

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

chapter 1197

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The kids were thrilled at the prospect of being reunited again.

Charlotte could not stop herself from smiling. Though she refused to admit it, her heart was fluttering in anticipation of the day.

I must miss Jamie a lot.

Diana, who was passing by with a tray of snacks in hand, happened to witness everything. A myriad of emotions flashed across her eyes.

She then entered Sherlyn's room and recounted the situation she had witnessed in a tactful manner.

One maid spluttered indignantly, "I thought Ms. Lindberg has completely separated from that husband of hers! Looks like she's deeply in love with him."

"How could she? She's about to marry Sir Louis soon! I can't believe she's still in touch with her ex-husband!" another maid chimed in sharply.

"Yes. What does she take Sir Louis to be?"

"Lady Sherlyn, should I talk to Ms. Lindberg?" Diana suggested in a soft voice. "If her ex-husband insists on seeing the kids, we can send them to him. There's no need for Ms. Lindberg to see him herself."

"Charlotte's stubborn and hot-headed. She won't allow anything to interfere with her business. Besides, we can't afford to offend her ex-husband," Sherlyn said, her brows scrunched up unhappily. "We have no choice but to let them meet up. If he comes over here, we even have to treat him with the utmost respect!"

“Well...” Diana seemed concerned. “Louis has been uneasy for the past few days. He must be worried about their meetup.”

“Yes. When I went to his study to serve him coffee, he was sitting behind the desk in a daze,” a maid added.

“My son’s too honest.” Sherlyn sighed in exasperation. “If I stay out of it, he wouldn’t even know he’s being cheated on.”

After a pause, she continued, “Zachary isn’t a pushover. I need to take action before he arrives.”

The maids did not understand what she was getting at.

On the other hand, Diana instantly realized what she had in mind. “Aunt Sherlyn, you mean...”

“I was talking to the kids yesterday about inviting the magician troupe to perform in the manor.” Sherlyn’s lips curled into a smirk. “Inform the magician troupe to come over tomorrow afternoon!”

“Yes!” Diana left to make the arrangements. When she passed the doorway, she bumped into Louis, who was here for Sherlyn. Almost immediately, she gave him a curtsy and greeted, “Louis!”

“Mm,” Louis replied absent-mindedly and stepped into his mother’s room with his head hung low.

He had been avoiding Diana ever since she practically threw herself at him when he had a cold back then, afraid to spend time with her alone.

Noticing how distant he was treating her, Diana averted her gaze to mask the sorrow that flitted across her face. However, she quickly composed herself and focused on the task at hand.

Louis knocked on the door and announced, “Mother, I would like to bring Charlotte to a vacation at the beach for two days.”

“Why the beach all of a sudden?” Sherlyn studied her son carefully, noting his uneasiness. “Are you afraid Charlotte will get back together with Zachary when he arrives to reunite with the kids?”

Louis' expression grew upset at his mother's sharp question, but he quickly explained, "No. Charlotte isn't that sort of person."

"Nothing is definite when it concerns love." The duchess snorted. "Besides, Zachary has an advantage over you—"

"Mom, stop it!"

Her words intensified the insecurity that had been growing in his heart ever since the news of Zachary's soon arrival reached his ears. After all, his relationship with Charlotte did not progress even after spending over a month together in the manor.

On that day, he tried to sound Charlotte out by mentioning the wedding ceremony, but she promptly changed the topic before leaving to spend time with her kids.

He was worried that the wedding would not be held as scheduled if this were to go on.

Hence, he came up with a plan to spend two days at the beach with Charlotte. Perhaps their relationship would proceed to the next level if they got to spend some quality time together.

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1198

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

"How long have you known Charlotte?" asked Sherlyn.

"About two years," Louis answered despondently. "Mom, can you take care of the kids for two days? I want to bring Charlotte to the beach—"

"Don't you understand?" The older woman furrowed her brows. "You've known her for two years, and you practically clung to her no matter where she goes. Charlotte has spent a lot of time with you in private. If she has feelings for you, you won't be panicking right now."

“Charlotte likes me, but...” Louis tried to explain, but his voice quickly trailed off. Even he could not convince himself.

Perhaps Charlotte had feelings for him, but she saw him strictly as a friend and did not have romantic feelings for him. Otherwise, she would not have kept a distance from him.

“Well...” Louis exhaled a deep breath and lowered his head in dejection. “I don’t know what else to do. I’ve done everything I could. I feel so useless.”

“Silly boy, you’re too honest.” Sherlyn gave him an indulgent look. “Think about it. How did Zachary and Charlotte fall in love?”

Zachary was an unfeeling, willful, and arrogant man. He was also the Lindberg family’s rival, yet Charlotte could not forget him.

“I don’t get it either,” Louis responded, a frown creasing his forehead. “I heard that they ended up together by chance back then. Charlotte got pregnant and gave birth to the children without knowing Zachary’s identity. Then they—”

“That’s right,” Sherlyn cut in when he mentioned a crucial point. “They didn’t even know each other at first but had sex, then she got pregnant and gave birth to the kids. Charlotte believed that she belonged to Zachary. In fact, most women would think the same. Once a man made his mark on her, she’d submit to him completely without even realizing it. You just have to make your mark on her, so she’ll fall head over heels for you, get it?”

“What nonsense are you talking about?” Louis did not share his mother’s sentiment. “After falling in love with each other, we’ll have sex naturally. I can’t possess her just because I want her to fall in love with me. That’s wrong and utterly disrespectful.”

Sherlyn was rendered speechless. “Forget it. You don’t even understand what I’m saying. What a waste of time.”

“Mom, stop spouting nonsense. That’s an immoral act!” he insisted. “Just take care of the children for us. Charlotte loves the sea, so we’ll spend some time there while I try to win her heart. I believe she’ll reciprocate my feelings one day as long I am sincere.”

“Fine. If you can persuade Charlotte to agree to the beach getaway, I shall take care of the kids,” Sherlyn agreed, too unbothered to educate her stubborn son further. “I’ve summoned the magician troupe to perform at the manor for the kids tomorrow, anyway.”

“That’s great!” Elation filled Louis’ entire being. “I’ll talk to Charlotte about the beach getaway now.”

“All right. I need to inform the kids about the good news too. I’m sure they’d be delighted to learn about that.”

Sherlyn placed her cup down and stood up to leave her room.

“Thank you, Mom.” Louis gave her a quick hug before dashing off to seek Charlotte.

Watching her son walking away eagerly, Sherlyn shook her head in a resigned manner.

“Lady Sherlyn, why did you agree to Sir Louis’ request? I thought you had a plan in mind?” one maid asked in a low voice.

“Charlotte won’t agree to go on the trip with him. She’s too focused on that ex-husband of hers to leave the manor.” Sherlyn seemed sure of herself. “Our plan shall proceed as usual.”

“Got it.”

Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort chapter 1199

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

Indeed, when Louis went to Charlotte and told her about the beach getaway, she rejected his offer at once.

Bluntly, she told him that Zachary would be here in two days to pick the kids up, so she would be spending the remaining time with Ellie in the manor.

Though Louis usually would not press the matter if he got rejected, this time, he tried to convince her by saying Ellie could come with them and that he had a surprise all planned out.

Alas, no matter what he said, Charlotte insisted on remaining in the manor.

Dejected, he could only leave reluctantly.

The children's joyous cries sounded from downstairs when he stepped out of the room.

"I can't wait to see the magic show!"

"Is the magician any good?"

"Can he teach me some magic?"

The three children gathered around Sherlyn and chattered about the magician troupe that was to arrive tomorrow excitedly.

"Of course, the magicians are good. You'll love them, I promise. They can teach you magic. If you wish, I can ask them to teach you." Sherlyn was good at coaxing the children.

"Yay, that sounds amazing!"

Louis felt a stab of jealousy in his heart when he saw how overjoyed the kids were. He was about to return to his room when Robbie and Ellie came upstairs to look for Charlotte.

Ellie had a few dresses in her arm. Hopping happily along the hallway, she asked, "Robbie, which dress is the prettiest? When Daddy and Jamie are here, I want to dress up for them!"

"They are all pretty," Robbie replied. He seemed to be in a good mood on that day. "All three are of different styles, so you can pick whichever you like most."

"Hmph, you know nothing. I shall ask Mommy."

Ellie gathered her dresses and scampered off to Charlotte. When she ran past Louis, she greeted him politely, "Hello, Sir Louis!"

"Hello, Ellie." Louis flashed her a smile before turning to Robbie. "Hi, Robbie!"

Robbie gave him a friendly nod and followed Ellie into Charlotte's room.

"Mommy, pick the prettiest dress for me! I shall wear the prettiest dress when Jamie and Daddy arrive!"

"They are all pretty," Charlotte responded with a hearty laugh.

"See, I was right," Robbie chimed in.

As the mother and children trio chattered merrily in the background, conflicted feelings washed over Louis.

The insecurity he felt in the face of Zachary's arrival was insurmountable. Strangely, he had a hunch that his relationship with Charlotte would end once Zachary arrived.

It also meant that their wedding scheduled to be held nine days later might be called off.

At that thought, he plodded back to his room unhappily and drowned his sorrows.

"Louis." Right then, Diana knocked on his door and entered with a tonic in her hand. "You've just recovered from a cold and require a proper recuperation. Aunt Sherlyn told me to give you this—"

"Thank you," Louis cut her sentence short. He was propping his forehead in his palm, slightly drunk from the alcohol he had consumed earlier.

"What's wrong, Louis?" she asked, her voice full of concern. "Why are you drinking? Are you in a foul mood?"

"I'm fine. You can leave now." He brushed her off and returned to his drink.

“Stop drinking!” Diana reached out to take the glass from him, but he refused to loosen his grip.

Losing her balance, she fell onto his lap.

Louis shoved her away hastily and demanded sternly, “Diana, I’m about to get married soon. Don’t do this, please.”

“Get married? Doesn’t sound like that would be happening,” she mumbled to herself.

“What did you just say?” he hissed in displeasure.

“I went past Ms. Lindberg’s room earlier, and I overheard her speaking on the phone with someone. She talked to the person so affectionately, and I even heard her say ‘Hubby.’ I think she hasn’t forgotten about her ex-husband. They will definitely get back together once he comes here,” Diana said, embellishing the truth.

“That’s not possible!” Louis panicked.

Though the rational side of his mind was telling him that Charlotte was not someone like that, he could not help feeling restless at the thought of Zachary and Charlotte’s past relationship.

“It’s true. I heard it with my own ears!” Diana pressed. “Ms. Lindberg even told the kids that she won’t marry you, for she sees you as a good friend. She even said their family will reunite once their daddy arrives.”