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Katherine's breath hitched, and her expression turned gloomy. Six months. An incurable disease. Was there really nothing that could be done?

Robin, however, remained unfazed. Panic was useless. Despair solved nothing. What mattered now was finding a cure.

Yet deep down, another thought gnawed at him.

Why?

Why would his father, a man who had always been in peak health, suddenly contract such an obscure and lethal disease? Thorneau Syndrome was so rare that only a handful of recorded cases existed in the past century, and none had appeared without a known cause.

This wasn't a natural affliction.

Was this a mere coincidence... or was there something more sinister at play?

Robin's eyes darkened. If this was deliberate—if someone had done this to his father—they would pay. But for now, all he could do was wait. His father held the answers, but those answers would only come when he woke up.

He closed his eyes for a moment, running through every possible treatment in his mind. No ordinary medicine could help. He needed something far rarer—some herbs so precious they were nearly impossible to obtain.

Then, suddenly—a memory flashed in his mind.

Last night.

One of Sheila's guards had mentioned something. The Serpent's Whisper Root.

Robin's eyes snapped open.

Of all the things he needed—one was already in Sheila's possession.

A slow exhale. Was this mere coincidence? Or fate?

Either way, he wasn't about to let the opportunity slip through his fingers.

His gaze shifted to Katherine, still tense, worry clouding her face. He spoke, his voice steady. "To treat him, I'll need some rare herbs. And there's one we can get now... I know where it is."

He needed that herb.

His father's life depended on it.

If Sheila wanted money, he would pay whatever price she asked.

If she refused... he would find another way.

"Really?" Katherine's eyes brightened slightly. In her anxiety, she didn't even think to ask how he knew. What mattered was that one of the herbs had been found. "Can I follow you, sir?"

"Nope." Robin shook his head. He'd rather not draw attention to himself and have Sheila and the rest of the Dunns guessing his identity by being

seen with her. "You should stay here with my father. He needs someone by his side." Without waiting for her response, he turned and walked away.

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The Dunns family luxurious villa sat peacefully on the banks of Silvercrest Lake, concealed behind towering cypress trees on the county's eastern edge. Inside, the estate was bustling with activity. Guests flowed in and out freely, with the security at the gate barely paying them any attention.

A short distance from the villa, a cab pulled over, and Robin stepped out. His brows furrowed at the sight. Was there some kind of event happening here today?

Approaching the gates, he moved with a calm, steady pace. Since the guards weren't stopping the other guests, he saw no reason to announce himself. With a polite nod, he proceeded forward.

Just as he was about to pass through, a cold, hostile voice cut through the air.

"Stop right there!"

As the voice rang out, three burly men immediately moved in, surrounding Robin—one on his right, one on his left, and the last blocking his path.

Robin halted, a frown creasing his brows. He obviously recognized these men—they were the Dunns' security guards, the same ones who hadn't bothered to pay any attention to any of the guests earlier. So why were they stopping him now?

The guards regarded Robin with open disdain, their eyes filled with contempt. From his cheap clothes, it was clear he was a nobody. This was the Dunns' villa. What business did a loser like him have here?

"Boy, are you lost?" one of them sneered, his tone dripping with condescension.

Robin cast him a calm glance. "Is this not the Dunns family villa?" he asked coolly.

The guard scoffed. "So you do know where you are, yet you still had the audacity to attempt to walk in? What gave a loser like you the guts? What business does a beggar like you have here? Do you think just any Tom, Dick, or Harry can waltz in?"

"Hahaha." At his words, the other two guards burst into laughter, their mockery ringing through the air.

Robin's frown deepened. Why did people always judge others by their clothing? Had they never heard the saying, don't judge a book by its cover? Or did they just choose to ignore it? And why was it always the ones with a fake sense of superiority who looked down on others? They were just security guards—what gave them the right to act so high and mighty?

Shaking his head, he asked, "Why didn't you stop the others? Why only me?"

One of the guards let out a cold laugh. "Isn't it obvious? Because you're the only loser! The other guests are all people of high status, personally invited by Miss Dunn. Of course, we wouldn't dare stop them.

"But you? You're nothing. And clearly, no one invited you. Naturally,

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we'd stop you. Got a problem with that? Get lost! The Dunn family villa isn't a place for beggars!"

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