

The Girlboss 371

Chapter 371

Helen stammered, "I...I'm really happy you could come."

She wanted to clear the air after her misunderstanding with Frank before but did not know where to start.

Frank did not glance at her twice, however, and turned as he headed inside the hall.

Zeb chuckled by the entrance just then. "Hey, what present did you bring?"

Frank shot him a look. "Do I have to tell you?"

Zeb laughed coldly. "Haha! Just worried you can't afford anything for Mr. Lane's eightieth birthday. Should I lend you some money?"

Frank glanced at the present box he was holding and could tell it was another vase from its size.

He chuckled. "What, you bought another vase? Watch out and don't trip over yourself this time."

"Fuck off..." Zeb snapped, though he was tightening his grip around his present.

Frank sneered as he entered the banquet hall.

Henry was at the host table, his eyes closed to rest after some small talk with a group of bigwigs.

He would rather not be a part of such a grand celebration but had no choice to do so.

It was his eightieth birthday after all, and his grandchildren had all worked hard for it, not to mention that this benefited the family business' development.

As he opened his eyes and saw Frank, he immediately got up and waved. "Frank, over here."

Frank hurried to him, smiling, "Congratulations, Gramps--"

"Oh, save the braindead drive!" Henry chuckled, tugging at his arm. "Come here, sit."

Everyone else was left surprised by Henry's clear preferential treatment of Frank, and they were all pointing and gesturing at Frank.

"Who's the kid? Henry Lane is so friendly with him..."

"No idea."

"

One of the more knowledgeable ones said, "That's Helen's ex-husband."

"Ex-husband? Really? Why divorce him? He's such a looker..."

"What good is a pretty face? Man's never held a job for three years and kept goofing off. If he did, more would have known about him."

Everyone realized a start. "So he's just some freeloading piece of shit? No wonder Helen divorced him."

Meanwhile, Henry pulled Frank to the main table and had Frank sit beside him.

Gina, Peter, and Cindy were there too, and Gina was already snapping at Frank, "He's not

family, Henry. It's inappropriate to let him sit here."

Henry rolled his eyes. "He's my grandson as far as I'm concerned, and I can have him sit wherever I want. You can switch tables if you don't like it."

"What..." Gina was left stumped, while Peter pursed his lips beside them.

Zeb arrived just then, immediately greeting Henry, "Wishing you a happy birthday and many happy returns..."

Henry never liked him and merely nodded.

Gina and the rest, however, were awash with enthusiasm.

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Gina quickly pulled Zeb to sit beside him, "You're finally here, Mr. Larkin. Come, sit."

Cindy and Peter also promptly served him drinks and cigarettes, a privilege Frank never had.

Gina turned to Henry right then. "It's all thanks to Mr. Larkin that we can celebrate your birthday here. You should appreciate him more."

"And you can shove it," Henry snorted impatiently. "I never asked for this—the way I see it, it would have been far better if there wasn't a party at all."

"Oh, would you stop it? We'd be the ones seen in a bad light if we didn't do anything," Gina lectured.

Frank was frowning in turn.

He knew a thing or two about Riverton Hotel, and he doubted Zeb had the authority to pull strings.

"Did he really book this hall?" he asked suspiciously.

"Who else would have, if not him? You?" Peter shot back.

"The Chief of General Affairs' secretary came to visit us personally. What, are you jealous?" Cindy joined in.

"The Chief of General Affairs' secretary? Do you have his name?" Frank pressed.

"So what if we don't?" Gina stood akimbo, the picture of smugness. "Who could pull strings with the Gerald Simmons aside from Mr. Larkin?"

"Oh, stop it. It's not that big of a deal." Zeb threw up his hands in feigned humility.

Frank turned toward him. "I say, could you tell me more about what you discussed with Mr. Simmons?"

Zeb froze, not expecting Frank to press the issue.

Averting his eyes, he snapped impatiently, "Why should I tell you?"

As he lit himself a cigarette and breathed a puff without a care, Henry waved off the smoke since he hated the smell.

Seeing that Henry was having a hard time, Frank promptly snapped at Zeb, "Snuff out that cigarette. Gramps doesn't like breathing your fumes."

Gina glared at him right then and snapped, "Shut up!"

Frank simply bellowed, "Snuff it out! Don't make me do it for you on Gramps' birthday."

Zeb froze again, feeling a chill from Frank's icy glare.

Peter, however, thought nothing of it and was going to argue when Zeb stopped him. "That's alright. I'll snuff my cigarette, as long as it keeps Mr. Lane happy."

Frank's icy glare only eased when Zeb extinguished his cigarette, but Zeb was glaring at him in turn. "Don't push your luck, brat. I'm just holding back because of Mr. Lane."

"Exactly," Gina quickly said. "Don't stoop to his level, Mr. Larkin... Also, your present looks so pretty. I wonder what's inside?"

Zeb remembered with a start—he almost forgot all about that.

He quickly put his present on the table, smiling at Henry as he said, "Mr. Lane, I heard from Helen that you like antiques, so I got you something dating back a hundred years ago from the antique bazaar. I hope you like it."

Henry was finally slightly interested when he heard the word 'antique', only for Zeb to open the present and reveal a porcelain vase.

Gina promptly leapt in to shower flattery. "Oh, that's exquisite! How much does it cost?" "Oh, just a mil," Zeb bragged smugly. "It's not much, really."

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"A million is expensive!" Peter exclaimed in awe. "But I guess it's pocket change for you."

"Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Larkin." Gina smiled before turning toward Henry. "See? That's Mr. Larkin's present for you."

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Henry took out a magnifying glass to study the pattern before asking curiously, “How old did you say this was?”

Zeb smiled. “A century old. Do you like it, sir?”

Henry nodded. “It’s not bad...”

Despite disliking Zeb, he was still interested in antiques of such value.

Frank, however, was frowning. “That’s a hundred years old? Doesn’t really look like it.”

Zeb’s heart could stop even as he turned to Frank in panic. “What are you talking about?”

The real vase he bought before ended up in pieces—this time, he bought a bootleg item.

However, the stall owner assured him that even with advanced technology, only specialists could see the difference.

“Shut up!” Gina snapped at Frank again. “What would you know? And you don’t get to talk around this table!”

“I don’t know my antiques,” Frank calmly replied. “But the patterns on the vase are drawn instead of printed, and the colors are too bright as well. Gramps, you should get some to appraise it, or it won’t do if someone recognized some bootleg antique you keep in your study.”

He did not know that much about antiques, but he had seen his fair share of treasures, especially porcelain vases.

That was why he could tell right away that Zeb’s was fake, and since the Lanes would not believe him if he said that, the best way was to get a specialist to appraise it.

Henry nodded at Frank's suggestion, but Gina—who had had enough of Frank for the day- promptly snapped, "Don't listen to his nonsense, Henry. The way I see it, he's just trying to drive a wedge between you and Mr. Larkin..."

Henry frowned. "Frank's just suggesting. What are you so worried about?"

"I..." Gina was stumped.

She glanced at Zeb and saw the awkward look on his face. Worried about upsetting him, she stubbornly persisted. "Mr. Larkin's family is very rich. Why would he give you a bootleg item?"

Cindy turned to Frank and demanded coldly in turn, "At least Mr. Larkin brought a present! What did you bring anyway?"

Peter nodded repeatedly. "That's right! You came empty-handed, didn't you? That cheek of yours!"

Frank simply smiled. "Of course I brought something. It's Gramps' birthday."

He took out the velvet box he carried and picked up the painting from inside, passing it to Henry directly. "This is an art piece by Alfie Bronx himself. See if you like it?"

"Really?!" Henry's eyes lit up.

Alfie Bronx's relics were so rare that money could not even buy someone one!

He quickly unfurled the painting, nodding as he admired the vibrant, vivid colors. "This is amazing... Where did you get it, Frank?"

Frank smiled. "A friend gave it to me. It's no big deal."

“Let’s see!”

Everyone else was curious since Henry really liked Frank’s gift, only to be disappointed when they saw that it was just a painting.

Gina rolled her eyes. “What’s so impressive about that?”

“Exactly.” Peter pursed his lips. “Some dull paintings are worth a lot less than the porcelain vase.”

Henry frowned. “Dull painting? It’s an Alfie Bronx piece—did you ever finish school, not knowing who he is?”

Cindy pointed at Frank. “What, just because he said so? He could say it’s by King Arthur for all I care!”

“Haha!” Zeb laughed. “Sir, I don’t mind telling you but paintings are easiest to fake, especially if they’re old. No canvas would be preserved this well—the way I see it, it’s fake.”

Gina and the others nodded repeatedly. “Exactly. Mr. Larkin is right.”

They had not the faintest idea about antique or art, but if Zeb said so, then it must be.

“Just throw it away already, Grandpa,” Peter then told Henry. “Why would you keep a bootleg?”

Henry quickly put it away and snapped. “Shut it. I think this is the real deal, and I like it.”

He could not care less if the painting was genuine—Frank gave it to him, and he would love it, real or otherwise.

Frank chuckled in turn, really doubting that Gerald Simmons would hang a fake painting in his own study. "What makes you say it's fake? Just because you say so? Do you have evidence to prove that?"

Zeb scoffed, "You were tricked, weren't you? Why don't you tell us how much you paid for it instead?"

On the other hand, Gina noticed someone else nearby and immediately had an idea.

"You really don't know when to give up, do you?" She snorted at Frank before hurrying to an elderly man nearby. "Mr. Young!"

Frank was perplexed by what Gina was up to and watched as she pulled the man to their table, saying, "Everyone, this is Randall Young, the most famous antique appraisal in Riverton."

Henry already knew what Gina was doing since he had already met Randall thanks to his antique hobby and snapped, "That's out of line, Gina."

"What? Frank was the one who said it's real." Gina shrugged innocently. "In that nothing to worry about by letting Mr. Young take a look."

case,

he has

Peter was already laughing in his head. "Greetings, Mr. Young."

Cindy and Zeb quickly greeted Randall as well, while Gina said, "Mr. Young, we have an art piece by Alfie Bronx. Could you take a look?"

Randall simply laughed, "No, I don't even have to look to tell that it's fake."

Everyone was confused. "What? Why?"

“Because the only privately owned Bronx piece is hanging on the wall of Gerald Simmons’

office,” Randall explained. “The one and only.”

Zeb laughed snugly right then. “Hahaha! Did you hear that, Frank?”

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Zeb, Gina, Cindy, and Peter all laughed at Randall’s words.

Helen just happened to be done greeting guests when she came and heard them laughing.” What’s going on? Why’s everyone laughing?”

Peter quickly told her, “Frank brought a present, saying it’s Alfie Bronx’s work... but Mr. Young called it a fake without even needing a look!”

Helen frowned. “Why?”

“Because the only real privately owned Bronx piece is hanging in Gerald Simmons’ office!” Cindy laughed, clutching her stomach and almost falling over.

Helen glanced at Frank and sighed.

She could understand him well enough to tell that he just wanted to show off in front of her grandfather and did not expect to be exposed.

“That’s enough. It’s just a painting—Frank was probably tricked too, right Frank?” she asked, trying to bail Frank out from the awkwardness.

Frank did not play along, however. “Randall Young never even looked at it. How would he know if it’s a fake? Also, I got it from Gerald Simmons’ office.”

“Haha! You really can talk!” Zeb shook his head. “I’ve met thick-skinned people, but you’re something else!”

Gina snorted in disdain. “You’ve probably never even met Gerald Simmons, and you’re saying you got it from his office?!”

Helen glared at Frank right then. “That’s enough. Just cut it out already.”

She did his best to protect him, but he was going too far!

That was when a servant came in and whispered, “Ms. Lane, Mr. Lynch has just arrived.”

“What?” Helen exclaimed in surprise, not expecting Aron to come as well.

She was ready to go over to see Aron when he arrived, and she exclaimed in surprise, “When did you arrive, Mr. Lynch? You could have told me I’d be on hand to receive you!”

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“It’s alright, Ms. Lane.” Aron smiled, holding up a hand. “I’m here mainly to send Mr. Simmons’ best wishes.”

“Oh...” Helen gulped, hardly able to believe her ears.

The Lanes were left trading glances, while even Zeb was perplexed.

Aron was carrying a rolled-up canvas as Helen led him to Henry.

After some polite exchanges, he spread the painting he was holding before passing it to Henry, he said, "Here, Mr. Lane. A token of best wishes courtesy of Mr. Simmons himself—he hopes you'll like it."

Henry promptly got up to take it politely. "This is too much... Please do send my best regards, Mr. Lynch."

Aron nodded. "Of course."

Gina suddenly had an idea and smiled. "Mr. Simmons certainly owns a lot of treasures. I'm sure you've seen your fair share, given that you work for him?"

Aron smiled. "Mr. Simmons is an avid collector. It's no big deal for him."

Gina nodded. "That's for sure... There's another painting here. Would you like to take a look?"

Naturally, she was talking about the painting Frank brought.

Aron nodded without hesitation. "Sure, though I'm not that well-versed myself."

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"Oh, it's not a problem," Gina assured Aron before wheeling on Frank. "Go on, bring your painting."

"What are you doing, Mom?!" Helen snapped with a scowl—if the real Bronx was being hung in Gerald Simmons' office, Aron would definitely recognize it!

Did she really have to go that far just to humiliate Frank?

Gina giggled smugly in turn. "Don't you dare side with him—he's the one who kept insisting that it's real. Let's see what he's going to say now!"

“What...” Helen bit her lip, speechless.

On the other hand, Frank remained impassive as he passed the painting to Aron, who was stunned when he saw it.

Gina hurried up to him, asking, “So? Is it real?”

Zeb, Cindy and Peter were staring at Frank in turn, waiting for him to embarrass himself!

Aron inhaled deeply and said, “Of course it’s real.”

“See—wait, what’s that?” Gina froze before she could start mocking Frank. “Are you sure, Mr. Lynch?”

“Of course,” Aron nodded repeatedly. “I’ve seen this painting every day for so long, since it was hung in Mr. Simmons’ study. There’s no mistaking it.”

He then remembered not seeing it for the past couple of days—so Gerald gave it off to the Lanes!

Still, what on earth earned them such a great favor from Gerald?

“What?!”

Zeb, Cindy, Helen, and Peter were left gaping in disbelief—this was not what Randall said!

Hold on, did Frank really get it from Gerald Simmons’ office?

Henry was stroking his beard, laughing out loud as he leveled a gloating look at Gina and the rest. “Hahaha! Like I said—Frank would never give me a bootleg item! What do you have to say now?!”

Aron paused just then before turning to Frank. “Sir, could you be Mr. Frank Lawrence?”

"Yes." Frank turned toward him slowly. "Do we know each other?"

Aron threw up his hands. "No we don't, sir—but Mr. Simmons often mentioned you. So, he gave you his favorite piece... that makes a lot of sense now!"

"Also, I believe I must inform you that Mr. Simmons arranged for this hall," Aron added. "We apologize for not asking for your approval beforehand."

Aron's apology somehow sounded suspiciously like bragging, as if he wanted everyone to know that Gerald was the one who got the hall for this occasion.

"Really?" Frank asked in feigned surprise before turning to smile at Zeb. "I thought Mr. Zeb

Larkin there made the arrangements?"

Even as Zeb's heart thumped when he realized things were going bad, Aron appeared utterly confused. "Zeb Larkin? Who's that?"

Gian quickly explained, "That's him right there! Didn't he ask Mr. Simmons to arrange this hall for us?"

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Zeb appeared totally embarrassed -he was well aware that he did not know Gerald at all, let alone be recognized by his secretary!

"Please don't shout, Mrs. Lane!" He pulled Gina to make her sit.

Gina, however, beamed at him. "Oh, why are you being so humble, Zeb?"

Aron turned toward Zeb just then and muttered in confusion, "But I've never heard of him."

“What?”

Gina, Cindy, Helen, and Peter were dumbfounded, while Gina quickly pressed, “Didn’t Mr. Simmons reserve this hall for Mr. Larkin?”

“You’re kidding.” Aron snorted before turning to Frank, “Mr. Simmons only decided to make the reservation for Mr. Lawrence. Why else would Mr. Lawrence possess Mr. Simmons’ privately owned painting?”

Aron himself found out about that just this morning, though he did not ask questions despite his doubts.

“What?!”

Everyone was left dumbfounded again, staring at Frank in shock while Zeb was left humiliated.

“I’ll be going now if there’s nothing else,” Aron said.

“Please, Mr. Lynch. At least stay for a course or two,” Helen quickly said.

Aron shook his head. “I’ll pass—I still have work to do, and I’m here just to deliver Mr.

Simmons’ present anyway. Best regards, Ms. Lane. Mr. Simmons does admire you.”

While Helen walked with Aron to the exit, Henry was grinning smugly. “Like I said, a painting this good couldn’t be a fake.”

Gina rolled her eyes but could not say a word despite her frustration.

Meanwhile, right after Helen saw off Aron, representatives of the Turnbolls, the Quills, Trevor International, Skyblade Dojo, and Flora Hall all arrived to offer Henry their best wishes.

Helen and the rest of the Lanes were left gaping in confusion. In the past, a measly company like Lane Holdings would never have been paid much attention.

“When did Helen get so impressive?” someone whispered. “That’s a lot of bigwigs!”

“I don’t know, but she’s plenty amazing, getting a huge project with the Turnbolls. And now, all the bigwigs are attending her grandfather’s birthday party!”

Someone sighed. “If only I had a daughter like Helen Lane....”

Helen was caught by surprise, but she was immediately on hand to greet the guests.

Gina was even gloating smugly at Henry. “See that, old timer? So what if that lowlife was friends with some government official? Or are you saying all these bigwigs came under his invitation?”

Henry did not say a word, while Frank chuckled. “I never told them, but it just goes to show how sincere they are.”

“You can shove it,” Gina snapped. “They are here to see Henry, not you. Don’t you dare breathe a word.”

As Helen led everyone to Henry, he flashed a polite smile and greeted everyone, since he had seen his fair share of social events during his youth.

Zeb was confused as to how Helen met those bigwigs as well and whispered to her, “You’re so amazing, knowing all these people... I mean, even Skyblade Dojo?”

“Huh...” Helen was actually puzzled too.

She was not surprised with the Turnbolls' and Trevor's friends visiting since they were partners. Likewise, she had also met the Quills before, but they were not close enough to warrant the governor sending people to visit her grandfather...

As for Skyblade Dojo?! She had never even heard of them! Meanwhile, everyone was busy chatting with Henry...

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Zeb was going to make the bigwigs' acquaintance, but he did not even have a chance to greet them when they all turned toward Frank.

"Mr. Lawrence, our chief would like to invite you for an exchange at Flora Hall. You must come whenever you have the time."

"Mr. Lawrence, our chief cordially invites you to..."

"Mr. Lawrence, my daughter is..."

Everyone spoke all at once, encircling and flattering Frank to kingdom come.

Exasperated, Frank could only nod and agree to their requests.

Naturally, Zeb, Gina, Cindy, and Peter were all gaping, with Gina's jaw almost dropping on the floor right then. "W-Why are they being so nice to him?"

Beside her, Cindy and Peter looked like they ate dung..

The crowd around them who were watching were busy gossiping among themselves too.

"My god, who is he? All the representatives from major groups are hovering around him!"

"I don't know... But isn't he Helen's lowlife ex-husband?"

"Are you sure? A lowlife being extended so many invitations?"

Meanwhile, the representatives took their seats after Frank agreed to all their invitations, finally granting him some peace.

Even Henry was left stunned beside him.

Gingerly nudging Frank with his elbow, he asked, "Were they all offering you invitations?"

"Probably." Frank nodded.

"When did you meet them?"

Frank thought about it. "Around the last few months."

Gina was immediately skeptical. "The last few months? You mean when you hooked Vicky?"

up with

Peter nodded. "If I became Vicky's gigolo, they would be on their knees even before they think about inviting me."

"That's right," Zeb quickly said, intent on saving face after his earlier embarrassment. "Those people are all associates of the Turnbolls, after all."

Helen had enough right then. "That's enough. Be careful not to choke on your food, people."

At the same time, she remembered what Vicky said that she was never Frank's sugar mommy.

Vicky certainly had no reason to lie about that.

Could that mean those representatives' invitations were really meant for Frank and Frank only?

Frank stayed until after the banquet was over, chatting with Henry.

He only started outside when it turned dark and found Helen waiting for him for a while at the entrance.

Quietly opening her car door, she beckoned to him. "Let me give you a ride."

Frank hesitated for a moment before getting in.

As she drove, Helen asked, "Could you tell me how you met Gerald Simmons?"

Frank smiled. "When I saved his life."

"You're a healer...?"

Frank shrugged. "Always was. You just never noticed."

Helen stopped herself from saying anything, since she never cared for Frank enough to notice his strengths.

“So... What about the others?”

“Long story, but the bottomline is that I know them,” Frank said quietly. “What, are you trying to ask for a favor?”

“Hah! Why would I?” Helen rolled her eyes right then.

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Helen regretted what she said soon after and switched gears by trying to show concern for Frank. “I mean, I’m just worried about you...”

“Worried? What for?” Frank asked.

“That those people would trick you,” Helen said, still convinced that Frank was too innocent for the world.

After all, she believed that he had not seen the world outside in the three years that they were married, not knowing that Frank might be more experienced than she was.

Frank laughed confidently in turn. “Thanks for your concern, but that’s not going to happen at the moment.”

When Helen finally brought Frank back to the hilltop mansion at Skywater Bay, Winter was already waiting at the door.

She hurried to him, leaping into his arms when she saw him return. “Welcome back, Frank.”

Seeing her reaction, Frank quickly asked, “What happened?”

"Nothing. I was just getting bored staying home..." Winter shook her head.

Helen alighted just then as well and was surprised to see Winter.

Judging from her youthful appearance, she could not be older than a college student!

Her figure was as great as her pretty face too...

Frowning, Helen asked, "Frank, this is..."

"My sister." Frank introduced them nonchalantly. "Winter, this is Helen Lane, my ex-wife." Winter paused for a moment before nodding in greeting. "H-Hello."

Helen felt embarrassed, though she soon breathed a huge sigh of relief.

She thought Frank was keeping a college girl in his mansion as a lover... it turned out that she was just Frank's sister.

Carol Zims arrived outside just then. "Welcome back, Mr. Lawrence! Come on, dinner's ready." Frank turned toward Helen. "Would you like a quick bite?"

Helen shook her head. "Oh, I'll pass. I'll visit again some other time."

She was not familiar with Winter and Carol, but judging from Carol's age, she and Winter must be visiting relatives.

She could visit some other day.

Frank did not ask her to stay either and returned into the mansion to have dinner with Winter and Carol.

Winter had been adapting quickly to her new surroundings—she had never lived in a big place like this and cheerfully scrolled through her phone after finishing dinner.

On the other hand, Carol was restless and started cleaning the floor after dinner.

“You don’t have to worry about that, Madam Zims,” Frank told her. “Just leave it to the cleaner,”

Carol quickly waved him off. “I’m just sweeping the floor. Hiring a cleaner for that is a waste of money,”

Frank sighed but held his tongue,

Eventually, Carol was done cleaning the floor, and sat on the couch, idling

It was a place of luxury, but it just did not feel like home.

And with her son abroad under Frank’s care, she was even more careful about not upsetting Frank

Frank could sense her state of mind and sat beside her as he asked, “You’re not used to this place, are you, Madam Zims?”

Carol nodded,

“Yeah... One easily gets restless at my age,” Carol said gingerly. “Would it be alright if I moved back to my old place after a while?”

Frank thought about it and came up with a compromise. “Why don’t I buy you a store near this area, so you can make a living?”

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Frank said, "I'd be near enough that way while you can make a living for yourself. What do you think?"

"Sure, that's good." Carol nodded repeatedly but soon paused. "But wouldn't buying a whole shop be very expensive? I don't really need it that badly..."

Frank smiled. "Don't worry—I can afford it."

"Then... Thank you very much. I don't know what else I can say," Carol exclaimed, "Can I have Winter with me too? Don't worry—we won't run away."

"Are you still wary of me, Madam Zims?" Frank asked in surprise.

He could not say that he was not hurt with how careful she was around him, especially since he was sincere.

Carol shook her head and made sure Winter was not around before saying, "No... I think you know about Winter's situation too, that she's not my daughter...?"

"I am aware. I don't mind telling you that I showed up at your snackbar the first time to look for her," Frank admitted, having no reason to hide it since Carol was now opening up to him.

Carol nodded in turn. "Yes, but Winter herself doesn't know. I've raised her for twenty years, and I know what she thinks—I can tell that she likes you too, but you're both siblings."

That was why Carol had to be careful, in case something amoral happened between Frank and Winter as they cohabited.

Frank pursed his lips in awkwardness—so Carol thought he was Winter's brother?

"You misunderstand, Madam Zims." He smiled. "I actually adopted the last name of my mentor, who took me in since I was an orphan. Winter is his only daughter, and before my mentor died, his last wish was for me to take care of her."

Carol did a double take before breathing a long sigh—so Frank was not Winter’s brother!

“Oh, you could have told me sooner,” she said wryly.

Frank scratched his head. “Actually, Winter’s life at your home is good, and that’s why I never told her. There’s no chance to do that later on either.”

“I see... Well, I’m relieved,” Carol said, patting her chest. “Either way, Winter’s in your care now. She’s young and headstrong at times, so I hope you could tolerate her more. I still have some money too. It’s not much, but it’s enough for her dowry... Just pick a good date soon and tie the knot.”

“Yeah... huh?” Frank nodded repeatedly before he realized something was not right and quickly explained, “No, Madam Zims, you misunderstand. Winter and I are not like that.”

“But you said Winter’s father asked you to take care of her before she died?” Carol asked solemnly. “It’s only right you take care of her for the rest of your life.”

In other words, by marrying Winter.

Frank did a double take.

Carol spoke sense—he just never thought about it that way.

Still, he threw up his hands. “No, no... Let’s not discuss that for a while either. Winter’s still young and hasn’t properly experienced society, and I don’t think we should tell her right now.”

He thought of Winter as a sister, and nothing romantic. Also, who would hook up with their mentor’s daughter?