

Perfect Match: Irresistible Desire For You – Chapter 215

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“I knew we would succeed,” Joseph declared coolly, taking Ashley’s cold hands into his.

She raised her head to say something. Before she could utter a word, the crowd burst into applause. They all stood staring at each other.

It was the host’s voice that brought them out of their reverie. “Congratulations! The couple standing in the middle of the Magpie Bridge is not only the first one to succeed today’s challenge, but has broken all the previous records by meeting each other in such a short time. Let’s hear it for them again!”

There was another ripple of applause. The atmosphere was quite lively. Joseph and Ashley, who had become the center of attention, clenched their hands and gazed at each other, a bright smile playing on their lips.

Then the speaker raised his voice again and said, “Now, on behalf of the Lover’s Lake, I’d like to present this outstanding couple with a small gift. I wish they remain happy forever. I wish the same for all the other contestants!”

In the end, under the burning gaze of the crowd, Joseph, who was quite happy, picked up his lovely girlfriend and retraced his steps.

His bold and affectionate gesture made the audience even more excited.

When he placed her back on ground, a shy smile crept on her face.

The staff came bearing a beautifully packaged gift box. After expressing her thanks, Ashley excitedly held Joseph’s hand and took him to a place that was away from all the hustle and bustle. In a few minutes, they were sitting on a smooth stone bench.

“Do you want to see what gift it is?”

Ashley asked. However, it was a rhetorical question. She had already begun unpacking the gift package. Joseph, who was sitting next to her, watched her with rapt attention.

“Wow, it’s a set of photos!” Ashley spread a few photos on her lap and exclaimed happily.

“Look at this one! An extremely awkward one. You are smiling a bit. But it’s a very composed smile.” She leaned towards him, showing him the photo. “And look at me.... there is something about me that screams dorky.”

When the two of them met in the middle of the bridge, Ashley was unaware of the progress she had made. And then, when she looked up and caught sight of her boyfriend in front of her, she was stunned. That was when this shot was taken.

“You are always like that,” Joseph replied after he looked at the photo.

When they were crossing the bridge, Joseph was busy tracking his progress but had always checked how Ashley was doing. Ashley, on the other hand, was walking with her head down. She didn’t even notice that she had walked to the center of the Magpie Bridge. At that moment, she looked really dorky.

“Humph!” Ashley, who was in a good humor, snorted at his remark. She ignored him and continued to assess the photos in her hand.

These photos, which were given to them as a gift, recorded the whole process of the two people from the meeting to their departure. The extremely accurate shooting angle managed to record the close-up of their facial expressions. There was happiness even underneath their nervousness. The camera captured everything.

Ashley gave a satisfied smile as her eyes ran over all the pictures.

“I want to see them too,”

Joseph complained in a domineering voice, seeing that she was enjoying them alone.

Before Ashley could react, he rested his chin on her shoulder and looked at the photos.

“What do you think of them?” she asked, pretty pleased with the photos.

“Not bad,” he said and turned his head to her ear. “These pictures are not as beautiful as yours,” he whispered.

“Mind your words.” Heat rushed through her body. She slightly tilted her head and tried to stop him from continuing.

He was undeterred. “I’m speaking nothing but the truth. The pictures you took are so much better than these.” Joseph leaned even more closer and began to shower her with compliments for her photography.

In Joseph’s opinion, these photos were good to have perfectly captured their expressions. However, they lacked the pleasantness of the selfies they clicked.

“You are one smooth-talker!” Ashley said with a stern face and pinched his handsome face. “Get up! Your chin hurts me,” she grumbled.

Joseph obediently returned to his normal posture. He leaned back against the seat and put one hand on Ashley’s shoulder. He said slowly, “Honey, I have to say that I don’t agree with what you said just now.”

“What’s wrong? I have only said the truth.” Ashley thought for a while but still couldn’t understand where the mistake was. ‘Isn’t calling him a smooth-talker a nice thing?’

“No, I’m not a smooth-talker. Your perfection and charm brings out that side of me.”

He explained his meaning shortly but clearly.

However, Ashley was in no mood to flirt. She decided to put a full stop to his philandering.

“Is what I am saying sensible?” Ashley shook her head at his explanation. Joseph, on the other hand, had moved closer, hoping she would praise him for his words.

‘His distorted explanation hardly makes sense,’ she thought, but didn’t say anything.

At this moment, Joseph’s phone rang.

“Your phone,” Ashley reminded, seeing he looked unbothered.

“No hurry.” He was calm as a millpond. He hadn’t yet started his romance with his girlfriend.

“What if it is my father calling you?” Ashley said leisurely, glancing at the sky and then at the relaxed man.

Once he listened to her words, he began to grow alarmed. He took out his phone from his pocket which was still ringing. When he saw the name of the caller, he sat in an upright position.

“Uncle,” Joseph said politely as soon as the phone was connected.

“Brat, time’s up! You better bring my daughter home.”

Ashley leaned over, trying to hear who it was from. Soon, she heard her father’s voice.

Jack was quite punctual with his phone calls. It always rang on the dot. And he never called Ashley. It was always Joseph. One could tell this was yet another form of assessment.

As usual, Jack hung up the phone as soon as he passed the message.

“Sometimes I wonder if your father sets an alarm clock. How does he remember to call me the same time every day? Perhaps, he is simply playing his recorded voice. Believe me or not, his voice and intonation are also always the same.” Shoving the phone back in his pocket, Joseph looked at the sky and let out a frustrated sigh. “Let’s go. I have to take you home.”

“Perhaps he does that. But this is the only time when I finally feel relieved,” Ashley said as they walked side by side.

The young couple had suffered a lot because of Jack. They were finally being given the freedom to date.

“How about we take a bus back? We still have a few coins left.” Ashley’s eyes fell on the bus station not far from the lake. She thought it would be a good idea to use the bus with him.

Earlier, they had taken a taxi and then they had walked all the way. They had decided to give up their luxury car for a day.

“Maybe next time. Today, I have to get you back home early,” Joseph said softly, raising his hand to caress Ashley’s hair.

“No, let’s go today. It’s still pretty early. I don’t think we will be late if we go by bus. Moreover, you can have dinner at my home,” Ashley protested in a shrill voice. “Besides, we agreed to keep our date simple. Let me show you the bus,” she insisted.

It was only five o’clock in the afternoon, but since it was winter, dusk fell pretty early. The lights near the lake were already turned on. It would only take them an hour and a half to reach home if they went by bus.

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According to Jack’s rules, Ashley should be back by six o’clock in the afternoon. But Ashley saw no harm in spending an extra half an hour with her boyfriend.

However, Joseph seemed hesitant to accept her suggestion. He had nothing against taking a bus which was a civilian vehicle. His concern arose from the fact that it could delay them. If he reached late, perhaps her father would deduct his points. And that would mean he couldn’t marry Ashley soon.

“Let’s go, Joseph. There is nothing to worry about. I’ll talk to my father.” Ashley walked to the front, held Joseph’s big hand and pulled him up the stairs with brute force. At the same time, she grinned coquettishly.

Joseph had no choice but to get on the bus with her.

“Hold the album and pass me the coins,” she said to her boyfriend as she looked at the bus schedule.

Then she took her phone out of her pocket and dialed her home number. “Mom, I’ll be half an hour late. Please tell Dad about it. Also, Joseph will be having dinner with us.”

“What did Aunt say?” Joseph asked as soon as they hung up the call. He handed the remaining coins to her and waited anxiously for her response.

“My mother said she would be delighted to have you for dinner. Besides, she told us there is no hurry. We can take our time. I had no idea why you have become more compliant than me.” Ashley stared gloomily at her boyfriend. Then she lowered her head and checked the bus route with her phone.

“It’s not like I have a choice. After I learned what kind of a person your father is, I decided to become more careful. I cannot underestimate him.” Looking at the empty road, Joseph uttered those words in a relaxed tone.

His marriage with Ashley was under Jack’s control. He loved his daughter very much. If Joseph made a wrong move, he might have to pay a huge price for it.

Hearing the cause of Joseph’s distress, Ashley burst into laughter. Then she said seriously, “Let’s go back by the direct line eight.”

As soon as Ashley finished her words, she saw the bus heading to the downtown approach them slowly. She pulled Joseph into the bus and put the coins into the box. The bus was crammed with so many passengers. The two of them had to stand in the middle of the rickety bus.

More and more passengers entered, jamming it up. It was now loaded with people. Ashley stood wrapping her arms around her boyfriend. Suddenly, she felt someone touch her buttocks. Before she could see who it was, she heard a harsh cry come from behind, accompanied by the sound of broken joints.

She saw a middle-aged man with a broken wrist. He was an obscene looking man. However, he was howling with pain. He had been brutally beaten by Joseph who was blazing with rage.

Ashley was still in shock, watching her tall and strong boyfriend punish the creepy pervert. Her boyfriend turned to her and said coldly, “Let’s get the hell out of this bus.” Then he hugged her and bolted out of the bus by the back door.

They had spent about a few minutes in the bus. However, in this short duration, they had managed to grab almost everyone’s attention. Now they were standing in the same bus station. Joseph was eyeing Ashley. She, however, lowered her eyes, not knowing what to say.

She could tell he was extremely angry. She raised her eyes slightly, shook his sleeves and said in a fawning manner, “Joseph, what you just did was pretty cool! I only wish you had dragged him out and given me an opportunity to beat him up!”

Ashley was obviously mad at the man who had thought he could take advantage of her. She went bright pink with embarrassment and humiliation. However, Joseph, who was standing steadily in front of her, wasn't falling for her words or her adorable face. His face was bereft of any expression.

It had been a while since she saw him look this angry. "I had no idea such a thing would happen. But we won't take the bus again. I'll listen to you from now on. Please don't be mad at me, okay?" she said in a timid voice.

He didn't reply and that reduced her to silence as well. After a while, he raised his hand and stopped a taxi. Indifferently, he ordered, "Get in the car."

Ashley wanted to say something. However, she didn't want to try too hard to please her boyfriend in a stranger's presence. Instead, she moved closer to him and covered the back of his hand with her cold hand. Her sad little face showed submissiveness.

Joseph, who was sitting quietly, didn't respond to her touch. Nor did he make any attempts to push her away. Instead, he pressed his thin lips and looked straight ahead. In short, he didn't even acknowledge her presence.

'How dare he touch my woman? I have only broken one of his hands. I should have done more!' he thought to himself. He kept recalling what happened in the bus. The more he dwelled on it, the angrier he became. He felt like a loser for not having saved his girlfriend from an unwanted touch. He thought back to the time when Ashley was kidnapped by Zack. He was slowly learning to leave those days behind. However, after this incident, those bad memories came rushing back.

As he thought about this, he ignored Ashley. There was a trace of cruelty hidden in his long and narrow eyes. His terrifying coldness was palpable.

The driver in the front seat had a hunch that the man in the back seat was pretty intimidating. From the corner of his eyes, he noticed the forlorn expression on his girlfriend's face. She was a cute and lovely woman. He felt sorry for her, even though she seemed unafraid of her boyfriend.

Being constantly ignored by her boyfriend, Ashley now wore a worried frown. She began to wonder what was causing him such distress. She had praised him for punishing that creepy man. However, Joseph didn't seem to appreciate her compliment. She had even apologized to him for insisting on

taking the bus. Nothing moved him! She couldn't figure out why he remained cold.

Ashley was at a loss for words.

She wished she could know what was going on in his mind. In the end, the two of them maintained silence until they reached her house.

"Are you still angry?" she asked, standing outside the gate of the Guzman family's house. Her gaze rested on his face. It was obvious that she was worried.

Looking at her anxious eyes, Joseph habitually stroked her forehead.

As soon as he touched her, Ashley realized that the previous grudges had been reconciled. She put her small hand into Joseph's big palm, took a deep breath and smiled sweetly. "Phew! You are no longer angry. You have no idea how worried I had been."

"I wasn't angry with you to begin with. I'm angry with myself, Ashley," Joseph said softly, staring at her with his loving eyes.

"I don't understand. Why are you mad at yourself?" Ashley raised her eyebrows. She couldn't make sense of his words.

After staring at her pretty face for a while, he explained, "I'm angry with myself because I failed to protect you." Then he fell into silence. 'I was afraid that you would be hurt again...' he thought to himself.

Once he explained, Ashley understood these were the thoughts that were haunting him. Feeling sorry for him, she took a step forward and gently embraced him. In a soft voice, she said, "What's there to be angry about? None of us could have expected this. Besides, it was something I could have handled by myself. I know you are capable of protecting me. Please don't doubt yourself. You should have confidence in yourself. Think about the confidence with which you encouraged me to walk across the Magpie Bridge. You need to conjure up that same faith in this matter. We will definitely be together for the rest of our lives, do you understand me?"

"Yes! Got it," he replied in a soft voice, hugging her gently.

Listening to his firm answer, Ashley was happy. She raised her head and flashed him her best smile. “Don’t do it again!”

In order to completely get rid of the depressing atmosphere caused by the bus incident, Ashley raised her right index finger and touched his charming chin. “Give me a smile now!” she demanded joyfully.

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“Wow! I never knew my sister could be so bossy. You demanded and Mr. Marshall flushed. Look at him! He is blushing.”

Joseph, who was teased by his girlfriend, was about to respond. Before he could do that, Mike’s voice came from behind.

As soon as he finished speaking, Ashley withdrew her hand from Joseph and glanced at her boyfriend awkwardly. She composed herself and told her brother, “Mike, why are you here?”

“I’m here to greet you both.” Mike put on a serious look.

He had been away a lot lately. But today, he learned from his mother that Joseph would be there for dinner.

However, he wasn’t really here to greet them. This was a lie he had fabricated.

Lately, his parents had a lot of spare time. And they often interrogated, asking where he had been and what he had been doing. He couldn’t take those questions anymore. He came out to get some fresh air in the pretext of greeting his sister and Joseph.

“Joseph, let’s go inside,”

Ashley said, turning around and looking up at Joseph. She had no desire to converse with Mike.

The two of them entered the gate, holding each other’s hand. “Mr. Marshall, don’t give me such a disapproving look. I want to see your smile too,” Mike said.

“Mike, you must be bored out of your mind to be trying to forcibly start a conversation with us!” Ashley grumbled at her brother. Mike was trying to get to their nerves.

“There’s nothing unusual about his behavior though. He has always been out of his mind. Soon, we’ll get used to it.” Ignoring Mike’s burning eyes, Joseph turned to his girlfriend and decided to tease.

“Um... Truth be told, I’m used to it by now.” Ashley nodded in agreement.

Mike watched their receding figure, resentment building inside of him.

He realized this was how things would be. His sister would always agree with Joseph on everything!

Once upon a time, Ashley had her own opinion. She rarely agreed to what other people said. Back then he had also thought his cold sister would never fall for anyone. Mike let out a sigh and thought, ‘Love makes blind people!’

The two of them managed to reach before the clock struck six o’clock. Jack glanced at them once and then continued to watch the TV. All he showed was indifference. After all, they hadn’t been late.

The rest of the Guzman family had already had dinner, so Simone set the meal on the table for the couple.

After a while, Mike also entered the living room. He and his parents kept taking a peek at the couple. Joseph and Ashley noticed them looking. They had dinner in silence. It was the only way to prevent Mike and Jack from giving them a hard time.

Finally, after the dinner, Joseph had a brief chat with the other members of the Guzman family. Jack kept an eye on him even as he conversed with them. In the end, it was time for Joseph to leave.

Ashley watched Joseph get into the luxury car which had been parked outside the Guzman family’s house this morning. Once he was out of her sight, Ashley turned to her brother and asked, “Mike, what have you been up to these days?”

Once again, she was asking the same question. Mike patted his sister's thin shoulder and replied lightly, "I've been pursuing your sister-in-law, but I would like it if you kept this a secret. I don't want our parents bugging me."

"What's with the secrecy? Why can't our parents know that you are pursuing her?" Ashley was bewildered by her brother's illogical words.

"Because your future sister-in-law is a bossy woman. I haven't gotten her yet. It's not the right time to break this news to them. I can't tell Mom and Dad about it now."

"Oh..." Ashley nodded but she was still confused. After a while, she said, "Mike, I have faith in you. I know you will succeed in bringing her home. If you really love her, please don't give up easily. Imagine if she loves you back. She might be deeply hurt."

Ashley stood outside her house. She was gazing at the big trees that kept swaying due to the wind in the courtyard. She thought about the bus incident. She remembered how deeply disturbed Joseph had been. His anguish had been too deep. She realized this same anguish had compelled him to break up before. The pain from the past came rushing back.

For some reason, Ashley cared about the relationship between Mike and her future sister-in-law. She hoped her brother wouldn't make the same mistake.

Hearing what Ashley said, Mike nodded his head in understanding. "Don't worry about me. I get what you are trying to say. I wish you and Joseph a happily ever after."

"I thought you were against the idea of me and Joseph." Ashley raised her eyebrows and looked at her brother.

In the past, Mike had insisted that she stayed away from Joseph. The two men had never gotten along well. Ashley was under the impression Mike didn't want them to marry.

"Looks like you are pretty dumb," Mike said and shook his head. After a short pause, he went on, "Ashley, I know almost everything about you and Joseph. In the beginning, I wanted him to leave you. I had thought his darkness would destroy and contaminate your purity. Hell, I thought your life would be in risk! However, as time went by, he has proved his love by taking good care of you."

Your love has moved me. You are right. Love is the foundation of happiness. Nothing else matters. And I have faith in you two.”

Mike finally admitted he had been too quick to judge Joseph. In the past, he was blinded by his love for his sister. He constantly worried her life would be in danger. But later, he realized Joseph was the man who kept her happy. She would happily tolerate physical pain. But being separated from him would be intolerable.

Joseph was a cold and arrogant man. Yet he had left no stone unturned when it came to treating Ashley with care and gentleness. This was not only an expression of love, but also a representation of his dedication.

Mike finally accepted his sister was deeply in love. He had long given up his original plans. He no longer wished to separate them. His new goal was to watch the two of them lead a happy life.

“Then why do you try to get into his nerves when he is around?” Even though her brother seemed to be speaking the truth, she couldn’t help but put forward her suspicions.

Mike smiled lightly and said, “Don’t you think it’s fun to anger him? He acts very indifferent. I like to ruffle him a little bit.”

Mike was being annoying, simply to vex Joseph. Ashley felt sorry for her boyfriend. Once she married him, he would have to tolerate such a brother-in-law.

“Mike, I haven’t seen Zaiden for quite a long time. Do you have any idea what he is up to lately?” Ashley asked, suddenly remembering about Zaiden.

“He went back to the United States two days ago to celebrate the New Year with his parents,” Mike answered right away. He shook his head and said, “I am sorry, but he had asked me to tell you about it. However, it slipped my mind.”

Ashley lowered her eyes. She didn’t want her brother to know how she was feeling right now. Noticing this, he said, “I am aware Zaiden has always liked you. He was waiting for you to grow up. However, now he realized it has been too late.”

Maybe they weren't destined to be with each other. This could be the only explanation for why Zaiden didn't get her.

Mike let out a sigh. "I'm really sorry for Zaiden, but I don't regret my choice," Ashley explained quickly. She took a deep breath and went on, "Love is selfish and so are lovers. I only love Joseph. However, I sincerely hope that Zaiden can find his own happiness."

"Sooner or later, he will be happy," Mike assured her.

Zaiden was an excellent man, possessing both money and looks. It wouldn't be hard for him to find someone who loved him back once he let go of his love for Ashley.

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The restricted yet sweet days of their dates passed in the twinkling of an eye. Soon, it was New Year's Eve in Ob.raria.

It was a happy occasion for most people. Thousands of family members gathered for a reunion. However, the noble Marshall family was all alone on this festive day.

The servants were away for vacation. Even their butler, John, went home to celebrate the day with his family. Therefore, on this lively holiday, the Marshall family's house stood desolate. The massive and luxurious mansion had only two people, Leonard and Joseph.

Ashley was ordered to stay at home today, so Joseph wasn't in a celebratory mood. He too chose to remain in his house.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, the sun was setting and the western sky was becoming dim. It was spreading its soft covers, rendering warmth to this auspicious day.

Inside the Marshall family's house, everything was solemn. It was eerily quiet and stood in total contrast to the life outside where everyone was celebrating. Joseph was sitting with his laptop. The only noise one could hear was of him typing.

“Joseph, I’m hungry!” Leonard grumbled. He was in low spirits. He looked at Joseph who seemed very immersed in his work.

Listening to his grandpa’s childlike outcry, Joseph looked up from his laptop. “Grandpa, what would you like? Do you want to eat outside or should I order something?”

“Why don’t you cook for me?” Leonard asked, sounding rather whiny. When they were alone, he often got grumpy. He enjoyed giving his grandson a hard time.

Joseph had made western-style breakfast for his grandfather this morning. And later, they ordered lunch from a restaurant. They hadn’t decided what they would have for dinner.

The reunion dinner on New Year’s Eve was important. It seemed meaningless to go out to eat. And the thought of ordering and eating at home wasn’t very appealing. Both the men hadn’t planned to cook at home either.

“Grandpa, I don’t want to cook during the New Year,” Joseph said indifferently, his attention once again diverted to the laptop.

“Then do you want me to cook? Besides, the suggestions you have given are ridiculous! There is no way we are spending our holiday like this!” Leonard remarked bluntly.

The old man was bored out of his mind and his grandson was of no help. He attached great importance to the festive atmosphere. Although they hadn’t cared much about the New Year’s Eve in the past, he was dead set on making this one better.

Joseph, who was being tortured by his grandfather for no obvious reason, glanced at his grandfather who was watching the TV. With a sigh, he said, “Grandpa, if you really wish to eat something cooked by me then it’s okay. I’ll prepare something for you right away.”

Leonard watched as Joseph closed his thin laptop. He stood up and walked towards the kitchen. However, Leonard stopped him. “Wait, who told you that I want to eat something cooked by you?” he demanded.

Once again, Joseph's suggestion was rejected. His grandfather's demands were getting more and more unreasonable. Joseph came back and sat down on the sofa, waiting to hear what his grandfather actually wanted.

Leonard said impatiently, "Hey, why did you sit down again?"

"Grandpa, since you don't like my suggestions, I think it's best if you come up with your own plan." Leonard was driving him crazy. He didn't know what to do.

"Why are you so stupid?" he asked and turned off the TV. It was playing the New Year's program. He rumbled discontentedly, "We have a family now. I don't think there is any reason for me to be stuck here with you."

Hearing that, Joseph showed no emotions. He said indifferently, "Then who do you want to spend the holiday with?"

Obviously, Joseph didn't understand what his grandfather was driving at. This made Leonard further annoyed. He shook his head and sighed. "Family! Your future wife is our family! We shouldn't sulk around here. Your Grandpa will take you to visit your future in-laws!" Leonard exclaimed.

"Grandpa, do you really think it's a good idea to eat at their house?" Joseph asked, an air of uncertainty around him. Leonard, however, stood up, ready to go.

Old people were fond of lively festivals. However, Joseph couldn't help but think that going to somebody else's house for food would be taking it a little too far.

"You talk like we are going for free dinner! Don't forget it's a family reunion!" It seemed like Leonard forgot that his grandson wasn't yet married to Ashley.

Noticing the hesitancy in Joseph's face, Leonard became enraged. Angrily, he spat out, "Joseph, don't talk such nonsense! Get up quickly and change into something decent. I'm starving to death."

"What's wrong with my current outfit?" Joseph, who had finally decided to oblige to his grandfather's plea to visit the Guzman family's house, was annoyed when another objection was raised.

“Your clothes are always either black or grey. It’s the New Year! You should wear something fancy!” Leonard gave a snort of contempt.

“Grandpa, you usually wear black and grey too, don’t you?”

Joseph retorted back, feeling rather angry.

“Enough, Joseph!” Upon hearing Joseph’s sarcastic remark, he was on the verge of losing his temper. “If we keep dawdling, we will be too late. By the time we arrive, they might have finished their dinner! That would be embarrassing. Now listen to me carefully. Go and get changed in three minute.”

“Okay.” Joseph stood up and went upstairs to change his clothes.

Three minutes later, Joseph came down wearing a long dark blue overcoat. He looked quite handsome and his personality was shining. There was a noble aura about him. He took the car key and waited for his grandfather.

A minute later, Leonard appeared wearing the brightest shade of red. He was wearing a military red leather jacket, oozing with energy and happiness.

“Why didn’t you wear red?” he asked, looking up and down at Joseph. He disapproved of him wearing such an ordinary color.

Most people associated the color red with festivity. Hence it seemed like the best way to make the New Year seem livelier.

“Why do I have to wear red? Moreover, I don’t think I have anything in that color,” Joseph said and stared at his grandfather confusedly. He couldn’t understand why the color of his outfit mattered.

“B-b-because you have to wear the same color as me,” Leonard stammered. Now that he thought of it, he realized he was simply making a fuss. There was no obligation for Joseph to wear red.

‘My grandfather is getting more and more difficult,’ Joseph thought and shook his head. “Grandpa, let’s stop talking nonsense and hurry up.”

After saying that, they walked out of the quiet mansion together and got into the car.

“Don’t call Ashley! Let’s give her and her family a pleasant surprise,” Leonard said, noticing Joseph had fetched his phone from his pocket.

‘Surprise? I am afraid our sudden arrival will scare them instead,’ Joseph thought to himself but put his phone down. He took one quick glance at his grandfather. Leonard seemed completely at ease. He decided to drive the car in silence.

“By the way, it’s the first time I am going to see your in-laws. To be honest, I’m a little nervous.” This was Leonard’s attempt to break the silence.

He had met his son’s in-laws at a dinner party. But today, he had taken the initiative to visit his grandson’s in-laws. Leonard couldn’t help but think back to the old days.

“Don’t worry. It will be all good. We are almost there,” Joseph assured him.

“No, I’m not nervous!” Leonard said dismissively as he adjusted his sitting position. He was acting fidgety.

Sure enough, it was indeed inconvenient to show up at the Guzman Family’s house out of the blue.

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In the Guzman family’s villa, on the New Year’s Eve, only the masters were there. However, they seemed pretty content and carried on doing their thing. Jack and Simone were watching a movie leisurely in the home cinema on the first floor. Mike and Ashley, on the other hand, were preparing dinner, going back and forth between the kitchen and the dining table.

“Ashley, your phone is ringing.” Mike observed as he put a dish on the table. He had heard Ashley’s ringtone coming from the living room.

Ashley, who was in the kitchen, quickly wiped her hands and walked out.

When she saw it was her boyfriend’s call, she switched on the attend button briskly. “Joseph, have you eaten yet?” she asked.

“Have you eaten yet?” he asked back in a flat tone.

“No, we are just about to eat,” she replied.

“I happen to be at your door. Please open the door for me.”

Her jaw dropped in astonishment. Once she was over the initial shock, she hastily took off her apron. She turned to Mike and said, “Mike, Joseph is here. I’ll open the door for him. I want you to call Dad and Mom out for dinner.”

“Why has he decided to pay us a visit during the New Year? I don’t want to see him today... You two will make me sick.”

Seeing his sister walk towards the door, Mike conveyed his disapproval. Ashley continued to walk, her brother’s voice slowly dying away.

Unfortunately, Jack had caught some of Mike’s words. He raised his voice and demanded, “Is Joseph coming again?”

Before Mike could answer him, his father added gloomily, “Don’t they see each other a lot already? Why aren’t they tired yet?”

Obviously, Jack was displeased to see Joseph around all the time. But there was nothing he could do about it.

“Are you tired of staying with me all day long?”

Simone asked, folding her arms and staring at her husband.

“Of course not. How could I ever get tired of you?” Jack said, shocked to hear her ask such a silly question.

“They love each other, so it is only normal for them to want to be with each other all the time. When you are in love, you never get tired of each other,” Simone said indifferently and walked out of the door.

Obviously, Simone was taking her future son-in-law’s side.

Jack was disheartened at being admonished by his beloved wife. He glanced at his son and noticed a gloating expression on his face. Without saying anything, he followed Simone closely.

At this moment, a man clad in bright red appeared from their brightly-lit courtyard. Ashley and Joseph came behind this man.

“Mr. Marshall, nice to meet you!” At once, recognition dawned on Jack’s face and he hurried to welcome Leonard.

Many years ago, Jack had a business deal with Leonard who was in charge of the Empire Group at that time. Back then, he knew that the Marshall family had experienced something terrible. In an instant, he had felt respect for this elderly man.

“Uncle, we haven’t seen each other for so many years. I am glad to note you are as young and radiant as ever!” Simone added, showering Leonard with warm smiles. She had been friends with Leonard’s daughter-in-law, Janice. They had met on several occasions and she was delighted to see him again.

Being greeted so warmly, the old man was quite pleased and surprised. He smiled kindly. “It’s very kind of you! My house was so empty. I thought it would be nice to come here with my grandson for a change. We could celebrate the New Year together. I hope I am not bothering you all,”

Leonard said, coming straight to the point. Jack and Simone, who were happy to have them here, shook their heads. In a hospitable way, Jack said, “How could we possibly mind you coming to our house? We are a family. It would be a shame to celebrate it alone. It’s New Year after all! The more, the merrier. We’re so happy you came to our house. Let’s go inside and have dinner.”

Leonard was ushered into the house. Jack, who normally behaved arrogantly with Joseph, treated him with kindness.

Joseph and Ashley, who were following them slowly, were utterly shocked. Ashley was particularly in awe.

“Great! Grandpa is so popular!” she exclaimed.

Joseph, however, had different opinions. He thought his grandfather was a very cunning man. His grandfather was renewing his connection with Ashley’s parents. He was trying to come up with excuses for having come uninvited.

“Yes, that’s what it looks like. And judging from the conversation between the elders, it looks like we are already married.”

The elders of the two families spoke as if they were married. Their conversation flowed quite smoothly.

Leonard and his grandson's arrival had made the reunion dinner of the Guzman family a lot livelier. Leonard was an easy-going man and had a way with words. All the members of the Guzman family respected and enjoyed his company. His mere presence made the atmosphere harmonious.

A lot of delicious dishes were placed on the table. Leonard got the festive and jolly atmosphere he had desired.

The relationship between the two families seemed to have become established on the New Year's Eve. However, the wedding date was still open to question.

After dinner, Joseph and Ashley took their leave and went to the yard. Mike followed them out, leaving the elders of both the families alone.

"Jack, when do you think it would be good for Ashley and Joseph to get married?" After dinner, Leonard sipped his tea leisurely and broached this subject.

Jack, who had expected this, was ready with an answer. "We hope the two kids can spend more time, getting to know each other. After all, they are still young."

Hearing this, Leonard, who had a heroic look on his face, gently put down the little teacup he was holding. "Joseph is thirty years and I watched him grow in the blink of an eye. I don't think he is young. I have done my best raising him up. It wasn't easy to find a girl like Ashley. Now that they have found each other, I really hope they can give me a great-grandson as soon as possible. It will make the Marshall family livelier."

Leonard was getting older and wiser. He knew how to communicate with people he knew in a more straightforward manner. Without any shame, he had expressed his desire to get them married as soon as possible.

Seeing that Jack hadn't uttered a word, Leonard continued to say earnestly and sincerely, "I remember that you were about twenty-five years old when you married Simone. If you think of that, they are pretty old now. I know you are worried that Joseph will not treat Ashley fairly. Perhaps you are also worried they might have emotional problems. But the two kids have already

fallen head over heels in love with each other. I am sure their feelings are genuine. As the elders, it is our duty to help them. Please trust me when I say that Joseph will love Ashley wholeheartedly.”

Leonard had long been looking forward to their marriage. Even though they had been together for two months since they made up, there was no mention of marriage. Leonard was Joseph’s only family. He was starting to get anxious. He came to the Guzman family on New Year’s Eve in the hope of hastening their marriage.

Listening to the old man’s sincere words, Jack said, “Mr. Marshall, I believe that Joseph can make Ashley very happy. As for the marriage, we shouldn’t be discussing it now. Perhaps some other day. What do you think?”

Although time proved that Joseph was a trustworthy person, Jack had only one daughter. He couldn’t take any risks. He had no choice but to politely turn down Leonard’s request.

It was not appropriate for Leonard to keep punishing them, hence he simply nodded his head.

Perfect Match: Irresistible Desire For You – Chapter 220 - Tips

On the New Year’s Eve, two black figures gathered in a dark place, away from all the cheerfulness.

These two people were none other than Charlie and Lina.

“Charlie, why aren’t you eating?” With a black-and-blue face, Lina wolfed down a big meal and gazed up at Charlie. He looked pale and haggard.

The day after Lina had stirred trouble for Ashley, Joseph found out about it. He knew something was wrong.

Ashley’s evasive look, the sharp dagger and the blurry surveillance video made Joseph learn the truth about that night. He immediately sent someone to catch the audacious woman, Lina. Soon, she was locked up along with her vile fiancé, Charlie. Joseph planned to settle accounts with them when he was free.

When Lina opened her eyes and caught sight of Charlie, she understood where she was. What was supposed to come had eventually come.

At first, she closed her eyes grievously. However, when she next opened them, there was a calm and indifferent look.

That night, Lina was beaten up brutally. Once Ashley left, Lina also left dejectedly, dwelling over the words Ashley had said in the end. She felt pain all over her body, yet there was a momentary enlightenment in her heart.

Indeed, she was the cause of her own downfall. If she hadn't lived her life comparing herself to others, perhaps she would have lived a good life with a decent salary to support her. She could have found someone who loved her and wished to be with her. She could have relished those simple pleasures. However, since she was crazed with jealousy, her life had been destroyed.

Life wouldn't give a second chance. Now the situation was hopeless, and Lina, who had once been arrogant, found herself in a desperate position.

Two days later, she had come to terms with her destiny. She regarded this hearty meal as the last dinner and wholeheartedly accepted she would be dead before the New Year.

Looking at the destitute woman eating with relish, Charlie, who was disheveled, asked weakly, "Lina, how can you be so calm?" He felt a stirring of anger.

Lina had been quiet for two days. During these two days, the guard hadn't beaten Charlie. They only came to deliver food.

After being tortured for over two months, the once radiant man had become bony, and it was almost impossible to recognize him.

Contrary to Lina, these desperate days hadn't made him resigned to his fate. Instead, Charlie was devoured by even more hatred.

Joseph had kicked him in his private area. Charlie was certain he had lost his ability to procreate.

However, with the arrival of Lina, his only hope was also shattered.

When Lina was brought here, he sneered through his pain and said, "Lina, I knew you would come in sooner or later!"

Having lost everything, Charlie felt deep hatred for her as he always did. She was partly responsible for his condition. If she hadn't seduced him, he wouldn't have broken up with Ashley nor would he have attempted to rape Ashley and suffered from the cruel revenge from Joseph. 'That wretched woman is the cause of everything!' Charlie thought.

Instead of getting angry, Lina just snorted contemptuously at Charlie.

Perhaps their aversion to one another was rooted to the fact they had a similar personality. If it weren't for Charlie, she wouldn't have provoked Joseph's wrath.

Charlie's eyes looked dull and sunken. He squinted and looked at her tummy. "Where is the baby?" he demanded.

In the past, the baby in Lina's belly was just a stepping stone to consolidate his position. Now, Charlie had lost just about everything. He probably couldn't have another child! This was his only hope.

Perhaps it was time for his retribution. Coldly, Lina said, "I had an abortion a long time ago." Her words pushed him to despair.

Charlie couldn't accept this. He was in a daze. He pounced towards her and grabbed her neck. Hysterically, he shouted, "Why? How could you be so cruel?"

Lina felt intense loathing for him. "This child was never supposed to exist!" she spat out angrily.

'What's the point of giving birth if the child will grow without parents' love?' she thought. Lina knew the sort of person Charlie was. He would never make a good father.

A deep sense of despair overwhelmed him. He widened his eyes and pressed her neck like a maniac.

Right at that moment, the guard entered the room. If he hadn't showed up, Charlie would have killed Lina. Lina, on the other hand, made no attempts to struggle or resist.

And now, watching Lina eat her food calmly, Charlie began to lose his temper again.

As he goaded her into answering his question, Lina didn't bother to raise her head or look at him. "Watch your tone, Charlie. If not calm, what do you expect me to be? Do I have to let off steam like you? You'll have an appetite if you treat every meal as if it was your last meal."

"Lina, are you out of your mind? You have given in so easily! I'm ashamed of you!" Charlie shouted angrily.

Lina sat with unruffled calm. She looked up at him and said, "Charlie, why do you have to act high and mighty now? Your present condition is worse than a stray dog! I am delighted to see you like this."

Lina loathed Charlie's condescending attitude. He was miserable yet he had the audacity to put on airs and mock others. He made her sick to her stomach.

With a loud bang, all the dishes on the table fell down. Lina, who was forced to stop eating, stood up and sat back in the corner. She paid no heed to Charlie.

The truth was, she didn't find this place too bad. After all, she was given food and water. In fact, it was so much better than the job she had recently taken up which involved being with several men.

"Lina, you bitch! I'll kill you!" When Charlie saw the disdainful look on Lina's face, he was furious.

"Charlie, if you have guts, just kill me. I would love nothing more than leaving you alone here." Lina was so unafraid of him that she went as far as provoking him.

There was a murderous light in Charlie's eyes. He once again lost control of himself and pounced on Lina.

When she just arrived at the place with no desire to live, she didn't struggle from the man's strangling. After that, she managed to fight back when he tried to attack her again.

In the end, she made him trip and fall flat on his face. She then kicked and punched him violently, trying to teach him a lesson.

Almost every day, this dramatic scene replicated itself. When the gatekeeper understood it wouldn't lead to death, he stopped bothering with it. Once both of them were exhausted, they would give up and mind their own business.

Charlie and Lina, who had been entangled by their evil thoughts, finally fell into the abyss of eternal damnation.

They were paying for their past sins. It was their evil thoughts that brought them to such a terrible end. They wanted extravagance and nurtured unrealistic dreams. These desires were what ultimately destroyed them.