

## Chapter 17 A Family Dinner

Half an hour later, the dining table was adorned with a plethora of dishes, forming a feast. As the final dish was presented, the clock's hands pointed to a quarter past seven.

"Why hasn't Xavier come back yet?" Adeline glanced at the clock once again and couldn't resist rushing to the entrance, anxiously waiting for her son.

Meanwhile, David sat nonchalantly at the head of the table, casting a fleeting glance at his wife, whose face betrayed her worry. His gaze then returned to the sumptuous array of delicacies spread out before him.

The various dishes, the feast all revealed a message that this was no ordinary family gathering. If he were Xavier, he would have no desire to return home. Ah, his dear wife, always prone to unnecessary concerns. She likes to intervene in her son's life.

"Ah, David, should I give Xavier a call to urge him?" Adeline, failed to see Xavier's figure at the door, returned to the table with frustration.

"No, don't rush him. It's better if you don't. He is your son, and you should understand his temperament. The more you push, the more counterproductive it becomes. Let's wait a little longer. Perhaps he will arrive soon."

Upon hearing this, Adeline reluctantly gave up and joined her husband, sitting patiently, awaiting Xavier's arrival.

Ten minutes later, the dishes on the table had cooled, and their anticipation had dissipated. Suddenly, there came the sound of a car entering the courtyard, followed by the hum of the engine being turned off.

"It must be Xavier! Let me go and check it out." Adeline's face lit up with delight as she stood up and hurried towards the entrance.

At that moment, Xavier had just arrived at the front gate, where

a servant promptly took his coat, bowing respectfully. "Young Master, sir and madam have been waiting for you."

Xavier remained expressionless, offering a slight nod, and then he caught sight of Adeline approaching him, her face beaming with excitement.

"Xavier, you're finally home. Come, come and have dinner. We prepare a table full of your favorite dishes. Take a look..."

Adeline grasped Xavier's hand, reminiscent of the days when they walked hand in hand during his childhood.

Xavier lowered his head, his gaze falling upon their intertwined hands, and in that instant, a surge of memories flooded his mind. It was as if he could see his mother's tender grasp, cautioning him to tread carefully, for hasty steps often lead to stumbling and falling.

He gently closed his eyes, allowing a bitter sensation to unfurl from the depths of his heart.

Around the dining table, Adeline avoided mentioning the idea of getting Xavier married. Instead, she gently told him to enjoy the meal.

As they finished the meal, a delightful and harmonious atmosphere filled the air, creating a sense of familial warmth.

Afterward, the three of them gathered in the living room, sipping tea together.

David engaged in a brief discussion with Xavier regarding business matters, while Adeline left the living room.

At nine o'clock in the evening, Xavier checked his watch, saying, "Dad, I have work left undone. I gotta go."

Being experienced in the business world, David understood him and simply waved his hand. "Go ahead while your mom is still upstairs."

Upon hearing this, a subtle smile graced Xavier's lips. "Thank

you, Dad."

Just as he was about to rise from his seat, Adeline descended the staircase.

"Did you two just speak ill of me? I distinctly heard the word 'mom.' Don't try to deceive me." She cast a sharp glance at her husband, then turned to Xavier, her eyes beaming with a cheerful expression. "Xavier, come over here. I want to show you something."

Xavier exchanged a knowing look with his father, sensing the sympathy reflected in his father's eyes.

He approached Adeline, only to discover that the thing she wanted to show him was a picture of a woman.

## Chapter 18 No Force Me Marrying

"Xavier, what do you think of this girl? She's pretty, isn't she?" Adeline was in high spirits. Without waiting for her son's response, she continued listing Bella's virtues. "Sterling family is a perfect match for our family in status. Miss Sterling herself has just returned from studying abroad. Her qualifications and character are absolutely reliable. Not to mention her stunning look and noble demeanor—outstanding."

Xavier stood silently by Adeline's side. After a quick glance at the photo, he didn't really absorb his mother's praise of Miss Sterling or care about it in the least.

In his mind emerged another face—astounding, enchanting, tinged with rebellion and stubbornness. The thought of her made his heart ache faintly.

"Xavier, how do you feel about Miss Sterling?" Adeline ventured, but there was no response from her son. She turned her head and saw him lost in thought.

"Xavier!" Adeline called out his name in displeasure.

Xavier snapped back to reality, only to find his mother in a sulk. He knew exactly why she was angry but chose not to explain, maintaining a calm expression.

"Did you not hear a single word I just said?" Adeline's tone grew stern as she glared at her son.

David sensed trouble. His wife's temper was acting up again, which might work when it came to David, yet it was futile when it came to their son.

"I agree." Just as David was about to intervene, he heard his son say so.

I agree? Agree to what?

Adeline widened her eyes and stared at her son's face. Suddenly, she burst into delighted laughter. "Ah, Xavier, do you

mean that you are satisfied with Miss Sterling?" She was flushed with excitement at the thought.

David cast a surprised and curious glance over Xavier, unable to comprehend what had transpired. Since when did his son become so obedient?

"I agreed to meet Miss Sterling, but there is a condition, and you must agree to it." Xavier's voice sounded again, his tone indifferent.

"Sure, go ahead. As long as you agree to date Miss Sterling and give it a try, I will agree to anything." Adeline responded eagerly.

"You cannot force me into marriage."

What? Adeline widened her eyes once more, tightly fixating her gaze on her son, attempting to discern his inner thoughts. Deep down, she knew all too well that her son was using a stalling tactic, in other words, he still couldn't let go of that bitch, Grace Everly!

Xavier cast a quick glance at his mother, who was on high alert, and suddenly a faint smile appeared on his face. "What? I have agreed to meet the extraordinary Miss Sterling, and you won't consent to this condition? It seems either you lack confidence in Miss Sterling or you lack confidence in yourself, am I right, mom?"

Adeline shot a resentful glance at Xavier, inwardly vowing, 'Clearly, my son is resorting to provocation. Of course, I won't fall for it. However, I refuse to lose to that despicable bitch Grace. Only a lady as noble as Miss Sterling is worthy of becoming my daughter-in-law and worthy of my son.'

Very well, since her son intended to use this ploy to delay her, she would employ her own strategy and utilize Miss Sterling to help her son forget about that contemptible bitch.

With this in mind, Adeline smiled faintly. "Xavier, mom agrees."

"Well. I hope you won't go back on your word." Xavier glanced

at her, his words carrying a hint of warning.

“Of course not. You can rest assured that once you agree to date Miss Sterling, Mom will never pressure you into marriage again.” Adeline promised wholeheartedly.

After Xavier departed, Adeline slumped onto the sofa, wearing a weary expression on her face.