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Jeremiah, Clifford, and Aurora all looked at Yvette.

Clifford's eyebrows furrowed slightly. He thought Yvette wasn't supposed to know about this. He found it hard to believe that Mr. Owens would be so careless that he'd reveal this to Yvette.

But Clifford couldn't figure out how Yvette managed to know that Mr. Owens had successfully recruited Siren. He was filled with questions, but he didn't let them out this time. Everyone had his secrets. Some things were better left unsaid. No matter how Yvette came to know Mr. Owens, Clifford had no right to ask.

Jeremiah turned his head to look at Yvette. His eyes flickered slightly, feeling as if there was something he had overlooked. But he couldn't figure it out anyway.

Aurora didn't think too much about it. She just thought it was because Yvette was so charming that Mr. Owens would share such secrets with her.

Without even realizing it, Aurora had become a huge fan of Yvette in just one short day, the kind of fan who would go wild, lose her mind, and run into walls for her.

The topic was naturally brushed aside, and none of the three felt the need to delve deeper.

At eleven o'clock at night, Yvette and Jeremiah finally returned to Skyland.

The reason was that Aurora insisted on keeping Yvette a while longer, even hoping the two would stay overnight. She wanted Yvette to stay. Jeremiah was just tagging along, whether he was needed or not. She kept delaying again and again, so by the time they left the Chavez residence, it was already midnight.

At the entrance of Skyland, Jeremiah pulled Yvette, who was about to walk inside, into his arms.

The whispered by her ear sent tingles down her spine.

He deliberately accentuated his words, his voice thick and hoarse, a mix of teasing and coaxing. "What should I do with you since I am a little jealous today?"

Jeremiah suddenly felt that Yvette had a kind of charm that irresistibly attracted both men and women. Aurora didn't usually act like this. In just one day, she'd fallen completely in love with Yvette.

Where the big, Only Jeremiah knows that bittersweet feeling of having rivals in love of both genders. It was another day tough Jeremiah turned into a softie. He knew that

Yvette responded better to kindness than to toughness and it was perfectly fine for a man to give in sometimes.

Yvette lifted her head from Jeremiah's embrace. She slightly raised an eyebrow. There was a touch of coldness at the corners of her eyes. She calmly said, "Well. You should get used to this."

tood in front of her. His Jeremiah was a bit surprised. He hadn't noticed before that Yvette could be so self–assured. He voice was low and raspy, like it had been run over gravel, low but not harsh. Yet it carried a hint of tenderness. "Want to get married?"

Jeremiah wanted to be Yvette's husband. He said the firmest words in the gentlest tone.

Those words really made Yvette pause for a moment. Then she slightly lifted her eyes. Her delicate, slender fingers tugged Jeremiah's tie, pulling him back. He was pinned against the wall, with her right hand on it and her left hand hooking under his chin. She gave a soft scratch.

Jeremiah's body tensed. He thought, 'Where do you come up with these tricks? Each time you become more irresistible. I'm completely overwhelmed.

Yvette's dark and bright eyes flickered slightly, locking with Jeremiah's gaze. The depth in her eyes was filled with desire. Her stunning features were highlighted by the streetlight shadows, exuding her unique charm. Her voice was clear and crisp. "Jeremiah, I'm not even at the legal age to get married yet."

Jeremiah only said it impulsively. He completely forgot that in Clusia, the legal marriage age for women had been raised to twenty–five. Because Clusia's divorce rate had been too high in recent years, the government decided to raise the marriage age for women to encourage people to take marriage more seriously. Yvette was only twenty–two, so she had three more years to go.

Jeremiah lowered his eyes, hiding a hint of a smile beneath them. Since they couldn't get a marriage license, he might as well get something in return.

In the next moment, a wave of disappointment suddenly emanated from Jeremiah.

Yvette's hand paused on his chin, a glint flashing through her eyes. She lifted Jeremiah's chin. Their eyes met.

Jeremiah tried hard to control the surge of emotions within him.

Yvette held his gaze for a few seconds before leaning in for a kiss. Her lips rubbed against his, not with any finesse but with raw intensity.

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Jeremiah's little plan worked; he quickly took charge of the situation.

Five minutes later, Yvette pushed against Jeremiah's chest, breaking free from his embrace. She crossed her arms over her chest, a smirk playing on her lips. "Jeremiah, if you try the poor little me act again, I swear you won't easily get out of bed.

Emmett heard some noise at the door. He guessed it meant Yvette and Jeremiah were back. So he came out of his room, bleary—eyed. As soon as he pushed open the door, he heard those words.

The door was now open. Jeremiah and Yvette both turned to look at the door.

Emmett stared at the two of them with wide eyes, completely awake.

The silence in the room was so intense it was frightening.

Emmett felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. He thought, 'Yvette said something so outrageous. Should I be heading out?' To make sure he wasn't silenced permanently by Jeremiah and could see tomorrow's sunrise. He decided to pretend he didn't hear anything, fooling himself into believing he still had a slim chance of survival.

In the next moment, Emmett stared wide—eyed, without blinking, then suddenly closed his eyes tightly. He turned around. Muttering to himself, "Sleepwalking. I'm sleepwalking. I'm not fully awake right now. I didn't hear anything. My memory's bad. What should I do now? Oh right, sleep. Sleeping is super important. I need to sleep."

With every step Emmett took, he could feel Jeremiah's eyes watching him closely. It was like having a thorn in his back. The conversation between Yvette and Jeremiah only made him wish he could sprout wings and fly away.

Jeremiah asked, "What's the best way to silence someone for good?"

Yvette replied, "There are many ways, such as bleeding from the nose and ears, heart—wrenching pain, being drawn and guartered, torn apart, or completely crushed."

Hearing this in the dead of night, Emmett felt like dropping to his knees. He started walking faster and faster. He pushed open the door, locked it immediately, and then dashed to the table to gulp down a big glass of water. He took a deep breath. He had narrowly escaped disaster,

After such a close call, he took out his phone and found the small group chat with Bruce, Chris and Frankie. "Guess what I heard?"

It was daytime in Mysonna. Bruce, Chris and Frankie were having breakfast together.

Sienna was there too. Her child has been taken care of, and she's gotten to know everyone recently. Frankie even set aside a room for her in the villa, and she'd been staying there to recuperate lately.

Chris responded to Emmett, [Eating. Do not disturb.]

Emmett said, [Can't you be more shameless?]

Chris said, [Day one of blocking you.]

Emmett knew if he didn't come up with some juicy news, they wouldn't pay him any attention. Then, in the next moment, he typed out the sentence he had overheard.

Emmett was sure Frankie couldn't resist gossiping about this. He couldn't possibly resist it

Emmett waited for a full minute, but the group chat remained—silent. He wondered if everyone had ignored their phones. He patiently waited another two minutes.

Finally, his phone buzzed. He quickly grabbed it to check, and as soon as he saw the group message, his phone slipped from his hands and fell to the ground. He shouted inward, 'What on earth?'

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The next morning, Emmett dragged his suitcase into the living room. He saw two people already sitting at the table having breakfast and forced a slight smile. Plastering on a grin, he braced himself and walked up to say hello. "Mr. Chavez, Mrs. Chavez, good morning. It's such a lovely day. If you have no other instructions, I'll head to the airport. You two take your time. Bye, Yve." With that, he was ready to make a quick getaway

Emmett was dragging her suitcase to the airport early in the morning, all because of that guy, Frankie.

Jeremiah casually handed a dumpling to Yvette and looked up. Watching Emmett as if he were about to take off running. He calmly asked, "Did you create the group chat?"

Yvette was focused on her bowl of dumplings, glancing up at the flustered Emmett.

Last night, Frankie took a screenshot of Emmett's message in the group chat and sent it to Jeremiah. It worked out well—at least for Frankie—because the result was that Emmett got assigned to take over the gold mine project in Afria, while a was pulled back to Mysonna. If there was ever a perfect example of "brotherly loyalty," Frankie showed it to the, fullest.

Cold sweat ran down Emmett's back in an instant. He thought, 'Isn't this just adding insult to injury? I swear that the small group chat was only created back then to help save Jeremiah. Who could've known that Frankie, that bastard, would use me as a trade to get back to Mysonna?' What a heartless move. When Emmett got back from Afria, the first thing he'd do was head to the States and castrate him.

Emmett quickly explained, "Mr. Chavez, I created this group when you went missing in the rainforest to help keep everyone in contact, definitely not to spread gossip. You have to believe me."

Yvette finished her last dumpling. She shot him a quick glance, tapping her toes. She thought, 'Isn't this a self–confession?'

Emmett clearly hadn't realized what he said that was wrong yet. His face was full of sincerity. Jeremiah looked at him with a knowing smile and said, "Not bad." And with that, he waved his hand.

Seeing the situation, Emmett immediately grabbed his luggage and bolted outside. In just a few seconds, he was gone, leaving behind any semblance of his cool demeanor. Forget being aloof; right now, escaping was the most important thing He thought, 'Didn't I just see the look in Jeremiah's eyes, like he wants to stab me? If I don't run now, when will I?'

As for what Jeremiah called "not bad," Emmett only realized how off that sounded after he got on the plane. Something felt wrong about it. When he arrived in Afria, he understood. What was supposed to be three days of work had turned into half a month. Being stuck in that godforsaken place felt like his limbs were about to start atrophying.

Not only that, but the miners there took a liking to Emmett, constantly shouting that they wanted to have his kn

without expecting anything in return. Emmett's body and mind suffered greatly from it, and for quite some time after he returned, he felt a wave of dread every time he saw a woman. When it comes to harsh punishment methods, Mr. Chavez unmatched. After that, the group chat never had any gossip again.

At the dinner table. Yvette's phone suddenly buzzed. She glanced at it, and it was a message from James. He wanted to take her on a tour of the physics lab. Yvette was silent for a few seconds, then typed the message and sent it. [Okay.

Jeremiah glanced at her. He smiled slightly and softly asked, "Any plans after dinner? Do you want to come to the military base with me?"

Jeremiah was very busy. Even though he was technically on leave, he still had plenty of military duties to handle. At his level, taking a vacation doesn't really make any

difference. He's been busy with the visit from Ybaulla to Clusia, squeezing out time wherever he can

Yvette lifted her gaze, her eyes dark and bright, calm like a deep pool. She thought, 'Why do people keep wanting to take me to these secret places? The National Physics Lab, the First Military District—is this a place ordinary people can visit?'

Yvette smiled slightly, her voice was cool and clear. "I can't go, I have to visit the physics lab with James later."

Jeremiah's hand paused for a moment, gripping his cup. His expression deepened, and his voice dropped low. "He's taking you to the physics lab?"

Yvette nodded freely, "Yeah, I think we're just going to browse around."

Jeremiah took a sip of water. He nodded and didn't ask anything else. Yvette was actually busier than him, not taking a break wouldn't have brought her to the physics lab.

since she arrived in Betrico. James must genuinely like Yvette, or else b

Besides the researchers with clearance, only James has the authority to take someone in.

Jeremiah stopped, gazing at her face, and exclaimed with a sigh, I always feel like you don't need me."

If he hadn't heard it firsthand, it would be difficult to believe those words came from such a strong and cold man like Jeremiah. Maybe this is the insecurity in love, Jeremiah never thought there'd be a day he would feel this way.

Yvette paused briefly, her brows slightly furrowed, her slender white wrist resting carelessly on the table. She gazed casually at Jeremiah and said, "Jeremiah, I've never been the type of woman to wait around. I don't need to rely on anyone else. True strength is what really matters, and that's how I've lived my life. Being in a relationship isn't going to change who I am, so stop reading those cheesy romance novels Andrew gives you."

Yvette's fingers tapped lightly on the table, her collarbone looking stunning beneath her shirt. She leaned forward slightly, her voice lowering with a playful tease. "Saving a damsel in distress? No way. But a damsel saving a hero? That, I might consider."

Her words were both bold and arrogant, yet no one could find a reason to argue. Yvette was just that strong, with the confidence to back up every word she said.

Jeremiah coughed awkwardly. He thought, 'How did she discover those novels I had so carefully hidden?'

Jeremiah looked at her intently. Even in casual clothes, he exuded an air of elegance and nobility. His handsome, calm profile seemed to glow with a soft golden light. His gaze lingered on the slender curve of Yvette's exposed neck, and his thin lips pressed together slightly. Such a beautiful neck, yet without a mark, it felt incomplete. In a deep voice, he said, "I'm yours. Whenever you feel like saving me, I'll be right there, ready for you. However you want to save me, it's up to you."

Something about his words felt wrong. Yet Jeremiah's expression remained completely sincere, as if he were being entirely serious. In reality, though, he was already steering the conversation into suggestive territory.

Yvette sat back in her chair, crossing her legs, a cold glint in her eyes. This old man had become more and more secretly flirty ever since he got a taste. At the slightest disagreement, he'd turn straight to suggestive talk.

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At the Terrell residence. Ronald Terrell, the patriarch, used to oversee the national finances. However, due to health issues, he has now retired and is enjoying his later years at home. He, along with Jase, James, and Walter Moore, have been fighting alongside each other since their youth, forming a deep bond through their shared struggles. The four of them get together every so often to catch up and reminisce about the past.

At this age, gatherings become less frequent, so whenever they set a date, they make it a point to meet for coffee and chat about their recent lives. Today was one of those scheduled times

Jase was the last to arrive; he was the busiest among the four. James sat on the sofa, leaning on his cane, and his expression darkened as he saw Jase come in with Yusef. He couldn't put on a good face when that brat from the Chavez family had stolen his newly recognized granddaughter. He might as well dream of having a pleasant demeanor.

Jase wore a dark suit that was both elegant and stunning, custom—made just for him. A closer look revealed that all four of them wore outfits made from the same material and craftsmanship, clearly from the same tailor.

Ronald said, "You finally made it, Jase. It's not easy to see you these days."

Walter nodded in agreement and said, "That's right. You need to take it easy with your old bones. Don't pretend you're still

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Jase sat down, leaning on his cane, while Yusef stood by his side and handed him the coffee that had been prepared in advance. Jase took a small sip and set the cup down. "I hear you," he said calmly. "My body can still hold up, so there's no need for you all to worry."

Ronald and Walter both sighed. At Jase's age, still holding his position, rumors had started circulating that he was clinging to power, unwilling to let go, driven by a love of authority. But only these old friends knew the truth—Jase wasn't concerned with power at all. He couldn't let go of his duty to the country. It wasn't as if his son, Jeremiah's, position was in any way threatened. And with Jeremiah's current standing, even if Jase were to step down, no one would dare touch the Chavez family.

Hearing those words, James remained silent, though his expression had softened quite a bit. However, Jase had already noticed his sour look from the moment he walked in. He turned his gaze to James and said, "What's with the long face as soon as I walk in, old man? When did I ever offend you? Why the attitude, all grumpy and upset?" Ronald and Walter both turned to look at James, waiting to see how he would respond. All eyes were on him, anticipating his reaction.

James snorted, "Can't I just dislike your face?"

Jase frowned. He had looked the same for decades, yet now James was acting like he couldn't stand the sight of him. It seemed like the old man must've been chewing on gunpowder today. Back in their younger days, James had been jealous of his good looks, and even now, he was still pulling the same stunt.

James remained silent, not offering any further explanation.

Jase never expected that the resemblance he shared with Jeremiah–those similar eyebrows and eyes–would make James so unwelcoming toward him.

Seeing the tension between the two, Ronald quickly changed the subject. "Hey, did you hear that Jeremiah has a girlfriend now? Why didn't you mention it, Jase?"

Walter nodded as well, "I've heard about this too. It seems like almost everyone in Betrico knows now. I never expected Jeremiah to actually have a girlfriend."

James chimed in with a grumble. "That kid must have racked up some serious good karma in his last life to land such a great girlfriend."

Ronald and Walter exchanged a glance, questioning the meaning behind James's words. Given the Chavez family's status and the fact that Jeremiah was such an exceptional young man, it was clear that anyone who ended up with him would be the one benefiting from good fortune.

Before they could ponder further, Jase furrowed his brow from the sofa and asked, "What do you mean by that?"

Walter noticed Jase's confusion and explained, "Yesterday, at a dessert shop, your daughter–in–law got into a fight with some ladies. It seems they said some gossip, and she overheard it. Now those women are in the Betrico police station, and Jeremiah is planning to sue them for defaming a soldier. Their families are scrambling to find connections to plead with him to let it go."

Ronald added, "That move by Jeremiah is quite ruthless. If he doesn't back down, those women are definitely going to jail."

James, who had been in the lab all day yesterday and was unaware of the situation, immediately asked, "What does this have to do with Jeremiah's girlfriend?"

Ronald, noticing that James was even more anxious than Jase, patiently explained, "I heard that Jeremiah's girlfriend was also there. She helped Aurora in the fight."

James stood up, slamming his hand on the table. "Did Jeremiah's girlfriend get hurt? Those women attacked both of them- did she suffer any injuries? Those ruffians must be locked up, no question about it."

The three in the living room looked at James in confusion. They thought, 'Isn't his reaction a bit excessive? Anyone unaware of the situation would think it was his daughter—in—law or granddaughter who had been attacked! Jase was equally baffled; he thought, When did this old man start caring so much about my family's affairs?'

Ronald, worried that James's agitation might raise his blood pressure, quickly tried to calm him down. "Why are you so worked up? I haven't finished speaking yet. Don't worry, Aurora and Jeremiah's girlfriend are both fine. They were the ones dishing out the punishment. I heard one of those women even lost her hair after arriving at the police station."

James sat back down, taking in the bewildered expressions of the others. He calmly took a sip of coffee and said with a composed tone, "Oh, as long as they're fine, it's no big deal. Losing some hair is nothing to make a fuss about."

Jase, Ronald, Walter, and Yusef all exchanged glances, their eyes twitching slightly. They thought, 'Isn't this double standard a bit too obvious?' They all stared at James, silently questioning his sudden change in demeanor.

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James, relieved to hear that Yvette was fine, resumed sipping his coffee nonchalantly. He looked others and asked, "What are you all staring at? Keep talking."

Jase and the others thought James was acting a bit strange; old age sometimes brous out peculiar behavior. Jase turned t

Ronald with a serious expression. "Has someone contacted you?"

Ronald let out a wry laugh, knowing that none of them could keep secrets from each oth

"Yeah, one of the deputy ministers from the Treasury Department had his wife trying every possible way to reach me, hoping I could intercede for them."

Before Ronald could finish his sentence, Jase's expression turned noticeably cold, and James also cast a disapproving glance at him.

Ronald, fearing that the two old men might turn on him, quickly raised his hands in a defensive gesture. "I didn't agree to anything. I know what your family's temper is like. I'd have to be crazy to say yes

I turned them down right away, so don't worry." Jase and James's expressions finally softened a bit.

Jase lowered his gaze, his expression serious. "This matter is up to Jeremiah. He lash out without reason; there must be something that provoked her."

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to handle it. Aurora wouldn't

He then turned to Yusef and instructed, "Make sure my message gets across. The Chav shouldn't y any underhanded tactics, or else they'll face severe consequences." amily won't budge on this. They

Yusef nodded and promptly left. Within an hour, everyone in the upper echelons of Betrico was aware of Jase's words. Those who had planned to leverage connections quickly backed off; with Jase personally weighing in, no on dared to take any risks. It would be tantamount to asking for trouble.

In the living room, James's expression softened a bit as he asked Jase, "What do you think of Jeremiah's girlfriend?" He ground his teeth, thinking that if Jase said anything negative about Yvette, he would surely confront him about that old face, which bore a resemblance to Jeremiah's.

Jase glanced at him and replied, "She's a great young lady—smart, beautiful, composed, strong, and decisive. It's truly rare to find someone like her."

Upon hearing this, Yusef and Walter exchanged glances, realizing that the girl had already won Jase's approval. It seemed that the position of Mrs. Chavez was secure.

They were genuinely curious about a girl who could receive such high praise from Jase, especially since they knew better than anyone how high his standards were.

James took a sip of his coffee, sighed with relief, and looked at Jase with appreciation, saying with a hint of pride, "Well, you do have good taste and vision."

Jase and the others were already immune to James's unusual behavior today. It seemed the daily lab work was affecting his mind. Jase decided it was time to schedule an appointment with a psychologist for him—no one should go crazy at this age, especially when their health was otherwise fine.

At the end of the dinner, Ronald turned to Jase and asked, "When will you bring Jeremiah and his girlfriend over to the house? I should really give them a welcome gift, right?"

Walter added, "Me too. I've got everything ready, just waiting for them to arrive."

Jase replied, "Alright, I'll ask that little brat if he has any time lately. Let's see how his schedule looks."

The two laughed, but then James glanced at the harmonious trio and suddenly said, "Make sure to prepare an extra portion -my granddaughter is coming too."