

## **The Double 381**

### Chapter 381

Mandy stepped out of the office, her expression clouded over with displeasure. She had suffered embarrassment at the hands of two teachers now and regretted coming to school that day.

What a nuisance.

The family butler, who had been waiting outside, noticed her mood and inquired, "Madam, what seems to be the trouble?"

Mandy glanced at the butler, her voice laced with irritation. "It's just another mess that dimwit created."

The butler paused, then instinctively asked, "Is it Miss Mira?"

"Don't even mention her to me; she's no longer a part of the Gilbert family," Mandy snapped before heading towards the school gates: The butler hurried after her.

As they exited the main entrance of Parkside High School, Mandy spotted Mirabella waiting by the roadside, obviously expecting someone to pick her up.

Mandy's lips curled into a sneer; it was so typical of the less fortunate not to afford a personal chauffeur. Her attention then shifted away as she strode towards her own Bentley parked by the curb.

The butler, getting there first, opened the passenger door for her. Just as Mandy was about to lower herself into the car, she caught sight of a black sedan pulling up beside the spot where Mirabella stood.

She instinctively looked up and was taken aback when she recognized the make of the car a Rolls-Royce.

How could Mirabella's biological mother be driving such an expensive car? Weren't they supposedly so poor that they could only afford to drive an old, beat-up Santana?

She must've been seeing things!

"Madam?" the butler, noticing Mandy's fixed stare and her delay in getting into the car,

voiced his confusion.

Suppressing her shock, Mandy stiffly settled into her seat and buckled her seatbelt, glancing involuntarily at the side mirror. Although she didn't see everything, it was clear that Mirabella had gotten into the car.

Mandy felt dazed as if none of this could possibly be real. After all, the Davis family lived in that run-down neighborhood. They couldn't afford such a car even if they sold their house. So this must've been a stunt, right? Did the Davis family rent the car just to show off at the school?

If that was the case, how utterly vain!

As the car in the rearview mirror drove away, Mandy snapped back to reality and sarcastically shook her head, then told the butler, "Let's go."

The butler glanced at Mandy and then asked, "Aren't we waiting for Miss Summer?"

At the mention of Summer, Mandy's thoughts turned to the unjust treatment she'd received from Morgan, and she replied coldly, "She didn't even go to school today."

The butler was taken aback. "Oh? If she's not at school, where could she be? Should we call and check?"

Rubbing her temples from the headache, Mandy said firmly, "No need. She's a grown woman; she doesn't need someone watching over her all the time. Just drive, we're going home."

With that, the butler said no more and started the engine. Soon, the car left the school behind.

After an embarrassing audio recording that had leaked online, Summer really did feel too ashamed to go to school and had asked her homeroom teacher for the day off.

She returned to the talent agency and was met with sneers and derisive glances from the other artists. Their looks conveyed mockery, and her carefully cultivated image of gentleness and kindness was on the brink of collapse.

## Chapter 382

In the talent agent's office, Craig leaned against his desk, eyeing the disheveled Summer sprawled on the couch with a mix of frustration and annoyance.

He had thought he'd signed a grounded, sensible artist, but in less than a year, she'd cooked up a scandal so big it was enough to give anyone Indigestion.

One was supposed to have a few good years under their belt before going off the rails, for heaven's sake. And what did Summer do instead? She tried to stir up trouble with her supposed superstar brother. Oh wait, Juztin wasn't even her real brother!

The thought made Craig's mood sour further. If she wasn't related to Juztin, she shouldn't have led him on, making him believe that they were siblings. No wonder Juztin didn't bring her along on that reality show. If it wasn't for this mess, Craig would still be in the dark.

Appearances really are deceiving!

If she'd put half this effort into her career, she might've had more than two million fans by now. But no, now she became a pariah on the internet.

Craig rubbed his face, sighing as he broke the silence in the room. "Look, sitting here isn't doing you any good. I've done what I can, but I can't bury this. Juztin isn't some run-of-the-mill pop singer. What were you thinking, taking him on?"

Summer pressed her lips together, her fingers tightly intertwined in her lap. If Leo hadn't been so ruthless, would she have ever made such a rash decision?

Mirabella was

st a nobody from the sticks, and Leo had flaunted her on that reality show, making Summer look like a fool.

After watching Mirabella get showered with praise episode after episode and seeing Leo's preferential treatment of her, Summer's jealousy had grown like a weed.

Why should a country bumpkin like Mirabella get all the admiration while the Davis family dropped all pretenses of poverty to court her favor?

If only the Davis family had treated Summer fairly, she wouldn't have been driven to such desperate actions.

Summer's throat felt parched with regret. She knew that her current predicament was due to her own shortsightedness, her impatience, and her inability to stay cool. She wouldn't. make the same foolish mistake again if she had another chance.

Craig, unaware of her turmoil, felt obligated to help since she was his client after all. "You might not be Juztin's real sister, but you've spent over a decade with him. Go and plead with him. If he's willing to let bygones be bygones and gives a clarifying statement, you. might just salvage your career. In times like these, you've got to play the family card. It's your only shot, or you can kiss your singing career goodbye."

"My reputation is already so tainted. Is there really a chance for a comeback?" Summer asked with a bitter chuckle.

Craig glanced at her. "As long as Juztin doesn't pursue this issue, there's a chance." That was just how the entertainment industry was. Every day, there was a new scandal, and with time, things got diluted. Who remembered the past when the next big story hit?

Summer looked up. “You don’t know my brother. He’s cold to the core. Getting him to clear my name is next to impossible.”

Craig lifted the corner of his mouth in a half-smile. “Difficult or not, you’ve got to try. Unless you’re done with the limelight.”

After a brief pause, as if a new thought struck him, Craig added, “Or maybe you should appeal to your adoptive parents? Surely, they’d step in to help, right?”

At that, Summer hesitated, her response lingering in the air. Craig, now curious at her silence, asked, “Don’t tell me you’re on bad terms with them too?”

Chapter 383

Craig tapped his nose thoughtfully. What kind of superstar had he signed?

Summer snapped back to reality, glanced at her agent, and then stood up briskly. “I’ll give it a shot. My foster parents were decent to me back in the day.”

Craig, though dubious, was relieved that the situation hadn’t escalated to a nightmare scenario. “Alright then, off you go. I’ll wait for your update. And hand over your Twitter login. I’ll have someone draft an apology tweet.”

At the mention of an apology tweet, Summer’s eyelids drooped slightly as she murmured softly, “No need.” Apologizing now would be futile, only making her seem more insincere to her followers.

Craig mulled it over and decided not to push the issue. “Fine, as you wish.”

“I better get going.”

Summer grabbed her mask and sunglasses, quickly disguising herself, and swiftly exited the office.

Craig watched her retreating figure, wondering if she was perhaps the quickest to crash and burn among all the talents he'd managed. Fame was fleeting, and now she was facing a backlash.

It was just one of those years, he sighed,

After leaving the agency, Summer hailed a cab to the quaint neighborhood where the Davis family's old house was nestled.

Once there, she stood outside for a long while, watching people come and go in the lobby, finally mustering enough courage to step inside.

She pressed the button for the top floor in the elevator, her heart rising with the ascent, anxious about the reception she might receive. She wondered if her foster parents would be willing to help her or if they'd turn a cold shoulder, especially since she had nearly tarnished Leo's reputation.

The elevator dinged, and Summer shuddered as the doors slid open. She felt a sudden urge to flee but, thinking of her future, took a deep breath and stepped out. She approached the Davis door and pressed the doorbell.

Time ticked by. After five long minutes with no response, she pressed it again. More time passed, but still no answer.

Summer frowned. Could it be that no one was home? She checked the time, and it was nearly six o'clock. It seemed unlikely that the house would be empty. Her foster parents

wouldn't have known she was coming, so it couldn't be a deliberate snub.

After a few more attempts and no sign of life, Summer concluded that the house was indeed empty.

She pulled out her phone, found Delilah's number, hesitated for a few seconds, and dialed. The call went through, but no one picked up, leaving her with the cold, mechanical voice of the voicemail service.

Summer hung up without leaving a message and leaned wearily against the wall, waiting. She waited until her feet went numb, but the Davis family didn't return, nor did Delilah call

back.

As time went on, Summer's spirits plummeted, and those bitter thoughts began to creep back in. Then, the elevator chimed. Instinctively, she looked up.

## Chapter 384

Summer had thought that the person coming out of the house was a member of the Davis family, but much to her surprise, it turned out to be the neighbor from next door. She knew the neighbor, so when she saw the figure emerging, a hint of disappointment flickered in Summer's eyes.

The neighbor glanced at Summer, not immediately recognizing her, and simply took out her keys to unlock the door. Her hand paused as she stepped inside, preparing to close the door. She took another look at Summer, who clearly seemed to be waiting for someone, and then spoke up, "Are you looking for the Davis family?"

Summer turned around, acknowledging the neighbor with a nod.

"Hey, are you related to them? They moved out a while back and don't live here anymore," the neighbor volunteered the information.

Summer's eyes widened in disbelief. "They don't live here anymore?"

The neighbor recognized Summer's voice and exclaimed, "Oh, you're Summer, right?"

Summer, who was too flustered to care about anything else, quickly asked, "Marian, your said my folks moved out. Do you know where they went?"

Marian, the neighbor, shook her head. "I'm afraid I don't know that."

There was a brief pause before Marian asked, seemingly offhand, “They moved and didn’t tell you?”

Summer’s grip tightened, and she was grateful for the mask on her face, shielding her embarrassment. Her voice came out hoarse, “They might have just forgotten with the busyness and all.”

Marian had only heard snippets about the Davis family’s mix-up with their daughter and found it odd they wouldn’t inform their once-claimed child of their move. “You might want to give your folks a call,” Marian suggested.

After a difficult swallow, Summer mustered a nod and thanked her neighbor.

Marian soon closed the door, leaving Summer to slump against the wall, sliding down until she was hugging her knees. Marian’s words echoed in her head.

Her adoptive parents had moved. They had left without a phone call or a message.

Summer bit her lip, frustration, and resentment toward Delilah and Shawn welling up inside her. Even if they didn’t want to share their new address, the least they could do was tell her they were moving, right?

Did they not consider that their daughter of over a decade might’ve wanted to visit? To move so abruptly, so eager to sever ties – didn’t it seem cruel?

11-201

Summer felt like a punchline. Her biological parents’ affection was tied to the prestige she brought them. And her adoptive parents? Since Mirabella’s return, it was all about flashy cars and fancy houses. Summer felt like she meant nothing.

She checked her phone again – no calls, no messages. With a self-deprecating twist of her lips, she pushed herself up and headed towards the elevator.



After picking up Mirabella from school, Delilah didn't head straight home. Instead, she took her daughter out for dinner.

Her friends had been eager to meet her daughter, but Delilah had been too busy with the renovations of the new house. Now that everyone was gathering, it was the perfect opportunity to bring Mirabella along.

Summer's call had come when Delilah was busy catching up with her friends. Her phone was buried in her bag, unheard.

After dinner, Delilah declined her friends' invitation to go karaoke, opting instead to drive home with her daughter.

On their way, Mirabella, who was engrossed in a game sitting in the passenger seat, suddenly received a call from Wyatt.

#### Chapter 385

After exchanging just a few words, Mirabella ended the call, her expression growing more somber.

As Delilah drove, she glanced back at her daughter. "Who's calling this late, honey? Anything urgent?"

Mirabella slid her phone back into her pocket and hummed a noncommittal "Mm," replying absentmindedly, "Just a friend."

Seeing her daughter's distracted demeanor, Delilah didn't pry further. Soon enough, they pulled into their sprawling estate.

No sooner had Mirabella stepped out of the car than Wyatt, who had been anxiously waiting outside, approached. Worry etched his features as he called out, "Ms. Mirabella."

With a calm nod, Mirabella acknowledged him before turning to her mother, who was about to drive the car into the garage. "Mom, I'm just popping over next door."

Wyatt, no longer concerned about being recognized, gave Delilah a polite nod. She paused, then cast a glance at her daughter. "Do you want me to come with you?"

Mirabella shook her head and replied, "I'll be back soon."

Knowing he was the same man keen on buying their property, Delilah whispered, with a lingering look at Wyatt, "Call me if you need anything, sweetheart."

Mirabella softly acknowledged. Quickly, she and Wyatt made their way to the adjacent villa.

Back at the car, Delilah's gaze shifted from suspicion to her mobile phone resting in a box beside her. Lighting up the screen to check the time, she noticed a missed call from her foster daughter.

The call had come over an hour ago.

Frowning slightly, Delilah hesitated for a moment before returning the call.

Meanwhile, in James' bedroom.

Standing by James' bedside, Nikolai looked as if he had just glimpsed hope itself when Mirabella entered. "Mirabella, you finally made it."

Curtis' gaze also fixed intently on Mirabella.

She nodded and approached the bed where James lay. His pallor was ashen, his forehead beaded with sweat. He seemed to be enduring immense pain. Yet his dark eyes held a steady gaze on Mirabella, and despite his discomfort, he maintained a composed façade.

1/2

“Sorry to call you over so late,” James said in a hoarse whisper.

Mirabella’s delicate brows furrowed slightly, and without a word, she reached out to feel his pulse. Two minutes later, she withdrew her hand.

An anxious Wyatt immediately asked, “Ms. Mirabella, what’s going on with James?”

Nikolai, a titleholder in traditional medicine, looked to her. “I’ve just checked James. Could these be symptoms of neuralgia?”

Nikolai’s expertise was well-founded, and though he wasn’t a pharmacist, his medical skills were highly advanced.

Mirabella nodded. “Correct, it’s diffuse neuralgia.”

Neuralgia was a different beast from other bodily pain; it was like needles piercing through the body, a torment that made life unbearable.

She looked at James again, admiring his fortitude. To remain so calm under such circumstances was indeed extraordinary.

“What exactly causes this kind of neuralgia? James has never suffered from this before,” Wyatt said gravely.

With James’ recent health scare barely behind them, this new affliction was alarming. Neuralgia sounded severe, and combined with his previous condition, it was downright life-threatening.

11.20

## Chapter 386

“There are many causes for neuralgia, but in James’ case, it’s due to a trauma,” Mirabella said in a measured tone.

Wyatt scratched his head. “But he doesn’t have any visible injuries.”

James had been resting and recuperating, not having lifted a finger for any strenuous activity.

“Latent complications,” Mirabella uttered succinctly. Then, she turned back to face James, pulling back the light blanket covering him. Her slender fingers pressed gently against several spots on his chest, “Do these areas hurt more?”

James grunted, not bothering with words or a nod, but his expression said it all. Mirabella. withdrew her hands.

Watching Mirabella pinpoint the source of the ailment with such precision, Nikolai couldn’t help but feel a pang of admiration. He had previously thought of her merely as an adept apothecary, well-versed in pharmacology, but now it was clear that her medical skills. were also formidable.

“Acupuncture would be the best treatment for James’ condition, but when I tried it just now, it only intensified his pain. So I dared not continue with the needles, nor can I force him to take painkillers for fear of triggering some underlying chronic issue,” Nikolai said with a wry smile, his concern evident on his face.

Mirabella was silent for a moment, then looked at James and said simply, “Hang in there for a bit longer. I’ll be right back with something.”

James’ lips were a bit too red from him biting them, but he managed a faint smile. Despite his pallor, there was a strangely attractive allure to his appearance. “Alright.”

With a subtle narrowing of her eyes, Mirabella turned and walked away.

Wyatt, witnessing this, felt the urge to follow her but eventually stayed put, his gaze returning to James. Seeing the smile still playing on James' lips, Wyatt felt a pang of discomfort. Despite the obvious discomfort, James was still putting on a brave face. Hopefully, Ms. Mirabella would return soon to ease some of the pain.

Back at her house, after greeting Zach, Leo, and Shawn in the living room, Mirabella prepared to head upstairs.

"Mira, is mom not coming home tonight?" Shawn asked, knowing his wife had taken their daughter out to dinner with friends.

Mirabella had just set foot on the stairs when she heard Shawn's question and paused. She turned back to him, a puzzled look on her face. "Isn't mom back already?"

Shawn blinked. "No, she isn't."

1/2

11:20

\*Oh... She just dropped me off. Didn't she come in?"

After a moment of thought, Shawn pulled out his phone. "I'll give her a call and check."

Mirabella nodded, not particularly worried, and without another word, she continued up the stairs. Once in her room, she retrieved a box containing silver needles from her chest, and soon, she was hurrying

back downstairs.

"Sis, heading out again?" Zach called out to her in surprise.

“Yeah, got something to take care of. I’ll be back soon,” she replied, nodding. Then she looked at Shawn and inquired, “Where did mom go?”

Thinking of his wife’s words over the phone, Shawn simply said, “She went to the supermarket.”

“Alright, then you guys should head to bed early. I’m heading out,” Mirabella didn’t further.

press

Seeing this, Zach stood up. “What’s the rush? Where do you need to go? Want me to drive you?”

“No need. It’s just next door,” Mirabella declined with a wave of her hand. She quickly left the house, her steps brisk. Zach hadn’t even fully processed her departure when the sound of the front door closing echoed through the entryway.

## Chapter 387

Mirabella made her way next door once again.

Nikolai caught sight of her returning with an antiqued–looking iron box cradled in her arms. and couldn’t help his curiosity. “What’s in the box?” he inquired, wondering if it was yet another concoction of hers.

Mirabella set the iron box on a nearby table, her fingers deftly undoing the latch. The box opened with ease, revealing sheepskin–wrapped silver needles. “Acupuncture needles,” she responded to Nikolai’s question.

She unfurled the sheepskin to disclose an array of silver needles of varying lengths, at least a hundred in total.

Nikolai watched in amazement. His family, the Reeves, had a long lineage in alternative healing and did their fair share of acupuncture, but they never crafted such an extensive collection of needles. Once his initial shock subsided, Nikolai asked, “Are you planning on using these on James?”

Mirabella nodded, her mind busying itself with how to strategically place the needles to alleviate James' nerve pain while also addressing his chronic ailments.

"I've

just tried acupuncture on James, but it seemed to worsen his pain," said Nikolai, a hint of concern in his voice.

"You can't stick to the conventional methods," Mirabella remarked, her finger gliding across the row of needles.

"Will you use unconventional methods? What might those be?" pondered Nikolai, stroking his long beard thoughtfully.

Mirabella picked up a needle and turned to Wyatt. "Strip James down, please."

James, instinctively clutching at his shirt, blurted, "What the--"

Wyatt, understanding the directive, nodded briskly and moved to the bedside. When he caught the apprehension in James' actions, he chuckled slightly. "Boss, Ms. Mirabella is simply preparing you for the session," Wyatt murmured. There was no need to act as if he were about to be defiled.

James shot him a look. Wyatt pretended not to notice James' glare and proceeded to help James out of his shirt. Turning back to Mirabella, he asked, "Should the trousers come off

as well?"

James was visibly irritated. That bloody scoundrel.

"Yeah," Mirabella replied nonchalantly, acting as if there was nothing amiss.

With a touch of trepidation, Wyatt followed through with Mirabella's instructions, sweat

115

beading on his forehead. After placing the trousers on a nearby chair, he looked back at Mirabella, who appeared puzzled by his reaction—it was just clothing, after all.

Quickly. Mirabella selected a needle and turned her attention to James, pausing as her gaze swept over his body. Not bad, she thought. Everything was in rather good proportion

James, acutely aware of her scrutiny, felt a wave of discomfort wash over his handsome face and gave a cough to break the tension.

Mirabella gracefully averted her gaze, adding, "A doctor sees no gender, no need for embarrassment."

"It might hurt a bit when I insert the needles, but it should be less painful than the nerve pain you're experiencing. Just bear with it."

No sooner had she finished speaking than the silver needle in her hand swiftly punctured a major point on his chest. Nikolai, observing her first placement, was taken aback once more. The spot she targeted was one of the most delicate in the human body, a place where the slightest misstep could cause unimaginable pain.

And as she continued with the second, the third needle... with each casual insertion, Nikolai's heart skipped a beat. Her technique was unconventional, almost reckless. It was a nerve-racking sight.

Before long. Mirabella's needle placements grew faster, and in no time, James' body was adorned with silver needles at every major point.

Chapter 388



After inserting the final needle, Mirabella stood up straight and let out a deep breath. Her face was a shade paler than usual, and her smooth forehead was dotted with fine beads.

of sweat.

Nikolai, finally coming to his senses from his initial shock, glanced at Mirabella and asked, "Is... is that it?"

Mirabella reached for a tissue from the bedside table and gently dabbed the sweat from her brow, saying slowly. "Not yet. Right now, the silver needles have just been placed. I'll need to probe and assess the situation before I remove them."

At this, Nikolai looked utterly dumbfounded, his face a mixture of incredulity and confusion. He knew about acupuncture, but probing was foreign to him. He wanted to ask but felt too embarrassed. He couldn't help but feel that his own proudly mastered medical skills were elementary compared to the young lady's techniques. The way Mirabella discerned and understood the body's points seemed more intuitive than his decades of studying alternative medicine. It was a bit hard to swallow.

Mirabella pulled a chair over to sit by the bed and then took James' pulse again, her delicate eyebrows smoothing out. "How are you feeling now?"

Only Mirabella and Nikolai remained in the room; Wyatt and Curtis had stepped out while she was working with the needles.

James tried to muster a smile but couldn't. He quietly watched Mirabella, his eyes intense and still. After a moment, he parted his lips and, with a strong voice, said, "Very well."

Mirabella nodded, her expression calm as she remarked, "Your voice suggests as much."

James gave a non-committal grunt.

Checking the time, Mirabella turned to Nikolai. "You can go and rest, Nikolai. I've got this covered."

Despite his eagerness to learn about probing, Nikolai heard her suggestion and knew that sticking around wouldn't be helpful. Reluctantly, he left the room.

Outside, Wyatt and Curtis immediately queried Nikolai upon his exit, "How is it going?"

Nikolai stroked his long beard, his face no longer bearing its earlier tension, and said, coolly, "With Mirabella in there, what's there to worry about?"

Hearing this, Wyatt and Curtis felt their anxiety lessen.

"Mirabella's medical skills might even surpass mine. It might be best for her to manage James' treatments from now on. There's hope for curing old ailments," Nikolai added with a sense of wonder.

11:21

The times are indeed changing," he thought.

Wyatt and Curtis exchanged a look of visible shock. They knew Mirabella was a top-notch alchemist, but they hadn't imagined her medical prowess could make Nikolai feel inferior. This was... alarming.

She was only eighteen—what a terrifying thought!

Nikolai waved to them and then headed toward the staircase. He paused after a few steps, turning back to add, "Oh, and you might want to prepare some energy-boosting chicken soup for Mirabella. She'll probably be quite drained after tonight's session."

Curtis nodded and offered, "Let me walk you out, Nikolai."

"I'll arrange for something to be made for Ms. Mirabella," Wyatt volunteered, taking on the task.

Soon, Nikolai left the villa.

Back in the bedroom, Mirabella continued with her treatment after a short rest.

The probing method using silver needles was complex. It was a proud and secret technique of the Massolio family, so unique that it could bring someone back from the brink of death.

## Chapter 389

Mirabella hadn't employed this technique in ages, yet her movements were as deft as ever. Her eyes sparkled with a touch of excitement as she worked.

The pain that had been plaguing James had subsided considerably. As he watched Mirabella, he couldn't help but feel like an odd specimen under her inquisitive gaze. "Why do I get the feeling you're practicing on me, kiddo?" James squinted his eyes at her.

Mirabella's hand, which was deftly handling the needles, paused. She lifted her gaze to meet his, her face unmoved as she responded, "You're overthinking it."

Without another word, she returned to her task, inserting the final few needles with precision. After a brief two seconds, she pressed gently on the spots and smoothly withdrew them.

Half an hour later, Mirabella finished removing the last needle. She casually grabbed a thin blanket from nearby and draped it over James before collapsing into the chair with a sigh of exhaustion. Her face was even paler than when she first started, and her hands rested limply on her lap, devoid of strength.

"That'll do for today. Give it a few days, and we'll have another session. You shouldn't experience today's symptoms again," she said, catching her breath. "As for your chronic issue, I'll need to do some more research."

"Understood," James replied in his deep, resonant voice. He slowly sat up, letting the blanket slip away to reveal his toned torso and his chiseled features, which carried an air of ascetic beauty.

Catching a glimpse, Mirabella averted her gaze nonchalantly and advised, "You'd better lie down and rest some more."

James raised an eyebrow and methodically began to dress. "I'm feeling much better already." No surprise there, given who was at work.

Clearing her throat, Mirabella simply said, "Good, that's good." She then stood up, using the chair for support, and turned her back to James as she began to pack away the needles.

By the time she was done, James had dressed and strolled to her side. His eyes lingered on the slow process of her packing and then drifted to the antique iron box beside her. The box, free of rust, was etched with intricate patterns. As he leaned in for a closer look, Mirabella quickly scooped it up.

She opened the box, placed the needles inside, then closed it and cradled it in her arms. Looking up at James, she said, "I should get going. Call me if you need anything."

Noticing the fatigue etched on her lovely face, James' lips twitched into a faint smile. "Thank you for tonight."

With a casual wave, Mirabella replied, "Don't mention it. Just make sure to transfer the payment." With that, she made her way toward the door.

James paused for a moment before following suit.

As Mirabella opened the door, she found Wyatt pacing anxiously. "Ms. Mirabella, I was worried about James and-" he began but stopped mid-sentence when he saw James standing right behind her. "Boss, you all right?"

James nodded.

Wyatt sighed in relief, his eyes brimming with gratitude as he turned back to Mirabella. Recalling the chicken soup he had simmering in the kitchen as a gesture of thanks, he blurted out, "Ah, Ms. Mirabella, I've prepared some chicken soup for you. I'll go fetch it right away."

With that, he hurriedly descended the stairs.

Raising an eyebrow, Mirabella turned to James and remarked, "Wyatt sure is attentive."

Hearing this, James merely narrowed his eyes, a knowing look crossing his face.

## Chapter 390

Mirabella descended the stairs. She finished her chicken soup and readied herself to head home.

TI walk you, James offered, standing up.

Just as Mirabella was about to decline, Wyatt interjected, "Boss, you should still be recovering Let me escort Ms. Mirabella instead."

James merely cast a casual glance at Wyatt. Was this what they called being attentive?

Feeling an inexplicable dangerous chill, Wyatt shivered.

Without a word, James slowly made his way to the front door, his upright posture belying any sign of weakness. Wyatt stroked his chin, conceding he may have misspoken.

Mirabella, casting a glance at James' retreating figure, said nothing more and proceeded outside.

She had told her brother, Zach, she'd be back soon, and now, nearly two hours later, she could only imagine the nagging that awaited her..

When Mirabella and James stepped outside the mansion, they were greeted by the sight of Zach waiting under the streetlight. Pressing her fingers to her temples, Mirabella had anticipated this.

James, noticing Zach from a distance, narrowed his eyes slightly before turning to Mirabella. "Is he waiting for you?"

Mirabella nodded and whispered, "My brother, Zach."

James' expression revealed no surprise. He pondered for a moment before stepping beside Mirabella as they approached Zach.

As they drew near, Mirabella called out with a hint of exasperation, "Zach."

Zach hummed in response, his gaze quickly shifting to James.

The man had a striking appearance and an air of aristocracy. Zach's eyes narrowed with an instinctive sharpness. "Mira, who's this?"

"He used to be my tutor," Mirabella replied smoothly, without batting an eye.

The corners of James' mouth twitched, and he politely nodded at Zach, choosing to ignore the hostility. "Hello there."

Zach, having heard about this tutor, was taken aback. A tutor in his early twenties? Could that be right? Something didn't quite add up.

Casting a suspicious glance at his sister and seeing no sign of deceit, Zach greeted James, "Pleased to meet you, sir!"

Hearing Zach's respectful address, Mirabella covered her face in silent embarrassment, coughed, and then turned to her brother. "Alright, Zach, it's getting late; we should head home."

Zach shot her a look. Now she remembered it was late. However, he didn't press further, simply nodding politely to James before walking home with Mirabella.

James watched their departing figures with a thoughtful gaze, then turned and re-entered the mansion.

Zach grew increasingly skeptical at the entrance and turned to Mirabella, who was keying in the gate code. "Mira, that guy..."

entered the fast digit, Mirabella raised her hand to cut him off, her expression quite serious, Dony

?D

Zach was speechless. Who could be so audaciously righteous?

The gate swung open, and Mirabella stepped inside.

Zach lingered for a moment, lost in thought, before following her into the yard. Just then, the glare of headlights approached from behind, causing him to pause and turn around.

Seeing their mother returning, Zach promptly opened the gate to let the car in.