

Surprised 1751

Chapter 1751: How do you talk to your father?

Upon hearing his son's words, the king naturally became interested. "What's the matter? Tell me," he said, despite the imminent meeting.

"Father, Louis is with Claire!" Taylor reported with a completely accusing tone, even smugly raising his chin!

Then, he looked coldly at the two behind him and asked, "Father, will you stop this?"

The king could sense his youngest son's full dissatisfaction and calmly asked, "Why should I stop it?"

This left Taylor stunned! The various times his father had expelled him from the palace played like a movie in his mind!

At that moment, Catherine and Julie also caught up, panting as they stopped by.

Before they could even greet, they heard Taylor passionately shouting at the king, "Father! I pursue

Claire, will you stop it? Why can he do it? We are both your sons! How can you be so biased?!"

"Taylor!" Catherine was anxious, she grabbed her son's arm and lowered her voice, instructing, "How are you talking to your father? What's with this attitude?"

His mother was here too?

Her gaze was even sharper, as if warning him. Was he really going to lose his temper in front of Louis?

Look at how much of a gentleman he is! You're just making a scene!

Taylor couldn't be bothered to explain to his mother. He looked back at the king. "Father! Please answer me!"

At this moment, he felt the pain of losing Claire and the hurt of being treated unfairly by his father. He felt that he was being treated unjustly!

He felt wronged, his eyes containing these two kinds of resentment, all of which the king understood.

"No need to answer anymore, haven't you figured out the situation?" Catherine was genuinely worried about her son's intelligence. She said, "Claire and Prince Louis have been together from the start!

They've been dating all along, just not publicly!"

"What?!" Taylor was shocked, as if seeing a ghost in broad daylight, he looked at his mother and then at the young couple beside him.

Louis still had his arm around Claire's shoulder. Although his gaze seemed calm, it carried a hint of arrogance that infuriated Taylor.

As for kind-hearted Claire, she looked embarrassed, her lips tightly pursed, feeling very apologetic.

"Alright, have you all had breakfast?" the king spoke up, his spirits still high. "If not, hurry up, we're preparing for the meeting."

The scene just now was treated as a farce by the king, he wouldn't pursue it further, as long as Taylor understood.

As he spoke, accompanied by servants and guards, the king strode out of the palace.

A car was waiting outside, someone opened the door and escorted the king into the car. He was headed to the castle for the meeting.

"Claire, let's go have breakfast first," Rowan said, leading the girl forward, without greeting Catherine or even sparing a glance at Julie.

Only Taylor hadn't quite figured out the situation, feeling like a clown! The servants and guards around all had their eyes on him.

"What are you looking at?!" He could only vent his frustration at these people, "Keep staring and I'll gouge out your dog eyes!"

Three minutes later.

In a restaurant, Catherine and Taylor sat across from each other, with various exquisite pastries on the table, along with two cups of warm milk.

The king's palace was large, with many restaurants, each with its own distinct style.

Catherine recounted what she had witnessed last night to her son, and Taylor found it very stimulating, as if he had seen a thrilling movie.

"Why didn't you inform me of such an exciting scene?" Taylor was regretful. "Eden is so despicable?!

Did you at least kick him a few times?"

Seeing her son so agitated, compared to Louis, Catherine couldn't help but feel a bit melancholic.

When would Taylor grow up?

"Son, mother wants to ask you a question, answer honestly," she said, looking at her son's serious expression. He not only listened carefully but also thought earnestly.

Chapter 1752: Taylor's True Thoughts

Catherine gazed into his eyes as if she wanted to delve into the depths of his soul. After a moment of contemplation, she asked earnestly, "Taylor, do you want to inherit the throne? Do you want to be

king?"

Taylor, prepared for a weighty philosophical question, was taken aback by what followed.

"Taylor, don't overthink it, and don't worry about anyone else's feelings. I'm just asking about your inner thoughts. Do you want it?"

She wanted to have a good conversation with her son, to understand his truest thoughts. As she looked at him intently, the message in her eyes was already clear- as long as Taylor wanted to be king, as a mother, she would do her utmost to help him.

Although conflicted within, a mother's dedication to her son always knows no bounds.

However, Taylor shook his head, showing not even a hint of interest in the throne. Since his mother had sincerely inquired, he answered truthfully, "I don't want to inherit the throne, nor do I want to rule the country. To me, these things are all just passing clouds. I want to live a life without worries, without responsibilities, isn't that great?"

"Then do you have dreams? Ambitions?" Catherine worried that her son might become aimless. "Is there something that makes you happy? Besides horseback riding and skiing, do you have desires?"

At his young age, could he already feel disillusioned?

"Yes," Taylor replied. The image of a girl flashed through his mind. He lifted his glass of milk again, and a faint smile crept onto his lips. "If I could be with Claire, if she would agree to be my girlfriend, then every day, for me, would be sweet, wouldn't it?"

Upon hearing this, Catherine's heart skipped a beat. "She belongs to Louis, you know that. How can you still entertain such thoughts?"

"Does liking someone disappear because of who they're with?" Taylor countered.

Then he added, "So is that still liking? It's like liking a certain drink, and when the store sells the last bottle to someone else, do you no longer want it? Then how much did you really like that drink?"

In matters of the heart, Catherine found her son's logic quite hard to argue with.

So, as she ate her breakfast, she changed the subject. "You should focus on your studies, do something that would make your father happy."

"Would making him a grandfather sooner count?" Taylor quipped, half in jest, half serious.

Catherine thought he was joking and didn't take his words to heart. She simply instructed, "Taylor, if you find a girlfriend, she must come from a respectable family. A perfect match might be unlikely, given

your royal status, but she must be well-educated and dignified because once she marries into the family, she becomes a representation of the royal image-she'd be a princess."

As his mother spoke, Taylor silently ate his breakfast, but in his mind, Claire's delicate and charming visage flashed before him. He had encountered numerous girls since middle school, but none had captured his attention like Claire. He longed to be with her and spend his life by her side.

If Claire belonged to his father, Taylor wouldn't dare to act, harboring his love in silence, but now that she was with Louis, aside from his affection for her, there was also a sense of challenge within him. He wanted to make a move, to vie for her!

In matters of love, it's all about one's capabilities!

Chapter 1753: The King Announces Abdication

This morning's emergency meeting at the Lu Layeka royal palace summoned all the important figures holding positions within the kingdom.

Clad in formal attire, the attendees engaged in lively discussions.

"Is it true that the king is truly unfit? Is he really going to hand over full power to Prince Louis?"

"It seems likely. What other urgent matter could there be?"

"But I heard a rumor last night. They say the king's illness is related to Eden. That Eden has been poisoning the king for a long time."

"Goodness, that must be a rumor, right?"

"..."

The king of Lu Layeka, in matters of state, held real power and authority over the military.

Bertie was a successful politician, with remarkable ideas, fostering friendly relations with neighboring countries. He was adept at learning and contemplating, dedicating at least 17 hours of work daily, every second devoted to the welfare of his people.

Many at the emergency internal meeting were already aware of the reason for the summons, while some were in the dark, having missed the dramatic events of the previous night.

The conference hall was vast, covering several hundred square meters, unusually spacious and extravagantly adorned. Such a venue was reserved for only the most solemn and significant gatherings in Lu Layeka.

Upon entering, everyone sensed the gravity of the occasion, understanding the importance of the meeting.

By eight o'clock, everyone had arrived early. The enormous crystal chandeliers emitted a brilliant glow, illuminating every corner of the conference hall.

King Bertie sat in the foremost position, flanked by two loyal commanders.

Government officials sat beside the long table, while Mr. and Mrs. Marsh had been invited to sit comfortably in the rear sofas to listen, as they were not members of the royal family.

Claire also sat beside the court, having received a similar invitation.

The two princes sat opposite each other, with their father at the head of the table, the recent events having brought them closer.

Queen Catherine and Julie were also in attendance.

As everyone laid eyes on the king, some were aware of the truth, while others, a portion of them, were curious. The king's demeanor did not at all resemble that of a seriously ill man; it was indeed quite perplexing.

The king calmly began to speak, recounting the events of the previous night in the simplest of terms to the gathering. He also candidly addressed his own health and explicitly pointed to Eden as the

assailant.

The revelation that Eden had been poisoning the king for a staggering five years left everyone in profound shock!

"Eden's crimes are unforgivable. As per the law, there will be no pardons. The death penalty will be carried out within a week," the king's voice was as cold as ice, his words resolute, carrying a tone of a warning to others.

"General Lee," the king glanced sideways, then spoke again.

"Your command, Your Majesty," General Lee stood up, respectfully bowing.

"You are responsible for eradicating all of Eden's influence within the royal court," the king ordered, "No matter who they are, I will not tolerate any corruption within the royal family. Cleanse it entirely."

"Yes, Your Majesty," General Lee's demeanor was resolute.

"Although I am in recovery, my decision to abdicate is final. Lu Layeka will be handed over to Prince Louis for governance. I have chosen a propitious date for the succession ceremony, which will take place next Friday, the 28th," the king announced.

Rowan turned his gaze toward his father, his features deep and inscrutable, a slight pause in his

heartbeat.

Subsequently, applause echoed through the meeting room.

All eyes turned to Rowan, with smiles suggesting their approval of him.

Earlier, the king had also introduced him, stating that he was an outstanding pharmacist, a prodigious physician who had always cared for the people, having developed many potent medicines, truly a person of great compassion.

Despite the circumstances, the applause continued. He couldn't openly dispute his father, nor could he prompt him to reconsider. However, deep down, Rowan truly did not want to become king.

He saw Queen Catherine and Julie clapping as well, expressing their affirmative gazes toward him.

Rowan rose from his seat, exuding an air of elegance and nobility. Despite the conflicting emotions within him, he graciously nodded to everyone, conveying his gratitude for their support.

Chapter 1754: The Wise Choice of the Princess

"Also, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to a few people today," the king spoke again, in a good mood, his face adorned with a smile.

As the applause gradually ceased, everyone noticed the king's gaze resting on Mr. Marsh and others.

He sincerely thanked them, "Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Marsh, for coming from afar, and Claire, you have contributed a lot to exposing the big problem of Eden. You are intelligent, wise, and dare to take risks. Louis is honored to have friends like you, and I am happy for him."

"Your Majesty, there's no need for such formalities," Jingting also stood up, adjusting his tailored suit.

"Meeting each other is fate."

Everyone at the meeting turned their eyes to him.

This man's exquisite features always gave people a sense of nobility and perfection. Standing there, with a soft smile on his lips, he was as handsome as a deity.

He said, "Friends are a matter of fate. It is an honor for him as well as for us."

Jingting's voice was truly pleasant, cool and magnetic, like aged wine, intoxicating to listen to.

The king nodded satisfactorily at this reply; he felt particularly reassured. It seemed that everyone was on the same page.

For Louis to have such friends, it was certainly a good thing for the future of Lu Layeka. A friend like Mr. Marsh was worth a hundred others.

The agenda of the meeting was straightforward. The king was organized and quickly announced all that needed to be addressed.

After the meeting...

Catherine felt incredibly calm inside. She was glad she had made the right choice. Louis, calm and wise, was indeed more suitable for this position than Taylor.

With the love of a father and mother, Catherine hoped that Taylor could get along with Prince Louis.

This group of people was all just and kind, and in the future, there should be no problem accommodating Taylor.

"Princess," Julie accompanied her, and the two walked back to the palace. Julie noticed Catherine's distraction and asked softly, "Are you alright?"

"I asked Taylor this morning, he doesn't want to be king," Catherine replied, glancing at her, "As an enlightened elder, we must respect the child's thoughts."

Julie fell silent.

Catherine continued, "And from the current situation, Prince Louis is more capable. He saved the king's life and is good friends with Mr. Marsh, which makes him more endearing to the people."

In fact, Julie had also pondered a lot last night. There was a moment when she, too, let go of her innermost convictions.

She said, "Princess, you don't need to explain further. I am yours, and I will definitely comply with your decision. I apologize once again for my actions last night. Please rest assured, such things will never happen again, and I will always consult with you in all matters."

"Julie, I need to ask you for a favor," Catherine turned to her, "You have a certain influence over Taylor, and he usually listens to you. Although I can also intimidate him, I hope you can guide him well, encourage him to learn more from Louis, and become more mature. This is also the way for the royal family to survive. Parents will eventually grow old and cannot protect him forever."

"Prince Taylor is not a bad person, but he has been too protected since childhood. He has never needed to strive, yet he has always been ahead," Julie expressed her concerns, "You didn't have this anxiety before."

"Now that Louis has returned, the entire royal family has two princes. It's inevitable that people will make comparisons."

The woman herself was very aware that Bertie's two sons had a vast difference between them.

She said with some concern, "As a mother, who can tolerate others saying that her son is inferior?"

"Please, Your Highness, from now on," Julie promised, "I will certainly guide Prince Taylor well and make him more outstanding."

Chapter 1755: Decision to Inherit the Throne

With Julie's words, Catherine finally felt a sense of relief within herself. As long as the plan was right and followed step by step, nothing could go wrong. In fact, her decision was the right one. Someday in the future, she would understand that letting go of her obsession with the throne had been helping Taylor.

After the meeting, Ivan and Rowan strolled on the lawn in front of the castle, both of them letting out a sigh of relief. However, Eden was Rowan's uncle, so Rowan's emotions were somewhat complicated and he was hurt in the emotional sense.

"What are your plans?" Rowan came to his senses and asked.

Ivan replied, "Jennifer is pregnant, and Alfie and Diana are also planning to go abroad, so we are planning to return to Arkpool City."

"When are you leaving?"

"We'll leave early tomorrow, we'll inform the king in a while."

"Thank you," Rowan thanked them sincerely, "You have all come amidst your busy schedules, and we haven't seen each other for years."

"Don't be so polite, we are all friends." Ivan patted his shoulder and walked ahead. "In fact, Lu Layeka is now prosperous and stable. I believe you have the ability to manage everything."

"But you also know that I am not very interested in fame and fortune. I have been away from here since I was young. Everything here is unfamiliar to me," Rowan said.

Rowan was quite laid-back. "But my father is too stubborn. He is still the same as many years ago, not considering others' feelings much and liking to make his own decisions."

"Because he judges people accurately, he can only rest assured to hand the country over to you," Ivan said to him. "In the future, you can travel back and forth, or stay here for a long time. You can continue to engage in medical research work or teach students who have talent in this area."

Rowan agreed with this point of view. He could pass on his experience and spread more love to more people.

Ivan said, "After all, one person's power is always limited, and after you get married, your focus should be on your family."

"So..." Rowan asked, "Do you think I should smoothly inherit the throne on the 28th of next month? Or should I fight for my freedom again? Challenge my father?"

"Of course, you should inherit. This was originally meant for you," Ivan answered. "Currently, only you are capable of managing the entire Lu Layeka. Your father's health is gradually recovering, he can teach you many things step by step, gradually hand over the work, and you won't be at a loss."

"Hahaha!" The king's voice arrived before he did.

The two stopped and looked up, only to see the king clapping as he walked toward them, followed by several guards.

This was unexpected for both of them.

"Father."

"Your Majesty."

The king's gaze fell on Louis. "Once you inherit the throne, the next step is to consider a wedding! By

then, my health will be fully recovered, and I can bless your marriage!"

The king's voice was a bit loud, exuding an unprecedented joy. His condition was clearly much better today.

Claire and Jennifer not far away stopped hand in hand and looked over. They had also heard the king's words.

Jennifer smiled sweetly at the girl beside her. Claire met Rowan's gaze and smiled at him. Her lively, grape-like eyes were full of vitality, clear and bright like water.

Rowan withdrew his gaze from his father and walked towards the two girls not far away.

The king glanced back and then looked at Ivan with a smile in his eyes. "Mr. Marsh, when Louis ascends, I would like to invite you and your wife to witness it together! Would you be available?"

Chapter 1756: Prince Louis is Getting Married

Ivan nodded, a smile in his eyes. "I will definitely come. In the future, Marsh Group will continue to expand its business in Lu Layeka. Your country has resources in Arkpool City that are both rare and valuable to us."

"We warmly welcome Mr. Marsh in every field! May the prosperity of Lu Layeka continue, and may

Marsh Group also play a part in it," the king hoped that Ivan would develop this area into a focal point for the company.

The two discussed cooperation strategies, and they found themselves getting along exceptionally well.

Unexpectedly, the king also possessed a unique insight into the economy, and many of his ideas coincided with Ivan's.

This was their first in-depth conversation, and it felt like they had known each other for a long time.

Rowan had already approached Claire. She was smiling gently, as radiant as the moonlight.

He reached out and took her by the shoulders, facing her in front of Jennifer. "Claire, will you marry me?"

"When?" Claire contained her excitement and looked at him with a beaming smile.

"After I inherit the throne, we will choose a good day and hold the wedding here," Rowan considered thoughtfully. "But before that, I will accompany you back to Arkpool City to formally propose to the Russell family."

Claire was deeply moved. He had thought this through so thoroughly.

"Alright!" She nodded with a smile. No matter what challenges she faced, she would face them together

with him.

There was only a week left until the 28th.

She would stand by his side until he ascended the throne.

Rowan added, "Let's return to Arkpool City after the 28th. There are some matters here that need to be taken care of, and my father is still recovering."

"That's fine."

He said, "When we're in Arkpool City, we can stay for a while longer, spend more time with your uncle and aunt, and have enough time to discuss the wedding with our elders."

Claire agreed with his considerations.

Just now, Jennifer told Claire that they planned to return to Arkpool City early tomorrow morning, and

Rowan also learned about this news.

Seeing them finally about to get married after all they had been through, Jennifer was very happy.

"Master, when we return, you must rest a lot, after all, you are pregnant," Rowan showed concern for

her. "You must have been very tired during this time. You've worked hard."

"It's okay," Jennifer smiled, then glanced at the girl next to him. "Hurry and arrange the wedding. I'm looking forward to the celebration."

Rowan and Claire exchanged a smile, their faces even sweeter with happiness.

The king and Ivan had an especially pleasant conversation, with bursts of laughter from time to time, and then the group accompanied the king as they walked toward the palace.

After all, the king's health had not fully recovered. He needed to take his medication on time and get plenty of bed rest.

With Eden stepping down, Arthur was the most anxious.

Because he was Eden's disciple, he had been by Eden's side for years, but he had never assisted Eden in any heinous acts.

It wasn't that he didn't want to, but Eden was cautious and only trusted himself.

Now, General Lee was clearing out the remnants, and many people were afraid of being implicated, even though they hadn't done anything wrong.

Arthur knew that he was under strong suspicion, and he didn't know how he would defend himself if he were accused.

Fortunately, Rowan noticed his anxiety and trusted him, so he didn't blame him.

Rowan had privately investigated Arthur. He was a good boy who had remained untainted despite the circumstances, so Rowan took him under his wing.

These two childhood playmates would also have a relationship like Catherine and Julie's.

Inside Princess Catherine's palace.

Julie had been guarding the door of the study for two hours, standing there, looking at him, not feeling the least bit tired.

Apart from practicing calligraphy, Taylor was doing his studies, and he had also spent some time reading classic literature.

These were not things Taylor enjoyed, but if he didn't finish, Julie wouldn't let him leave. He couldn't argue, so he obediently complied.

When the alarm clock went off, Taylor closed the book, got up, and walked out, ignoring Julie, with brisk steps.

Julie didn't stop him, as he was seriously studying.

Just as Taylor walked out of the palace, greedily breathing in the fresh air, he heard a servant not far away happily telling another servant, "Prince Louis is getting married!"

Taylor's movements paused, and he couldn't help but furrow his brow.

Chapter 1757: Claire'S Appointment

It was as if something had struck his heart!

What? They were getting married??

Taylor was sure he hadn't misheard. He couldn't accept this fact, why should the throne be his, and the woman as well?

This wasn't fair!

Taylor liked Claire, it was the kind of feeling one has when they first meet someone. He felt that the aura Claire exuded was something other women could never replicate, something he had never encountered before in his life.

Taylor could give up the throne, he could forgo being a king, and he could abandon fame and fortune, but he couldn't bear to lose the woman he liked!

For an individual, love was something that couldn't be sought, only encountered.

So, he became anxious, unsettled, and began to devise a plan...

About an hour later.

Claire was in the garden of Rowan's palace, helping the servants water the flowers and plants. Some were already in full bloom, while others had withered due to the heavy rain last night, with some just beginning to blossom.

Recalling her stay here last night, with the pouring rain and thunderstorms, and Rowan, a gentleman, holding her close as they slept under the same blanket, not making a move on her, every detail showed his care and love for her.

Before they were married, love was about restraint, about wanting to touch and then pulling back.

Claire couldn't help but smile at the thought, feeling incredibly happy. Dr. Watson was indeed an exceptional gentleman.

At that moment, a servant approached her from a distance. "Miss Russell."

Claire looked up as the maid quickly arrived and stood before her. "Miss Russell, Prince Taylor requests your presence at Aire Castle, the westernmost location. Just head in that direction and take a left, you'll see it."

"Does he have something to discuss with me?" Claire was slightly puzzled.

"Yes."

"What is it about?"

"I'm sorry, I do not know, but he insisted that I pass on the message."

"..." Claire pondered for a moment, thinking it was necessary to meet with Taylor. After all, the last incident had caused such a stir, and the king was angry with him, which was unjust. Furthermore, she had been deliberately keeping her relationship with Rowan a secret from him. Now that Eden had stepped down, she felt it was necessary to explain things to him.

She needed to mend the strained relationship between the two brothers, and she had to play a role in eliminating the barriers. It was also important for her to explain things to him.

"Alright, I'll go over immediately," Claire agreed.

The servant was elated, having delivered the message and successfully arranged the meeting for the prince. It was certain that a handsome reward awaited her.

The servant smiled, bowed to Claire, and then turned to leave.

Claire thought for a moment, then set down the watering can and took out her phone to call Rowan.

At that moment, Rowan had just finished giving the king his medicine, and the king had just laid down to rest. Just a moment ago, father and son had been talking about many things.

His phone rang, and he checked to see that it was Claire calling. He quickly answered, "Hello, Claire."

"Dr. Watson, Prince Taylor has sent a message asking to meet me," Claire informed him. "I think it's important to see him, and I thought it best to inform you by calling."

Rowan thought for a moment and asked, "Where are you meeting him? When?"

"Aire Castle, I'm going right now."

"In that case, be careful, and let me know if anything comes up." Rowan advised her, "I'll come find you later. I have some matters to attend to at my residence."

"Alright," Claire's voice was sweet. "I'll see you later." She then hung up the phone, put it away, and headed towards Aire Castle.

Chapter 1758: Taylor Playing with Fire

The royal Lu Layeka family had castles scattered everywhere, elegant and exquisite, each exuding a sense of profound history and grace.

Many royal weddings took place within these castles.

The Aire Castle was particularly renowned, distinguished by its unique design, luxurious grandeur, and a particularly romantic legend.

Taylor, the prince, chose this place precisely because it was seldom visited.

Here, he could discuss matters without any disturbances.

The lounge was spacious, its vaulted ceiling adorned with intricate patterns exuding an artistic ambiance.

The walls were adorned with masterful artwork, and the air carried the scent of wealth. A table was set with a countryside-style cloth, upon which a vase held several fresh lilies.

A bottle of wine had been poured into a decanter.

Taylor poured two glasses himself, retrieved a packet of white powder from his pocket, and without hesitation, poured a measured amount into one of the glasses.

He then gently swirled the glass until the powder dissolved completely, placing it on the opposite side of the table.

Taylor calmly awaited Claire's arrival, determined to have her drink this wine.

The warm yellow lighting inside, accompanied by a soft classical melody with just the right volume and excellent audio quality, created a strong atmosphere, reflecting Taylor's taste in music selection.

Claire hadn't dressed up deliberately; she had come straight after finishing a call with Rowan.

Recalling the scene where the king had expelled Taylor from the palace and forbade him from re-entering, Claire felt somewhat guilty. It had affected the relationship between the father and son.

As Taylor waited for Claire, he patiently mused, knowing that once the die was cast, a new groom would be needed for the wedding. He couldn't be the favorite son, but he could be the first to give his father a grandchild.

Taylor was somewhat paranoid today, his mind not entirely clear, unsure of what he was doing.

Since Louis's return to the royal family, Taylor felt he had been treated differently, that his father no longer valued him.

Despite his body steadily recovering, such important matters were kept from him.

Hearing footsteps, Taylor looked up, hearing the soft voice of a servant at the door, "Miss Russell, please come in."

She had arrived.

Claire stepped inside, the servant gently closing the door behind her, as Taylor had instructed.

This was Claire's first time entering Aire Castle. The scenery inside was unlike any other palace; it was exceptionally beautiful and filled with a captivating ambiance.

At a glance, she spotted the man sitting at the center of the room by the table.

Claire approached him, her tranquil gaze fixed on him. "Prince."

Taylor turned his eyes slightly, smiling at her. "Please, have a seat."

The girl noticed the pastries and the poured wine on the table, along with the blooming lilies in the bottle.

She took her seat opposite him, feeling somewhat apologetic. "Prince, I'm sorry for concealing my identity due to our need to guard against Eden."

"How long have you been together?" Taylor seemed unperturbed, his gaze fixed on the girl. She always gave him a feeling of spring blossoms, as if even the corners of her eyes carried the fragrance of flowers.

"Half a year," Claire met his gaze. "But... our relationship is strong. We are planning to get married."

Her words pierced Taylor's heart like a thorn. To entrust one's lifetime to another after only half a year?

Just how outstanding was Louis?

Taylor forced a smile, his gaze now on the glass of wine in front of her. He spoke gently, "Taste this

wine. It's produced within our royal family and not sold elsewhere. You've probably never had it, but it

truly tastes wonderful."

Chapter 1759: Claire Can't Escape

Claire, thinking he wasn't upset, relaxed a bit.

Out of politeness, she picked up the wine glass. Under Taylor's gaze, she took a sip, not detecting

anything unusual. The wine was aromatic and not particularly strong.

"Claire, first of all, I want to congratulate you," Taylor mused, lifting his own glass. He took a sip,

smiling. "Congratulations on becoming Lu Layeka's queen."

The words made Claire feel slightly awkward. It didn't sound like a blessing, more like a taunt.

"But there's something... I want to remind you of," Taylor smiled, telling her, "In Lu Layeka, a man

having four wives is protected by law."

Polygamy? This surprised Claire; she knew some countries practiced it historically, but she hadn't

expected it in Lu Layeka.

So, what was Taylor trying to convey?

Claire couldn't discern if it was a warning; it almost felt like a touch of schadenfreude.

But as she drank from the glass, she lightly retorted, "Your father has always had only one wife, hasn't

he? Emotions aren't something the law can protect; it depends on finding the right person."

"You've only been together for six months. How can you be sure this person is right for you?"

Taylor swirled the wine glass gently, meeting the girl's gaze. He earnestly confessed, "I like you. I'm

serious. Can you feel it?"

A tale of two brothers vying for the same woman? Unfolding right in front of her?

Claire had written about such melodramatic plots in novels before. If mishandled, it could lead to bitter

enmity between the brothers. Moreover, considering the delicate relationship between Rowan and

Taylor, who didn't share the same mother, the situation was even more complex.

So, Claire patiently responded, "Thank you for your affection, but I'm sorry I can't give you the response

you're seeking."

Taylor knew she would reply this way. He took a sip from his glass, the smile on his face tinged with sadness.

"I love him, with a pure and ardent love, unwavering," Claire declared. "That's why we can only be friends."

Taylor concealed his inner disappointment with a smile. "You'll never know how much I like you. I've never liked anyone this much before."

"Prince Taylor, about concealing my relationship status, I apologize once again for giving you the impression that I was single."

Claire raised her glass towards him and clinked it in the air. "I'm sorry," she said, then drank down the contents of the glass.

This was exactly what Taylor wanted. She drank it all.

He had thought she might refuse the drink, so he had deliberately chosen one with the lowest alcohol content, the kind even a three-year-old could drink, and had prepared a heap of lines to coax her into drinking it.

Setting down the empty glass, Claire asked, "Was there anything else you wanted to talk to me about

today?"

Taylor looked at her affectionately and shook his head. "No, I just wanted to see you." In that moment, he felt incredibly content.

"Then, can I leave?" Claire didn't want to give herself any more private time with him. She was well aware of her status and her current position.

If anyone saw them together, gossip would inevitably spread, and it would lead to discussions involving Rowan as well.

But as she rose from her seat, she suddenly felt dizzy. Claire instinctively reached out to steady herself on the table.

The objects on the table began to blur before her eyes. She furrowed her brow, then looked up slowly at Taylor. "Did... did you tamper with this wine?"

A searing sensation surged through her body, intense and acute, as an ominous premonition enveloped Claire instantly.

Chapter 1760: Directly Beaten and Screamed

As a scream pierced the air, the scene unfolded just as Taylor had anticipated. Seated in a chair, he

watched her, observing her eyes gradually becoming unfocused, a flush spreading across her cheeks, until she struggled to stand steady.

"Claire! T... ler...!"

Claire's rage remained unspoken, her throat parched and tight.

Unable to clearly see his face, she watched the figure opposite her, blurring in her vision, and then, as she struggled to maintain coherence, she saw him rising.

In a moment of clarity, Claire asserted, "You can't do this. You mustn't make irredeemable mistakes."

Each word brought a searing pain to her throat.

Not far outside the castle, Rowan had swiftly departed from his own palace, making his way towards the commotion.

He thought to himself that when Taylor arranged to meet Claire, it was likely for no good, probably just to entangle her further.

Moreover, the choice of Aire Castle for the meeting seemed out of the ordinary, and as Rowan's steps quickened, he grew increasingly uneasy.

In the uniquely styled Aire Castle, within the reception hall on the ground floor, the effects of the drug hit Claire forcefully. Although her thoughts remained momentarily clear, she struggled to move. She tried to walk out, but her legs refused to obey, feeling as though her body was no longer under her brain's control.

Furthermore, her body was growing weaker, making it a challenge to even support herself against the table.

She saw the figure opposite her rise and step towards her, and soon their bodies collided.

"Don't... don't touch me..." she resisted.

But drugged as she was, how could she, a weakened woman, resist a man in the prime of his vigor?

Taylor had already come to her side, enfolding her in his arms, whispering to her, "Claire, I like you. If you give me a chance, you'll come to like me too. There are many qualities about me that you haven't yet seen."

As he spoke, he reached to play with her long hair, utterly captivated by her.

Instilled with fear, Claire instinctively leaned away, as if summoning all her strength to break free. Her throat had become so dry that she couldn't even speak. "Don't..."

Greedy to inhale her scent, Taylor closed his eyes in enjoyment, unable to resist reaching to undo her clothing. "Claire, I can be a better boyfriend."

If before it was fear that surrounded Claire, now it was despair.

She had no strength to resist at all.

At that moment, Rowan arrived at the door, finding it closed, with four guards stationed outside.

Sensing the abnormality, he commanded their attention.

Upon seeing Rowan, they were taken aback, their faces betraying their surprise. "Prince Louis!" They quickly greeted him, visibly flustered.

"Open the door," Rowan's thin lips parted, exuding an aura of authority.

Being Taylor's men, the guards were unaware of the situation inside, only following Prince Taylor's orders not to let anyone disturb them. However, they hesitated for only three seconds before actively swinging the closed door open, without seeking permission from those inside.

The reason was simple: the man before them was the future king, and they couldn't afford to offend him.

As the door opened, Rowan stepped inside, and what he witnessed not far away left him aghast-Claire pinned to the chair by Taylor, struggling.

"Taylor!" Rowan's eyes darkened, striding forward in a few swift steps. "What are you doing?!"

Taylor barely had time to react before Rowan grabbed him by the collar, delivering a fierce blow to his face!

"Ah-!" With a cry of pain, Taylor, caught off guard, was sent flying!