigh and handed Luna a slip of paper. ”These are the IP addresses that Aura contacted me with after she got imprisoned. I’ve sought the help of several IT professionals, but they told me that these addresses were forged. However, I know that a really experienced hacker can figure out the real address through the forged sequences. Please Natasha bit her bottom lip and proceeded to pull out two bank cards. ”I know that since you’re working at Blue Bay Villa as a maid, you’ re probably in need of money. You can take all the money in this card... ” As she spoke, Natasha slipped one of the cards into Luna’s hand. ”This card contains all my life savings. Please, take it and help me find Aura.”

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”I ’m not a local from Banyan City, and I don’t know anyone apart from you and the Lynch family...”

Luna tried to protest.

Before she could finish, however, Natasha shoved the other card into her hand and said, "Take this card as well... There's a lot of money in this one, too. You can have both cards, as long as you help me find evidence that Aura was framed."

Luna lowered her gaze to look at the two cards Natasha had given her. She could recognize both of them. One of them was Natasha's personal account which contained all her life savings; Luna herself had helped Natasha set up the account. The other one, however, was a card she had given Natasha just before she got married to Joshua. The card contained all of Luna's own savings and assets. At that time, Luna knew it was rough for her parents to raise her till adulthood, yet because she was getting married so young, she did not know how to repay them, so she accumulated all her savings into an account and decided to gift the card to her mother.

Little did Luna know that many years later, this card would make its way back to her. She couldn't believe that, in a twist of fate, she would one day stand before her mother with a new face and identity and that her mother would offer her this money to help clear Aura's name.

"Mrs. Gibson, what if even after I investigated, the evidence still points to Aura being guilty?"

Natasha froze. It was obvious she never expected that Luna would ask her this question.

After a moment's hesitation, she let out a sigh and answered, "Well, in that case... I have no choice but to accept the truth." After finishing her sentence, Natasha closed her eyes.

"I have only two daughters. It's one thing to be disappointed by my eldest, but if the other one turned out the same..." Natasha lamented, but she trailed off before she could finish.

Gazing at Natasha's sunken and languish face, Luna bit down on her bottom lip. She did not know how to describe her feelings at that moment. It was a maelstrom of feelings rioting in her simultaneously.

Luna felt painfully disappointed that her own mother did not trust her at all, yet at the same time, she knew she could not blame Natasha for feeling that way. It must have been unbearably agonizing for Natasha to have to come to terms with her daughter's betrayal. Perhaps, in the past, Natasha had struggled to believe that Luna would do something like that, just like how she struggled to believe otherwise in Aura.

"Alright, I'll help you," Luna finally said after a long silence. She heaved a sigh and stuffed the two cards back into Natasha's hand. "I don't want your money. If in the end, I managed to find evidence that suggested Aura was guilty, all I ask of you is that you try to step into your eldest daughter's shoes. It

probably hasn't been easy for her all these years. "

With that, Luna got up and left the room.

Natasha chewed on her lip nervously. She frowned as she watched Luna's retreating figure get further and further away. She could not put her finger on it, but that woman, who shared the same name as her eldest daughter, felt vaguely familiar to her.

After coming out of the hospital, Luna immediately sent Nigel the IP addresses that Natasha had given her.

"What's going on?" Nigel asked as he turned on his computer and began working on cracking the fake IP addresses.

"I want you to help me find the location of the real address. Aura might be imprisoned there. Your grandmother asked me to help track Aura down and prove her innocence, " Luna replied.

Nigel fell into silence on the other end of the line. "Did you agree?" he eventually asked.

"Yes, " Luna murmured. She heaved a sigh before continuing, "I wanted to do one last thing for my mother." She wanted to let Natasha know that Aura was not as innocent as she seemed.

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Luna arrived home from the hospital. As soon as she sat down, however, she received a call from Nigel.

“Mommy, I’ve managed to confirm the address. The IP address that Aura used to contact Grandma seems to be coming from a hospital. I’ve sent you the location of the hospital, “ said Nigel over the phone.

Luna glanced at the address Nigel sent. It seemed to be a mental institution located on the outskirts of Banyan City.

‘Is it true that Aura hasn’t been sent abroad to Ausland?’ Luna thought to herself. ‘Since she was still in Banyan City, why did Joshua fake the news that she went abroad? He even went to the extent of forging photographs and footage of Aura landing in Ausland. Was it simply because he wanted to find an excuse for her sudden disappearance? Why did he imprison her then, and in a mental institution, no less?’

More and more questions surfaced in her mind. ‘Did Joshua imprison Aura because he wanted her to pay the price of trying to hurt his child? If so, why did he not report her to the police or just punish her

instead? Why did he choose to imprison her? What is this man up to?’

“Everything points to the possibility that my father found out what my Aunt Aura did, and is trying to teach her a lesson,” said Nigel. On the other end of the line, Nigel’s brows tightly together as he frowned, fingers fluttering across his keyboard.

After a while, he added, “I just hacked into the hospital’s backend system. According to the system records, Aura was taken away and imprisoned the night of Granny Lynch’s birthday party. If my calculations are correct, Aura was sent into the hospital almost immediately after the party ended.”

Luna frowned at that. If Joshua had sent Aura into the mental institution as soon as Granny Lynch’s birthday party ended, then he must have made up his mind to do so during the party itself.

Luna shut her eyes and tried to recall Joshua’s actions the night of the party. She could picture his stony, determined face as clearly as if he stood right before her.

The night of the party, everything he did and all the words he said were in Aura’s favor. Why did he act that way if, all the while, he had planned to imprison her?

‘This man truly is an enigma,’ Luna thought to herself.

“It doesn’t matter what happened anymore. Since Aura is still in Banyan City, we still have a chance to make her pay for what she did, “ said Luna resolutely.

Nigel let out a sigh. “Mommy, what should we do next?”

Luna paused for a moment to think before she replied, “Are visitors allowed? Can we visit her?”

“I don’t think so,” answered Nigel as his slender fingers flew deftly across the keyboard. He managed to hack into the hospital’s security system and studied one of the surveillance tapes. “It looks like all the entrances to Aura’s ward are guarded—even the windows. The guards don’t look like hospital staff, either. In fact, they seem like Joshua’s own men. Judging from this, you might not be able to visit her, but it’s not entirely impossible...”

“What do you mean?”

“If you went with Joshua, you’d probably be able to see her then, ” Nigel answered.

There was silence.

Nigel frowned as he continued to pan the security camera at different angles. “I know why you want to visit her, Mommy. You want to get her to come clean about what she did, don’t you?”

Luna stiffened at his words, but it was a split second later that she smiled a forced smile. “You’ re right.”

Natasha so blindly trusted Aura that she even believed someone was trying to frame her daughter.

Well, whoever started the trouble should be the one to end it. Hence, Luna wanted to make Natasha see her precious daughter for what she really was: a two – faced liar. To do so, however, she had to get Aura to come clean about everything herself. That was the best evidence she could ever get her hands on.

Initially, Luna was led to believe that Aura was in Ausland, so her mission had to be put on hold indefinitely. However, as it turned out Aura was in Banyan City, things would be much easier.

”Mom.” Nigel let out another sigh before he continued, ”If you want to visit Aura, you...have to find Joshua.” He was not sure how she would react to this, since he knew that his mother’s hatred for Joshua ran deeper than the blood in her veins.

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Nigel could remember the times when Luna woke up crying in the middle of the night. Every time that happened, he would get up and put his arm around her in an attempt to comfort her.

His mother had been through so much just to bring the three of them into this world. She had gone

through so much hardship to change her appearance and assume a new identity. All of this was so she could start a new life, but because of him and Nellie, she had to get close to that man again—the man who brought all of this down on her in the first place.

“Mommy.” Nigel paused and took a deep breath before he finally said, “I love you.”

He would never say anything that would disappoint her again.

Luna never expected to hear a heartfelt confession like that from her usually shy and temperate son.

She chuckled in response. “I know. The three of you are the best things to ever happen to me, and I’ll do whatever it takes to keep you by my side.”

With that, she hung up the phone and plopped down on the couch. She stared up at the ceiling above her, deep in thought.

Joshua Lynch... What other tricks did that man have up his sleeve?

Luna remained in the same position on the couch until evening. When the time came to pick up Neil from kindergarten, she hurriedly went downstairs.

Coincidentally, she bumped into Joshua at the kindergarten gates.

It was five in the evening, so the sun was still up in the sky, casting a yellow glow over the streets.

Joshua stood at the gates to the kindergarten amidst the crowd of parents. He was a tall and slender man with an air of indifference and arrogance about him, so he easily stood out from the rest.

The rest of the parents seemed to deliberately steer clear of him. Some of them even tried to take pictures of him surreptitiously.

“That’s Mr. Lynch! But why is he here? This is just a n ordinary kindergarten.”

“I heard that his ex-wife’s daughter recently returned to the family. My guess is that the little princess is attending school here.”

“Why would she be attending school here? Wouldn’t she be at some prestigious kindergarten? Why would he send her daughter to some ordinary preschool like this?”

“This is exciting! I can brag to other people that my child went to school with Joshua Lynch’s daughter...”

Luna could hear the low murmurs of the other parents as they shared gossip among one another. She frowned and sat down in a corner by herself.

She had dropped Nellie off at Blue Bay Villa this morning herself, so how did Nellie end up attending

school at the same kindergarten as Neil?

Luna guessed that it had probably been Neil's idea. She sighed and made up her mind to talk to Neil about that when they got home.

All of a sudden, the parents stopped whispering among one another, and silence fell.

She lifted her head in confusion, and her eyes met Joshua's. His intense gaze seemed to pierce right through her skin and bones, all the way down to her heart.

He curled his lips into a smirk. "We meet again, Ms. Luna."

Joshua took a few steps in her direction and stopped in front of her. He was so tall that he loomed over her like a towering tree.

Luna took a deep breath and met his gaze. She gave him a small smile in return. "What a coincidence, Mr. Lynch. Are you here to pick up your daughter?"

"It's not a coincidence. I came here for you," Joshua replied, his eyes still fixed on her.

"You came here for me?" Luna furrowed her brows skeptically, unable to believe what she had just heard. "You ordered for me to leave your house this morning, yet now you came to the kindergarten just to look for me?"

“Why is that so hard to believe?” Joshua narrowed his eyes a little. “If it weren’t for you, my daughter wouldn’t have insisted on coming to school with your son.”

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Luna’s breath caught in her throat. Her guess was right; Nellie had started attending school at the same kindergarten that Neil went to.

“Mr. Lynch, I believe you’re mistaken,” began Luna. “Nellie’s insistence on attending school with Neil must’ve been because they’re very close with each other. I don’t think it has anything to do with me. I’ve never even mentioned this idea to her.”

She gave a slight smirk and added, “Mr. Lynch, I have a piece of advice for you: Instead of trying to blame your problems on other people, why not actually sit down and have a conversation with your daughter to find out what she really wants? Nellie and Neil are close friends, and it’s normal for them to want to attend school together.”

Joshua’s eyes narrowed as he heard Luna’s response. This woman was a piece of work. Not only did she suddenly quit her job at Blue Bay Villa, but she acted so uncouthly and impolite to him all at this

moment, too.

When Joshua did not reply, Luna frowned and tried to sidle past him. She did not want to talk to him any longer, so instead, she would find another spot to wait.

However, when she moved to the left, Joshua stepped in front of her, blocking her way. When she moved to the right, he did the same. She reluctantly lifted her head to stare at him. "Mr. Lynch, you're in my way."

He narrowed his eyes at her and said, "Well, if it weren't for you, I wouldn't even be here anyway. It was difficult for me to give in to my daughter and send her to a preschool like this because of you, so what's so hard about me being in your way?" Joshua was obviously infuriated about his daughter's insistence, yet at the same time, he knew he could not change her mind, so he decided to take out his anger on Luna.

Luna shot him a glance of helplessness. She did not understand why this man acted like a child.

She relented and slid back into her original spot, leaning against the wall while Joshua remained poised in front of her. After a while, he took out a stick of cigarette and proceeded to light it.

"Ms. Luna, you must've been paid quite generously when you were abroad. Why didn't you choose a

better school for Neil? Why come to a place like this?" asked Joshua.

Luna rolled her eyes at him. "What's wrong with this school?"

Anne was the one who picked out this school for Neil. Although it was not a prestigious school, it certainly was not a bad one either. The children who went to school here came from ordinary families, so there would not be too much unnecessary drama or rules to adhere to. The teachers were patient and friendly, and they did not teach glamorous sports like horseback riding or archery. Instead, they were committed to creating a comfortable learning environment for the children. In Luna's opinion, those were enough.

Neil was an intelligent boy. She did not want to send him to a reputable school where all they did was restrict and conform him to society's standards. She wanted her son to grow up in a place where he could make friends and have fun.

As for Nellie, however, she never expected Nellie to attend the same kindergarten. Luna knew Nellie was a spoiled child and maybe a regular preschool like this was not meant for her, but she disagreed with Joshua's opinion. This school was ordinary, but it was not a bad one.

Luna's response to his question made Joshua snicker. "If Neil were my son, I wouldn't send him here."

Luna frowned. "Well, thank God Neil isn't your son, then."

He could not put his finger on it, but that response somehow made him uneasy. He fixed his gaze on her, but just as he was about to retort, the school bell rang. Immediately, the crowd of parents surged forward toward the gates like a pack of sardines.

Luna did not like the feeling of being squished up against the crowd of people, and it did not help that Joshua still blocked her way, so she remained motionless.

The children came out of the kindergarten in a single file line. One by one, Luna counted them. One, two...

By the time she reached the 20th child, there was still no sign of Neil or Nellie. She began to panic.

Neil's class only had 25 students.

Eventually, the 24th child came out of the school building, but it was not Neil either. Luna bit her lip and wound her way around Joshua, storming toward the gate. "Teacher, where's Neil and Nellie?"

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The kindergarten teacher was startled by Luna's sudden reaction. She froze for a moment before she

slowly pointed in the direction of the nurse's office. "Nellie got injured just now, and Neil is currently with her at the nurse's office."

As soon as she finished her sentence, Joshua immediately stomped off in the direction the teacher had pointed. Luna had no choice but to trail along behind him. The two adults stormed into the nurse's office in a flurry of panic.

Inside the nurse's office, Neil asked, "Which flavor do you like more: original or garlic?" He was perched on the examination bed as he munched on a chicken drumstick.

"They're both yummy!" replied Nellie with her mouth full. She was clutching another chicken drumstick in her hand.

"Alright, then let's sneak out to order some more tomorrow," beamed Neil. He reached out an oily hand to pinch Nellie's cheek. "Tomorrow, we'll pretend that I got hurt, and you can accompany me to the nurse's office again."

"Okay!" Nellie nodded in enthusiasm. She paused for a moment as if suddenly recalling something.

"Neil, Mommy never lets us eat fried chicken. She says it's junk food. Today is the first time I've ever

had junk food, and it's the yummiest thing I've ever eaten! " she exclaimed.

Neil raised his eyebrows in agreement. "I agree, it's delicious! Nigel did say that fried chicken isn't healthy, though, so we can't have too much of it." After he finished his sentence, Neil immediately lifted the necklace he was wearing and spoke into it, "Isn't that right, Nigel?"

Nigel's stern voice came from the necklace, " Mommy's here."

Neil's eyes widened upon hearing this. He immediately hopped off the bed and hid the fried chicken.

"Quick, Nellie! Pretend like you're sick! "

Slam!

The door to the nurse's office slammed open just as Nellie climbed onto the bed.

Joshua stormed into the room, followed closely behind by a flustered Luna and an even more flustered school nurse. "Mr. Lynch and Ms. Luna, please calm down..." the nurse cried out in desperation.

"Nellie! " Joshua exclaimed as he rushed to the bedside. "What happened?"

"Daddy..." Nellie looked up at him and pouted, showing him her bandaged hand. "I accidentally cut myself with a knife during class... It hurts! "

Joshua gave her a helpless look as he glanced at her bandaged hand. He picked her up and

immediately shot a glare at the teacher who had followed them into the nurse's office. "How irresponsible are you guys? My daughter ended up getting hurt on her first day of school."

The teacher replied, wringing her hands, "She just got a small cut on her hand..."

"A small cut?" he snarled. "Look at the way her hand is bandaged. You call this a small cut?"

"My daughter hasn't gotten hurt, not even once ever since she returned to my side, but she got injured on her first day of kindergarten." He scowled at Luna.

What kind of school is this? Why did you even choose this place? I 'in taking Nellie to the hospital right this second to get an X-ray, and if she suffers a fracture, I'm holding you responsible, Luna. This kindergarten is so irresponsible, I'll close this place down in an instant."

Joshua was just about to storm out of the room when Nellie suddenly cried out, "Daddy!" She was alarmed that her father would be holding Ms. Luna responsible for her incident, and more so by the fact that he would close the school down because of this.

"I'm... I 'in fine!" Nellie declared as she ripped off the bandage to reveal her perfectly intact and unwounded hand. "I'm not hurt!"

Joshua frowned and lifted her hand to check. He looked all over and discovered that his daughter was indeed not hurt. Immediately, a dark look crossed his face. "What happened?"

Neil silently watched it all happen, but as Nellie had confessed, he decided there was no point trying to hide anymore. He brought out the chicken drumsticks that he had hidden underneath the bed and explained, "We wanted to eat fried chicken, so we pretended that Nellie was hurt to distract the nurse and ordered food delivery without her noticing."

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Joshua and Luna both froze as they heard Neil's confession. Even the teacher who stood behind them gaped at the sudden turn of events.

Who would have thought something like that would happen? Luna rubbed her brows in exasperation, thinking to herself, 'What kind of scheming children did I give birth to? Haven't I told them countless times that they shouldn't eat junk food like this?'

"It's all my fault, Daddy," sulked Nellie. "Class was really boring, and the lunch I had wasn't yummy at all. I overheard another kid talking about eating fried chicken with his mommy and daddy, so I wanted fried chicken too, but..."

Disappointment clouded Nellie's gaze. "I knew that you wouldn't let me have fried chicken because it's not healthy, so I asked Neil to help..."

The anger on Joshua's face dissipated. After a moment's hesitation, he heaved a deep sigh and stared at his daughter. "You're such a mischievous girl," he said in a tender voice.

"This was all just a misunderstanding, Mr. Lynch," the teacher shot Joshua a nervous glance. "You're... not going to close our school down because of this, right?"

This was the first time this kindergarten had enrolled a student as important as the daughter of the famous Joshua Lynch. All of the teachers were afraid that something terrible would happen, so as soon as Nellie injured herself, they immediately panicked and tried to fulfill her every request. It was because of this that the two children were able to distract the nurse and teachers, ordering fried chicken without their knowing.

"He won't," Joshua did not respond to the teacher's question, so Luna piped up instead. She heaved a sigh of relief and smiled at the teacher and nurse. "Thanks for your help. Everything's fine. You guys can go now."

The teacher and the nurse both glanced at Joshua apprehensively, but they figured that since Luna came together with Joshua, she must have meant it when she said everything was fine, so they nodded and quickly left the room.

After the teachers left, Luna immediately turned around and gave Neil a disapproving glare. "Neil, what were you thinking?"

Neil replied meekly, "Nellie wanted fried chicken..." He lowered his head dejectedly and added, "I wanted fried chicken, too..."

"You guys can have it," Joshua's low voice rang. He turned around, his gaze skimming across Luna and landing on Neil. "The reason why you kids aren't allowed to have junk food, including fried chicken, is because they're very high in calories. Secondly, the sanitation of outside foods can be questionable. If you two want to have fried chicken, I'll ask the chef to prepare some for you."

"Okay!" Nellie's face lit up upon hearing her father's words. "Daddy, I want... I want Neil and Aunty to come home with us and have fried chicken, too. Can they?"

Joshua frowned and gave Luna a cold stare. A smirk played on the corner of his mouth as he replied,

"Of course they can." He reached his hand out toward Neil. "Come on."

He had no intention of talking to or interacting with Luna at all.

Neil acknowledged Joshua's outstretched hand with a scowl and raised his head to give him a haughty

look. Neil still held a grudge against Joshua for losing the evidence of Aura trying to get rid of

Nellie, so he ignored Joshua's hand and grabbed Luna's instead.

"The only reason we're going is Nellie!" he said to Luna.

Luna's brow furrowed in response. She had not made up her mind to accept Joshua's invitation yet, but

she recalled what Nigel had told her earlier that afternoon. The only way she could see Aura in person

was through Joshua.

Luna let out a sigh and grabbed Neil's hand. She had no choice but to go along with it.

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By the time Joshua, Luna, Neil, and Nellie came out of the kindergarten, the crowd of parents waiting

outside had dispersed.

Lucas, obediently waiting outside, froze momentarily in shock when he saw the two adults and two

children emerging out of the building.

'Why are Joshua and Luna together again? They had just parted ways last night and even fought this morning.' Lucas thought to himself, flummoxed at the sight. He could still picture the solemn look on Joshua's face when he returned to the ward this morning. Did they somehow manage to make up in just a few hours?

Joshua hoisted Nellie into his arms and slid into the backseat.

Neil, seemingly trying to avoid Joshua, opened the passenger side door in a swift motion and sat in the front passenger seat.

Luna paused. After a moment's hesitation, however, she opened the car door and got into the backseat. Joshua was on the left while Luna was on the right, with Nellie wedged in between them.

"Thank you, Daddy! " Nellie gazed at her father with an awestruck look in her eyes. "I wouldn't have lied if I had known you'd let me have fried chicken! "

Joshua squinted at her and cupped her tiny hand with his large one. "In the future, you should be honest with me about anything you want. Don't lie to me."

Nellie lowered her head in shame and muttered, "

Okay..."

“Most importantly, you shouldn’t lie about getting hurt, understand?”

“Then...what if I do get hurt?”

Joshua stared at her little finger painted in bright red nail polish. “Well, in that case, Daddy will be very sad.” After a pause, he added, “I’ll make sure whoever hurt you gets taught a lesson.” There was a hint of tenderness in his low voice.

Nellie pursed her lips in approval. She snuck a glance at Luna and said, “See, Aunty, my Daddy is the best.”

Luna narrowed her eyes upon hearing this but said nothing else.

Joshua acted like he was the best father in the world. Who was he kidding? If he truly cared about Nellie, if he would handle those who hurt his daughter, then what about Aura?

Ever since Nellie was born, Aura had been the first and only person who seemingly wanted Nellie’s life at all costs, yet this man—who kept trying to act like a good father—did nothing apart from imprisoning her.

At the thought of Aura, Luna could not help but let out a sigh. She lifted her head to sneak a

surreptitious glance at Joshua. She still could not figure out what this man planned to do to Aura.

The car soon arrived at Blue Bay Villa.

“Sir, little princess! “ Lily came forward to greet them with a smile as soon as the car stopped. “How was school today?”

The car door opened, and Luna stepped out.

Lily’s smile froze on her face upon seeing her. “Ms. Luna, what are you doing here?”

“Daddy wants to treat Neil and Aunty to some fried chicken! “ Nellie exclaimed, grinning as she hopped off the car. “Lily, do you know how to make fried chicken?”

Lily picked her up and answered, “Of course I do! “

She turned to look at Joshua and Luna and asked tentatively, “Sir, are you sure...that you want to have fried chicken with guests over?”

Joshua had alighted the car gracefully and unbuttoned his cuff sleeves when he heard that. “ What do you mean?”

Lily took a deep breath and replied, “You have a guest; it’s your father. He’s been waiting in the living room for about an hour now. He said... “ She gave Luna a sideways glance before she continued, “

He said he wants to talk to you about Ms. Luna.”

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Luna was astonished to hear Lily’s words. Why would Adrian Lynch want to talk to Joshua about her?

Was she not just a resigned maid to the Lynch family? What was there to talk about?

Joshua was just as surprised. He shot Luna a disapproving frown and turned back to look at Lily. ” Ask

the chefs to prepare fried chicken, ” he ordered.

Lily nodded after a moment’s hesitation. She linked hands with the two children, and the trio entered

the house together. Lucas also left to park the car in the garage.

Joshua and Luna were the only two people left standing in front of Blue Bay Villa, though Joshua did

not seem to be in a rush. He took out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and proceeded to light one.

Then, he leaned casually against the pillar and took a drag on his cigarette. The smoke made his

unsmiling face look even colder and unapproachable.

Joshua fixated his steely gaze on Luna and sneered, ” I guess you decided to target my father instead

since you couldn’t get any confidential information out of me, huh? What did Malcolm Quinn offer you in

return for doing his dirty work, so much so that you're willing to be a pawn?"

Luna initially frowned at his words, but she smirked a split second later. Joshua must have thought she was the one who led Adrian here over the pretense of having a conversation about her. He even thought that Luna kept trying to get close to him so she could extract confidential information for Malcolm.

'He thinks too highly of himself and too lowly of Malcolm,' Luna mused to herself. 'Although Malcolm is his biggest competitor and had never managed to outsmart him, that doesn't mean Malcolm would resort to dirty measures like this. Malcolm isn't a despicable rogue like Joshua thinks.

The fact that Joshua's mind immediately jumped to this conclusion, proves how much more despicable he truly is.'

Luna snickered as a cold glint flashed in her eyes. " You insist that I' in a spy sent by Malcolm Quinn.

Let me ask you this, Mr. Lynch: I've been with you for almost two months now, and if I truly am a spy, wouldn't the Quinn Group have gotten their hands on the Lynch Group's confidential business information already?"

Joshua snorted, "Just because they don't have access now doesn't mean they won't in the future.

Maybe Malcolm Quinn is just biding his time." He let out a puff of cigarette smoke. The smoke

obscured most of his face like a thick fog, but his piercing eyes still stared straight at Luna.

"I don't care who sent you or what your motives are. I've warned you, Luna. You can hurt me all you

want, but I draw the line at family. You used Nellie and my father as chess pieces in your game to get

close to me, but I won't let this happen a second time." He put out the rest of his cigarette. "Let's go in."

With long strides, Joshua's tall figure disappeared into the villa.

Luna's brow furrowed and remained motionless for a moment, but she followed him nonetheless. No

matter how much hatred she harbored for this man, she knew what she had to do. She had to restrain

herself to persevere.

She had always been very good at that, and this day was no exception.

The two entered Blue Bay Villa.

"Joshua." Adrian, who had been sitting on the couch, stood up as soon as he saw his son entering. "I

want to talk to you about that girl, Luna..." Before he could finish his sentence, Adrian caught a glimpse

of Luna, and his words seemed to be stuck in his throat.

After a pause, he gave an awkward smile and said, "Ms. Luna is here as well." Luna smiled politely and nodded in response. "Hello, Mr. Lynch."

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"Lily mentioned that you've been waiting for over an hour now?" Joshua took off his jacket and handed it over to a servant. He lowered himself onto the couch and planted his arm gracefully on the leather armrest. "You wanted to talk to me?"

"I do," Adrian replied. He glanced at Luna and smiled. "It's okay, we'll talk next time."

"I probably won't even be interested in hearing about it next time," said Joshua as he crossed one slender leg over the other. "Tell me now."

Joshua had never really been fond of his father, much less had a close relationship with him. The way he talked to his father at that moment felt no different from talking to a subordinate.

Adrian never expected that Joshua would behave like that; he did not even bother to show any respect toward him. Adrian remained silent for a moment before giving a wry smile. "Alright, I'll just come right out and say it."

He glanced at Luna and cleared his throat. "It's about Ms. Luna. I'm sure you know that I'm a jewelry designer, and Nellie has displayed great talent in jewelry designing as well. However, I'll be leaving in a few days to take care of some stuff, and I don't want Nellie's talent to go to waste. I didn't think anyone in Banyan City would be qualified to teach her, except..."

Adrian pointed at Luna. "Except for Ms. Luna," He continued, "At the beginning, I, like everyone else, thought that Ms. Luna was just an ordinary maid.

However, when I discovered her real profession and capabilities, I was shocked and ashamed that I hadn't managed to see her for what she truly is: a genius."

Adrian fixated his stare on Luna. "Ms. Luna's gift and aptitude in jewelry design are just what Nellie needs. She'd be the perfect teacher for Nellie."

Joshua chuckled upon hearing his father's words. He raised an eyebrow and swept his gaze over Luna's face. "You expect me to believe that my father isn't in on this with you?"

Joshua had not spoken more than a few sentences with Adrian ever since the latter returned to the

Lynch family, yet just a mere few days before his leaving, Adrian suddenly brought up the prospect of

Luna becoming Nellie's teacher. Joshua could not help but feel that his suspicions were correct: Adrian

was part of Luna's scheme, and he was trying to find an excuse to let Luna remain close to Joshua.

Luna frowned. She had a bad feeling about this.

She had been an exceptionally skilled jewelry designer in the past, but before she returned to Banyan

City, she made sure that Malcolm had altered her personal information. In her resume, she was

portrayed as an amateur who did not have many achievements, and her qualifications would not allow

her to teach a prodigy like Nellie. Besides, the experience listed in her resume was nothing to boast

about; there were plenty of people in Banyan City who had more impressive portfolios than hers.

Saying that there was no one else more qualified than her was a blatant lie.

Luna pursed her lips and shot Adrian a questioning look. What was this man trying to do?

"Daddy! " All of a sudden, Nellie appeared. "Can you come upstairs for a bit? Me and Neil want to talk

to you! "

Joshua murmured in response and got up from his seat. "Excuse me, I'll need to go take a look."

"Go ahead! " Adrian waved his hand at Joshua nonchalantly. "I wanted to have a quick talk with Ms.

Luna anyway."

Joshua frowned upon hearing this. He gave Luna another cold glance before heading up the stairs.

After he left, Adrian and Luna were the only two people who remained in the living room.

“Ms. Luna,” Adrian began as he took a deep breath and sat down across from her. “Or should I say...

Moon?”

Adrian poured himself a cup of tea and took a sip. “The famous Moon, who just recently announced

that she’d be leaving the jewelry design industry forever. Who would’ve thought that I’d run into the

legendary Moon herself, working as a maid in my son’s home?”