

Marrying 381

Chapter 381 Mothers

“Do you know what my memory of my mother is?”

“Before I turned seven, all I remember of my mother is her lying in bed all the time. She never moved.”

“My dad would give her a sponge bath daily, and the nurses would administer nutrient solution daily. All I could do was watch.”

“Other children had mothers to scold them, hug them, and tell them how much they loved them.”

“But my mother just lay there, completely still.”

“When I turned seven...”

She sniffled. “My dad discussed with my grandparents. They agreed to let the doctor euthanize my mom.”

“I was still too young then and did not understand what it meant.”

“My dad said my mother’s organs were donated to three people.”

“Her heart and two kidneys were given to three boys older than me.”

Lucy wiped her tears with a tissue. “My dad said Mom didn’t die. Instead, she lives on in the three boys who received her organs.”

“At the time, I told myself that I must remember what these three boys looked like. They carried on my mother’s life.”

“But later...”

Lucy rested her head on her arms and cried profusely. “Mandy, you should be thankful that your mother at least left you with beautiful memories. At least you know that she loved you.”

“As for me...”

”

Lennon’s heart ached when he saw Lucy cry.

He felt her sadness acutely as if it was his own. Moreover, he sensed an inexplicable grief.

He took a deep breath and moved closer to her. Then, he held her hand and said, “Please don’t cry.”

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Lucy glanced at him. She wanted to say something but decided against it.

In the end, she rested her face against his chest and hugged his muscular waist as she cried. profusely.

After many years, she finally found the person who had a part of her mother.

However, she did not dare to tell him...

Mandy and Lucy cried that noon.

At the same time, Jacob got drunk.

Lennon had to rush around to take care of them.

Cherise stood at the door and was reluctant to leave. "What about... I call my uncle and tell him that I'm not coming over today."

She had called her uncle as they traveled, informing him that she and Damien would come over for lunch.

Unfortunately, the situation here...

"You should go."

Lennon shook his head helplessly. "I can take care of a drunkard and two women."

"You haven't seen your uncle and aunt for a long time. You should visit them."

Cherise pursed her lips and looked at Lucy and the others. Once she confirmed that Lennon could care for them, she gradually followed Damien to the car.

"Let's go."

Damien said calmly and started the car.

Cherise was still worried about Lucy and the others. She kept looking at the house as the car traveled away.

Once the house disappeared from view, she sighed. "The lunch started on a happy note..."

But Mandy mentioned her mother.

The word 'mother' triggered Lucy's unhealed wound.

Then, Lucy and Mandy took turns exposing their hurts, causing the atmosphere to grow

2/3

somber.

"My mother had loved me too."

Damien gripped the steering wheel and looked ahead. Hints of emotions flickered in his usually emotionless eyes. "Unfortunately, she passed away too soon."

"She was kind, just like you."

"If she had lived longer.... I believe my sister wouldn't have turned out like this."

Cherise pursed her lips.

Damien rarely brought up his family with her.

She sighed and said, "I've always sensed that your mother was a good person."

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Chapter 382 A Simple Life

“I can see her influence in you.”

“You’re gentle and caring. You must have learned from her.”

Cherise’s eyes gleamed earnestly.

Damien smiled resignedly. “You always have a way of uplifting people.”

Then, he frowned and continued, “You were an orphan since you were young. Do you miss your birth parents sometimes? Have you ever thought about searching for them?”

Cherise solemnly shook her head. “No.”

“I don’t miss them, nor do I want to find them.”

wwwww

Cherise pursed her lips and continued, “My aunt and uncle have been very good to me.

“In my village, people would tell their adopted children that they were their birth parents. to avoid complications. Only when the children grow up and understand better, will they be told the truth about being adopted.”

“However, my aunt and uncle were different. From the moment I could speak, they told me I had biological parents, and they were only my aunt and uncle.”

Cherise’s expression softened as she recalled her past. “In reality, aunt and uncle are just titles.”

“They cared for me more than some parents care for their own biological children.”

“All these years, I’ve wondered why my parents didn’t want me.”

“Later, I realized they must have had their reasons for giving me away.”

“Perhaps my father remarried, or my mother married someone else. I would have only been a burden to them.”

Cherise looked ahead resolutely. Her voice was solemn.

Damien gripped the steering wheel so tightly that his fingers turned pale. “Is this really what you believe?”

“Yes.”

Cherise nodded. “If they remembered me, they would have found me.”

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“However...”

Cherise smiled bitterly. “It’s been nineteen years. No one came to find me. They must have forgotten about me.”

“It’s better this way. I can focus on taking care of Uncle Shaw, Aunt Sarah, and Grandma in their old age. Then, you and I can focus on our own lives.”

“If my parents found me, we would have to deal with other relatives. That’s exhausting!”

She grinned and leaned comfortably into the seat. "I dislike complicated matters. I want. life to be simple and easy. It's nice this way."

Damien glanced into the rearview mirror. Seeing her contented and happy smile, he couldn't help but chuckle.

"You're right. It's good to live a simple life."

It was past three in the afternoon when Cherise and Damien arrived at Shaw's village.

Cherise had called her uncle, Elvis, before boarding the flight in the morning. She informed him that they would reach the village around two in the afternoon.

However, they were delayed for some time at Mandy's place. It was already half past three when their car stopped in front of Elvis' house.

"Uncle Shaw!"

Cherise got out of the car and ran excitedly into the yard.

Damien watched her with an amused smile. He opened the car trunk and retrieved a box. filled with presents.

As he walked through the gates with the box, he noticed a black car parked in the vacant land beside Elvis' yard. It looked new and didn't seem like a car from the village.

"Uncle Shaw, who are they..."

Cherise didn't expect to see Elvis with guests when she entered the house. There were two men in suits sitting on a couch in the living room.

The men were lean but fit. They appeared to be ex-soldiers.

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Chapter 383 I'll Keep My Promise

"These two are the sons of my friends from the army. They came to visit me."

Elvis smiled when he saw Cherise. "It looks like you had a great time in Europe. Your cheeks have gotten rounder."

Cherise was surprised and instinctively touched her cheeks. "Really? That can't be true!"

I remember to exercise every day!

I even controlled my intake of ice cream and cake. How could I have gained weight?

"Uncle Shaw."

As Cherise pondered, Damien entered the house carrying a box.

He immediately noticed the two men sitting on the couch.

Elvis repeated the explanation he had given Cherise.

Then, he smiled and turned to the two men. "My niece and her husband have arrived. Would you gentlemen mind waiting in the inner room?"

"They will only be here for half an hour. I will discuss your fathers' matters shortly."

The men exchanged glances and did not object. "We will wait for half an hour. Please don't delay it any further."

The taller man warned before heading to the inner room.

"Sure, sure."

Elvis smiled and continued, "I'll keep my promise. Don't worry."

After the two men left, Elvis sighed and looked at the suitcase in Damien's hands. "Did you bring presents for us?"

"Yes!"

Cherise looked around the room excitedly. "Where's Aunt Sarah and Grandma?"

"And where are Sky and Tay? Isn't it summer vacation?"

Elvis shook his head resignedly. "It's summer, and you know how much your grandmother loves watching people play cards. After lunch, she dragged your aunt to the back street to

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watch a card game."

"Sky and Tay are in the middle of their summer vacation. However, they will have exams. soon, so I enrolled them in extra classes."

"Oh..."

Cherise looked down, feeling disappointed.

She had informed them earlier that she would be back from Europe.

Furthermore, she even called her uncle from the airport. She thought the whole family would be waiting to welcome her home.

In the end, only her uncle was at home. And there were two unfamiliar

“Is something wrong?”

Elvis could easily tell what Cherise was thinking.

guests.

He chuckled and replied, “I didn’t tell your grandmother that you would be back. I wanted to surprise her.”

“Unfortunately, the plan backfired. She and your aunt went out before I could stop them.”

Elvis patted Cherise’s head. “Do you want me to call them to come home?”

“It’s okay.”

Cherise pursed her lips. “I will see them again. I will come back another time to talk to

Grandma.”

After all, she had only planned to stay for half an hour and leave after dropping off the gifts.

She had to leave soon because she had missed a lot of classes and the final exams were approaching. She couldn't afford to delay her studies any longer.

With that in mind, Cherise sighed. "I will have finals in less than half a month."

"Once I finish my finals and start summer vacation, I will come here and stay for a few days. Then, Grandma will be able to see me every day. She won't have time to watch people play cards anymore!"

"Besides, I'm good at card games. I can play with her."

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Cherise had spent many summer vacations playing cards with her grandmother and aunt.

The memories filled her with nostalgia.

"Haha, great!"

Elvis smiled and patted Cherise's shoulder. "Can you show me what you bought?"

Upon hearing that, Cherise turned around and opened the suitcase.

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Chapter 384 I'll Take Good Care Of Her

As Cherise was about to open the suitcase, she furrowed her brow and remembered something. She turned to Elvis and said, "You're not allowed to complain about the gifts being expensive or ask about their prices!"

Every gift she bought from Europe had a high price tag.

Since it was her first trip there, she wanted to buy nice things for her family.

"Cherry..."

Elvis shook his head resignedly. He looked at her affectionately. "Did you overspend again?"

"Didn't I tell you that Mr. Lenoir's money doesn't grow on trees? I warned you not to waste his money, but you never listen..."

It was difficult to get Elvis to stop nagging once he started.

Cherise pursed her lips and pretended not to hear.

"This purse is for Aunt Sarah. It will suit her when she goes line dancing."

"This tablet is for Sky and Tay. I've downloaded many educational apps on it. It will be beneficial for their studies."

"I bought a set of clothes for Grandma. The elderly ladies in Europe all dress in this style. It looks elegant!"

"And also, there's this."

Cherise placed a massaging device in front of Elvis. "This is not for Grandma, but for you."

“I consulted the salesperson. She said this massaging device is useful for treating old. injuries from your time in the army...”

“Also...”

Cherise sat on the floor and brought out the gifts one by one. She introduced each of them.

Finally, she looked at Elvis and grinned. “Uncle Shaw, do you like them?”

“Yes... I like them!”

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Elvis’ smile seemed a little forced.

“Alright, there’s less than a month left before your vacation starts. If there’s anything else, we can discuss it then.”

“Anyway, it’s getting late. If you don’t leave now, it will be dark by the time you reach Adania. I have some matters to attend to.”

Elvis patted Cherise’s head and put the gifts away.

Then, he looked at Damien with a meaningful gaze. “Please take good care of Cherise.”

“I’m entrusting her to you. You must take good care of her for the rest of your life.”

Damien narrowed his eyes. Conflicting thoughts crossed his mind. "Uncle Shaw, don't worry. I'll take good care of her."

Then, he pulled Cherise up from the floor and continued, "We'll leave first since you have other matters to attend to."

"I..."

Cherise was reluctant to leave. However, she still followed Damien out of the house.

Elvis stood at the doorway. Once Cherise and Damien's car left, he closed his. helplessly.

eyes

He turned around and opened the door to the inner room. "We can leave now."

"Mr. Shaw."

Even though there was no one else in the house, the two plain-clothed police officers dutifully showed their badges. "We received a report from Ms. Maeve Lenoir accusing you of involvement in a fire thirteen years ago."

"Please come with us and cooperate with our investigation."

"Sure, I'll go with you."

Elvis smiled and turned around to put Cherise's presents in the inner room.

He had spoken to Jack earlier. After he left, Jack would come to the house and take the things away.

After finishing his preparations, he smiled and extended his hands to the police officers.

“Go ahead.”

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He chuckled bitterly as the police officers placed handcuffs on his wrists.

He reminisced about the summer thirteen years ago.

At the time, Cherise was seriously ill from the cold that was spreading around the village.

Normally, it wouldn't be a cause for concern. One just needed to take medicine and get

some rest.

Unfortunately, someone had planted false information in Cherise's mind. They told her that adopted children would eventually be abandoned. Therefore, her aunt and uncle would leave her if she caused trouble.

Chapter 385 We Must Turn Around

Cherise, a well-behaved six-year-old, never caused trouble for her aunt and uncle. She was even too afraid to tell them that she was unwell, fearing that they would abandon her. As a result, a simple cold worsened and developed into pneumonia.

Eventually, Elvis and Sarah discovered Cherise unconscious with a high fever in the chicken coop. but it was already too late. When they brought her to a doctor in the city, he informed them that Cherise urgently needed treatment or she would not survive. The treatment cost two hundred thousand.

Elvis had no choice but to search for jobs in the city's black market. After all, he had a shady past when he was younger. Eventually, he received a job that required him to set fire to a place. The person insisted it was an empty house and no one would be there at night. Elvis was required to set fire to it due to property disputes. He would be paid two hundred thousand for the job.

Elvis found it suspicious to be paid so much for such a simple task. However, he desperately needed the money and had no choice but to proceed with it. He paced outside the house for a long time, confirming that there were no lights in the house and it seemed to be empty. Therefore, he took a nap in a corner outside the home.

By the time he woke up, it was already the appointed time. He did not pause to reconsider and immediately started a fire that burned down the house. Once he received the payment, he immediately used it to save Cherise's life.

Later, on the second day after Cherise regained consciousness, Elvis read the news and realized that the fire had killed a young lady and injured a boy from a wealthy family. He panicked and immediately brought Cherise back to the village, swearing to never come to Adania again. However, fate had a twisted sense of humor.

Years later, Cherise was accepted into a university in Adania. She later married the young man who had been severely injured from the fire and almost couldn't walk again.

Elvis entered the police car and closed his eyes. He calmly glanced at the police officer beside him and asked, "Do you know whether I'll receive a death sentence for my crime?" The police officer frowned and replied, "We're not sure." Elvis sighed and muttered calmly, "Honestly, the death sentence will be the best. It will end everything once and for all." He feared they would do something worse to him.

Cherise felt somber after leaving Shaw's village. She couldn't explain why, but she felt inexplicably anxious. She leaned into the backseat, and her discomfort grew as she pondered on the matter.

"Hubby, can we turn back?" Cherise gritted her teeth. In the end, she couldn't help but voice her concern. "I'm worried that the two men in Uncle Shaw's house would harm him."

"Vivian Shaw," she continued, "Uncle Shaw said they were the sons of his friends in the army."

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army

However, he hadn't been in contact with anyone from the army for a long time. He left the over twenty years ago. Why would his army friends' sons suddenly come to see him? And why do they insist on staying?"

The more Cherise thought about it, the more absurd the situation seemed. "Hubby, something is wrong. We must turn around to check on Uncle Shaw."

"What if they..." Cherise held her head and pondered for a long time. "Uncle Shaw is an honest man. He never offended anyone..." Then, she suddenly looked up. "Vivian's husband has been released from prison. Could he have sent someone to harass Uncle Shaw?" Convinced of her theory, she urgently sat up and said, "No, we must turn around now!"

"Cherise," Damien frowned slightly, "Uncle Shaw hurried us out of the house because he had something important to discuss with those people. If they had threatened Uncle Shaw, he would never have made us leave. Furthermore, those two wouldn't have regarded us with indifference."

Chapter 386 A Distant Relative

Damien sighed. "Have you been experiencing your menstrual cycle recently? You seem to be overthinking and more anxious than usual."

Cherise was taken aback.

Menstrual cycle...

She instinctively protected her lower abdomen with her arms. "You... you... How did you know..."

"Do you really think I have no idea what you did in the bathroom?"

Damien shook his head in resignation. "Don't worry. Uncle Shaw will be fine.

"Even if anything happens, you have me."

Damien took a deep breath and looked ahead. It seemed his words were not only for Cherise but for himself.

In reality, he had guessed what was going on when he saw the license plate number of the car parked in the empty lot beside Elvis' yard.

Those two men were fit and alert. They did not look like ordinary people.

Furthermore...

Damien narrowed his eyes. He had glimpsed into the house through the rearview mirror when he started the car.

He noticed Elvis extending his hands towards the two men.

Judging from the gesture and angle, it could only mean they were putting handcuffs on his wrists.

Damien let out his breath. "Cherise, can you tell me about your uncle."

"You mentioned he stayed in Shaw's village for many years and never went anywhere.

"Has he ever been to the city?"

Cherise furrowed her brow and pondered. After a while, she answered, "Uncle Shaw doesn't go to the city. He hates going there."

“When I started university, he also didn’t send me there.”

“I think he’s only been to the city when I was six to bring me to the hospital. The only other time was when my Grandma was ill.”

Then, she looked at Damien in confusion. “Why do you ask?”

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Damien’s fingers tightened on the steering wheel. “Were you ill when you were six?”

“Yes.”

Cherise nodded awkwardly. “I was too young to understand what was happening. It started as an ordinary cold. I tried to hide it, but it worsened so severely that I nearly died.”

“We ended up spending a lot of money.”

“The treatment cost two hundred thousand. My aunt said they couldn’t afford it initially. They would have no choice but to bring me home and perform the last rites.”

“However, Uncle Shaw later returned to the hospital with two hundred thousand. He said he borrowed the money from a distant relative.”

Cherise frowned and continued, “However, that distant relative never reappeared.”

Damien’s knuckles turned white on the steering wheel.

“Were you ill during the summer?”

Yes.”

Cherise nodded innocently. “Speaking of this, I should remind Uncle Shaw the next time I see him.”

“Even though we never saw the distant relative in all these years, we still have to return the money.”

“It’s a matter of integrity.”

Damien nodded and smiled. “Sure, I’ll prepare the money the next time we return. You can ask your uncle about how we can get in touch with the relative.”

“I wish to thank the person who saved my wife.”

Cherise pursed her lips and nodded solemnly.

However, her phone rang before she could say anything.

It was a generic message from the university counselor sent to every student under his charge. The message urged every student to study hard for the upcoming final exam.

There was also a message specifically for Cherise. It reminded her to focus on her studies as she had missed too many classes this semester. Furthermore, it also said that the counselor’s friend, a former top student, offered to tutor Cherise.

Cherise fell silent as she read the message.

The counselor’s friend, a former top student, wants to tutor me personally? Can I refuse?

She was confident that she could prepare for the finals on her own.

However, she could not bring herself to refuse the counselor's offer.

Never mind...

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Chapter 387 I Don't Want Any Privileges

I'll explain everything to this individual properly once we meet.

Cherise took a deep breath and began typing on her phone. "Sure, thank you."

Upon receiving Cherise's message, the counselor promptly sent more messages, urging Cherise to excel in the final exam.

In essence, the messages emphasized the importance of studying hard and striving for good grades in all subjects.

If she failed to do so, he would reduce her holiday time in the following semester.

Cherise patiently replied to each message.

By the time she finished responding, the car had already entered Adania.

Cherise stretched wearily. "Hubby, have you planned any activities for me in the next few days?"

Damien furrowed his brow and shook his head. "No."

"Good!"

Cherise gazed out of the window at the familiar scenery. "The counselor went to great lengths to remind me to study hard and prepare for the final exam."

"He even threatened to shorten my holiday next semester if I didn't achieve good grades in every subject..."

Damien seemed distracted as he replied, "Then you should study hard."

"I'll drop you off at home first. After that, I have some matters to attend to. You should study at home and not go anywhere."

"Okay!"

Since Damien had been away from Adania for over a week, Cherise didn't suspect anything when he mentioned having things to deal with.

After all, he had a massive corporation to manage. It was expected for him to be busy.

Damien stopped the car in front of Lenoir Manor. Cherise got out and waved goodbye. Then, she stood at the doorway and watched him drive away.

She smiled as she watched Damien's car disappear into the distance.

My husband is so reliable! He takes good care of his family and manages his business well.

Cherise suddenly frowned.

Why did Damien's car go in the opposite direction instead of heading to the company?

"Mrs. Lenoir, you're home!"

The grand villa door swung open. Frances rushed towards her excitedly and pulled her inside. "It's been so long. You look slimmer."

Cherise saw her round face reflected in Frances' eyes. "Am I really, slimmer?"

Frances observed her closely for a moment. Then, she looked away and cleared her throat. "Yes, you're slimmer. You've definitely lost weight!"

Cherise pouted indignantly. "From the way you reacted, you must be thinking that I've gained weight!"

Uncle Shaw also mentioned that I've become rounder when we were in the Shaw's village. Have I gained weight?

She pouted and took a deep breath. "I'll work hard on my studies and start losing weight from

now on!"

"Sure, sure."

Frances grinned and pulled Cherise into the villa. "I've prepared your favorite chicken thigh dish. Let's have a feast to celebrate your return. Don't worry about dieting today."

Cherise was left speechless.

Meanwhile, Damien was inside a police station in Adania.

The police chief looked at him resignedly. "Mr. Lenoir, how did you find out about this?"

"We've just brought the suspect to the police station and haven't even started questioning him. Yet, you're already here to see him. It goes against our procedures!"

Damien nodded and adjusted himself to a more comfortable sitting position. "It's alright. Since you must follow procedures, I don't want any special treatment either."

"I can wait."

"I'll be the first to visit him after you finish interrogating him."

The police chief was at a loss.

"Why do you insist on going against a suspect?"

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"I understand that you want to know what happened years ago. However, we can only reach a conclusion after interrogating him."

Chapter 388 Did The Old Man Know?

"Besides..."

"You misunderstand."

Damien graciously accepted the cup of tea from the police chief. I'm here not because I'm afraid of setting fire to my house."

"Instead, I'm here to see him because he's my wife's adoptive father."

The police chief was left speechless.

suspect

How much stranger can things get? A woman who had been presumed dead for thirteen years suddenly claimed that she was alive. She made a police report accusing Elvis Shaw of starting the fire, which nearly killed her and her brother. My subordinates immediately arrested Elvis. Now, the woman's brother shows up and claims that Elvis is his father-in-law. I've never encountered such a complex case in all my years in law enforcement!

The police chief was at his wit's end. Damien seemed determined to remain in his office and would not leave until he spoke to Elvis.

Suddenly, a police officer knocked on the door and entered. "Chief, Elvis confessed to starting the fire.

The police officer belatedly realized that Damien was present in the office.

Damien met the police officer's gaze.

That police officer was one of the 'guests' he had met at Elvis' home earlier that afternoon.

"Good that he admits it!"

The police chief sighed and turned to Damien. "Your father-in-law confessed to the crime. Do you still want to see him?"

"Of course."

Damien stood up and elegantly adjusted his clothes. "If I don't see him, how can I confirm that he wasn't coerced into confessing?"

The expressions of the police chief and the police officer darkened.

Nevertheless, the police chief calmly instructed the police officer to bring Damien to see Elvis.

The police officer led Damien to a dimly lit room with only one lamp. Soon, Elvis was brought in, handcuffed and shackled.

"I knew you would figure it out."

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Elvis sighed calmly.

Damien had come to the police station immediately after Elvis was brought in. Therefore, Elvis knew that Damien had seen through his deception in the Shaw's village.

"Thank you."

Elvis sat down on a chair and smiled. "Thank you for keeping this from Cherise."

"She's a bit naive. I worry about what she would do if she discovered the truth."

Damien remained silent for a while..

Then, he smiled and replied, "She may be naive, but she cares about you.

"If I hadn't stopped her from returning to the village, she would have realized the truth by now."

Elvis was taken aback. He looked down and his voice sounded a little choked. "Thank you."

"You don't have to thank me."

Damien closed his eyes. "I never knew that the fire thirteen years ago not only destroyed my sister's and my life, but also saved a girl."

"Furthermore, I didn't expect that this girl would become my wife, the person who would spend the rest of her life with me."

Damien crossed his arms and continued, "Uncle Shaw, I didn't come here to condemn you. I have already investigated the entire matter."

"I didn't expect everyone to keep it hidden from me for so long."

He had sensed something unusual about Elvis from the beginning but couldn't figure out why.

Moreover, Elvis would always divert important matters and focus on trivial things during their conversations.

Damien frowned and asked coldly. "Did the old man know that you did it?"

The 'old man' Damien referred to was Old Mr. Lenoir, his grandfather.

Thirteen years ago, Elvis set fire to a house and saved Cherise by burning himself and Maeve. Then, thirteen years later, Damien's grandfather took a liking to Cherise and arranged for her to marry Damien.

Damien was not foolish. He knew that things could never be so coincidental.

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Chapter 389 Charisa Neller

"Yes."

Elvis wiped his eyes and raised his head. His eyes shimmered with tears as he looked at Damien. "Old Mr. Lenoir found me when my mother was seriously ill. I was searching for a way to make money in the black market."

"However..."

He laughed bitterly. "Thirteen years ago, I was traumatized by what happened and vowed never to commit arson or harm anyone again. Instead, I planned to sell my blood or organs."

"Unexpectedly, even after all these years, Old Mr. Lenoir still had someone waiting to capture me in the black market."

Although Elvis was staring directly at Damien, his gaze seemed distant. Later, he sent people to beat me up and threatened to hand me over to the police."

"I admitted that I deserved punishment for my crime, but I begged to be allowed to say goodbye to my family. My mother was dying, and the daughter I raised had reached a marriageable age. I pleaded to see them one last time."

“Old Mr. Lenoir took pity on me and asked if I would do something in exchange for forgiveness. He knew I was just a pawn. Even if I hadn’t started the fire, the mastermind would have found someone else...”

“I was desperate and had no choice but to do as Old Mr. Lenoir said.”

“Then, I showed Cherise your photo and asked if she would be with you...”

Elvis looked down and laughed bitterly. “At the time, I thought if she agreed, I could pretend it was a normal matchmaking and move on.

“If she didn’t want to marry you, I wouldn’t force her. I knew I would eventually have to go to prison.”

“However, I didn’t expect her to agree when she saw your photo. She even put it under her pillow, saying you were her lucky star.”

“At the time, her aunt and I questioned her, thinking she was just trying to put us at ease. We were worried that she only agreed to marry you to save my mother.”

“Later, we realized that... she really did like you...”

Elvis raised his head again and focused on Damien. “But fate played a cruel trick. I thought everything would be over after Cherise married you.”

“Who knew...”

1/2

“My grandfather was right.”

Damien narrowed his eyes and emphasized what Elvis had said. “You were just a pawn.”

“Even if you hadn’t started the fire thirteen years ago, someone else would have.”

He closed his eyes and clenched his fists. “Honestly, you shouldn’t blame yourself for everything.

Elvis gave a bitter laugh. “But there’s no denying that what I did was wrong.

“I should take responsibility for my mistake.”

He sighed and continued, “I’ve made arrangements for my family. My wife will take them to a place where no one knows them.”

“They’ll be safe without me.”

Then, he closed his eyes. “The person I worry about the most is still... Cherise?”

“She has a complicated background. Her mother is a formidable figure. Her father...”

He laughed sarcastically. “Since I’m here now, I might as well tell you about her past. At least you won’t be confused when her birth parents come looking for her.”

Damien narrowed his eyes. “Alright.”

In reality, Damien already knew a lot about Cherise’s background.

Still, he was curious to hear what Elvis had to say.

“Since you had a previous agreement with Charisa Neller, you should have returned Cherry to her thirteen years ago. Why didn’t you?”

Elvis was stunned.

He clenched his handcuffed fists and mumbled, "I..."

"Furthermore..."

Damien frowned and continued calmly. "If I'm not mistaken, Charisa Neller changed her name to Charisa Miles thirteen years ago. She killed her then-husband and became the head of the Miles. family."

Chapter 390 Have You Had Dinner?

"You should have informed Charisa when Cherry was ill. Then, Charisa could have arranged for the best doctors for her."

"Instead, you chose to accept a job from the black market and brought Cherry back to the village after she recovered."

"Cherry said you hated going to the city. I suppose one of the reasons was that someone would discover that you set the fire thirteen years ago."

you feared

"The other reason was that you knew Charisa had people searching for you worldwide."

Elvis' fingers turned pale as he clenched his fists.

After a moment, he closed his eyes and muttered, "L... was selfish."

Suddenly, he recalled a memory from thirteen years ago. A little girl on the hospital bed reached out her tiny hand and held his hand.

“Uncle Shaw, I don’t have parents, and I don’t want them. All I want is you and Aunt Sarah. You are nice to me.”

“People said you would send me away eventually...”

Her

eyes were swollen from crying. She looked at him expectantly with innocent eyes. “Uncle Shaw, I’ll listen to everything you say. I’ll be good.”

“Please don’t send me away, okay?”

At the time, he looked at her doll-like face and felt his heart melting into a puddle.

Still, he gently coaxed, “But Cherry, your birth mother is a good person. She...”

“I don’t want her!”

The little girl clung to his arm like it was her lifebuoy. “I don’t want anything else. All I want is to live in Shaw’s village with you and Aunt Sarah!”

Elvis reopened his eyes in the cold detention center room. He looked at Damien and replied. sadly, “I couldn’t bear to let her go.”

Damien stayed in the detention center and talked to Elvis all afternoon.

When he returned home, he found Cherise asleep in the study, hugging a book.

He looked at her revision notes and smiled.

Her handwriting reminded him of her. It was meticulous yet endearing.

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He carried her in his arms and helped her change into pajamas before laying her on a large bed.

“Bayes’ theorem...”

Cherise mumbled about her studies in her sleep.

Damien smiled, feeling amused. He covered her body with a blanket.

I must prevent her from finding out about Elvis for as long as possible. She has to sit for her finals soon.

“Mr. Lenoir waited for you all night.”

After tucking Cherise in bed, Damien left the room and bumped into Frances.

She held a plate of warm honey garlic salmon. “Mrs. Lenoir cooked this for you. She waited for you to come home to try it, but...”

Then, she smiled and continued, “Mr. Lenoir, would you like to have it in the study or the dining room downstairs?”

“Let’s go to the dining room.”

Damien smiled and went downstairs.

Frances followed him.

She set the table and stood behind him to serve him.

“Frances.”

Damien frowned and continued, “Have you had dinner?”

Frances was surprised by his question. She nodded immediately, “Yes, I have.”

“When?”

“Around six...”

“Oh.” Damien glanced at his stainless steel watch. “It’s past ten. You should have a late-night snack.”

Frances hesitated on her spot and did not know what to say.

“Grab a plate and eat with me.”

Damien rubbed his sore brow.

Why is Frances so slow to react? Is it because she spent too much time with Cherise?