

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

chapter 1091

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“Women are like clothes. Well said.”

Sharon cackled sardonically as tears began to trickle down her face. “Taylor Blackwood, you really are a heartless b*stard. She stayed by your side for decades and even birthed you a child. That’s how you treat her?”

“Every man for himself,” Taylor remarked dryly.

“So, tell me. There’s police surrounding you right now, am I right?” Sharon abruptly questioned. “You’re stalling for time on purpose so that they can use their tracking device to figure out where I am.”

Taylor fell silent and lifted his head to look at the throng of policemen encircling him.

He never knew that his own daughter was so intelligent.

“Guess I was right again.” Sharon let out a sarcastic laugh. Tears were streaming down her face relentlessly. “What benefits did they give you in order for you to betray your own daughter?”

Taylor lowered his head. “You can’t escape. Just turn yourself in. Zachary and Charlotte are already in T Nation.”

“W-Why would you treat me this way?”

Sharon demanded in an agitated manner. Alas, there was nothing but silence on the other side of the phone.

“Taylor Blackwood. I detest you! I will never forgive you.”

After she screamed at him at the top of her lungs, she promptly hung up.

Her hand trembled as she gripped her phone. She hung her head and cried her heart out.

No matter how poorly her father used to treat her, she always treasured their kinship. Even at the most critical point in her life, she made it a point to leave him some money for his retirement.

Even while she was on the run, she still thought about her father and even pleaded with that mystery man to save him. That was why the mysterious stranger dealt with her father's arrangements for him.

She rushed over to T Nation in a frenzy and barely managed to settle down before she gave him a call to inform him about the money she set aside for him. Unfortunately, he sold her out to safeguard his own interests.

Is that what a father-daughter relationship is supposed to be like? Is that what kinship is supposed to be like? Aren't fathers supposed to love their daughters the most in the whole wide world? Why is my own father like this? That man is a wolf in sheep's clothing. All that chivalry was a facade. Only now do I see that he's actually a self-obsessed scoundrel. It's a pity my mom never knew that. She spent her whole life deeply in love with a brute like him. If I'd known how things would turn out, I should've just remained in that quaint city and lived a modest life. Why did I have to give up everything to return to the Blackwoods and acknowledge that scumbag as my father? At the end of the day, I've been played like a pawn, manipulated and discarded according to his whim and fancy.

Knock knock knock.

The bodyguards rapped the door multiple times. In Ustranasion, they anxiously said, "We might've been followed. We must leave right away."

Sharon remained quiet. The look in her eyes turned hollow.

She didn't know what the meaning of her life was anymore.

All of a sudden, she felt like destroying the whole world.

Everyone should perish together. That might be more satisfying.

“Did you hear us? We have to evacuate this instant.”

The bodyguard was badgering her into leaving, but Sharon stayed motionless.

In the other room, Olivia was holding onto the medicine that the bodyguard purchased. She dared not feed it to Ellie but she gave her a fever patch instead.

The commotion outside alarmed Olivia. She was worried that Sharon would jump the gun and kill the both of them off. When she noticed that the bodyguards were all looking for Sharon, she saw a window of opportunity to make a run for it.

With Ellie in her arms, she surreptitiously climbed out of the window and sprinted for her life.

Despite having drained all her energy earlier in the day, Olivia still persevered and ran as fast as she could with her clothes drenched in sweat and her feet bare.

Her topmost priority was to ensure Ellie was safe and sound.

“They fled!”

A furious bellow came from behind them. Shortly after, people began chasing after them.

A frightened Olivia continued to dash forward with Ellie in her arms. Sadly, her legs soon gave way and the bodyguards managed to catch up to her.

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1092

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort](#)

“Stop right there!” A bodyguard aimed his gun at Olivia.

“You can take my life, but please spare the child. However much money Sharon is paying you, the child’s parents can give you a tenfold increase.” Olivia nervously rattled in Ustranasion.

The bodyguards simply ignored her. One of them walked over and held her by her hair before giving her two violent slaps across the face.

She fell to the ground as blood oozed out of her nose and mouth. Even then, she held Ellie close to her and dared not let go. In Ustranasion, she uttered, "Her mother is the second-largest shareholder of the Lindberg Corporation and her uncle is the legendary Mr. Lindberg. Her father is Zachary Nacht of the Nacht Group. If you have the audacity to even touch her, you will be sure to die a terrible death."

"Please. She's our trump card. Of course, we won't be hurting her. As for you? You're getting in our way." A bodyguard fished out his gun and held it against Olivia's temple. "Die!"

Olivia shut her eyes in despair.

"Stop it!" Just then, an arrogant voice sounded.

The bodyguard halted in midair and turned to look at the source of the voice. "You're letting her stay alive? Until when?"

"They've already located us. If you fire the gun, it'll only attract them." Sharon cast Olivia a scornful look. "Take the child. We've got to leave."

"Alright." The bodyguard stepped forward to grab Ellie.

"No, don't touch her."

Olivia held onto Ellie tightly, refusing to let go.

The bodyguard used all his might to pry open her hand, to no avail.

That incensed him. He brutally smashed the gun against Olivia's forehead.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Blood began to pour from her head onto the ground after the three impactful hits.

Olivia's whole body finally fell to the ground, but her hands were still tightly encircling Ellie.

"Ms. Peyton. Ms. Peyton!"

The ruckus jolted Ellie awake. She immediately burst into tears. However, because of her frail state, her voice was extremely hoarse.

The bodyguard attempted to grab Ellie once again, but he was unsuccessful. Annoyed, he struck Olivia's head with his foot three times.

Olivia had long lost the energy to resist, yet she resolutely endured and held onto Ellie with her last ounce of energy.

Ellie's face was splattered by blood and she was utterly petrified. All she could do was wail in fear.

Olivia's energy was crumbling even further.

The bodyguard continued to kick Olivia's head.

All of a sudden, Ellie lurched forward and covered Olivia's body. With her croaky voice, she cried out, "Don't kill her. Please."

The bodyguard instantly stopped in his tracks. He glanced at Ellie with his brows furrowed.

A smidge of emotion flashed in Sharon's eyes but it was quickly replaced by aloofness. Without any emotion, she instructed, "Hurry. Make it quick."

The bodyguard reached out to carry Ellie only to be bitten by her.

The pain was trifling, but the sound of a car approaching from a distance told them that their enemy was nearing.

In a hurry, the bodyguard violently flung Ellie aside.

The motion was so great that her head hit the corner of the wall. Her head immediately began bleeding profusely.

“Ellie...”

A bloodied Olivia crawled over to Ellie with all her might and embraced her.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” Sharon fumed.

The bodyguard shook his arm to get rid of the blood and fished out his gun to kill Olivia.

Just then, to his utter horror, a bullet punctured his wrist. The gun in his hand clattered onto the ground as he screamed in agony.

The other three bodyguards instantaneously scurried to hide.

Sharon rushed forward to carry Ellie and prepared to board the car with the bodyguards’ protection.

Then, a Jeep furiously charged at them at top speed, sending their vehicle straight into the wall.

Slam! Just like that, their vehicle became a crushing mess.

The bodyguard who was at the driver’s seat instantly died while the other two fell from the vehicle. Before they even had the chance to resist, they were caught.

With Ellie in her arms, Sharon quickly got up and pressed the gun against Ellie’s head. She yelled, “Go ahead. If anyone dares to harm me, I’ll shoot right away.”

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1093

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort](#)

“Sharon Blackwood! You must be courting death.”

A familiar yet icy voice sounded from behind her.

Sharon inexplicably shuddered and turned to look back.

Under the harsh lighting, she could see a slender figure sashayed over while a domineering and murderous aura was exuded.

The Charlotte before her eyes was a stark contrast from the delicate woman she once was.

As for Sharon, she no longer emitted an air of arrogance like she used to. She now looked beaten and crestfallen.

Sharon looked at Charlotte with a nervous expression. However, she quickly masked it with a composed look. She held Ellie tightly in her arms and chuckled sinisterly, "Charlotte Lindberg. You'd better let me leave this place quietly. Else, I'll perish with your daughter."

"Mommy..."

Ellie, who was on the brink of death, felt like she saw a ray of hope when she saw her mother.

"Ellie, don't be afraid. Mommy's here to bring you home."
Charlotte's gentle voice comforted Ellie.

Ellie weakly shut her eyes. She no longer had any more energy.

"This is heaven's will. Two years ago, you walked all over me and even callously killed Mrs. Berry. Two years later, the heavens want me to finish you off at the exact same place to seek revenge for Mrs. Berry." Charlotte took a look at Ellie before she raised her gun at Sharon.

"What are you talking about? Are you out of your mind? Your daughter's in my hands. I'm the winner." With a sardonic laugh, Sharon scoffed.

She began to grow excited thinking about it. "Charlotte Windt. Even if you change your last name, you're still as ignorant as ever. Two years ago, you were unable to fight against me. Two years later, you still can't. Hahahaha..."

“This haughty b*tch. You don’t even know how you’re going to die.”

Enraged, Morgan immediately aimed her gun at Sharon.

The army of female bodyguards around them also pointed their guns at her.

“Even if I go down, I’ve got two others with me. I’m not losing out.”

Not only was Sharon not frightened, she also had an ugly sneer on her face.

“Never mind about Olivia, that little b*tch. But your daughter’s yours and Zachary’s precious little baby. With her by my side, I’ll gleefully explore the depths of hell. Do you still remember this place? Two years ago, I murdered Mrs. Berry here. Right now, I’m going to do the same to your daughter. I want you to live the rest of your life in agony.”

Sharon uncontrollably shook with maniacal laughter as though she was the victorious party.

Without an ounce of will to live and nothing to her name, she no longer had faith in humanity. Life had no meaning to her anymore. She just wanted to ruin everyone else’s lives.

Looking at Charlotte all helpless, she felt immensely satisfied, as though she was triumphant.

That sense of achievement was more gratifying than staying alive.

“I think you’re the one who will be living a life of regret. Do you know how I found this place?” Charlotte retorted coldly,

She took out her phone and turned on a recording. It was a familiar voice.

“Mr. Blackwood, I’ll cut to the chase. Sharon has fled and she has my daughter with her. The police will find you in no time. There’s a bug in your phone. When Sharon dials your number later,

remember to buy time. When they pinpoint her exact location, inform me straight away.”

“Why do I have to listen to you?”

“The police will give you a lighter sentence at most. It won’t make much of a difference. What I can give you is much more. Your sentence will be reduced to a year, and I’ll help you get back on your feet after your release.”

“Really?”

“The Lindbergs never break our promises. I’ll give you a portion of your rewards first. Once you check your secret account, you’ll see it.”

“I’ve seen it. It’s a deal, then.”

“As expected, you’d go as far as to turn against your own daughter for your own interests.”

“Cut the crap. Remember to keep to your promise.”

“Once I find Sharon, you’ll get what you deserve.”

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1094

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort](#)

Sharon was incensed when she heard this.

She would not be as agitated if Taylor had worked with the police to spy on her.

If that were the case, he could well excuse his action by saying the police left him no choice but to cooperate with the authorities to buy them time. In a sense, he was doing what was necessary to protect himself.

If the police had apprehended her, they would still need to abide by the protocol and run a retrial. They would still play by the rule and not kill her, but that was not what Taylor did.

He made a deal with Charlotte and even gave her Sharon's address. This was no longer just about protecting himself.

He was pushing her to the forefront and throwing her right into the eye of the storm because of his selfish interests.

He simply wanted her dead.

Never had she loathed her father with such an immense hatred.

This truth sparked an unquenchable desire in her to live on. She told herself she had to stay alive. She wanted to face Taylor head-on and demand an explanation for his indefensible cruelty.

A bolt of sudden lightning zapped through the dark sky and a thunderous sound followed. Sharon stood frozen as she tried to come to terms with what she found out.

"I can't believe I spent that much money just for you," Charlotte derided, "I paid your dad a phenomenal sum just to know your location."

"It doesn't matter how much money you gave him," Sharon said, lifting her head finally, "I know Lindberg Corporation can take back what y'all offered with just a simple command."

Taylor fell from power to failure overnight. He was desperate and he had to cling on to the only hope he had.

He would do anything just to survive—even at the expense of his daughter's life.

"Turns out you're not as dumb as I thought you were," Charlotte said, motioning toward Sharon slowly.

"Stay where you are or I'll shoot!" Sharon shouted, "Get me a car now!"

Bang!

Before Sharon could continue, a bullet drove through her knee and she collapsed to the ground, shrieking in pain.

Charlotte darted over and snatched her gun away. She grabbed Ellie with another hand and handed her to Morgan, who quickly carried the child into the car.

“Goodbye, Sharon.” Charlotte stepped on her head and bent lower. “Your death is long overdue. Two years is already too much for you.”

“Kill me if you dare to, Charlotte,” Sharon seethed, glaring back at her. “I will haunt you even in death!”

“Even hell is too good for you, Sharon, but come to think of it, you’re as good as dead now. Even your dad has betrayed you. There’s nothing else for you to live for.”

Charlotte used the same words Sharon told her two years ago. It was about time she had a taste of her own medicine. This familiar scene brought back bad memories.

Two years ago, Sharon had Charlotte under her feet. Similarly, Sharon smirked triumphantly at Charlotte as she ridiculed her.

“You’re as good as dead now, Charlotte. Even Zachary has betrayed you. What’s the point of living now? I’ll do you a favor and end your life. You won’t believe how thrilled I am to see you suffer. You’re never getting what I can’t get. This is my sweetest revenge for you.”

That was what Sharon said to Charlotte back then.

“You know what? It’s not worth it dirtying my hands for someone like you. I should just let you live and suffer more. You should be grateful because I spared you today.”

Sharon laughed hysterically.

“Come on! Beg for your life! I will give you an easy death if you beg.”

Life was like an echo. What you sent out came back to you. Two years ago, Charlotte was the one struggling for her life.

"I will remember what you did to me, Sharon Blackwood. I will make sure you pay for it. Make sure you live to see me again," Charlotte howled.

Two years had elapsed since that incident. It was Charlotte's turn to deliver justice when she finally got her hands on Sharon.

"To hell, Sharon," she said coldly, pointing the gun at her head.

Sharon knew it was not her time yet. She had to do everything she could to survive. "Aren't you curious about the person who helped me flee?"

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1095

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"Don't worry. I will get to the bottom of it." Charlotte did not want to hold this out. "I just want to end you here and now."

"Charlotte!" Zachary ran in just as she was about to pull the trigger. "Are you crazy?"

Sharon broke out in a psychotic laugh when she saw her savior. "You can't kill me, Charlotte! Zachary promised to spare me. He still needs me to find out who that mysterious person is!"

"Shut up! No one is stopping me today."

Bang!

Zachary fired a shot in Charlotte's direction before she could do anything.

Charlotte looked up at him in indignation. "Stay out of this, Zachary Nacht! I'll kill you if you stop me!"

“Charlotte, calm down! I know she deserves to die, but we have no idea who is the main culprit behind this yet,” Zachary said frantically, “Think about it, Charlotte. We’re out under broad daylight while the enemy is hiding in the dark. They can see our every move while we know nothing about them. They will target us again for sure.”

“I don’t care about what happens in the future.”

Charlotte was not buying anything he said.

“Your time is up, Sharon. I’ll send your ashes to your dad so he can ask for your forgiveness on his own. You can confront him all you want after you die.”

Her words debilitated Sharon. “No... You can’t kill me... I can’t die...”

Another lightning flashed through the night, lighting up the sky instantly.

The stormy weather elicited traumatic memories of everything that happened two years ago. Mrs. Berry’s gruesome death flashed back in her mind, launching a barb in her heart.

Charlotte could hear her painful screams resounding in her ears and a sinister smile curved on her lips. She moved her gun, pointing at Sharon’s legs.

“I shouldn’t just end you like that. I should give you a slow death!”

“Please...” Sharon shook her head in denial. “Have mercy, Charlotte...”

Bang!

A shot was directed at her thigh.

“Argh!” Sharon screeched in pain, “Zachary! Please!”

“Charlotte, don’t!”

Zachary ran over, trying to stop her, but the Lindbergs' men had their guns all pointed at him.

"Mr. Nacht, these are all Mr. Lindberg's men," Lupine reminded him, "They will not go easy on you."

Charlotte had brought Danrique's men with her after the funeral and they set out for T Nation right after that.

Danrique's men were no small fries. They could not care less about who Zachary was and what was his relationship with Charlotte. They would eliminate anyone who crossed their path.

Zachary halted in his steps and shouted, "Charlotte, stop! You don't know what you're doing!"

Bang!

A third bullet went through Sharon's back.

Sharon could not even scream anymore. "I'll... I'll tell you who that person is..."

Bang!

Another shot was directed at her shoulder.

Sharon lay on the ground, immobile. "You'll regret this, Charlotte," she moaned.

"I regret not killing you earlier!"

"Charlotte!" Zachary cried out.

Bang!

Charlotte fired over and over again until she ran out of bullets.

Sharon's blood splurged all over her body, but Charlotte did not even flinch.

She wanted to watch her die with her own eyes. She did not want to miss a moment like this.

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

chapter 1096

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Sharon was dead.

Her eyes were wide open as she breathed her last.

Perhaps she did not even expect that that would be her last moment, or perhaps she was not willing to accept her fate even in her death.

There were still things she needed to do.

Zachary rushed all the way to Coldbridge just because he wanted to stop Charlotte from killing Sharon, but in the end, there was nothing he could do.

The rain poured incessantly, washing away the blood on the ground.

Charlotte squinted her eyes looking at the gory scene. "This is exactly how Mrs. Berry died."

Zachary's heart wrenched listening to her. He could imagine how much she had been through. That was why she behaved so rashly today.

"You didn't go through this yourself, so you'll never understand." Charlotte looked at him in determination. "I will kill anyone that touches my family."

This was not just a word of advice for Zachary, it was also a reminder for herself.

She should not be merciful toward her enemies anymore.

Danrique did not save you from jail just so you can be a weakling, Charlotte. You need to be strong so people won't walk all over you.

It's time you live up to your calling.

Charlotte left with her men right after, leaving Zachary alone in the rain.

Zachary looked at Sharon's body before his gaze shifted toward the house where Charlotte and Mrs. Berry used to live.

The rain poured relentlessly on him as an indecipherable glint shone in his eyes.

He knew there would be a rainbow after the rain, but he had a hunch that things would not be as easy this time around. He had a premonition that impending doom was looming.

"Mr. Nacht, Ms. Lindberg has already left," Ben said, holding out a big black umbrella for Zachary, "We should leave before the police come."

"Send someone to keep an eye at this place. Let me know if anybody suspicious comes."

Zachary simply has to get to the bottom of this. He had to tie up the loose ends.

"I've already ordered them to do so."

Zachary nodded and left, but before he could even reach the car, a dizzy spell struck him and he felt cold liquid flowing out of his nose. He touched his nose and felt blood.

"Are you okay, Mr. Nacht?" Ben was worried.

"It's nothing. It's just Charlotte's blood."

Zachary made up an excuse and brushed Ben's concern aside. Good thing there isn't a lot of blood.

Although he did not bleed a lot, Zachary was fully aware that there was something wrong with him.

It was definitely not just overexertion.

He lifted his head and looked at the Lindbergs' convoy driving away. "How's Ellie?"

"Her condition is serious. Olivia is severely injured too. It's difficult to tell if she can survive," Ben reported, "But Dr. Felch is already in Coldbridge. I'm sure he will get her the best treatment and do everything he can to save her."

"Which hospital is she at? I'll go over now." Zachary was worried sick.

"It's a private hospital for royalties in T Nation that Lindberg Corporation invested in."

Morgan's car pulled up beside the hospital in just ten minutes.

Lupine had earlier on called the hospital to spare a whole floor just for them.

Dr. Felch had already arrived ten minutes earlier along with Hayley and Sam. They were pacing around anxiously waiting for them when they arrived.

Once Charlotte got to the hospital, she rushed out of the car holding Ellie in her arms.

"Let her lie down."

Dr. Felch was alarmed the moment he saw Ellie. He did a quick check on her and realized the situation was grim.

"I think you need to get a few doctors who know western medicine. We will need their help."

"Alright." Charlotte turned to Lupine and told her to do accordingly.

Morgan and Raina just arrived when they saw the anxious lot.

"Is there anything I can do to help, Ms. Lindberg? I can help Dr. Felch if he needs me," Raina offered.

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

chapter 1097

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“Yes, please,” Charlotte said, nodding immediately.

Raina went in without further ado.

Although Raina might not be the best doctor out there, she was the most suitable candidate. She was familiar with Ellie’s condition.

She was a timely help.

“Do you guys mind leaving us alone?”

Dr. Felch sent out everyone else other than the medical staff.

Although Charlotte was distressed over Ellie’s condition, she went out just as Dr. Felch requested.

“Ms. Lindberg,” Morgan came over not long after they got out, “Olivia is in the ICU. She’s in a critical condition.”

“Save her at all costs. I want the best doctors to attend to her,” Charlotte said readily, “I want to see the medical superintendent.”

“The superintendent is already there. Dr. Langan brought a few other doctors with her. I heard they are pretty good too.”

“Ask them to go over.”

“Right away.”

Both Ellie and Olivia were in the emergency rooms.

The wait was unnerving for Charlotte. “Ms. Lindberg, Mr. Nacht and his men are waiting outside the hospital. Should we let them in? Mr. Lindberg’s men are keeping them out at the moment.”

“Let them in.”

Although Charlotte was still angry with Zachary, she did not want their fallout to affect their child.

“Sure.”

Within a couple of minutes, Zachary dashed in with his men.

“How’s Ellie?”

“They’re trying to save her,” Charlotte said solemnly, “Dr. Felch and Raina are inside. They will take care of it. You can go back first.”

“How can I leave when Ellie’s condition is still unstable?” Zachary questioned, “I should at least know she’s fine first.”

“Whatever.”

Zachary ordered his men to prepare a few rooms in the hospital and told Charlotte, “You should go get a change. I bet you don’t want Ellie to see you full of blood when she wakes up.”

It was not until then that Charlotte realized she was soaked in rain water and blood.

The nurses had been avoiding her out of fear ever since she got into the hospital.

She looked like a disheveled serial killer on the loose.

“Lupine, keep watch over here.”

“Sure,” the bodyguard said.

With that said, Charlotte took two men with her and left.

Meanwhile, Zachary had been waiting outside in agony all this while. It broke his heart to imagine the pain Ellie went through.

Charlotte was shocked when she looked at herself in the mirror in the washroom.

She almost could not recognize herself.

She looked away to avoid looking at herself.

She took off her clothes and took a shower to wash away the bloodstain on her body.

What Zachary said was right. She had to clean herself before going to see Ellie.

Zachary was still outside the emergency room when his phone ring. "Robbie?"

"How are you, Daddy? How are Mommy and Ellie?"

Robbie had been anticipating updates from them for a long time, but he could no longer hold it in anymore, so he decided to call.

"Mommy is fine," Zachary said comfortingly, "Ellie is sick, so she needs to be at the hospital."

"So y'all saved Ellie?"

Robbie was quick to catch on.

"Yes. We saved her, but Dr. Felch is still treating her. She'll be okay soon."

"Where are y'all now? Jamie and I want to go over."

"Mr. Spencer can send us over!" Jamie's anxious voice came from further away.

"Listen, Robbie and Jamie," Zachary said, trying to sound calm, "We're in another country now. We will go back with Ellie when everything's settled. Don't worry, okay?"

"But, Daddy..."

"Mommy's here. Do y'all want to talk to her?"

Zachary tried changing the topic.

“Okay.”

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1098

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort](#)

Charlotte had already got a change and removed all her makeup. Zachary passed the phone to her when she came over. “It’s Robbie and Jamie.”

Charlotte quickly collected herself. “Robbie! Jamie!”

“Mommy...” Jamie broke into tears when he heard Charlotte’s voice. “What happened to Ellie? I’m so scared, Mommy.”

“Everything is okay, Jamie. Don’t be scared.” Charlotte’s voice became gentle the moment she heard Jamie. “Ellie’s just down with flu. She will be okay in no time.”

“Mommy...”

“Give me the phone, Jamie,” Robbie interrupted, “Don’t worry about us, Mommy. Mr. Spencer is here with us. We’re all safe and sound. You, Dad, and Ellie just need to get home safely.”

“Of course, Robbie.” Charlotte felt like crying. “We will be home as soon as possible. You and Jamie just stay at home these few days, okay? You don’t have to go to school either.”

“Yes, Mommy.” Robbie knew she was worried they would be put in danger.

“Alright, Robbie. I need to go check on Ellie already. Talk to you later?”

“Okay, Mommy. We will be waiting for you.”

Charlotte ended the call and gave the phone back to Zachary before sitting down and staring at the light of the emergency room.

"She'll be okay." Zachary's voice rang beside her.

"I miscalculated."

Charlotte was overtaken by guilt. If she had noticed earlier that there was something wrong with Olivia and if she had made watertight arrangements, all this would not have happened.

She had put Ellie in danger twice. The first time was when Ellie accidentally drank the poison Cynthia planted for her.

It was all her fault.

She blamed Zachary for it, but she knew deep in her heart that she was culpable.

"Don't overthink."

Zachary wanted to hug her, but he realized he was still drenched the moment he reached out to her.

"Go get a change. Ellie wouldn't want to see you like this either."

"I'll be back in a bit," Zachary said before leaving.

Charlotte's gaze was complicated as she watched him leave.

"Ms. Lindberg," Morgan's voice called her back to reality, "Peter said he wanted to see Olivia. He will be boarding a plane to Coldbridge soon."

"Send someone to pick him up. Don't let anyone know where we are."

"Sure."

Charlotte glanced at the window and realized the rain had stopped. The sky was still bleak. It seemed like another downpour was brewing.

Charlotte felt a heavy burden in her heart.

How she hoped there would be light at the end of the tunnel.

The time of waiting was harrowing.

Hours passed by without any news.

Peter had already arrived, but the doctors were still trying to save Ellie and Olivia.

Peter was wounded all over. He had a bandage around his head and a cast around his arm. He could not even walk steadily. Charlotte wondered how he even made it to Coldbridge from H City.

When he found out that Olivia was still in a critical stage, he slumped to the ground and started crying.

"I've already arranged the best doctors to operate on her. They will save her," Charlotte assured him.

"I'm sorry..."

Peter went on his knees before Zachary and Charlotte.

"Please don't blame Olivia. It's all my fault. She did all this because of me. Please spare her. You're like a sister to Olivia. She will rather die than to have you hate her."

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1099

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort](#)

"I don't blame her, Peter, else I won't ask them to save her," Charlotte replied, "But I need to know what happened. When did Sharon get you?"

"You arranged to meet Olivia and Mr. Judd, but you didn't turn out in the end. Mr. Judd waited at the hotel for days before he finally went back to his factory in Yaleview while Olivia stayed back to wait for you," Peter said, "I told her to go back first, but she refused to listen to me. She said you must've something important to want to see her. She said something must've come up and delayed you."

Charlotte finally started to connect the dots as she listened to Peter.

“She said if she went back, it would take time for her to get from Yaleview to meet you again when you reach, so she waited for half a month at the hotel. One day, I walked in on someone trying to kidnap her when I visited her at the hotel. I tried to fight them off but to no avail. I bet they’re professional assassins. I tried to buy time for Olivia so she could flee and inform you, but they ended up catching me and blackmailing her.”

“I think Sharon initially wanted to kidnap Olivia to threaten you.” Zachary finally broke the silence.

“But Peter intervened and they lost Olivia, so they realized both of them must be really close. They decided to make the best out of the situation and used Peter to blackmail her.”

“Yes. That’s what they wanted. They video called Olivia when they were beating me up... That’s why I said it’s all my fault. I failed to protect her.”

Charlotte was thrown into a quandary.

She knew Peter was Olivia’s only support throughout the two years she went missing. They had grown closer over time.

When they used Peter as bait to coerce Olivia, Olivia was caught in a dilemma. She refused to budge at first, but she could not bring herself to watch Peter being beaten over and over again, so she decided to approach Charlotte and help the other side abduct Ellie in order to save Peter.

Charlotte could understand how much she loved Peter. Olivia had a difficult childhood. Her mother fell ill just when she got to H City.

She thought they could have a good life together, but she ended up spending all her money to cure her mother’s sickness.

This cultivated her independence and grit, but this also made her vulnerable. She was someone who would put her whole heart into a relationship when someone showed her kindness because she lacked love growing up.

This was the case between her and Charlotte too. Charlotte only helped her once, but Olivia remembered her kindness and did everything she could to reciprocate that kindness.

When she found out what happened to Charlotte, she refused to receive a single penny from the Nacht family and even severed all ties with them. She would rather live a frugal life than betray their friendship.

Peter was like a godsend to her. He brought warmth and love to her life and had become a part of her.

With her mother passing and Charlotte missing, Peter was her only pillar of support.

This was why all she could think about was saving him when danger arose.

She would even turn her back against Charlotte just to save him.

Charlotte hated Olivia after Ellie was kidnapped, but when she arrived at the spot and saw from the car how Olivia put her life at stake just to protect the child, she was moved.

Olivia was ultimately still a gentle soul. She may have made a mistake, but her heart was kind.

Besides, they managed to save Ellie.

Charlotte had already moved on from this little hiccup in their relationship. All she wanted now was for them to survive this.

“Stop it, Peter,” Zachary said, helping him up, “That’s all in the past now. All we can do now is to pray for their recovery.”

Peter got on his feet and heaved a sigh of relief, but he quickly directed his worried gaze at Charlotte.

"I don't blame her, but I want you to be a man and protect her with your life in the future."

"Rest assured I will do that," Peter promised.

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1100

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort](#)

"I will hold you to your word," Charlotte said solemnly, "I'll give her a house and let her stay in H City. Both of you can live together there."

"You don't have to do that for us."

"We'll discuss this after they get through this. All we can do is pray they survive the surgeries. I won't let you off the hook if anything happens to them."

Peter nodded and lowered his head without saying another word.

Three of them waited outside the emergency room quietly after that.

Time ticked by and morning broke.

Charlotte walked down the corridor to look at the sky outside through the window.

The sky looked clear after a whole night of rain.

Rays of sunshine pierced through the window and Charlotte felt this new day might just be the new start she needed.

She reached out her hand to block the sun from her face, but glares of the sun still shone through her fingers, beating on her face.

She felt an uneasy feeling creeping in her heart.

“The doctors are here!”

Morgan’s voice rang behind her.

Charlotte turned around immediately and saw Dr. Felch coming out of the emergency room as he took off his face mask. “Ellie’s condition is stable now.”

“Thank God.”

Everyone was relieved to hear his words. The worst was finally over.

Charlotte felt a suffocating burden lifted off her heart. Perhaps my gut feeling is wrong.

“Ms. Lindberg, Olivia’s doctors are done too,” Lupine said.

Charlotte ran over with the others following behind.

Peter stood up when he saw Charlotte coming over. “Ms. Lindberg.”

“How’s she?”

“She’s not out yet, but the light’s off already. I think the doctors are coming out soon,” Peter answered, “How’s Ellie?”

“She’s out of danger already. Don’t worry. I’m sure Olivia will be fine too.”

“Good to know.”

This good news gave Peter hope.

“They’re here!”

Charlotte scrambled over when she saw the doctors. “How’s Olivia?”

“We’re sorry. We tried our best,” the doctor said quietly, “Her brain is severely damaged and she’s in a coma now.”

“What does that mean?” Charlotte asked impatiently

“She probably won’t wake up anytime soon. Her brain is dead and she’s in a vegetative state now.”

Peter’s legs turned wobbly and he fell to the ground the moment he heard that.

Ben rushed over to help him. “Don’t lose hope. We will do everything we can to help her,” he comforted.

It took Charlotte a while to respond. “It cannot be,” she denied, shaking her head, “There must be something else y’all can do.”

“What about we ask Dr. Felch to take a look at her?”

Charlotte whipped her head looking for Lupine. “Bring Dr. Felch!”

“Dr. Felch just finished surgery. We should let him have a breather at least,” Lupine reminded, “What about I bring him Olivia’s medical record so he can have a look?”

“I’ll ask them to fetch her record for you,” the doctor said.

“Thanks.”

Charlotte was unwilling to accept the reality. She took Olivia’s medical record and went to look for Dr. Felch.

Dr. Felch was alerted the moment he saw the document. A frown stitched on his brows and went over without losing a moment.

After about an hour, Dr. Felch came up with the same conclusion—but he offered hope.

“There’s nothing we can do for patients like her now, but medicine is improving really quickly these days. We might have a cure in the next few years. All we can do for her is to provide her with the best care now.”