

The Enigmatic Return (Neera and Jean)

Chapter 1401

The way Neera interpreted "tidying up" clearly embarrassed her; her face flushed.

She stomped her feet, feigning a pout, "Oh, I'm just worried about the Cox family, not just Avery. Don't cause trouble; it's a critical moment now."

Jean, understanding her current concerns, sighed and pulled her into a seat, embracing her.

"Don't worry; the Cox family will be fine. I can assure you of that."

Neera looked up at him, her gaze resting on his perfectly chiseled jaw. Curiously, she asked, "How can you be so sure?"

Jean remained composed, casually stating, "The Cox family is not as vulnerable as you imagine, and Bartitsu Guild is not invincible. In a direct confrontation, it's unclear who would win. Right now, the Cox family is desperate to leave, without constraints. They can go all out against Bartitsu Guild. However, Bartitsu Guild won't dare to go all-in; they'll be cautious. Besides, Bartitsu Guild might fear that if the Cox family can't evacuate, they'd rather go down with a fight, pulling Bartitsu Guild down with them."

Neera pondered for a moment, finding some logic in his words.

At this moment, Zephyr's call finally came through.

Neera immediately picked up. "How is it? Has the Cox family evacuated? What's the situation?"

Zephyr's voice promptly came through, "Ms. Garcia, don't worry. The Cox family has completely withdrawn. They should reach District Ten by daybreak."

Neera, whose heart had been suspended in anticipation, finally experienced a sense of relief.

"How did it go? Did they face any ambush or interception? Did anyone from the Cox family sustain injuries?"

"There was indeed an interception. People from the Watson family and the Laker family tried to stop the Cox family. But surprisingly..."

At this point, Zephyr paused, as if weighing his words.

After a few seconds, he continued thoughtfully, "I always feel like someone was secretly helping the Cox family. The Watson family and the Laker family brought quite a few people to intercept the Cox family, outnumbering them. However, in the chaos of the skirmish, I sensed that the Cox family's numbers increased, and the advantage was entirely on their side. The Watson family and the Laker family were overwhelmed, suffering numerous casualties. However, when the Cox family withdrew, I didn't feel any change in their numbers."

Neera, surprised, inquired, "Are you suggesting that some individuals silently joined the chaos, aided the Cox family, and then discreetly withdrew without leaving a trace?"

Zephyr affirmed, "Exactly, that's how it is. I'm sure of it. I definitely wasn't seeing things."

Neera, puzzled, said, "How could this happen?"

After ending the call, she shared this information with Jean.

The latter, seemingly indifferent, responded casually, "It might be families that have private alliances with the Cox family, fearing reprisals from Bartitsu Guild. They could be helping covertly to avoid being targeted. The Cox family has deep roots and connections after so many years under Bartitsu Guild. Having a few friendly families is quite normal."

Neera, convinced by his explanation, didn't dwell on it much and quickly crawled into bed.

Jean, observing her wrapping herself tightly, chuckled softly, "What, feeling sleepy now?" [SEARCH the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

Neera's round, wide eyes peeked out from the blanket, and her eyelashes blinked twice. "Yeah, turn off the lights. Let's go to sleep."

Jean raised an eyebrow, kissed her forehead, and laid down beside her.

As he turned off the bedside lamp, he glanced at his phone.

Ten minutes ago, Ian had sent a message: Mr. Beauvort, the Cox family has safely left District Fourteen, and Mr. Wiley's people have returned.

After reading it, he swiftly deleted the message with his slender fingers.

At the same time, Avery, who had already left District Fourteen, sat in his car deep in thought.

He had noticed something unusual regarding the recent skirmish, and what puzzled him was that this situation had occurred for the third time.

Previously, on Adieu Island, a group of people suddenly appeared to aid the Cox family.

The subsequent list was also provided by mysterious individuals.

Now, in a critical moment, another batch of unfamiliar faces emerged to assist the Cox family, leaving without a trace.

Who was repeatedly helping the Cox family in secret, and what was their purpose?

Irwin couldn't fathom it and speculated, "Mr. Cox, could those people be from Ms. Garcia's Gordon family?"

Avery immediately denied this possibility, "No, Neera is sensible. I made it clear to her, and she wouldn't risk the entire Gordon family. Besides, the people today were all new faces; I've never seen them before."

As he spoke, a furrow appeared on his forehead.

Irwin immediately caught on. "Never seen them before. Could it be... people from Lordsworth Estate?"

Avery remained silent, contemplating the possibility.

It couldn't be ruled out, but the question lingered-why would Lordsworth Estate be so generous?

Accepting the Cox family into their fold was one thing, but secretly protecting them, especially given their previous interactions, raised questions.

Unable to find an answer, he leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes, and pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Let's set that aside for now. Once we reach District Ten, settle in quickly. It's not the time to relax yet. Bartitsu Guild will undoubtedly regroup, and there's much to handle on the Lordsworth Estate side as well."

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Chapter 1402

Early the next day, news of the complete withdrawal of the Cox family from District Fourteen spread like wildfire, sparking a flurry of discussions.

"So, the Cox family really left, huh? My goodness, such a massive family, announcing their departure from Bartitsu Guild, it's quite remarkable."

"What departure? This is clearly Bartitsu Guild forcing others out. If it weren't for the guild being unfair and creating this kind of atmosphere, I don't think the Cox family would have left. They were doing fine in Bartitsu Guild. Why go to an unfamiliar place and trouble themselves?"

"What about the armory? Is it a real thing? Has the Cox family already emptied it? In that case, Bartitsu Guild is left with nothing. Can't understand what Bartitsu Guild is trying to achieve. The Cox family has always respected Bartitsu Guild, never causing any trouble, and now they're being pushed away. What's the point?"

"Oh, that's simple. What else can they be thinking? They want the things in the Cox family's armory. Greed knows no bounds, right..."

There were onlookers, sympathizers for the Cox family, and those condemning them.

"The Cox family are traitors! Avery is a traitor! Building a secret armory, storing illegal weapons, and engaging in prohibited smuggling. Now that the truth is out, they betray the guild and defect to another. No dignity left!"

"Bartitsu Guild has been good to the Cox family. Now, they've betrayed the guild. They have no conscience. Disgusting!"

Meanwhile, Bartitsu Guild also issued the latest statement, claiming that even though the Cox family has left the guild, they will still punish the Cox family for their alleged crimes.

Of course, these words were just for show, to save their dignity.

After all, with the Cox family no longer within the jurisdiction of Bartitsu Guild, they have no authority to administer any punishment.

However, these statements were not just empty talk; they were aimed at reinforcing the impression that the Cox family were traitors.

But within half an hour, a statement released by Lordsworth Estate stirred up a storm across the entire Phison.

Lordsworth Estate: Firstly, we are honored to welcome the Cox family into our extended family, becoming a valuable ally under our banner. In the future, the glory and disgrace of Lordsworth Estate are intertwined with that of the Cox family. We hope to develop

and prosper together. Secondly, Lordsworth Estate would like to clarify that the Cox family did not secretly build an armory, nor have they engaged in any illicit private transactions. These are baseless accusations that hold no ground in Lordsworth Estate or the entire Free Realm. The Cox family is innocent, both during their time in Bartitsu Guild and afterward in Lordsworth Estate. Regarding the armory issue, Lordsworth Estate has verified that it was not privately constructed by the Cox family. It was discovered by the Cox family's previous patriarch and has been guarded by them since then. The armory has not been accessed, and Bartitsu Guild was well aware of this arrangement. The decision for the Cox family to guard it was made with the approval of Bartitsu Guild. As for why Bartitsu Guild is now making counter-accusations, we do not have that information.

As soon as this statement was released, an uproar exploded on the internet.

Oh my, Lordsworth Estate issuing a statement; that's a rare sight! When was the last time this happened? The Cox family really knows how to make a statement! After the Gordon family, they're the second family to command such respect from Lordsworth Estate, right?

This is absurd. So, the armory existed long before, and Bartitsu Guild, acting like it's something new, accuses the Cox family of building it. What's the deal with that? And accusing the Cox family of building it privately? Tsk, tsk. We need to examine this closely.

It appears that the Bartitsu Guild has no shame. The Cox family was rightfully safeguarding it, and yet they want to tarnish their name by accusing them of illegal weapons smuggling. I'm sure it's a fabrication, an attempt to besmirch their reputation. It's truly unsightly.

If that's the case, who would want to align with such a power? Any family could be the next target. Aligning with this kind of force might leave you bone dry one day. Be cautious, run away quickly!

My assessment is that Bartitsu Guild is truly deceitful. This isn't the first or second time. Who would want to associate with them? Talking about betrayal, if the Cox family didn't leave, that would be the real surprise. I'm siding with the Cox family.

I'm with the Cox family too! I used to think they lacked conscience, but now, thinking about it... Hah.

Looking back, sending the Cox family to reclaim Adieu Island from the Jagger family was probably intentional from Bartitsu Guild. Clearly, they had sent their own people to reclaim it several times without success, yet suddenly they feared the Cox family. It's like they willingly let the Cox family be the sacrificial lamb. Bartitsu Guild probably didn't expect the Cox family to come back intact and successfully reclaim Adieu Island. Haha,

that's quite unexpected. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Be bolder and don't say it's a guess; it's definitely a deliberate action from Bartitsu Guild.

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Chapter 1403

In just one morning, public opinion shifted dramatically.

Everyone was condemning Bartitsu Guild, and the Cox family had turned into the unfortunate ones forced to leave their homeland, gaining tremendous support.

The label of betrayal has successfully been removed from the Cox family's reputation.

Not only that, but some families under Bartitsu Guild now have an even worse opinion of the guild, growing wary one by one.

Bartitsu Guild's actions can only be described as a loss outweighing the gains.

Matthew, upon seeing these discussions, was furious to the point of exploding.

"Hurry up and have people delete those online comments for me! What kind of image are we presenting?"

However, his assistant, Darren, stood there looking hesitant, unmoving.

"Mr. Lozano, even if we silence them, it won't make any sense. It will only make people think that Bartitsu Guild is trying to silence others and create the impression that the guild has something to hide."

"What other options do we have? Are we going to allow public opinion to keep escalating like this?" Matthew stroked his beard, his expression more disgruntled than if he had eaten a fly.

Darren responded with a strained expression, "Currently, the paramount concern isn't public opinion but the unity of the guild. The Cox family has already severed ties with the guild and joined Lordsworth Estate. Now, our focus should be on whether Lordsworth Estate will leverage the Cox family against us. We need to prepare in advance."

Matthew sneered. "I don't believe Lordsworth Estate would dare to make a move for real against the guild. Even if they are powerful, the guild is not to be trifled with!"

Darren wiped the sweat off his forehead and continued to advise, "That may be true, but we still need to be prepared in advance. Moreover, even though the Cox family has gone to Lordsworth Estate, their grievances with families like the Watson family and the Laker family still exist. Given Avery's temperament, he won't quietly accept this loss. There will be revenge for any wrongs, and in that case, his stance against the guild will only become more hostile." Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Pausing, he carefully added in a hushed tone, "And, the secret hidden in that arsenal, once exposed... If Avery finds out about what happened back then..."

"Shut up!" Before he could finish his sentence, Matthew suddenly glared at him fiercely. "Who gave you the right to spout nonsense?"

Darren's voice abruptly ceased, and he lowered his head, reluctant to utter another word.

The atmosphere grew eerily still. After a moment, Matthew squinted and inquired, "So, what do you suggest we do now?"

Darren hesitated for a moment before stating, "Given the current circumstances, our best course of action is to seek support from influential families. Despite the significance of the Watson family and the Laker family, their power has considerably waned in recent conflicts with the Cox family. The skirmish yesterday also unveiled that these two families are not operating at their peak. It appears we'll need to depend on the Gordon family."

Upon hearing this, Matthew furrowed his brow.

"The Gordon family? Have you lost your mind? The Gordon family has a favorable relationship with the Cox family. With the Cox family's departure and all the upheaval, why would the Gordon family still align themselves with Bartitsu Guild?"

"The Gordon family indeed has a close relationship with the Cox family, but Bartitsu Guild has more than just the Gordon family as allies with the Cox family. The outcome remains within Bartitsu Guild, right? Whether a relationship is good or not boils down to interests. If the guild wants to win over the Gordon family, we need to appeal to their interests and find a way to lift the Gordon family's spirits."

Matthew paused his pacing, turned, and sat on the sofa, sinking into deep thought.

If it were in the past, he would have scorned the Gordon family.

However, things had changed. The head of the Gordon family held influence from District Twenty-One to District Twenty-Five, and Chad had recently revealed the hidden strength of the Gordon family.

In the current situation, there might not be any family in Bartitsu Guild with a greater influence than the Gordon family.

Reflecting on this, he took a deep breath and commanded, "Reach out to the Gordon family. Inform them that I extend a personal invitation for tea. Let's engage in a face-to-face discussion."

Darren nodded in acknowledgment. "Yes, sir."

Not long after, Neera received the message.

She consulted with Chad, "Uncle Chad, do you think I should go?"

Chad set aside the newspaper and leisurely replied, "Go ahead, see what tricks Matthew and the others have up their sleeves, and what they plan to use to win over our Gordon family."

Neera smirked. "Most likely, it's all about using personal gains. Bartitsu Guild has no scruples, and for their goals, they'll use any means necessary. They're not afraid to make empty promises. Who knows what grandiose claims they'll make this time?"

As expected, when she attended the meeting at the café, Matthew indeed intended to persuade her with personal gains.

"Ms. Garcia, you are the head of the Gordon family and also the ninth elder of Bartitsu Guild. The responsibilities on your shoulders are quite substantial."

Savoring the coffee, Neera casually smiled and straightforwardly said, "If you have something to say, feel free to speak directly. I believe there's no need to waste time beating around the bush. After all, everyone's time is precious."

Matthew reclined in his chair, a slight twitch at the corner of his eye as he controlled his temper, all the while maintaining a smiling demeanor.

"Ms. Garcia, you're a direct individual, and I appreciate that. It's easy to converse with someone like you. Since you've laid it out so plainly, I'll get straight to the point. The guild hopes that the Gordon family can offer full support, stand in solidarity, and aid in resisting external threats. In return, the guild will promote you to the second elder seat..."

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Chapter 1404

Neera held the coffee cup, her slender fingers gently caressing the rim casually. Her expression was indifferent, not particularly warm but not cold either.

Matthew had been studying her expression intently. Seeing this, he decided to continue.

"The Cox family's betrayal of Bartitsu Guild, and their defection to the Lordsworth Estate, has now become the talk of the town. I'm sure you're aware of it. As for the Lordsworth Estate's explanation, it's not the truth. Since the Gordon family is still here, it shows your loyalty to Bartitsu Guild. Therefore, it would be best if you take up the vacant position of the third elder seat."

His explanation was logically and emotionally appealing, yet every sentence he uttered was tied to self-interest.

Although Neera had anticipated this in her heart, she broke out a feigned look of surprise.

"The third elder seat? Mr. Lozano, you're not pulling my leg, are you? I'm currently just the ninth elder, at the bottom of the hierarchy. How could I possibly be promoted to the position of the third elder all of a sudden? Wouldn't this upset the other elders? After all, when it comes to seniority or experience, I'm far behind the other elders. Moreover, the strength of the Gordon family is not comparable to the other families. Mr. Lozano, you're really overestimating me. Let's forget about this."

Matthew chuckled deviously, like a cunning old fox.

"How can this be considered favoritism? This is what you deserve. You hold power over from District Twenty-One to District Twenty-Five. These five districts give you influence that other families can't really compare. Moreover, the strength of the Gordon family itself is not to be underestimated. Ms. Garcia, your words are too modest. Besides, the Gordon family's loyalty to Bartitsu Guild is well recognized. The guild has long planned to elevate your status, and by doing so, make the Gordon family the leading family in Bartitsu Guild. It's just that there hasn't been time to discuss this before such an event occurred..."

At this point, he let out a deep sigh, pouring out his troubles to her.

"I never expected things to turn out this way with the Cox family. You know, the Cox family has a history of over a hundred years in Bartitsu Guild. They are considered a founding member of the guild, and their relationship with the guild has always been good. They are even one of the families that the guild values the most. Who would have thought that fate would play such a trick, leading to a day when things would escalate to the point of a complete fallout."

Neera gazed at him quietly, pouring herself a cup of coffee and another for him. Then, she casually asked, "By the way, what's the deal with the Cox family's armory? Mr. Lozano, would you mind telling me about it?"

A hint of surprise was clearly visible in Matthew's eyes, but it vanished in an instant.

"Don't you know? The Cox family... didn't they tell you?" Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Neera's expression revealed a hint of frustration and helplessness. "The Cox family has been in trouble recently, and we, the Gordon family, intended to help. But before we could act, the Cox family moved to Lordsworth Estate. I asked Avery what he was thinking, but he didn't give me a clear answer. As for the matter of the armory, he didn't give me a clear answer. Perhaps it involves the Cox family's secrets and significant benefits, so it was not convenient to tell me directly. After all, no matter what, the Cox and Gordon families are now two separate families. My marriage alliance with Mr. Cox has already been called off. His concealment from me isn't that much of a surprise."

Listening to her words, Matthew was clearly somewhat skeptical and still wanted to test her.

"Even if the Cox and Gordon families' marriage alliance did not come to pass, the friendship between these two families that has lasted for hundreds of years cannot be dismissed so easily. Avery should have told you. I thought you heard a false version from him and was wondering how to convince you that the truth is not as you believe."

Neera still wore a helpless expression. "Mr. Lozano, the Cox and the Gordon family might have a deep relationship, but my relationship with the Cox family is not that deep. Let me tell you something. I went to Wind Chime Island to clear my mind, but I returned to the Gordon residence within a day because the Cox family sent someone to assassinate me. This matter has always bothered me. Out of respect for Avery, I didn't deal with those people too harshly. I just gave them a minor punishment as a warning. Even though this incident is in the past, I can't help but be unsettled by a family that's plotting to assassinate me, can I? Moreover, ever since I got married to my husband, Avery's attitude toward me has cooled down. This time, he has shifted the Cox family's support away from the Bartitsu Guild to Lordsworth Estate, but he left the Gordon family behind. Doesn't that explain everything?"

After she finished speaking, she added, "I have no reason to lie to you. The Gordon family has made many enemies because of our assistance to the Cox family. Yet, the Cox family left us alone to face this. This situation makes me feel very uncomfortable. It seems that the friendship between the Cox and Gordon families has come to an end."

Matthew didn't respond immediately, pondering the truthfulness of her words.

A moment later, he felt that what Neera said made sense.

If the relationship between the Cox family and the Gordon family is still that strong, why didn't they leave Bartitsu Guild together and head to Phison? There's only one explanation. The Cox family and the Gordon family have recently lost contact, while their friendship has also ended.

That was also why Matthew believed that there was a chance to win over the Gordon family, the very reason why he met Neera.

With this in mind, he felt a bit relieved and began to persuade Neera, "In truth, the matter of the armory isn't really related to Avery. It's more about his parents. Back when they were still alive, they harbored thoughts of betraying Bartitsu Guild, secretly building an armory. When the Guild discovered this, they considered the fact that they were from a founding family and remembered the contributions and sacrifices the Cox family ancestors made for the Guild. So, they suppressed the incident, keeping it from becoming public knowledge. At the time, the guild wanted to dismantle the armory, but the Cox family insisted they wouldn't use any of the weapons stored there. They promised to guard it. I don't know where they got those firearms from. I had been there before, and they weren't anything extraordinary. Out of trust, the guild agreed to their request. Despite the significant matter, the guild didn't pursue it any further and left it like that."

After a brief pause, he added, "But who would have thought that the Cox family, along with the Watson and Laker families, and a few others, were at each other's throats not long ago. Because of this, the Cox family unexpectedly went back on their word, breaking their initial promise. They secretly accessed the armory, an act that the guild could not tolerate. If the guild continued to shield them, who knows what other audacious actions the Cox family might take in the future? Therefore, the guild must punish the Cox family this time. I just didn't expect that the Cox family would remain unrepentant and even lash out, completely falling out with the guild. As for that statement from Phison, I suspect it was Avery who informed them. Otherwise, how would Phison know about the Cox family's affairs?"

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Chapter 1405

Neera listened to him quietly, her face expressionless, making it impossible to tell whether she believed him or not.

Once Matthew had finished, she leisurely poured him another cup of coffee.

"Mr. Lozano, please calm down. I think I understand now. This makes a lot more sense. I was actually wondering why the guild suddenly started to make things difficult for the

Cox family. After all, the Cox family is a powerful force within the guild. Now, it's clear that they have gone too far."

Matthew took a sip of coffee, moistened his throat, and nodded in agreement. "You're right, I understand. Based on my words alone, you might still not believe me. But the events from back then, not only I, but many people in the guild also knew about it. If you don't believe me, I can take you to the guild, so you can ask those people and hear what they have to say."

Neera waved her hand dismissively. "You're overthinking it. Of course I trust what you say. This matter holds no significance to the Gordon family, so there's no reason for you to deceive me."

The conversation was nearly over, and once again, Matthew extended an olive branch.

"Ms. Garcia, what do you think about my previous proposal? If you agree, I can have the guild announce that you have become the third elder of Bartitsu Guild upon my return. This will elevate the status of the Gordon family. From now on, the guild and the Gordon family will support each other, creating a mutually beneficial situation."

Neera hesitated for a moment before cautiously responding, "Mr. Lozano, I appreciate your sincerity. To be honest, I'm quite surprised and flattered that you invited me here today and shared so much with me. However, as you know, I'm new here. Even though I've become the head of the Gordon family, I can't make decisions on such significant matters alone. I need to discuss this with my uncle and the elders of the Gordon family. Once we reach a decision, I will inform you immediately. Would that be acceptable?"

Matthew was quite satisfied with her current attitude. Although he didn't get the results he wanted immediately, he gained a bit more patience.

"Alright, after all, this matter is of great importance. It's only right to be cautious. I hope to hear a positive response from you."

Neera stood up, smiled slightly, and said, "Certainly."

Seeing Neera return to sit in the car, Jean closed his laptop, set it aside, and asked her, "How did it go? What did Matthew say?"

Neera's expression turned grim, completely losing the feigned politeness she had shown Matthew.

"Hmph," she snorted disdainfully. "This old fox is full of lies. He simply shifts all the blame onto the Cox family and does so logically. If I hadn't been aware of the situation, I might have actually been tricked by him."

Jean slowly smiled, his expression somewhat nonchalant.

"It's normal for one to never blame themselves. He wants to win you over, so naturally, he would try to brainwash you into believing him. How did you respond to him?"

Neera turned to look at him, blinking her eyes mischievously.

"I didn't give him a definitive answer. I just told him that the matter was of great importance and I needed to go back and discuss it with my uncle and the elders of our family."

Jean immediately understood. "Why? Do you intend to mess with Matthew?"

Neera let out a disdainful snort. "I can't be bothered to waste my time on him." Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"So, what do you want to do?"

"Um... I was thinking whether I could possibly find some clues about the Wug inside Avery's body."

Jean raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

Neera went on to share with him the speculations she had.

"Think about it. Isn't it quite a coincidence? Not long after Avery's parents discovered that armory, they both fell victim to the wug poison. Soon after, they passed away. Yet, when Avery was weak and ill, the guild never showed any concern. But now that I've healed Avery, his health is improving, and the power of the entire Cox family is on the rise, the guild can't sit still anymore. So, they've openly brought up the matter of the armory. It's clear that they have hidden intentions and have been coveting the armory for a long time. They've chosen to act at this critical moment because they've realized that Avery is no longer predictable to them.

Jean asked, "So you think that the wugs in Avery and his parents are related to Bartitsu Guild?"

"Yes, and my gut feeling tells me that there's a good chance of it. Avery also suspects this and has sent someone to investigate. I'm thinking that we might be able to find some clues from Matthew."

Jean pondered slightly. "Aren't you afraid that if the guild notices, it will be detrimental to the Gordon family?"

Neera laughed. "What's there to be scared of? It's just a matter of time. We're going to reject them anyway. When the time comes, Bartitsu Guild will definitely crush the Gordon family. What I need to do now is to take advantage of this period to find clues as quickly as possible. If we can find solid evidence, that would be even better."

At this point, recalling Matthew's words elicited a slight frown from her.

Matthew mentioned that there are still some people in the guild who know about the events back then. Those people must certainly know the truth. It seems I need to investigate which of the current members of Bartitsu Guild were involved in the discovery of the armory by the Cox family back in the day.

Once she returned home, she shared her thoughts with Chad.

Upon hearing her words, Chad didn't object, he only reminded her, "Neera, just be careful."

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Chapter 1406

Just as Neera was worrying about how to investigate without arousing the suspicion of Bartitsu Guild, an unexpected encounter caught her attention.

That day she and Zephyr were on their way to Finnley's fighting arts center when they passed by a restaurant.

She caught a glimpse of a figure from the corner of her eye. Greatly surprised, she quickly called out to Zephyr, "Stop the car."

Zephyr reacted quickly, immediately slamming on the brakes. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Ms. Garcia, what's wrong?" he asked, turning around with a puzzled look.

Neera leaned to the side, without lowering the car window. She looked outside and pointed in the direction of the restaurant.

"Look at that person. Doesn't he resemble the third elder of the Cox family?"

With a piercing gaze, Zephyr immediately recognized the man.

"Yes, that's him. Why is he here?"

Neera was also puzzled, "Didn't the Cox family already move to Lordsworth Estate? Why did he suddenly come back?"

At that moment, Albert didn't notice them. He was busy engaging in lively conversation with the man beside him. After a while, he watched as the man got into a car and drove away. Then, he too got into a car.

After watching Albert's car drive away, Neera took one last glance at the restaurant across the street, then turned around to ask, "Do you know who that man he was just talking to is?"

Zephyr shook his head. "I haven't seen him before, but he doesn't seem to be from the Cox family."

Neera hummed in acknowledgment. Recalling Albert's obsequious behavior earlier, she decided to be more cautious.

"Go and find out who the man that Albert met today is and what is the purpose of their meeting."

Zephyr nodded, "Yes, Ms. Garcia."

Inside the fighting arts center, Finnley was all alone, cradling a large bowl and eating pasta.

Upon seeing this, Neera immediately expressed concern. "Mr. Weaver, why are you eating such bland pasta? They're tasteless. Please stop eating them. I'll make you a new bowl."

Seeing her approach, Finnley cradled his bowl, turned his head away grumpily, and muttered, "Stop pretending to be caring. I've heard that you've returned for some time, yet you only visit me now. I don't mean to scold you, but I am, your master after all. Your behavior is really unbecoming!"

Neera found it amusing to watch the old man throw a tantrum. With a good-natured smile, she walked over, squatted in front of him, and began to massage his legs, trying to cheer him up.

"Please, don't be upset. I rushed back as soon as I could. There was trouble at the Cox residence, and the Gordon family was implicated too. I was so occupied that I really couldn't help it. But look, the moment I had some time, I hurried over to see you."

Finnley looked away, remaining silent, but his attitude had clearly softened.

Neera took the opportunity to take the bowl from his hand.

"Good thing you haven't eaten much. It seems I've arrived just in time. Please, stay here. I'll go and make some pasta for you."

Finnley hummed twice, but didn't stop her.

Before long, an enticing aroma wafted out from the kitchen.

Finnley couldn't contain his curiosity any longer and found himself drawn to the kitchen. He hovered around Neera, hands clasped behind his back as he paced back and forth.

"Parsley... More parsley, please... The soup... The soup is good. Serve more of it... Goodness, is it ready yet? I'm so hungry I can't stand it."

Neera listened to the old man's endless chatter, finding it both amusing and exasperating. After serving his meal, she sat next to him, watching him eat.

The same bowl of pasta, when prepared by her, became incredibly delicious.

Finnley didn't have time to pay attention to Neera, who was staring at him from the side, as he wolfed down his food.

After devouring a bowl of pasta, he was finally satisfied. Wiping his mouth, he glanced at her, only then did he have the mood to engage with her.

"Tell me. What brings you here this time?"

Neera blinked, teasing him, "How did you know? I indeed have something to discuss with you. I didn't expect you to be so insightful!"

Finnley glanced over, his small mustache quivering slightly.

"Enough of your nonsense. I've figured you out. You would never think of seeking me out unless you needed something. You've probably forgotten all the skills I've taught you, haven't you? Hmph, to think that someone of my illustrious reputation has such a useless disciple like you. I'm such a failure!"

As he spoke, he shook his head, the very picture of a broken-hearted old man.

Neera stood up immediately and made a couple of gestures.

"How could that be? I've been practicing what you taught me all the time. You saying all that is doing me an injustice. You're just making me upset."

Finnley raised his eyebrows, letting out a skeptical hum. He then asked, "Are you telling the truth?"

Neera clicked her tongue, stood up while holding his arm, and dragged him out. In front of him, she threw two darts and even performed a round of the flying needle technique.

After her performance, she clapped her hands contentedly, mimicking Finnley's proud demeanor.

"See, I wasn't lying to you. I really have been practicing. Thanks to you, I even managed to escape a dangerous situation and save a life!"

Finnley didn't expect that during her absence, she had indeed been obeying his instructions, which made him quite happy.

"Alright, alright. It seems you're a sensible and obedient girl. Enough with the show, just speak your mind. What exactly do you need from me?"

Neera chuckled softly, helping him over to sit down on the rocking chair. She crouched beside him, behaving as adorably as possible.

"Actually, it's no big deal. I just wanted to ask you. Would... Would you like to come with me to Lordsworth Estate?"

The words took Finnley by surprise.

"Oh? You're planning to go to Lordsworth Estate? When?" he asked.

Neera rubbed her chin and said, "It's not settled yet, but it will be soon. And it's not just me. It's the entire Gordon family."

Finnley was aware of the recent events at Bartitsu Guild, so he wasn't surprised when he heard her say this.

However, what he found somewhat unbelievable was that Neera would actually tell him such important matters.

At that moment, he rocked in his chair, speaking thoughtfully, "Did you just casually tell me such a significant matter as going to the Lordsworth Estate? Aren't you afraid that I might inform Bartitsu Guild about it?"

With a slight smile, Neera responded without a second thought, "You wouldn't do that."

She spoke with such certainty that it only piqued Finnley's curiosity even more. "Do you trust me that much?"

Neera nodded without hesitation. "Yes, my uncle trusts you, and so do I. We both recognize your noble character and know that you've always disliked the disputes within Bartitsu Guild. The thought of leaving you alone here as we depart is somewhat unbearable. It must be lonely and boring for you to guard this deserted fighting arts center by yourself. It would be better if you come with us to Lordsworth Estate."

Upon hearing these words, Finnley was displeased. He picked up the hand fan next to the rocking chair and gestured it at her.

"Off you go, off you go! Since when has my fighting arts center lost its popularity? It's because I'm too lazy to teach. Otherwise, there would be an endless stream of people coming here to learn! Neera, if you don't understand what's going on, don't talk nonsense, alright?"

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Chapter 1407

Neera managed to suppress a smile, respectfully nodding her head. "Yes, yes, I was thoughtless in my speech."

Finnley fumed as he corrected her, "What do you mean by you bring thoughtless? You clearly just don't understand the real situation!"

Neera nodded obediently. "Yes, yes, yes. It's my fault for not understanding the real situation. Mr. Weaver, you are a magnanimous person, so please don't be upset with a little girl like me."

Finnley snorted twice, waving his hand fan. Feeling a bit chilly, he moved it to his right and casually pointed at the small stool next to him.

"Alright, let's sit down and talk. You're always squatting like that, aren't you tired? It tires me just watching you."

Neera smiled wryly and promptly took a seat.

"I knew it, Master. You truly care for me."

Finnley's small mustache quivered as he urged, "Stop buttering me up. I'm asking you, was the Gordon family's decision to join Lordsworth Estate planned beforehand? If so, why didn't they leave with the Cox family earlier?"

Neera explained candidly, "Originally, I thought we should leave together. But then I reconsidered and felt it would be better if the Cox family left first. When Bartitsu Guild loses such a powerful force as the Cox family, they will definitely try to win over the Gordon family to stabilize the situation. Naturally, the Gordon family wouldn't want to side with the guild. When Bartitsu Guild can't stand it anymore and acts out of desperation, the Gordon family can then leave with a clear conscience."

"Hmph, you're quite the clever one, aren't you? Looking back now, I suppose even I've been played by your schemes."

Neera smiled and said, "Just as expected, after the Cox family left, Matthew came to me and offered me the position of the third elder in Bartitsu Guild. He wants both me and the Gordon family to pledge our full loyalty to the Guild."

"Did you agree or not?" Finnley asked on purpose.

"Of course not. I've just been stringing them along, saying that I can't make the decision alone and need to discuss it with the Gordon family elders. I've been stalling for the past few days. Matthew has asked me twice, and both times I've managed to dodge his questions."

Finnley pointed at her. "You're quite the clever little imp, aren't you? If Matthew knew you were tricking him, he'd be fuming with rage."

Neera waved her hand, not bothered at all. "Let him be angry. The angrier he gets, the happier I am. Bartitsu Guild is intolerant and treacherous. I've long wanted to leave them. Now, thinking about being able to leave here with the Gordon family, I can hardly contain elation."

"You're oversimplifying things. Bartitsu Guild isn't exactly a benevolent entity, but Lordsworth Estate is no saint either. It's a place that devours people without mercy, so to speak. While their methods might not be as cruel as the guild's, their ruthlessness is second to none." [Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

Neera nodded. "I've looked into it beforehand. The methods of Lordsworth Estate are indeed ruthless, but they are only used against those who oppose them. When dealing with their own families, they have never acted like Bartitsu Guild, who fears and refuse to tolerate others."

"You're right about that," Finnley agreed. He then asked, "So, what did Lordsworth Estate ask of you this time? They allowed the Gordon and Cox families to go over, but what do they require from you? What do they need you to do?"

"We don't have to do anything. I personally met with Mr. Wiley. He's a straightforward man who didn't beat around the bush or put on airs with me. He's very approachable. Initially, I was a bit nervous, but to my surprise, Mr. Wiley said that our two families don't need to do anything for Lordsworth Estate. All we need to do is to behave ourselves and abide by the rules within the jurisdiction of the Lordsworth Estate."

Finnley seemed somewhat incredulous. "Really? Lordsworth Estate is actually that benevolent? I find it hard to believe. After all, by leaving Bartitsu Guild and going to Lordsworth Estate, you're essentially making an enemy of the guild. Lordsworth Estate

accepting both of your families is akin to slapping the guild in the face. This grudge is not a small one."

"I've thought about it before, but judging from Mr. Wiley's attitude, it seems that the Lordsworth Estate doesn't care."

After pondering for a moment, Finnley could only think of one possibility. "It seems that saving the lord of Lordsworth Estate was the right thing to do. Who would have thought it could bring such benefits."

Neera nodded. "I also find it quite unbelievable. Who would have thought I'd end up saving such a big shot."

Then, she asked again, "Finnley, would you like to come with us? I don't see any point in you staying back here. Rest assured, the Gordon family will always back you up. As long as we're around, you will be well protected."

Finnley waved his hand. "I'm alone. I'll be fine. It doesn't matter where I am. I won't go over and cause you trouble."

Neera quickly reassured him, "You're no trouble at all. I feel at ease with you around. Besides, you still have to keep pushing me to practice martial arts. If you're not there, I might get distracted. You have to stay with me and watch me practice diligently. Moreover, if you go, you can often play chess and chat with my uncle. Isn't that much more interesting than being here all alone?"

Hearing her sincere invitation caused Finnley's eyes to glisten with joy. After some thought, he agreed.

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Chapter 1408

"Alright, it doesn't matter where I am. It's all the same to me. Bartitsu Guild is bustling, but staying here isn't particularly interesting. I might as well go with you to Lordsworth Estate."

After he finished speaking, he made a small additional request.

"By the way, you did promise me before that you'd cook something delicious for me. When we're at Lordsworth Estate, it would be time for you to fulfill that promise, wouldn't it?"

Neera chuckled. "Of course. When the time comes, you'll be staying at the Gordon residence. Just let me know what you'd like to eat, and I'll make it for you!"

After discussing the matter, Neera thought for a moment and then asked him another question.

"Mr. Weaver, you've lived in Bartitsu Guild for so long, there's something I'd like to ask you. I wonder if you know."

"Go ahead, what's the matter?"

"Um... It's about the Cox family's armory."

Upon hearing these words, Finnley's eyes narrowed. The wrinkles at the corners of his eyes extended backward as he gazed at her thoughtfully.

"I knew it. You're always up to something. So, you've been waiting for me here, haven't you? What is it? Do you suspect the Cox family, or Bartitsu Guild?"

Neera touched her nose and said, "Neither. I naturally trust the Cox family. As for what Matthew told me, I don't believe a single word."

"What did Matthew say to you?"

Neera related Matthew's words to him. [SEARCH the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

After hearing this, Finnley sniggered. "Nonsense. I'm really surprised that Matthew could come up with it. Does he think everyone else is a fool? Do you know how big the armory is? It's not just any ordinary warehouse that you can build whenever you want, especially under the watchful eyes of Bartitsu Guild. It seems that Matthew will stop at nothing to win you over."

Neera also thought the same. "He even said that if I didn't believe him, I could ask others in the union. He claimed that there are still people who know about what happened back then."

"What a bunch of nonsense! Those people are all on his side. Of course they're in cahoots with him, parroting the same lines."

Neera nodded, then asked again, "Mr. Weaver, do you know who in Bartitsu Guild is aware of the original armory incident? Or, is there anyone within the guild who was particularly close to the Cox family at that time?"

Finnley paused for a moment, not quite understanding the question. "Why are you asking this?"

Neera hummed in response. "It's just a speculation at this point, as I've no evidence or clues yet. I'm just asking casually."

After some thought, Finnley replied, "It's been a long time since then, and I've never paid much attention to the Cox family. I also don't have much contact with Bartitsu Guild. I spend my days here in this fighting arts center, so I'm not very informed about their affairs. However, one thing I can confirm is that when the previous head of the Cox family was still in power, their relationship with Bartitsu Guild was not bad, but it wasn't particularly good either. It was merely due to their position on the board of elders that they had necessary interactions. Overall, my impression is that the guild once tried to control the Cox family, but they were unsuccessful."

"The guild tried to control the Cox family? What happened?" Neera was somewhat surprised.

Finnley thought for a moment, then said, "I can't recall the specifics. Why don't you go back and ask your uncle? He should know the details."

Neera simply hummed in response and didn't ask anything further.

When she returned to the Gordon residence, she was surprised to find that Shane had come back.

"Shane, how come you're here? Aren't you supposed to be in District Twenty-Three? Did something happen over there?"

The travel-worn Shane had only just returned not long ago and had just managed to find time to take a few sips of water.

Upon seeing her, he gave a slight smile, walked over, and affectionately ruffled her hair.

"Don't worry. Everything is fine over there. There's nothing urgent for now, so I came back early. I heard you and Jean have registered your marriage. Why didn't you tell me about such a major event? I feel like you're not treating me as your brother."

Neera stuck out her tongue. "I'm sorry, Shane. I didn't mean to. It was just that everything happened so suddenly. Not long after we registered our marriage, Jean's father had an accident. We had to rush back to our country and didn't have time to notify you."

Shane laughed heartily. "Don't worry about it. Now that I've returned, let's spend some quality time together as a family."

Neera chuckled and nodded.

At this moment, Shane asked again, "Has the decision to move to Lordsworth Estate been made?"

When he was in District Twenty-Three, he had already heard Chad talk about it, and he didn't object to it.

Neera hummed in affirmation. "We're just waiting for the right moment."

"I heard you went to the fighting arts center to see Mr. Weaver, what did he say?"

"He said that it doesn't matter where he is, so he's willing to go to Lordsworth Estate with us.

"That's good to hear. Mr. Weaver has been alone for so many years, with the Gordon family being his only close friends. He and my Uncle Chad have always had a good relationship. It's nice that they can be together."

As the two were conversing, Chad emerged from the study and descended the stairs.

"Neera, you're back. What did Mr. Weaver Fu say?" he asked the same question.

Upon learning the answer from Neera, Chad was very satisfied.

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Chapter 1409

Following that, Neera talked about her chance encounter with Albert that day.

"Uncle Chad, why do you think Albert returned to District Fourteen? Didn't the Cox family already move away? Could he have some sort of agenda for coming back?"

Chad didn't find it surprising.

"Although the Cox family has already left Bartitsu Guild and is no longer under its jurisdiction, the Cox family's influence has been entrenched in the guild for many years. There are likely still some matters to be taken care of, along with some affiliated forces that need to be dealt with, or some arrangements to be made."

Neera still found it odd. "But his attitude towards his peer seemed somewhat obsequious, not like how one would typically treat affiliated forces."

Chad gave it some thought. "I'm not sure about that. There might be something else going on."

Neera asked again, "The Cox family and Bartitsu Guild are on the brink of falling out now. Is it appropriate for the Cox family to appear so blatantly on the Guild's territory? Wouldn't the Guild send people to intercept and kill them?"

Upon hearing this, Chad slowly smiled. "Although Bartitsu Guild and the Cox Family are at odds now, it doesn't mean the guild can just strike whenever they want. A direct assassination nowadays is no longer feasible."

"Oh? Why do you say that?"

"If the guild intercepted Avery before he left District Fourteen, there might have been a chance to take action directly. After all, at that time, Avery had not yet fully submitted to Lordsworth Estate. But now, it's different. Lordsworth Estate has personally stepped in and made a statement, clearly intending to protect the Cox family. If Bartitsu Guild were to make a move against the Cox family now, it would be tantamount to challenging Lordsworth Estate. When that happens, Lordsworth Estate will undoubtedly retaliate. Given the current situation of Bartitsu Guild, they certainly wouldn't take such a risk."

Neera understood clearly. "Bartitsu Guild is still very wary of Lordsworth Estate. They are still no match against them." [SEARCH THE WEBSITE TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.](#)

"Well, you could say that."

After that, Chad asked her, "Have you figured out how to go about your investigations?"

Neera was somewhat troubled by the topic. "No, I went to see Mr. Weaver today. Firstly, I wanted to invite him to come with us to Lordsworth Estate. Secondly, I wanted to ask if he knew anything about the armory incident back then, or if there was anything amiss between the Cox family and Bartitsu Guild. However, Mr. Weaver doesn't pay much attention to the Cox family and doesn't bother with the affairs of the guild, so he can't really remember. He suggested that I ask you instead. Perhaps you might have an idea."

Upon hearing this, Chad laughed helplessly, "To be honest, I'm not really sure myself. Initially, in order to be closer to your aunt, I spent most of my time in Essley, busy running F.A Group and hardly returned to Phison."

"I see..." Neera couldn't help but feel a sense of frustration. "Then we'll just have to find another way."

Phison was neither Essley nor Kingsview. She had no connections and dared not to act rashly.

The place is fraught with danger. A single misstep could potentially bring about a great disaster.

Therefore, she trod carefully with each step, daring not to make any mistakes. After all, she represented not only herself but the entire Gordon family as well.

With that thought in mind, she let out a sigh.

The rapid development of events was something she hadn't anticipated.

Meanwhile, she soon received the investigation results from Zephyr.

"Ms. Garcia, that person is indeed not from the Cox family but from Bartitsu Guild."

"Bartitsu Guild?" Upon hearing this, Neera was very surprised. "Who is it? Why is Albert still in contact with people from Bartitsu Guild?"

"That person's name is Quincy, one of Matthew's trusted confidants."

Upon hearing this, Neera wrinkled her forehead. "Matthew? How did Albert get so close to his people?"

Judging by their demeanor at the restaurant entrance, their relationship is certainly not superficial.

"I'm not entirely sure about the specifics. So far, I've only been able to identify the person. As for what they said or did, I can't say, as they were dining in a private room and I couldn't access the surveillance."

Neera nodded thoughtfully. "Alright, I understand."

Upon returning to the bedroom, Jean was already inside.

Seeing her looking distracted, Jean's eyebrows slightly lifted. He grabbed her wrist and pulled her into his embrace.

"What are you thinking about? I haven't seen you all day, and now that we meet, you won't even look at me?"

Neera was taken aback for a moment before leaning against his chest and sitting on his lap. "Stop messing around. I'm thinking about something."

Jean lightly pecked her lips, filled with lust yet forced to restrain himself.

"Hmm? What's the matter? Tell me about it."

"Hmm..." Neera pondered for a moment, then shared with him about her encounter with Albert today, as well as the report she just received from Zephyr.

"Do you find it suspicious? How did Albert get so close to Matthew's trusted aide? Moreover, the Cox family has already fallen out with Bartitsu Guild, yet Albert hasn't changed his attitude toward the guild. Something doesn't feel right to me..."

Jean immediately understood what she was thinking. "You suspect that Albert might have ulterior motives toward the Cox family and is secretly colluding with Bartitsu Guild?"

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Read Chapter 1410

Chapter 1410

Neera nodded. "Yes, that's my suspicion. However, I can't make a definitive conclusion based solely on today's encounter. I just find it suspicious, that's all."

Jean gave a hum of acknowledgment. Pulling her into his embrace, he patiently analyzed the situation for her.

"Indeed, there's a real possibility of it. I've heard that the relationship between Albert and Avery has always been strained. However, due to Avery's status as the head of the family, they've had to tolerate each other. So, it's not a surprise if there are any underhanded schemes going on behind the scenes."

At that moment, Neera thought of another possibility. "What if they didn't just join forces now, but have been in cahoots all along?"

Jean looked at her thoughtfully. "Are you suspecting that he is responsible for the death of Avery's parents years ago?"

The thought was so audacious and terrifying that Neera couldn't help but shiver all over.

She swallowed, speaking softly. "It's not entirely impossible, right? The Cox family is powerful and vigilant. Also, Avery's parents are not careless people, yet they didn't even know they were cursed. Even when they fell ill, they never suspected anything. This means we can rule out external factors causing their health to deteriorate. So, the only ones who could have done this is someone within the family, isn't that right?" Search the [website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

With a slight squint in his eyes, Jean responded softly, "Hmm, indeed."

Neera continued rambling on. "Although I don't know if Avery's parents ever suspected anyone in their household back then, it's clear that the most likely suspects would be those within the family. They were able to poison the two of them without anyone

noticing. If it were outsiders, Avery's parents would have surely been on guard. Thus, the close relationship between Albert and the people from Bartitsu Guild under these circumstances is clearly abnormal."

At this point, she couldn't sit still any longer. She quickly got off Jean's lap and called Zephyr.

"Go and investigate whether Albert had any dealings with Quincy when the previous head of the Cox family was still around, or if he was particularly close with anyone else from Bartitsu Guild. It's been a long time, so it might not be easy to find out. But give it a try and see what you can find. Every bit of information counts."

Zephyr immediately accepted the task. As soon as he hung up the phone, he set off to get it done without a moment's delay.

Meanwhile, after much thought, Neera decided to send a message to Avery, informing him about the day's events. She kept it brief and to the point: Beware of Albert.

The next day, Matthew called again, asking Neera if the Gordon family wanted to accept the third elder seat.

Neera continued to evade the matter, but this time, she could clearly feel that Matthew was getting impatient.

Meanwhile, rumors were spreading online at the same time:

Have you heard? It seems that Bartitsu Guild is extending an olive branch to the Gordon family. They want to win them over and even want the head of the Gordon family to take up the third elder seat in the guild."

The third elder seat? Isn't that the previous position of the Cox family's head? Wasn't Neera originally the ninth elder? This is quite a drastic promotion, isn't it? Can the other families tolerate this?

Is it fake news? How is it possible? Neera has no qualifications, no experience, and is still so young. How could she possibly occupy the seat of the third elder? Has Bartitsu Guild gone mad? No matter how much they want to win her over, they wouldn't go to this extent, would they?

Am I the only one who noticed something off? I've been wanting to ask this for a while now. Weren't the Gordon and Cox families always on good terms? So why did the Cox family pledge allegiance to Lordsworth Estate, while the Gordon family didn't? Does this mean that the relationship between the two families has ended or they had a falling out? After all, they are now in two opposing factions...

Whenever gossip was mentioned, the online discussions become even more heated:

Hey, I guess it doesn't matter anymore. The Cox and Gordon families have always had a tradition of marriage alliances, but the previous head of the Gordon family didn't follow through. It was fine back then since neither family really admired the other, but this time it's different. Look at how deeply the head of the Cox family cares for the head of the Gordon family. From the moment she joined Bartitsu Guild, he's been protecting her, offering all kinds of help, and even spending a fortune for her. It's clear how deep his feelings are for her. But what happened? She spurned him and married another man. If I were the head of the Cox family, I would definitely sever ties with the Gordon family.

It seems that the head of the Cox family is quite pitiful. Despite his excellent background and sincere efforts, he was simply discarded after being used. Now, not only has the good relationship between the two families ended, but they have also become enemies. If Neera really dares to take the third elder seat, it would mean that she truly has no feelings for him at all and was purely using him.

I'm really puzzled, what on earth is she thinking? Isn't the head of the Cox family a much better choice than her husband? What's so special about him? He might be rich, but the Cox family isn't short of money either. Neera really has bad taste.

Jean sat on the balcony, tablet in hand, casually flipping through the comments. His eyebrows cocked slightly.

Bad taste? Ha!

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Chapter 1411

However, Neera's attention was not focused there.

The more she read, the more intense her frown became. Finally, she tossed her phone onto the coffee table, her face visibly upset. "This news was most likely released by Bartitsu Guild. They're clearly trying to make things final in a hurry, forcing the Gordon family into a difficult situation. They're obviously pressuring me to submit!" Search The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Given the situation, if Neera ultimately refused the invitation from Bartitsu Guild, she would be seen as an ungrateful person in the eyes of others. Not only would that invite criticism from everyone, but it would also give Bartitsu Guild an opportunity to slander her.

The more Neera thought about it, the more upset she became. She crossed her arms, wearing a stern expression on her face. "Matthew really talks the talk and walks the walk. He's the best at playing dirty tricks."

Just as she was speaking, Matthew called as if on cue.

Neera stared at the name displayed on her phone screen, her expression shifting several times. She left him hanging for over half a minute before she leisurely picked up the call.

Since the two of them hadn't yet fallen out, she maintained a polite tone, greeting him with a fake smile. "Mr. Lozano, may I ask if there's something you need?"

Matthew took the initiative and asked, "Ms. Garcia, have you ever mentioned the content of our conversation to anyone else?"

Neera couldn't help but smirk coldly, yet she still had to put on an act. "No, what's the matter? Mr. Lozano, why do you ask?"

Of course, Matthew knew very well in his heart that she wouldn't spread the news around. Upon hearing that, he pretended to understand suddenly and said, "Oh," then drew his own conclusions. "It could be that someone heard something through the grapevine and spread it around. Regarding your potential appointment to the position of the third elder seat, there are rumors swirling online, Ms. Garcia. The guild didn't expect this turn of events, but please don't let it bother you."

Neera chuckled coldly, responding, "Rest assured, I won't be bothered by others' idle gossip."

"That's good, that's good." Matthew chuckled and mumbled a few words, then cut to his main point. "Ms. Garcia, you've been considering this for a while now. Haven't you made up your mind yet? Even if you've been discussing with the Gordon family elders, there should be a result by now. What have you decided? Do you plan to join the core family of Bartitsu Guild officially?"

Neera had a feeling he called for that matter. Without furrowing her brows, she responded with an air of nonchalance. "Well, about this, please don't worry and be patient for a bit longer. This is a significant matter, and the Gordon family has a lot to consider. For thoroughness' sake, it may take a bit more time to deliberate on the matter."

Upon hearing that, a dark glint flickered across Matthew's murky eyes. His tone abruptly shifted, carrying with it a hint of sharp intensity. "Ms. Garcia, considering that you are the current head of the Gordon family, I have tried my best to be polite and respectful to the greatest extent. You're not trying to trick me, are you?"

Seeing him finally unable to bear it, Neera smirked even more mockingly. "How could that be, Mr. Lozano? How could you think that way? The Gordon family and I absolutely have no intention of disrespecting Bartitsu Guild, no do we have any intention of playing

games with you. This matter is just too significant. The Gordon family has discussed it several times without reaching a conclusion, so we had no choice but to delay."

Her tone was truly sincere. Over the phone, Matthew couldn't discern whether she was genuine or just pretending.

However, regardless, he had already run out of patience.

Therefore, at that time, he wasn't as agreeable as before. Instead, he issued an ultimatum.

"Ms. Garcia, I really don't understand. Bartitsu Guild has given the Gordon family such a great opportunity. What could possibly be troubling you? You currently hold the position of the ninth elder seat, which is worlds apart from the status of the third elder seat. No matter how you look at it, this matter is only beneficial to the Gordon family. There are no drawbacks. Setting aside status, let's talk about the other clear benefits that the Gordon family can gain from that. It's very easy to foresee. Without a doubt, the guild will prioritize the Gordon family in the future. Whenever there's any good fortune, they will think of the Gordon family first. Such a huge advantage is something that's within the sights of the other families but is beyond their reach. What concerns could your Gordon family possibly have? I've said my piece, Ms. Garcia. I hope you'll give it some serious thought over the next couple of days. First thing the day after tomorrow, I'm looking forward to hearing some good news from you." After he finished speaking, he didn't wait for Neera's response and hung up the phone.

Neera let out a disdainful snort through her nose, not taking it seriously at all.

Judging by her expression, Jean knew exactly what Matthew had said. "Can't wait any longer?"

"Yep. He said he's only giving me two more days. He wants the results first thing the morning after tomorrow."

At that point, Neera couldn't help but sneer. "He finally can't hold back anymore, ready to show his true colors. I was wondering why he was so patient this time. I was even getting impatient waiting. It's better to drop all pretenses as soon as possible so I don't have to play dumb and pretend to be fake and pretentious with him all day. This has been an annoying test of my acting skills."

Jean laughed. "I must say, your acting skills are quite impressive now. You have a good grasp of it, knowing when to hold back and when to let go."

Neera gave him an annoyed glance. "You think I want to?"

The two chatted casually for a bit, and then Neera stood up and stretched lazily. "All right, we have two days of leisure ahead of us. During this time, I'll finalize the designs

for my aunt and uncle's wedding rings, as well as the wedding attire. I also need to hurry and confirm the final details with the designer from Essley."

"Has the date for their wedding been set yet?" asked Jean.

"Not yet, but I've spoken to Uncle Chad. He thinks it's best to get things settled as soon as possible. I'm thinking once the situation in Phison stabilizes, we can set off. He said that the island was almost ready. He's so eager, and he can't wait to have a grand wedding with my aunt."

Jean laughed. "Any normal man wouldn't be able to wait."

As he spoke, he narrowed his eyes. Leaning lazily against the couch, he playfully teased her. "I feel the same way. So, Darling, when can we have our wedding?"

Even though they were already married and it wasn't the first time he called her "Darling," Neera would still blush whenever she heard that affectionate term.

She shot him a disgruntled look, huffed out an "I'm ignoring you now," with all the flair of a petulant little girl, then turned and scampered up the stairs.

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Chapter 1412

When Neera was finalizing the design draft, a call came in from Avery.

"Sorry, did I disturb you?" he asked.

Neera hadn't been in touch with him for a while and was quite curious about his situation over there. Upon hearing that, she set aside the work in her hands. "No, how are things on your end? Is Lordsworth Estate treating the Cox family well? Are you able to fit in?"

"Mmm, everything's pretty good." It had been a long time since he had heard her voice. Avery's longing overflowed, and his anxious heart calmed down.

He smiled as he softly explained the situation to her. "In any case, rest assured, everything is normal with the Cox family. Lordsworth Estate has been taking good care of them, and no other forces in District Ten have interfered with the Cox family. At least for now, everything seems harmonious. How about your side? I saw some comments online today. They were released by Matthew, weren't they? He's trying to pressure you into submission, right?"

That was as clear as day. Anyone who knew the inside story could see it.

Neera gave a nonchalant "Mhm," not particularly concerned. "Let him fuss all he wants. I'm just buying time anyway. Once he reveals his true colors, it will be easier for the Gordon family to play the part of the victim forced to leave." [SEARCH THE WEBSITE](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Avery understood, then asked with confusion, "By the way, what did you mean when you told me to be careful of Albert? I've been a bit busy lately and couldn't reply to your message in time."

Speaking of that, Neera recounted her previous encounter with Albert at Bartitsu Guild.

After hearing it, Avery was not surprised. "Quincy and the Cox family have always been on good terms. Albert's constant disapproval of my coming to Lordsworth Estate is probably because he wants to put in a good word for Quincy. There's no need to worry about it."

In his eyes, Albert was nothing more than an incompetent fool who was unable to do anything right and always causing trouble. He never considered that man to be of any importance, nor did he care if the latter would resort to any petty tricks. No matter how much Albert stirred things up, he could never change anything.

Hearing that, Neera set aside her doubts for the moment and turned to ask, "By the way, how is your investigation going regarding the matter of your parents from years ago?"

Avery's eyes darkened, and he said in a deep voice, "The incident happened too long ago. Many details are already impossible to verify. Moreover, we don't have any leads to open up the case, so we can't start investigating for now I've also been busy settling in District Ten, so I haven't had the time to look into it."

"I see....." Neera tried to comfort him, "Don't worry. If Bartitsu Guild really did something, there will definitely be traces. Be patient in your search. You should find something. For now, focus on your own matters. When you have some free time, then deal with this. As the saying goes, 'Revenge is a dish best served cold'. There's no need to rush this right now."

Avery's gloomy mood, which had initially settled in, was slightly alleviated by her comforting words.

His eyes were half-lowered, his gaze gentle beyond words. His eyes spoke of a longing that others couldn't see, a thousand words and feelings all condensed into a single "Mhm."

The two hadn't spoken on the phone for a long time, and even though they had finished discussing important matters, he still couldn't bear to hang up the phone.

Just as he was about to find a topic to chat with her, he heard another voice coming from across the room.

"Mr. Cox, do you have anything else to say? If not, I'm going to take my Neera downstairs for dinner." The voice carried an undertone of arrogance and deep dissatisfaction, along with a glaring, undisguised possessiveness that caused Avery's expression to falter.

Avery pressed his lips together, and the warmth in his eyes completely disappeared. "Mr. Beauvort, casually interrupting others' calls, I believe, isn't a courteous act. As a CEO, and moreover, from a prestigious family, you shouldn't be engaging in such impolite actions. This could tarnish your reputation."

His words were filled with sarcasm, a strange mix of veiled threats and mockery. However, Jean didn't take it to heart at all. He let out a casual laugh, responding with complete indifference. "There's some truth in what you say. However, I don't play by the usual rules when it comes to my family, especially my Neera. Also, I don't believe my words are disrespectful or upsetting. So, Mr. Cox, your reaction seems a bit excessive. Since you've finished discussing the important matters, I won't waste any more of your precious time. Goodbye."

After speaking, he hung up the phone immediately, not waiting for Avery's response.

Listening to the disconnected tone from the other end of the line, Avery furrowed his brows, his expression far from pleasant.

Every time Jean said "my Neera," it sounded extremely grating to Avery.

Jean's self-assured possessiveness also filled Avery with intense jealousy.

Avery's gaze dropped, landing on the darkened phone screen. His fingers unconsciously caressed the name displayed on the screen, his eyes filled with nothing but profound sorrow...

Meanwhile, Neera couldn't help but find Jean amusing. "Why are you doing this? Why suddenly take away my phone? I haven't even said goodbye to Mr. Cox yet."

Jean tossed the phone onto the table without uttering a word. Suddenly, he pinched her chin and pecked her lips, his jealousy clearly evident. "Why's it necessary when you two have been chatting for so long?"

Neera couldn't help but laugh. "What's the matter with you? Why are you so jealous? I was just having a normal conversation with him. Why are you being so aggressive with your words?"

"I know," Jean said nonchalantly. "I'm just simply annoyed."

The mere thought of those people online criticizing Neera's poor taste filled him with jealousy and irritation as if he had fallen into a vat of vinegar. Bad taste? I doubt I can't compare to a mere Avery. What a joke!

Neera paused for a moment, then suddenly understood, laughing even more heartily. "I've noticed you've become increasingly petty lately."

Facing that accusation, Jean was not very pleased. "Am I?"

Neera blinked, quickly correcting herself in a doting manner, "No, no, I misspoke. You're not petty at all. My Jean is the best!"

With just a single sentence, she had the man beaming with joy.

After a tender moment of holding her close and kissing her passionately, Jean finally stopped.

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Chapter 1413

As the two of them walked downstairs hand in hand, Jean was still thinking to himself. It seems I have indeed become a bit more thoughtful recently. If it were in the past, I would never have cared about a single word of what the outside world said. However, ever since I met this woman, everything has changed. I began to care, and anything related to her, I would take to heart. Hah... The more I live, the more I seem to be going back. However, this feeling is quite nice, as if all the emotions and desires I once lacked have now appeared in my life. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

He assumed that by then, Chad and Adriana would have already sat down for dinner. However, to his surprise, when he went downstairs, he found them still sitting in the living room.

On the other side, there sat a few unexpected guests.

Baxter had a stern look on his face, and his two sons, Troy and Ollie, also appeared with aggressive demeanors.

Upon hearing footsteps, several people turned their heads to look. Seeing Neera, they all reacted in different ways.

Baxter reacted the quickest, immediately snorting coldly and turning his face away, making it clear that he didn't want to deal with her. "Chad, I'll say it again. I don't agree with the Gordon family leaving Bartitsu Guild to seek refuge in Lordsworth Estate. This ridiculous idea, I won't agree to it no matter what!"

Neera's lips tightened slightly. Her previously good mood instantly became less so.

Actually, not everything she said to Matthew was a lie.

One thing was certain, and there was indeed a dispute currently brewing within the Gordon family.

The only difference was that they had differing opinions on whether or not to join Lordsworth Estate.

Right from the start, those from Baxter's faction made it clear that they were unwilling to leave Bartitsu Guild.

"No matter the reason, this is the act of a traitor. I don't want our Gordon family to be branded as traitors! The Cox family being one is already too much!"

Shane frowned, launching into a direct confrontation. "So, according to your view, the Gordon family should swallow their pride under Bartitsu Guild, is it? Even if our clan members are killed, we should still compromise and disregard their lives? Is that it, Granduncle Baxter? If that's the case, wouldn't the rest of the Gordon family lose faith in their family?"

Baxter choked a bit, then argued forcefully, "The harm done to our family was not directly caused by Bartitsu Guild. If the Gordon family hadn't helped the Cox family, we wouldn't have been despised by the other families, let alone become enemies with Bartitsu Guild. Ever since the new head of the Gordon family took office, we've been in danger, repeatedly implicated by the Cox family. Now, we're even considering abandoning the principles our ancestors held for many years and seeking refuge in Lordsworth Estate. It's a complete disgrace!"

Seeing him belittle himself to the point of worthlessness, Neera scoffed coldly, showing no sign of cowardice. She stepped forward and retorted without any courtesy. "Are you implying that I've harmed the Gordon family? One should speak with conscience, Mr. Baxter. Consider what was the Gordon family's status in Bartitsu Guild before and what is it now. Has my presence led to the decline or rise of the Gordon family? "You've lived for quite a long time. Surely you can't be blind to such obvious facts? If you can see them and still speak this way, may I interpret it as you being unable to achieve something yourself, and thus, out of jealousy, you're trying to bring me down?"

Unfortunately for you, I've never been one to fear criticism. I'll shoulder what's mine to bear, but if it's not my fault, and you're still trying to pin the blame on me, I absolutely won't take it lying down."

She came right out with it as if she'd swallowed gunpowder, full of fire and brimstone.

Baxter was utterly dumbfounded by her retort. It took him several seconds to regain his composure, only to be instantly filled with rage, fuming with anger. "Do you- Is this how you speak to your elders? You're absolutely out of line!"

Troy and Ollie could no longer sit still. With a swift movement, they stood up, their eyes wide open in anger, glaring at her intensely.

However, before they could utter a word, Jean cast a chilling glance their way. Instantly, a cold wind seemed to sweep across the back of their necks, causing goosebumps to erupt all over their bodies.

Neera couldn't care less and sneered. With an ambiguous tone, he said, "You think this is too much? Seems like your tolerance isn't that great. I haven't even said the worst part yet."

"You-You-" Baxter scowled furiously. Clutching his chest, he gasped for breath and questioned Chad. "Chad, are you going to do something about this? Are you just going to let her run amok? It's simply unreasonable!"

However, Chad merely glanced at him, his expression indifferent, showing no intention of getting involved at all. "I don't think Neera has made any mistakes, Uncle Baxter. It's you who always seem to be prejudiced against her. After Neera took over, the Gordon family's social standing rose, even gaining control over District Twenty-One to District Twenty-Five. What else are you dissatisfied with? Do you really need to belittle her in this way? It's quite ungentlemanly."

At that point, Neera continued with a rather cold tone. "Also, the Cox and Gordon families have always been on good terms, haven't they? The Cox family has provided considerable help to the Gordon family, right? Are you planning to burn bridges now? This is not something a reputable and distinguished family would do. If you really intend to act this way, then I must say, I will lose all respect for you."

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Chapter 1414

At that moment, Troy was visibly upset. "Neera, even if you are the head of the family now, basking in your success, don't go too far! When an inferior person gets conceited, it never ends well. Aren't you afraid of retribution for your reckless actions?"

Those words were extremely unpleasant to hear. Jean couldn't bear it any longer. His face darkened, ready to retort.

However, Neera preemptively grabbed him, holding her chin high without arrogance or humility, staring at Troy. "Retribution? What retribution? I'm really puzzled. What benefits has Bartitsu Guild given you that you're so biased toward them? They've already killed your clansmen, yet you still defend the guild, saying they're not the direct cause. If the other Gordon family members heard this, I'm afraid you'd be drowned in a sea of their spit! Bartitsu Guild has always been eyeing the Gordon family with covetous eyes, wary of the Gordon family's power, yet desiring to seize control of the District Five from my hands. Is there still a need to follow such a force? Do you really have to wait until the guild can't stand it any longer, overturns the entire Gordon family, and then you go to the underworld to admit how ridiculous your persistence is to our ancestors? Don't forget, even though the Gordon family is under Bartitsu Guild, the Gordon family has never truly served it. The Gordon family only truly serves itself! Whenever the interests of the Gordon family are infringed upon, we must promptly cut our losses and think of other ways out. Sticking to the old ways, remaining unchanging, will only lead the Gordon family into a quagmire! The family will only be plunged into an abyss with no chance of turning things around!"

She spoke these words with perfect articulation, finalizing the matter with a decisive bang.

"In any case, my decision to join Lordsworth Estate is final, and no one can change it. Those of my clan who wish to come with me are welcome. As the head of the Gordon family, I will protect them. Those who do not wish to come, I will not force. If they wish to remain in Bartitsu Guild, they may do so. The Gordon family will not fall apart without them!" After she finished speaking, she turned around and went upstairs.

When Jean followed her into the room, he saw her furiously watering the plants, clearly quite upset.

Jean found it amusing. He walked over, playfully touched her chin, and said, "Why are you suddenly upset? Weren't you quite domineering just now?"

Neera kept a straight face, feeling extremely annoyed. "I just feel that they really don't get it. Can't they see the current situation of the Gordon family? Why do they insist on staying in Bartitsu Guild time and again? Could it be that they've actually accepted benefits from the Guild?"

Jean sat next to her, helping her with the analysis. "This shouldn't be the case. Although Mr. Baxter always likes to express an opposing view, it's just to bring you down and

covet the position of the Gordon family head. As for colluding with Bartitsu Guild, he's not that foolish. All right, don't sulk anymore, let's eat. The food is getting cold."

Neera grumbled and shook her head, "No, I'm not going. I'm already fed up. Seeing them just annoys me."

Jean chuckled, thought for a moment, then tilted his head to look at her. "How about I take you out for a meal? You can choose whatever you want to eat."

Neera blinked and nodded in agreement.

Before the two of them left, Baxter was still there. Neera didn't even spare him a glance, swiftly stepping out the door.

However, that dinner, ultimately, was not enjoyable. [SEARCH THE website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Neera had initially wanted to cast aside all matters, to immerse herself in the world fully with Jean. However, unexpectedly, she received a call from Maggie.

When she heard Maggie's voice, Neera felt a moment of daze as if she had suddenly returned to her childhood.

"Neera? Neera Are you listening? It's me, Mom!" On the phone, Maggie's anxious voice brought Neera's thoughts back to reality.

The emotion in Neera's eyes faded away, quickly returning to normal. She responded indifferently, "What's the matter?"

After asking, she recalled how Maggie referred to herself earlier and frowned. "I only have one mother, and she now rests eternally beneath the ground."

Maggie choked a bit, gave a sheepish laugh twice, her feelings uncertain. "It's okay, Neera. If you're not comfortable, you can call me godmother. If that's still not okay, you can call me Aunt Maggie. Whatever works for you, as long as you're happy."

Maggie appeared to be pleading for mercy, but Neera was not buying it and cut the former off directly.

"If there's something you need to say, go ahead. I'm busy on my end and can't chat for long."

"Oh, okay." Maggie hurriedly poured out her grievances amidst her tears. "Here's the thing. Neera, your dad... Your foster father is sick. He's in the hospital right now. The doctors say he needs to be hospitalized and undergo tests. They say his illness is quite serious, very severe. The medical expenses will be quite substantial, including

hospitalization and examination fees, and so on. I... I was really hesitant to bring this up with you, but you know our family's financial situation. We simply can't afford such a large amount of money. What do you think we should do..."

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Chapter 1415

Neera seemed not at all surprised nor worried. She asked indifferently, "Do you want money?"

Maggie's eyes lit up, and she nodded repeatedly. "Yes, yes, that's exactly what I mean!"

After speaking, she realized that her tone was overly excited. She quickly switched to a tone of sorrow.

"Neera, I know I'm causing you trouble, and I really don't want to. However, I'm truly out of options. It's a large sum of money. Where am I supposed to get that from? I can't lay golden eggs. I... I've thought it over and over, and you're the only one I could turn to. Neera, your status is different now. You're wealthy and influential. Even a tiny bit of your wealth could feed our family for ten years or something. Please help us out. After all, we're family!"

Family? Ha. This word, coming from Maggie's mouth, somehow seems laughable no matter how I look at it. Neera didn't want to dredge up the past with Maggie.

She simply asked, "What illness?" Her tone was extremely indifferent.

Maggie paused for a moment, then said vaguely, "It's a stomach issue. He's suffering from severe stomach pain, vomiting, and diarrhea."

"What's the issue with his stomach?" Neera asked further.

"This..." Maggie seemed a bit stumped, stammering, "I can't remember clearly. Oh, I'm uneducated. How would I know the names of those diseases? You're asking me so many questions, but I can't explain clearly. Anyway, it's a stomach issue. Neera, is it convenient for you to send some money now? I don't even have enough to pay for the inpatient fee. Even if you don't do it for our sake, do it for your younger brother's sake. Help us out. You can't just do nothing and watch us suffer, can you?"

Neera responded indifferently, "Just tell me the hospital's name. I'll ask myself."

Maggie seemed to choke up, pausing for a moment before responding in a strange tone, "There's no need for that, Neera. You don't think I'm lying to you, do you? I'm not

lying. Why would I joke about my husband's life? If you don't believe me, I... I can take a video for you and send it to you so you can see if he's really in the hospital, okay?"

Neera suddenly laughed. "Didn't you say I can't just stand by and do nothing while you all are suffering? In that case, I should at least show some concern about what kind of illness he has, right? Don't worry. If it's a serious disease, I'll fly back immediately to perform the surgery on him personally. I'll even hire a professional caregiver to look after him, so you won't have to spend a dime."

Maggie fell silent.

Neera waited patiently. After a few seconds, she heard Maggie's voice again, laced with a touch of anger, yet the latter was desperately trying to suppress it. "Neera, I know you're a good girl. It's not so serious that he needs surgery but... He does need to stay in the hospital for a while. The doctor said he'll need a lot of supplements and such. I really can't afford it. Given your high status and busy schedule, there's no need for you to worry about this all the time. You..." Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Neera suddenly found the whole thing boring and lost her patience, interrupting Maggie coldly. "Let me reiterate. Just tell me the name of the hospital. During the hospitalization, I will cover all the expenses directly with the hospital."

She spoke with such firmness that Maggie, after much hesitation, had no choice but to grit her teeth and reveal the name of the hospital.

After hanging up the phone, Maggie could no longer hold back. Her face suddenly changed, and she began to curse Neera through gritted teeth. "This little b*tch! How dare she show off in front of me, acting all high and mighty. Now that she's got money, she's off gallivanting abroad, forgetting all about us, who took care of her. She's an ungrateful ingrate! If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have fed her in the first place. I should have let her starve!"

Beside her, on the sickbed, Nigel also had a dark expression on his face.

"This Neera, she's not one to be easily manipulated. When it comes to money, she holds onto it like her life depends on it! This is just as expected of the rich. The richer they are, the stingier they become!" At that moment, he spoke with full vigor, showing no signs of illness whatsoever.

Maggie kept on complaining, "We really misjudged the situation back then. If we had known she had an aunt who loved her so much, we would have at least put on a show. We really missed out!"

After she finished speaking, she laughed maliciously. "However, it doesn't matter. No matter what, she can't escape the fate of having been adopted by us. We are still her

parents in name. We were kind to her when we were young, so she should be grateful. It's only right and natural for her to spend money on us!"

"Dad, Mom! You're being too unfair!" At that moment, Wilfrid walked in, carrying a thermal lunch box in his hand, his expression quite irate.

Earlier, when he was outside the door, he overheard every word his parents were saying.

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Chapter 1416

Chapter 1416

Startled, Maggie quickly changed her expression, rising to her feet with a beaming smile to comfort him. "Oh dear, Wilfrid, don't take it to heart. Your father and I were just casually chatting, venting a bit. We didn't mean anything by it. It was just idle family chatter, that's all."

"No other meaning? Mom, Dad, I heard everything you just said from outside. Is it right for you to insult my sister like that? What has she done wrong to deserve such harsh words from you?" said Wilfrid. Upon hearing his son speak in such a manner, Nigel immediately became displeased. He put on a stern face and reprimanded him unhappily. "Do you talk to your parents like this? You dare to question whether we're making sense, but are you making any sense yourself? We've raised you to adulthood. Is this how you're supposed to speak to your parents?"

Wilfrid realized his tone was a bit too harsh. He cleared his throat and walked over with a gloomy expression. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

He placed the thermos he was holding at the head of Nigel's bed, but he still didn't plan on letting the matter drop just like that.

He took a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down, and began to reason with them, word by word. "Dad, Mom, I've said it many times. Please don't go looking for Sis, and don't contact her anymore. Her life now has nothing to do with us. We shouldn't cause her any trouble. Can't we just live our own lives peacefully?"

Nigel glared with wide eyes, casting an impatient glance at his son. "What do you mean it's none of our business? If we hadn't adopted her in the first place, would she be living such a good life now or have the fate to enjoy such blessings? She has what she has

today because of us! She should be thanking us! If anything, we should be considered the benefactors in her life!"

Maggie also joined him. "Exactly, your father is right. She was so destitute at that time, unloved by her father and mother, abandoned by her entire family. She had nowhere to run, no place to go, and no food to eat. If it wasn't for our help, providing her with food and a place to stay, would she be where she is today?"

"Wilfrid, have you forgotten how hard it was for our family back then? Yet, I still chose to keep her. They say adoptive parents are even more selfless, but I don't see her showing me any respect or filial piety. This ungrateful wretch, she really has no conscience!"

Wilfrid felt that his parents were completely unreasonable. "Dad, Mom, can we talk this out logically? Have you ever considered how you treated Sis in the past? Why should she be grateful to you?" It's already good enough that she doesn't resent you two!

"What do you mean by that? Did we do something wrong? We took her in and raised her for so many years. Isn't that good enough? What a joke! We've done our part for her. Not to be harsh, Wilfrid, but whose child are you? Why are you always siding with outsiders?" questioned Maggie.

"Exactly. Wilfrid, we are your family, your biological parents. She is nothing more than a mongrel that we took home. Any talk of her being a relative is nonsense. There's no blood relation at all. Don't be confused and side with outsiders!" spat Nigel.

Wilfrid scowled, using their own words to refute them. "If she's neither relatives nor family, then why are you seeking money from her? It's clear that she has no connection whatsoever to us.'

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Boldly, Maggie huffed. "Why shouldn't we? We've taken care of her. That's the biggest favor we've done! Even though she's not our real kin, she should repay us. She ate our food and lived under our roof, all of which we paid for. Money doesn't drop from the sky, you know. So, she owes us and should give us the money we spent on her!"

"Exactly. I'm sick, and we're not asking for money for no reason. I am her adoptive father. Shouldn't she be responsible for my medical expenses? I'm already being nice to her by not asking her to come back and take care of me! She's rich right now, so my medical expenses are peanuts to her. What's so wrong about asking her for money?" said Nigel.

Wilfrid's temples throbbed. A fire ignited in his chest, growing more and more intense, making him feel uncomfortable all over.

He couldn't comprehend why his parents were so greedy. He truly didn't understand. "Is there no end to this? After Sis went abroad, she has been sending money home. The amount she has given is more than enough. Why are you still asking her for more? You treated her so poorly in the past, yet she has been nothing but kind and generous. What more do you want from her? Back then, when she returned to our home pregnant, did any of you lend her a hand? No, you didn't! Not only did you drive her out of the house, but you also mocked her, cursed her, and even cursed the child in her womb, all because the Garcia family expelled her, and she no longer had any value to exploit! Dad, Mom, the heavens are watching over us. They see everything you two do. Aren't you afraid of divine retribution for your actions?"

When Wilfrid finished speaking, Nigel couldn't help himself. The latter sat up abruptly from the bed, causing the bed frame to creak loudly.

His expression was one of anger, glaring at his own son as if to condemn the latter's reluctance to stand

up for himself. "The more you talk, the more outrageous you become. It seems your mother and I have truly spoiled you to the point of no return; you have no sense of propriety at all! You're already eighteen, and yet you can't grasp the simplest things! What do you mean by divine retribution? Are you saying we deserve that when we're merely reclaiming what belongs to us? It's not just the medical expenses and hospitalization costs. Our living expenses, including your future college tuition and job hunting, all require her to foot the bill! Moreover, she should help you find the best job. With her power and influence, finding a good job shouldn't be a problem, right? I refuse to believe she can't handle such a simple task! It's not like we're deliberately making things difficult for her!"

Wilfrid's gaze suddenly became incredibly desolate. He felt that it was utterly impossible to reason with his

parents.

After taking a deep breath, his tone steadied, his expression turning indifferent. "Mom, Dad, I'm saying this for the last time. I don't need my sister's money, nor do I need her to find me a job. I can manage on my own. Whether it's going to college or working, I can handle it all by myself. I can even support you with the money I earn. You don't need to ask anyone for money, so please stop bothering Sis. Consider this a plea from me, okay?"

"Are you seriously saying you can take care of us and can handle all that?" Nigel suddenly sneered. "Can you cover my current medical and inpatient fee? Are you able to afford it?"

Wilfrid calmly said, "I've asked the doctor. You have acute gastroenteritis. It's not a big issue. After an IV drip, you can leave. There's absolutely no need for hospitalization."

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Chapter 1417

Chapter 1417

In the midst of their conversation, Wilfrid pulled out a card from his pocket and handed it to Maggie. "There are several thousand dollars on this card. It should be enough to cover your medical expenses and also suffice for your living costs for a while."

When Maggie saw the card, her eyes lit up, but then she felt puzzled.

She quickly lifted her head and asked him, "Where did the money in your card come from?"

Wilfrid's reaction was quite calm as he spoke the truth. "This is the money I've earned from working at the coffee shop near school. It's not ill-gotten wealth, so you don't have to worry. Feel free to spend it. From now on, every two months, I'll also send some money home. It should be enough to cover your living expenses."

Upon hearing that, Maggie immediately became angry. "How did you end up working at a coffee shop? Aren't you supposed to be in school? Who allowed you to make such a big decision on your own? Why didn't you discuss it with us at home? Your father and I don't approve of this at all. You must go there and quit immediately! It's absurd to neglect your studies and go out to work!"

Nigel also roared at him in anger. "Why are you working at such a young age instead of focusing on your studies? At your age, you should be diligently studying in school. We are counting on you to excel in your college entrance exams. There's no need for you to work. Quit your job immediately. If I find out you're still there, washing dishes and serving water, I may break your legs!"

Wilfrid's gaze was indifferent, shifting from his father to his mother, his eyes filled with determination. "Mom, Dad, I've turned eighteen this year. I'm capable of living and working independently. I don't need anyone to guide me in whatever I do, and I consider my own decisions. I came to the decision to work after careful consideration. As for my studies, you don't have to worry. I can handle it myself. So far, there are no signs of my academic performance declining. I've always been at the top of my class, and you can rest assured about that. I know our family's condition isn't so bad that I need to work. However, I want to do this. From now on, every penny I spend will be earned by my own hands and feet, through legitimate labor, not through the charity of others."

"Are you suggesting that we are giving you charity?"

"If you ask my sister for money to fund my education, to me, that's charity. I absolutely refuse to use that money, so stop bothering her. This is the last time I'm telling you this. If I find out you've troubled her again, then..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Maggie and Nigel exchanged a glance, understanding his intentions.

Nigel was instantly infuriated, raising his voice to yell at his son. "What? Do you want to sever ties with us? To think you would abandon your own parents for a stranger!"

"That's not what I meant." Wilfrid frowned.

"I don't care what you mean. Right now, you're threatening us. Wilfrid, let me tell you, stop always siding with your sister. Even if you continue to do so, she won't remember you, let alone consider you important. Go to school now and behave yourself!"

Seeing that he couldn't get through to them, Wilfrid suddenly didn't want to say anything at all.

He gently reminded his father to eat well, then left the hospital room.

Just as he had barely stepped out of the ward, Maggie, in a huff, pressed the bell, summoning the nurse

over.

When Wilfrid was leaving, he crossed paths with a nurse who was rushing over.

The nurse recognized him as the son of Nigel and Maggie, casting him a look of utter helplessness.

By the time the nurse rushed into the room, Maggie gave her an impatient glare. "Why are the medical staff so slow? I've been calling you for ages, and only now have you come over! My husband and I have been waiting forever!"

The nurse took a deep breath, maintaining her professional composure without showing any signs of anger. She politely asked them what they needed.

Maggie was quite blunt, saying, "I want you to perform every possible test your hospital can do on my husband. Also, use the best medicine on him! If there are any imported, expensive ones, just prescribe them. We're not short of money. We can afford it!"

The nurse furrowed her brows, advising, "Not all tests are necessary for this patient. He simply has acute gastroenteritis. After receiving the IV drip, he will recover and can be discharged. There's no need for these tests. Moreover, some health examination

procedures can actually harm the body. Our recommendation is to avoid them if possible."

Both Maggie and Nigel insisted on going ahead with it, stating that someone else would cover the costs. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

In the end, the nurse had no choice but to write them a prescription and schedule an appointment.

Upon reaching the nurse's station, a junior nurse asked her what happened. "Why were you gone for so long? What were you asked to do?"

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Chapter 1418

Chapter 1418

She voiced her complaints once more, but the young nurse listened with utter disdain.

"If you ask me, this couple is like a pair of leeches. Who knows who they might swindle next? Ah, whoever gets involved with them is just plain unlucky, ending up with such scum..."

After leaving the hospital, Wilfrid thought for a moment and decided to text his sister via WhatsApp: Dad's fine, Sis. He just has acute gastroenteritis. It's nothing serious, so you don't need to worry. I heard they called you, I'm sorry for causing you trouble. I really am.

When Neera saw this message, she immediately called him back without a second thought.

"Sis?" Wilfrid froze, his voice filled with surprise and a hint of uncertainty.

"Yes, Wilfrid. It's me. How have you been lately? I haven't contacted you for a while. I've been really busy, otherwise I could have called you more often," Neera said with a smile.

Wilfrid was overjoyed and quickly said, "It's all right, Sis. I know you're busy. Just focus on your work, everything is fine here, so you don't need to worry about me. When you have some free time, come back and I'll treat you to a meal."

Neera chuckled. "Why would you, as my younger brother, need to treat me to a meal? You're still a student. If anyone should be treating, it should be me, as your older sister."

Wilfrid smiled shyly. "I'm an adult now. In fact, I already turned eighteen this year, so I'm a responsible man now. It's just a meal, Sis. Do you really have to argue with me over it? Can't you just let your little brother show off a bit?"

Neera was greatly comforted, her eyes filled with joy and relief.

"All right, then. It seems you have truly grown into a man, Wilfrid. Fine, I'll come to see you once I return."

Speaking of this, she recalled something and added, "You don't have to wait for me to return, though. My aunt and uncle are going to have a wedding soon, so I'll buy you a plane ticket and help you with the visa. You can just fly over here to attend the wedding."

Wilfrid really wanted to go, and he was quite excited after hearing about it. However, his excitement quickly faded away.

"I'm afraid it might not be appropriate for me to go, Sis. Let's just forget about it. Please help me convey my best wishes to them. I sincerely hope they will enjoy a long and happy life together."

"What's the matter? Is it the academic pressure? Oh right, I forgot that you're in your final year of high school. Are you preparing for a huge exam? How are your studies coming along? Given your intelligence and wisdom, you should have no problem, right?"

"Mhmm... I'm fine."

"That's good to hear. I hope you can come over if you have the time. It won't take up too much of your time. If you're having any difficulties with your studies, there are people here who can guide you." She extended a sincere invitation, but Wilfrid still declined after giving it some thought.

"There's really no need to trouble yourself, Sis. I'm not going."

The smile at the corner of Neera's mouth slightly faded as she immediately figured out the reason behind it.

"I-Is it because of your parents?"

After a moment of hesitation, Wilfrid finally began to speak, his voice slightly hoarse.

"Yeah. I'm worried that they'll want to follow along if they find out that I'm going. That could end up causing you more trouble, which wouldn't be good."

Neera fell silent for a moment, pondering. In the end, she didn't insist and chose to respect his decision.

"All right, follow your heart, then. It's okay if you can't make it. I'll pass on your congratulations for you."

Then, she changed the subject and started talking about the matter that Wilfrid had just mentioned in his text message.

"Wilfrid, you don't need to worry about the issues between me and your parents. All you need to do is focus on your studies. You don't need to concern yourself with anything else. I'll handle it myself, so don't let these matters affect your mood or life. Do you understand?"

Wilfrid bit the corner of his lip, his expression somewhat pained.

"But, they always cause you trouble, and they even try to ask you for money at every chance they get. Our family isn't actually so poor that we can't make ends meet. We can manage a normal life just fine, so don't listen to their nonsense. Ignore them. They... They are just a bit greedy."

Even though it was inappropriate for him to talk about his parents behind their backs, he really had no choice. He simply couldn't ignore it any longer.

"I understand; don't worry. As I've said before, what you need to do now is to take good care of yourself, focus on your studies, and aim for a good university. Nothing else matters, got it?" Neera replied softly. Then, she asked again, "By the way, why haven't I seen you spending the money on that card? Didn't we agree that you should treat yourself to some good food and take care of yourself? This is the time when you're growing, so you need to eat well. Don't ever be stingy with yourself." [SEARCH THE WEBSITE TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.](#)

Wilfrid nodded in response. Then, realizing that she couldn't see him, he obediently uttered, "Okay. I know, Sis. Don't worry; I'll take good care of myself. You're so busy over there, so you need to make sure to take care of yourself too."

Neera said with a smile, "Okay. Oh, by the way, there's something I forgot to tell you because I've been busy. I got married."

Wilfrid was taken aback quite intensely.

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Chapter 1419

Chapter 1419

"When did this happen? Why didn't you tell me about it, Sis? This is such wonderful news! Is it still with that man?"

At that point, he paused, somewhat embarrassed, but still asked, "Sis, after all the fuss that happened before, have you forgiven him?"

Neera glanced over at the man sipping his coffee on the balcony. His eyes and brows were filled with a smile that radiated the vibrant energy of spring.

"Yeah, I've forgiven him. What happened before wasn't intentional on either of our parts. It was all a misunderstanding. I think there's no need to dwell on the past. Since fate has brought us together, I shall gladly accept it. We're together now, and it's wonderful. We've already gotten our marriage certificate, so all that's left is to hold the wedding ceremony. We'll probably schedule it after my aunt and uncle's wedding. This time, you must come. You can't miss it again, okay?"

Wilfrid laughed, feeling as if a weight had been lifted from his heart. He was genuinely happy for her.

"Sure, Sis. This is your wedding, so I will definitely be there!"

After hanging up the phone, Neera set her phone aside. She then tiptoed to the balcony and playfully covered Jean's eyes from behind.

A book rested on Jean's knee, his hands momentarily still. A charming smile played at the corners of his lips.

"I heard you coming," he said.

Neera stuck out her tongue, let go of her hand, and sat down on the chair next to him.

"This is so boring. Phison is not fun at all. It's best if we head back."

She just got off the phone with her younger brother, and suddenly, she felt a longing to go back home.

Jean raised an eyebrow in response. "It is indeed not fun at all. I spend all day in this room, being the man behind you, watching you bustling about, yet I can't help you in the slightest." Neera couldn't help but chuckle, teasing him with her playful arrogance.

"Aren't you happy being the man behind me?"

A hint of warmth slowly spread across Jean's eyes and brows, his demeanor elegant and noble. He spoke in a very gentlemanly manner, "How could that be? I am utterly honored." Neera nodded in satisfaction, choosing not to say anything more.

After a long silence, Jean saw through the hidden worry deep in her eyes. He considered for a moment, then gently and softly asked, "What's wrong?"

As Neera curled up in the chair and gazed at the star-filled night sky, she suddenly felt a touch of melancholy.

"You know I have adoptive parents, right? Have you heard anything about them?" Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

There was a time in Kingsview when stories circulated about Neera's childhood, about how she was adopted by parents from the countryside.

But most of it was just hearsay, without any detailed substance.

Jean immediately understood what she meant. "Did they just call you? What did they want? Were they asking you for money? Or did they want you to do something for them?" Neera raised the corners of her mouth in a faint, wry smile.

"Even you can guess it. They come to me for nothing more than money or favors. Nothing else."

Jean's eyebrows slightly furrowed when he heard her say that. "Do they often ask you for money like this?"

Neera shook her head, "Not often. We've been out of touch for quite a while. When I went abroad with my aunt, I sent them a substantial amount of money, enough to repay them for raising me. The next time we met was just before I came to Phison. I didn't expect them to find my company."

"How come they've contacted you again this time?"

"My foster father is ill, and it seems to be quite serious. However, I think it's probably just a minor illness, nothing too serious. Wilfrid has already told me about it."

That was when she remembered to introduce Wilfrid.

"Wilfrid is the biological son of my foster parents, and also my younger brother. Even though my relationship with my foster parents isn't great, this brother of mine is a good

person. We've always had a good relationship. When we were young, he was quite protective of me and took good care of me. I want to invite him to our wedding."

Upon hearing that her younger brother was taking good care of her, Jean's expression eased slightly.

"Indeed, we should."

Suddenly, he grabbed Neera's hand, pulling her up to stand. He then sat her down on his lap.

"What's wrong?" Neera asked with a smile, playfully ruffling his hair as she spoke.

Jean tilted his head slightly, lifting his eyelashes to reveal his ink-colored pupils, gazing intently into her beautiful eyes.

"Tell me about your experience in the countryside. Were there any fun adventures, or did you face any hardships?"

Neera blinked. "Why do you suddenly want to hear this?"

"I really want to know every little détail of your past life. I want to listen to the past that I didn't have the chance to be a part of all those years," Jean replied calmly.

"I see..." Neera pursed her lips and began to share her memories.

There were moments of joy as well as moments of sorrow.

There were moments of joy as well as moments of sorrow.

"In the past, my foster mother always had me chopping wood. It was bearable in the summer, but come winter, it was especially tough. I had to get up early, chop wood in the dark, and then carry it home to prepare for cooking. Wilfrid couldn't bear to see me like this, so he would get up even earlier than me. By the time I woke up, the wood basket would already be full. He also had to juggle his studies. I didn't want him to be so tired, so I asked him to stop doing this. He agreed readily, but the next morning, the wood basket was full again. Sometimes I'd come home late from work, and the food at home would have already gone cold. Worse still, there were times when there was no leftover food at all. It was Wilfrid who cooked for me.

He still had homework to do, and I didn't want him to waste his time, so I told him to go back to his room and study. But no matter what I say, he insisted on making me food anyway.

During those years, if it weren't for Wilfrid, I wouldn't have known how to survive. Later, I was taken back to the Garcia family. After that incident occurred, I was driven out by the

Garcia family again. Since I had nowhere to go, I could only return to my foster parents' home in the end. But when they saw that I was pregnant and no longer of any use to them, they didn't want to accept me. My foster mother didn't even want to let me stay for a night, and hurriedly drove me away. I had no choice but to leave. At that time, my mind was completely blank, and I felt utterly helpless. I had no idea how I was going to survive. Wilfrid ran out of the house to look for me. He kept apologizing to me and gave me all his pocket money.

I didn't want to accept it, but he insisted and ran off after giving it to me. Looking back, if it wasn't for his money, I might not have survived until my aunt found me. You should already know what happened next. My aunt took me abroad, and my life underwent a drastic change. After earning my first paycheck, I gave it all to my foster parents. Then, I continued to transfer money to them, amounting to at least two or three million in total."

Jean listened in silence, his eyes filled with a look of pain. He tightened his hug on her more and more.

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Chapter 1420

Chapter 1420

Every time he thought of the injustices she had suffered in the past and the hardships she had once endured, Jean's heart felt as if it was being sliced by a knife.

The pain was so intense that he could barely breathe.

And the thought of those greedy foster parents ignited a surge of anger from deep within his heart.

"This amount of money is more than enough for a rural family. How could they have the nerve to ask you for medical expenses?"

Neera flashed him a wry smile, tinged with a touch of helplessness.

"My foster father, though poor, had an extraordinary love for gambling. Most of the money was lost to his gambling, and what was left was used to furnish the house. Now, their life is just ordinary, but such a life is definitely not satisfying for them. People's desires are insatiable. Knowing my current situation, they naturally wouldn't want to give up on me."

She then flashed him a confident smile and playfully tousled the man's hair as she continued, "But rest assured, I won't let them take advantage of me for no reason. I

have my own ways to deal with them." Jean naturally knew that she was clever and capable of finding solutions. Yet, he couldn't help but feel a pang of heartache.

"If you don't want to deal with them, I can help you sort it out," he suggested after a moment's hesitation.

Neera smiled. "Don't worry; I'm fine."

Early the next morning, Neera received the hospital bill.

Seeing the long list of medical tests and the extremely expensive medication bill, Neera could only respond with a sneer.

She found the couple's behavior utterly disgraceful, but she had grown accustomed to it, so she didn't take it to heart.

No matter how they choose to act out, she wouldn't care.

That day, after finishing the design draft, Neera sent it to Levi, asking him to help find the best raw gemstone, stating that he could accept it regardless of the price.

Levi gladly agreed.

After resolving a matter of great concern, Neera stretched lazily and finally stepped out of the study.

At that moment, Jean and Chad were playing chess in the living room. Hearing her footsteps, they turned their heads toward her, their eyes filled with a faint hint of amusement. The moment his gaze met hers, an uncontrollable smile spread across Neera's face.

With a spring in her step, she walked over and stood beside him, her gaze lowered to observe the chess game.

"Um... It seems like you're on the verge of losing, Uncle Chad."

With a helpless sigh, Chad scattered the remaining chess pieces in his hand across the board.

"All right, all right, no more. No matter how much we continue, it's clear I'm the one losing. My nephew-in-law's chess skills are indeed exceptional. I admit, I'm outmatched."

Jean's eyebrows lifted in amusement, his face radiating an indescribable confidence. He modestly said, "It's only because you let me win, Uncle Chad."

At this point, Adriana also came over to join in the fun, teasing Chad by saying, "No more winning, huh? You used to always crush me at chess. Now someone's giving you a taste of your own medicine. And it's my nephew-in-law, no less."

Chad couldn't help but chuckle. "You're really something, Adriana. Your man loses, and you come over to kick him while he's down. Whose side are you really on?"

Without a second thought, Adriana took Neera's arm and said confidently, "I stand with Neera, of course. Jean is Neera's husband, so it's only natural that I would support them."

Feigning heartache, Chad said, "It seems I really don't have much of a standing in this household."

The four of them were chatting and laughing, the atmosphere was just right, when suddenly the butler came forward to report.

"The vice president of the Bartitsu Guild has arrived."

As soon as these words were spoken, the laughter abruptly ceased. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

The four of them exchanged glances, their expressions involuntarily turning serious.

"Let him in," Chad said indifferently.

Soon, Matthew walked in, with his assistant, Darren, trailing behind him.

Matthew, leaning on his cane, was dressed in traditional attire, his expression stern and serious.

Upon entering the living room, his gaze swept over everyone present. Then, parting his furrowed lips, slightly, he said, "Everyone's here, perfect. I came personally because there's something I need to discuss with you all."

His voice was aged yet steady and powerful, carrying an inexplicable sense of pressure.

Neera exchanged a glance with Chad, then said with a smile, "What brought you here, sir? Please, have a seat."

Afterward, she turned her head and instructed the butler to brew some coffee and prepare some snacks.

However, Matthew interrupted her, "That won't be necessary. I came here for an important matter. I'll leave once I'm done. I won't stay long."

Neera's eyebrows twitched slightly, already guessing the purpose of his visit, but she pretended to know nothing, nodding and saying, "All right. Whatever it is, just say it."

Matthew's murky eyes swept around, first landing on her, then on Chad. His mustache twitched slightly above his lips, his voice raspy as he began to question them.

slightly above his lips, his voice raspy as he began to question them.

"Ms. Garcia, have you given any thought to the matter we discussed earlier? I believe it's time for you to give me a response today, isn't it?"

Neera blinked, maintaining her polite smile, courteous yet subtly distant.

"You really are a punctual person, Mr. Lozano. You said you wanted a result early this morning, and here you are. You could have just given me a call, though. I can't be troubling you to come here in person, can I?"

Matthew nodded nonchalantly in response. "I've always been a person of my word. When I give you a timeframe, that's the timeframe you get. Unlike some people, who keep postponing things. I really don't know what games they're playing with me."

His words, both overtly and covertly, were laced with sarcasm toward Neera.

Even so, Neera acted as though she didn't notice his sarcasm and continued to smile faintly at him.

"You sure are straightforward with your words, Mr. Lozano. Speaking with someone like you really saves me a lot of energy. Since that's the case, I won't beat around the bush with you any longer. To be honest, I was very tempted by the invitation you previously extended to the Gordon family. After all, who wouldn't be tempted by the opportunity to leap from the position of the ninth elder seat to the third elder seat? Moreover, the benefits you promised to the Gordon family also made us feel greatly honored."

At this point, she abruptly changed the subject, speaking candidly, finally laying her cards on the table with him.

"However, I must regretfully inform you that the Gordon family has decided not to accept your invitation."

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Chapter 1421

As soon as these words were spoken, Matthew's face immediately darkened, and his beard visibly twitched.

Before he had a chance to speak, Darren, standing behind him, stepped forward. With furrowed brows and a stern face, he indignantly began to chastise Neera.

"How audacious! Mr. Lozano has promised the Gordon family so many benefits, even allowing an exceptional promotion for you to the second elder seat. This is an extraordinary favor toward the Gordon family. Yet, you are so ungrateful and dare to refuse Mr. Lozano. Do you not know what's best for you?"

Matthew remained silent with a stern face.

Upon hearing these words, Neera suddenly burst into laughter.

Her beautiful eyes lifted as she shifted her gaze from Matthew to Darren.

"What's best for me? Mr. Torres, aren't your words a bit too harsh? Mr. Lozano merely extended an invitation to the Gordon family. As far as I know, it's not a strict rule that I accept it, right? So according to your logic, this is not an invitation, but a mandatory request that the Gordon family must agree to, is that correct?"

After she finished speaking, she turned to look at Matthew, a decent smile still hanging on her lips. She asked him, "Don't you agree, Mr. Lozano?"

Matthew's mouth twitched slightly. There was a hint of annoyance in his dark eyes, but he had no choice but to correct himself. "Indeed, it is an invitation. The Bartitsu Guild has no intention of forcing the Gordon family to accept, nor do they have the right to do so."

"Exactly. That's more like it." Neera nodded. "I knew it. How could the Bartitsu Guild be so unreasonable, resorting to such forceful tactics? As expected, you truly understands the greater good, Mr. Lozano."

Then, with a swift change of topic, she steered the conversation back to Darren.

"However, what surprised me was you, Mr. Torres. Previously, you seemed refined and courteous, giving the impression of a reasonable person. But why did you change so drastically just now, becoming so brash and unreasonable? Is it because Mr. Lozano is here, so you're acting arrogantly with the support of a powerful man like him?"

Darren's face turned beet red in an instant, the blush spreading all the way down to his neck. He was overwhelmed with embarrassment and indignation.

"Ms. Garcia, you... you need to be careful with your words and actions," he said through gritted teeth, struggling to squeeze out these words after a long silence.

Neera chuckled lightly, looking at him with great interest.

"Be careful with my words and actions? Mr. Torres, I didn't expect you to turn into a great educator. I am quite curious, though. Among all of us here, who should really be careful with their words and actions? Wasn't it you who misspoke just now? Mr. Torres, I think it would be best if you don't forget your place. You're just an assistant to the vice president, so why are you acting more important than the vice president himself? Even Mr. Lozano hasn't said anything yet, so why are you in such a hurry to speak up? Could it be that you think you can speak for Mr. Lozano?"

"I—" Darren's neck stiffened. He glanced at Matthew, ultimately failing to utter a complete sentence.

Neera continued to tease him calmly, "Since you can't, then it's best you just stand quietly behind Mr. Lozano. Do what he asks of you only after you receive the order. Otherwise, if you overdo it, we might start thinking that you're the vice president of the Bartitsu Guild."

Darren's face was flushed with a mix of red and blue. He gritted his teeth and defended himself, "I'm just standing up for Mr. Lozano. He was kind to the Gordon family, but you guys just don't appreciate it!" [Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

Neera's attractive lips curled upward, her smile carrying a hint of indifference. Her voice, too, was tinged with a touch of coldness.

"Who says that the Gordon family must be grateful for others' kindness? What, is it implied that the Gordon family relies on the charity of others?"

"You—"

"Also, Mr. Torres, even though you are favored by Mr. Lozano, I am still the ninth elder of the Bartitsu Guild. No matter how you look at it, my position is above yours. I am polite to you on a daily basis because I respect Mr. Lozano and you as well. However, this does not mean you can disrespect me or criticize me. What, do you think the Gordon family is a force under the Bartitsu Guild, and thus became your subordinates? Or your servants? Who gave you such audacity? Even the vice president treats me with utmost respect. Are you implying that your status is higher than Mr. Lozano's? You dare to show off and act aggressively in front of Mr. Lozano. Do you disregard everyone in the Bartitsu Guild?"

After she finished speaking, her gaze became sharp as she stared directly at Matthew.

She didn't speak to him but just looked at him, her gaze cold and indifferent.

Darren was so taken aback that he couldn't utter a word. He became somewhat anxious and quickly tried to explain himself to Matthew.

"Mr. Lozano, please don't listen to her nonsense. I don't mean that. I really am doing this for you..."

The corner of Matthew's mouth twitched slightly. His face was stern, and his eyes were dark. There was no telling what he was thinking.

After a few seconds, he suddenly barked, "How dare you! Apologize to Ms. Garcia right now! Who gave you the right to speak!"

Darren was stunned, his face changing colors several times. He found himself at a loss for a good while.

He didn't want to apologize, of course. But when the vice president had spoken in such a manner, he had no choice but to swallow his pride.

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Chapter 1422

"Ms. Garcia, I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive my rudeness. I'm truly sorry for my inappropriate words. I hope you won't take it to heart."

Neera was satisfied, leaning back with a casual and somewhat languid posture, looking like the head of a family.

"Well, I don't have many virtues, but one thing is, I'm broad-minded. If someone offends me, I usually don't make a fuss about it. Unless it's a serious matter, then I won't let it slide. But for trivial things, I don't bother."

These words had two meanings.

Firstly, she placed herself on a pedestal, ostensibly saying she didn't mind Darren's confrontations. However, in reality, she was sarcastically belittling Darren, telling him that he was not even in her league and didn't have the qualifications to be.

Secondly, she was challenging the Bartitsu Guild, implying both subtly and openly that if this matter escalated, the Gordon family would surely seek revenge.

Matthew was no fool. He understood immediately.

A surge of anger welled up in his chest. His lips twitched slightly as he asked in a deep voice, "Is this the response from the Gordon family? Are you sure?"

Neera smiled slightly. "Yes, I'm very sure. I appreciate your generous offer, Mr. Lozano, but I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint you."

"May I ask what the reason is?" Matthew paused for a moment before asking again, his tone noticeably unpleasant.

Neera blinked and responded in a rather tactful manner, "I am but a humble person with little influence, having only recently assumed the role of head of the Gordon family. It was already a hard-won blessing to be able to sit in the ninth elder seat of the Bartitsu Guild. At present, I have yet to firmly establish myself in this position. If I were to rashly seek promotion, I fear it would do more harm than good. After all, it's lonely at the top, and I'm afraid of falling hard from such heights. If something were to happen to me, it wouldn't matter much, but I fear it would also implicate the entire Gordon family, which would be unfortunate. I think it's best for me to keep my feet on the ground and take things one step at a time. Only then can I truly be at peace."

The reason she gave was high-sounding, yet it didn't offend Matthew in the slightest.

The stern expression on Matthew's face softened slightly, and he began to speak again, his words filled with earnest persuasion.

"Ms. Garcia, I understand that you have many concerns, and they are all necessary. However, rest assured, with the Bartitsu Guild backing the Gordon family, backing you, we won't let your worries come true. Besides, isn't Chad also there to help you?"

With that, he steered the conversation toward Chad.

"Chad, Ms. Garcia has just become the head of the family and there are still many things she's unfamiliar with. You surely won't just let go so easily, right? After all, she needs guidance to ensure her path is smooth and steady. The honor of being the second elder is not something anyone can achieve. To reject it outright is not a wise move. Don't you agree, Chad?"

Chad crossed his long legs, one hand resting on the arm of the couch, the other casually draped over his leg. He exuded an air of nonchalance from head to toe, his posture relaxed and carefree. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

In response to the words thrown at him by Matthew, he didn't even think about it and casually gave a reply.

"Neera is capable enough to manage all the household affairs efficiently even without me. I have nothing to worry about. As for the matter of the second elder seat, we've

already discussed it. Everyone unanimously respects her decision. If she doesn't want it, then let it be. Besides, I think her considerations are reasonable. This path should be walked step by step on her own. With her current experience and qualifications, a sudden rise would inevitably draw dissatisfaction from other families. She would become a thorn in their side, a source of envy and resentment. Moreover, she would be walking on thin ice, and any misstep could lead to irreversible consequences. Mr. Lozano, we appreciate your kind intentions, but we must decline. I'm sorry."

Matthew's face fell after he listened to that, his cheek muscles seemingly twitching. When he spoke again, his tone was heavy, clearly filled with displeasure.

"It seems the Gordons had made up their minds a long time ago, huh, to reject the guild? If that's the case, why bother with all this pretense? Why wait until now to refuse? Ms. Garcia, what are your true intentions?"

Neera blinked, wearing an innocent expression on her face.

"Mr. Lozano, your words are unjust to me. At first, I truly wanted to accept it, but after much thought, I finally made this decision. It's not that I wanted to waste time, but this matter is of great importance. Making this decision was not easy. I hope you can understand."

"Hmph! Who do you think I am? Someone you can easily deceive?"

At this point, Matthew completely lost his temper. His face was full of indignation, and his eyes were ablaze with anger.

"I had thought that the Gordon family was relatively honest in the Bartitsu Guild, which is why I treated you with special favor. It seems I overestimated you, leading you to believe that you have some leverage to play around with the guild! What do you think the guild is? You think you can just refuse us because you feel like it? What Darren just said is absolutely correct. I advise you not to choose to do it the hard way."

Neera was not surprised in the slightest by his attitude.

Her bright eyes flickered slightly as she corrected him, neither humbly nor arrogantly, "Mr. Lozano, as you just mentioned, this is an invitation, not a compulsion. Why have you suddenly changed your mind? Although the Gordon family is affiliated with the Bartitsu Guild, we should still be able to make our own decisions, right? Or is it that the Bartitsu Guild plans to strip these families under its command of their autonomy? This would contradict the original intention of Phison..."

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Chapter 1423

Matthew chuckled coldly. "Indeed, the Bartitsu Guild will not deprive the autonomy of the families under its command, but it's not a complete indulgence either. Otherwise, what kind of mess would the guild get into? We would become a laughingstock! Some things are better prevented before they happen!"

Neera raised one end of her dark eyebrows slightly. "Oh? What do you mean, Mr. Lozano? I don't quite understand."

"You don't quite understand?" Matthew glanced at her sideways. "I think you're just pretending to be confused when you actually know what's going on."

Neera replied evasively, "Mr. Lozano, you've misunderstood. I truly don't know what you're trying to say. I'm a straightforward person. I don't like beating around the bush. If you have something to say, just say it. There's no need to be so secretive and speak in riddles here."

"Hmph!" Matthew sneered disdainfully. "You think I enjoy wasting my time here with you? I've kept silent until now, not wanting to embarrass you, to leave you some dignity. Neera, why do you think I promoted you to the second elder seat? Just as you said, you're nothing more than an inexperienced individual with no qualifications. You're unfamiliar with Phison, and even your understanding of the Gordon family is not clear enough. You do have some self-awareness, but why do you think I insist on promoting you, giving you this respect? It's all to knock some sense into you! Yet, you fail to appreciate it. Do you really think you're something special?"

He added, "Do you really think I can't see through your little schemes? Aren't you just like the Cox family, wanting to establish your own power? But let me tell you, as long as you're in the Bartitsu Guild, you can only be an affiliated force of the guild! Don't think about playing mind games with me. I'm not taking action against the Gordon family because I don't want to make things ugly and become a laughingstock. But if you insist on not knowing your place, then don't blame me for being rude!"

Neera remained utterly calm and composed.

All of this was within her expectations. Just a moment ago, she had been curious about how much longer Matthew could endure.

Looks like he has reached his limit.

Well, this might be for the best. What's meant to come will always find its way. It's about time the Gordon family and the Bartitsu Guild settle their scores.

With these thoughts, Neera didn't feel nervous at all, but rather, she felt incredibly relaxed.

The atmosphere grew increasingly tense, yet the smile on her lips became ever more radiant.

Such a smile, however, increasingly irritated Matthew and Darren. They felt as if their attack was in vain.

"What are you laughing at? Is this your attitude?" Matthew questioned.

Neera didn't respond to him immediately. Instead, she leisurely picked up an orange for herself. As she peeled it, she replied to him without even lifting her head, "Of course I am laughing at you."

This sentence immediately made Matthew so angry that his beard quivered. His eyes wide open in fury, he raised his voice and demanded, "What do you mean?"

An orange peel fell onto the coffee table. Neera popped a segment into her mouth and took a couple of bites. Instantly, the sweet and sour taste filled her entire mouth.

Neera narrowed her eyes in satisfaction. Paired with Matthew's expression, she found it even more tasty.

"It's just as it sounds, Mr. Lozano. You've lived so long, yet how can you still not understand the meaning of words? I think the Bartitsu Guild is too arrogant, thinking they can do whatever they want. They're just a clown, not knowing how many people are laughing at the Bartitsu Guild and discussing their disgracefulness behind their backs." [SEARCH THE WEBSITE TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.](#)

"You-"

These words were shockingly direct that Matthew, who was usually so composed, couldn't help but be taken aback at this moment.

He had lived for most of his life, yet he had never encountered anyone who dared to speak to him in such a manner or dared to discuss the Bartitsu Guild so openly.

Suddenly, his face changed dramatically. With the support of his cane, he shakily stood up, pointing at Neera. His voice trembled as he spoke.

"How dare you speak such vile words! This is outrageous! Do you really think the Gordon family can act lawlessly?"

Neera was unbothered. "You consider this too much? Then what would you call the things the Bartitsu Guild has done?"

Since the gloves were already off, she had nothing to hold back. She decided to just let it all out and get it off her chest.

"Do you think you're doing a good job? Do you believe that no one knows what you've done or that no one dares to object? Well, let me tell you the truth. Everyone knows about the terrible things you've done. There's no one who doesn't. Everyone is disgusted by your actions, yet you alone are still feeling smug, thinking you're flawless. The Bartitsu Guild, known for their cunning and suspicious nature, have no tolerance for others. Their methods are extremely underhanded, a fact known to all. Yet, this time, you've taken things to an extreme. The Cox family, who have always been diligent and dedicated to the Bartitsu Guild, are such a loyal clan, yet you've plotted against them in every possible way!"

She continued, "First, you sent them to accomplish a task that even the Bartitsu Guild could not complete: to take over the Jagger family on Adieu Island. Then, after the Cox family's head set off, you secretly manipulated things against the Cox family, trying every possible means to suppress them. Fortunately, the Cox family returned in glory, successfully completing the task. But instead of showing gratitude, you became even more apprehensive. Not only did you not intervene in the infighting of the Bartitsu Guild, punishing those families that were at fault, but you also let them stir up trouble against the Cox family. You even joined their ranks to suppress the Cox family, fabricating unfounded charges against them. Now, the Cox family has already left, yet you still want to completely eliminate them. How many people are truly willing to follow such a force?"

At this point, she let out a series of cold, mocking laughs.

"In fact, it's not just the Cox family, but the Gordon family have also long become a thorn in the side of the Bartitsu Guild. Ever since I gained control of the five districts, you've been coveting it. However, due to the presence of Lordsworth Estate, you didn't dare to act openly. Later on, even though you made me an elder of the Bartitsu Guild, it was to better control me. Now, by elevating my status and that of the Gordon family, it's even more so! On one hand, you want to use the power of the Gordon family to deal with the Cox family, to eliminate dissidents. On the other hand, you're looking for an opportunity to snatch the position of district president from my hands!"

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Chapter 1424

"Actually, this is something everyone knows. Given your intelligence, you should have figured it out too. The Gordon family has been on guard for a long time. Ever since you

started suppressing the Cox family, you've been indirectly suppressing the Gordon family as well. Therefore, the Gordon family had no choice but to be cautious. However, you thought that the Gordon family, after all, is not as deeply rooted or as powerful as the Cox family. You dared not confront the Cox family, so you came to me humbly, putting on this show of a sincere invitation. Am I right, Mr. Lozano?"

Listening to her dissect his actions word by word, Matthew grew increasingly angry.

After a full minute had passed, he suddenly let out a strange laugh from deep within his chest.

Neera looked at him coldly. Her smile had disappeared, leaving only indifference and vigilance in her eyes.

Having had his fill of laughter, Matthew stopped, his face shrouded in gloom.

"Neera, I must admit I underestimated you. I thought you didn't know much, but it seems I was the one who was careless. Yes, the Bartitsu Guild has been wary of the Gordon family for a long time, but so what? On the turf of the Bartitsu Guild, we are the rulers, we are the law! To maintain the status of the Bartitsu Guild, we naturally have to be cautious of prominent families like yours. Otherwise, if you grow and develop, and if you ever harbor ill intentions, won't it be too late for the Bartitsu Guild to react? Looking back, I should have been ruthless from the start, not giving you the chance to show off in front of me! Now, the Bartitsu Guild has given the Gordon family enough respect, but you just don't appreciate it. If you're so ungrateful, don't blame the Bartitsu Guild for being impolite! From now on, the Bartitsu Guild will no longer tolerate the Gordon family!"

With that, he stormed off, his face gloomy.

Darren supported him, and before leaving, he turned his head for one last look.

Soon, the sound of a car driving away could be heard from outside.

The living room was silent. Only then did Neera, who had been holding her breath, let out a long sigh. She leaned back tiredly onto the couch, her brows furrowed in irritation.

Chad lowered his head and chuckled.

"Well done, Neera. This is the first time I've seen Matthew being put in his place like this. His face was practically twisted with anger."

He gave Neera a thumbs up.

Neera gave a bitter smile. "Uncle Chad, please stop teasing me. Given the current situation, we have completely fallen out with the Bartitsu Guild."

Chad smiled. "This is actually quite good. After all, the Gordon family has no intention of colluding with a force like the Bartitsu Guild."

At that moment, Shane descended the stairs, standing behind Neera. He gently ruffled her hair, affirming her recent words and actions.

"That's the way it should be. The Gordon family has been very apathetic for many years, but now the situation is different. It's time to show our tough side. Neera, you're doing very well."

Neera nodded and touched her nose.

"To be honest, I've long wanted to have a falling out with the Bartitsu Guild. It felt incredibly satisfying to curse them out just now. However, after the thrill, troubles are bound to follow. The Bartitsu Guild will surely retaliate against the Gordon family. When that time comes, I fear we're in for a headache."

Shane was quite optimistic. "Don't worry. We'll handle whatever comes our way. In any case, we've achieved our goal for now. When the Bartitsu Guild makes their move, that's our cue to leave. Have you contacted the people at Lordsworth Estate yet?"

Neera shook her head. "Not yet. I've arranged with Colin that we will get in touch before we set off."

"Which district has Colin assigned us to? Are we in the same district as the Cox family?"

Neera shook her head again. "No. Colin told us to go directly to District One."

As soon as these words were spoken, everyone, except for Jean, was taken aback.

"District One? Isn't that the territory of Lordsworth Estate?" [Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

"Yeah, I was quite surprised too. But Colin said that this was personally arranged by His Lordship."

Chad pondered for a moment, then speculated, "Perhaps they simply want to separate the Cox family from the Gordon family. After all, we both came from the Bartitsu Guild. If we continue to band together, it might make Lordsworth Estate wary. This is quite normal. They're sending the Gordon family to District One probably because they want to keep a close eye on us. There's nothing unreasonable about that."

Shane also thought so, and after some consideration, Neera also agreed.

Jean's mouth twitched slightly, but in the end, he said nothing.

Only he knew that such arrangements were made for two reasons. First, he wanted his wife to be completely under his protection. Second, it was to separate the Cox family from the Gordon family.

As for the reason behind separating these two families, it was quite simple.

He didn't want a man who had his eyes on his wife to be too close to her.

However, no one knew this except for those few in Lordsworth Estate.

In the time that followed, the Gordon family was simply waiting for the Bartitsu Guild to make their move.

Even though she was fully prepared, for some reason, Neera felt a faint unease in her heart.

Jean noticed her deep worries and comforted her in a gentle voice, "Don't worry. Even if the Bartitsu Guild takes action, the Gordon family will be fine."

Neera pursed her lips and nodded slightly. "Mm..."

Even so, she was still distracted, her eyelids twitching intermittently.

After dinner that evening, she video-called the little ones. Even they could sense her downcast mood.

The three little ones set up the tablet a bit further away, all appearing together on the screen, their eyes gleaming as they stared at the person on the screen.

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Chapter 1425

"Mommy, is there something troubling you? You seem like you've encountered some difficulties."

Neera paused for a moment, a helpless smile tugging at the corner of her mouth.

"How come even you guys noticed it? Is it that obvious?"

Penny nodded, then shook her head. "It's not obvious, but we can feel it. Perhaps this is what they call a mother-daughter bond."

Sammy chimed in, "And a mother-son bond."

Neera smiled lightly. Not wanting them to worry, she just made up an excuse.

"There's really nothing much going on. It's just that I've been a bit busy lately over here. I'm just a bit tired, I guess."

Upon hearing that she was tired, the three little ones were incredibly understanding. They quickly urged her to rest.

"Get some rest, then. We won't disturb you any further. Once you've recovered, we'll give you a call!"

After speaking, they faced the camera, waved their hands, said goodnight, and quickly hung up the phone.

Before Neera could even respond, the video call was abruptly ended, leaving her somewhat amused.

The bathroom door swung open, and Jean emerged, clad in a bathrobe. His chest was half-exposed, revealing a tantalizing glimpse of his pectoral muscles.

His hair was still wet, with droplets of water trickling down the strands of his hair. Some droplets found their way to his shoulder, sliding down his collarbone before finally disappearing beneath his bathrobe.

Neera blinked, inexplicably feeling a bit parched, and quickly averted her gaze.

Jean was drying his hair. He chuckled lightly and moved closer to her. "What are you hiding from? It's not like you've never seen it before. Are you still shy?"

Neera wrinkled her nose, then reached out to tug at his bathrobe, pulling it down. "Sit down. Let me help you.'

Jean raised an eyebrow and readily took a seat next to her, relishing in the service she provided.

Neera dried his hair roughly, seemingly venting her frustration.

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She removed the towel, revealing his messy hair. She tried to hold it in but couldn't help but burst out laughing.

Throughout the whole time, Jean did not stop her at all, indulging her antics. At that moment, he let out a soft sigh, raised his hand to smooth his hair, and turned to look at her.

"Are you feeling a bit better now? You've been distracted all day, hardly even smiling."

Neera gave a soft grunt in response and suddenly buried herself in his arms.

"I feel so uneasy. I don't even know what's wrong with me. I was really looking forward to this day, but now that it's here, I'm somewhat apprehensive. I'm afraid... I'm afraid I might cause trouble for the Gordon family, or even worse, inflict irreparable damage. If that's the case, then I would become a sinner of the Gordon family. At that time, it won't just be my personal problem. Even Uncle Chad, I fear, would be blamed and criticized by the elders of the Gordon family. I'm afraid I would let down Uncle Chad's trust..."

She knew that the Bartitsu Guild was not so easy to deal with. The Cox family might have been lucky to get away, but the Gordon family might not be so fortunate.

In this battle of wits and courage, where danger lurked at every corner, a single misstep could plunge them into an abyss.

She didn't want to drag the entire Gordon family down with her.

Jean understood her thoughts. He pulled her closer into his embrace with his strong arms.

"I understand that no matter how much I say, you may still feel uneasy and scared at this point. All I can say is, I'm here with you. No matter what you do, I'm by your side, doing my best to support and encourage you. I will also do everything in my power to protect you."

Neera took a deep breath, and all she could smell was his refreshing and comforting scent.

She nodded slightly, her arms tightening around him a bit more. With her eyes closed, she leaned against his chest.

That night, Neera drifted off to sleep, only to be awakened by a sudden chill that ran through her entire body. Her stomach ached, the pain so intense that she broke out in a cold sweat.

"Neera... Neera, wake up."

Jean was a light sleeper and noticed something was off about her. With a stretch of his long arm, he turned on the bedside lamp.

At a glance, he saw the young woman's deathly pale face. Cold sweat dampened the hair on her forehead, and her delicate eyebrows were knitted tightly together. Her lips, bitten by her own teeth, had lost all their color.

He paused for a moment, his heart suddenly tightening, and then something occurred to him.

He lifted the blanket for a quick glance and immediately grasped the situation. He swiftly carried her into the bathroom.

Neera was in so much pain that she was unable to move even a finger. She curled up in his arms, letting him take care of everything for her.

Once he had cleaned her up and changed the sheets, she felt him carrying her to the bed.

"It hurts so much." The warmth of the blanket was not enough to fend off the icy coldness of her hands and feet. She was in unbearable pain.

Jean's heart ached unbearably. He tenderly kissed her forehead, his large hand reaching under the covers to rest on her lower abdomen.

After a gentle massage, he whispered in her ear, "Bear with it. I'll be right back, okay?"

Neera half-opened her eyes, looking at him listlessly, then closed them without much energy. "Okay," she murmured.

Soon, Jean left the room. After a short while, he returned, now holding a glass that was steaming hot.

He gently lifted her from the blankets, cradling her in his arms. He cooled the content in the glass and said, "Open your mouth." [Search The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

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Chapter 1426

Neera struggled to open her eyes, only to see a glass of ginger tea in front of her.

"You... made this?" she asked weakly.

Jean gave a hum of affirmation. "Don't worry. It's not too hot. Drinking it will warm your stomach."

Neera leaned against him as if she had no bones in her body and drank half of it from the glass in his hand.

"Ugh... Too much ginger. I don't want to drink it anymore..."

Jean didn't force her to finish it either. He placed the glass on the bedside table and handed her a piece of tissue to wipe her mouth.

After downing half a glass of ginger tea, Neera shivered slightly. Only then did she feel as if she had come back to life, gaining a bit of strength.

She clutched her abdomen, curling up sideways in the man's arms.

She murmured aggrievedly, "The day hasn't even arrived yet, but somehow it came early. It's so annoying. I'm not happy..."

Jean kissed the top of her head. "Perhaps the stress is too much. It will get better after a while."

After he finished speaking, he asked her to lie down. He touched her foot, feeling its icy coldness. A frown creased his forehead, and he simply decided to keep holding her feet to warm them.

Seeing Neera half-opening her eyes, looking at him weakly, he comforted her in a gentle voice, "Close your eyes and sleep. The pain will be gone soon. I'm here." [SEARCH the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Neera nodded and closed her eyes. After a while, she fell asleep.

When she woke up again, the sky was already bright.

She raised her hand to shield her eyes, then reached out to find that there was no one beside her.

Clearly, Jean had been up for quite a while.

After adjusting to the dazzling sunlight, she glanced at the time and was surprised to find it was almost eleven o'clock.

I can't believe I slept for so long...

She sat up. There was a lingering discomfort in her lower abdomen. However, compared to last night, it was already much more bearable.

Her menstrual cycle had always been very regular, but this time it came much earlier than expected.

She let out a soft sigh, muttering to herself, "It seems the stress has really been too much lately."

Having gathered herself together, she descended the stairs.

She had assumed everyone would be downstairs, but to her surprise, there was not a single person in the living room.

"Huh? Where is everybody?"

She stopped a maid who was passing by and asked curiously, "Why is everyone not around? Where have they all gone?"

The maid's expression was somewhat solemn as she respectfully responded, "Ms. Garcia, something happened to the Gordon family. They-"

Before she could finish her sentence, Neera immediately interrupted her, "Something happened to the Gordon family? What happened?"

An ominous premonition bubbled up from the depths of her heart.

Could it be the Bartitsu Guild...

However, before the maid could respond, the sound of the door opening echoed from the living room.

As Neera turned around, she saw Jean and Chad, among others, walking in.

She quickly approached them, asking anxiously, "What happened? Did the Bartitsu Guild make a move? What did they do?"

The expressions on their faces were far from pleasant, especially Shane, who looked exceptionally grave.

Judging by the look on his face, it must not be an ordinary matter.

Realizing this, Neera became even more anxious inside. She felt as if she had fallen into a bottomless pit, continuously sinking.

Jean pulled her along, heading toward the couch, and sat down. "Calm down."

Neera frowned. "How can I calm down? What kind of problem has the Gordon family encountered? It must be serious if it required all of you to take action, and you're only just returning now."

At that moment, Shane gritted his teeth and began to speak. "In the early hours of the morning, large-scale explosions occurred one after another in District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four. All communications within the districts were cut off, making it impossible to send out any messages. The fires caused by the explosions were

extremely severe. By the time we received the news, the fires had become uncontrollable. An affiliated force under the Gordon family rushed over to help... and many people were lost in the process."

Neera's face instantly turned deathly pale.

She abruptly stood up, her eyes wide with shock, but for a moment, she was at a loss for words.

Jean was mindful of her frail condition, his brows furrowed in concern. Holding her hand, he gently pulled her back down.

"Although the situation is serious, there weren't many casualties in the two districts. The explosions occurred in open areas, with five locations each in District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four, all far from important places. It's clear that someone did this on purpose. The fire is now under control, and the injured have been sent to the hospital for treatment. There are people on site cleaning up."

Neera blurted out immediately, "It must be the Bartitsu Guild. They must be the ones behind this!"

Everyone thought the same.

Neera was somewhat puzzled. "But why would they do this? Isn't what Matthew wants most the power of the five districts in my hands? Even if he wants to make a move, he should directly target the Gordon family. Why would he take a roundabout approach and go after the five districts?"

At this point, Jean spoke up. "That's why the Bartitsu Guild chose to act in the uninhabited area. Even if it caused a large-scale explosion and fire, it wouldn't have a significant impact on District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four. However, it would severely damage the Gordon family. The Gordon family has already lost some people in the rescue efforts. And to repair these explosion areas and recover after the disaster, apart from the local people, you as the district president, will inevitably have to use more people from the Gordon family. For the Gordon family, this is an unavoidable and massive consumption of resources."

"Not only that," Chad added solemnly, "but the Bartitsu Guild is killing two birds with one stone by doing this. They will definitely use this incident to stir up public opinion, criticizing Neera for failing to play her role as district president. They'll argue that her negligence in managing her subordinates has led to a major disaster."

Neera gritted her teeth. "What have we found so far? With so many explosions, the Bartitsu Guild surely had sent a lot of people."

Chad shook his head. "The situation is chaotic right now. Conducting an investigation is extremely difficult. Moreover, the Bartitsu Guild deliberately chose to do it at dawn, in a place where few people venture. It's not impossible for them to leave without a trace."

Neera's heart sank.

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Chapter 1427

They indeed made thorough preparations.

I can't believe the Bartitsu Guild would be so cunning. They chose the very places that we least expected.

Shane's face was grim. His eyes were filled with hostility and regret.

"I'm to blame for this. I shouldn't have come back. I should have stayed there and kept watch. If I had, this wouldn't have happened."

Chad patted his shoulder. "Don't take everything upon yourself. How could this be your fault? The Bartitsu Guild clearly had this all planned out. Even if you didn't come back and stayed over there, it wouldn't have affected their plans. They could have easily chosen the areas where you weren't present. In the end, it's our fault for not having proper arrangements in every area, allowing the people from the Bartitsu Guild to exploit our weaknesses."

Neera also felt the same way.

"Shane, this isn't your fault. Indeed, as the district president, I haven't done well. I should have been vigilant from the start and not taken things lightly. When I took over these districts, I should have arranged everything properly. It's my mistake."

The thought of causing such a major incident and bringing so much trouble to the Gordon family filled her heart with immense guilt.

Chad sighed helplessly and comforted her, "Neera, the same goes to you. Don't take everything upon yourself. It's not your fault. You don't fully understand what's going on within the Bartitsu Guild, nor do you completely know Matthew's character. In retrospect, I was too hands-off. I should have guided you more."

Adriana came over with a tray of coffee at this moment. "All right, all right, what are you all doing now, comforting each other, then taking all the blame onto yourselves? This is clearly the fault of the Bartitsu Guild. What does it have to do with you? Matthew has a

sinister and vicious heart. It's hard to guard against someone with evil intentions. They will stop at nothing to do evil. That's human nature. What you need to do now is not to reflect on yourselves but to think about how to handle this matter and then get your revenge!"

With that, she placed a cup of coffee in front of each person.

"All right now, everyone calm down, take a breather, and let's think of a solution."

Neera and the rest fell silent.

A moment later, Chad spoke up. "We must have someone watch over these two districts. Shane and I will each take an affiliated force there. Neera, Jean, you two stay at home. If there's any news, I'll contact you immediately."

The Gordon family would definitely have to send someone over.

But the thought of the complex and dangerous situation over there made Neera feel extremely worried.

Adriana also couldn't help but worry, her eyes filled with concern as she looked at Chad. She bit her lower lip, wanting to say something but held back. In the end, she didn't say anything at all.

That noon, Chad and Shane set off.

As she watched them leave, Neera felt a sense of unease in her heart.

Meanwhile, as expected, the Bartitsu Guild could no longer sit idle. They issued a statement and began to shape public opinion.

In the statement, the Bartitsu Guild expressed their deep sorrow over the unexpected incidents in District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four. They clarified that they would promptly send assistance, but given that District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four were under the control of the Gordon family's head, further communication would be necessary.

The Bartitsu Guild also sharply criticized the Gordon family, attributing the accidents in District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four to Neera's inaction and the Gordon family's negligence.

Soon, the news spread all over the city, sparking a flurry of discussions.

Netizen A: Holy smokes! It's such a big incident. There were so many explosions. Those two districts must have been blown to smithereens.

Netizen B: It's been a while since the explosion, and the fire has become so huge, yet the Gordon family didn't make a move. It took them several hours to send support. What is the head of the Gordon family doing? Isn't she the district president? How can she not take care of her own districts well?

Netizen C: Come on, have you ever thought about what this so-called district president can actually do? Isn't she just a family head who was pushed into the limelight? She has no experience at all. It's just an empty title. If it weren't for the support from Lordsworth Estate, would she be where she is today? It's such a huge misfortune that the five districts into her hands!

Netizen D: I'm speechless. Can someone stop obsessing about love every day and think about their responsibilities? Can they get down to business, please? They're good at showing off their love in a high-profile manner, but they're useless at everything else. I just don't understand. What on earth was the former head of the Gordon family thinking, entrusting such a large family business to such a useless person? It's beyond comprehension.

Netizen E: How hilarious! As glorious as she was before, that's how embarrassing she is now. I bet she's probably busy crying, shedding crocodile tears to gain some sympathy. Who in the Gordon family would blame her? If she can't do it, she might as well give up her position to someone who can get things done. She shouldn't just stand there doing nothing.

Netizen F: My suggestion is, why not hand it over to the Bartitsu Guild? After all, the Gordon family is also a force under the guild, and she holds the ninth elder seat. Isn't it said that she might even be promoted to the second elder seat? If that's the case, she might as well hand over her authority as district president to the Bartitsu Guild. I believe that with the guild's capabilities, managing these five districts would certainly be a piece of cake.

Netizen G: I feel the same way. After all, we're all family. Why insist on keeping a tight grip on it...

When Neera saw these comments, she was absolutely livid.

Her eyes were red and misty.

Thinking back to the comments she had just read, she held back her tears, refusing to let herself cry.

No! I can't be this weak. I won't let anyone mock me!

At that moment, a large hand took the phone from her grasp. [SEAR*ch the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

"These are just nonsense. Don't take them seriously, and don't take them to heart."

The man's gentle and deep voice echoed above her head.

As Neera raised her head, she met Jean's gaze that was filled with heartfelt concern.

"Jean... I really didn't expect things to turn out this way. I underestimated the shamelessness of the Bartitsu Guild."

She pouted, and upon reflection, she still felt quite angry.

Jean gently touched the corner of her eye and comforted her, "It's not your fault."

However, the situation was far from over.

Just as Chad and Shane had just arrived at District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four, unexpected incidents also successively occurred in the other three districts.

This time, it was still an explosion, but it was far more severe than before.

Although the explosion site wasn't as crowded, the location had changed.

They were no longer sparsely populated suburbs but research centers and chemical plants.

When the news reached the Gordon family, Neera almost collapsed, her body swaying. It was only thanks to Jean's support around her waist that she didn't fall.

"Are you all right?" Jean asked, his face filled with worry as he anxiously looked at her.

Neera nodded dazedly. After a moment, she finally responded, "I'm fine."

Then, she asked Zephyr, "How's the situation now?"

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Chapter 1428

Chapter 1428

Zephyr immediately responded, "The situation is grim. The chemical plant in District Twenty-One, the drug research center in District Twenty-Two, and the drug research center in District Twenty-Five have all suffered devastating explosions. There are numerous casualties, and the scene is chaotic. The fire caused by the explosion is

intense, with thick smoke billowing, making rescue efforts difficult. It would be best to send people over as soon as possible to take control of the situation."

Neera had reached a point where she could no longer afford to be scared out of her wits, nor did she have the time to analyze the situation.

She nodded without hesitation and said, "I'm going right now."

However, Jean immediately stopped her. "No. You can't go. It's too dangerous there. I can't let you."

Neera was just about to retort when Adriana chimed in, "Exactly, Neera, you must listen. You can't be reckless and put yourself in danger. Moreover, think about it. If you were to leave, who would take charge of the Gordon family? You are the head of the Gordon family. Without you, this place would be leaderless, which is a big risk."

Neera's mind was in a mess, unable to think of any other solutions. "But I have no choice but to go. Now that Uncle Chad and Shane have left, they are busy enough with just Districts Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four. They simply can't be in two places at once. I can't possibly let them run around even more, nor can I just leave things as they are."

Right then, Jean uttered in a deep voice, "Aren't there still two elders in the Gordon family? Let them go."

Neera had forgotten about them, and she remembered only when he mentioned it.

Immediately after, she frowned and said, "No. One person can only lead a team to one area. We are still one person short." After a few seconds of silence, Jean said, "I'll go."

Neera paused for a moment, then turned to look at him. "How can you? No. You can't go. It's too dangerous over there..."

Jean suddenly curved his lips into a slight smile, raising his hand to smooth out her furrowed brows. "It's dangerous, and that's exactly why I should go. I can take care of myself. You have to trust me. Besides, in my current status, I am the husband of the Gordon family's head, the district president. I am also considered part of the Gordon family, so I should be qualified enough to help you handle affairs, right?" Neera bit her lower lip. "That's not what I meant. I'm just worried about you..."

"There's nothing to worry about. All you need to do is trust me and wait patiently for me at home," Jean replied.

At this moment, Adriana let out a sigh. "For now, this is the only way. Neera, please get in touch with Mr. Robin and Mr. Baxter." Gritting her teeth, Neera knew the situation was urgent. There was no room for hesitation, and she had no choice but to agree. Sure

enough, before she could reach out to Robin and Baxter, these two were the ones who came first.

Robin still showed Neera the same kind and benevolent demeanor, not blaming her at all. Instead, he reassured her not to worry and took the initiative to volunteer, indicating that he would go and provide support.

As for Baxter, he naturally wouldn't let the matter slide. Seizing such a perfect opportunity to kick someone when they're down, he wore a mocking expression and started to reprimand her in a sarcastic and eerie manner. "I've said it before. The positions of the family head and the district president are not something you can just casually take on as if you're playing house. Do you realize the immense responsibility that comes with it? Do you really think a young lady like you, without any qualifications or remarkable talents, can handle it? Now look at the mess you've made. In the end, isn't it us who have to clean up after you?"

Robin knitted his brows, casting an impatient glance at Baxter. "All right, cut it out. There's no time for you to whine anymore." [SEARCH the Find_Novel.net website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Baxter snorted, unwilling to let the matter slide just like that. "Robin, stop defending them. In my opinion, both you and Chad have been blinded by naivety to actually trust such a young lady. Especially Chad. I don't know what he's thinking, handing over such a large Gordon family to an outsider, and one without any ability at that. Now look, everyone is laughing at our family, saying all sorts of unpleasant things. When has our family ever been subjected to such humiliation? It's truly an unprecedented disgrace!"

As he spoke, he glanced at Adriana, intentionally or not, clearly blaming her, feeling that she had bewitched Chad.

Adriana's lips twitched slightly. She held back her temper, ignoring his remark.

Yet, Neera couldn't bear to tolerate any disrespect toward her aunt, no matter who it came from.

At that moment, she retorted with an expressionless face, "I accept the criticism from Mr. Baxter personally, and I understand that I haven't done well enough, causing trouble for the Gordon family. However, I believe we should focus on the matter at hand and not bring unrelated issues into the discussion. These are two different things. Also, since Mr. Baxter is so energetic, why not spend some time thinking about how to resolve this issue and how to find and punish the mastermind behind all this?"

Baxter's brows furrowed together, and he asked in a displeased tone, "What mastermind are you talking about? What are you saying?"

Neera stared at him. Word by word, she said, "Don't you know yet? This is all a plot by Bartitsu Guild. They are the ones who have been pulling the strings behind the scenes."

Upon hearing those words, Baxter's facial expression changed several times, but he opened his mouth to deny it. "How could it possibly be Bartitsu Guild? Do you have any evidence?" Neera shook her head. "No, but I know it's the work of Bartitsu Guild. There are some things that, even without evidence, can be clearly understood."

Baxter sneered, "What do you mean by that? I think you're just making up excuses to absolve yourself. Why would Bartitsu Guild do such a thing? Do you have any explanation?"

Neera looked at him with an expression as if she was looking at a fool. "Well, they obviously want to seize control of those five districts."

Neera looked at him with an expression as if she was looking at a fool. "Well, they obviously want to seize control of those five districts."

Baxter immediately retorted, "Have you been scared so badly that you're suffering from paranoia? If Bartitsu Guild wanted to take control of the five districts, why would they harm them? Isn't that contradictory?"

"What's so contradictory about it, Mr. Baxter? Could it be that your age has rusted your brain, making you unable to think?" Neera was filled with anger at that moment, with nowhere to vent. Since he's determined to rush into the line of fire, I might as well treat him as a live target.

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Chapter 1429

Chapter 1429

That was why her words became blunt, her tone cold, laced with a hint of mockery.

She spoke in a similar tone Baxter used when he spoke to her earlier. "Bartitsu Guild targeted the five districts because they anticipated that the Gordon family would be well-prepared to deal with any fallout from a confrontation. Therefore, they chose to strike where the Gordon family least expected, and those targets were the five districts. The places they destroyed were not particularly important, but the damage inflicted was enough to leave the Gordon family in chaos, unable to attend to other matters, and significantly depleted. On the other hand, it can generate enough public opinion and influence. Right now, the public sentiment toward the Gordon family is very hostile. Quite a few people have been swayed, asking me to willingly hand over the position of

district president to Bartitsu Guild. Who do you think is behind this? Naturally, it's Bartitsu Guild. This is precisely the effect they want. And I believe, soon, Bartitsu Guild will reveal its true intentions, actively demanding that I hand over the position of district president. By doing this, on the one hand, it weakens the Gordon family, and on the other hand, it also achieves its goal. Do you understand?"

Baxter really didn't like it when she spoke to him that way. His face looked quite displeased. After listening, he let out a cold huff. "Even if Bartitsu Guild did this, it would be because of you that this outcome occurred. If you hadn't insisted on leaving Bartitsu Guild to join Lordsworth Estate, thus angering Bartitsu Guild, they wouldn't have taken action."

Neera took a deep breath, and she had run out of patience. Suddenly, she let out a cold laugh, her words becoming sharper and more unpleasant. "Do you even have a brain? Have you lived all these years in vain? Bartitsu Guild has long wanted to seize control of the five districts, and they will act sooner or later. It's just a matter of time. Moreover, the Gordon family has long been a thorn in their side. Whether you can survive in Bartitsu Guild depends on whether they allow you to!"

Baxter had lived to such an old age, yet he had never been scolded like that by anyone, let alone by a young girl he looked down upon who was standing right in front of him.

Immediately, his face turned ashen, displaying his anger in full. "What about you? What have you contributed to the Gordon family? If it weren't for Chad's stubbornness and loss of reason, allowing you to become the head of the Gordon family, how could the Gordon family have fallen into such a state? In my opinion, you're nothing but a jinx. Ever since you came to the Gordon family, we haven't had a single day of peace!"

"Baxter!" Robin couldn't bear it any longer, abruptly raising his voice in a stern rebuke.

Robin stood up, glaring at Baxter with a warning in his eyes, his brows furrowed in deep irritation. "Watch your attitude! Regardless of your grievances, you must remember that Neera is the head of the Gordon family! You may have thousands, tens of thousands of complaints, but you must swallow them! These are the rules set by our ancestors! If you're not satisfied, then get out!"

"Robin!"

"Shut up already!"

Upon seeing Robin completely lose his temper, Baxter's facial expression changed several times. He then let out a cold laugh but said nothing more. Afterward, Robin turned to Neera, sighed, and apologized, "I'm sorry. Baxter is just too anxious. He's always been loose-lipped. Please don't take it to heart." Afterward, Robin turned to Neera, sighed, and apologized, "I'm sorry. Baxter is just too anxious. He's always been loose-lipped. Please don't take it to heart."

Neera's face was solemn. "I won't take it to heart, nor do I care about what others think. I admit I was negligent in managing this situation. You don't need to point it out. I'm well aware of it myself. But right now, the most important thing is to solve the problem, not to waste time here arguing. It serves no purpose." Search the Find_Novel.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

As she spoke, she took a deep breath, doing her best to calm her emotions. "At present, incidents have occurred in District Twenty-Three and District Twenty-Four. Uncle Chad and Shane have already rushed over. The remaining three districts have also been severely damaged to varying degrees. Someone must go there to take control of the overall situation. I don't trust others to handle it. As the head of the family it's not quite appropriate for me to leave the residence and go there. It has to be someone from the Gordon family who has prestige. Mr. Robin and Mr. Baxter, considering your experience and capabilities, I'm afraid we might need you to make a trip for this matter."

Without a second thought, Robin nodded in agreement. "I came here for this very reason. Even if you hadn't mentioned it, I would have taken the initiative to go. The Gordon residence will be relying on you." Neera nodded slightly, turned her head to look at Baxter, and remained silent, waiting for his response.

Baxter gave a cold snort, still maintaining his eerie demeanor. His words were laced with sarcasm, but in the end, he didn't abandon his post in the face of battle. "Well, I thought you were so capable, but in the end, we still have to step in, don't we?"

The situation was critical, and Neera preferred not to squabble with him, nor engage in a war of words. Without paying any heed, she simply handed over District Twenty-Two and District Twenty-Five to them. Robin asked, "What about District Twenty-One?"

Jean went upstairs to pack his luggage. Just as he came down, Ian was following behind him.

Upon hearing that question, Jean said indifferently, "I'll go." He then took a few steps to Neera's side.

Upon hearing that, both Robin and Baxter couldn't help but gasp in surprise. They looked at him somewhat unexpectedly, then turned their gazes toward Neera.

Robin clearly hesitated. "This-"

Before he even had a chance to express his own opinion, he heard Baxter vehemently voicing his opposition frantically.

"No way! He's an outsider. Why should he meddle in the affairs of our family? Besides, what does he know? He's just a mere businessman. Even if he has a renowned reputation and is highly skilled in the business world, it doesn't necessarily mean he can

handle matters here. I disagree with handing over District Twenty-One to him!" Baxter protested.

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Chapter 1430

Robin knitted his brows, giving him a sidelong glance. "Can you stop making a fuss every time something happens? When will you ever change this temper of yours?"

Baxter sneered, "As long as the Gordon family doesn't return to its rightful hands, I won't have a moment's peace!"

Neera closed her eyes, unable to suppress the rage burning within her chest any longer. It scorched her, making her body feel hot all over, her blood boiling in her veins.

A few seconds later, she opened her eyes. Her beautiful pupils were chillingly cold, and her delicate features were veiled with a layer of frost.

Her gaze was fixed intently on Baxter, sharp and piercing. She began to speak slowly, her tone even, yet carrying an oppressive force that brooked no argument. "Based on the fact that I am the head of the Gordon family, the district president, I have the right to send whoever I want. Who do you think you are? Do you think you have the right to question my decisions here? What makes you think you have the right to disagree? Consider your own status. You're not even the head of the Gordon family yet. If you want to overrule me, wait until you take my position. Only by then you can make a fuss!"

In just a few words, her entire demeanor had changed. She became assertive and proud, and her eyes held a cold indifference that seemed to look down on everything.

Baxter was taken aback, his mouth half-open, stunned by her sudden shift in momentum. For a moment, he found himself unable to utter a single word.

Neera's gaze remained icy and ruthless, yet the corners of his mouth suddenly lifted slightly. However, there wasn't a trace of amusement in his eyes. Instead, they reflected a hint of mockery and ridicule. "For those who reason, I can treat them with respect and measured words. But for those who are unreasonable, foolish, and ignorant, to reason with them is a waste of time and breath. Mr. Baxter, even if you're dissatisfied, you'll have to hold it in. If you still feel wronged or resentful, then don't go. The Gordon family won't be affected by your presence or absence. There are plenty of capable people available." Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Baxter was dumbfounded, his face alternating between shades of green and red, like a knocked-over palette. It was quite a spectacle.

He had never taken such a big hit before. He was so angry he felt like his lungs were about to explode.

Yet, when Neera spoke, every word carried an undeniable force.

He had no doubt that if he dared to utter another word and upset her, she would truly replace him immediately.

With that knowledge in mind, even if he was so angry he was about to explode, he could only swallow his pride and hold his breath.

Seeing him finally quiet down, Neera let out a scoff, neither light nor heavy, full of mockery.

Afterward, she turned her head to look at Robin. Her expression softened a bit, her tone became more gentle, and she explained things to him in a polite manner, "Handling such matters is a piece of cake for Jean. I can vouch for hi

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Chapter 1431

After Jean left, Neera felt an emptiness in her heart.

However, she knew she had to stay focused.

The conflict with Bartitsu Guild was gradually reaching its peak. She couldn't afford to lose her footing nor show the slightest hint of vulnerability or unease. She had to pull herself together.

By Jean's side, she could find reliance.

At that moment, however, she was all alone. She had to stay strong and believe in herself.

Due to the sudden departure of several key members from the Gordon family, Neera was worried that Bartitsu Guild might seize the opportunity to strike at the Gordon residence. Therefore, she arranged for manpower, fully alert and ready to deal with any crisis at any moment.

Just as she had predicted, Bartitsu Guild used the explosion incident in the other three districts to continue stirring up public opinion. The uproar was deafening, pushing Neera to the pinnacle of public attention. The comments made by the netizens were rather one-sided.

Come on! You're kidding me! Not again! So, looking at it this way, from District Twenty-One to District Twenty-Five, they've all been hit by disaster. Isn't this too much of a coincidence? What on earth is going on?

What on earth is Neera doing managing her five districts? Two districts have had issues consecutively, and she still hasn't realized the severity of the problem. What is she up to? Is she brainless?

The Gordon family is really in trouble now. How did they end up with such a new head of the family who can't handle anything? What's the use of her?

Outrageous! Are these explosions accidents or caused by someone? Can accidents really be this coincidental? Somehow, I sense a hint of conspiracy in all this.

It's clear that someone did this on purpose. How could it possibly be an accident? They must be targeting the Gordon family. Could this be some form of retaliation?

To be more precise, I think they're targeting Neera. Think about it. The Gordon family has been a steady presence in Bartitsu Guild for over a hundred years, always keeping a low profile and never causing any trouble. But ever since Neera joined the Gordon family, one thing after another has happened. First, they gained a lot of attention, and now they've become a target, with one incident following another. If you ask me, this is a classic case of someone not being suited to their position, and it's bound to lead to problems.

Perhaps Neera has provoked some enemies, so they targeted her five districts. No matter how you look at it, the Gordon family is unlucky, getting dragged into this mess by Neera. And as for the five districts, if they had submitted to Bartitsu Guild earlier, they probably wouldn't have ended up in this situation.

I'm so curious. Who on earth has Neera managed to offend? She's only been here for a short time and has already caused a big mess for the Gordon family. She's really something. The other party must not be easy to deal with, able to stir up so much trouble while the Gordon family is unprepared. They're really a tough nut to crack.

Let me speculate for a moment. Could it be Bartitsu Guild? As far as I can recall, aside from the Cox family, the Gordon family only has some connections with Bartitsu Guild. Wasn't there a rumor going around a while ago that someone from Bartitsu Guild dealt with a member of the Gordon family?

As soon as that idea was proposed, it was immediately rebutted.

It can't possibly be Bartitsu Guild. Also, if it's about the Gordon family's affairs, it should be about the Gordon family seeking revenge against Bartitsu Guild. So why is it that the Gordon family is the one suffering now?

Exactly, and didn't Bartitsu Guild propose to offer Neera the position of the third elder seat? They also want to elevate the status of the Gordon family. This should be considered indirect compensation, right?

Bartitsu Guild has already gone this far. Why would they target the Gordon family? Isn't that just asking for trouble...

Due to the overwhelming number of rebuttals, the so-called conspiracy theory was quickly suppressed, and soon no one brought it up again.

Neera flipped through the internet, and she couldn't help but sneer when she saw the netizens speaking up for Bartitsu Guild. I have to admit, Matthew, that old fox, really knows how to scheme. The trap he set long ago was waiting right here! Previously, Matthew intentionally spread the news that he wanted to promote me to the board of elders, all for the purpose of creating a false impression in front of everyone. Now, everyone assumes that Bartitsu Guild, whether out of sincerity or compensation, is trying to win over the Gordon family. They also believe that the negotiations with the Gordon family are almost complete, so it's unlikely they would take any action against the Gordon family. With this, the matters concerning District Twenty-One and District Twenty-Five have nothing to do with Bartitsu Guild. Ultimately, I'm getting the blame. He probably knew everyone would assume that it was my poor management and knack for stirring up trouble that brought disaster to the Gordon family and the five districts.

"Heh..." The corner of Neera's lips curled up slightly, a cool, mocking laugh escaping her. "Such a cunning man. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality."

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Adriana knew who she was talking about, and she let out a soft sigh. "After all, he has lived for more than half of his life. It is said that he was groomed to be the leader of Bartitsu Guild from a young age. He was exposed to intrigue and deception from childhood. Thus, his schemes are naturally profound, not something an ordinary person can outwit. You're still inexperienced in the ways of the world, so it's only natural that he was able to manipulate you. What's surprising is that Chad had let go too quickly, never expecting Bartitsu Guild to be so wildly ambitious. He wasn't careful enough, and he feels somewhat guilty about it now."

Neera bit her lip corner, shaking her head. "This isn't Uncle Chad's fault. He never wanted to get involved in these conflicts. It's just that people are unpredictable. Who could have foreseen that Lordsworth Estate would simply hand over such an important

position as district president to me? And who could have imagined that Bartitsu Guild would stoop so low just to seize the position?"

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Chapter 1432

Adriana was preoccupied with Chad in her mind, which affected her appetite. After a few bites, she found herself unable to eat any more.

The vast mansion suddenly became eerily empty.

Neera had a vague sense of unease.

As the night deepened, she found herself unable to find peace for a long time.

When Avery's call came through, she had just reminded Zephyr again, instructing the subordinates to be on guard at all times.

"Neera, I heard something happened at your end. What's going on? Was it Bartitsu Guild's doing?" On the phone, Avery's voice was anxious and full of worry.

Neera responded with a hum and said, "Yes, but we don't have any evidence. The situation in those districts is chaotic right now. The Gordon family has already sent people to handle it."

Upon hearing those words, Avery furrowed his brows tightly. His eyes held a mix of anger and regret. "I'm sorry. I've dragged you into this."

"It's not your fault." Neera sat at the head of the bed while hugging her knees. No lights were on. Only the faintly cool moonlight streamed through the window, casting a serene chill throughout the room. "Even without the Cox family, the Gordon family has long been a thorn in the side of Bartitsu Guild. From the moment I took the seat as the district president, Bartitsu Guild must have started plotting. This day would come sooner or later, regardless of whether the Cox family left Bartitsu Guild. The Gordon family would eventually face this calamity."

Even so, Avery still felt deeply sorry in his heart. "You've sent people out, so who's left in the Gordon residence now?" he asked.

"It's just me and my aunt." Neera sighed. "There's no other way. This matter is too significant. I can't rest easy without sending someone trustworthy. It has to be this way."

Upon hearing that, Avery furrowed his brows even tighter. "In that case, there will be no one left at the Gordon residence. That's too risky."

As he spoke, he became restless and could no longer sit still. "No. I'm coming over right now."

"No need," Neera quickly intervened. "I'm fine. Zephyr is with me, and the Gordon residence is not unattended. I've already made arrangements, so you don't need to worry." [SEARCH THE website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

Avery couldn't help but worry. "I know how cunning Bartitsu Guild can be. They will definitely figure out the current situation of the Gordon family. What if—"

He hadn't finished speaking when Neera interrupted him.

"Then you shouldn't come either. No matter what happens, it's all the Gordon family's business. You've finally made it to Lordsworth Estate and settled down. You must not risk your life again. Otherwise, if Bartitsu Guild finds out you've come here, they will definitely try every means to block and hunt you down. So, you can't come," she urged.

Of course, Avery knew what kind of peril he would face if he ventured into the territory of Bartitsu Guild.

Yet, he couldn't bear it, watching her over there, constantly facing dangers.

In a clear and calm voice, Neera added, "Avery, I appreciate your good intentions, but it's better if you don't get involved in this murky situation. Rest assured, the Gordon family isn't easy to deal with. Bartitsu Guild may want to bite off more than they can chew, but it remains to be seen if they have the appetite for it."

On the other end, Avery's face was stern. His grip on the phone was so tight he almost crushed it.

In the end, he heeded the advice, took a deep breath, and said in a hoarse voice, "All right. I agree. But you must promise me something. Don't get into trouble. I'll be waiting for you at Lordsworth Estate."

Neera's gaze subtly shifted, and she responded with a soft hum. "Okay."

After hanging up the phone, Avery stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling window. His amber eyes stared at the night scene outside the window, their depths unfathomable.

Violet walked over, tilting her head to look at him. "Is Neenie in danger?"

Avery's throat bobbed up and down, his voice tense. "She might be."

Violet asked again, "Are you very worried about her?"

Although it was a question, her tone was decidedly confident.

Avery remained silent.

Violet, with her hands behind her back, stood with him for a while before suddenly saying in all seriousness, "Satan, I know this may sound cruel to you, but you're not the one Neenie needs. In her heart, no one can replace that man. Even if she needs someone now, that person wouldn't be you."

Avery's breath hitched slightly. He paused for a moment, then calmly said, "I know."

"Neenie is a very clear-headed person. She doesn't like to drag something out, nor does she like lingering feelings. Her feelings of love and hate are simple and steadfast. Love is love, and dislike is dislike. If she doesn't love, she maintains a distance. It's not appropriate for you to go. She doesn't want you to take risks for her, nor does she want to owe you anything."

"I know."

Violet looked up at him, her eyes suddenly moist, her thick lashes flickering. Her voice was somewhat muffled as she said, "Satan, you're worried and upset. I don't like seeing you like this. Ever since you met Neenie, you've changed a lot. Anything related to her seems to shake you. You always seem burdened. Haven't you let go of her yet? It's painful this way..."

For the first time since she had grown up, Violet revealed the sadness of a young lady in front of him.

She was a smart girl, able to see through everything, yet she said nothing.

Between her and Avery, it was like they were siblings. They understood each other so well that there was no need for words.

But this time around, she just couldn't hold back from speaking.

Witnessing his transformation, his unrequited love, and his worries truly made her feel upset.

For every ounce of his sorrow, she would feel an equal measure of it.

Avery glanced at her, his thoughts unreadable.

After a long while, a deep sigh echoed.

He lifted his hand to gently tousle her hair and whispered, "Although I'm reluctant to admit it, I must acknowledge that Jean is indeed the man destined for her. After all their twists and turns, they still ended up together. I knew then I stood no chance. Now, I don't want to fight for anything anymore. You don't need to worry about me."

Violet's eyes sparkled. "Really?"

"Yes," he said, pinching her nose gently. "Why are you crying? It's not a big deal."

After speaking, he let out a bitter laugh, his eyes cast downward. "Nevertheless, I simply can't bear to see her in even the slightest bit of danger..."

Meanwhile, at the Gordon residence, Neera was waiting impatiently, until finally, she received news from Jean.

He texted: Everything is under control. I'm fine, so you shouldn't worry. I have things to take care of, so I won't keep you on the phone. You should get some sleep early, okay?

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Chapter 1433

Neera stared at those few short sentences, reading them repeatedly. Only then did her restless heart find a bit of comfort.

News also started pouring in from the other districts.

All the explosion sites had their fires extinguished.

The chemical plant and drug research center had suffered severe damage. Fortunately, the data was still intact. As for casualties, they were currently being tallied.

After reading everything one by one, Neera returned to her bedroom. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

As she passed by Adriana's room, she knocked on the door.

Adriana was sitting in a chair by the window. Hearing some noise, she said, "Please come in."

Seeing it was Neera, she leaned back into her chair, "Oh, it's you. What's up?"

As she spoke, she rubbed her throbbing temple.

Neera walked over and asked, "Aunt Adriana, can't you sleep?"

With a helpless tug at the corner of her mouth, Adriana said, "Indeed, after such a big incident, how could I possibly sleep?"

Neera knew Adriana was worried about Chad. "Aunt Adriana, don't worry. Uncle Chad will be fine."

Adriana nodded. "I know, but I can't help but worry. Moreover, for some reason, my eyelid is twitching badly, and I feel a sense of unease in my heart. I always feel like something terrible is about to happen."

Neera's brows subtly furrowed as that unsettling feeling began to surface again.

Neera shook her head, refusing to let her thoughts run wild, and comforted Adriana by saying, "Aunt Adriana, don't overthink it. Worrying about it now won't help. What's meant to come will come. We just have to take it one step at a time. Otherwise, you'll only scare yourself. Nothing has even happened yet, and you're already on the verge of a nervous breakdown. That's not good. It's already very late, and you need to rest. If you don't, your health will suffer. When Uncle Chad comes back and sees you like this, he will definitely be heartbroken."

Adriana sighed. "All right. I'll follow your advice. I'll go to bed as soon as I finish washing up. You should also rest early. Don't just advise me and then stay up late yourself."

"Sure. I understand."

Despite saying that, Neera was plagued by severe insomnia after leaving Adriana's room and returning to her own. She tossed and turned in her bed, finding it hard to fall asleep.

Her mind was in a mess, with all sorts of things piled up together, causing her to feel restless.

She ended up only feeling sleepy at past three in the morning.

Her tense spirit gradually relaxed. Just before her consciousness plunged into chaos, she had a vague thought. If Bartitsu Guild wanted to take action against the Gordon family, they would've done so already. It's already so late, so they probably wouldn't come anymore.

However, the reality was completely the opposite.

Matthew deliberately chose the moment when Neera was at her most vulnerable, in the deepest of sleep, to launch an attack on the Gordon residence.

When Neera was awakened, her mind was in a state of confusion, completely bewildered.

"Neera! Neera! Wake up! Wake up! We're surrounded! Hurry, come to your senses! The fight has already started down there!"

Neera regained her consciousness immediately when she heard that they were surrounded.

She abruptly sat up, realizing that the room was dark. Even though she couldn't make out who was beside her in the darkness, she could tell from the voice that it was Adriana who had just spoken.

At that moment, she heard the sounds of intense fighting coming from downstairs and outside the window. Her heart immediately leaped into her throat. Instinctively, she wanted to turn on the light and get out of bed to see what was happening.

Adriana quickly stopped her, lowering her voice to say, "Don't turn on the light! Zephyr told me to wake you up, but we mustn't turn on the light or make any noise."

Neera frowned. "Why? What's the situation down there now?"

Adriana shook her head, her hand cold in the grasp. "I'm not sure either. I was awakened by Zephyr. He was in such a hurry, and he only had time to wake me up and told me to find you "

She hadn't finished speaking when suddenly, there was a knock at the door.

In that moment of crisis, the sudden knock at the door startled both Neera and Adriana.

The two of them were tightly huddled together, warily watching the door, neither of them making a sound.

Soon, the sound of knocking echoed again, followed by Zephyr's voice. "Ms. Garcia, it's me."

Neera's spirits lifted when she heard that. She quickly rushed over to open the door. "What's going on? Are the people from Bartitsu Guild here? What's the situation down there?"

Zephyr walked in, casually shutting the door behind him. He led the two to the window, peering down through the gap in the curtains.

Seeing the chaos below, the sheer number of people left Neera utterly speechless. "H-How can there be so many people?"

Zephyr wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, his voice so deep it was almost inaudible, his whole body exuding a strong aura of menace. "It's not just these people. The entire Gordon residence is now tightly surrounded, both inside and out. We've deployed a substantial number of people, but it's still less than a third of what the other side has!"

Neera was shocked. "How could this be? Given the power of Bartitsu Guild, it's impossible for them to send so many people!"

It was important to note that the people Neera was willing to deploy included those affiliated forces from the Gordon family.

And yet, the numbers of Bartitsu Guild far exceeded theirs.

Isn't this equivalent to having more than half of Bartitsu Guild here? How is this possible? Neera was baffled.

Zephyr's face was gloomy. He gritted his teeth and said in a cold voice, "Bartitsu Guild didn't just send their own people. Several families have also come along! The Hoffman family, the Quigley family, the Watson family... They've all been rallied together. It seems Matthew had arranged everything in secret long ago."

Neera was pale as a sheet, shocked by the unexpected turn of events. She had done her best to prepare for the worst, yet she still couldn't overcome the wild ambitions of Bartitsu Guild.

Adriana was now extremely anxious. She quickly asked, "What is Matthew's purpose? Even if he really takes down the Gordon residence, what's the point? If the Gordon family is gone, Bartitsu Guild will also become a target for everyone!"

However, Zephyr let out a cold, scornful laugh, his voice filled with contempt and mockery. "Matthew is as cunning as a fox. He has already planned his next ten moves. Why do you think he took action, and why did he involve so many of his subordinates? He has meticulously planned everything."

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Chapter 1434

Adriana didn't understand. "What does this mean? What exactly does Matthew want by making such a fuss?"

Before Zephyr could speak, Neera suddenly broke the silence, articulating each word clearly, "What he wants is my life."

Upon hearing that, Adriana was taken aback. "W-What do you mean by that? Your life? Neera, what on earth are you talking about?"

Zephyr's face was dark and gloomy, his voice sounding like it was being squeezed out between his teeth. "Ms. Garcia is not wrong. That is indeed Matthew's objective. I'm afraid the incidents from District Twenty-One to District Twenty-Five are all part of a series of traps. He has played a trick of creating a diversion. When trouble occurs in the five districts, the Gordon family will definitely send support because the five districts are simply too large, and the situation is serious. Therefore, the number of people sent will only be more, not less. Moreover, it must be someone with a high position and authority in the Gordon family. As the head of the family, Ms. Garcia must stay at the Gordon residence. In this way, it will be convenient for Bartitsu Guild to take action. Bartitsu Guild has sent people from other families tonight. If they really intend to take advantage of the chaos to take Ms. Garcia's life, he can easily shift the blame onto these families afterward. It seems they have already colluded. Even if they bear such a crime, no one will really be punished. Instead, they might even get a bigger piece of the pie."

Adriana was so startled by his words that she broke out in a cold sweat.

However, there were still some things she didn't understand. "But what's the point of doing this? Even if Neera loses her life, there are still others in the Gordon family. If he wants the power of the five districts, there will be others who will stand in his way..."

"No one will stand in his way. Matthew has already built up enough momentum for himself. Districts Twenty-One to Twenty-Five have all been heavily hit. Now, all public opinion is against the Gordon family. Everyone is calling for Bartitsu Guild to take over those five districts. With Ms. Garcia's death, those five districts would be unmanaged. Bartitsu Guild can completely send people to intercept the Gordon family members who rush back upon hearing the news. They can take advantage of the chaos to get there first and rightfully claim the position. Moreover, even if the Gordon family rushes back, Bartitsu Guild can take advantage of the current chaos within the Gordon residence and their heavy losses as an excuse to prevent the Gordon family from continuing to control those five districts. They would claim that they are acting in accordance with public opinion. When the time comes, even if the Gordon family makes a reasonable demand for their rights, it would be dismissed as wishful thinking and greed, forgetting righteousness for personal gain. In short, Bartitsu Guild has made a move that has blocked the path ahead. The Gordon family is now on the defensive everywhere. The only solution is to ensure Ms. Garcia's safety. There must not be the slightest mishap," Zephyr said.

Upon hearing that, Adriana was terrified, feeling a chill from head to toe.

She never imagined that Bartitsu Guild could be so corrupt. Instantly, she was filled with immense regret. "If I had known it would be this dangerous, I would never have agreed to let you become the head of the Gordon family, let alone allow you to come to Phison!"

Adriana bit her lip tightly, her eyes welling up with tears, her heart filled with worry and fear, pushing her to the brink of madness. "Chad, that jerk... If anything happens to you, I-I won't let him off the hook!"

Seeing the situation, Neera's previously tense mood suddenly eased a bit. She held Adriana's hand, giving her strength. "Aunt Adriana, don't worry. I'm tough as nails. Absolutely nothing will happen to me. I've been through so much hardship. Why would I fear this? Isn't it just a bit more thrilling than before? No problem at all. Since Matthew is so eager for my life, I'll play along with him. I'm actually curious to see the look on his face when I'm standing in front of him, safe and sound."

Saying that wasn't about being arrogant, but rather, it was about boosting her own morale.

In truth, Neera was terrified at that moment, and her legs had gone slightly weak.

But seeing Adriana on the verge of tears with worry, Neera knew she absolutely couldn't crumble.

After all, she didn't believe she would die that easily.

In fact, she was determined to emerge victorious. [SEARCH THE WEBSITE](#) TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.

"Besides, there's still Zephyr, isn't there? He's highly skilled and will protect me," Neera added.

Upon hearing those words, Zephyr solemnly and respectfully bowed slightly before assuring, "Ms. Garcia, rest assured, no matter what, I will protect you. Anyone who wants to take your life will have to take mine first!"

"We don't have much time," said Zephyr after understanding the situation. "We need to figure out a way to leave this place now."

"But I can't just leave." Neera hesitated. "There are still so many people here. If I leave, wouldn't I be abandoning them to their fate?" Adriana insisted, "No. You must go. They are fighting so hard, all for you. If you don't leave, you'll be letting down their unwavering loyalty!"

Zephyr also said, "Ms. Garcia, we are not abandoning them. I have already alerted people outside, and soon, there will be several groups coming to assist us. But before they arrive, you must leave this place. They have already breached our defenses, and we can barely hold them off. If we delay any longer, we might not be able to flee. So before that happens, you must leave! As long as you are safe, the Gordon family will have a future!"

He knew she couldn't be at peace with it, so he explained to her, "Moreover, our people are not that fragile. It's just that we are outnumbered, so for now, we can only resist with all our might. It doesn't mean we're just going to die in vain."

Neera gritted her teeth, wrestling internally for a moment. She understood that she couldn't let her emotions cloud her judgment. She needed to focus on the big picture. "All right. I'll go with you, but how do we get out? The place is completely surrounded. We don't have an easy way to leave."

Zephyr said, "No. There is a way."

He glanced out the window, looking down toward the building below, his eyes deep and thoughtful. Turning his head back to Neera, he lowered his voice and continued, "There's a secret passage at the Gordon residence. Apart from a few seniors of the Gordon family, hardly anyone knows about it. We can escape through this passage.'

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"A secret passage?" Neera had been there for quite some time, yet that was the first time she had heard of it. She was utterly surprised.

Adriana only just found out. "Where is this secret passage? How come I've never seen it before? Are there any places that look like a secret passage? And where does this secret passage lead to?"

Zephyr answered, "Behind the wine cabinet in the kitchen, there's a hidden door. That's the entrance to the secret passage. This passage leads directly to another Gordon family stronghold not too far from here. When the time comes, we can rest there and wait for reinforcements."

Neera nodded. "Time waits for no one. Let's talk as we walk."

Soon, the three of them emerged from the bedroom. With Zephyr leading the way, he made sure the coast was clear before allowing them to follow.

What everyone failed to notice was that after they left the window, a figure downstairs suddenly looked up. His eyes, sharp as a hawk's, were fixed intently on the spot where they had just been standing. A sinister smile crept up from the corner of his mouth.

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Chapter 1435

When Neera, Adriana, and Zephyr descended the stairs, they discovered that someone had already broken into the living room.

The instant the intruders saw Neera, they reacted as though they had spotted prey, immediately charging at her.

Luckily, those from the Gordon family were there to intervene, engaging in a fierce fight with them, blood splattering everywhere.

The sight shocked Neera to the core and made her heart pound rapidly.

She felt her entire body turning stiff, her feet so heavy she could barely move them. Yet, she had no choice but to persist and continue forging downstairs.

Adriana had never seen such a scene before and was scared out of her wits. Her scream was stuck in her throat, and her body was drenched in cold sweat.

She gripped Neera's hand tightly, her palm slick with cold sweat, an incredibly uncomfortable sensation.

Under Zephyr's cover, the trio finally reached the wine cabinet in the dining room.

Zephyr opened the door of the wine cabinet and fumbled around the space within, seemingly depressing something.

In the next moment, an exceedingly faint click sounded. Astonishingly, the wine cabinet began to shift to the side.

Luckily, the noise wasn't loud. Coupled with the ongoing fight outside, no one noticed the situation there.

In just a few seconds, the wine cabinet had moved away from its original position, revealing the "wall" behind it.

In reality, it wasn't a wall but a door, identical in color and texture to the wall itself. If it weren't for the tiny crack left slightly ajar at that moment, it would be completely indistinguishable.

Zephyr swung the door open, baring the secret passage within to Adriana and Neera's sight.

The secret passage was not as dilapidated as Neera had initially imagined. On the contrary, it was very clean, with lights on both sides.

It seems to be sensor-based.

The two of them walked in, curiously observing the narrow corridor as they ambled forward.

Zephyr followed behind them, first closing the door before pressing a button next to it.

In the space, they distinctly felt a vibration under their feet, likely produced by the wine cabinet outside the door moving back to its original place.

Neera asked with slight unease, "After the wine cabinet shifts back, would anyone outside be able to tell that it has been moved?"

After all, it was a large wine cabinet, and moving it around would leave traces on the floor or wall.

However, Zephyr responded with certainty, "No. This switch has been programmed. Once the wine cabinet is moved and returned to its original position, the robot vacuum in the kitchen will immediately spring into action, wiping the floor around the wine cabinet clean. As for the walls, they have been specially treated and will not leave any traces."

While saying that, he tapped a few times on the door's keypad. Following that, a click sounded.

"Moreover, just to be on the safe side, this door was specially designed so it could be locked from the inside."

Hearing that, Neera felt somewhat relieved. "I never expected the Gordon family to have made such thorough arrangements."

Zephyr nodded, taking a few large strides to stand in front of Neera.

"I will lead you both out of here, Ms. Garcia. Please follow me. We should arrive in about ten minutes or so."

Neera would nodded and followed behind him.

About ten minutes later, Neera and the others finally reached the end of the secret passage.

However, when the three of them finally emerged from the secret passage to arrive at the mansion belonging to the Gordon family's affiliated forces, they discovered that the situation was completely different from what they had imagined.

They had thought that the affiliated forces of the Gordon family would be waiting for them right then.

But unexpectedly, people were lying all over the place in the living room and dining room at that very moment. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

It was clear that they were either dead or passed out.

Neera and Adriana were both dumbfounded, gaping at everything before them in utter shock and disbelief.

Zephyr's expression quickly turned as cold as ice.

He promptly realized that the place was no longer safe.

"Ms. Garcia, come with me quickly!"

Like a cheetah, he sensed danger and turned to Neera, speaking urgently.

However, it was already too late to do anything.

Just as Zephyr was about to leave with Neera and Adriana, a group of people suddenly stormed into the living room.

Seeing that, Zephyr immediately shielded Neera and Adriana behind him and starting retreating.

"Who are the lot of you?" he demanded sharply.

Regretfully, they did not answer him. Instead, they surrounded the trio completely.

Each wore expressions akin to having spotted prey, their eyes glinting dangerously.

Just then, a round of applause rang out from the entrance, followed by two figures walking in, one after the other.

When Neera made out their countenances, her eyes instantly widened. She went as pale as a sheet and was filled with a mix of shock and anger.

"So, it was you two. When did you both start colluding together?"

In no time, understanding dawned upon her. She then questioned in a raised voice, "You've actually defected to Bartitsu Guild!"

The two figures who walked in were none other than the long-lost Phoebe and Howard, whom she hadn't seen in a long time.

She did not know the kind of relationship that existed between them.

But as far as she knew, there had never been any connection between the Cox and Logan families.

Logically speaking, Phoebe should have no interaction with Howard. Unexpectedly, they came together at that moment.

This truly took her by surprise.

Even more surprising was the fact that Phoebe had defected to Bartitsu Guild.

No sooner had her words rang out than Howard snickered.

"Come on, Ms. Garcia. Do you have amnesia or something? When have I ever not been a part of Bartitsu Guild's forces? But now that you mention it, I remember that it was all thanks to you that I was suppressed by the guild previously."

Speaking of which, he paused for a moment and suddenly flashed her a malicious smile. "But it's also thanks to you that the Logan family got to turn things around now."

Neera frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Exactly what I said. Can't you even understand that? It's all thanks to you that the Logan family is being entrusted by Bartitsu Guild again. Mr. Lozano personally instructed me to take your life. How could I not comply?"

After he had said that, his expression abruptly changed, his face contorting into a mask of malice.

"Neera, I've had my fair share of hardships because of you in the past. Now, it's about time I settle this score."

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Chapter 1436

Gritting her teeth, Neera said coldly, "Back then, you brought it all upon yourself. What did it have to do with me? It was the Logan family who had ill intentions. The Gordon family never provoked you. Yet, you repeatedly attacked us and tried to annihilate us. You were the ones who committed evil first, so how was it my fault? Is there such logic in this world-whoever does evil is in the right?"

With a sneer, Howard casually stuck his hands in his pants pockets, all nonchalant.

"Indeed, it was the Logan family who made the first move. But so what? If the Gordon family had behaved themselves, you wouldn't have become a thorn in everyone's side. If it weren't for you suddenly becoming the head of the Gordon family and saving the lord of Lordsworth Estate, those of Lordsworth Estate wouldn't have gone to such lengths to protect you, much less willingly hand over the position of the district president to you. Who do you think you are, Neera? You're neither a member of the Gordon family nor a citizen of Phison. You have no qualifications or experience, so why should you get so much? Just because you saved someone? What does that even count? How are you possibly worthy of the position of district president? Bartitsu Guild even promoted you to the board of elders in the guild. Looking back at it now, it's the joke of the century! Bartitsu Guild has always valued strength above all else. What right does a third-rate family like the Gordon family have to rule roughshod over me?"

Neera found him truly unreasonable.

"I treat people and save lives because it's my calling. Is that wrong? When I happened to save the lord of Lordsworth Estate, I never thought of asking for any reward. I myself didn't expect things to turn out the way they have today. You claim that I lack qualifications and experience, and I admit that. But whether I'm worthy is not for you to judge. If I'm unworthy, it goes double for you! Someone not only sinister and vicious but also despicable and shameless like you is no different from the members of Bartitsu Guild!"

"Hah, no different? How righteous do you think you are? You've indeed done nothing wrong, but you should never have appeared in Phison. If there's anyone to blame, it's Chad for bringing you back from the outside, and even more so for promoting you to be the head of the Gordon family. Then, there's the Gordon family to be blamed for harboring ambitions to seize the position of district president and you for standing out too much, stealing the limelight of others. That's what brought about the current disaster!" [SEARCH THE website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

At that moment, Phoebe stepped forward and shot him an impatient glare.

"Are you done? You're going on and on about such a trivial matter. Enough with the nonsense. Get her out of here first."

When Neera heard that, her expression grew increasingly grim.

She stared intently at Phoebe, the look in her eyes complex.

It had been a while since they last met, and the latter's hair had grown out to reach her shoulders.

Her beautiful face was still as attractive as ever. Alas, it had evil written all over it. Her gaze was as venomous as a viper's, radiating malice and calculation at every turn.

Taking a deep breath, Neera said solemnly, "Phoebe, do you even know what you're doing? Bartitsu Guild has repeatedly suppressed the Cox family, even attempting to eradicate it completely. Avery has already led the Cox family away from the guild. Yet, you've chosen to defect to the guild. Are you planning to abandon your family?"

Upon hearing that, Phoebe suddenly laughed. Her laughter was wicked, carrying an added touch of malice.

"I abandoned the Cox family? Who exactly did the abandoning? Neera, it's because of you that Avery gave me the boot. I'm no longer a part of the Cox family! He even used family discipline on me! No one had dared to strike me since I was a child. Despite not having been particularly good to me, he had never laid a finger on me! But ever since you came into the picture, he's been growing increasingly colder and impatient with me. He even used family discipline on me because of you and banished me, telling me to never return to the Cox family! It's all because of you that I lost the backing of the Cox family. I've got nothing left. I've lost everything! Do you know how hopeless I was at that moment? I had nowhere to go, and my only option was to seek defect to Bartitsu Guild. And all of that is thanks to you, you b*tch! And now, you have the audacity to accuse me, saying that I betrayed the Cox family. How utterly ridiculous! You know what? The despair I felt previously has now been replaced with hatred. I wish nothing more than to skin you alive, tear you into pieces and feed them to the dogs! Only then would I be gratified!"

Adriana was so furious that she almost burst a blood vessel. She barked sharply, "How could you be so malicious! The Cox family and Gordon families have always been on good terms. I've always thought that the members of the Cox family were fair and reasonable people, but I didn't expect them to raise someone like you!"

"Shut up! You've got no right to speak here!" Phoebe glared at her. "Who do you think you are, daring to lecture me? If Chad weren't smitten with you, he would never have handed the position of the head of the family to your niece! In fact, you're also to blame!"

Instead of being enraged by her words, Neera was slightly taken aback instead.

She was unaware that Phoebe had already been driven out of the Cox family by Avery and also didn't know that Phoebe had been punished with family discipline before being banished.

Upon hearing the news, she couldn't help but feel a touch surprised.

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Chapter 1437

However, Neera didn't feel sorry for Phoebe at all.

Her lips parted slightly, and she enunciated, "Phoebe, you're not a child anymore. You're an adult, and adults should pay for their mistakes. You know very well what you did to me. If you dared do it, then you should have the courage to admit it and be prepared to face the consequences. That's the price you should pay. I don't think I've wronged you in any way, nor do I think Avery hasn't done good enough or gone overboard. If you had shown even the slightest hint of remorse, I don't think he would have kicked you out of the family just like that. But looking at you now, it's clear that you haven't reflected on your wrongdoings, not even in the slightest. You don't feel any remorse for your mistakes. Instead of repenting, you're aiding and abetting evil, continuing to commit heinous acts. You're truly beyond redemption."

As she said that, her expression was calm, her gaze filled with a touch of sorrow and pity.

Phoebe was instantly infuriated by it, losing her composure completely as she roared, "Shut up!"

Her eyes were wide open, and her whole body was trembling. Her face was flushed bright red to the base of her neck.

"What a b*tch! You've reduced me to such a state, yet you still have the audacity to lecture me? It was all because of you! It was all thanks to you, you b*tch! I've lost everything! How could I possibly let you off the hook? Even if I die, I won't allow you to live in peace! Ha! Today is your retribution!"

After she had finished speaking, she turned and glared at Howard. "What are you still standing around? Are you here to watch a show? Hurry up and get your men to act!"

No sooner had her words rang out than Zephyr suddenly declared icily, "I'd like to see who dares!"

At that, both of them turned their gazes to him.

Howard inexorably sneered, "Why, you want to stop me alone? You're biting off more than you can chew, overestimating your abilities!"

He immediately ordered his subordinates, "Capture Neera alive. There's a reward for whoever succeeds!"

In a flash, the men began to move, converging toward Neera, one after another.

Seeing that, Zephyr quickly positioned himself in front of her and engaged them in a fight.

However, they had the advantage of numbers. Even though his skills were exceptional, he gradually started to lose ground, becoming increasingly overwhelmed.

Even so, he didn't show the slightest intention of giving up. He remained standing firmly before Neera, refusing to let anyone touch her.

Adriana huddled with Neera, scared out of her wits.

She had never seen anything like that and was completely stunned, utterly clueless about what she should do.

Despite being on the verge of a breakdown, she still instinctively protected Neera.

The scene was utter chaos, and the situation gradually spiraled out of control.

It seemed that they had not anticipated Zephyr to be so skilled. Despite having the upper hand, they could not defeat him even after a long time had passed.

Seeing that, Phoebe not only remained calm but also added insult to injury at the side with sarcastic remarks.

"Howard, I don't mean to criticize, but with so many people at your disposal, not even one of them is his match. How weak! No wonder Bartitsu Guild has always overlooked the Logan family. Considering your family's capabilities, it's not even enough to carry the sandals of the Cox family."

Howard's face flushed bright red, making it a sight to behold. He turned around and shot her a glare, his expression far from friendly.

"Stop with your sarcastic remarks here. Don't think you're any better than me. So what if you were once part of the Cox family? Aren't you now just an outcast abandoned by the Cox family? You're barely surviving on the charity of Bartitsu Guild. What right do you have to be so arrogant in front of me? If you dare utter another word, I'll deal with you first!"

Although Howard and Phoebe were acting together, they had long since been at odds with each other.

Now that they had the chance to act alone, if Howard really did harm Phoebe there, Bartitsu Guild would certainly not pursue the matter when they returned.

Phoebe gritted his teeth but ultimately said nothing further.

Howard no longer paid her any attention, turning to look at Zephyr. Seeing that he was still stubbornly resisting, his expression darkened, and his eyes glinted

ruthlessly. Search The website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

He suddenly barked, "Why are you still fighting him? Bring him down now!"

As soon as those words were spoken, someone reacted immediately. The man took something from his pocket and blew it at Neera and the others.

In an instant, white powder scattered into the air.

Neera was the first to react, quickly covering her mouth and nose.

Alas, it was already too late.

The stupefying drug had already entered their bodies as they breathed, quickly taking effect on all three of them.

Just moments ago, Zephyr was standing upright, but within a minute, he went limp and collapsed onto the ground.

Adriana had never experienced anything like that before and was totally lost. After inhaling a large amount of the stupefying drug, she quickly passed out.

Neera often studied drugs and smelled various kinds of drugs, so she had a degree of immunity to stupefying drugs. However, she didn't react immediately this time and had also inhaled a significant amount. Her body went limp as well.

The scene immediately plunged into an eerie silence.

Seeing that, Howard suddenly smirked and walked over.

He first kicked the fallen Zephyr a couple of times, then turned to kick Adriana twice. Receiving no reaction from either of them, he proceeded to give Neera a kick as well.

Neera remained unresponsive, keeping her eyes closed with her face deathly pale.

Very much satisfied, Howard cackled coldly.

"Tsk-tsk. I thought this b*tch was something else, but she turned out to be just a worthless piece of trash, easily taken down by a bit of a stupefying drug. Had I known, I wouldn't have wasted so much effort."

Phoebe was delighted to see the outcome.

Nonetheless, she didn't forget to mock him, saying, "It only proves you're foolish. You ignored such a simple solution and insisted on making things more complicated, wasting so much time and nearly ruining my plans."

Howard shot a look at her impatiently, his gaze dark and brooding.

"Can you just shut up?" His tone was far from friendly, carrying a hint of warning.

Phoebe shrugged, not bothering to take offense with him. She glanced at the time and said, "All right, as we agreed earlier, hand over that b*tch to me now."

Tapping the roof of his mouth with his tongue, Howard let out a dismissive grunt.

"Sure. I can hand her over to you. But don't forget our agreement. Don't kill her, for she is destined to die at my hands."

With that said, he let out a sinister laugh with malice written all over his face.

He added, "Since she's already fallen into my hands, I can't waste such a great opportunity. I must thoroughly enjoy her. I'm curious to have a taste of the woman who can captivate Avery to such an extent."

Upon hearing that, Phoebe frowned, a sudden surge of anger welling within her.

"Come on. You can't be serious. Such lowbrow taste? You're interested in a woman who's been married and has three kids? She's just damaged goods that's been tainted by others. You can have any woman you want. Is this necessary?"

Howard raised an eyebrow. "Despite that, I can't help but wonder what exactly Avery likes about her."

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Chapter 1438

Phoebe couldn't accept this explanation and immediately, with a stern face, corrected him.

Phoebe found his explanation unacceptable and immediately corrected him with a stern expression. "My cousin doesn't like that woman at all. The only reason they interact is due to arranged marriage between the Gordon and Cox families. Otherwise, he wouldn't even spare her a glance. She's just a woman who has given birth to three children. What's there to like about her? Stop spouting nonsense here!"

After hearing her words, Howard couldn't resist a chuckle, his gaze playful as he fixed it on her. "Hey, are you still defending Avery even now? Haven't you forgotten that he personally ousted you from the Gordon family? Or could it be that you're still hung up on him?"

Phoebe's face twitched slightly, her expression complex.

Observing her reaction, Howard clicked his tongue twice. "I never expected this. You hold a grudge against this woman, but not against your cousin who banished you from home. Avery was ruthless to you, disregarding familial ties, yet you still defend him. Do you really believe that by ruining this woman, Avery will start to have feelings for you?"

He continued, "Listen, I advise you to stop being naive. Have you ever considered that if Avery found out about what you're doing now, could he still forgive you? The reality is harsh, but it's the truth. You'll never be able to stand on the same side as him. Instead of dwelling on this, why not close your heart to love and devote yourself to the Bartitsu Guild? You did an excellent job this time by informing the guild about this secret passage. It's clear that they highly appreciate your help. Once this matter is settled, they will surely treat you fairly. When you rise again, strong enough to stand on your own, what kind of man won't you be able to get?"

At this point, he narrowed his eyes, casually making a proposal. "If it really comes down to it, it wouldn't be the end of the world if you got with me instead. Compared to Avery, I'm not any less, right? You're quite attractive yourself, and I'd say we're a good match. If we support each other from here on out, there will come a day when we'll rise above the rest in Bartitsu Guild."

Upon hearing this, Phoebe felt nauseated deep inside and responded with a cold, sarcastic laugh. "Howard, where did you get your confidence? Comparing yourself to Avery, aren't you just asking for humiliation?"

The grin on Howard's face turned into a sudden freeze, his eyes squinted but emanating a clear warning. "Phoebe, I'm showing you respect here; don't test your luck!"

Phoebe didn't want to engage in unnecessary conversation, urging impatiently, "Fine, spare me the talk. Heart-to-heart discussions aren't really our style. Time is ticking away. If we don't act quickly, they might wake up. I'm taking Neera with me. As for the other two, do what you will. If you're not interested, just leave them. They're useless anyway; having them in our hands won't make a difference."

Howard cast a casual glance at the individuals on the ground and chuckled nonchalantly. "Just let those two be. Someone will undoubtedly inform the Gordon family. Let them savor a bit of heartbreak from the Gordon clan."

Once he finished speaking, he subtly signaled his subordinates to move forward and transport Neera.

Unexpectedly, as someone reached out to touch the still-unconscious Neera, she suddenly seized the person's hand and bit down forcefully.

"Argh!"

The man assumed Neera had already fainted, caught completely off guard when she suddenly bit him, and he cried out in pain.

At that moment, Howard snapped to attention and delivered a fierce kick to Neera's stomach.

Weak and already drained, she felt an intense pain surging through her abdomen, causing her to convulse in agony. The force of the kick lifted her body off the ground, only to crash down heavily.

The pain was so overwhelming that stars danced before her eyes, and cold sweat streamed down her body.

Simultaneously, just at that agonizing moment, Zephyr, who was expected to be unconscious, unexpectedly propped himself up, attempting to stand.

Shaking his head in an effort to stay alert, his body staggered. With sheer determination, he reached for Howard's leg, using every ounce of strength to pull him down.

As Zephyr was under the influence of the stupefying drug, his efforts proved futile in bringing Howard down.

Nevertheless, he clung on, refusing to let go.

Out of nowhere, Zephyr produced a fruit knife and forcefully slashed at Howard's leg.

Discovering Zephyr was still conscious, Howard was caught off guard as the knife struck him, and his pants were immediately soaked with blood.

"D*mn it!" he cursed through gritted teeth, his immediate reaction being to grab Zephyr and unleash his frustration with a physical beating.

Even Zephyr himself was unsure of the source of his newfound strength. Half propped up from the floor, he headbutted Howard, sending him stumbling several steps backward, nearly causing him to lose balance. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Undeterred, Zephyr then crawled toward Neera, all the while uttering from his mouth, "Ms. Garcia..."

Neera, initially poised to speak, was rendered speechless upon seeing the figure advancing behind Zephyr. Her expression transformed into one of sheer terror.

"No... Don't..." she attempted to scream, but her voice faded into a faint, choked whisper, fragmented and broken.

Zephyr, fueled by the desire to protect Neera, struggled against his current physical limitations, but it proved impossible.

Phoebe, perceptive to his intentions, emitted a cold laugh. "Overestimating your abilities!"

She turned her head to address the few onlookers standing there in bewilderment, issuing a reminder, "What are you all standing around for? Hurry up and get this w*inch into the car. If anything goes wrong, you'll be the ones to pay the price!"

Her words instantly snapped them out of their daze.

Two individuals reacted promptly, rushing over to Neera. They lifted her from the ground and began to drag her toward the entrance.

Neera struggled, but facing two opponents in her weakened state, resistance was futile. Helplessly, she could only watch as they pulled her away, utterly powerless to fight back.

As he witnessed the distressing scene, Zephyr's anxiety reached a boiling point. The veins on his forehead bulged, his entire body trembling. He strained with all his might to crawl toward her, but the distance remained insurmountable.

Left with no alternative, he grabbed at the feet of those around him, desperately attempting to impede their progress.

Yet, every effort seemed as futile as throwing straws against the wind.

It was then Neera understood the grim reality, realizing there was no escape from the unfolding situation.

In her current state, Neera's mind was solely occupied with concern for Zephyr and Adriana.

At this critical juncture, she wished for Zephyr to cease resisting or struggling. She silently hoped he would lie on the ground, feigning unconsciousness until the Gordon family's rescue arrived.

"No, don't..." whispered words once again escaped from her lips.

She desired to intervene, but before she could utter a word, her eyes widened in the next instant.

Howard advanced toward Zephyr, his expression dark. He callously stepped on the man's hand, grinding it beneath his foot. In the blink of an eye, Howard seized the fruit knife from his opponent's grasp.

Suddenly, a fierce stab was aimed at Zephyr's back!

Blood immediately gushed out, staining the surroundings. The crimson fluid splattered across Zephyr's clothes, also dyeing Neera's eyes red.

Her breath seemed to freeze, as if her heart had stopped beating in an instant, leaving her mind utterly blank.

A heart-wrenching scream erupted from the depths of her throat, "No!"

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Chapter 1439

However, in the next moment, Neera felt a sharp pain at the back of her neck and immediately lost consciousness.

In the fleeting moments before the darkness consumed her, she caught sight of Zephyr's eyes.

Those eyes, brimming with intense regret and resentment, seemed to plead with her to resist being taken away, reflecting a profound self-loathing for not fulfilling his promise, for failing to protect her.

When Neera regained consciousness, it was the biting cold that jolted her awake.

Confused and disoriented, she couldn't discern her surroundings until she realized she was in a bathtub.

The chilling revelation hit her as she discovered the tub filled with ice cubes and water, submerging her chest, with only her head exposed.

Bound hand and foot, Neera was left in this chilling predicament.

The duration of her immersion in the icy water remained unknown, and her body temperature had plummeted frighteningly low, causing uncontrollable shivers.

The unbearable cold surrounded her, her teeth chattering, and her lips taking on a frightening shade of purple. It felt as though she was on the brink of freezing to death.

Attempts to move her hands and feet were futile; the ropes were tied too tightly, rendering her unable to break free.

Neera forced herself to calm down, struggling to piece together the events leading to her loss of consciousness.

As she closed her eyes, the image of Zephyr's eyes and the horrifying scene of Howard thrusting toward him resurfaced in her mind. The pain that gripped her heart was akin to being stabbed.

How is Zephyr? Is he... dead? What about Aunt Adriana? Is she still lying there, or has someone taken her away? Perhaps something else had happened?

These haunting questions swirled incessantly, consuming her attention and preventing her from focusing on her surroundings.

A full minute passed before the biting cold forced her to pull her thoughts back to the harsh reality.

Neera swallowed hard, her throat aching intensely, as she tried her best to control her trembling. Surveying her surroundings, she recognized that she was in an old, abandoned warehouse, and the bathtub she occupied seemed equally neglected.

A vivid memory lingered: before losing consciousness, Phoebe had mentioned wanting Howard to hand her over.

So, it was Phoebe who brought me here, right? But there's no one here. Where has she gone?

As she contemplated, the sound of approaching footsteps echoed from behind her, growing louder with each step.

The distinct click of high heels resonated in the air.

A jolt ran through Neera's body, her heart pounding in her chest. She instantly grasped that the approaching person was none other than Phoebe.

However, her body was so cold that any movement proved difficult. Restrained in the bathtub, she couldn't even shift her neck significantly.

The sound of footsteps gradually drew closer, coming to a halt right behind her.

Just as Neera anticipated Phoebe was about to speak, a sudden hand seized her head, forcefully submerging it into the water.

Immediately, Neera's mouth and nose were engulfed in icy water, and her eyes, drenched in the freezing liquid, refused to open.

Startled, she instinctively held her breath, struggling with all her might.

However, the hand above her applied relentless pressure, and the bone-chilling coldness sliced across her face like a knife.

Despite her desperate struggles, Phoebe tightened her grip.

Just when Neera felt on the verge of suffocation, Phoebe abruptly yanked her hair, pulling her out of the water.

Fresh air rushed into her nostrils, mingling with the lingering cold water, inducing a fit of incessant coughing.

Yet, the ordeal was far from over.

Before Neera could catch more than a couple of breaths, Phoebe, with a sudden force, pushed her back into the water.

This tormenting cycle repeated several times until Phoebe eventually released her hand. Leisurely moving in front of Neera, Phoebe wiped her hands with a handkerchief, calmly admiring the woman's disheveled appearance at that moment.

"How's it going? Having fun?"

Witnessing Neera's wretched state, Phoebe couldn't contain an indescribable joy, her words resonating with a triumphant smile.

Neera coughed relentlessly, her lungs feeling as though they were on the verge of exploding. The burning sensation extended from her lungs to her throat, inflicting unbearable pain.

Her entire body was set in motion by the coughing, including her abdomen, still throbbing from the earlier kick delivered by Howard, as if her internal organs were convulsing in unison.

After what felt like an eternity, the fit of coughing finally subsided, but her breathing remained rapid.

A chilling coldness enveloped her entire being, her face numb as if frozen by icy water. Lips constantly trembling, teeth chattering ceaselessly, Neera found herself unable to articulate a single word.

Phoebe took satisfaction in the spectacle, maintaining her leisurely and unhurried smile.

"Lost your tongue? Can't find your words? Weren't you always quick-witted? How come you're silent now? What an unusual sight, don't you agree?" Phoebe taunted, her words dripping with mockery.

Neera took several deep breaths, barely managing to calm herself down. She strained to lift her eyelashes, feeling frost already formed on them, and coldly looked toward Phoebe. "I'm already at your mercy; what else do you want me to say?"

Phoebe let out an exaggerated scoff, shaking her head and clapping her hands as she laughed, her expression incredibly animated. "Oh my, who would have thought? The head of the Gordon family, the universally praised Ms. Garcia, even you have moments of speechlessness, huh? Neera, did you ever imagine you would fall into my hands? Did you ever think you would end up like an outcast? Did you ever foresee yourself in such a sorry state?" [SEARCH THE Find_Novel.net website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Faced with Phoebe's string of mocking questions, Neera remained indifferent. "Regardless, this is the situation now. I'm powerless to change anything. Ultimately, the winner rules, while the loser is ruled. Do as you please. I know you hate me. Vent your anger in whatever way you wish."

Phoebe didn't expect Neera to maintain such an attitude and was somewhat surprised. "Aren't you always competitive? How come you have no fighting spirit now? Seeing you like this, I actually find it boring."

As her words landed, she abruptly seized Neera's chin, holding it with such force that it felt on the verge of shattering. Twisting the woman's face, she compelled Neera to look at herself.

"Neera, it's not entertaining to see you like this. Have you truly resigned, convinced that you're ensnared in my grasp, with no escape and a predetermined fate? Or do you entertain other notions, thinking that by remaining silent, I'm rendered powerless, that you can prolong the situation, naively hoping for a rescue? Let me make it clear, don't even entertain that thought."

Suddenly, Phoebe released her grip, withdrawing her hand with an expression of distaste.

She meticulously wiped her manicured fingers, then casually discarded the handkerchief onto the ground. Pulling a chair from behind, she nonchalantly seated herself in front of Neera.

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Chapter 1440

"There aren't many remaining in the Gordon family now. The possibility of them rescuing you is out of the question. Remember your sidekick? Howard has already taken his life. His body has grown cold, rendering any hope of him coming to your aid futile. Regarding the other members of your family, I suspect Bartitsu Guild has almost eradicated them. Oh, and about your husband, cousin, and uncle they're still in District Five. I should inform you that Bartitsu Guild has cordoned off District Fourteen. They won't permit them to enter until this situation is resolved."

Neera took a deep breath, maintaining a stoic silence, cautioning herself not to trust a single word that Phoebe uttered.

It seemed as though Phoebe could discern Neera's thoughts, as she let out a scoff. "What's the matter? Don't you believe what I'm saying?"

Neera preferred not to delve into this conversation further. Firstly, she was wary of being deceived and having her peace of mind disrupted. Secondly, she had no desire to hear even the slightest bit of distressing news.

So, she shifted the topic, suppressing her shivers, gritting her teeth as she said, "You won't kill me. Howard has made it clear; he instructed you to spare my life and hand me over to him."

Upon hearing Neera's assertion, Phoebe indeed felt as if she were being led by the nose. A sarcastic curve hooked up at the corner of her mouth.

"Yes, according to our agreement, I can't kill you. But what does that matter? Sooner or later, you won't be able to escape our grasp. Your pathetic life is already determined by Bartitsu Guild. And what I'm going to do now is to thoroughly torture you. I'd prefer to torment you to the point where you're half-dead, neither human nor ghost. That's what would make me happy, you know? This was the condition I proposed when I exchanged information with Bartitsu Guild. Fortunately, they're reasonable. As long as you end up dead in the end, I don't mind if the process is a bit slow."

As she spoke, a sudden glint of malice flashed in her eyes. She leaned in closer, articulating each word, "Neera, you have finally fallen into my hands. I will make you pay

a hundred, a thousand times for the humiliation I suffered in the past. I will make you taste the torment of wishing for death!"

The venom in her words sent a shiver down Neera's spine.

However, Neera remained silent, her expression indifferent, as if she were entirely indifferent to Phoebe's threats.

This apparent lack of reaction instantly infuriated Phoebe.

Suddenly, Phoebe raised her hand and delivered a sharp slap to Neera. The sound echoed crisply in the air.

Neera's head knocked askew, and on her face, numbed by the cold, she felt a thread of pain.

In the next moment, another harsh slap landed, causing the corner of her mouth to bleed.

A burning sensation gradually spread across her face. Though she attempted to raise her hand to touch and wipe the blood away, it proved futile.

At this moment, Phoebe stood up, assuming a superior position as she looked down at Neera. Once again, she seized Neera's chin, lifted her face, and delivered another forceful slap.

After about a dozen strikes, Phoebe finally released her grip, panting heavily as she rubbed her palms and wrists. With satisfaction, she regarded her "masterpiece" and remarked, "Do you want me to bring a mirror over so you can see what your face looks like right now? It's quite a sight to behold."

Neera's face, now marked by numerous slap imprints, was swollen and bruised from the blows. The corners of her mouth were split open, blood incessantly oozing out, presenting a shocking sight.

Her head felt heavy and dizzy, stars danced before her eyes, and a constant buzzing sound enveloped her, causing her ears to throb with pain.

Despite the agony, she remained silent, never once crying out.

The curve of Phoebe's mouth dropped slightly. She emitted a cold laugh and resumed her seat in the chair beside Neera.

"You know what I despise the most? It's this facade of yours, pretending to be strong and calm, as if you're invincible, as if nothing affects you. You're clearly a woman who only knows how to cling to men, so why do you put on this air of arrogance with me?"

Others may think you have backbone, but I see you as the epitome of hypocrisy! I really don't understand how no one can see through your deceitful and ugly face. It seems you truly have a knack for deceiving people."

Neera kept her eyes closed, enduring the nauseating feeling, swallowing her saliva, and remaining silent.

Observing this, Phoebe's eyes narrowed slightly, her expression growing increasingly grim. "There's no one else here now, so who are you putting on this act for? Don't you get tired of all this pretending?"

Neera chose not to answer.

Her indifference, more powerful than a thousand words, instantly fueled Phoebe's anger, burning all the way up to the top of her head.

Suddenly, she leaned forward, gripping a handful of Neera's hair from the back of her head. With force, she compelled Neera to lift her head and meet her gaze. "I'm talking to you; are you deaf or mute? Hm? Since you refuse to learn your lesson, I might as well let you taste the consequences of your actions."

Following her words, she retrieved an eyebrow razor from her pocket and brought it close to Neera's face. "You tell me, with a face as beautiful as yours, what would you do if it were to be disfigured? Then, you wouldn't be able to charm people anymore..."

Neera felt the blade against her skin, her heart pounding in her chest, yet she remained motionless, only meeting Phoebe's gaze with indifference.

Originally intending to cut her, Phoebe, upon looking into Neera's eyes, suddenly found the prospect extremely uninteresting.

She yearned to witness this wretch crumble and beg for mercy, to observe her frantic and disheveled state of madness, instead of facing such indifference and disdain.

With that thought, Phoebe gritted her teeth, withdrew her hand, and pushed Neera's head to the side. [Search the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Neera bumped into the edge of the bathtub, as the feeling of nausea surged again, causing a tumultuous churning in her stomach.

Seeing Neera's grim expression, Phoebe believed she had instilled fear, somewhat lifting her spirits.

"Tsk, tsk, it seems you're not as composed as you appear. You do care about your looks after all. But it's a pity, this face is destined to lose its value. After all, you're about to become a dead man. Let's just let you stare at this face a little longer."

After uttering these words, Phoebe retrieved something else from her pocket—a small bottle.

Neera shot a sidelong glance and immediately had a bad premonition.

Phoebe was seen pouring a small pill from the bottle. Holding the pill, she chuckled with a hint of mischief.

"Neera, as I've said before, the humiliation I've endured, I will surely return twofold. But after much thought, the only way I could think of to completely shatter your psychological defenses was this clichéd method..."

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Chapter 1441

Chapter 1441

"Do you want to know what this is?" She squinted her eyes, waving the pill in her hand triumphantly at Neera.

Neera's feelings of uneasiness intensified and gripped her heart with such anxiety that she even forgot to tremble. "W-What exactly do you want to do?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper, her lips quivering slightly.

Phoebe's eyes lit up when she heard her voice, and she laughed heartily as she said, "It hasn't been easy, has it? You've finally decided to speak up, huh? It seems like you've figured something out, haven't you? Well? Are you scared now?"

Neera gritted her teeth and said nothing in response.

Phoebe didn't mind, though. Suddenly focusing on the small pill in her hand, she started recalling something at a leisurely pace.

"Once, I wanted to give this pill to my cousin, but I failed. It was almost impossible for me to get close to him. He was always so cold and never really looked at me. Even though I am his cousin, I never received any special treatment because of our relationship. But I don't care about that at all. In fact, I even despise being his cousin. Why? Why did my foster father adopt me as his daughter? Why didn't he just keep me

by his side and nurture me? I wouldn't mind even if I was just his subordinate or his servant! I'd have stood a much better chance with those options than being cousins."

Neera pursed her lips after hearing Phoebe's sudden confession. Seizing the moment of her inner turmoil, she said, "Perhaps, you and Mr. Cox simply aren't destined to bet together. Being able to become the daughter of the Cox family is a good thing in itself. Given Mr. Cox's temperament, there might not have been any interaction between you two if you had become a servant or a subordinate instead."

Phoebe suddenly sneered, the look in her eyes turning ominous as she said, "What do you know? You've never truly understood him! I do, though! I've been brought up in the Cox family since I was a child, so I've been watching him every minute and every second. I dare say, there's no one in this world who understands him better than I do! He may seem cold on the surface, but he's a man who, once truly in love, would willingly give everything for it. He's so wonderful, so why can't he be mine?"

Neera took a deep breath and glanced at the girl. Her heart pounded fiercely, her mouth was dry, and her tongue was parched. All her attention was focused here, to the point where she couldn't even feel the chill running through her body.

"Phoebe, I can see that you truly love him."

She swallowed, hoping that this acknowledgment would help Phoebe calm down.

To her, Phoebe was at her most dangerous at the moment. It was as if she had lost her sanity, behaving as though she had gone mad,

Provoking her at this point would not be a wise move.

Neera was not afraid of the torment from this woman. However, if it was a different form of harm, it had already caused her a lifetime of pain. Just thinking about it, she had already begun to despair.

So, the only thing she could do was buy some time by engaging Phoebe in conversation and persuade her to hold off on any actions for the moment.

At this moment, Phoebe was deeply immersed in her feelings for Avery. Hearing Neera's approval, her gaze suddenly became distant, as if she had fallen into a memory.

"Yes, I truly love him. I've never told anyone about this, not even a single word. I dare not reveal it. In the eyes of others, even in the eyes of our extended family, we are cousins, distant cousins at that. If others knew about my feelings, I can't imagine how they would see me. I've been hiding my feelings like this, over and over again. It's so painful, yet the moment I see him, I feel it's all worth it. Even if he has never shown me a smile, even if he has hardly spoken a few words to me, I still think it's wonderful. He

doesn't want to get close to me, nor does he want to deal with me. That's fine; it's no problem. I'll take the initiative to get close to him instead. I threw a tantrum with my foster father, insisting on moving into the Cox family's main residence. My foster father sees in me a resemblance to his deceased daughter, so he's quite lenient with me.

Moreover, he himself wanted to move into the main residence as well. I knew he had always been ambitious about my cousin's position, so he didn't object. As expected, he moved into the main residence with me. Even when he angered my cousin later on, and my cousin asked him to move out, I stayed there and refused to leave. Living under the same roof, sharing our daily lives together, even if we don't speak much, I feel an unprecedented closeness to my cousin."

Upon hearing that Albert also wished to move into the main residence, Neera's eyes flickered slightly. She remembered their previous encounter at the Bartitsu Guild and how she had once again saw Albert and the people from the guild. She then began to probe carefully without revealing any emotion.

"Has your foster father always been at odds with Mr. Cox? Is that why you're caught in the middle and find it hard to choose sides?"

Phoebe was toying with the pill in her hand, chuckling with a half-smile on her face.

"Caught in the middle? Torn between two sides? Ha! If it weren't for my foster father, why else would my cousin treat me so coldly! Everything is because of my foster father! It's all his fault! He nearly destroyed all my hopes! If it weren't for his disgraceful behavior in the Cox family, he would have been causing trouble since the time my cousin's parents were alive. He's incapable, yet he stirs up trouble instead of behaving himself. How could my cousin not dislike him? It's because of his disgrace that I'm also implicated! My cousin dislikes me now because of

him!"

Upon hearing that Albert had been causing all sorts of trouble since he took over as the head of the family, Neera couldn't help but feel that something was off.

However, this was not the time to ponder on that matter. If she wasn't careful, she could end up provoking Phoebe further. Therefore, she could only temporarily set aside her doubts, and muster all of her energy to deal with Phoebe's unpredictable moods.

When speaking of Albert, Phoebe showed not a shred of gratitude for being adopted. Instead, she was filled with resentment, her eyes brimming with malice.

"Why is he so incapable and worthless! If it weren't for him, I wouldn't be this upset! I can only watch my cousin helplessly, unable to get any closer to him! I hate everyone! I hate the people in the Cox family! They all see Avery and I as mere cousins! And I hate those women outside even more for coveting Avery!"

As if she had gone mad, she suddenly burst into a fit of laughter. Her laughter was so loud that it was almost ear-piercing.

"Those fools! They really thought I would help them! They thought by getting close to me, I could put in a good word for them in front of my cousin. They thought I would create opportunities for their infatuation, but what they didn't anticipate was that seeking me out was the beginning of their nightmares!"

Neera understood it all at once.

"Those people..."

Before she could even ask, Phoebe confidently nodded, "That's right! I've outsmarted them all! Their reputations

are completely ruined, all thanks to this pill..."

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Read Chapter 1442

Chapter 1442

Chapter 1442

As Neera listened, her heart sank heavily.

She took a deep breath, forcing herself to remain calm and composed.

93%

"Phoebe, the mistakes of the past have been made and cannot be changed. However, the path you take in the future can still be altered. You clearly know what kind of people Mr. Cox dislikes, so why do you persist in your misguided ways, repeating your mistakes? Isn't everything you do in the hope that Mr. Cox will forgive you? If you continue down this wrong path, you'll only end up distancing yourself from him even more."

Before she could even finish her sentence, Phoebe burst into another fit of wild laughter. Her expression was mocking, her eyes filled with derision and a madness that threatened to annihilate everything. "Neera, do you really think I'm seeking my cousin's forgiveness? Let me tell you the truth. I've long since understood that my cousin will

never forgive me, let alone welcome me back into the Cox family. Stop trying to deceive me here! As for being obstinate and repeating my mistakes... Do you know what I regret the most? It's that I didn't have someone deal with you the moment you first appeared in Phison!" Her voice was laden with pure malice as she uttered those words through clenched teeth..

"It's all because of you! You shattered my last shred of hope! I've never seen my cousin so devoted to any woman before. He's been at your beck and call, doing everything he can to help you out without complaint nor regret. Even when he knew that you have another man, he's still willingly giving you everything. And what about you? What have you done? You trampled on his sincere heart as if it were a joke! You have him wrapped around your little finger and treated him like a dog, summoning him when you needed him and kicking him aside when you no longer needed him! How could Avery possibly fall for a despicable woman like you? What right do you have to lecture me here?"

Neera was tense all over as she explained herself meticulously and methodically, "I never trampled on his sincerity. Right from the beginning till the very end, I made it clear that there is someone else in my heart. Apart from my husband, I can't make room for anyone else. As for the help Mr. Cox has given me, I remember it all and I'm very grateful. I also lent a hand when something happened to the Cox family. I'm not just taking, I also give back. But beyond that, what he wants, I can't give."/

Phoebe seemed to be provoked upon hearing that. The veins on her forehead were throbbing, and she was livid with rage.

Suddenly, she grabbed Neera's hair again, pulling it back forcefully.

Neera endured the pain, her eyebrows tightly knitted together.

"This is what I hate the most about you! I hate how you simply disregard the man I love with my all! What is it about you that makes Avery like you so much? What right do you have to make him fall head over heels for you?"

Jealousy and intense hatred seared Phoebe's heart, distorting her face into a terrifying grimace.

"Now that you've fallen into my hands, I will make you taste the torment of a fate worse than death!"

She then grabbed Neera's chin and got ready to shove the pill into the latter's mouth.

Neera struggled hastily, tilting her head back and clenching her mouth shut, refusing to swallow the pill.

"You still dare to resist? Do you really think you can escape from this predicament today?" Phoebe yelled, her grip tightening to the point where it seemed she might crush Neera's jaw.

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Neera endured the intense pain in her jaw, her eyebrows knitted tightly together, but she stubbornly refused to open her mouth.

Seeing this, Phoebe angrily slapped her, causing her to see stars.

Taking advantage of her moment of dizziness, Phoebe swiftly moved forward, forcefully prying her mouth open and tossing a pill inside.

"Swallow it!"

Neera feel her stomach churning violently again, making her unbearably nauseous.

Feeling the bitter taste of the small pill spreading in her mouth, she wanted to spit it out.

However, Phoebe slapped her again, and this time, Neera hit her head on the bathtub.

She felt even more dizzy, and a strong wave of nausea surged from her stomach. Unable to hold it in any longer, she turned her head and vomited onto Phoebe's clothes. Phoebe was taken aback, staring dumbfounded at herself, her face turning red instantly/before suddenly exploding in anger.

"You lowlife! You absolute scum! How dare you puke all over me!"

At that moment, Phoebe was like a madman, ceaselessly screaming at the top of her lungs.

Neera felt much more relieved after vomiting.

She closed her eyes briefly, and when she opened them again, she said in a deep voice, "It wasn't intentional, and you'd better clean yourself up."

Phoebe wished she could tear her own skin off right now, but her disheveled state left her unable to move a muscle.

In the end, she gritted her teeth and swallowed her frustration, flinging her coat aside from a distance.

As she was looking down, adjusting her clothes, she didn't notice that there was now a small knife in Neera's hand.

That was the eyebrow razor that Phoebe had just retrieved earlier.

Just now, when Phoebe roughly grabbed Neera's hair and slapped her, she didn't notice that the eyebrow razor fell out of her pocket and landed in the bathtub.

Forcing herself to stay conscious, Neera grabbed the blade and carefully hid it in her hand so that Phoebe wouldn't

see it.

After cleaning herself up, Phoebe glared at Neera fiercely, then suddenly let out a mocking laugh again.

"Do you think that you can escape your fate by spitting out the pill? Ha! I just wanted to see you make a fool of yourself! It's fine if you don't want to take it. Either way, it won't affect my plans." After she finished speaking, she suddenly raised her voice to call out to someone.

Soon, the warehouse door opened, and several men walked in. One of them was even carrying a camera.

Neera's heart sank heavily when she saw that. Her whole body tensed up to the extreme.

She swallowed hard, gritting her teeth as she said, "Phoebe, even if you set me up, Avery will never like you. On the contrary, he will despise you even more! What you're doing is simply not worth it!"

Phoebe didn't seem to mind at all.

"So what? Avery will never like me regardless of what I do anyway, so why shouldn't I do what makes me happy? Besides, seeing you suffer is the only thing that brings me joy!" [Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

As she spoke, a scornful sneer curled up at the corner of her mouth.

"Also, the one who will be despised by everyone in the future won't be me. It will be you. You're always the one who attracts all the men, aren't you? You're the best at seduction, no? Well, you should be thanking me now that I've brought so many men to you! Rest assured, every moment that unfolds here will be recorded. Later, I will post the video online for everyone to see your debauched behavior, having sex with several men at once. You love being the center of attention, don't you? Well, I'll give you all the attention you want! In a different way, though..."

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Chapter 1443

Chapter 1443

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As Phoebe spoke, she wrapped her arms around herself and swayed smugly in front of Neera, her high heels clicking with each step. "From now on, everyone will despise you, loathe you, find you filthy, find you disgusting. I'm curious to see if Avery will still like you as he did before, disregarding everything for you. Oh, by the way, don't you have a husband? How about you imagine what his expression will be when he finds out? What will he think of you? If your children know how disgraceful you are, will they feel ashamed of you and even wish to sever ties with you? Ha, just thinking about it is so satisfying..." "Phoebe! You've lost your mind! You're nothing but a lunatic!"

Phoebe laughed defiantly, "Yes, I've gone mad. The moment Avery kicked me out of the Cox family, I lost my sanity! The moment I found out that Avery fell in love with you, I was already insane! You took everything from me, which is why I will take everything from you. Your reputation, your innocence, your husband and family, your glory, your splendor... Everything that belongs to you, I will destroy! Neera, you deserve this. You deserve to die!"

Neera's temples throbbed rhythmically as she realized it was completely impossible to reason with that madwoman. What should I do? How can I escape? I absolutely refuse to endure such pain again!

As she was frantically pondering how to escape in her mind, Phoebe began to speak leisurely again. "No, that's not right. I overestimated your husband's abilities. I'm afraid he won't be able to return, nor will he witness your humiliation. What a pity, truly."

Upon hearing that, Neera held her breathe. "What... What do you mean?"

Phoebe blinked. "Wow, really? Are you still fantasizing that he can rush back to save you? Ha, didn't I tell you? Until things are settled, the people from Bartitsu Guild won't let those from the Gordon family step into District Fourteen. As for your husband, he's been marked for death. After all, as the district president, if you die, he could theoretically take your place. It's a huge risk. How could Bartitsu Guild possibly leave it unaddressed?"

At that point, she shook her head, looking quite regretful. "That man is truly exceptional. He's handsome, has a great physique, and a wonderful temperament. Plus, he's the CEO of Beauvort Group. With such a status, he's outstanding among his peers.

Compared to Avery, he's in no way inferior. Objectively speaking, he may even be better. I'm really puzzled as to why such a good man would become your lover. What methods did you use to bewitch these two outstanding men? It's a pity such a great man met a jinx like you. When you meet him on the road to the netherworld, you better apologize to him properly." The more Neera listened, the heavier her heart became.

The thought of Bartitsu Guild plotting against Jean was enough to make her feel like she was on collapse. How could this happen? How did things end up like this? Am I dragging him down with me?

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She dared not imagine the kind of peril he might encounter. Just hearing those words from Phoebe was enough to drive her to the brink of madness.

Her heart was pounding faster and faster as if it was about to leap out of her chest. Fear had a tight grip on her heart. Jean... He must be all right! Please be all right!

As Neera was in a state of panic, Phoebe leisurely admired the former's pale face, grinning.

"You're so worried about him, huh? I suggest you save your energy. You'd be better off worrying about what you're about to face. These people here don't have compassion for a lady. Soon, it'll be your turn to taste hardship!" After she finished speaking, Phoebe gave a knowing look to the few people around her, then leisurely turned and walked

away.

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At the warehouse's entrance, she turned around and smiled triumphantly at Neera.

"Neera, enjoy what little time

you

have left. Once you're gone, this will be the only memory of you that remains."

After Phoebe finished speaking, she burst into loud laughter and firmly shut the warehouse door.

The men glanced at each other, then suddenly burst into a sinister, smug laughter. [SEARCH THE website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

One of them courteously said to the person in front of him, "Boss, why don't the rest of us wait while you go ahead and enjoy first?"

The rest of them also joined in the laughter and echoed, "That's right, the boss goes first. The rest of us will wait here. After you've had your fill, then it's our turn one by one!"

The man known as "Boss" was a guy with a crew cut, and he was stroking his chin and leering at Neera for quite a while. "D*mn, even though this woman's face is all swollen from being hit, her beauty is still top-notch. Just one glance at me could steal my soul away. Looks like we are in for a treat today, boys!"

Everyone immediately burst into laughter.

Neera trembles uncontrollably all over her body. At that moment, she was isolated and helpless. With her frail body, how could she possibly evade those extremely vicious men?

Her strength she was barely maintaining crumbled to dust at that moment. She was completely enveloped by fear and dread.

Her throat tightened as she told herself to stay calm and not lose her composure. She opened her mouth, feigning tranquility, and asked, "What benefits has Phoebe given you? Is it money? If you want money,

I can afford any amount as long as you are willing to let me go. I can pretend that today's events never happened, and I assure you, I won't pursue it once I'm out."

After she finished speaking, there was a moment of silence.

Then, the men suddenly burst into hearty laughter, with some even dramatically clutching their stomachs.

"What's with this woman? Is she really that naive? Haha, this is too funny. She's actually delusional enough to negotiate terms with us. Could she have gone

mad?"

"This is what we call 'at the end of one's tether'. You don't know jack. She's trying to bribe us."

At that moment, the crew-cut man leading the group licked his lips with a wicked grin, He stood there, hands nonchalantly in his pockets, his eyes narrowing slyly as he stared at her like a wolf.

"Money? Ha, once we deal with you, that woman will have plenty of money for us. She's backed by Bartitsu Guild, and now that you've fallen into their hands, you're as good as dead. Do you think we'd be foolish enough to let go of the money within our grasp and let you go? Once Bartitsu Guild gets rid of you, we'll be the next ones out of luck. Do you think we're stupid?"

Neera pursed her lips, her mind racing at full speed.

Her time was running out.

The crew-cut man was getting closer with each stride, all the while removing his coat as he walked.

Neera looked away immediately, her heart pounding rapidly as if it was about to sprint out of her throat...

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Chapter 1444

Chapter 1444

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"Stop scheming, gorgeous. Even if you were to shatter the heavens today, there's still no escape for you..." The man tossed his coat onto the ground, one hand resting on his waistband, while the other reached out to pull Neera toward him.

Just as his hand was about to touch Neera's arm, suddenly, Neera, who should have been tied up, stood up abruptly. Without uttering a word, she fiercely swiped at his thigh!

The sharp blade instantly sliced through his pants, and dark red blood began to gush out from the slit.

"Holy sh*t!" The crew-cut man suddenly yelled out in pain.

He was utterly taken aback. Neera had actually managed to untie herself, and she even had a knife in her hand!

He was instantly filled with rage, reaching out to grab Neera.

Seeing the situation, Neera added another cut to his leg.

Meanwhile, she suddenly turned around, mustering all her strength to climb out of the bathtub. Dripping wet, she stepped onto the floor.

She didn't have time for anything else, her eyes scanning the entire warehouse. Spotting a second floor, she had no choice but to run toward it.

The first floor was completely empty, devoid of anything, and there wasn't even a single window in sight. There was absolutely no way to escape. Perhaps there might be a glimmer of hope on the second floor. Having been submerged in icy water for too long, her entire body had become frozen stiff. Her limbs were rigid, making it difficult to move. Every slight movement of her foot was met with intense, throbbing pain.

However, she knew, at that moment, she absolutely couldn't stop. Even if she had to tread over a sea of flames and knife edges, she had to move forward without any hesitation..

Otherwise, if those people catch her, she would be truly done for.

Thus, she gritted her teeth, her frozen hands clenched tightly into fists. Her nails dug into her palms, the sharp pain bringing her body back to its senses. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

She exerted too much force, causing a piece of her fingernail to snap off. Blood began to seep out, staining her palm and trickling down between her fingers.

However, for her, those pains served as a sobering elixir.

She ran as fast as she could, clutching the stair railing.

Meanwhile, the crew-cut man had also reacted, furiously yelling at the stunned people behind him. "What are you all standing around for? Hurry up and go catch her!!"

Upon hearing his roar, those few people finally snapped back to reality and hastily rushed up to intervene.

Even though Neera tried her best to run as fast as she could, her weakened body simply couldn't keep up the pace.

She had only climbed halfway up the stairs when she felt someone approaching from behind. Her heart pounded wildly. Without a second thought, she abruptly stopped, turned around, and swung at the face of the person behind her

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The man winced in pain, clutching his face as he let out a mournful cry. He lost his balance and fell backward, knocking down the person behind him in the process.

Seeing that, the person on his right swiftly slapped Neera's hand away. The eyebrow razor slipped from her grasp, tumbling down the stairs.

Neera endured the burning pain on the back of her hand. Seeing the man about to grab her, she panicked and swiftly kicked him down. There were still two people who hadn't come up. Gritting her teeth, Neera turned her head and continued to run upstairs.

When she finally managed to climb to the entrance of the second floor, she looked around, but still, there was nothing to be seen. There was nothing she could use for defense. There were no windows and no means for her to escape.

In an instant, a kind of despair she had never felt before rose from the depths of her heart.

At that moment, heavy and hurried footsteps echoed from behind, accompanied by a man's roar of anger. "You b*tch! How dare you hurt me! I'll kill you!"

Neera's eyelashes trembled as she turned around, her frail body showing signs of exhaustion. She had nowhere left to run, yet she couldn't bring herself to give up just yet.

She lowered her head, her gaze scanning the floor of the second story. Suddenly, she crouched down, attempting to gather the dust on the ground.

The blood in her palm hadn't dried yet, and mixing it with the dust made the wound look grimy, posing a risk of infection.

However, she couldn't care less about anything else; her heart was still stuck in her throat, and her movements were frantic. Just as the footsteps were closing in, she suddenly stood up, turned around, and flung her hand behind her.

The dust in her hand was suddenly flung out, blinding the person who rushed over. He cursed furiously.

Seizing the opportunity, Neera decided to use her old tricks, intending to kick those people down.

The crew-cut man, however, was on guard. He swiftly grabbed her ankle, yanked it hard, and instantly pulled her down to the ground.

Thump!

Neera's back and the back of her head hit the ground hard, making a dull thud.

A sudden wave of pain swept over her entire body, causing her to shiver uncontrollably. The dizziness in her head intensified her agony even more.

That time, she was completely stunned. She couldn't recover for a long time. Her eyes were half-open, and she gazed dazedly at the dusty ceiling above her, her pupils almost losing their focus.

"D*mn woman! I didn't expect you to have so many tricks up your sleeve! And you even dared to run away! Where the hell did you get that knife from? D*mn it, that Phoebe. She's unable to do anything right and always causing trouble, almost letting you escape! You wretched woman, I was actually thinking of being nice to you today. However, it seems like I was too kind! I need to teach you a lesson for slicing me D*mn you..." The crew-cut man wiped his face, cursing non-stop, clearly infuriated to the extreme.

He showed no mercy, dragging Neera by the leg and tossing her onto the vacant ground nearby before he began to undress.

Neera endured his harsh words and the throbbing headache before striving to regain her composure.

Watching the man's movements, she clenched her teeth tightly, forcing her body to shift backward.

However, the crew cut man didn't let her go. He pulled out his belt and began to whip her mercilessly. "D*mn it, you wretched woman. Still trying to escape? I dare you to try it again! Today, I won't rest until I've put you in your place!"

The sound of the belt striking against Neera's body was like the tearing of cloth. Neera was extremely weak at that moment, and she was in so much pain that she was on the verge of fainting, unable to utter even a single sound.

She couldn't move at all, forced to endure the blows, her gaze growing more and more scattered.

Suddenly, the image of Jean appeared in her mind. If he knows what I'm going through right now, it'll surely break his heart. How is he doing now? Is he in danger? He's so incredible, like a god from the heavens. He surely won't be as they say. He can definitely turn the tables, right? It seems I won't be able to wait for his triumphant return...

Tears slid sideways from the corners of her eyes, dampening her ears.

She thought again of her aunt, the children, and her family with whom she had finally reunited after much difficulty.

Agony welled in her heart as she thought about how she couldn't meet them again.

Pain and longing intertwined at the bottom of her heart, causing her tears to multiply. Through the mist in her eyes, she saw the crew-cut man standing beside her, cursing furiously while taking off his shirt. You can't Even in death, I refuse to fall into the hands of these scum! Neera thought.

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Chapter 1445

Chapter 1445

Neera tilted her head, looking at the railing that was close at hand.

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In the next moment, her gaze was filled with an unparalleled determination. From an unknown source, she found the strength to push herself up to stand suddenly. She then ran toward the railing. Just jump..... Just jump!

The crew-cut man sensed her intentions and was immediately startled. He rushed over in a hurry, grabbing hold of her.

"You stinking b*tch! Are you looking for death? Not a chance!" As he spoke, he forcefully yanked her backward. However, Neera was determined. Her hands were tightly gripping the railing, refusing to let go no matter what.

The man with the crew cut was livid, his hand clamping down on her chin, forcefully twisting her face back toward him.

Despite everything, Neera refused to let go, even going so far as to bite down hard on his hand.

The crew-cut man didn't expect her to be so difficult to deal with. He yelled out, completely losing his patience.

Suddenly, he slapped her, then forcefully grabbed her by the neck, pressing her against the railing, her body leaning outward.

"You're that eager to die, huh? Fine! If you're so keen on an early grave, I'll grant your wish! However, even if you die, you'll die by my hand! When the time comes, I'll be the one delivering your corpse!" the man roared.

Neera endured the pain, tilting her head back. She felt her breath becoming more and more labored as her face gradually turned purple.

However, at that moment, she didn't feel sad at all. Instead, she felt a sense of relief. Dying like this wouldn't be so bad...

Just as her breath grew fainter, and she was about to close her eyes, a loud noise suddenly came from downstairs.

It was the sound of a door being kicked open.

Immediately after, several footsteps echoed in, suggesting that someone had entered.

Neera was in a semi-conscious state at that moment, thinking she was experiencing auditory hallucinations.

However, when she saw, through her half-open eyes, the man in front of her suddenly showing a shocked expression, a glimmer of hope inexplicably ignited in her heart. Who has arrived? Has someone come to rescue me?

She wanted to look back down, but the crew-cut man was forcefully gripping her neck.

Just as she was about to struggle, suddenly, it was as if something flew over her head.

In the next moment, a red dot appeared on the crew-cut man's forehead. That red dot rapidly expanded, and blood began to flow from it, instantly covering half of his face.

He still wore that shocked expression, but the strength in his hands had loosened, quickly dropping to his sides.

"He didn't even have time to make the slightest sound before he fell backward. With a loud thud, he collapsed onto

the ground, head askew, motionless.

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A rush of fresh air filled Neera's burning lungs. She leaned against the railing, coughing and staring in disbelief at the scene before her. Only belatedly did she realize that person was already dead. In an instant, she felt as if she had survived a catastrophe. Her legs gave way, and she collapsed onto the ground.

Just then, a hurried footstep echoed, accompanied by a familiar voice. "Neera!"

Neera suddenly froze. She held her breath, and her eyes filled with shock and disbelief. This voice...

"Neera! Neera, it's me. Don't be afraid. I'm here." The owner of the voice took several large strides, rushing to her front.

As he witnessed her disheveled state, his eyes were filled with shock, fury, heartache, and pain.

"Neera..." He opened his mouth, his lips trembling. His voice was tense, suddenly choked with emotion, unable to utter a single word.

Neera stared at the person in front of her for a long time before finally reacting.

She had thought she would cry, but at that moment, she laughed instead. It was a laugh that felt like a great burden had been lifted. "Jean, you're back... Thank goodness. Thank goodness you're all right..." After she finished speaking, her vision went black, and she lost consciousness.

"Neera! Neera!" Jean was frightened, quickly embracing her and calling out a few times. Seeing her unresponsive, he was stunned.

For the first time in his life, he was so utterly at a loss. It was to such an extent that he didn't even dare to reach out to confirm whether the person in his arms was still breathing.

At that moment, Ian and his subordinates, having dealt with the people below, rushed up. Seeing that scene, they were almost scared out of their wits.

He could hardly believe that the person before him was Neera.

Her swollen cheeks, filled with red handprints, the glaring choke marks on her neck, her bleeding hands, and her disheveled clothes, with faint traces of whip marks visible...

Ian couldn't help but wonder what torture Neera had suffered.

He only took a fleeting glance, unable to bear looking any longer. He quickly averted his gaze, looking toward Jean.

At that moment, he saw his employer holding Neera, trembling and expressionless.

That was the first time Ian had seen such a breakdown from Jean.

He took a deep breath and quickly stepped forward, first confirming Neera's breathing, then reminding Jean. "Mr. Beauvort, please pull yourself together! Mrs. Beauvort is still

alive. She's still breathing. We must find a doctor for her treatment immediately! We need to hurry back!"

Upon hearing those words, Jean looked at him blankly, his pupils once again finding focus.

That time, he mustered the courage, reaching out to feel Neera's breath. Although it was faint, so faint that it was almost imperceptible, it was indeed there.

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In that instant, he inexplicably felt as though he had been pulled back from the depths of hell, and his spirits immediately lifted.

He stood up, cradling Neera horizontally in his arms, holding her carefully. When he spoke again, his voice was laced with a chilling intensity. "Capture everyone here alive for me. Not a single one is allowed to die!" Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Upon squeezing out those words through gritted teeth, he hurriedly descended the stairs, carrying Neera in his

arms.

Back in the car, he took off his coat and draped it over Neera, feeling her icy cold body. He didn't dare to relax, continuously rubbing her hands and arms to warm her up.

When he witnessed the bloodstain in her palm and her broken fingernails, his eyes turned a fierce crimson. He was like a raging wolf, his entire being exuding a bloodthirsty aura.

Ahead, Ian was driving the car at breakneck speed. After running a few red lights, they finally made it back to the Gordon residence.

At that moment, the Gordon residence's courtyard was in complete disarray, resembling a disaster area after a

war.

As Jean held Neera while getting out of the car, Adriana stumbled out of the mansion. Chad tried to hold her back, but he couldn't stop her.

When Adriana saw the state Neera was in, she suddenly stopped in her tracks. Then, she covered her mouth to let out a heart-wrenching scream, which was followed by a downpour of tears. "Neera..." Heartbroken, she roared, resembling a trapped beast. "How could this happen to my Neera? How could it

turn out like this? She..."

She was terrified to the core. As she lifted her eyes to look at Jean, she shook her head incessantly, whimpering and crying out. "Don't scare me. Please don't scare me. She's still alive, isn't she? Please, I beg you..."

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Chapter 1446

Chapter 1446

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The news was so terrifying that it filled Adriana with despair. She didn't dare to take another step forward. Her only hope rested on Jean. She hoped to hear words of hope from him.

Jean's Adam's apple bobbed slightly, and his voice was hoarse to the point of being unrecognizable as if he was speaking with a mouthful of sand. "She's still alive. Is the doctor here yet?" Upon hearing those words, Adriana suddenly burst into tears, unable to utter a single word.

Chad was also terrified, his eyes filled with heartache. He quickly nodded in agreement. "They're here, waiting

inside."

Jean subtly nodded, holding Neera in his arms, and strode in.

When the doctor saw Neera's terrible condition, he was genuinely taken aback. "Ms. Garcia, she's..."

Jean spoke in a cold voice. "She has fainted, her body is trembling, and her body temperature is very low."

As he spoke, he gently laid Neera on the bed.

The bedroom remained exactly as it was when Neera left. However, the person in the bedroom was no longer the same as before she left.

The doctor didn't dare to slack off and promptly conducted a preliminary examination.

When her temperature was taken, the doctor's brow furrowed. His expression was very serious. "Ms. Garcia's body temperature is significantly below normal. We must warm her up as quickly as possible, otherwise the situation could be dire."

Upon hearing that, Ian immediately turned on the air conditioning in the room and increased the temperature. At the same time, he said, "I'll go find some hot water bags."

After speaking, he quickly left the room and descended the stairs.

The doctor looked at her drenched clothes and said, "Just doing this won't be enough. We need to change Ms. Garcia's clothes first and dry her off. Otherwise, she'll only get colder."

At that moment, Adriana also came in. Hearing that, she immediately volunteered, "I'll do it."

However, Jean said, "Let me do it."

Without delay, he scooped up Neera and carried her into the bathroom.

As he filled the bathtub with hot water, he couldn't help but recall the moment when he kicked open the warehouse door and what he saw inside.

On the first floor, there was a bathtub. Inside it were floating ice cubes, not yet fully melted. One of Neera's shoes was still submerged at the bottom of the tub.

At the railing of the second floor, a slender figure leaned, with more than half of her body exposed, teetering on the edge of danger.

It was as if a gentle breeze could make her fall at any moment.

At that moment, he felt as if his breath was about to stop. His heart seemed to be tightly gripped by an invisible hand, almost crushed. The pain was so intense that he couldn't help but shudder slightly.

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The moment he pulled the trigger, his eyes were filled with malevolence, radiating a bloodthirsty gleam. However, looking back, he felt that doing so had really let that crew-cut man off too easily.

Back then, he shouldn't have acted impulsively. Instead, he should have spared that man's worthless life.

He should thoroughly torment the crew-cut man, let the latter taste what it was like to be in extreme pain.

Lost in thought, his eyes filled once again with a deep crimson. The bloodshot corners of his eyes looked somewhat terrifying, a hint of malevolence subtly dancing across his brow.

It was Neera's soft whimper that pulled his thoughts back from the brink of fury.

"Neera? Are you awake?" He quickly turned around, lifting Neera from the chaise lounge.

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However, Neera had her eyes tightly shut. Her brows furrowed deeply as if she was in great pain yet unable to wake up.

The bathtub gradually filled with hot water, and the steamy heat permeated the entire bathroom.

Jean was drenched in a thin layer of sweat due to the intense heat.

Yet, he couldn't care about anything else. He scooped up Neera sideways and gently placed her into the bathtub..

As the hot water filled up around Neera's body, she seemed to sense something. In her unconscious state, she restlessly shifted, seemingly resisting.

Jean's heart ached terribly. With a hoarse voice, he gently stroked her face, comforting her. "Don't be afraid, Neera. It's just hot water. Don't fear. I'm by your side. No one can hurt you anymore." Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

In her unconscious state, Neera seemed to hear his gentle voice. Gradually, her brows unfurled, and her body began to relax.

Next, Jean carefully undressed her.

The marks of the beatings she had received gradually appeared before his eyes, grotesquely vivid.

When Jean saw the crisscrossing scratch marks, he was first taken aback. Then, a fierce and ruthless aura suddenly erupted from his eyes. His entire aura instantly became terrifying, as if it wanted to devour everything and destroy the world!

He had noticed the scars on Neera's body, but he never imagined there would be so many!

He simply couldn't fathom how Neera managed to endure so many beatings!

She was so delicate, her skin so tender, yet she became like that.

He wondered what kind of inhuman torment could have left so many shocking scars on her body.

In an instant, Jean clenched his teeth tightly, his large hand forcefully forming a fist. It trembled slightly, the bones of his knuckles cracking as if they were about to be crushed.

Yet, the woman in the bathtub remained with her eyes tightly shut, oblivious to everything around her. She was as tranquil as a lifeless doll.

Watching her like that, Jean suddenly lowered his head, his shoulders subtly trembling.

After a while, a whimper, akin to that of a trapped beast, escaped from his lips.

His voice was intermingled with malice, rage, and heart-wrenching pain.

After a while, when the hot water had warmed Neera's body a bit, Jean draped a bathrobe over her and carried her

out.

Inside the bedroom, Adriana and Chad were anxiously waiting.

They could all tell that when Jean came out, his eyes were frighteningly red.

Adriana hurried forward, eager to see Neera.

Yet, Jean quickly and carefully placed Neera on the bed, making sure to tuck her in snugly with the blanket.

"Where's the hot water bags?" He turned to look at Ian, who came over with hot water bags.

Jean stuffed a few into Neera's quilt, careful not to burn her. Then, he straightened up and asked, "Where is the doctor?"

Chad pointed toward the door. "I've arranged for a female doctor to come and prescribe some medicine downstairs. Given the circumstances, it may be inconvenient for her. Once the medicine is ready, could you apply it to Neera?"

Jean nodded slightly.

After the doctor had prescribed the medication, she gave a few more instructions. "Ms. Garcia has mostly superficial injuries, but we can't be sure if there's any internal damage. I suggest waiting until her body temperature returns to normal, then taking her to the hospital for a full-body check-up. Also, she may develop a fever. If it doesn't subside after a while, you should immediately take her to the hospital. Don't delay."

Jean meticulously noted everything down, then, holding the ointment, he returned to the bedroom.

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Chapter 1447

Chapter 1447

Adriana also wanted to follow in, but was stopped by Chad.

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"Adriana, don't go in just yet. You've had quite a shock, and you need to rest. Once you've regained some strength, it won't be too late to visit her then."

However, Adriana shook her head. "How can I rest at a time like this when Neera's in this state? I'm so worried. I don't even know how she's doing right now and if there are

any other injuries to her body. No, I must go in and see her, stay with her. Otherwise, I simply can't put my mind at ease..."

After she finished speaking, she turned around to go upstairs.

Chad sighed, pulled her close, steadied her by the shoulders, and made her face him. "Adriana, at this moment, Jean probably doesn't want to be disturbed. His mood is quite bad, and he seems very down. For now, let's just let him be alone with Neera. We shouldn't bother them."

Adriana paused, her eyes suddenly reddening. Large tears began to roll from her eyes, tracing a path down her face.

She shed many tears already, yet no matter how much she cried, it seemed endless. Her voice had even become hoarse from sobbing.

"Chad, did you see? Neera's body is covered in so many wounds, all red and inflamed. They must hurt terribly. Just now, Jean wouldn't let me get close to Neera. He must have seen the wounds when he was helping Neera change clothes. There must be even more signs of beatings on Neera's body, which is why he hurriedly covered him with a blanket. He must not want me to see, afraid that I would feel heartbroken, so he deliberately didn't tell us and didn't let us see. He loves Neera so much. How heartbroken must he be after seeing those wounds..." The more she spoke, the more fiercely her tears flowed. "Even though she had a tough childhood, not having been pampered or loved properly, she never experienced hardships like these! Since I brought her abroad and kept her by my side, I have been taking care of her meticulously. She hasn't suffered the slightest bit of injustice, let alone physical harm. I can't even bring myself to scold her. I've always treated her as if she were my own daughter, raising her with tenderness. I don't know how a delicate and refined woman like her can endure this torment. How much pain and helplessness she must have felt at that time? Yet, she still persevered... It's all my fault. If only I hadn't fainted at that time and protected her, kept her from being taken away by those people, maybe she wouldn't have had to suffer like this. I would rather it had been me they took so I could bear all this pain instead and prevent them from laying a finger on her! I feel so regretful and useless, like I couldn't do anything..."

"Adriana, calm down. If you keep crying like this, you won't be able to bear it." Chad was also deeply distressed.

On one hand, he felt sorry for Neera, and on the other hand, he was heartbroken for Adriana. He was at a loss on how to comfort his wife.

When he received the pews, he was shocked and scared, too.

At that moment, he couldn't care less about anything else. Without a word, he hurried back.

When he rushed back from afar, travel-worn, and saw Adriana safe and sound, he felt a great weight lifted off his shoulders

On his way back, he was nearly driven mad with worry. He had no idea about her condition, whether she was injured or if she was scared. Merely overthinking was enough to drive him insane. Therefore, he deeply understood how Jean felt at that moment.

If it were Adriana who had been tortured, he dared not imagine what his own emotional state would be.

He couldn't even begin to imagine the terrible things he might be capable of doing. "Adriana, you must understand that what has happened cannot be changed. Don't blame yourself like this. Neera wouldn't have wanted you to take all the blame if she knew what you're saying right now. Moreover, if you were taken away, she wouldn't be able to bear it. This isn't your fault. You've already done very well."

"No, it's not okay. What I've done is far from enough. Looking back now, I feel like such a failure. As an aunt, I failed to protect my own niece. I watched as she was taken away, allowed her to face such great injustice, such immense harm..."

Adriana was extremely fragile at the moment. Her mind was filled with Neera's incident and the dreadful state the latter was in upon returning. She was deeply immersed in self-blame and guilt, unable to calm down.

She blamed herself and blamed those who had hurt Neera. She even directed some of that blame toward Chad. "It's all because of you. I told you from the beginning that I didn't want her to become the head of the Gordon family. I was worried that she wouldn't be able to handle it. However, you stubbornly claimed that she could manage and insisted on helping her take this position! Look at her now. Look at what she's been reduced to! It's all because she came to Phison, joined Bartitsu Guild, and became the head of your Gordon family. She has been targeted by so many, faced hostility, and repeatedly found herself in dangerous situations. It was the same when she went to Mount Cloud to attend the district president selection. Now, she's been hurt like this again. The consequences would have been unthinkable if Jean had been a step late. Perhaps Neera... I'm not even sure if she could appear before me again! Why did you insist on making her the head of the Gordon family? It's all your fault. All because of the decision you made. If anything happens to Neera, I... I will never forgive you..."

As she spoke, Adriana punched him lightly, but her fists lacked strength, and the force she exerted was soft and gentle.

She hung her head helplessly, her crying intensifying in sorrow. "What should I do if something happens to her..."

Chad's heart ached deeply. He quickly pulled her into his embrace, not dodging at all, allowing her to vent her emotions. "It's my fault. Indeed, it's my fault. The decision I made back then, looking back at it now was indeed inappropriate. It was my lack of thorough consideration that put her in danger. You're right to blame me, and I'm blaming myself too."

Even if Adriana didn't blame him, in reality, Chad was already harshly blaming himself in his heart.

Every time he thought of Neera lying in bed lifelessly, he hated himself. He questioned himself why had he been so impulsive, making such a foolish decision.

Even if he loved everything related to Neera, he shouldn't have placed such a heavy burden on Neera's shoulders. [SEARCH THE website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

Because of him, she became a thorn in many people's side.

Chad thought, Adriana is right. It's all my fault. I was too impatient..

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Moreover, he was fully aware that Neera was the target of envy and hatred, yet he didn't provide her with adequate protection in time, which led to her suffering such significant harm.

All of this calamity befell Neera solely because of him.

It went without saying Adriana wouldn't forgive him. In the event any harm befell that girl, even he himself wouldn't forgive himself, not to mention Adriana.

As Adriana leaned into his embrace, her fists gradually lowered until she wrapped her arms around him, sobbing like a wounded animal.

"Chad Gordon, I hate you to the bones... I hate you....

Chad rested his chin on her shoulder, his eyes tightly closed. The weight of regret consumed him to the point that he thought he was going to go mad, yet all he could do

was patiently console her. "If it makes you feel better, just hate me. Punish me in any way you want, but rest assured, no matter what happens, Neera will be fine. I will find the best doctor to treat her. I promise you, she will get better..."

While the two were heartbroken, seeking solace in each other's embrace downstairs, Jean sat alone by Neera's bedside in the bedroom upstairs. His gaze remained fixed on Neera's pale face, as if he could never get enough of looking at her.

At that moment, the aftermath of the slap on Neera's face lingered; her cheek remained slightly swollen, a stark reminder of the recent trauma. It was a disconcerting sight.

Unable to resist, he reached out, his touch a tender caress as if he sought to erase the marks, hoping to alleviate her pain.

His movements were delicate, as though he feared causing her any further harm.

When he was far away in District Twenty-One and received the news of Neera's kidnapping, he yearned to grow a pair of wings so he could swiftly return.

The anxiety of that moment was so overwhelming that he wished never to endure it again in his lifetime.

On his journey back, the haunting image of Neera's sad expression as he departed replayed in his mind.

Suddenly, he found himself despising his decision, questioning why he had to leave.

If he had known the tragic events that would unfold in his absence, he would never have gone, regardless of the circumstances. Countless emotions surged within him—regret, anger, ferocity, remorse, and worry—pushing him to the brink of madness.

When the news reached him upon his return to District Fourteen, he hurried to the warehouse without delay.

Before barging in, he envisioned countless possibilities in his mind.

However, what he saw inside was beyond his expectations. Even in the face of death, this resilient woman refused to yield. Observing the patchwork of scars on her body, he could imagine the painful struggles she must have endured.

It was her defiance that had led those angered by her to subject her to such brutal treatment.

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He was well aware of how strong Neera could be, but in that moment, he found himself wishing she wouldn't be so resilient.

The mere thought of what might have transpired had he arrived a moment later sent shivers down his spine.

Her slender and fragile figure, leaning on the railing, appeared as if it could collapse at any moment.

The prospect of bursting in only to witness her falling was too much for him to bear; he believed it would undoubtedly drive him to madness.

This haunting notion invaded his mind, causing the corners of his eyes to turn crimson once again.

He shook his head, closed his eyes, and compelled himself to calm down, determined not to let his thoughts spiral out of control.

Upon touching Neera's body, he noted that her temperature was currently normal. With a deep breath, he rose and exited the bedroom.

Ian stood in the hallway, waiting. As soon as he saw Chad emerge, he hurriedly approached.

"Mr. Beauvort, it's getting late and you haven't eaten anything all day. Please have something to eat first to fill your stomach. If you continue to starve like this, your body won't be able to take it. If Mrs. Beauvort sees you like this, she will surely be heartbroken."

Despite the suggestion, Chad knew that Jean wouldn't entertain the idea of eating.

As anticipated, Jean shook his head, displaying no inclination to go downstairs for a meal. Instead, he beckoned Ian to the study.

"Where are those who have been detained?" he asked bluntly and coldly upon entering.

Ian replied honestly, "They are still in that warehouse and haven't moved yet. Do you want me to bring them over?"

"No need," Jean responded without hesitation. With a calm voice, he issued his instructions methodically. "Just deal with them there however you see fit. Don't worry about anything. Go personally; you know what to do."

Ian nodded in acknowledgment of the order. "Yes."

He then conveyed another piece of information, "Sir, I have already sent people to detain the Logan family. As for Phoebe, he has also been found. She is currently in our custody. How do you plan to handle this?"

A profound malice surfaced in Jean's eyes when he heard that.

His thin lips slowly parted, a chilling voice squeezing out from his throat.

"Not a single one from the Logan family shall be spared. As for Phoebe, however she plotted against Neera, she shall be repaid in kind. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." "Yes, sir!"

With that, Ian left and headed straight for the warehouse to carry out the orders.

At this moment, those robust men were being held captive there.

The sky had already darkened, casting the warehouse into shadows.

Inside, only a dimly lit lamp emitted a faint yellow glow. The lamp swayed gently as the wind occasionally seeped through the cracks in the door, enveloping the space in an eerie atmosphere. When Ian walked in, his subordinates spotted him and promptly greeted him respectfully, "Mr. Morrison, you're here."

Ian nodded in acknowledgment, then turned to survey the room.

Without delay, someone astutely and tactfully brought a chair over, placing it steadily behind him.

Ian took a seat, one leg casually draped over the other, exuding an aura of confidence.

With a condescending gaze, he scrutinized the few individuals who were tied up and kneeling on the ground. His expression was cold, yet the corner of his mouth curled up in a wicked smirk, inexplicably sending chills down one's spine.

One of them, having never encountered him at the Bartitsu Guild before, immediately started making a fuss in a fit of anger.

"Who are you? By what right do you detain us here? Do you know who we are? Can you afford to offend us?" the man yelled.

After hearing this, Ian let out a cold laugh. "Oh? I seriously don't know who are you guys? Why don't you tell me? I'm in the mood now, and I have the time to listen to your introductions. So, while you can still talk, talk more. I'm afraid you won't have the chance to speak later."

The man's eyes widened with anger as he glared at Ian, raising his voice.

"Stop acting so high and mighty here! You're so full of yourself! Do you really think we're easily frightened? Let me tell you, you're in big trouble, do you understand? This is the territory of the Bartitsu Guild, and the Bartitsu Guild wants Neera's life. If you dare to interfere, you're courting death! If you know what's good for you, let us go now and hand Neera/over. Otherwise, when the Bartitsu Guild realizes we haven't returned, they will definitely send people to deal with you. Then, you'll have to face the consequences!"

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At this moment, they were unaware that the members of the Gordon family who were abroad had already returned to District Fourteen.

So, they simply regarded Ian and his group as irrelevant bystanders or a minor force attached to the Gordon family and didn't pay them much heed.

Despite hearing the threats, Ian remained indifferent, his expression still one of nonchalance.

"Bring it on. I can't wait to see if the Bartitsu Guild will send someone to rescue you and if they will dare to lay a

hand on us."

"You-"

"Do you know where the one who died was taken?"

He posed a sudden question, causing the expressions of those men to shift several times, yet no one uttered a word.

With a slight smile, Ian remained unfazed and casually provided the answer.

"That guy has already been taken to the headquarters of the Bartitsu Guild. He's lying right at the entrance. I'm curious to see who among you is so eager to go and keep him company right now," he declared with a hint of

sarcasm.

The faces of those few people instantly turned pale, as if grappling with disbelief when they heard that.

"W-What are you talking about? The headquarters of the Bartitsu Guild is not a place where people like you can come and go as you please. Do you really think you're a big shot?"

Ian put down the leg that was folded over his knee, suddenly leaned forward, squinting his eyes a bit closer, maintaining a posture that exuded loftiness and superiority. "So you think that by aligning yourselves with the Bartitsu Guild, you've found a solid backing? Ha, looks like this is as far as your vision extends."

With that, he lost the mood for idle chatter. Abruptly, he retrieved a dagger from his pocket, holding it in his hand and toying with it. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Speak up. Who made a move? Which hand you used?"

The sudden change in subject left them momentarily stunned.

The man who was making a fuss just now was the first to react, immediately raising his voice in protest.

"What are you trying to do? Intimidate us? I'm warning you. If you dare lay a hand on us, the Bartitsu Guild will make sure you regret it!"

Seemingly irritated, Ian dug at his ear in apparent annoyance.

His subordinate, keenly observing the subtle movement, acted without a word and kicked the man out, sending him sprawling to the ground. With a forceful stomp, he stepped on the man's face. "Enough with the nonsense! When Mr. Morrison asks you something, you answer right away! Any more nonsense, and I'll end you right now!"

The man's face contorted under the force of the step, causing him to shudder in pain. He stuttered, unable to utter a single clear sentence.

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Ignoring the man's distress, Ian shifted his gaze to the remaining few people and repeated his question,

"Speak up. Who exactly made a move? Or did everyone make a move? If no one's going to talk, then I'll proceed according to my own rules." "Speak up, who exactly made a move? Or did everyone make a move? If no one's going to talk, then I'll proceed according to my own rules." Still, no one spoke.

At this juncture, Ian's patience wore thin. He nodded, pressing on the armrest of the chair and rising to his feet, slowly advancing toward them.

Before long, a horrifying, heart-wrenching scream pierced the silence of the deep night, emanating from the crack of the warehouse door, casting a layer of chill and terror over the silent surroundings. Half an hour later, Ian casually strolled out, tossing a blood-stained handkerchief to the subordinate trailing behind him. Bathed in moonlight, he admired his now clean hands and curled his lips with satisfaction.

"Don't sleep tonight; pull an all-nighter. Deal with them as you see fit, but don't kill them. Come dawn, take them and the one who died earlier, and dump them all at the front door of the Bartitsu Guild's headquarters."

The subordinate promptly acknowledged the order. "Yes, sir."

Meanwhile, news about the Gordon family's affairs and Neera's injury began circulating on the internet. Online discussions were abuzz with netizens unable to resist delving into the unfolding events. Netizen A: Have you heard? There's been a huge uproar in the Gordon family! And Neera has been kidnapped!

Netizen B: Have you heard? The Gordon family is in turmoil! Neera's been kidnapped!

Netizen C: As far as I know, several powerful families seem to hold a grudge against the Gordon family, so they took advantage of the Gordon family's recent misfortune and spontaneously joined forces to strike against them. Speaking of which, this is all thanks to Neera. Before Neera arrived, the Gordon family didn't have so many enemies. But now, the Gordon family's enemies are everywhere, and they've even joined forces against them. Tsk tsk, it's really quite tragic.

Netizen D: Let's not jump to conclusions. The Gordon family didn't fare too badly this time. According to witnesses, they were initially at a disadvantage, but a lot of reinforcements arrived, probably from the Gordon family's affiliated forces. Surprisingly, the seemingly insignificant Gordon family has secretly amassed quite a force behind the scenes.

Netizen E: That's not all! Several members of the Gordon family, who originally went to support the fifth district, have returned. It's said that Jean was the one who rushed to save Neera! Netizen F: Jean Beauvort is back? How is Neera doing now?

Netizen G: The details are unclear, but when Jean carried her out, someone saw it. Neera was covered in injuries, likely tortured severely. There's been no word on

whether she's dead or alive. Netizen H: Yikes, that gave me goosebumps. But do we know who took Neera away?

Netizen I: Not sure, but this is probably the second-biggest event in the Bartitsu Guild recently, after the Cox family incident. The guild has been anything but peaceful lately.

Netizen J: Well, when has the Bartitsu Guild ever been peaceful? It's always been like this. The conflicts have never ceased. Besides, the guild doesn't prohibit it; it's pretty much the norm. I just wonder how the Gordon family is going to resolve this situation this time....

The Bartitsu Guild, however, was privy to the inside story. At this moment, the headquarters was brightly lit. Matthew, leaning on his cane, was pacing back and forth in the living room, resembling a cat on a hot tin roof.

"What on earth happened? Didn't I instruct you to intercept them and prohibit anyone from the Gordon family from entering District Fourteen? How did Chad and his people manage to return? And how did you allow someone to rescue Neera? Is this how you do your job?"

With each question, his anger escalated. Suddenly, he seized the ashtray from the coffee table and hurled it at Darren.

Darren, wary of the consequences, didn't dare to dodge; he stood still, bearing the full brunt of the hit. Blood immediately began to flow from his forehead, covering half of his face.

Despite the intense pain, he explained in a submissive and humble manner, "Indeed, following your instructions, I deployed a significant number of troops to secure the border of District Fourteen. However, Chad, Shane, and Jean returned simultaneously. They brought back quite a lot of men with them, and each of them was highly skilled. In the confrontation with our men, they clearly had the upper hand. Our forces were ultimately no match for them and suffered severe losses... As for Neera, in fact, Howard should have taken the opportunity to kill her when they were coming out of the secret passage. But Phoebe insisted on taking her away. Howard didn't stop her because she had previously asked us to hand Neera over. But he did tell Phoebe to keep Neera alive for him..."

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"Useless! What a bunch of useless fools! Where is Phoebe now? And Howard! Where is he?" Matthew fumed.

Darren swallowed nervously, responding honestly.

Darren swallowed nervously, responding with honesty, "Phoebe has disappeared without a trace. We don't know where she's hiding. The people we sent to go with her haven't returned yet, and there's a possibility they might have been detained. As for the Logan family, we haven't heard anything from them yet. Mr. Lozano, should we summon them here now?"

At this tense moment, Matthew was visibly furious, shaking his hand in frustration.

"Summon them for what? Given the current situation, if you summon them over and someone sees us, it would only bring trouble for the Bartitsu Guild."

As he spoke, his face was shrouded in gloom.

"Fortunately, the Bartitsu Guild has not openly intervened in this matter and has only been giving instructions from the shadows. Even if something goes awry, we can deflect the blame onto those families involved: At present, let's maintain a cautious stance and withdraw all our personnel to prevent providing any leverage to the Gordon family. We'll assess the situation tomorrow before reaching a decision." Darren concurred, then voiced his concern, "What about those dispatched to Phoebe? They might not be able to keep things under wraps. If they disclose the Bartitsu Guild's involvement, won't the Gordon family have grounds against us?"

Matthew sneered, "Those few people's words amount to nothing! Thankfully, I exercised caution and didn't dispatch the most crucial figures from the Bartitsu Guild. Instead, I chose to send minor lackeys. If Phoebe hadn't provided us with crucial information, I wouldn't have bothered with her. She's nothing more than an outcast from the Cox family. As for those few people we sent to go with her, they're typically so inconspicuous that no one takes notice of them. Even if they were to betray the Bartitsu Guild, the Gordon family wouldn't be able to use them as leverage. Furthermore, I could turn the tables and accuse the Gordon family of bribing them, insinuating that they're deliberately framing the Bartitsu Guild. Or, I could say that those people belong to other families that attempt to tarnish the guild's reputation. You should be able to handle such a minor issue well, right?"

Blood trickled from the corner of Darren's forehead, making its way into his eyes. Swiftly, he raised his hand to wipe it away, hastily saying, "Okay."

Throughout the night, Jean didn't catch a wink of sleep. He remained by Neera's bedside, vigilantly monitoring her condition.

As the doctor had forewarned, by midnight, Neera began running a high fever. Her whole body was burning up, and she mumbled incoherent words in her sleep from time to time.

Jean was anxious. He quickly fed her medicine and tried cooling her down physically.

Yet, despite all efforts, her body temperature stubbornly persisted after two hours, showing no signs of abating.

Adriana, equally concerned, couldn't sleep a wink either. She was on high alert in the adjacent room, keenly listening for any commotion. The moment she sensed something awry, she hurried in. "What's wrong? What happened to Neera?"

Jean spoke in a hoarse voice. "She's developed a high fever, and her temperature won't come down. The situation is hot good; we must get her to the hospital."

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Upon finishing his words, he gently pulled Neera from under the covers, draped a thick coat over her, and without a word, cradled her in his arms. Without a word, he exited the room, descended the stairs, and prepared to make his way to the hospital.

Concerned about potential emergencies at night, Ian remained downstairs. Observing the urgency, he hastened to

start the car.

Worried, Adriana asked Chad to accompany her to the hospital.`

Upon reaching the hospital, the doctor initiated a simple cooling treatment for Neera, followed by a thorough physical examination.

The examination revealed a mild concussion and adverse reactions in her abdomen, indicating internal bruising.

In the doctor's office, Adriana stood by Jean. As the doctor delivered the diagnosis, her tears began to fall uncontrollably. Search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"How could this happen... Hasn't that girl endured enough superficial wounds? Why are there so many other injuries? What did those b*stards do to Neera? My Neera..." she said, sobbing. Chad enveloped her in a hug, his expression profoundly solemn.

Jean's face was equally grave, his eyes ablaze with a fierce and angry energy.

His hand hung by his side, clenching into a tight fist with prominent knuckles and bulging veins. He endured the tumultuous emotions, struggling to suppress the rising tide of rage.

In a low voice, he inquired, "Is her condition serious?"

The doctor furrowed his brows, studying the medical record before letting out a heavy sigh. "Based on the examination results, it's not a severe illness. It seems to be a fever, and the concussion isn't overly critical. However, a period of rest is imperative. As for the abdominal bruising and blood clots, a long period of recovery is needed. In essence, the patient has sustained significant injuries. Even after the recovery, a prolonged period of recuperation will be essential."

Jean nodded slightly in acknowledgment.

Returning to the ward, as Jean gazed at the fragile form of the woman resting in bed, his heart almost shattered.

He had no idea how he managed to get through the day.

Each moment felt like a precarious dance on the verge of collapse, each second threatening to plunge him into madness.

How he wished for the woman to open her eyes at that moment, look him in the eye, and tell him she was okay and that it was all just a dream.

Yet, the cruelest part was that this was not a nightmare but the harsh truth.

The woman, whom he held dear like a precious treasure, had endured profound harm.

Dwelling on what had happened seemed futile at this point.

The only thing he could do was be there for her, staying by her side and waiting for her to wake up.

As the night wore on, Jean's eyes reddened from sleep deprivation. Despite his exhaustion, he adamantly refused to rest, choosing instead to stay unwaveringly by Neera's side.

Yet, Neera's condition showed no signs of improvement.

The persistent high fever, unyielding even after administering fluids, stubbornly clung to a temperature of one hundred and two degrees.

Sensing something was wrong, Jean summoned the doctor once more.

However, aside from acknowledging the high fever, the doctor remained baffled and couldn't tell what went wrong.

Swallowing his anger, Jean stepped into the corridor, dialing a number.

As dawn painted the sky, Caleb appeared at the hospital and entered the ward.

Chad, taken aback, voiced his astonishment, "Mr. Medicina, what brings you here?"

Caleb nodded politely, his expression carrying a hint of gravity, and began to elucidate, "I received word of Ms. Neera's predicament. Given our past interactions and the responsibility entrusted to me by His Lordship to ensure her well-being, I came to check on her the moment I found out what had happened. Are her injuries severe? How is she doing now?"

Witnessing Caleb's genuine concern, Chad momentarily set aside his reservations and gestured toward the

sickbed. "She's been unconscious, suffering a persistent high fever that won't subside. The doctor is currently at a loss, unable to pinpoint the exact cause of the fever."

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