

The Double (or More ?) Life of The Fake Heiress

#Chapter 71 - Read The Double (or More ?) Life of The Fake Heiress Chapter 71

Chapter 71

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The results of the preliminary exams had just been released, and students, even those who hadn't participated, were whipping out their phones in a frenzy to check the scores. Everyone was curious about Mirabella, the new girl rumored to have pulled strings to get into Parkside High School. They wondered if her score would be an abysmal twenty or 50, However, at the moment when they saw the ranking of the grades, everyone's eyes almost popped out.

"Holy smokes, is the new kid some kind of genius? She nailed a perfect score!" "My eyes must be deceiving me. Wasn't she the one they said got in through pulling strings?" "In this day and age, pulling strings gets you perfect scores? What was the point of my honest effort to get in?"

"Could it be cheating? Think about it, someone who got into Parkside High School through connections could easily snag a copy of the exam answers. Plus, she's an arts student and she aced the science questions too?"

"It's downright spooky." The chatter was nonstop, and the consensus was split between shock and skepticism over Mirabella's score. When Mirabella returned to the classroom, she was met with a barrage of complicated stares.

"Hey, Mirabella. When the teacher asked you to go to the office, was it about the results of the preliminary exams?" Jenna asked, her face a blend of excitement and gossip.

Mirabella just arched an eyebrow and hummed noncommittally.

"You're so secretive, scoring top marks on the prelims." Jenna smacked her lips and added, "For an arts student to ace the science questions, that's seriously impressive."

Mirabella offered a smile. "That's why I told you to hit the books."

Jenna was momentarily speechless, feeling mocked. But then something clicked in Jenna's mind, and she leaned over Mirabella's desk to pull out several books that she often saw Mirabella reading.

Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. Jenna blinked. "You read these every break?" Mirabella raised an eyebrow. "What else? Billionaire CEOs in love stories?"

Jenna burst into laughter, feeling truly deflated. Jenna had always assumed that Mirabella, being the artsy type, was buried in literature or history during her free time. But who would've guessed?

No wonder on the first day of school, Mirabella had asked to borrow a chemistry textbook—she'd been double-dipping in arts and sciences all along.

Jenna shook her head. "Mirabella, you're a freak of nature."

Mirabella just chuckled.

"But now, let's see who would say you got in through pulling strings." Jenna hummed proudly, basking in reflected glory.

Take that, you jealous bitches!

Summer hadn't been at school today because she was recording a TV show and had taken the day off. She hadn't even had a chance to check her prelim scores.

However, her agent, aware that Summer had participated in the "BrainSpark Nationals," had kept an eye on the results for her. As soon as the backstage rehearsal was over, the agent handed her his phone with her scores and ranking. "Summer, solid performance in the prelims—138. As expected of a top student, you're amazing," the agent said with a beaming smile.

11:40 Chapter 71 In his mind, he was already strategizing how to leverage "BrainSpark Nationals" to boost Summer's popularity.

It was rare to find someone in the industry with Summer's background—good looks and genuine academic prowess. If they played their cards right to highlight her strengths, she was bound to become a star.

Summer smiled as she took her agent's phone.

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Summer was brimming with confidence about her test scores. Since stepping out of the examination hall the day before, she felt certain that, despite a few vague answers in the humanities section, everything else was spot on. Passing the preliminary round was, in her mind, a foregone conclusion. Scoring one hundred and thirty-eight and ranking sixth was well within her expectations.

Smug smile played on Summer's lips. She had barely glanced at the results on her phone before she almost handed it back to her agent. But then, a thought struck her, and she smoothly withdrew her hand, her fingers delicately swiping up the screen.

Summer scrolled down to the bottom of the ranking page, but still did not see Mirabella's name. A frown creased Summer's brow. Hadn't Mirabella taken the test? Why wasn't her name listed? Could it be that Mirabella didn't pass the preliminaries?

That thought deepened the smile on Summer's face. She knew it. With Mirabella's ability, how could she make the cut? With a soft chuckle, Summer's fingertip inadvertently tapped the 'back to top' arrow. As she was about to close the

page, the name Mirabella suddenly jumped out at her. First place, one hundred and thirty points, Mirabella.

The smile on Summer's lips froze, and her grip on the phone tightened involuntarily. How was this possible? How could Mirabella have gotten a perfect score? How could Mirabella be at the top of the list?

"Summer, you look a bit pale. Are you worn out from the rehearsal?" her agent asked with concern upon noticing his client's unusual demeanor.

Summer's eyes flickered, and she casually handed the phone back to her agent, her voice gentle. "I'm fine. Maybe I just got too wrapped up in the performance. I'm still coming down from that."

Her agent patted her shoulder reassuringly, “Take a breather here, and once it’s time for the live recording. I’ll come to get you.” “Thanks.” Summer replied graciously.

As her agent took the phone and started to leave, he paused and turned back to Summer, “Summer, there will be a Q&A segment. I’ll mention your competition to the producers. Just play it by ear when you answer, alright?”

Summer blinked, then nodded in agreement.

Mirabella had sailed through the preliminaries with a perfect score, a feat unmatched in the dozens of schools across Ashford. Her name sat confidently at the top of the official BrainSpark Nationals citywide rankings. Even the student in second place trailed by nine points—a testament to her solid grasp of both the arts and sciences.

At the city Education Association headquarters, the buzz was about the extraordinary student from Parkside High School who had aced the test, even cracking John’s notoriously tricky physics problem. “This student is quite remarkable,” the secretary-general commented, holding up the test paper with admiration before passing it

to the chairman.

The chairman, adjusting his glasses, took the paper and cast his eyes downward. Before he even examined the answers, the neat handwriting caught his attention. It was pleasing to the eye.

“Nice penmanship,” the chairman remarked generously. “The handwriting reflects the person. This student must be quite cultivated.”

“Humanities students tend to have a bit more finesse than those in the sciences, I suppose,” the secretary—general replied with a chuckle.

The chairman raised his eyebrows in surprise. “Really? A humanities student solved John’s physics conundrum?”

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“The person’s got something special about them, that’s what I was saying,” the Secretary—General mused, his gaze drifting to some distant thought.

The Chairman took a moment to ponder the comment before turning his attention to the stack of exam papers on his desk. He was particularly interested in the last question—the one John had crafted, a complex physics problem.

After a while, a look of admiration spread across the Chairman’s face. Leaning back in his chair, he let out an impressed sigh. “Indeed, this student’s not ordinary at all. Look at how elegantly he set up these equations, not a single superfluous step, and the method used is quite original—simpler than the solution John sent us.”

Although the Secretary—General wasn’t well-versed in physics, he could tell from the Chairman’s reaction that whoever had solved the problem had an incredible mind. The Secretary—General’s expression became slightly restrained and said, “John has been searching for a protégé with an exceptional gift in physics. Should we recommend this Parkside High School student who aced the test?”

The Chairman removed his glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose, giving himself a few seconds before replying. “Let’s not rush things. An initial test like this doesn’t show us much. After all this top scorer is a humanities student. For all we know, this student might have just lucked out on John’s question.”

The Secretary—General found it to be reasonable. “Alright then, we’ll wait and see how the student does in the city preliminaries.” “Agreed,” the Chairman said with a nod, placing the paper back on the table.

The Secretary—General’s gaze lingered on the exam for a moment longer before he suggested, “Should we take a photo of this physics solution and send it to John? I bet he’d be...

But the Chairman raised his hand to interrupt. “John taking the time to contribute a problem to our competition was already a huge honor for the Education Association. For him, this type of question is not worth mentioning at all. It’s just another approach. There’s really no need to make a fuss and present it before him as if it’s something extraordinary.”

The Secretary—General touched his nose in acknowledgment, “Alright, I get it. I’ll archive the test paper then.” With that, he picked up the papers.

“Go on,” the Chairman dismissed him.

However, just as the Secretary—General had taken a couple of steps, the Chairman seemed to recall something and called out to his retreating figure. “By the way, how did a student named Summer from Parkside High School do on the test?”

The Secretary—General stopped in his tracks. He remembered Summer because his own daughter was a fan of hers. Turning back, he reported. “One hundred thirty-eight points, sixth place. Not bad at all. He paused before adding. “She’s somewhat of a campus celebrity, a science student, and quite talented to score like this.”

The Chairman tapped his fingers lightly on the desktop. “Alright, I’m aware. You can go.”

The Secretary—General glanced at the Chairman, wondering why he had suddenly inquired about Summer, but he didn’t ask further and simply left.

Saturday.

After finishing breakfast, Mirabella was practically dragged to the local supermarket by Delilah. They loaded up on groceries and an assortment of snacks.

Delilah turned to her daughter, who was laden with bags and looking utterly defeated, and couldn't help but let out a chuckle. Trying to help carry some bags, she teased. “You shouldn’t be such a homebody, sweetie. It’s good to get out and about instead of becoming a bookworm.”

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Mirabella flatly refused her mother’s help and deadpanned. “You just need someone to carry your shopping.”

Delilah coughed sheepishly, realizing her daughter was strong enough to handle the load, and the dream of having a dandy and delicate daughter was just that—a dream.

“Are we expecting company today?” Mirabella asked, glancing at the bag of groceries in her right hand.

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Chapter 74 Delilah spoke with a hint of mystery in her voice, “Well, they’re not exactly guests.” Mirabella arched an eyebrow, “Summer?”

Even though Summer had returned to the Gilberts, as far as the Davises were concerned, she probably wouldn’t be considered a guest.

“Not her.” Delilah shook her head, a smile playing on her lips, “Why would you jump to Summer all of a sudden?” Mirabella looked casual, “Just a wild guess.”

With the grocery store bustling with people coming and going, Mirabella wasn’t too keen to press on with questions, so she simply said. “Let’s head back.” With that, she was already walking out, arms laden with two hefty bags of groceries.

Watching her daughter’s slender figure exhibit surprising strength, Delilah couldn’t help but muse internally once more: A delicate and frail daughter was simply out of the question.

Once home. Delilah immediately dove into the kitchen to get busy. Mirabella, lost in thought, glanced at her mother and then retreated to her room.

It wasn’t until past six in the evening that the Davis family doorbell chimed. “Mira, would you mind getting the door?” Delilah called out from the midst of her culinary endeavors.

Mirabella hummed a response, pocketed her phone, and got up to answer the door.

“Ah... did I get the wrong house?” The man outside, about to greet Delilah, caught sight of Mirabella and paused for a second before quickly swallowing the word.

Mirabella frowned slightly. “Hmm?”

The man was holding an armful of items, stepped back to double-check the house number against the door frame, “No mistake there.”

He then looked back at Mirabella, internally admiring her striking beauty, cleared his throat, and asked uncertainly. “This is the Davis residence, right?”

“It is,” Mirabella answered with a cool and detached voice, her exquisite face showing little emotion. Even her voice was a delight.

However, although the girl looked unfamiliar, he couldn’t help but notice a resemblance to his client in her features. His eyes narrowed, and he suddenly remembered something, exclaiming. “Are you Leo’s biological sister, the one who was switched at birth?” He knew Summer, so guessing the identity of the girl before him wasn't difficult.

Mirabella stared at him with indifferent eyes and remained silent.

Pretty, with a lovely voice and a cool demeanor — she didn’t look like someone who had grown up in the countryside. Collins's surprise flickered briefly before he hurriedly introduced himself, “Hello. I’m your brother Leo’s agent, Collins.”

At the mention of this, a flicker of surprise crossed Mirabella’s eyes. So, her mother had been bustling about all day, stubbornly keeping the identity of their visitor a secret- it was Leo?

Mirabella’s gaze shifted, sizing up Collins. This man who claimed to be an agent, so her estranged brother was a performer?

Feeling scrutinized by Mirabella, Collins reflexively straightened his posture. Although she was just a young girl, she somehow imposed an inexplicable pressure. How odd!

After she gathered her thoughts, Mirabella’s lips formed a slight smile, and she politely nodded at the person, “Nice to meet you. Then, she swung the door wide open, inviting him in.

Collins, snapping out of it, chose not to enter. Instead, he set down the several elegantly wrapped bags at the entrance, smiling. “I won't intrude. I’m just here to deliver some things on behalf of Leo. I’ll be on my way shortly.”

Chapter 74 Mirabella’s expression cooled upon hearing this, and with a half-smile, she asked, “He’s not coming home tonight?”

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Collins had been hustling in the entertainment industry for well over a decade, clawing his way to the top until he became one of the most sought-after agents around. His knack for reading a room and picking up on subtle cues was

second to none.

At the moment, Leo's sister was smiling, but to Collins, it felt like there was a chill behind that smile. He was about to nod and say yes, but for some reason, he diverted, "No, something came up at the office. That movie he shot abroad needs some final touches, so he headed straight to the company after landing."

He paused before adding, "Leo knew you were coming home. He made a point of asking me to drop off this gift and said he'd swing by as soon as he's wrapped up at work."

Mirabella's smile twitched slightly as she replied in a cool tone, "Got it, thanks."

Scratching his head, Collins couldn't help but ask. "I'm heading back to the office soon. Is there anything you want me to pass on to Leo?"

Mirabella was already turning to enter the house when his question reached her. She glanced at the kitchen, then turned her gaze back to him, "Well if it's not too much trouble, let him know Mom picked up a bunch of his favorite groceries this morning."

Collins stood dumbfounded for a moment. By the time he found his words, Mirabella had already closed the door behind her. After a moment, the smile faded from his face, replaced by a look of worry. He let out a sigh and walked back toward the elevator.

Delilah stepped out of the kitchen, with spatula in hand, her cheerful expression faltering when she saw only her daughter, "Who was that ringing the doorbell just now, honey? Wasn't that your brother?"

“It was his agent,” Mirabella replied, placing the paper bags on the side cabinet. Delilah’s face fell slightly. “So. Leo’s not coming today?” Mirabella glanced at her, “His agent said he had some company matters to deal with.”

“Alright then,” Delilah sighed, heading back to the kitchen, muttering with a hint of irritation, “I should have objected when he wanted to get into showbiz. He never gets a break. His sister comes home after so long, and work still keeps him away.”

Mirabella just offered a mysterious smile in response.

Meanwhile, Collins didn’t head back to the office after leaving the Davis residence. Instead, he drove to an upscale villa community in the city center. After swiping his card at the gate and entering the villa, he placed his keys on the console table, switched into clean shoes, and went upstairs with a glass of water.”

“I saw your sister at your place today. She’s quite a looker, very much like you,” Collins began as he entered the master bedroom, speaking to the person lying in bed. The figure in the bed didn’t stir, lying as still as if asleep. With a sigh, Collins approached the bedside, flicked on the lamp, and said, “Your sister seemed like she really hoped you'd come

to see her. She even had me pass on a message before I left.”

At that, the person who had been motionless in the bed suddenly threw back the covers, revealing a face that bore a striking resemblance to Mirabella’s.

Leo’s hair was a mess, and his handsome face bore the unkempt despondency of neglect. He glared at Collins with a dark and fierce gaze, his voice sharp and bitter, “Can you not? Why are you telling me all this? You know exactly what I’m going through right now...”

Leo stopped mid-sentence, his lips curling into a mocking sneer, his voice deflating, “Just get out, and don’t bother coming back.”

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Seeing that Leo finally had some reaction, Collins, as if accustomed to his erratic way of speaking, handed over the water in his hand, and said with a somewhat solemn tone. “Leo, when are you gonna stop throwing yourself this pity party?”

Leo stared blankly at the ceiling, his brooding gaze quickly replaced by the stillness of a stagnant pond. After an agonizing silence, he spoke with a bitter edge, “Not being able to get back on stage is like a death sentence to me. I’m practically useless, man. Do you get that?”

Collins opened his mouth, then closed it, unsure of what to say next. He understood all too well the turmoil eating away at Leo.

Leo was his discovery, a prodigy in music production, singing, and dancing—a natural-born superstar destined for the spotlight. But a single accident had shattered his foundation, and for someone as fiercely proud as Leo, it was a devastating blow.

“Don’t give up, Leo. Medicine’s advanced so much, someone out there’s gotta have the fix you need,” Collins said, his throat dry, repeating the same hopeful lines, even though he felt utterly helpless.

A hollow laugh escaped Leo as he closed his eyes, turning his head away from Collins, shutting down any further conversation.

Collins let out a wry chuckle, setting the glass down on the nightstand with a soft clink. He straightened up, schooling his emotions into neutrality, and headed for the door. Then he paused, recalling something Mirabella from the Davis family had mentioned as he was leaving. Turning slightly, his voice softened, “Your sister wanted me to tell you that your mom hit the supermarket early today, and stocked up on all your favorite grub.”

A few silent seconds passed before Collins seemed to reach a decision. “Leo, I don’t want to cover for you with your folks anymore. I didn’t tell your sister that you weren’t coming home tonight either. Whether you go back or not, that’s on you.”

“Pm out.” The sound of the door closing echoed from the entrance. The bedroom, at this moment, became very quiet, in a way that was eerily unsettling.

Leo on the bed opened his eyes, with a complex expression in his eyes. He clenched his fists, frustration boiling over as he pulled the covers over his head.

Ten minutes later, he threw the covers off with a curse, sitting up abruptly, and after a moment of indecision, he got out of bed. Around eight in the evening.

Delilah sat on the couch, glancing between the clock on the wall and the front door, her face betraying her anxious wait. Mirabella lounged beside her, idly scrolling through her phone, seemingly detached from the tension in the air.

“Mira, you hungry? Go ahead and eat,” Delilah suggested, her voice tinged with motherly concern.

Mirabella put her phone away, feigning nonchalance. “Maybe Leo’s tied up with something. He might not make it back tonight.”

But Delilah shook her head, her smile unwavering. “Your brother might be busy, but he doesn’t break his word. If his agent said he’s coming, he’ll be here.”

In truth, if her son were really coming, they wouldn’t need an agent to drop off gifts in his stead.

Mirabella’s expression remained neutral, tempted to speak her mind, yet choosing to hold her tongue upon seeing the hopeful look plastered across Delilah’s face.

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Ashort while later, the doorbell rang. “That's gotta be your brother,” Delilah said confidently, rising to her feet and heading toward the entrance.

Mirabella raised an eyebrow, a hint of surprise flickering in her clear eyes.

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As Leo stepped into the living room, Delilah, his mother, pointed towards Mirabella, who had just risen from the couch, and said, "Leo, this is your little sister, Mira."

Leo followed his mother's gaze. The girl was totally gorgeous, with a cute yet striking look about her, her pale cheeks shimmering with a luminescent glow under the lights. She was dressed down in an oversized tee paired with comfy shorts, perfect for lounging at home. Her legs were long, slender, and perfectly straight-surpassing the beauty of any model or celebrity he had ever encountered.

Aside from her looks, there was an air about her that seemed casual, yet inexplicably, she exuded a cool, edgy vibe. She wasn't coy, nor did she exhibit any sign of timidity, and she certainly didn't possess the fragility often associated with other girls,

Initially, Leo felt indifferent about the sister he had never met. Even when Collins had spoken highly of her, Leo remained unimpressed. After all, they had grown up in different worlds, and he had little patience for overly delicate girls.

However, the girl in front of him was unexpectedly intriguing, and the first impression was far from objectionable. The aloofness that usually guarded Leo's expression eased somewhat.

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While he appraised Mirabella, she boldly returned his scrutiny. Frankly, Leo didn't quite match the image she had conjured in her mind, His appearance was unmistakably a testament to the Davis family's renowned good looks, but judging by the way his agent had delivered gifts that afternoon, she had pegged him as exceedingly arrogant.

Now, observing him, she recognized the arrogance, but it seemed innate rather than directed at anyone in particular. Someone with such a demeanor, she mused, must be genuinely strong, with no need to curry favor with anyone.

Mirabella found herself surprised, questioning her own earlier assessments. With such an imposing presence and being in showbiz, why hadn't she seen him featured in commercials before? Could it be that he wasn't actually that famous?

As she pondered this, Mirabella withdrew her inquisitive gaze and calmly, yet politely, greeted, “Hi, Leo.”

“Yeah, good to have you back,” Leo said, nodding slightly. His tone was casual. He paused for a moment as if realizing something, then added with a hint of regret. “Sorry, things were rushed, and I forgot to bring you a present.”

Mirabella’s eyes wandered to a cabinet not far away, where items from Collins’s delivery rested.

Before she could respond, Delilah chimed in from beside her, “Didn’t your agent bring over a bunch of gifts this afternoon?” Delilah had already moved to the cabinet and began to sift through the items.

At this, Leo’s gaze flickered briefly, and he replied. “Those were Collins’s choices. When I get the chance, I’ll personally pick out something for my little sis.”

Delilah was visibly surprised. Leo’s personality was quite peculiar, arrogant, aloof, and seemingly indifferent. Even with Summer, who had grown up with him since childhood, he tended to ignore her. Emmitt had harbored biases against Mira earlier, which made Delilah worry about how her other sons, especially Leo, would handle it. However, from the looks of it now, Leo seemed to have had a favorable impression of Mira.

“It’s okay, you don’t have to go out of your way to get me anything.” Mirabella said with a sweetly polite tone.

Leo’s brow furrowed, seemingly unwilling to accept the refusal. After pondering for a few seconds, he reached into his pocket, pulled out his phone, and said, “I don’t know what you like. How about this—you take some money and buy something you want.”

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Leo had added Mirabella on Messenger quite a while ago, but back then, learning that his sister had been raised in the countryside — no offense intended — he worried she might be a bit of a pest. So, even after connecting, he never struck up a conversation with her.

With a nickname clearly noted, it didn't take Leo long to find the chat with Mirabella. His fingers tapped several times on the screen as he entered an amount in the money transfer panel.

"I can only send two hundred grand a day. Take this for now, and I'll send more tomorrow. Just buy whatever you like, and if it's not enough, let me know," Leo said with nonchalant ease.

The notification sound from her phone signalled another hefty transfer. Was this some kind of family gene? It must be, right?!

Rubbing her temples, Mirabella didn't even pull out her phone. She was about to decline when Leo's voice came through once more.

"If you don't take it, I'll think you're still mad, and you don't like your new brother." Mirabella fell silent. Listen to that this family all had the same methodical way of forcefully giving money. 23

Still reeling from the forced windfall, Mirabella felt a bit spaced out even while sitting down to dinner. The facade of a poor family life had been skewed, and now, with Leo's flashy moves upon their first meeting, the situation was well beyond the definition of poverty.

"Mira, what's on your mind? You seem distracted," Delilah asked with concern next to her. It was the first time Delilah saw the kid so out of it ever since she sat down at the table.

Mirabella snapped back to reality and shook her head with a complex expression, "Nothing."

Leo glanced over at her, the young girl's face still a bit dazed. Perhaps due to their blood relation, he suddenly found this expression, which would seem silly on someone else, quite endearing on his sister.

"By the way, Leo, why don't you stay at home a bit longer this time? Work's important, but so is your health," Shawn chimed in.

At these words, Leo's grip on his fork tightened slightly, and his eyes narrowed. His handsome features showed no sign of disturbance, and he responded in an indifferent tone, "Probably not. My schedule's packed for the year. I have to fly out to Lakewood tomorrow afternoon to shoot a music

video. It's tight." Finishing his explanation, he lowered his head and resumed eating.

"You insisted on going into music, working yourself to exhaustion. Look how thin you've gotten since you've been back," Delilah said with heartfelt worry.

Leo swallowed a mouthful of somewhat dry rice and after a few seconds, he looked up with a forced smile, "Losing a bit of weight is good. It's needed for the showbiz."

Delilah shook her head helplessly, "You're so young. Your health should come first."

A bitter smile touched Leo's lips as he hummed in acknowledgment, more to appease her than anything else. Mirabella looked up just in time to catch his strained expression. Though he seemed natural, it was clear that the ease was somewhat feigned. She pondered for a moment, but she didn't ask further.

Everyone has their secrets.

After dinner, Leo only lingered in the living room for half an hour before concocting an excuse that he absolutely had to leave. "| can't shake the feeling that there's something off about Leo," Delilah mused, frowning once Leo had left.

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Men just aren't as detail-oriented as women. Shawn patted his wife's hand. "He's probably just exhausted. Didn't you hear him? He just got back from an international flight today."

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"But | still feel something's off," Delilah said with a furrowed brow. "In the past, no matter what, he would stay with us for a while when he came back. But did you see earlier? He seemed like he couldn't wait to get out of this house,"

Mirabella had already returned to her room, which was why Delilah continued, "If it weren't for the fact that he didn't seem to reject Mira, I would've thought he was avoiding staying here because of her."

But clearly, that wasn't the case.

Shawn pondered for a few seconds before suggesting. "How about we give his agent a call tomorrow?" Delilah nodded in agreement. "That might be a good idea. Otherwise, I'll just keep worrying,"

"Don't overthink it."

After Mirabella took a shower, she settled in front of her computer, opened a web browser, and typed in the name Leo. Pages of results popped up instantly, but none seemed to be linked to the Leo that was her brother.

Mirabella stroked her chin, puzzled. Could it be that this Leo had no real fame to speak of?

After a moment of thought, her fingers flew across the keyboard, entering a string of web addresses. Soon enough, the page redirected, and after a two-step verification, she successfully logged onto The Mirror's website. She opened her personal friends list and messaged someone with the nickname "Oracle."

Bald Baby: [You there? Need you to look someone up for me.] The Oracle's status showed online, but there was no immediate reply, possibly busy with something else.

Mirabella wasn't in a hurry. She leaned back in her chair, the flickering light from the computer screen reflecting on her face, giving her an air of nonchalance.

About five or six minutes later, Oracle finally replied. Oracle: [Sorry about that, got held up. Who do you need info on? Please let me know.]

Mirabella's eyes lowered as her fingertips rested on the keyboard, ready to type, when her phone suddenly rang. James? Confusion crossed Mirabella's face. What was he calling about at this hour?

After a brief hesitation, she picked up the phone and pressed the answer button.

A minute later, "Got it. I'll be right there." She ended the call, her expression turning grave.

She stared at the chat box waiting for her reply on the computer screen, her fingers moving swiftly as she typed: [Gotta go, emergency. Talk later.]

Without waiting for a response, she closed the webpage, stood up, grabbed a jacket from the closet, and hurried out. Downstairs, Shawn and Delilah had already retired to their rooms. Without disturbing them, Mirabella grabbed her keys

and left the house.

Twenty minutes later, at the hospital.

As soon as Mirabella stepped out of the cab, she saw James waiting at the entrance. She approached him, her voice low with concern, "How's my grandmother?"

James led her toward the ward as he spoke, "She's just out of critical condition."

Relief washed over Mirabella, her tense expression softened as she glanced at him, "Thanks, I owe you one. Lucky you were there."

The corners of James's lips twitched into a faint smile, his chiseled features softly illuminated by the light, "It's nothing." They soon arrived at the ward.

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Catherine had been moved from the emergency room to a regular one, where a duty doctor was monitoring her vital signs. Mirabella stood outside, not immediately entering, but quietly watching through the glass window, her gaze intense and contemplative.

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James glanced at Mirabella, whose expression had clouded over as if she had become someone else entirely. After a long moment, he spoke up gently, "Your grandma's going to be just fine."

Mirabella murmured a soft acknowledgment. Her eyelids drooped slightly, casting faint shadows beneath her long lashes. She sat quietly, showing no outward signs of distress.

Soon, the door to the hospital room swung open from the inside. Mirabella lifted her head and walked over with calm steps.

The doctor removed his mask, eyeing both Mirabella and James with a mix of seriousness and reproach. "The patient is stable for now, but can't you youngsters keep your tempers in check? Don't you know she has a weak heart and can't handle the stress?"

A flicker of emotion passed through Mirabella's eyes before she responded with utmost civility and a willingness to learn from her mistake, "We understand. We'll be more careful in the future."

Perhaps persuaded by her polite demeanor and receptiveness, the doctor seemed to lose the urge to lecture further. Instead, he advised, "Go in and keep her company, but make sure not to upset her again."

"Thank you," Mirabella nodded slightly. Once the doctor and nurses had left, she stepped into the room.

Catherine had not yet awakened, an oxygen mask covering her face as she lay quietly, the monitors beside her showing a steady rhythm of vital signs.

Mirabella's gaze briefly touched the medical equipment before she casually pulled a chair over and sat by the bed.

After watching Catherine in silence for a moment, Mirabella reached out, tucking the blanket around her with a gentle touch before nonchalantly taking grandma's hand that rested beside her.

James took a seat in another chair, his eyes catching only Mirabella's profile, missing the tender gestures she made. His phone vibrated in his pocket, pulling his attention away. He withdrew it, glanced briefly at the message on the screen, and then slid the phone back into his pocket.

But within a couple of minutes, the phone buzzed again-this time, a call.

James frowned, gave Mirabella a quick look, and then stood up to walk out of the room. His footsteps were almost silent, barely audible until the door

clicked shut behind him. It was only then that Mirabella turned her head toward the door, a thoughtful expression crossing her face for a second before she looked away again.

Soon after, James returned to the room. Mirabella slowly placed Catherine's hand back under the covers and looked up at James. "Thanks for tonight. It's getting late. You should head back and get some rest. I'll stay here with her."

James raised an eyebrow. "You're being awfully polite."

Mirabella leaned back in her chair, her face no longer as tense as when they had first arrived at the hospital but seeming more relaxed. "Not really, you've got things to do, right?"

Her eyes flicked briefly to the phone he hadn't yet put away.

James was somewhat surprised by Mirabella's perceptiveness but he did have matters to attend to. After a brief pause, he explained, "I might be out of Ashford for a few days. If something comes up, give me a call."

"Sure," Mirabella waved him off easily, clearly not too concerned. Seeing her reaction, James just smiled and said, "I'm off then."

Soon, the room was left with only Mirabella and her grandma. After the night nurse made one last check, Mirabella settled down to rest beside the bed.