

Chapter 12 Heidi's Disappointment

"A pendant?" Upon hearing Ashton's gift, the woman beside him feigned surprise and said, "Could it be the Radiant Lotus that Heidi likes the most? Are you that mysterious tycoon?"

"You know about that?" Ashton was slightly taken aback, wondering if they had figured out it was him.

Seeing his reaction, everyone burst into laughter. They couldn't help but admire how well he could play along.

Gracie sneered and shook her head. "Mr. Griffin splurged on Heidi with a Starry Night necklace worth hundreds of thousands. Your pendant won't impress her." With a smirk, she added, "But hey, show it to us anyway. None of us have seen a knockoff Radiant Lotus before."

The room erupted in laughter once more.

Heidi sighed, and she was disappointed. "You can return this pendant. I don't need it," she said with a tinge of sadness. "And now that you're back, maybe try finding a job that matches your skills instead of aiming too high."

Ashton stood dumbfounded for a moment, then forced a bitter smile. Who would have thought that childhood sweethearts would drift so far apart within six years? He sighed lightly and said no more, simply turned and walked away.

He still faintly heard Gracie's mocking voice as he reached the door. "Ashton can really put on a show. A Radiant Lotus? Can a poor nobody like him afford such a thing?"

He shook his head. These people would probably never know who stood before them just now. But he didn't feel the need to explain himself to them.

"Ashton, why are you out so soon?" Harold hurried over upon seeing him, curiosity evident in his tone. "How did it go with Markus' daughter? Did you have a good chat?"

Ashton smiled but didn't give a direct answer. Instead, he handed Harold the box containing the Radiant Lotus. "Dad, I need to leave for a while. This is the gift I got for Heidi. Please give it to her."

Since Heidi was so distant from him now, Ashton didn't want to press further and create more awkwardness. With that gesture, he felt he had done enough.

Although Harold didn't know what was happening, he didn't press further. He casually slipped Ashton's gift into his pocket and continued his day.

Before long, preparations on Heidi's side were almost done.

The Griffin family's convoy had assembled downstairs. They were ready to transport Heidi and the others to the Griffin Residence.

Klaus sat at the front of the lead car. He frequently glanced out the window as if searching for someone. After a moment, he asked, "Heidi, where's your brother?"

"My brother?" She hesitated briefly. "You mean Ashton?" She found it peculiar that he was asking about Ashton. But without dwelling on it, she replied, "I'm not sure. He was at our place earlier, so he's probably already gone."

Upon hearing that, Klaus let out a small sigh of relief tinged with disappointment. He was somewhat apprehensive about running into Ashton. Yet, at the same time, he harbored hopes that cultivating a good relationship with Ashton could propel his family to the top echelons of Lindonbury society.

Soon, they arrived at the Griffin Residence. The Griffin family hosted many esteemed guests, with luxury cars lining the entrance. Being quite influential with assets in the hundreds of millions, the Griffins had attracted prominent figures from Lindonbury to attend the engagement banquet.

Klaus' aunt, Amelie Ayers, stood at the door, personally welcoming the guests. "Mr. John Howell!" she exclaimed and rushed to greet a middle-aged man in his fifties. "What brings you here? Please, come in, come in!"

John was a well-known figure in Lindonbury and incredibly influential in certain circles. How did the Griffin family come to know him?

John smiled faintly. "I heard Mr. Griffin is getting engaged today, so I came to offer my congratulations. I hope you don't mind my uninvited presence."

"Why would we mind? Your visit honors us greatly. Please, come inside," Amelie replied. Though puzzled, she quickly ushered John in.

Before she could relax, she saw several other Lindonbury dignitaries stepping out of their cars.

"Mr. Henson."

"Mr. Lambert."

"Old Mr. Brown."

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After ushering them all inside, she wiped her brow. Each of these guests was a major player in Lindonbury. Their influence could shake the entire city with a single move.

The Griffin family hadn't known them before, so why had they all suddenly showed up uninvited? But their mannerisms suggested they weren't here to stir up trouble.

Amelie breathed a sigh of relief and felt a surge of pride. The Griffin family's recent accomplishments seemed notable if even these influential figures were now visiting them.

"Where should we sit?" Harold asked Frieda.

Amelie's eyes narrowed upon seeing Harold and his wife. She stepped back as if afraid they might soil her evening gown, then gestured to a seat at the edge. "The main seats are all taken. You can sit at the secondary table."

Upon hearing that, his expression darkened slightly. As the bride's parents, they should have been seated at the main table. But now, many who weren't even directly from the Griffin family were sitting there instead. As Heidi's biological parents, how could they be relegated to a secondary table?

Seeing his reaction, she sneered. "What? You got a problem?" She added, "For Heidi to marry into our family is her honor. If it weren't for Klaus insisting on marrying her, would she even qualify to marry into a wealthy family?" She continued, "If you have a problem with that, you can take her and leave. There are plenty of beautiful women lining up to marry into our family."

"You..." Harold's anger surged.