

Chapter 611 Prodigy

Katrina had understood from childhood that blood meant nothing in Maxine's calculus. She was a Griffiths born and bred, while Jules remained an outsider brought in from the cold. Yet, in Maxine's calculating gaze, Jules held all the value.

Maxine's emotions toward Jules defied simple categorization. Her affection blazed unmistakably, but she would lash out at him without warning. Sometimes, her eyes would find him across a room, and irritation would bloom across her features for reasons no one could fathom.

Love-hate captured it perfectly, though the boundaries between devotion and resentment remained impossibly tangled.

Katrina had never grasped why Maxine selected Jules as the heir's future partner. Jules possessed no remarkable intelligence, no exceptional talents that set him apart. The decision seemed to spring from some hidden logic that eluded everyone else.

Yet, despite her confusion, Katrina never dared voice her questions.

When Maxine's finger crooked in summons, Katrina shot to her feet and crossed the room. "Grandmother."

Maxine examined Katrina's injuries with clinical detachment, offering no salve or comfort. Instead, she posed a question that carried dangerous undertones. "Did Elliana alone inflict this damage?"

"Yes," Katrina answered.

A satisfied smile curled Maxine's lips. Only then did she extract a pill from her medicine box and extend it toward Katrina.

Katrina accepted the pill and swallowed it whole. Blessed warmth flooded her system instantly, chasing the pallor from her cheeks and restoring vitality to her battered form.

As the healing took hold, Maxine spoke with brutal precision. "Katrina, you likely know that I named you heir because alternatives didn't exist, not because you demonstrated exceptional promise. Measured against your predecessors, you fall devastatingly short in both intelligence and capability."

The assessment cut deep, but truth rarely offered mercy.

Katrina had always known that luck had placed the crown within her reach. Understanding it was one burden. Hearing it declared with such clinical coldness was entirely another. Humiliation crashed over her in waves, and she struggled to decode Maxine's purpose.

"Would you care to elaborate?" Katrina managed, her voice strained with barely contained panic.

Maxine's stare could have frozen fire. "Should I discover a more suitable candidate," she continued without a trace of compassion, "I will strip you of your position without hesitation. Are we perfectly clear?"

Katrina's world tilted dangerously. This role had shaped her entire existence. To be cast aside now, she wouldn't be able to cope with the failure, let alone endure the mockery from the rest of the family.

"Grandmother!" Katrina collapsed to her knees with bone-jarring force, her face tilted upward in a desperate plea. "I know I lack natural gifts, but I have devoted everything to this position! I believe dedication can compensate for what nature denied me. Please, just have faith in me."

Maxine's head moved in slow negation, and a laugh escaped her lips—dry as autumn leaves, empty of warmth. "Effort cannot manufacture what was never there. Talent arrives as a gift. No amount of determination and dedication can bridge the chasm between ordinary and extraordinary."

As someone blessed with exceptional abilities, Maxine understood that gulf better than most. Even in childhood, she had absorbed complex ideas while her peers struggled despite repeated explanations. No matter how relentlessly they practiced, they could never approach the mastery that came to her like breathing.

Rita had possessed identical gifts. Maxine's feelings for Rita transcended typical maternal bonds—they shared the rare understanding that existed between equals, the recognition of matching brilliance.

Rita's betrayal and disappearance had carved out something irreplaceable. Maxine hadn't simply lost a carefully cultivated daughter. She had lost her intellectual peer, her only true equal.

In all the years since Rita's departure, Maxine had never encountered another mind that matched her own. But today, in Elliana, she felt that familiar electric recognition—the thrill of discovering kindred intelligence.

Trapped within the Jones family compound since age five, Elliana had weathered endless cruelty and dismissal. Everyone had written her off as worthless and dumb, but that assessment had been catastrophically wrong. She was a weapon wrapped in deception.

The Soulsorch that Elliana had unleashed on Jules and Katrina originated from the Poison Volume of the Medical Codex, yet the concoction wasn't Rita's creation. Maxine had witnessed Rita's version firsthand.

Elliana had worked from identical foundations, but she had clearly pushed beyond mere replication. She had refined the formula, amplifying its potency through her own innovations.

The implications struck like lightning. Rita's supposed "donation" of the Medical Codex to Ublento Medical University had been nothing more than elaborate misdirection, designed to throw the Griffiths family off her scent. She had secretly preserved the knowledge and passed it to Elliana like a hidden inheritance.

But Rita had vanished when Elliana was merely five years old. A child at that tender age, abandoned without guidance or mentorship, had somehow conquered the Medical Codex through sheer determination and raw intellect. What a breathtaking prodigy!

Even Rita, despite her extraordinary gifts, had required Maxine's careful tutelage to unlock the Medical Codex's secrets. Yet, Elliana had achieved mastery in complete isolation. This revelation meant Elliana's intellectual prowess eclipsed even Rita's formidable abilities.


Actually, that assessment fell short of the truth. Neither Maxine nor Rita could claim to be Elliana's equal. Maxine understood with crystalline clarity that even in her prime, she could never have unraveled the Medical Codex's mysteries without a master's patient instruction.

Arthur's and Rita's exceptional bloodlines had merged to forge something unprecedented in Elliana. She wasn't just gifted—she was transcendent.

Maxine surmised that if such a prodigy were to carry the next generation of Griffiths heirs, it would boost the family to new heights.

The more this possibility consumed Maxine's thoughts, the more wild excitement seized her chest. She had mourned Rita's loss for decades, but now, through Rita's extraordinary daughter, hope blazed to life within her—not a flickering ember, but a consuming wildfire. She had to capture Elliana. She had to claim Elliana for the Griffiths legacy, no matter the cost.



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