

Masked In Nobility: Secrets Of Mrs. Chavez Chapter 71

Although Yvette had an excellent memory, she wouldn't spend extra time thinking about things she didn't care about. With that, she didn't remember the person before her was the man who had followed Hector.

Confusion was written over Yvette's face as she wondered, What general manager?

The person I know should still be busy with new product research in Betrico. How could they ask a stranger to bring me something? Who is he?

Jimmy quickly realized Yvette didn't remember him. He hurriedly tried to ease the

nation, saying, "Ms. Zeller, perhaps it's true people forget easily. I'm the duty manager at Sky Nimbus. My surname is Lowe. We met at Sky Nimbus that day when I was with the general manager. Mr. Kirk."

After Yvette heard that, her expression turned cold. A trace of impatience appeared between her brows, and arrogance and sharpness were hidden in her demeanor.

She could roughly guess why Hector sent Jimmy to meet her.

Before Jimmy could state his purpose, Yvette interrupted, "You can leave and take the stuff back with you. Tell Mr. Kirk I don't need #. Take care. I won't see you out. Then, she pointed at the door.

Tobias pretended to cough several times and thought, 'She really doesn't hold anything back when speaking. They hardly spoke, but she was about to send the person out'

Simon was indifferent and sat on the couch, not commenting on Yvette's attitude. He was somewhat curious about how she knew Hector from Sky Nimbus.

Simon had met Hector once at Sky Nimbus in Betrico. He normally wouldn't go to such clubs, but he had to go due to special circumstances.

During the gathering, he and Hector exchanged a few words. Although it was a brief conversation, he could tell the latter was capable and polite.

He heard Hector had been abroad for a long time and only recently returned to develop Sky Nimbus, which had backing from the forces in Mysonna, so it was quite famous in Betrico. No one dared to cause them trouble.

Sky Nimbus was impressive and lived up to its reputation, so it was worth visiting.

Jimmy wouldn't dare go back and report empty-handed, unless he didn't want his job anymore.

His transfer to the capital would be almost certain if he completed today's task. Before coming, he told himself it was all or nothing. He was determined to make Yvette accept the document regardless.

Jimmy said flatteringly, "Ms. Zeller, would you like to read through before deciding?"

Jimmy was confident that once anyone saw the contents, they couldn't refuse. After all, it was enormous wealth. As long as Yvette agreed, she would receive a constant flow of wealth-something many could only dream of but never obtain.

Yvette's bright, blue eyes calmly gazed at Jimmy without any emotion. "I don't need it."

After that, Jimmy was certain that she already knew the document's contents,

It's undeniable that she's a student at Argrol University. Even if she's the daughter the Chambers family has found, how wealthy could she possibly be?

She might be able take out 100 million dollars to compete with Ethan, but it's not the same as having a constant flow of money, which is free.

"Did you finish the physics problems I assigned you?" Tobias asked.

Yvette nodded with a cheeky and relaxed demeanor. "I did. Mr. Sunderland. Do you and Mr. Simon Sunderland called for me?"

Simon and Tobias both shook their heads.

Yvette quickly realized the situation. With three people in the room, if Tobias and Simon weren't seeking her out, then it must be the other man. She turned to Jimmy. "Is there something I can help you with?"

Jimmy first nodded and then shook his head. "It's not me, Ms. Zeller. Our general manager asked me to send this document to you.

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"Why would anyone think too much money is a problem? Jimmy thought and couldn't understand it.

"Ms. Zeller, Mr. Kirk specifically instructed me to discuss this with you. Please take a look so I can report back," he pleaded.

As Jimmy spoke, he was about to kneel, and Tobias knew this couldn't happen and thought, What will people think of Yvette if word gets out? He quickly stepped forward to pull Jimmy up

Jimmy felt he had no choice but to go all in, hoping to gamble on Yvette's compassion.

"Yvette, could you please take a quick look? It would really help Mr. Lowe out," asked Tobias,

Given how spontaneous Yvette could be, Tobias wasn't sure if she would heed his advice. However, he couldn't stand watching someone kneel like that.

Yvette glanced at Tobias before at Jimmy, who seemed on the verge of tears. Feeling frustrated, she extended her tanned hand and signaled to him.

Jimmy quickly jumped to his feet and handed over the documents. "Here you are, Ms. Zeller. Please take your time? Yvette gave Jimmy a meaningful look and whispered in a voice only the two could hear, "Next time, if you like kneeling so much, just stay down and don't get up."

A shiver ran down Jimmy's spine when he heard those words. Yvette clearly saw through his little scheme.

Jimmy suddenly remembered the fate of the Brooks family and was too scared to speak. He stood quietly at the side while Yvette read the documents.

Yvette read through the documents thoroughly. As she had suspected, Hector wanted to separate Heavenly Pavilion in Seacriety from the headquarters and gift it to her- something she had anticipated long ago.

She thought so because the entire business scale of Sky Nimbus was her idea, and the current layout was just like the drawing she had made when she was six years old

Yvette read over a dozen pages in less than five minutes.

She tossed the documents to Jimmy, who caught them nervously. Trembling, he said, "Mr. Kirk asked me to tell you that you must accept Sky Nimbus in Seacurity. He said it rightfully belongs to you, and if you refuse, he might have to return to handle this personally

Although Jimmy wasn't sure why Hector claimed it belonged to Yvette, he didn't dare ask further. It wasn't something at lowly duty manager like him should question.

Simon had completely lost his earlier calmness and was surprised.

Tobias was even more shocked, his mouth agape.

'Hector will give the branch in Seacurity to Yvette. We're not talking about several hundred thousand dollars here. It's at least several million dollars just given away like that.

Sky Nimbus is a gold mine. Yvette will have a continuous source of income as long as it's open. This isn't just a gift. It's like hitting the jackpot. Who wouldn't be tempted by that? Tobias exclaimed inwardly.

Tobias rubbed his ears and was sure he hadn't heard wrongly

He exclaimed inwardly, I can't believe Yvette actually refused without even looking at it. This work is crazy. No, she's crazy.

Hector knew Yvette's temperament very well. She definitely wouldn't want it if he gave it to her like this. Only by saying it in this way right she consider accepting it.

Yvette rubbed her temples and thought, Is Simon giving me this as compensation? I really don't need it.

When it came to money. Yvette's bank account in Mysonma probably had so many digits that she couldn't count them all. She could easily buy as many Sky Nimbuses as she wanted.

"To others, it was something they could only dream of, but Yvette didn't want to accept it to avoid trouble.

Simon, who had been quiet all this time, suddenly said, "If Yvette doesn't want it, forget about it. She's still studying and has no time to manage Sky Nimbus. Mr. Lowe, please leave. Tell him I said Yvette is still young and should prioritize her studies. She'll decide whether to accept the shares after she graduates."

Seeing Yvette had decided and Simon supported her, Jimmy couldn't insist on staying. He could only excuse himself and report this matter back to Hector.

After Jimmy left. Yvette turned and politely thanked Simon.

Simon let Tobias leave first and asked Yvette to stay.

The two sat on the couch, and Simon casually poured Yvette a cup of coffee, its subtle aroma wafting in the air.

Simon stared thoughtfully at Yvette before asking. "Are you Siren?"

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Yvette's expression hardened as she set her coffee cup on the table, the sound of a quiet but deliberate click that filled the tense silence. Her fingers lingered on the rim for a moment, tracing its edge, before she finally raised her gaze, eyes sharp and piercing. Yet, she said nothing.

Simon rubbed his temples, feeling the weight of the stress from the past few weeks pressing down on him. It fueled his desperation to find Siren. How old is Yvette, anyway? How could she possibly be Siren? he thought to himself.

"I am," Yvette said, breaking the silence.

"You can go ba" Simon stopped mid-sentence, freezing in disbelief. His eyes shot up to meet hers, his expression a Tumultuous mix of shock and confusion.

Always composed and graceful, he now struggled to regain his control. His voice trembled as he stammered, "Yvette, you... What did you just say? Say it again." He stared at her intently, searching her eyes for some kind of explanation that would make sense of this revelation.

Yvette's fingers, which had been tapping a steady rhythm on the table, suddenly stilled. She lifted her gaze, cold and detached, her voice flat and almost indifferent. "I am Siren."

Those three words hit Simon like a thunderclap. He remained motionless and speechless as the weight of the revelation settled over him. At over fifty, he found himself surprisingly at a loss, grappling with a truth he had never expected.

The person he had been searching for was right in front of him all along. Yvette wasn't just acquainted with Siren—she was Siren, the physics genius that James had admired so much. It all made sense now, including the email he received from Siren right after Yvette went to the police station.

If Yvette was indeed Siren, then it wasn't just physics in which she excelled. She probably had a deep knowledge of networks too—maybe even hacking. The whole thing

was mind–boggling, yet Simon didn't doubt her for a second; this was a truth that couldn't be fabricated.

“Am I the only one who knows?” he asked urgently. “Did you only tell me?”

Yvette nodded. Her expression was indifferent, as if the weight of this revelation meant little to her. To her, it was simply a matter of no one bothering to ask; she had never intended to keep it a secret. Yvette disliked unnecessary trouble.

Simon clutched his chest and sank into a chair, taking a moment to compose himself. “Yvette... No, Siren, do you know that James Owens from the National Physics Lab in Betrico has been searching for you?”

He then continued, “Mr. Owens' desperate to find you, and even... Forget I said that. But the country needs a mind like yours. You could help advance our nation, make it stronger.”

Yvette remained silent; her expression unchanged. From the moment Simon uncovered her true identity, everything shifted. He could no longer see Yvette as just a student. She had become something much greater in his eyes.

Leaning forward, his tone turned deeply sincere. “Mr. Owens is eager to recruit you. He said the lab's doors will always be open to you—whenever you're ready! After speaking, Simon looked at Yvette with intense determination, as if a fire had been lit inside him

Yvette's gaze fell, and she withdrew her hand from the table, “I'm not interested,” she said flatly.

Simon had learned not to push her: Yvette wasn't someone to be pressured. Who knew what unpredictable path she might take if he did? He let out a sigh, feeling the weight of disappointment settle in his chest

“Can you at least think about it and give me an answer by tomorrow?” His tone was almost pleading, stripped of any pretense. He didn't care. After everything he'd gone through to find her, a little humility was worth the risk

Yvette didn't respond, but a flicker of irritation crossed her face, Simon pressed on. “I'll keep your secret, but there's one person I can't hide it from—Mr. Owens. He's getting older, and this search has worn him down. I owe it to him to tell him the truth, don't you think?”

Just then, a knock on the door broke the tension. Simon quickly composed himself, slipping back into his usual stern demeanor. “Come in.”

The door opened, and Patrick stepped in, surprised to find Yvette seated on the couch. Ever since the Sky Nimbus incident, he had harbored suspicions about the relationship between Simon and Yvette.

Why else would Simon have rushed to the police station that day? Something's going on. What exactly is their connection?" Patrick thought, his mind racing with possibilities.

He gave Yvette a brief, assessing glance before turning his attention back to Simon "Mr. Sunderland, Lewis Group will meet with you in ten minutes to discuss the talent exchange program for next quarter," he stated, trying to keep his tone neutral.

Simon nodded, his mind clearly elsewhere, still lingering on the conversation with Yvette. "Got it," he replied, waving Patrick away dismissively.

But instead of leaving. Patrick lingered just outside the door, curiosity getting the better of him as he hoped to catch more of their conversation. He heard Simon say, "If you don't want to, I won't force you.

Unable to resist, Patrick moved closer, straining to eavesdrop. Just then, the door swung open unexpectedly, and he nearly stumbled into Simon, who stood in the doorway, an icy glare directed at him. "Mr. Williams, is there something else?" Simon said coldly.

Caught in the act, Patrick let out an awkward laugh. "Oh, I just remembered something, Mr. Sunderland. I was going to knock again. Just wanted to remind you about your trip to Betrico next week... I completely forgot."

His excuse felt ridiculous, and even Yvette, sitting in the room, smirked at the absurdity. Her amusement only deepened Patrick's embarrassment.

Why is Yvette so comfortable, sitting there like she belongs, while I, the dean of Argrol University, am standing here being lectured?' he thought bitterly. With every passing moment, his sense of shame deepened, accompanied by growing resentment toward Yvette.

Simon wasn't fooled by Patrick's excuse. Normally, travel arrangements were handled by someone else. Patrick had no business mentioning it. But with Yvette present, Simon held back from reprimanding him.

The office was soundproofed, so he wasn't worried about Patrick overhearing anything important. There's no need to concern yourself with that. Leo handles the details."

Now visibly uneasy, Patrick nodded and hurried out. He knew better than to eavesdrop again. Simon had no tolerance for nonsense. Getting caught a second time might cost him his job.

The more he reflected on his mistake, the more anxious he became. For days afterward, he made sure to avoid Simon, like a mouse dodging a cat

Once Patrick had left, Simon turned back to Yvette. "About what said, you..." But Yvette was already on her feet. Without a word, she moved past Simon and walked out, her long legs carrying her swiftly from the office. She paused briefly at the door before exiting

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"Whatever. Just tell the people at Betrico to stop tracking my information. If it happens again, there will be consequences. Yvette slid her hands into her pockets, opened the door, and walked out.

After she left, Simon sat on the couch for a full ten minutes, motionless. His expression shifted as he wrestled with his thoughts, and finally, he seemed to reach a decision. Gritting his teeth, he stood up and walked over to the office phone, dialing the number for Betrico.

The phone rang several times before a deep, seasoned voice answered. "Simon, do you have news about Siren?"

Simon hesitated, his tone heavy. "Yes, Mr. Owens. L... I have news about Siren.

They spoke for nearly half an hour. By the time Simon hung up, his hand ached from holding the receiver. He sighed, reflecting on the conversation.

James had repeatedly emphasized not to pressure Yvette. He insisted that once his current experiment was finished, he would personally come to Seacurity. In the meantime, James urged Simon to make Yvette's life as comfortable as possible-

her in any way, whether in her studies or daily life.

support

Simon let out a bitter chuckle. Yvette's refusal to join the physics lab wasn't some coy act. James had asked him to try to

convince her.

"But convince her with what?" he wondered. 'Money? She casually handled deals worth 100 million dollars. Mr. Kirk from Sky Nimbus even offered her shares, and she couldn't have cared less. Power? Jeremiah clearly had his sights set on her, and who could challenge his influence?

'And Yvette herself? She didn't care about money, power, or fame. If she did, she would have revealed her identity as Siren long ago instead of waiting for me to ask, he thought.

James sounded desperate, and Simon knew that if it weren't for the importance of the experiment, he would have rushed back from Betrico by now. But even if he did return, Simon doubted the outcome would change. He sighed again, staring out the window of his office.

Meanwhile, at the Carter residence, Robert and Yulia sat before a lavish dinner spread, but neither touched their food. They wore tight expressions, especially Robert, whose features hardened with anger.

Yulia sat silently, afraid to make a sound. Robert had hit her many times in the past, especially in the early years when he took out his frustrations on her after dealing with Claude.

As their children, Victor and Rebecca, grew older, Robert had cut back on the physical abuse—at least in front of them. But behind closed doors, Yulia still occasionally bore the scars of his rage. Over time, she had grown used to it, enduring in silence.

Suddenly, Robert threw his fork down, the loud clatter startling Yulia. Her flinch only fueled his anger. 'Other men's wives support their husbands and help them with their problems. And what does she do? Spa treatments, poker games, shopping. What good is she for? Robert thought

He made Yulia go find Yvette to break off the engagement. She had been dragging her feet and still hadn't done it, which only fueled Robert's anger. He glared at her, his tone sharp. "Have you talked to Yvette about ending the engagement yet?"

Yulia's face went pale. She had hesitated to speak to Yvette, partly out of respect for her friendship with Lilian. She didn't want to embarrass Lilian's daughter, which is why she had delayed her visit.

But deep down, she knew Robert would never allow Victor to marry Yvette—someone with no talent, no connections, and no real support, especially compared to someone like Winona. After a long pause, Yulia stammered, "Since she's Lilian's daughter, maybe we could want a little longer—"

Robert cut her off sharply, his voice dripping with venom. "Quit wasting time! Lilian's been dead for how many years now? She didn't care about her daughter when she ran off with Zachary and abandoned the Chambers family. So why are you pretending to care now?"

He continued, "Lilian gave up her title as Mrs. Chambers. Do you think that's our problem now? Get your things together and go to Argrol University. I heard Yvette's in the physics department. Go straight to her and settle this once and for all."

Robert's frustration boiled over. This entire mess stemmed from Claude's insistence that Victor marry Yvette, complicated further by a marriage contract Lilian had drawn up years ago. Liplless Yvette agreed to void it, the arrangement would stand.

But Robert had no intention of letting Victor marry her. After Winona's apprenticeship ceremony next week, Robert planned to let Victor propose to her. He wanted all of Seacurity to know that the Carter family had secured such a prestigious match with Winona, the last student accepted by the Art Association president.

As for Claude, Robert had already decided to act first and deal with the fallout later. By then, it would be too late for anyone to object.

Trembling with fear, Yulia quickly nodded and stood up, grabbing her purse from the couch. She didn't want to linger, terrified that Robert might lash out again. "Wait!" he called.

Yulia froze, her voice barely above a whisper. "What is it?"

Robert looked at her with disdain. She seemed old, timid, and weak. She couldn't compare to the vibrant energy his younger mistress exuded. Take the engagement letter with you. Have Yvette sign it. If she does, this whole thing ends.

He added, "If she refuses, offer her a check-whatever she wants, within reason. Just get this done before it messes with Victor and Winona's wedding plans. After next week's ceremony, I'll make the engagement official."

It was clear Robert had already made up his mind. Yulia had no choice but to comply. She went upstairs to retrieve the engagement letter, then called for the driver to take her to Argrol University.

At the university's physics department, Yulia hadn't told Victor about her visit. She hoped to handle the situation quietly and avoid embarrassing Yvette. After asking around, she finally found her way to the classroom.

Yulia had seen pictures of Yvette beforehand. She resembled Lilian, who was stunning with a cool, aloof demeanor. But as Yulia peered into the room, she didn't see Yvette anywhere. Someone with her looks would stand out in any crowd. Unsure what to do, Yulia nervously paced outside the door.

Bonnie and Andrew had just finished lunch and parted ways with John. On her way back to the classroom, Bonnie noticed a woman in her forties standing at the door,

looking lost. Curious, she approached with a friendly smile. “Hi, are you looking for someone?”

Yulia turned to see a cute young lady, clearly a student. She smiled politely. “Yes, I’m looking for Yvette. Do you happen to know her!”

Bonnie nodded, thinking to herself, “Why is everyone after Yvette today? She then replied, “Yeah, I know her. She should be on her way back from the Principal’s office. Would you like to come in and wait?”

Flustered, Yulia quickly shook her head. “No, I’ll just wait out here. But thank you for the offer.

Just then, Bonnie’s gaze drifted down the hallway. She pointed, and Yulia followed her line of sight. When she saw who was approaching, her expression froze.

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Yulia looked at the girl walking from afar, and for a fleeting moment, she thought it was a young Lilian. They looked so much alike, especially those eyes, as if they were carved from the same mold. However, the girl in front of her was even more beautiful than Lilian.

“Yves, you’re back! The next class is with Top Dog. I thought you might not make it! Bonnie said.

Yvette nodded slightly and lifted her eyes, a laid-back expression in her gaze. She looked at Yulia, who was staring at her in a daze.

Yulia was wearing the latest fashion from LV. Although she was in her fifties, she was well-maintained. Apart from a few visible wrinkles on her face, she looked lively.

When Yulia noticed Yvette looking at her, she suddenly became tongue-tied.

Bonnie, looking puzzled, whispered, ‘Yve, this lady came to find you. Don’t you know her?’

Yvette turned slightly, revealing a portion of her wrist. “Who are you?” she asked in a chilly and lazy tone.

Noticing that people around were starting to glance in their direction, Yulia quickly introduced herself, “Hello, Yvette. I’m Yulia, Victor’s mother, and... and your mother’s close friend.

Last time on the basketball court—she had spoken ill of Yvette to appease Victor. Yulia didn’t know the full story, only that Yvene had gotten involved, which angered her. She

felt Yvette shouldn't have helped outsiders go against Victor. Later, after calming down, she realized Rebecca was right. Victor's spoiled nature was her doing, and he deserved some setbacks.

Time had passed, and Yulia no longer harbored those feelings. Seeing Yvette in person now stirred some old memories. Lilian had treated her kindly back then, viewing her as a close friend, though their relationship could never reach a heart-to-heart level due to too many entangled interests. Yulia could never truly be sincere with Lilian.

After hearing Yulia's words, Yvette's gaze sharpened slightly, exuding a cold aura that made Yulia feel uneasy. "Let's go to the cafe outside the campus, Yvette said. Then, she tilted her head and said to Bonnie, "Tell Jeremiah I have something to do and won't make it to class."

Bonnie, still a bit dazed, nodded and said, "Got it, Yve

After they left, Bonnie slapped her own head and thought, "How stupid of me!" She hadn't expected that the woman was Victor's mother. They didn't look alike at all. Bonnie didn't know that Victor had inherited his looks from the paternal side of the family.

But why did his mother come to find Yve? It must be a scheme, an absolute conspiracy! she thought.

While Bonnie was muttering to herself, Jeremiah approached with a textbook in hand. "Where's Yvette?" he asked, startling

Bonnie

She clutched her chest in surprise. 'Why did Top Dog walk so quietly like a ghost?' she wondered,

By now, Bonnie wasn't as nervous around Jeremiah as before. After some hesitation, she decided to tell him about Victor's mother seeking out Yvette. She thought, 'One can never know someone's true intentions, and what if that woman tried to threaten Yve? Just like in those TV dramas where money gets thrown at people, followed by angry threats. I'll go all out for Yve's safety!

Jeremiah frowned slightly when he saw the determined look on Bonnie's face.

"Top Dog, just now Victor's mother came to see Yve. They went to the Heartbeat Gale next to the campus, Bonnie said, while mentally assuring herself that she wasn't tattling.

In an instant, Jeremiah's eyes deepened like an unfathomable abyss. Someone from the Carter family? he thought.

In the cafe, Yvette and Yulia sat by the window. From Yvette's seat she could see the school's plaque with the words "Teach and Educate inscribed by Simon, hanging at the school entrance.

Yvette ordered a milkshake, since she preferred its sweetness over coffee. Meanwhile, Yulia chose an Americano.

For the first five minutes, neither of them spoke. Yvette sat with her legs crossed, head lowered, lost in thought. Yulia considered reminding her to sit properly, but she hesitated and decided against it. Uncomfortably fidgeting with her handbag. Yulia reminded herself of why she was there and felt a pang of guilt as she looked at the girl in front of her.

Another five minutes passed.

Yulia's coffee was almost gone, but Yvette still hadn't spoken. Finally, unable to wait any longer, Yulia carefully began, Yvette, I'm here today because of the marriage agreement Lilian and I made between you and Victor. You know that when Lilian was five months pregnant, she disappeared, and you were missing for over twenty years. Because of that, with your father's consent, the marriage arrangement was transferred to Winona. This matter has long been settled. Plus, Victor and Winona have developed deep feelings for each other over the years. As parents, we can't break them up over a mere agreement. I'm here today to... to make it clear that the engagement will be called off."

Yulia finished in one breath, not daring to look at Yvette's face afterward. She knew it wasn't the right thing for the Carter family to do and had prepared herself for Yvette's reaction. The compensation promised by Robert was set at 15 million dollars, but Yulia privately decided to add an extra 1.5 million dollars, as a nod to her old friendship with Lilian.

Yvette sipped her milkshake, stretched lazily, and yawned.

Yulia had expected Yvette to be furious, to accuse her, or even cry and throw a tantrum over the engagement. She thought Yvette might demand an exorbitant amount of money as compensation. But Yvette's calm reaction shattered all her expectations.

"Oh, I wish Victor and Winona a long and happy marriage and lots of kids. Yvette said, putting down her empty cup and getting up to leave.

Her interrupted nap time had left her in a bad mood.

Yulia quickly called her back, nervously continuing, "Yvette, you might not know this, but your mother left behind a marriage agreement. Did she give it to you?"

Yvette thought for a moment. A marriage agreement? she wondered. Then, she recalled that she had probably given to someone in the village who needed something to start a fire with back then. She didn't remember it clearly. Either way, it had probably been thrown away or ended up in some trash can in the village by now

"I threw it away. Don't worry, it won't resurface, Yvette said

Yulia didn't believe her. She thought, 'How could such an important document be carelessly discarded? Is Yvette planning to use it for some scheme, like demanding more money? With that thought, Yulia's guilt lessened..

"Yvette, maybe you just forgot where it is. Why don't you think again? Oh, and I brought this check for you today," Yulia said, pulling out a check for 16.5 million dollars from her bag and pushing it toward Yvette.

Yvette's eyes flashed with amusement. Why did people keep trying to throw money at her? Did she look poor?

Yvette definitely did look poor, Yulia had noticed her old, worn-out canvas shoes and assumed she was living in rough conditions. She had forgotten about the things Rebecca had mentioned about Yvette.

Yvette picked up the check. Seeing that, Yulia's expression brightened. As expected, how could Yvette turn down 16.5 million dollars? Yulia thought.

Yvette dangled the check between two fingers, waving it arrogantly in front of Yulia's eyes. "Mrs. Carter, do you think this is a

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Yulia's expression changed immediately. 'Does she think it's not enough?' she wondered.

Yulia felt that Yvette was being greedy, and her tone changed slightly, becoming sharper. "Yvette, though this amount isn't much, it's more than enough for most people for a lifetime," she said. Her words, both overtly and subtly, accused Yvette of insatiable greed.

Yvette tossed the check over. Though it was just a light sheet. Yulia felt a cold gust accompany its descent, causing a bead of cold sweat to trickle from her temple.

"This money. Yvette said.

"Consider this money as a wedding gift from me and Yvette to Victor and Winona. We wish them a long, happy marriage and many children. Mrs. Carter, you should take it back. It's too little to be offered, or others might think the Carter family has gone

bankrupt,” Jeremiah interrupted Yvette. His sudden appearance made Yvette pause slightly.

It doesn't matter, the meaning is the same anyway. But weren't the one who wished them a long, happy marriage? How unoriginal of this dining companion to reuse that she thought.

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Jeremiah wore a light-colored casual outfit, a crisp white shirt, and wrinkle-free trousers. With a cold gaze, he swept over Yulia indifferently, his expression dismissive and aloof

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Jeremiah couldn't be bothered to respond and instead looked directly at Yvette. His gaze was calm as water, but a hint of affection in his eyes betrayed him. “Are you done? Let's go back to school. The next class is Mr. Sunderland's. If you're late. he'll start complaining about you again, he said.

Jeremiah's tone wasn't a question. It was a statement. Yvette didn't find it inappropriate either, so she responded with a hum

As they reached the door, Yvette turned to look at Yulia, who was still sitting dumbfounded. “Before my mother left Seacrity. did she come to see you?” she asked.

Yulia stiffly turned around, looking conflicted. Indeed, before Lilian left, she had come to see Yulia. But she hadn't said much, just one odd sentence, warning Yulia not to trust her father-in-law. Then, she left in a hurry. “Yes,” Yulia replied,

A flicker of light flashed through Yvette's eyes. She had asked casually, but had unexpectedly hit the mark. She had discovered that back then, Lilian had been closest to Yulia, so she asked on a whim. She hadn't expected to gain any useful information.

Tell me what my mother said to you, and I guarantee that the marriage agreement will never resurface, Yvette said. In reality, the agreement was long gone. She was merely bluffing.

As expected, Yulia hesitated no more. The person was already dead. What harm could it do to spill the secrets!

She said, "Your mother came to see me the night before she left. It was raining heavily in Seacriety. She braved the rain find me, and all she said was one confusing sentence: Be careful. Be careful of your father-in-law."

Yvette's brows furrowed slightly. Yulia probably wasn't lying. Even if she were, she wouldn't make up something so unbelievable. What did Lilian's death have to do with Claude? Some truths were slowly coming to light

Having learned what she needed, Yvette turned and left without looking back.

When they left the cafe, Jeremiah mentioned going to buy some books from a nearby street. Yvette wasn't really interested in attending class anyway, especially after Jeremiah offered to help her get permission from Tobias. She agreed to accompany him

On the shaded path, the scorching sun baked the earth. Apart from a few workers, there were only a handful of people around. Few students from Argrol University were outside at this time, as most were attending classes. Still, that didn't stop them from attracting countless admiring glances. They were used to the attention and paid no mind.

Walking side by side at a relaxed pace, both remained silent.

"You have a marriage agreement? Is it still around?" Jeremiah broke the silence first.

Yvette's brows furrowed slightly as she recalled. "I used it to light a fire for the neighbor's kid in the countryside. It's long gone," she replied

Yvette's voice was as soft as a willow branch touching the water in early spring, stirring ripples in the pond. It was also like a tiny feather, gently tickling Jeremiah's heart.

Jeremiah's eyes noticeably brightened, a hint of satisfaction flickering within. The marriage agreement didn't matter to him Whoever he set his sights on wouldn't be influenced by some trivial document. However, knowing that Yvette had burned it made him inexplicably happy. It meant she had never intended to marry into the Carter family.

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Yvette wasn't particularly interested in the classics, having already read most of them. Thus, she found a sunny spot to sit and wait for Jeremiah. With her head lowered, she dozed off.

Yvette had mastered the art of sleeping while sitting. During those years in Mysonna, any chance to rest was a luxury. She could sleep through anything, even explosions.

Suddenly, a shadow fell over her.

Yvette had long noticed someone approaching but didn't raise her head, sensing no malice from the

person.

A voice came. I'm sorry, Yvette.

Yvette snapped out of her thoughts and looked up, her expression indifferent. The person standing in front of her was Ryan.

After that night, Ryan had been avoiding Yvette, taking a leave of absence. Today, he came back to school to cancel his leave. As he was passing by a bookstore, intending to buy a couple of books, he unexpectedly saw Yvette sitting in a corner, bathed in sunlight, looking less cold and unbelievably beautiful. Her delicate profile glowed.

Ryan had stood there for a while before mustering the courage to approach her. He owed Yvette an apology. He had betrayed his conscience and wronged her.

That night, after revealing Yvette's name, Ryan couldn't sleep. The next day, he wanted to go to the police station to explain, but his father, Lionel, had locked him in the house with bodyguards watching him until yesterday. It was then that Lionel finally relented and let him out.

Ryan had been puzzled. Knowing his father, Lionel would never have released him if he hadn't complied. Then, after getting his phone back and going online, Ryan learned that Daniel had fallen from power, and the Brooks family had collapsed. Ethan had been sent abroad by his family.

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He thought perhaps Yvette didn't know why he was apologizing, so he explained, "Yvette, I'm sorry. I betrayed you. Daniel approached my father, and I... I failed to stand

my ground and gave up my principles. I caused you trouble. After speaking, Ryan bowed his head deeply.

He was waiting for Yvette's judgment.

At that moment, Yvette's phone buzzed in her pocket. She glanced at it. It was a text message: [Boss, Flying Fish's in trouble. I need to go to South EYulia's expression changed immediately. 'Does she think it's not enough?' she wondered.

Yulia felt that Yvette was being greedy, and her tone changed slightly, becoming sharper. "Yvette, though this amount isn't much, it's more than enough for most people for a lifetime," she said. Her words, both overtly and subtly, accused Yvette of insatiable greed.

Yvette tossed the check over. Though it was just a light sheet. Yulia felt a cold gust accompany its descent, causing a bead of cold sweat to trickle from her temple.

"This money. Yvette said.

"Consider this money as a wedding gift from me and Yvette to Victor and Winona. We wish them a long, happy marriage and many children. Mrs. Carter, you should take it back. It's too little to be offered, or others might think the Carter family has gone bankrupt," Jeremiah interrupted Yvette. His sudden appearance made Yvette pause slightly.

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Yvette put her phone away. She cracked her krickles and lazily glanced up. Her face was tanned and clear, her eyes cold and sharp.

Ryan's body abruptly froze.

Yvette said, "Get it

Her words stunned Ryan I turned out that he was worried about nothing and that Yvette did not care. She was not concerned about what a stranger like him had done. Her response made him feel worse.

Ryan, who had been egotistical since childhood, had never experienced such indifference. He laughed bitterly and, after pause, stated firmly, "No matter what, I owe you an apology

Jeremiah said. "I've made my choice".

Ryan turned back, stunned.

Jeremiah stood behind Ryan, holding a few foreign publications. His handsome face was chilly, his eyes narrowing slightly and gleaming with a sharp icy glare, giving off an intense, intimidating aura that made Ryan uneasy,

Ryan was regarded as a gifted individual from childhood. From everyone's view, he was the only heir to the Lewis family and owned over 3.3 billion dollars. Yet, Jeremiah stood there, giving him an overwhelming presence. He had to admit that he felt slightly inferior to Jeremiah.

"Oh." Yvette responded

The two then left together, their backs inexplicably harmonious, leaving Ryan standing there dazed.

Jeremiah feigned to glance back at Ryan casually Ryan felt a twinge of danger from that glance alone, giving him the chills. Jeremiah glanced sideways at Yvette, his voice slightly hoarse. "Who's that guy? A classmate!!

With a brief pause. Yvette replied. "It's Ryan."

Jeremiah laughed, his voice low.

When Zeke returned to the Chambers residence from the nightclub drunk, it was already past one in the morning. He had been hanging out at nightclubs as he had not been interested in anything lately and had been sleeping with women, but none had piqued his interest

All he could think about was Yvette. That was because Yvette embarrassed him in the cafeteria, something he had never experienced. So, he decided to put Yvette, the ungrateful woman out of his mind for the moment

"Zeke, stop right there" Nellie, wearing white silk pajamas, was seated on the couch. She had spent more than two hours seated there.

Zachary had not been home much lately. Winona said earlier that Yvette had been taken to the police station. She was ecstatic. believing Yvette would not get another chance to turn things around. However, she did not expect Zachary to go so far as to offend Daniel to bail her out.

When Zachary returned from the police station, Nellie discreetly tried to ascertain the reason behind Yvette's arrest from him. After rounds of questioning he said briefly that she had a minor quarrel with Blake's son, nothing serious.

Zachary did not seem pleased, so Nellie opted to drop the question rather than risk upsetting him further.

Several days later, the news that Daniel had been ousted was released, leaving Nellie anxious for days. She was aware of the

Hambers family's power. Zachary could not bring down Daniel the deputy mayor, even if he risked all for Yvette.

"Was Yvette involved in Daniel's downfall? This question stuck in her head, bothering her for days.

When Yvette stabbed Nellie before, she was cold, ruthless, and cynical. Recently, every time Nellie fell asleep, she would dream about that day, turning it into a haunting nightmare.

Zeke was startled, musing. A spooky female voice sounds in the middle of the night is creepy.

The lights were turned on. The mansion quickly lit up, as bright as day.

Seeing Nellie with a disgruntled expression, Zeke knew he could not dodge a lecture that day. He was not concerned by it because he was used to it. Since childhood, he had only been scolded without further punishment.

Zeke's excessive drinking had left him with a hoarse voice and a noticeable alcohol odor in his speech. "Mom, why aren't you asleep? Sitting here in the middle of the night is eerie."

Nellie's expression was gloomy. Zeke was the child she had hoped for and nurtured from an early age, but in the end, he could not compare to Winona in any way. To maintain his image before outsiders, she had spent a fortune to help him stand out among the scions.

Besides Ryan, the son of the Lewis family, Zeke got the most attention and had the best reputation. But Zeke was not living up to expectations. All he did was enjoy himself. Nellie had no idea what else he could do but hang out at nightclubs and never return home.

Now that Yvette had returned, Nellie could see Zachary's kindness for her. She felt hopeless for Zeke if things remained like this. All Nellie felt now was disappointment for Zeke, who was not living up to his full potential.

Nellie scolded. "Were you going to the nightclubs again? Don't you know your dad already knows you often hang out there? You keep indulging without restraint. Do you still want the Chambers family inheritance?"

The mention of the inheritance brought Zeke to his senses.

He said, "Mom, don't worry. I'm the only son in the Chambers family. Who else would Dad give the money to but me? Enjoy your life as an affluent wife, playing poker and shopping daily. I know what I'm doing. I'm just feeling a bit down and need to relax. If it bothers you, I'll stop going out starting tomorrow, okay?"

Zeke was good at coaxing Nellie. He always dismissed the matter with those comments but did not expect Nellie to be so persistent this time. Hearing Zeke's words did not alleviate Nellie's rage, in fact, it aggravated her.

Nellie argued, "Zeke, how many times have you made these promises? Did you do as you said? After a few days, you'll be back in the nightclub. Half a year ago, you got a lady pregnant and had her come to you, leaving me to clean. Luckily, your dad was on a business trip. If I hadn't handled it, have you thought about the consequences? The Chambers up the mess. family's reputation would have been destroyed if it had spread

Zeke only remembered the episode when Nellie mentioned it, musing, That lady is only a passing interest. Did she truly believe she could marry me and climb in status? He had previously sent someone to deal with her, but she managed to escape and find the Chambers family.

The matter did make Zeke terrified. If Zachary found out, he would certainly force Zeke to take responsibility.

"I swear, Mom, this is the last time, Please, no more lectures. It's so late, if you don't get some sleep now, you'll look exhausted tomorrow. Lora, hurry, get some milk for my mom," he said, considerately massaging Nellie's shoulders and legs. Looking at Zeke's attempts to please her, Nellie could only sigh dotingly.

She said, "You leave me with no choice. Fine. Lora has already made hangover soup for you. Do something to make us proud. I've arranged for Winona to marry into the Carter family to pave the way for you. I also have a plan for dealing with that brat. Yvette. At Winona's apprenticeship ceremony, I'll ensure Yvette's reputation is ruined. Just wait, Zeke, no one can get in your way!

Zeke felt relieved. If he could not have her, he would rather ruin her. Nellie and Zeke were up to no good.

In the faint light around the corner of the second floor, a face flickered, makin

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The next day. Bonnie emerged from the dormitory with dark circles under her eyes. She hadn't slept for most of the night and could hardly open her eyes

It was her fault for watching a horror movie. She was so scared that she couldn't even go to the bathroom. If Yvette hadn't returned, she might have held it in all night. She swore she'd never watch a horror movie again. It was too torturous,

Bonne was so tired she could fall asleep while walking. She moved purely by instinct, and her head suddenly hit something. In a dare, she felt around, trying to figure out what it was. It was soft, fleshy, small, and quite springy..

She didn't even notice Andrew's face growing stiffer. "Bonnie, if you want to take advantage of me, just say so. No need to beat around the bush. You could've just asked, and I would've let you," said Andrew,

Bonnie was now fully awake. She looked up and immediately jumped back nearly three feet. Where did Andrew come from Dhd L. bump into him? What did I just touch? she thought

She stole a glance and noticed the two red marks on Andrew's chest, which were particularly conspicuous. 'Oh my god, what did I feel Boumes face turned bright red.

Andrew wasted to tease her, but seeing her almost hang her head to the ground, he suddenly felt embarrassed too. After all, no girl had ever touched that part before!

They stood under the tree. Neither of them looked at each other or spoke.

Fmally Andrew spoke, and only then did Bonnie look up. "Come on, it's no big deal. You're usually so confident. You touched me, and I didn't say anything. Why so embarrassed?"

Bonnie looked like a cat with its fur standing on end. "I'm not embarrassed! I just wasn't fully awake! What's it got to do with you? Hmph

For once. Andrew didn't argue back. "Okay, let's just say you were waking up. You're fully awake now, right?"

Bonnie nodded, her face still red. "What's up? Why are you here so early? Don't you have class?"

Of course, Andrew had something important to do. Jeremiah got orders early in the morning and didn't even have time to pack before he flew to South East Aploth on a military plane.

Jeremiah didn't say what it was, but Andrew thought it must be important. If Jeremiah needed to be dispatched in a hurry, it had to be a national matter. He didn't dare to ask

For military personnel like his father and Jeremiah, everything was confidential. He didn't even know how many missions his dad had been on over the years.

Before leaving Jeremiah wrote a note and asked him to deliver it to Yvette.

Andrew was speechless. What era is this? Can't he send a text? Why do I have to deliver it myself? Men in love are crazy. No, this looks like unrequited love. Older men in unrequited love are even crazier. It's just the pits! he thought.

He got up early and skipped breakfast just to wait for Yvette. Who would've thought that instead of her, the unreliable Bone showed up!

black tracksuit.

irrying some orange ju

juice and sandwiches she bought from the cafeteria

The campus paths were bustling with people. Andrew saw Yvette right away. Her appearance was so striking that she stood

was hard to miss. Yvette over here".

Yvette saw Andrew and Bonnie paused, and then walked over. "You're here! What's up?" she asked.

Andrew didn't waste time and handed over Jeremiah's note. Yvette didn't take it and frowned. She didn't understand Andrew's intention she was here, but a note?

Jeremiah asked me to give it to you. He left for a mission this morning and isn't sure when he'll return. Andrew explained.

Yvette took the note and glanced at it. It read: Something urgent came up. Wait for me, and we'll have quiche together. Call me if you need anything. There was a phone number at the end Yvette memorized it instantly. "Got it."

She glanced at the sleepy Bonnie and the disinterested Andrew, then handed over her bag of food. Andrew looked flattered. by the gesture,

Bonnie didn't react. Lately, Yvette always brought her breakfast after her morning exercise. With her around, Bonnie could just be a happy couch potato waiting to be fed.

"For me?" Andrew asked again, unsure.

Yvette kicked a pebble by her foot and glanced at the excited Andrew, with a look that said, "Is this guy out of his mind? Look

at this fool”

Andrew realized he was the fool and chuckled awkwardly. “Ms. Zeller, I’m so touched... You’re sharing your food with me? How generous!”

Bonnie sat nearby, munching on her sandwich and watching Andrew’s clown show. “Why do those two always hang out together! Just look at Top Dog-classy and subtle. You can tell he’s got substance. Then look at this guy... a total airhead. What a difference, she thought t

After they split up, Yvette and Bonnie went to class.

Andrew slacked off. Since Jeremiah wasn’t around, he didn’t feel like being a librarian and booked a flight back to Betrico. A big bed, sports car, fine wine... Andrew’s back, baby, haha... he thought to himself.

However, he hadn’t been happy for long when a message from Jeremiah popped up. Jeremiah ordered him to stay on standby as a librarian in Seacurity.

Andrew fell straight from heaven to hell. He resigned himself to packing up and returned to the library cabin to continue his role as a “struggling worker.

The invitation letters for Argrol University’s Art Festival were sent out, four for each department. They had just arrived at the physics classroom. Ryan got one and, unsurprisingly, signed up for chess.

Of the remaining three, the one for Yvette was left untouched on the table, while the others took theirs. One signed up for puno and another for calligraphy, leaving painting as the last option. Everyone knew that painting was Winona’s forte, so they all avoided it.

Ever since the news of Yvette’s participation spread, people started secret betting pools. The odds were ten to one in favor of Yvette winning. With the festival three days away, the betting was in full swing. More people placed bets, mostly betting that Yvette would lose.

“What a joke. Winona’s been a painting prodigy since she was little and won countless awards. Mr. Griffin is set to take her as his apprentice. Who would be dumb enough to bet on Yvette? That’s just asking to lose.” This was the general sentiment.

Besides the students in the physics department, there were a few people from other departments who bet on Yvette. They were probably just thinking about the 20 dollars or so at stake-if they lost, they lost. It was just a way to support her.

Jolin bet on Yvette to win. People from other departments rocked him, saying he was throwing money away. Out of frustration, John bet all his savings on Yvette.

Bonnie had just finished a sandwich and was sipping her orange juice, content, telling Yvette what she had heard yesterday, “Yve, theres a rehearsal for today’s Art Festival opening ceremony. They said everyone participating needs to attend. heard the rules have changed this year.”

Yvette twirled the pen in her hand. Her mind wasn’t on the class. Jeremiah went to South East Aploth today, and Eagle King rushed over there yesterday. Those two.. she thought.

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In the afternoon, Ruby arrived early at the auditorium with the student council to begin preparations.

The opening ceremony of the Art Festival would begin with her performance. Ruby planned to play a world-famous piece. Bryan’s Second Life Concerto,

Ruby practiced day and night for this performance, hoping to make a big impression at the Art Festival. She knew she wouldn’t win first place in other events, so she didn’t compete in those. However, she was confident she could win the top prize in the piano event.

Argrol University’s Art Festival had invited Seacriety’s upper class and the media. It would also feature an important figure as a mystery guest.

Unbeknownst to others, Ruby, as the student council president, already knew who it was. She had already invited this mystery guest twice. This time, the guest agreed to come because of his relationship with Simon.

The mystery guest was none other than Zion Holmes, a famous young pianist in Clusia.

Ruby had always dreamed of joining his studio. For anyone studying piano in Clusia, joining Zion’s studio was a dream come true. So, the performance at the opening ceremony was vital for Ruby. If she could leave a strong impression on Zion, she might have the chance to join his studio.

Bonnie came along with Yvette and Ryan. She was the physics department’s representative, so she volunteered for the opening ceremony. Even though she wasn’t competing, she still had the opportunity to attend.

Besides, Bonnie always felt that Ruby had some hidden agenda, so she insisted on staying close to Yvette and not giving Ruby any opportunity to take advantage of her. The rumors she had heard weren’t for nothing.

The auditorium was already filled with people, including participants from various departments and volunteers like Bonnie who were there to help.

“Ruby, Yvette and the others are here. Just as Ruby was directing people to move the piano to the center of the stage, she heard her friend saying that Yvette had arrived.

She looked in Yvette’s direction, her eyes filled with malice. Ruby then glanced at Ryan standing beside Yvette in a white shirt and slacks. She was somewhat confused

Ryan was well-known at school for being introverted. He never seemed close to anyone. “Why did he come with Yvette? Is he also bewitched by Yvette? Ruby wondered.

In front of everyone, Ruby put on quite a performance, humbling herself as she came down. She had a big, warm smile, completely different from the other day when she was being difficult. “Ms. Zeller, you came! I thought... you wouldn’t? Mr. Lewis, you’re here too.”

Yvette looked down and ignored her. Ryan simply adjusted his glasses, nodded at her, and then looked away. Ruby’s eyes were the sort of thing he’d seen plenty of since he was young-people acting humble, desperate to please, and cautious, all because he was the son of the Lewis family

Bonnie was fuming. Ruby had never seemed faker than ever. She was the one who insisted Yvette attend the Art Festival, yet anyone who didn’t know the truth thought it was Yvette’s problem. “Ruby, you

Ruby was afraid Bonnie would muplicate her, so she quickly interrupted. “Forget it. Just come. Yvette, you and Bonnie are in the last row.

Hope you don’t mind that. There are too many people, so I nonchalantly told Ryan, “Your seat is the second chair in the front row”

old only give you the last row. Then, she

Ryan glanced at Yere, who was quietly fiddling with her phone No, it’s fine. I’ll sit in the back with the representative and Yvette. You can give my seal in somnour else”

Yvette put away her phone and looked up, asking Bonnie. “Where are we sitting?”

The noisy room instantly fell silent. Even though Ruby spoke for a long time, Yvette hadn’t listened at all. Ruby’s face turned ashen. She couldn’t even force a fake smile. Bonnie couldn’t hold back and burst out laughing. To Ruby, that laughter was nothing but pure mockery.

However, she misunderstood Bonnie Bonnie just genuinely thought it was funny, thinking Yvette was impressive. With just one question, Ruby was furious. How did she not notice this talent before? Even Ryan, who was usually so serious, couldn’t help laughing a little.

When she saw Ryan also laughing at her, Ruby's resentment for Yvette grew, as she was humiliated in front of everyone. Then, she thought about the Art Festival, and Ruby could only slowly suppress her anger. Just wait. I'll make sure Yvette has

hard time then, she thought.

"All right. Mr. Lewis. Do as you wish," she said, lifting her head proudly and straightening her back before returning to the center of the stage.

The others didn't dare to say anything. As the student council president, Ruby had considerable power. She often lost her temper with the lower-ranking members, and anyone who had been in the student council for a while knew about her short temper and tried to avoid provoking her,

When the three of them sat down, Ryan cautiously sat three seats away from the other two. After all, he wasn't particularly familiar with them, so sitting together felt inappropriate. They were the only ones in the last row, leaving a large space there. Everyone had moved to the front, so no one noticed Yvette taking out her black phone. She hacked into a website effortlessly, scanned through ten lines, and logged out in less than a minute without a trace.

At Murphia's Department of Homeland Security, an officer reported, "Sir, it seems our firewall was just attacked. The attacker was probably a top-tier hacker, but they didn't succeed. The attack was too brief for us to trace their location."

Manuel Cruz, the Secretary of Homeland Security, calmly lit a cigar, completely unconcerned. Incidents like this happened all the time. There were always reckless individuals trying to attack the national security system, so he didn't take it seriously

at all

Manuel was sure that their national security system was the most secure and toughest in the world, thinking no one could break it. "What's the fuss? This kind of thing happens all the time, doesn't it? It's not like they breached it. Don't panic next time, okay?"

The young officer who reported the incident felt something was off. The code was messed up for a moment and then returned to normal after a few seconds, but it shouldn't affect anything. Maybe he misread.

He figured Manuel was right. Their country's security system was the best in the world. All the top hackers were in Mysonná. He was certain no one could breach the system and steal anything. He must have drunk too much last night.

They didn't take it seriously, but little did they know that in just a few seconds, Yvette had entered the system and got the information she wanted

Bonnie was so tired that she fell asleep on Yvette's shoulder. Eventually, she was woken up by the sound of a piano. She rubbed her eyes, gradually regaining consciousness.

She found herself leaning on Yvette's shoulder and quickly straightened up. When she checked her watch, she saw that an hour had already passed. Yve, why didn't you wake me up? Your shoulder must be sore."

Yvette shook her head. Her eyes were as clear as spring water, but there was a hint of coldness in her expression. "It's not,"

Only then was Bonnie relieved, and she looked ahead. Ruby was sitting at the piano, sound-checking. The sounds of her piano playing had woken Bonnie up.

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Bonnie felt a bit confused about what was happening. Unbeknownst to her, the rules for this year's Art Festival had been announced while she was asleep.

It was now rehearsal time for the piano competition participants. If Bonnie had not fallen asleep, Yvette would have already left.

"Yve, what do we do now? Have they explained the rules?" Bonnie asked.

Yvette nodded, and Ryan, standing beside her, piped up, "Bonnie, they've already told us the festival rules are the same as last year. It's still a point system. The only difference is that each person can enter four events this year.

Bonnie shook her head, still confused. What a weird rule. Each person can participate in four events? This is redundant because no one's doing that. Which oddball on the student council thought of this? How unnecessary, she thought.

Bonnie was not the only one thinking this way. Ryan also felt that entering four events was too much; there was no way anyone could win all four. The rule was not logical at all.

"Let's go. The cafeteria is serving your favorite buffalo wings today," Yvette said.

Ryan was surprised. He did not expect Yvette to remember what Bonnie liked to eat. Perhaps she was not as cold and unapproachable as people thought.

Bonnie's mouth started watering. The cafeteria had three delicious dishes: ribs, chicken wings, and the quiche that was only available on Fridays. Getting one's hands on them depended on luck because they were snatched up fast.

Bonnie was about to get up but thought better of it and sat back down. She had been asleep for so long that she did not even notice her legs were numb.

Bonnie had a miserable look on her face. She

ne was feeling upset because she would not make it in time to get the buffalo wings.

“Yve, my legs are numb. Why don’t you go ahead? I’ll just stay here,” she said, swallowing hard.

Yvette had just gotten up but sat back down. “I’m not going. I’ll stay here with you,” she said, her tone cold as ever.

Bonnie gave a silly grin. “You’re the best, Yve.”

Ryan, off to the side, suddenly felt a pang of envy. He envied Bonnie and Yvette. Their friendship was genuine and beautiful, something he could never have. Being born into the Lewis family meant he would never have any true friends.

On stage, Ruby, for some reason, glanced behind her. Seeing Yvette, Bonnie, and Ryan still there made her secretly happy. Soon, she would make sure Yvette saw just how much better she was than her.

Ruby sat elegantly at the piano and lifted her hands. The light around her and the piano created a perfect atmosphere. As her fingers fluttered across the keys, a slow, beautiful melody filled the auditorium. Everyone listened quietly.

Seeing the audience entranced, Ruby felt proud. She specifically arranged this rehearsal to intimidate the other contestants and make them back down. There was also a surprise bonus: showing Yvette the difference in their abilities.

It was Bonnie’s first time hearing Ruby play the piano. Although Ruby’s personality was not great, to be fair, her skills were undeniable, even to someone like her who knew nothing about the piano.

Bonnie saw that Yvette had her eyes closed and thought she was enjoying the piano music, so she whispered, “Yve, Ruby’s piano skills are pretty good, huh?”

Yvette stopped swinging her leg and turned to look at Bonnie.

She squinted her pretty eyes and explained slowly and calmly, ‘s average. She played the second bar of the first section and the third bar of the second section wrong. There was no feeling in it.”

Bonnie’s mouth dropped open. Yvette’s critique sounded rather professional. Yvette’s comments even made Ryan turn around.

No wonder he felt something was off while listening to Ruby play earlier, but could not quite place it. Once Yvette pointed it out, he understood. It was not just about hitting the wrong notes.

The main issue was that Ruby's playing lacked emotion. She was just showing off her technique, which might fool those with an untrained ear.

Yvette's observations were spot-on. These were not words one would expect from someone who knew nothing about the piano. Hence, Ryan was certain that Yvette not only knew how to play the piano but also had deep expertise.

None of them noticed a man wearing a white casual outfit and a baseball cap sitting in the second last row. That man was Zion. He had snuck in to watch Ruby's performance today.

Ruby had left a strong impression on him. Initially, she approached him, expressing her desire to get a chance to join his studio. He had given Ruby that chance but was not very impressed with her piano playing. It was skillful but lacked emotion.

Playing the piano without emotion was practically a joke, so he turned her down. After that, Ruby tried all sorts of ways to get close to him, but Zion was put off by such tactics, so he never gave her another chance.

Argrol University had been reaching out to him for two years to invite him to be a guest speaker. If he refused again, it would not look good:

After all, Argrol University was a prestigious institution with a century-long history. If others caught wind of his constant rejection, it would not look good. Also, he was good friends with Simon, hence, he agreed to attend this year's Art Festival.

Today, Zion dropped by the piano rehearsal on a whim. He wanted to see if Ruby had improved over the past two years. Hearing her play, Zion was disappointed yet again. She still was not playing with any emotion!

After listening for a while, Zion was about to leave but unexpectedly overheard Yvette's comment as he passed the last row,

Zion was pleasantly surprised. Someone who could make such an assessment must really know the piano well.

Her voice sounded somewhat cold, but he could tell it was a young girl's voice. For her to be here at this hour, she was more than likely to be an Argrol University student.

Zion stopped in his tracks, looking excitedly at Yvette sitting inside, his eyes bright and his voice full of anticipation. He approached her and asked, "Excuse me, do you also play the piano? If it's possible, I hope you could help guide my student."

Yvette and Bonnie stopped talking and both looked up at the person speaking. Zion took off his baseball cap.

His face was handsome, with well-defined features and sharp lines. His eyes, bright like stars, shone with intelligence. He was of average height, slightly slender, and had a gentle smile on his lips. He had a gentle and graceful aura

Yvette restrained the smile in her eyes. She lazily plopped her arm on the armrest and replied languidly, "I don't know how

Zion could not believe it. How could she not know how to? Would someone who doesn't know how to play the piano be able to make such an observation? he thought.

Zion wanted to ask another question when Yvette glanced at him He could see the annoyance practically burning in her eyes.

This feeling was somewhat new to him. Ever since he became famous, it had been a long time since anyone had treated him this way. But since she did not want to talk about it, he could keep pressing

Zion apologized for bothering her and left. When he reached the door, something came to mind, so he turned back, pulled a business card from his pocket, and handed it over.

Bonnie instinctively took it. She was aware enough to know it was not meant for her.

"Here's my card. I hope we get a chance to talk sometime. With that, Zion walked away and did not come back.

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Bonnie held up the business card and glanced at the gold embossed letters.

Ryan overheard the conversation just now. He could see the words and phone number on the card from where he was. The name Zion Holmes caught his eye. He stood there, stunned..

Turning around. Bonnie saw Ryan's surprised expression. She was puzzled as to what was special about the business card.

Bonnie carefully examined the card in her hand. From her perspective, aside from the fancy lettering of the words "Zion Holmes, there was not much to it.

Seeing Ryan in a daze, Bonnie waved the card in front of his face. "Ryan, what's wrong with you? It's just a business card." She then turned to Yvette. "Yve, has Ryan lost it or what?"

Yvette sat in her chair, a bit distracted, her knuckles turning white as her hands gripped the armrests.

Ryan snapped back to reality, noticing Yvette's indifferent expression and Bonnie's curious look. He uttered softly. "Do you know what that card in your hand means?"

Bonnie shook her head and pointed at the card. "What? Isn't it just a business card?"

Ryan smiled bitterly and said. "Bonnie, the card in your hand is every piano student's dream in Clusia. If I'm not mistaken, that man is Clusia's well-known young pianist, Zion Holmes. He's currently the only one who has held a concert in Mysonna Concert Hall. He is also an honorary member of the Piano Association. Everyone is desperate to get into his studio, extremely selective"

which is

Bonnie neither played the piano nor knew much about it. She had never heard of Zion, but it sounded like he was very famous. "Wow! Yve, from what Ryan said, this person seems really famous."

Ryan wondered if Yvette would remain calm when she knew who Zion was,

Hearing it. Yvette just paused expressionlessly, as cold and composed as ever. She did not care at all who Zion was.

Bonnie suddenly thought of something and slapped her thigh too hard. She winced in pain, then chuckled sheepishly. "Since this card is so important, well. She pointed at Ruby, who was still energetically playing the piano on stage. "Would she like to have it, too?"

Ryan nodded blankly. "As far as I know, Ruby once approached Zion but got turned down. She must want it very much

Bonnie glanced slyly at Yvette, who was sitting on the chair with her eyes half-closed. "Hey, Yve, should we tease that arrogant Ruby with this card?"

"That's lame," Yvette responded.

Bonnie admitted it was indeed a lame idea. She casually slipped the business card into her pocket, planning to give it to Yvette later. However, she knew Yvette too well. There was a high chance that the card would end up in some corner, just like those colorful love letters, and no one would care about it.

Ryan was completely at a loss for words now. He thought, These two are really... How should I put it? Well, let's just say they're as unique as can be.

Few people in Clusia would turn down Zion's business card and casually stuff it away even after finding out who he was.

Bonnie did not even notice that after hanging out with Yvette for a while, she had become pretty chill about certain things. She thought, "Who could be more mysterious and powerful than Top Dog? No matter how impressive this pianist is, he can't compare to Top Dog. That's right. Stay calm,

When Ruby finished playing the piano and stood at the center of the stage, everyone applauded passionately. Whether it was because of her good performance or her status as the president did not really matter.

Several people praised Ruby, Ruby plays well. It's mesmerizing/

Yeah, absolutely. She's got some serious skills."

Theard Ruby has passed the Level 8 piano exam. I bet she will be champion in the piano competition this time."

"I think so, too. Didn't you see how discouraged the other contestants looked? They probably realized they didn't stand a

chance."

"Ruby's mean. It's just a rehearsal. Everyone was already intimidated even before the competition. Who else can compete with her for the championship?"

Ruby lost herself in the crowd's admiration. She could not wait to get the trophy and show it off. She felt even more proud when she saw that Yvette and some others in the last row were gone. She knew Yvette could not compare to her and thought Yvette had run away in defeat.

However, Ruby seemed to have seen a familiar figure earlier, but she could not remember where she had seen that person before.

Zion returned to the hotel. He had just entered the room when there was a knock on the door. He opened the door, and standing there was Sawyer Lane, a student he brought from Betrico

Sawyer had potential but was still inexperienced. He needed more humility and some refining. Zion wanted to take this opportunity for Sawyer to interact with students from Argrol University. Music was not meant to be solitary.

Zion thought of Yvette and sighed. It would benefit Sawyer greatly if she were willing to give him a few tips. Sadly, she turned down his invitation.

Sawyer was a tall young man with nothing special about his appearance except for the ambition shining in his eyes.

Since he was young, Sawyer believed he had an extraordinary talent for the piano. His path of learning was smooth. While others worried about the exams, he passed them easily, one after another, ultimately earning his place in Zion's studio, making quite a name for himself.

Sawyer felt destined to be the next Zion. Or rather, he believed he would surpass Zion one day and become an even more outstanding figure than him.

"Mr. Holmes, I came by earlier, and you weren't here. The invitation from Argrol University just arrived, Sawyer said

Zion took a sip of water before saying, "Just leave it there. Come with me in a couple of days. Argrol University is the best university in Seacriety, and it's full of talented piano students. This is a great chance for you to exchange ideas with them."

Sawyer seemed a bit dismissive. To him, exchanging ideas with students from a local university was meaningless. It would be worth his attention if it were Betrico University where the best talents gathered. Still, he agreed sincerely, "Okay, Mr. Holmes.

Although Zion was drinking water with his head down, he was constantly watching Sawyer's expression. Zion was not just anyone. Over the years, he had met all kinds of piano students. No matter how well Sawyer hid his true nature, Zion could see through the ambition in his eyes and the perfunctory tone in his words

In fact, based on his standards, he would not have accepted Sawyer, no matter how talented the latter had been. For a pianist, the most important quality was simplicity. If one were too ambitious and obsessed with fame and status, their desire would eventually destroy their music career

Zion had seen too many talented pianists destroy themselves in the end. He would give Sawyer a chance. If Sawyer still could not realize this, there was nothing more he could do.

Sawyer was completely unaware of the world beyond his own and did not know there was always someone better than him.

just like the genius Yvette, whom Zion had met today.