

Chapter 11

The lakeside villas were situated in the Lakeside Garden, which was the most famous residential area in Eastcliff that consisted of several luxurious villas. The Lakeside Garden, which covered an area of 5000 acres, only contained 166 villas with each country house covering an extremely large area. Honestly speaking, not even 50 units in the residential area had been sold up until now.

It was not that the city was short of people who could afford one, but it was because there were not many who qualified to own an estate there. Lakeside Garden was a residential area developed by Billy Newman, and only those who met certain qualifications could have the rights to reside in the area. Anyone else who failed to meet the threshold would have no hopes of owning a building there, even though they offered to buy one with a price higher than its original by ten times. Therefore, only less than 50 vehicles had been registered for the ownership of an access card for Lakeside Garden up until now.

That was the reason why Francis Cooper had been so rattled when he caught sight of the access card for Lakeside Garden on the Maybach. It was because he could not afford to offend those who resided in the Lakeside Garden! The Old Master of the Cunningham Family had once had the honor to be invited by a friend to set foot in the Lakeside Garden before. From then on, he had often boasted about the experience in various public occasions.

The landlady said that the villas in Lakeside Garden were worth 30 million, but that was only the base price. The one Joseph Harrison had invited Matthew over to stay was valued at 207 million because it was situated at the best location at the lakeside.

Its total area covered over 3600 square meters with a spacious courtyard which covered nearly 30 acres. There was a swimming pool built in the courtyard and another smaller one built indoors. If one was to sit at the balcony which was over 60 square meters, he would be enjoying a clear panoramic view of Lake Eastcliffe as though he owned the entire world. Its interior was designed extravagantly that came with all sorts of furniture and facilities. Everything was brand new because no one had ever stayed there before; only the domestic maids would visit it everyday to clean up the place.

After sending Matthew to the villa and helping him to settle down, Joseph then left him an access card before bidding farewell with him. In fact, Joseph was not the owner of the house. He did own another smaller villa in Lakeside Garden, but it was worth only around 70 million, which was a reward he received from a big shot in the city whose illness he once treated.

As for the unit that Matthew was staying in, it was considered the best in the entire residential garden and it was a gift Billy sent for Matthew through Joseph. Someone had once offered Billy 500 million for this property, but he declined because he had planned to reserve it for his daughter, Brittany. Now that Matthew had saved Brittany's life, Billy decided to reward him with the villa as a token of appreciation. It came with five housekeepers who could help Matthew take care of Natalie other than handling his daily house chores.

After settling himself down, Matthew received a call from Helen Freeman, his mother-in-law. "Matthew, where have you been? Can't you see what time it is? Shouldn't you be back by now to prepare dinner?"

Heaving a sigh, Matthew then walked out of Lakeside Garden with resignation and went back home by taxi. As soon as he had arrived, he heard some commotion coming from the house.

"James, I don't want to listen to any more nonsense from you. In fact, you can only blame your daughter for being incompetent for the work assigned to her. Grandpa just wanted me to tell her that she doesn't have to report to work anymore in the future. What has this got anything to do with me? If you're not satisfied with his decision, you should visit Grandpa and argue with him! Also, it's more than reasonable that you guys are asked to offer compensation after causing such a huge loss to the whole Cunningham Family. Don't talk to me about kinship now, because I've never taken personal relationships into account when I do business. If you guys are unwilling to fork out the money, just brace yourself to be put in jail then!"

With full attention, Matthew looked rattled when he listened to what the man said. He could recognize the voice belonged to Charlie, Sasha's cousin. Charlie Cunningham was Jason Cunningham's son, and he was also deemed as the successor to the family business of the Cunningham Family. Known for his arrogant and snobbish attitude, no one dared to offend him.

Jason was the one who had seized and occupied the single-storey villa that James and his family once resided in. On top of that, Charlie was a man who was extremely wicked. In order to achieve his own private means, many a times he had tried to arrange Sasha to keep his friends company. Once, he even plotted against Sasha to sabotage her career. If Sasha hadn't been alert enough to constantly keep a distance from him, she might have already fallen into his trap.

Because of that, Charlie had always held a grudge toward Sasha and he would undermine her position in the company as soon as he found an opportunity to do so. Without Charlie standing in her way, Sasha could have been occupying a higher position in the hierarchy of the company than what she was having at the moment.

Following a smack, the door was opened from which Charlie walked out. At the sight of Matthew who was standing by the door, a slight trace of disdain flickered on Charlie's face as he sneered, "Well, if it isn't my brother-in-law? You're back home again to ask for allowance from your wife's family, aren't you? How wonderful it is to be a live-in son-in-law! It's so enviable that you get to live a comfortable life without having to work for it!"

Looking icy, Matthew did not speak a word while Charlie strode off as he let out a huge guffaw. When he stepped into the living room, Matthew found that everyone in the family was present. James and his wife slumped on the sofa with their faces looking as pale as sheets of paper, while Sasha had her eyes red-rimmed with tears threatening to trickle down any minute. "What's going on?" Matthew asked in a soft voice.

"What's going on? The only thing you're capable of doing is asking us that question!" Helen freaked out and sprung to her feet as she snapped, "Matthew Larson, you're really a piece of useless crap! Other than coming back home to eat and sleep, what else can you do? I don't expect you to do anything grand that can bring Sasha more respect in the family, but could you at least not be a hindrance in her career path?!"

"W-What did I do that caused hindrance to her?" Matthew asked anxiously.

"Matthew, I'm begging you, our entire family is begging you..." With a thud, James kneeled down on the floor.

"Dad, w-what on earth are you doing?" Panic-stricken, Matthew quickly went on to help James to his feet but he was shoved away by James.

With both of his eyes reddened, James implored, "Matthew, I'm begging you to... I-let us go, and let Sasha go as well! Could you get a divorce with Sasha? Just think of it as an act of charity by letting us go. I'm begging you and I'm offering you a kowtow. Could you please do it?" While James was at it, he started bowing down to Matthew which produced continuous thumping sound when his head came into contact with the floor.

Just as Matthew wanted to step forward to stop him, he was pushed away by Helen. "Matthew, if you still have a little humanity left, please give us a chance to survive!" Helen then yelled at him, "Do you want me to kneel down and give you kowtows as well?"

Matthew was left speechless.

"That's enough!" Sasha shouted all of a sudden and added indignantly, "What's so big a deal about losing a job? I am a fully able person. Can't I just get myself another job?"

"Sasha, are you playing dumb or are you really so naive?" James asked urgently, "After being fired by the company owned by our own family, will you be hired by other firms? Jason is a very ruthless man, so I am sure he will see to it that you won't be hired by all other corporations in the same industry!"

Sasha looked bleak because she knew her father was right. After being fired by the company, she would have no hopes of pursuing a career in the same field from this point forward.

Helen offered her opinion anxiously, "Right now, all you need to do is... get a divorce with Matthew and marry another man. For example, Young Master Cooper. In that case, y-you won't have to worry about your career anymore and Jason would also have to pay us more respect by then! Sasha, your Dad and I have been undergoing too much humiliation all this while. You're our only hope to fight for a better future after what we have suffered so far..."

Matthew felt a throbbing pain in his heart as his parents-in-law were actually advising Sasha to get herself another husband in his presence. Judging from their behavior, they did not take him seriously at all.

Through gritted teeth, Sasha spoke, making each and every word clear, "Stop trying to persuade me because I won't use my marriage as a tool to exchange for this so-called success, even if it means having to starve from now on!"

"Sasha..." Helen was anxious to continue in her attempts to convince Sasha. However, she was not given a chance to talk any further because Sasha pushed the door open and left immediately.

