

Card Apprentice Daily Log

#Chapter 2611: Ideal/ Dumb/ Crazy Daughters - Read Chapter 2611: Ideal/ Dumb/ Crazy Daughters

Chapter 2611: Ideal/ Dumb/ Crazy Daughters

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

I returned to the warehouse that had once served as my base. The Guild Association Mall had left it untouched, despite numerous parties offering vast fortunes to purchase it. The new city lord had declared it a historical landmark. Had I been dead, they likely would have turned it into a museum in my memory, or at least that was the reason I believed this old warehouse had earned such a designation.

As I walked through the warehouse, waiting for Anna to appear, I couldn't help but notice that nothing had changed since the day we left. Everything within these walls echoed my humble beginnings. I had come a long way since then.

I remembered Susan introducing me to this place, then helping me build a card lab for creating cards, along with a bedroom so I could move in.

Right over there, Susan and I had recruited Corey, after she apologized for her uncle's actions.

And on that couch, I clearly recalled sitting in that very spot, worrying about how to deal with the Zhang financiers.

And right next to it, Anna had impaled my arms and legs, trying to force me to sell her the rights to silver milk powder production and distribution.

Funny how things had turned out. Now, I was willing to risk my life and kidnap her father, all for a single chance to meet her.

As I lingered in those memories, Hive AI warned me of a familiar presence nearby, carefully trying to sneak up on me. I let it play out.

Moments later, a supple pair of pale arms wrapped around my neck from behind, and a familiar voice whispered softly in my ear, "I missed you. Now that I've got you, I'm never letting go."

At the sound of her voice, my heart began to race, and I blurted out, "Anna!"

I had thought she would lose her love for me. I had been told she would lose her obsession with me. Everything in the past suggested that her passion for me would fade.

Yet the reality unfolding before me told a very different story.

I grabbed her arms and pulled her in front of me, to see the familiar figure I have been missing. It had been a while since I had seen her. However, as our eyes met, I pushed her out of my embrace saying, "You are not Anna. You are that woman from the cafe."

I didn't need my Soul Pupils to distinguish the real Anna from a fake. I had her eyes etched into my memory. I could never forget them. And the ones staring back at me now were not hers.

"Who are you?" I demanded coldly. "Tell me before I lose my patience and kill you."

At my words, the fake Anna's eyes welled up with tears. Then, with a fanatical fervor, she rushed out her reply. "Wyatt, it's me. The one you love so deeply that you made a deal with the devil to save. It's me, the one you risked your life for, the one you went to the Northern Region for."

"Wyatt, it's me."

I frowned, staring at the imposter, wondering what kind of sick mind would find pleasure in such a grotesque charade, one worth risking their life for. "Alright," I said flatly. "You've chosen death."

Just as I was about to invoke my celestial domain, Hive AI alerted me to another familiar presence nearby. At the same moment, a voice I had missed and longed to hear echoed through the space.

"Anne, you heard him," the voice said calmly. "You're not the one he's waiting for. Now, obediently return to your card."

I finally saw the figure of the person I had been missing. It was Anna, clad in combat attire, clearly prepared for a fight.

"No, there has to be some mistake," Anne cried out, disbelief twisting her features. "I'm the one who loves him. I'm the embodiment of the love that made him fall for Anna. I'm

the one he's supposed to love. Wyatt, it's me you love!" She called out desperately to her beloved, only to realize that my gaze had never once left Anna.

Shock and rage flooded her in equal measure. With a shrill scream, she lunged at Anna. "You! What did you do to him? Give me back my Wyatt. Give me back my—"

Anna never finished her sentence. Anna forcefully retrieved her into her origin card, Ideal/Dumb/Crazy Daughter. It had evolved from her origin card Ideal/Dumb Daughter through the power of the Extreme Path and the baptism of the card world when Anna broke through to the demigod realm.

Fully aware that Anne's obsessive madness was a liability, Anna had confronted her directly and proposed a wager to determine which of them was the "Anna" their fiancé truly loved.

Anna issued the challenge knowing one crucial detail: their fiancé's origin card was Aura Sight. He would be able to distinguish Anne from her instantly. Anne, blinded by her obsessive love, overlooked this critical point and accepted the wager as Anna had promised that if Anne won, she would never recall her into her origin card without her consent.

The outcome now stood plainly before them.

Anna had not expected Anne to renege on her word. Fortunately, she had the foresight to bind Anne with an oath sworn in the presence of the world's will. Anna sealed Anne within her origin card, to be released only when she needed her again.

"It's been a while," I said, finally recovering from the shock and surprise that was Anne. I quickly understood that Anne was much like Ann. The difference was simple. Ann was obsessed with her mother, while Anne was obsessed with me. I hadn't expected such an outcome was possible. I guess when it came to origin cards the possibilities were simply infinite.

Fortunately, Anna had dealt with her decisively. Anne was terrifying. I feared her not only for my own sake, but for Susan and Jill as well. From the way she had been ready to kill Anna, I had no doubt she would have done the same to Susan and Jill.

"I'm going to skip the formalities and excuse my language," Anna said sternly before she exploded, "What the heck were you thinking, breaking into the Northern Capital like that?"

Chapter 2612: Authoritarian Southern Heir

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

"I should be the one asking you that," I shot back, taking slow, deliberate steps toward Anna. Normally, she would have been all over me, heedless of personal space or consent, but this time she kept her distance. The restraint felt alien, almost cold. I shook my head, thinking she had already made enough of a spectacle of herself by openly flirting with me. I guess now it was my turn.

"And who are you to question me? Also, I asked you first," Anna replied, clearly flustered as her teenage groom approached her so boldly. The glint in his eyes warned her that he was up to no good, yet she neither retreated nor so much as twitched. Instead, she met his gaze head-on, her expression stern, refusing to let him undermine her authority.

Actually, she felt nothing for him. What stirred within her instead was a curiosity, prompted after closely observing his reaction toward Anne. It was entirely different from what she had assumed. When she had first introduced Ann to her mother, the latter had been so taken with Ann that she all but forgot her own blood daughter. Anna had expected her teenage groom to react the same way. Yet, to her astonishment, after distinguishing Anne from her, he had been prepared to kill Anne for deceiving him by impersonating her.

This outcome was beyond anything she had imagined. She could not help but wonder if perhaps he truly loved her. Otherwise, what could compel him to choose an Anna who felt nothing for him over an Anna who would do anything for him? His choice stood in stark contrast to her mother's. Her mother had never been satisfied with the daughter she had, instead yearning for an obedient and clever child who would carry out every command without question, never daring to talk back or say no, doing exactly as she was told.

Anna began to see her teenage groom in a new light, despite the childish antics he used to draw her attention. She praised her former self for giving her whole heart to the right man, yet at the same time reproached herself for failing to temper and guide him properly.

"Who am I? Why don't you ask the ring you gave me? And since when did it ever matter who comes first or second between us?" I asked, stopping a finger's breadth away from her. We could both feel the warmth of each other's breath. "It's been a while. Let me taste those plump lips and supple tongue of yours."

Without waiting for Anna's consent, I pulled her into my embrace, pressed my lips against hers, and forced my tongue past her defenses, trying to rouse a partner that refused to cooperate. She resisted and struggled, yet in that moment she was just as helpless as I had once been.

However, a sudden surge of strength coursed through her body. It met my force head-on, parried it, and sent me flying like a rag doll. I only came to a stop after crashing into the wall. As I struggled back to my feet, her furious voice rang out.

"How dare you? You should count yourself lucky. If not for the foolish contract I signed back then, I would have your head for this."

Anna was enraged, and rightfully so. Yet she had no choice but to rein in that fury, bound by the grave mistake her former self had made when she signed that cursed contract.

One had to understand that every time Anna carried her obsessions to their extreme and forged them into her sisters, she emerged as the same person, but with altered priorities. After shaping her filial devotion into Ann and her love into Anne, her focus now lay wholly on her duty and responsibility toward her realm and its people as the Southern Heir.

And as the Southern Heir, no one was permitted to undermine her or challenge her authority, not even her teenage groom, the future Prince Consort of the Southern Region.

That was to say, the Southern Princess had succeeded. She had molded her daughter into an heir worthy of her father, an heir deserving of the Southern Region. In truth, however, it was her son-in-law who deserved the credit for that success. It was his influence and encouragement that pushed Anna to take her responsibilities seriously. She abandoned frivolity altogether, devoting her time and energy to her beloved and to her duty toward the Southern Region.

Now that her beloved had been removed from the equation, all that remained was her sense of duty to the Southern Region. The Anna who stood before them now was the product of that single shift. Had it not occurred, there was no telling what her Extreme Path might have driven her toward next. She could have become a sadistic serial killer seeking pleasure in the dying screams of the innocent souls, or a despairing savant bent on ending everything, destroying the card world and the myriad realms along with it. Either outcome was possible.

That was why one had to be exceedingly cautious when going down extreme path.

"How dare you? It's fine when you do it, but it becomes a crime when I do the same. Is it because you're royalty and I'm just an orphaned commoner?" I said, feigning indignation. I realized then that my skin hadn't grown thick enough to shamelessly chase after a woman's skirt, even if that woman was Anna. With that in mind, I adopted a different approach. It was a little sadistic, perhaps, but it felt like the right tool to confront Anna's newly hardened, authoritative side.

"Royalty or commoner, no one has the right to force themselves on another," Anna replied. Then, with a slight bow, she added in a subdued voice, "I apologize for my past actions. I am no longer the same person. Please find it in your heart to forgive me."

Her apology caught me completely off guard. Her new bearing reminded me of the royal snobs back in the capital, JJ for example. But right now, it was clear she was not merely flaunting her title like those snobs. She was shouldering the duty and responsibility that came with it. Well, that was my Anna. I expected nothing less from her. Every version of her was just as captivating as the one I had once fallen for.

Chapter 2613: The Sadistic Manipulator

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

"Forgive you? You must be joking," I said to Anna in disbelief, releasing a dense, malevolent pressure woven from more than a thousand ruler-class curses.

The moment it descended upon her, Anna was drenched in sweat. For an instant, all her strength seemed to drain away. Breathing became difficult, as though she were in the presence of pure evil itself. Yet in the next heartbeat, her will flared to its absolute limit. She forced herself upright and pushed back, her resolve colliding head-on with the oppressive pressure. Gathering every shred of strength she had left, she cried out, "Wyatt!"

At the sound of her voice, I withdrew my pseudo-intent. My aim had never been to crush her, only to make one thing clear. She might have grown stronger, but I was still stronger than her. It was a reminder not to flaunt her authority in front of me.

This, however, was only the beginning. From here on, it would become far more sadistic on my part, and far more humiliating for Anna. I intended to tame her and make her fall in love with me all over again.

Anna stared at her teenage groom in shock. She had heard countless accounts of his exploits, but experiencing them firsthand was entirely different. In that moment, she understood that none of what she had heard about him had been exaggerated. Her brows knit tighter. Not only were her hands bound by the contract, but he was stronger than her, or at the very least, he appeared to be.

With that realization, it dawned on Anna that she had walked straight into his trap of her own volition. Though she had lost her love for him to Anne, she had not forgotten just how intelligent he was. That was precisely why she had been so cautious, allowing

Anne to meet him first and only revealing herself once she believed it was safe. Yet despite all her precautions, she had still stepped into the snare, unaware until it was too late.

Anna gave her teenage groom a hard glare, now fully aware that the situation was not under her control, as she had once believed, but entirely under his. Saying nothing, she met his gaze and waited for him to lay out his demands.

Yes, he was her teenage groom, but she was the future Southern Ruler, and he was the future prince consort. Though they were partners, a clear hierarchy of power existed between them. If she could not even handle her own prince consort, how was she supposed to govern the entire Southern Region and navigate its treacherous political landscape?

She had to assert her authority and remind her teenage groom that this was a marriage of convenience, not a marriage of love. If not today, then someday. She would never allow him to disrespect royal authority. She would engrave that truth into his mind.

"What are you glaring at?" I said calmly. "Do you feel helpless? Enraged? Then imagine how I must have felt back then when you forced yourself on me. Well, thinking back on it, I would deny it if asked, but I enjoyed it. Your attention, your touch, all of it—"

Unable to endure the intimate implications, Anna cut in sharply. "Wyatt, where are you going with this?"

I smiled when I saw that Anna no longer carried her lofty, imperious demeanor. Instead, her expression spoke of desperation, of someone willing to do anything to survive the moment. I know this was the woman I loved. And yes, as I had already warned, it was going to be sadistic on my part and humiliating for her.

"When I couldn't defend myself, you used your power and authority to toy with my body and my heart whenever you pleased, without the slightest regard for my consent," I shouted, my gaze locked onto Anna. "And now that I'm addicted to it, now that I can't live without it, you tell me you've changed and expect me to find it in my heart to forgive you? How dare you?" My voice rose further. "How dare you think a simple apology could ever make up for that?"

Anna stared silently at her teenage groom, his words forcing her to relive the foolish things she had done in the past. She knew her actions had been wrong, yet at the time she had been ignorant, blind to the consequences. Now she knew better. Since no one had ultimately been harmed, she had hoped that acknowledgment and remorse would be enough. But as she listened to him, she began to realize that it wasn't.

No. What was she thinking? Things had never been as her teenage groom recounted them. She had been forceful and had not sought explicit consent, but she had never crossed the line. If he had truly hated it all, all he needed to do was reject her advances

resolutely, instead of offering weak refusals while still cooperating with her. After all, she loved him and respected his boundaries to the extent of making a fool of herself and herself alone in front of the entire five regions. In truth, it was he who had been misleading her, sending mixed signals and leading her on.

They were both responsible for what had transpired between them. She more than him, perhaps, but he had just admitted that he enjoyed her advances. She owed him nothing. And yet, here she was, ensnared by his words, blaming herself, waiting for his judgment. How could her partner in crime presume to judge her? It made no sense.

Then again, he had always been dangerously good with his tongue. And she almost forgot. He had cheated on her with a bitch from the Central Capital.

Anna had let his affair with Jill slip from her mind, convincing herself that their marriage was nothing more than a matter of convenience. After all, there was only chatter about their marriage, it had yet to be acknowledged publicly.

Chapter 2614: Prince Consort Has Gone Astray

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

Anna had let his affair with Jill slip from her mind, convincing herself that their marriage was nothing more than a matter of convenience. Not to mention, there was only chatter about their marriage, it had yet to be acknowledged publicly.

However, now that he dared to accuse her, the memory resurfaced unbidden. He was hardly innocent. He had far too many skeletons buried in his closet. Back then, he had used his manager to torment her. Now, he was using a researcher from Morningstar University to humiliate her, openly cheating on her with that bitch.

If anyone owed an apology, if anyone needed to offer an explanation, it was him. Instead, he had deftly placed her on trial, blaming her for everything and posturing as the victim, when in truth, he was far worse than she had ever been.

"How dare I?" Anna shot back, her voice cutting and unyielding. "If what you say is true, then how dare you announce to the entire world that you are dating Jill? How dare you put me on the stand when you are guilty of something far worse?" She flung her accusations at her teenage groom, with all five regions standing as her witnesses.

"So it did bother you," I remarked, a smile breaking across my face. "Phew. That's a load off my mind. I was scared that it didn't."

At my words, Anna snapped back at once. "Yes, I almost didn't care, until you dragged it out of me." Then she let out a long sigh and asked, "Tell me, what is it that you want? Why did you bring me here?"

"I want you," I declared, slowly closing the distance between us. "I want you to hold me the way you used to. I want you to smile playfully while you do it, just like before—"

"So you want to live in the past?" Anna cut in, refusing to listen further to her teenage groom's profane wishes. "I don't have to tell you. You're smart enough to know that's impossible."

"Yes, living in the past is impossible. But learning from the past is not." I continued, my voice steady as the words spilled out. "Back then, everything was right in front of my eyes, yet I didn't have the courage to reach for it. I regret not taking your hand when you offered it to me. I regret hesitating. I regret my indecision. I regret thinking that I had to choose between you and Susan. I regret—"

Just as I was pouring my heart out, Anna cut in, interpreting my words differently. "What do you mean by 'I regret thinking I had to choose between you and Susan?' Does that mean you chose me over her?"

"I thought you didn't care," I smirked, deliberately teasing her. I knew it wasn't love that prompted the question, but her vanity, her need to confirm that she stood above Susan. "No. It means I chose both of you. Actually, all three of you."

Anna was so taken aback by her teenage groom's words that she couldn't react for a moment, struggling to process what he had just said. Then she exploded. "What the fuck is that supposed to mean?"

Without waiting for my response, she pressed on, her outburst continuing unabated.

"Wyatt, you are the prince consort. You don't get to choose. I chose you. You don't get to be with anyone else but me. Get that through your thick head," Anna said coldly.

"Because I promise you this. If you continue this behavior after we marry, I will not tolerate it, and I will not hesitate to execute you."

"Prince consort?" I scoffed. "Who decided that? I never agreed to it." My voice hardened as I continued, no longer holding back. "And get this through your thick head. If I want all three of you, whether you like it or not, you are all mine." I finally revealed the side of myself I had only ever shown to Jill, a side I had been too afraid to show to Susan and Anna. The side of me that took what it wanted without waiting for permission or caring for other's opinion.

Anna stared at her teenage groom, her eyes wide with shock. She had not expected him to harbor such fantasies, and she could not help but think that her mother had been

right. All men were the same. Damn these morgels. If you did not train them properly, they would start shitting in your bed and making a mockery of you.

She blamed her past self for this outcome. It had been she who had repeatedly suggested threesomes, hoping to seduce him. And now, as a result, he was demanding three wives and lord knew how many concubines.

She was the future Southern Ruler. She could not have a husband who openly cheated on her or kept other wives and concubines. That would be a mockery of the entire Southern Region and its citizens. As the future Southern Ruler, she represented the Southern Region and its people. To disrespect her was to disrespect the citizens she stood for, and that was something she would never tolerate.

If it had been anyone else, Anna would not even be entertaining this conversation. She would have already broken off the engagement without hesitation. But this was the Southern Hope. She had to marry him and guide him, ensuring a better future for the Southern Region and its people. Though he had clearly gone astray, she believed that with firm guidance, she could steer him back onto the right path.

Therefore, she not only accepted this arranged political marriage, she regarded it as her duty. She would ensure that this marriage came to pass, binding him to the Southern Region for centuries to come, so that he would stand beside her in governing and developing the Southern Region and its people.

"Have you gone senile? You will be doing no such thing. You will properly marry me and work your butt off for the Southern Region and its people. I'm warning you, Wyatt. Don't you dare entertain such thoughts ever again. As my prince consort, you represent the Southern Region. It's about time you started acting your role. Don't you dare make a mockery of me or the Southern Region. And make sure you live up to the faith the Southern citizens have placed in you," Anna warned her teenage groom, reminding the weight of his title and the responsibilities that came with it.

Chapter 2615: Greater Good

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

Listening to Anna, I shook my head in quiet disappointment. Seeing my reaction, she quickly softened her tone and tried to persuade me. "Wyatt, I'm doing this for the greater good—"

"I understand, Anna," I cut in before she could finish. "That isn't the issue. I'm disappointed because your vision is so narrow, so limited."

Yes, listening to her plans on how to use me was an eye-opener and had offended me, but I forced myself to remain tolerant. After all, she had shown the same patience when I had used her love and status to establish myself in the Southern Region and the Card World itself.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Anna asked, visibly shaken. "Don't tell me you want to be the next Southern Ruler?"

In her memory of me, such ambition had never existed. Her regal status had meant nothing in my eyes. My indifference to power was part of what had once drawn her to me. Yet, here she was doubting my intentions, such was the allure of the throne and crown.

"There you go again," I said, shaking my head with exaggerated displeasure at her closed-mindedness. "Once more, you prove just how narrow and limited your vision truly is. I'm honestly feeling second-hand embarrassment for having fallen for someone like you. And here I thought you would be different from your ancestors." My voice cooled. "I suppose the extreme path really did ruin you for me and the card world."

"I don't understand," Anna said, frustration seeping into her voice. "Stop beating around the bush. If this is your attempt to mock my intelligence, then I give up. Surprise, surprise, you're smarter than I am. Now be straight with me, just as I was with you."

She abandoned the guessing game altogether, openly admitting that she had no idea what I was hinting at.

"Why limit yourself to the Southern Region," I replied, still denying her the direct answer she wanted. "Why not change the entire Card World? Why settle for improving the lives of Southern citizens when we could uplift the whole card apprentice society to unprecedented heights?"

I spoke deliberately, believing that an answer one arrives at on their own lingers far longer than one simply handed to them.

"As far as I know, you have no history of abusing drugs," Anna replied dryly. "Did you hit your head during the fight or something?"

For a moment, she thought she might have missed something crucial. Instead, it sounded no different from every warlord's wet dream.

"Every warlord has said the same thing before declaring war on their neighbors," she continued, her tone turning sharp. "They ruined millions of innocent lives and shattered countless families, yet their people still defended them as conquerors. Let us first

improve ourselves. Then we can talk about improving others, and only if they want it. Otherwise, it's pointless."

"Honey, I don't fancy myself a conqueror or a savior," I said calmly. "I'm a capitalist, through and through. The more they earn, the more they spend, and the more I stand to gain. I would never do anything to break that chain."

I appeared behind Anna and wrapped my arms around her, activating my 'If you see me, I see you' ability. She struggled instinctively, trying to break free. Leaning closer, I whispered into her ear, "The Card World is not our final stage..."

Her resistance weakened as I continued, my voice low and measured. "There are individuals across the myriad realms who can destroy our world from the farthest corner of existence, long before we even sense our impending doom."

When she finally stopped resisting altogether, I spoke again, unrestrained. "When I reach that height, I want you by my side, as one of my three queens."

Hearing that, Anna asked coolly, "And what guarantee do I have that it will remain just three queens, with no additions along the way?"

"You women need to learn how to protect your man," I replied with a light, teasing tone. "Do I need to teach you that too?"

She shot back instantly, "So now it's my fault that you want three wives?"

"Yes," I agreed shamelessly. "If you had forced yourself on me back when you had the chance, the way Jill did, who knows what might have happened?" I even used Jill as proof to support my argument.

"So it was Jill you were referring to back when you returned from Sun Blossom City after faking your death," Anna said irritably, piecing it together. "Ann should have realized it the moment Jill rushed to the Southern Capital to warn you about the central government's plan to kidnap you. What was she thinking?"

She spoke her thoughts out aloud, frustration creeping into her voice, coming dangerously close to the truth that Ann had likely found a way to hide or mask her memories from her. It was a real pain to deal with cards that were smarter than you. Fortunately, Anne possessed an obvious weakness, one Anna could exploit to bend her to her will, unlike in Ann's case.

"..." I chose not to tell Anna that Ann had already guessed my relationship with Jill back in the Southern Capital. I had no desire to wedge myself further between the twins—no, triplets—than I already had. It felt like navigating a real-life game of minesweeper. One wrong step, and I had no idea what would explode. So I decided to avoid that subject altogether.

Ann had already made her eagerness toward me painfully clear, and as for Anne, there was no question at all. As for Anna... that was best left unanswered for now.

"How long do you plan to keep holding me like that?" Anna asked, snapping me out of my thoughts. Despite her words, she made no attempt to struggle free. With that, my courage grew bolder, planning to slowly and steadily break past all her defenses.

Chapter 2616: Chibi Anna

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

"So," I asked, nestling my head on her shoulder from behind, "should I take this as a sign that you agree with me?"

"Your vision is grand, even noble. I will give you that," Anna replied. "But can you truly achieve it?"

She didn't seem to mind that my head was buried at the nape of her neck and I occasionally sniffed the body and hairs' scent. She had convinced, even fooled, herself that I was her groom, and that there was nothing inappropriate about it.

"Yes," I answered without hesitation. "The plan is already in motion. Even your mother is pulling her weight and doing her part."

"You met my mother? How am I only hearing about this now?" Anna asked, shock evident in her voice. The thought sent a chill through her. She began to believe that Ann might truly have found a way to hide memories from her. Anna had endured what felt like an eternity with that deranged Anne in the mystic dimension, all to grow stronger for everyone's sake, yet the other was now developing methods to keep things from her. In silence, Anna resolved to make Ann's punishment far harsher than it was now.

"No, I haven't met your mother yet," I replied calmly. "We've merely crossed paths a few times while conducting our respective business. For now, I believe our interests happen to align."

I had already guessed that the Southern Princess, understanding the inevitability of the coming upheaval, was also waiting for the three mischiefs to make their move against the Masters. As a safeguard for the Southern Region, she kept the hero within Clown Mask's memories of the future close at hand.

Aba Windsor, the VR-universe addict, had been persistently asking to return to Sky Blossom City to be with me, the creator of the VR-universe, but she could not. Her father had entrusted her custody to the Southern Royal family, particularly to the Southern Emperor. By using Ann as an intermediary, the Southern Princess had effectively kept Aba anchored in the Southern Capital.

I allowed her to do so simply because I did not want her pestering me. She might have been the hero in Clown Mask's future vision, but at present she was nothing more than a stinky gamer with heavy, dark bags hanging beneath her eyes in a world filled with all manner of miraculous cosmetic cards, that alone spoke volumes about the degree of her VR addiction. It was best for both of us that she stayed far away from me.

"And what is that?" Anna asked, clearly having lost track of why she was even here, what they had been arguing about, and how the conversation had reached this point.

"Overthrowing the true oppressors of the five regions and uniting them under a single vision, just as our true founding card apprentices once envisioned," I said, spouting some grandiose nonsense while deliberately withholding my real plans from her.

It wasn't that I didn't trust Anna. I didn't trust Ann, the one who shared her memories. By now, I was certain she was the snitch helping the Southern Princess stay one step ahead of me. Perhaps she had even approached me on her mother's orders. Even though I knew better, that was how it went once trust was broken. Every action became suspect, every word carried an ulterior motive, and nothing about them felt incidental or genuine anymore.

"Now whose vision is narrow and limited?" Anna snapped. "If you don't want to tell me, then don't. Just don't lie to me."

"Sorry, my bad," I said, offering a quick apology. Since we were already on the subject, I added, "You know I can see your true form, right? You don't need to hide it from me. Still, I'd prefer it if you maintained this one."

No, I was not body-shaming Anna. Her situation was simply similar to that of her grandaunt, Field Marshal Lorn. After breaking through to the card demigod realm, both of their bodies had transformed to better suit their latent potential. At least Field Marshal Lorn's body had merely regressed to that of a teenager. In Anna's case, it was worse. Her body had reverted to that of a pre-teen.

Mind you, she was well over a hundred years old, and I very much preferred her mature, curvy form.

"Is that so?" Anna said playfully as she turned to face me, then abruptly transformed into her original form, a little girl whose apparent age I was too sick to my stomach to even acknowledge. She wrapped her arms around me and chirped, "Daddy, am I a good girl?"

"Fuck," I blurted, instinctively trying to pull away. I let go of little Anna, but she refused to release me, clinging tighter as she repeated sweetly, "Daddy, was I a good girl?"

"Stop it," I blurted. "I promise I won't approach you without your consent. Now stop it." I knew exactly what she was doing. This was retaliation for my getting handsy earlier without her permission.

"Hahaha," little Anna burst into laughter. In the next instant, she transformed back into her adult form and said smugly, "That should teach you to think twice before testing me again."

"Don't even joke about that again. I almost vomited on you," I warned Anna, making it clear she shouldn't take too much pleasure in my misery. It could have just as easily backfired on her.

That said, thinking back on it, pre-teen Anna really was far too cute. Any parent would be lucky to have a child as adorable as her.

Anna rolled her eyes at my empty threat, then finally turned to the real reason she was here, having avoided it long enough. "That's enough for the reunion. Now, where is he?" She paused, her voice tightening. "Don't tell me you've already killed him."

The moment she mentioned him, Anna's demeanor shifted. The air around her seemed to boil, thick with barely restrained fury as her rage bled into the space between us.

Chapter 2617: Confused Anna

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234

"No, I didn't kill him. But are you sure you want to do this?" I asked Anna. Massacring a clan of demon worshippers was one thing, but killing her own father was not something one could ever truly come back from.

"And what exactly am I hearing now? If you're looking for a damsel to protect, go find the other two. I can handle my own affairs," Anna replied, a smug grin playing on her lips as she signaled for me to hand Gainover over to her.

When she saw the genuine concern in my eyes, her expression shifted. She shook her head and said calmly, "I never had a father. And Gainover is no less guilty than the Davis family. He should have died that night with the rest of them. The only reason he didn't was because he got a tip-off and escaped to the North."

I simply nodded and expanded my limitless celestial domain within the confines of the warehouse, engulfing both Anna and me. As we entered, we saw the space stretched boundlessly in all directions, and at its center stood a lavish three-story manor, silent and still. I had already ejected the demigod guards back to the Northern Capital. At this moment, aside from Gainover, the domain was completely empty.

Gainover possessed an impressive mastery over compressed space-rule. Unfortunately for him, his pursuit of the space-rule had diverged entirely from mine, though it bore some resemblance to Anna's Amphitheatre, the Field Marshal's Mystic Dimension, and similar constructs. From what I had gathered, the unparalleled bloodline was known for using dimensions to trap their enemies and overwhelm them through sheer bloodline dominance. It seemed his time in the Southern Royal Palace had not been without its benefits.

However, unlike the descendants of the unparalleled bloodline, his dimensional technique was tailored for defense rather than to trap the enemy. He could only cower within it, like a turtle retreating into its shell. Alone and trapped within my celestial rule domain, he had no choice but to wait for his inevitable demise in his shell.

As we stepped into the manor, Anna spoke firmly, "Wyatt, no matter what happens, stay out of this. This is my score to settle."

"I will respect that," I lied. I fully intended to step in, even if Anna ended up hating me for it. Gainover was a capable card demigod. If not for my unconventional methods, even approaching him would have been difficult, let alone capturing him before the Northern Capital guards arrived. Although Anna was powerful for a newborn card demigod due to her extreme divinity, she was still inexperienced.

"Well, would you look at that," Anna mocked. "You've gotten better at lying. Or is it just that I can finally see the real you now that my eyes are no longer blinded by your charm?" Her tone made her dissatisfaction unmistakably clear, especially regarding my relationship with Jill, after I had explicitly promised to take her on a date once she emerged from the Field Marshal's Mystic Dimension.

I followed her in silence, choosing not to argue. The tension was already thick enough as it was. Besides, strictly speaking, I was in the wrong for having double-booked.

When we reached the manor's main hall, we found a translucent, glass-like surface suspended in midair at its center. It was the entrance to Gainover's dimension, clearly sealed. Judging by how he had positioned the entry point, I could tell he was not simply waiting for death. He had thrown a welcome party for it.

Pointing at the suspended glass, I said with certainty, "He's in there."

Anna nodded and began preparing to force her way into the dimension. Before she could act, Gainover suddenly appeared at the very spot where the glass-like entrance

hung. The moment Anna laid eyes on him, she lunged forward. I grabbed her wrist and yanked her back, warning, "It's just his reflection. A sloppy trap."

I focused on analyzing both the dimensional entry and the reflection bound to it, which meant I did not see Anna's expression. But I could hear it in her voice, sharp with fury, as she shouted aloud, "Wyatt!"

When I turned to her, she was seething. She demanded, "What did I just tell you?"

"I was—" Before I could even explain myself, Anna cut me off, shouting, "What did I just tell you? No matter what, stay out of it. Was that really so damn hard to follow? What was I even thinking, asking that of you? It's you. You'll do whatever you want, and the rest of us are supposed to either accept it or just fuck off."

I immediately understood that this had nothing to do with Gainover at all. Anna was not fine with me dating Jill after I had promised to take her on a date. I didn't mind her anger. She had every right to it. What troubled me was where that anger was coming from.

I knew for a fact that her resentment toward me did not stem from love. It came from the belief that she had to marry me for the sake of the Southern Region and its citizens, made worse by the fact that I now had openly declared my relationship with Jill.

She was angry because things between us were not developing the way she had expected when she chose to respect the Southern Royal Court's decision and accept me as her prince consort.

She was angry because, somewhere along the way, she had begun to see me as no different from Gainover in certain respects. Now that she was facing Gainover up close, those thoughts had grown louder, more insistent, until she could no longer suppress them and lashed out.

There were countless reasons for Anna to be angry with me at that moment. My problem was that her love for me was not one of them. I had no intention of ever giving up on her, but the longer this dragged on, the more it hurt. And then there were the other two. If I chose to focus on Anna alone, I would be unfair to them. They might forgive me, but was that really the kind of person I wanted to be? Someone who hurt people who loved him?

At this point, even I was beginning to think that in some ways, I truly was no different from Gainover, let alone Anna who had been wounded by both of us.

Chapter 2618: Mirror Maze Dimension

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234, Limitless Celestial Domain, Gainover Manor

"It seems I've become more of a distraction than any real help. Since you don't need me, I'll take my leave. Stay safe," I said, taking my cue to withdraw. Without waiting for Anna's response, I stepped out of the limitless celestial domain.

The Anna Heatsend I knew, the Bad Daughter, could never let duty and responsibility bound her. If such chains were forced upon her, she would eventually begin to wither under their weight.

As she was now.

Yes, Anna had accepted the duty and responsibility of being the Southern Heir of her own volition, but she was now carrying them out the way others expected her to, not the way she herself desired.

In truth, the Anna standing there had no feelings for me, yet she was preparing to enter matrimony with me because others insisted she needed the Southern Hope by her side, nurturing and guiding me for the sake of the Southern Region. If it had been her true self making the choice, she would have long since ended whatever remained between us.

However, this would not last long. Like every ruler, Anna would eventually recognize the error in her path, tune out the noise, and begin doing what she should have done from the start, reigning with her will and not others.

She was still learning. Without mistakes, how could she grow? That was to say my window to rekindle things with Anna was narrow. Before long, I would be no different from one of her exes in her eyes, with only Anne's presence setting me apart.

With me gone, Anna once again dashed toward Gainover, who remained suspended in the air, disregarding my earlier warning that it was nothing more than a reflection and a trap. The instant she made contact, her body was swallowed whole, like a pebble sinking into a lake, except there were no ripples to follow. She simply vanished.

I immediately switched on my primordial soul pupils and peered into Gainover's dimension. What I saw was Anna trapped within what resembled a nightmarish version of a circus house of mirrors. Only, these mirrors were not glass. They were thin, translucent sheets of ice, transparent yet completely non-reflective. Yet, they reflected Gainover's image.

At the very heart of the dimension, I spotted Gainover hiding. I had to admit, he was strikingly handsome, like a snow elf carved from frost itself. No wonder women across

the five regions had gone mad over him, including two princesses. One had been Anna's mother, and the other Anna's rival, the Northern Princess.

"Welcome to my mirror maze, my dear daughter." Gainover's voice echoed throughout the dimension as every reflection of his reflected on the towering sheets of ice turned to look at Anna.

Anna did not wait to hear another word. She charged forward and began smashing at the ice. To her shock, every strike passed straight through it. From where I stood, I could see what was happening. Each time she made contact, she was flung to the far end of the maze, while the section she had just traversed subtly reconfigured itself, reshaping and realigning until it fit seamlessly back into the structure.

The result was cruelly elegant. Every attempt to break the ice only forced her to start over, trapped in a newly altered mirror maze each damn time.

As I observed more closely, it became clear that Gainover's mirror maze held far more depth than what was currently on display. He simply had not been given the chance to reveal it yet, not while his foolish daughter was still struggling to understand the first stage. He showed no urgency in dealing with her, and I felt there was a reason for that.

I wondered how long Anna would continue charging forward like a wild bull. Had her enemy been anyone other than her cowardly father, they would have already exploited her rage and killed her by now.

Before long, I noticed something else. On every ice sheet filling the dimension, beside Gainover's reflection, another image slowly began to take form. It was Anna's reflection. Not just one, but countless reflections of her, each identical in appearance. Even the light in their eyes shone with the same intensity as her own, as if they were truly alive.

Seeing her likeness appear beside Gainover's reflection, Anna finally halted and looked around. At last, she gave her mind a chance to work instead of blindly swinging her fists in fury. That was when Gainover's voice echoed through the dimension once more.

"Go," he commanded calmly, "bring my daughter to me."

His reflections mirrored his movements and issued the same command to the Annas standing beside them. The light in those reflections' eyes flared as they stepped out of the ice sheets and rushed toward Anna in a surging wave.

Just when I thought she was about to properly engage her brain instead of her rage, Anna reacted. She threw a confident punch at the nearest reflection. To her astonishment, the reflection met her strike head-on with equal force, perhaps even slightly greater, driving her back several steps.

In that moment, I understood why Gainover had not attacked her immediately. He had been patiently copying her, bidding time to create those reflections. Each one was an exact replica of Anna, identical not only in appearance but also in strength and skills. There were more than a hundred thousand of them, and Anna stood alone.

The outcome was inevitable. Anna was soon overwhelmed, surrounded on all sides, overpowered, helpless, and finally subdued. The replica Annas restrained her and carried her deeper into the mirror maze.

Watching this, I frowned. They were not taking her toward the heart of the mirror maze where Gainover was hiding. Instead, they were moving toward another end, where an incarnation of Gainover stood waiting for them.

He had lied, no surprise there.

Chapter 2619: Origin Card: Predatory Upgrade

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234, Limitless Celestial Domain, Gainover Manor, Mirror Maze Dimension

"You have grown up beautifully, my dear daughter," Gainover's incarnation said, as the replica Annas dragged Anna, they had restrained, before him. "Forgive the rough welcome. I had to take precautionary measures. After all, your mother and her side of the family have poisoned your mind and heart against me, to the point that instead of holding a banquet to celebrate breaking through to the card demigod realm, you set out on a journey to hunt me, your father."

Restrained and forced to kneel before the most hated being in her life, Anna slowly lifted her swollen, bloodied head. She strained against the replica Annas' restraints, trying to break free, but no matter how fiercely she struggled, she failed. In the end, she could only glare at the bastard who dared to call her his daughter while slandering her entire family.

"I know you won't believe me. After all, you have been fed lies for so long that you will refuse to believe the truth even when it is staring right at you, and may cling to those lies instead. I would not blame you for doing so. Still, I know you, my daughter, are stronger than any of them give you credit for. You can handle the truth. The truth I have kept to myself and never allowed another soul to know, fearing they would hurt you if you began to ask questions," Gainover said dramatically, his expressions as striking as each word he spoke. If I did not know better, even I might have begun to second-guess everything I had heard and learned about him.

Not receiving the reaction he expected from Anna, Gainover was not surprised. He continued nonetheless, knowing that if a lie is told often enough, it can come to be perceived as the truth.

"My daughter, they say that I abandoned your mother and married your stepmother over a diamond grimoire. Now that you are a demigod yourself, do you still believe that lie? Do you not feel there is more to it?" Gainover asked, waiting for Anna to react. She had remained unresponsive for so long that he began to wonder whether she was even listening.

Once again, however, he was met only with her bloodlust-filled glare. The sight took him aback, and he frowned, momentarily breaking character. He had not expected Anna to believe his lies, but neither had he expected her to simply ignore them. He had anticipated her lashing out, defending her dumb slut of a mother and her inbred family.

If she had lashed out, he would have taken pleasure in breaking her. Instead, her complete disregard only infuriated him, as though she were deliberately ruining his amusement. Strangely, that indifference stirred his sadistic side. It reminded him of his ex-wife, who had worn the same detached expression when he divorced her and married into the Davis family. Recalling that day, Gainover unconsciously broke into a drooling grin. Only he knew that he would pay any price for a dream nymph card crafted using his ex-wife's personality rights.

Momentarily, Gainover could not help but entertain the thought of using Anna as a hostage, threatening his ex-wife into satisfying his sadistic desires. The only reason he appeared so laid-back was his belief that Anna was firmly in his grasp, and that the Southern Hope would have no choice but to secure his release.

Several minutes ago, he had been waiting for his inevitable end. Now, however, he saw new possibilities, all made possible by his dumb daughter. Snapping out of his fantasies, he refocused on his original plan: turning his daughter into a weapon against the Southern Royal Family and the Southern Hope. He grew giddy at the thought that the seed he had planted years ago was finally reaching fruition. It was an unexpected windfall at what he perceived to be his darkest hour.

"My dear daughter, it was never about the diamond grimoire. I was merely collateral damage in the struggle for power between the Southern Royal Family and the Southern Royal Court. It all began when your uncle chose to travel the enlightened path. The Southern Ruler was left without an heir. The royal family wanted to choose your mother, but the royal court opposed it because I, her spouse, possessed neither the strength nor the status required to be a prince consort. They told your mother that she would have to divorce me and marry someone stronger or of higher status to become the Southern Heir. Your mother rejected them without hesitation.

"However, I was not fine with it, so I decided to do something about it. I appealed to be granted a diamond grimoire of one of the unparalleled bloodline predecessors. My

appeal was rejected without even consideration because they knew that with my origin card ability 'Predatory Upgrade,' using such a diamond grimoire of one of the unparalleled bloodline predecessors would have allowed me to gain the power to stand beside your mother, making her eligible to become the Southern Heir.

"That is because my origin card 'Predatory Upgrade' can absorb the power of the grimoires used to upgrade my grimoire. In other words, if the grimoire I used to upgrade my grimoire possessed origin cards, my origin card would permanently take a portion of their power and abilities depending on how high the complementation rate is.

"So I decided to take matters into my own hands and steal a diamond grimoire belonging to one of the unparalleled bloodline predecessors. But before I could succeed, I was caught in the act. I tried to explain myself, yet no one was willing to believe me, more accurately no one was willing to side with me, not even your mother. Although they did not punish me for this crime, the way they looked at me changed, growing worse with each passing day. In the end, I had no choice but to leave, divorcing your mother. Because that was the best for her. I didn't want to come in the way of her dreams and duty...

Chapter 2620: The Full Truth

Date: Unspecified

Time: Unspecified

Location: Myriad Realms, Card World, Southern Region, Southern Capital, Guild Association Mall, Warehouse No. 234, Limitless Celestial Domain, Gainover Manor, Mirror Maze Dimension

"My dear daughter, leaving your mother and you, was the most painful and hardest decision I had made in my entire life. Only I know how I struggled after leaving you guys, I was lost, and in that moment of weakness, your stepmother and the Davis family approached me, taking advantage of my unstable mind and heart they lured me into their elaborate conspiracy. I promise you I never knew that they were actually filthy demon worshippers. I only knew of it when you revealed it, massacring them. All I'm trying to say is that over time, the facts were twisted into the version you heard and were taught about me, poisoning your mind and heart against me. I never meant to hurt you or your mother, I always had your best interest in my heart—"

"Arrrh," Anna suddenly let out an enraged grunt, interrupting Gainover's fanatical rant. For a moment, I almost thought he believed his own lies to be the truth, making me question whether he was trying to deceive Anna or himself.

"Shut your damn whining, you heathen," Anna spat coldly. "And how dare you bad-mouth my family to me, when the only reason you are still breathing is because they chose not to kill you out of consideration for me. If you ask me, they made a mistake

letting you live. Since that mistake was made because of me, I believe it is my duty to correct it."

"Sigh." Gainover let out a long breath, shaking his head in disappointment before continuing. "My dear daughter, believe what you wish. After all, I am the one in the wrong for abandoning you. Sometimes, I wonder if I should not have broken it off so early, if I should have at least endured until you were grown. However, you must understand that the royal palace no longer felt like a warm home to me. It felt like a cold prison, not only for me, but for your mother as well because of me—sigh!

"There is no point in dwelling on what could have been. I believe that what I did was the best decision I could have made given the circumstances at the time. The only reason I told you all this is because, in the end, a part of me could not help being a little selfish and greedy. I was overtaken by the thought that perhaps, just perhaps, you might see the truth in my side of the story and find it in your heart to forgive me for abandoning you and leaving you in the care of those lying mons—"

"Don't you dare!" Anna screamed, cutting in before Gainover could insult her family once more.

Seeing such a fierce reaction from her, his eyes glinted with a subtle grin. The harder she resisted now, the more firmly she would believe in his lies once he was finished with her. More importantly, he had found her trigger point. Knowing what enraged her and what calmed her would serve him well in brainwashing her against everything she knew and believed about her mother and her family.

"My dear daughter, no matter how hard I try to remain indifferent, it pains me to see how their lies have poisoned your heart and mind against me—" Gainover continued his act of the misunderstood, tragic father.

Anna was not buying it in the slightest. She shouted over him, cutting him off. "Shut up, you damn heathen. I didn't want to bother arguing with you, but now I believe that would be better than listening to your relentless whining.

"My uncle treated you, his brother-in-law, like his own brother. He confided his worries and fears in you, trusted you, and sought your guidance. Instead of helping him, you guided him into taking the enlightened path. Making him unfit to become the next Southern Heir.

"You claim the royal court hindered my mother's path to becoming Southern Heir. They were merely a tool my family used to dismantle your conspiracy to exploit my mother. It was a ruse, meant to conceal the fact that my grandfather already knew how you had betrayed my uncle's trust and drove him astray, far from salvation. He spared your life only because my mother pleaded for you and willingly withdrew from the succession to become the next Southern Heir. She was a fool back then, convincing herself that you

acted as you did because you believed she wanted the position of Southern Heir. When actually, it was all for the sake of your ambition.

"It was not the royal court that rejected your appeal for using a diamond grimoire used by the unparalleled bloodline predecessors to upgrade your grimoire. It was my grandfather, using them as a tool, preserving face for his only daughter. My mother knew this and respected her father's decision, knowing he had every right to be furious with you. That was why she asked you to abandon your attempt to secure one of the diamond grimoires used by the unparalleled bloodline predecessors to make her the next Southern Heir.

"You claim you were stealing one of the diamond grimoires used by the unparalleled bloodline predecessors for my mother's sake, but we all know you did it out of your own selfishness and greed. Otherwise, you would never have attempted such a crime, fully aware of the consequences. That night, for the first time in her life, my mother also saw you for what you truly were. Even so, she still pleaded on your behalf to my grandfather. When that failed, she used me, informing him that she was pregnant with me and that his granddaughter would need a father while growing up.

"You say that after the incident everyone began to look at you differently, when in truth it was you who saw them differently. Once they saw your true face, they could no longer be marks for your con. Knowing your ambitions would never come to fruition in the southern palace, you divorced my mother while she was still pregnant with me.

"You claim the Davis family took advantage of you at your weakest hour, when the truth is that they offered you a diamond grimoire that once belonged to an unparalleled bloodline predecessor who died at the hands of a devil. The price was marrying one of their daughters, becoming a part of their family. A condition you accepted fully aware that they were demon worshippers. As a matter of fact, this mirror maze of yours was built using that predecessor's origin card.

"Do you know how I know all of this is true? Because the people you claim wronged you never once bad-mouthed you to me. They told me the truth as it was and never disrespected me by insulting the scumbag they perceived as my father. Meanwhile, you claim to be telling me the truth, yet you do not even have the decency to refrain from disrespecting me by disrespecting my family. You could have simply told your side of the story, but instead you chose to demean them at every turn you got. The fact that you still hold a grudge against them after so many years tells me enough about you not to trust a single word that comes out of your mouth."