

Honey, You're a Billionaire?

Chapter 561 He Treats Rosie So Well

[1,254 words]

"Yes. You're right. This is the best outcome possible," Miles said, his voice as steady as ever as if nothing had changed. "I'm glad you're happy for Rosie. You don't have any objections to Grandpa's will, do you?" As he spoke, his eyes briefly flicked to Anastasia, who was still seated on the couch.

The news that Rose had inherited the entire Young family fortune would inevitably spread across Regalia, especially with the media present at the Xanth family banquet.

Although Chloe might not be aware yet, both Harriette and Anastasia had been there, so they were well-informed.

"None at all!" Harriette was quick to respond, her words bubbling out as if she were genuinely overjoyed.

"Grandpa took me in and gave me a home. I've always been so grateful for that. Any decision he made is the right one. "Besides, Rosie is Grandpa's real granddaughter, his bloodline. Everything in the Young family rightfully belongs to her!"

Her words were filled with so much sincerity that, if Miles hadn't already known she was an imposter, he might have believed her.

"What about you, Anastasia? What are your thoughts on this?" Harriette asked, trying to deflect the attention from herself for fear of her facade slipping. She swiftly turned to Anastasia, who was on the couch. In the brief moment when she turned her back to Rose and Miles, the joy on her face darkened, and her expression soured noticeably.

Anastasia witnessed the sudden shift and was momentarily taken aback. Harriette hadn't even bothered to hide her disdain. It was as if she didn't consider Anastasia worth the effort of pretending around. Feeling Miles' expectant gaze, Anastasia shrugged nonchalantly. "I have no objections either."

After all, there was nothing she could object to. Initially, she had contemplated claiming a share of the Young family's wealth.

However, she gradually realized that she couldn't outmaneuver Miles. His unwavering determination to honor Oliver's will and secure Rose's inheritance rendered any resistance futile.

Moreover, since Harriette's return, Anastasia had lost not only her opportunity to contest the will but also her status as the Young family's eldest daughter. Now, she was nothing more than a laughingstock within Regalia. Even armed with the knowledge of Harriette being an imposter, the repercussions had already taken their toll.

Her true identity had been exposed during that charity auction, where her deception of posing as the Young family's eldest daughter was revealed for all to see.

Even if the truth about Harriette was revealed, Anastasia knew she could never reclaim her status, so there was no point in resisting.

At this point, she was more interested in seeing how long this imposter Harriette, who was actually Kelly, could keep fooling Miles.

Her gaze briefly drifted toward Rose, and a faint smile crossed her lips. She was well aware of the complicated history between the Shaffer sisters.

A part of her regretted sharing the information about Harriette's true identity with Jonathan. She could have stayed on the sidelines and watched the drama unfold. Still, it was for the best. At the very least, Jonathan now owed her a favor. With a soft chuckle, Anastasia rose from the couch and headed upstairs, leaving nothing but her silhouette.

Harriette's eyes immediately narrowed as she caught the intentionally carefree laughter. She turned to Miles, feigning a pout.

"Miles, did you see that?" Then, shifting her attention to Rose, her tone turned soothing. "Rosie, don't let her upset you. Anastasia has been with Young Group for years and likely feels entitled to a share.

"It's understandable she's unhappy with Grandpa's decision, but her opinion holds no real weight."

Harriette's voice echoed throughout the hall. Anastasia could hear her but chose not to defend herself. She didn't even look back once and simply continued to her room upstairs.

Rose felt a strange sense of unease. She wasn't upset-not at Anastasia, at least. In fact, the laugh hadn't bothered her in the slightest. It was Harriette's reaction that left her feeling unsettled.

"I'm hungry," she suddenly stated. She had barely eaten anything at the banquet.

Rose was aware that Miles mentioning beef stew was an attempt to coax her back to the Young Estate, but at this moment, she genuinely craved the dish.

"You're hungry? Perfect timing! Mr. Miles had the kitchen prepare beef stew earlier. I'll have it brought out right away," Patrick said as he quickly set things in motion.

Rose's appetite was excellent that evening. She ate much more than usual, and Miles stayed by her side the entire time, gently serving her food with care and affection.

His attentiveness was palpable, and Harriette, sitting beside him, couldn't help but feel a twinge of jealousy.

"Miles, you really do treat Rosie well," she commented, resting her chin in her hand, her gaze a mix of feigned admiration and envy.

In the past, such a remark would have prompted Miles to swiftly balance his attention, serving Harriette a dish to appease her.

Yet, that evening, an unusual pause hung in the air. He didn't make any move, nor did he spare her a glance.

Harriette was momentarily stunned.

Just as she started pondering the reason behind this sudden shift, Miles finally scooped some of her favorite dishes and placed them on her plate.

"Etta, both you and Rosie are very dear to me," he said softly, his tone as warm and doting as ever.

Harriette's doubts melted away, her smile returning as she relished the food Miles had served. "You treat me very well, too, Miles!" she exclaimed, satisfaction evident in her voice.

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However, when she caught sight of Rose's contented smile, her inner turmoil resurfaced. She desperately wanted to ruin that smile and carry out the task Lizzie entrusted her with. She was already plotting how to achieve it, completely overlooking the significance of Miles' words.

"Etta, both you and Rosie are very dear to me," he had said. But Harriette wasn't the real Harriette.

After Rose finished her meal, she retired to her room to rest while Miles retreated to his quarters. Meanwhile, Harriette found herself standing before Anastasia's door.

Anastasia had already settled into bed when her phone chimed with a message from Harriette. "Open the door."

The words resonated like a command from a master to a servant.

Anastasia frowned and was initially unwilling to comply, but curiosity got the better of her. "What does this Kelly want now?" she wondered.

She opened the door, and Harriette slipped inside without hesitation before shutting the door behind her.

Leaning against the door, Harriette stared at Anastasia with an unguarded intensity. "You saw I wasn't happy earlier. Are you not going to tell Miles about it?"

She was referring to the look Anastasia had caught in the living room earlier, the fleeting glance that revealed Harriette's true emotions.

Naturally, Anastasia understood what Harriette meant. She met the woman's gaze, remarkably unafraid. "Tell him? Even if I did, do you think he'd believe me?" A smirk tugged at Harriette's lips. "Good. As long as you know that."

Her tone took on a warning edge as she added, "Remember, as long as I'm around, you'd do well to keep your head down. Don't even think about stirring up trouble." "Sure," Anastasia replied, her unbothered response taking Harriette by surprise.

Anastasia was only there to observe the drama, with no real intention of taking action. Her calm compliance left Harriette momentarily confused.

The lack of fear from their encounter at the temple left Harriette feeling unsatisfied. It was as if she had tried to scratch an itch but couldn't quite reach it.

Frustrated but unwilling to escalate the situation, she turned toward the door, ready to leave. Just as she reached for the handle, Anastasia's voice rang out from behind her.

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Chapter 562 As Expected

[1,217 words]

"Harriette..." Anastasia called out, stopping Harriette in her tracks.

Harriette turned around, meeting Anastasia's gaze. For a fleeting moment, she thought she caught a hint of mockery in Anastasia's gaze, but when she blinked, all she saw was the familiar timid, downtrodden expression she had come to expect. "Must've been my imagination," she thought. After all, Anastasia had never been worth her attention.

"Is there anything else?" she asked with a note of arrogance as she raised her chin. It was as if she was addressing an insignificant insect. Unfazed, Anastasia replied softly, "No. It's nothing."

Harriette frowned, irritation mounting as she studied Anastasia's face, finding only a meek submission that fueled her disdain. Had the hour not been late and Miles' room nearby, she would have loved to teach Anastasia a lesson right then and there. With a derisive huff, she turned and left the room without bothering to close the door.

Anastasia listened as Harriette's footsteps faded into her own room down the hall. A cold, mirthless smile crept across Anastasia's face as she reached out to close her door.

"How long could an impostor maintain the facade of the Young family's esteemed daughter?" she wondered. A bitter chuckle escaped her lips. "The higher you climb, the harder you'll fall..."

Returning to her bed, Anastasia found sleep elusive. Troubling dreams plagued her throughout the night. She saw the real Harriette-sometimes cold and distant like in their childhood, sometimes apologetic, uttering a soft "I'm sorry". However, the dream soon turned dark as the true Harriette transformed into the impostor, tearing off her disguise to reveal Kelly's menacing face.

"Anastasia, now that you know my secret, you must die!" Kelly hissed.

Gasping for air, Anastasia bolted upright, her skin slick with sweat and fear's icy grip constricting her throat. She fought to regain her composure, but panic clung to her like a shadow.

"No. This won't do..." she thought. She had initially planned to watch the chaos unfold from the sidelines, but things had changed.

Although she had already sent Jonathan the message revealing that Harriette was actually Kelly, she couldn't help but worry that Jonathan wouldn't believe her.

After all, the real Harriette, Jonathan, and Miles had shared a close bond, and if Miles was convinced that the impostor was truly Harriette, there was a chance that Jonathan might be swayed as well.

The realization made Anastasia even more restless. Sleep was impossible now, and she felt parched after all the tossing and turning. Grabbing her empty cup, she decided to go downstairs for some water.

The kitchen was dimly lit by the soft light of dawn creeping through the windows. She didn't bother turning on the lights as she quietly filled her cup, but as she lifted her gaze, a figure by the large window caught her attention. Startled, Anastasia nearly gasped aloud but quickly regained her composure upon recognizing the familiar silhouette.

"Miles?" she called out hesitantly.

When she didn't receive any response, she approached the figure with her cup of water in hand. Miles stood there staring at the sky. Holding his own cup of water, he seemed lost in his thoughts. "Should I tell Miles the truth about Harriette that she's really Kelly?" The notion crossed Anastasia's mind briefly before she hastily dismissed it.

She couldn't do it for she was sure that Miles wouldn't believe her. If she revealed her suspicions, she would only risk alienating him further. But perhaps she could plant the seed of doubt subtly enough to pique his curiosity. With furrowed brows, she took a sip of water, feeling her dry throat relax ever so slightly. She finally mustered the courage to speak.

"Miles, have you noticed anything strange about Harriette?"

Miles, who had been gazing out the window, suddenly stiffened. His piercing gaze locked onto Anastasia, making her heart skip a beat.

"What do you mean?" Miles asked slowly.

Now that she had broached the subject, Anastasia had to continue. "Well... it's just that...ever since Harriette returned, she seems different from before," she explained tentatively.

"So, even Anastasia had noticed something amiss," Miles thought bitterly. He couldn't believe how blind he had been.

From the moment Harriette returned, he had never doubted her identity. He had fully believed she was the real Harriette. But now, even Anastasia had sensed something strange about the woman.

His thoughts drifted back to that day

at Aurora Crest. "Had Etta really gotten lost? Or was it a deliberate act meant to separate me from

Rosie? it hadn't been for Elia net

If

who had accompanied Rosie-up the mountain, what could have happened to her? Would she have faced danger alone?"

The more Miles thought about it, the more guilt gnawed at him. If harm had befallen Rose that day, he knew he could never have forgiven himself.

"Thankfully, nothing happened..." he mused.

Miles was relieved that Jonathan was level-headed. Considering Jonathan's instructions, now was not the time to act rashly.

Despite his burning resentment toward the imposter Harriette, he understood the importance of maintaining appearances. He had to suppress his anger and continue protecting Harriette, just as he always had.

Miles' lips curled into a cold smile. "Don't think I don't know what you're up to, Anastasia."

Anastasia was taken aback. "What? Miles..." she tried to explain herself, but Miles didn't give her the chance.

"I know Etta's return has stripped you of your title as the eldest daughter of the Young family, leaving you humiliated. But that title was never yours to begin with. It has always belonged to Etta," Miles said, his tone growing sharper.

"For years, you've enjoyed the privileges that should've been hers.

Instead of being grateful, you harbor resentment now that she's back. Let me make one thing clear, Anastasia." His gaze narrowed, holding a warning. "If you dare to slander Etta again or lay a hand on her, I won't hesitate to make you regret it."

With those words, he turned on his heel and stormed out of the dining room, leaving Anastasia standing in stunned silence.

As the shock wore off, she let out a bitter laugh. How foolish she had been to expect anything else.

Miles' devotion to Harriette ran too deep for him to question her identity. He refused to entertain even the slightest possibility that the Harriette before him was an imposter. His trust in her was absolute.

"I guess this route is a dead end," Anastasia thought, sighing in disappointment. Just then, she heard a familiar raspy voice from outside the dining room.

"Miles, you're awake, too? I couldn't sleep either. Come on. Let's go to the rooftop and watch the city come alive, just like we used to when we were kids."

Anastasia's heart sank at the sound of the fake Harriette's voice. She couldn't help but wonder if the imposter had overheard her conversation with Miles. Miles responded in a low, somber tone, and Anastasia watched as the two made their way upstairs.

As they did, Harriette glanced in her direction, her gaze filled with a triumphant gleam as if to say, "See? No matter what you do, Miles will always stand by me". Harriette then turned to Miles, her gaze once again filled with the familiar warmth she wore so well in front of him.

She had heard every word Anastasia

had uttered in the dining room. A surge of pride welled up in her. Her performance had been flawless, and

she had Miles wrapped her

finger. He defended her

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unconditionally, with no inkling that the woman he doted on wasn't his real sister at all.

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Chapter 563 What Happened

[1,213 words]

Harriette was feeling incredibly pleased with herself, oblivious to the fact that the tables had now turned. Once the puppeteer, she was now the puppet.

Miles, on the other hand, was lost in thought. He was still reeling from Harriette's suggestion to go up to the rooftop like they used to do as children.

The real Harriette had loved early mornings. Every time she woke up early, she would go upstairs to watch the sunrise.

She used to say that her life before meeting Oliver had been like living in darkness, but his presence brought the light. Watching the sunrise was her reminder to appreciate each new day.

Miles had always known about her fondness for this ritual. Whenever she went to the rooftop, he made it a point to join her, even if they sat in silence, just waiting for the sky to transition from darkness to light.

"But how did the imposter Harriette know all of this?" The question had barely formed in his mind when he realized the answer.

"Lizzie! This imposter must have some connection to Lizzie. As for the things Lizzie had said on the rooftop last night..." "Etta..." Miles whispered, his thoughts consumed by his curiosity about what had truly happened to Harriette all those years ago.

Startled by his sudden voice, Harriette turned toward him. "What is it, Miles?" she asked, her raspy tone pulling Miles back to the present.

Realizing he had let his thoughts slip, he quickly composed himself, his gaze softening as he looked at Harriette. "I'm just glad you're back."

Harriette smiled brightly in response. "Back?" she thought. She liked the sound of that. It was good to be back, and it would be even better if she could get what she truly wanted.

As she redirected her gaze to the sky, Miles's expression changed. The warmth in his eyes dissipated in an instant.

"Indeed. It's good that she's back," he thought.

If this fake Harriette hadn't returned, the truth about what happened to the real Harriette might have remained forever buried. But now, he saw a glimmer of hope, a chance to uncover the answers he desperately sought. As the sky brightened, the two of them sat side by side, consumed by their own thoughts.

As the sun rose, news spread like wildfire across various media outlets. The headlines were all focused on one person-Rose.

"The former CEO of Lerain Group and legendary figure of the Xanth family has found his long-lost biological daughter!"

"Mr. Miles of the Young family announces the late Mr. Young Senior's will. The entire fortune to be inherited by his biological granddaughter!"

"The Xanth family's daughter is named Rose..."

"The Young family's granddaughter is also named Rose..."

In no time, the internet was buzzing with talk of this "Rose", the woman everyone now considered to be the luckiest person in Regalia. Her name was on everyone's lips, from the city's elites to everyday people. The consensus was clear-Rose was now undoubtedly the wealthiest and most powerful heiress in all of Regalia.

"Rosie! Is it true? The Rose they're talking about online... It's you, isn't it?" Yvonne's voice crackled over the phone.

Rose had just finished getting ready when Yvonne called, her voice filled with disbelief despite having pieced together Rose's connections to both the Young and Xanth families.

"Rosie's background is unbelievable!" Yvonne thought.

"Yes, it's me," Rose replied softly, a tinge of guilt in her voice. She hadn't returned to the villa in Royal Garden the previous night, leaving Yvonne there alone.

"Good heavens, Rosie!" Yvonne gasped, practically losing her composure. "This is unbelievable! Do you even know what they're saying? You're being called the wealthiest woman in all of Regalia, and it's all true!" Her excitement only grew as she continued, "Although I don't know much about Lerain Group, I could tell from Clover's demeanor that he's no ordinary man.

"It all makes sense now! No wonder he's always treated you so well-he's your cousin! Did he know all along that you were his biological cousin?"

After asking this question, she finally calmed down and waited silently for Rose's response.

Rose paused, reflecting on the previous day's events. "No, I don't think he knew from the start."

Yvonne squealed again, her voice piercing Rose's ears. "Oh my goodness! That's even more incredible! If he treated you so well without knowing you were his cousin, imagine how things will be now!" Rose's thoughts drifted to Clover. He had indeed always treated her kindly. With this newfound familial bond, she felt like she and Clover had grown even closer.

"And then there's the Young family..." Yvonne continued, "Miles is truly remarkable. He could've easily kept the entire fortune to himself, but he chose to hand it all over to you instead."

Rose couldn't help but agree. Miles could have hidden the will and claimed the vast inheritance. Yet, he had chosen to reveal everything.

The weight of that gesture settled heavily in her heart as she wondered how she could ever repay such kindness.

Yvonne chattered on, her excitement palpable. It was as if her best friend's newfound prominence meant they would both soar to new heights. Rose could tell she was genuinely happy for her. After hanging up, Yvonne remained exhilarated. Sitting in her wheelchair, she looked down at her phone, still smiling.

"This is really wonderful," she whispered, her words full of sincerity.

"It is," Evan agreed, sitting on the couch nearby. He had seen that day's trending topic online as well.

The news was everywhere-Rose

was now the heiress of both the Lerain Group and the Young family, her status elevated beyond comprehension. He couldn't ignore the vast distance between their lives, and a shadow of sadness crept into his eyes.

As Yvonne lifted her head, she just happened to see his expression.

"Evan," she suddenly said. "You're a wonderful person, and so is Rosie. But sometimes, fate decides the ties between people."

She was well aware of her brother's long-standing feelings for Rose, but fate had a way of being unpredictable.

"I know Rosie is amazing. I've always wanted the best for her. I see her as a sister, just like you do." Evan managed a smile, his words filled with genuine sincerity.

He had long known that there was no future for him and Rose. With Dawn in the picture, his guilt toward Rose had only deepened.

"It's good that you can think that way, Evan. Speaking of which, Dawn called me yesterday..." Yvonne shifted the conversation abruptly.

She wasn't close to Dawn. During the time she was bedridden, Dawn had visited her a few times, but Evan had always been present. They had never spent time alone together, nor had they exchanged phone numbers. Yvonne didn't know how Dawn had

found her number, but she was caught off guard when she received a tearful and nearly hysterical call from Dawn. Despite Yvonne's questioning, Dawn wouldn't reveal what had happened. "Evan, what exactly is going on with you and Dawn?"

Yvonne could tell that Evan didn't

like Dawn. They had gotten married out of a sense of responsibility because of their child. But after returning from Aquasteed, where they were supposed to be married, Evan had become despondent.

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"I asked Mom and Dad, but they wouldn't say anything. I don't think you have any reason to hide it from me, do you? Look, I'm all better. now!" she said as she tried to stand up, hoping to convince Evan that she was truly okay.

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Chapter 564 Public Assault

[1,307 words]

Yvonne had genuinely regained her strength. However, the moment she managed to stand, Evan instinctively rushed to her side, a hint of concern lingering in his eyes as he held onto her arm. "Look, Evan!" she exclaimed with pride, eager to show off her progress. She then playfully pressed, "Now, tell me everything. Come on!"

Evan looked at his sister, and for the first time, he began to open up about his relationship with Dawn. "I got to know Dawn because of Rose."

Yvonne knew that Dawn and Rose were acquainted, but she hadn't realized that her brother's connection to Dawn had also begun because of Rose.

Upon seeing the surprise on her face, Evan gestured for her to sit and continued his tale.

"I've been fond of Rose for a long time. I knew about her design talent, so I used my position as K&K's design director to ask for her help with creating dresses. In reality, I had selfish motives-I wanted to create opportunities to be around her. "Despite knowing she was engaged to Nixon, I couldn't fight my feelings. When I heard they had broken

off their engagement, I returned to Aquastead immediately. I thought my chance had finally come. Alas, it was already too late." Yvonne understood that there was already another man in Rose's life by then.

Evan continued, "I later found out that Nixon had set up Rose that night, using one of her former scholarship students as leverage. That student was Dawn."

He paused, the memory clearly weighing on him. "I had no real connection with Dawn back then, but that night... I got drunk."

He had no memory of what happened after that, but in the morning, he woke up to the sound of Dawn's tearful voice. That was when he knew he had made a terrible mistake.

"Dawn said it was an accident and that she wouldn't hold it against me, but..." Evan let out a bitter laugh.

Yvonne understood her brother well. Even if Dawn had truly forgiven him, Evan wouldn't be able to let go of the guilt. He was the type of person who would take responsibility, and that was precisely what he did.

"She got pregnant that very night, and I only discovered this by accident. After that, I proposed to her. I thought that I would marry her, settle down, and we would just live out our lives together."

As Evan spoke, his tone remained calm, but Yvonne could sense the profound sadness hidden within his words.

Yvonne recalled that Evan had rarely contacted her during that time. "Could he be avoiding something?" she wondered.

Evan's mention of the accidental discovery stirred an odd feeling in her, and a question surfaced in her mind. "Was it truly an accidental discovery? Or did someone intentionally lead him to it?" Yvonne remained silent, but soon Evan provided the answer.

"Later, Dawn had a miscarriage. We went back to Aquastead to get married, but I uncovered the truth during that trip.

"It turns out that I didn't do anything that night. The child she was carrying wasn't even mine..." Evan's lips curled into a bitter smile as if he saw himself as nothing more than a joke.

It was because of this that he missed the opportunity to pursue Rose. Not only that...

He hesitated for a moment before revealing the truth he hadn't told Rose that day. "Rose was on Ebot Road the night of her car accident because of Dawn. Dawn claimed

she ended up there after an argument with me. "Distressed, she had hopped into a cab that mistakenly took her to Ebbott Road. But how could it have been a mere coincidence? I didn't want to think about it back then... or maybe I was just too scared to."

Upon hearing this, realization struck Yvonne. "Rosie's accident..."

A surge of anger swelled within her. Initially, she had believed that Dawn was simply someone she wasn't close to yet, and with time, they would warm up to each other. But now she realized that Dawn had never had good intentions. "So, you and Dawn..." Yvonne already knew the answer. There was no way Evan would marry Dawn after learning the truth.

Sure enough, Evan said, "We went through with the marriage registration and ceremony, but now... we're in the process of getting divorced. Regardless, I'll make sure she's financially secure for the rest of her life." However, that was all he could do.

As Evan shared his story, a weight seemed to lift off his shoulders, and Yvonne could feel his relief.

Although it was Dawn who had

initially deceived him, he still planned to compensate her and ensure she could live worry-free. His actions demonstrated the utmost generosity and justice. However...

"Will Dawn agree to this?" Yvonne murmured, her tone laced with uncertainty. Realizing her words might be disheartening, she quickly added, "She should agree. After all,

she's the one at fault."

A shadow of doubt crossed Evan's eyes. In truth, he wasn't as optimistic as Yvonne about Dawn's willingness to agree.

Meanwhile, after breakfast at the Young Estate, Miles informed Rose that she would need to join him at the company to handle some formalities as the heiress to the Young Group.

The sheer scope of the Young

family's business empire, which spanned across various industries left Rose feeling overwhelmed. She couldn't help but wonder if she was truly capable of managing such a vast enterprise.

"Miles, could we..." she started to plead, but Miles cut her off before she could finish, firmly stating, "No."

Rose's face fell, her expression defeated. Miles looked at her and chuckled, his tone filled with warmth. "Don't worry. No matter what happens, I'll always be here to support you." Indeed, he would always have her back.

Something clicked in Rose's mind, and her eyes brightened. "You'll help me no matter what, right?"

"Of course," Miles affirmed. "Who else would I help?"

A mischievous sparkle danced in Rose's eyes. "Let's get going then."

Since there was no avoiding the inevitable trip to the company, she chose to face the challenge head-on.

As the Young family car arrived at the Young Group headquarters, an unmistakable commotion was already stirring on the top floor of the building.

Tension permeated the vast office floor as every employee moved with cautious trepidation, eager to avoid the fiery temper of the woman seated at the center. Employees scurried past, keen to escape her notice, while the lone receptionist stayed near, anxiously attending to her with a fresh cup of coffee.

"Has anyone informed Mr. Miles about this?" a hushed voice inquired from the secretarial department.

Having just concluded a call with Miles, an assistant recalled his directives and promptly addressed the office, "Everyone, just focus on your own tasks." Yet, the words had barely left the assistant's mouth when a sharp slap reverberated through the room, followed by an enraged shout.

"How dare you spill coffee on me? Are you trying to burn me?"

The person speaking was none other than Chloe.

Chloe's presence at the Young Group's headquarters was a rarity, but she had barged in with a storm of fury that day.

Everyone present knew that her sudden appearance must have been spurred by the news circulating in the media about the "heiress".

Her actions left no doubt that she was vehemently displeased with the news, and now, she was venting her pent-up fury on the staff.

The receptionist, still reeling from the sting of the slap, fought back tears as she managed a meek apology.

"I-I'm sorry, Mrs. Yones..."

But before she could finish, Chloe delivered another slap, the resounding smack echoing through the office, causing a collective wince among the employees.

"What did you just call me?" Chloe seethed, her anger unrelenting.

Over the past few weeks, she had been fiercely contesting Miles for control of the Young family assets, but her efforts had been repeatedly thwarted, leaving her harboring a well of anger. Now, with everyone seemingly disregarding her after the news of the "heiress" surfaced, that anger threatened to boil over.

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Chapter 565 Rose Is So Cool

[1,241 words]

The receptionist couldn't help but feel aggrieved. She had always addressed Chloe as "Mrs. Yones", so she couldn't understand why today was any different.

Realizing that any misstep could lead to greater trouble, the receptionist was at a loss for what to do. Unfortunately, her moment of hesitation further enraged Chloe, who raised her hand once more, ready to strike. However, a firm grip caught Chloe's wrist before the blow could land.

Everyone in the office froze momentarily before letting out a sigh of relief when they saw who had intervened. It was Miles, who had just stepped out of the elevator.

They started to rejoice at Miles' timely presence when their attention shifted to the woman who had grabbed Chloe's wrist. Someone with sharp eyes soon recognized her.

"M-Ms. Shaffer?"

The woman in question was none other than Rose, whose name was currently plastered all over the media. Not only was she Oliver's biological granddaughter, but she was also the rightful heiress to the Young Group. "Don't you think it's inappropriate to hit someone in public?" Rose locked eyes with Chloe.

She had seen Chloe before and knew that the woman was Gabriel's mother. Rose remembered her from the staged funeral in Aquastead, where Chloe had shown a keen interest in the Young Group's inheritance. Clearly, Chloe was here that day because of the news. Earlier, Rose had barely stepped out of the elevator when she saw Chloe raising her hand to strike someone. Instinctively, she rushed out to intervene.

Glancing at the terrified woman, Chloe furrowed her brows slightly.

"So what if I hit her?" Chloe retorted, showing no remorse. "This receptionist can't even perform a simple task like serving coffee. Clearly, she hasn't been properly trained.

"She almost burned me today. What if she scalded an important client tomorrow? I was just trying to teach her a lesson."

Despite her attempts to rationalize her behavior, her words were evidently nothing more than a thinly veiled excuse for venting her anger.

Rose had never liked Chloe, and at that moment, she found the woman's attitude even more distasteful.

"Oh, is that so?" she responded with a faint smile. "It seems like she isn't quite suited for the receptionist role then."

Turning to the assaulted receptionist, she asked, "Do you have any other skills?"

"Do I have any other skills?" the receptionist thought as she hesitated. "... I majored in design..." she finally replied.

The receptionist had recently graduated, and her ambition had always been to join Young Group's design team. However, the competitive recruitment process had made it challenging.

Thankfully, her appearance had granted her an advantage, landing her the receptionist position. She hoped that with hard work and dedication, she could eventually transition into a design role through internal recruitment. But now, having crossed Chloe, she feared that even this job could be at risk.

Clutching her sore cheek, she was worrying about her future when Rose's clear and pleasant voice rang out.

"Perfect! Starting today, you'll be transferred to Young's House of Jewels as the assistant to the design director."

Although Rose wasn't familiar with the design director, she understood that if the receptionist had a design background, this role would provide the best opportunity for

her to learn, grow, and advance within the company. The entire office fell into stunned silence. They couldn't help but wonder if they had misheard Rose.

"You can head to HR to process your transfer paperwork," Rose added with a soft smile.

The warmth of her smile snapped the receptionist out of her daze.

"Ms. Shaffer..." She couldn't believe her ears. Not only was she not being fired, but she was being offered the opportunity to work as the design director's assistant.

Still in shock, she saw that Rose had already turned away, seemingly focused on more pressing matters. Realizing she shouldn't interrupt, she quickly swallowed her words and stepped back.

Chloe's anger boiled over as she witnessed the receptionist leaving. She spun around to confront Rose. "Rose, what do you think you're doing?"

"Oh, nothing. I was just following your advice. She's clearly not suited for the front desk," Rose replied calmly.

Chloe was rendered speechless. "She's taking my advice? Yeah, right. This is more like a blatant insult!" she fumed inwardly.

Her expression darkened further, and she tried to yank her wrist free from Rose's grip, but to no avail. She shot Rose a venomous glare. "Let go!"

With a casual shrug, Rose released her grip and then deliberately wiped her hand with a tissue. The sight of it only caused Chloe's fury to escalate. "Rose, you—"

Before she could finish her outburst, Miles cut her off. "Aunt Chloe, what brings you here?"

Reminded of her purpose, Chloe dove right into the issue at hand. "Oliver is gone, and suddenly, a granddaughter, along with a suspicious will, emerges out of nowhere. Who knows if any of it is real?"

whoel

Miles had anticipated this confrontation and was fully prepared.

He began, "Aunt Chloe, since you have concerns about their legitimacy, please follow me." He then gestured toward the conference room.

Chloe followed his gaze and gave a cold snort before marching toward the conference room without another word.

"Rosie," Miles called gently, his tone softening as he turned to Rose.

Rose recognized the cue. They joined Chloe in the conference room while murmurs of admiration followed them.

"That was so cool!"

"Ms. Shaffer is incredible!"

"Did you see how she stood up for Olivia? That was absolutely amazing!"

The receptionist, Olivia Lenner, had been the object of sympathy when she was being bullied earlier. But now, every single person in the office was filled with envy.

"Did Ms. Shaffer really say Olivia would be transferred to be the design director's assistant?" someone whispered.

"Of course! Why would she lie about that?" came the response.

"But the design director is Ms. Harriette. Will she even agree to this?"

When Harriette returned, Miles had offered her a position in the Young Group. After deliberating over various roles, she finally settled on the position of design director for Young's House of Jewels. Despite her questionable design taste-which even some non-designers found hard to appreciate Miles had let her hold that position due to their relationship.

"It doesn't matter if she agrees or not. Right now, the entire Young Group belongs to Ms. Shaffer. Her word is equivalent to a decree within the company."

"I'm so jealous of Olivia. She went from receptionist to design director's assistant. That's like a rocket-fueled promotion!"

"If I had known this would happen, I'd have gladly volunteered to be the one bullied!"

As the office buzzed with chatter, it was clear that they were not only envious of Olivia but also in awe of Rose. Many had already made up their minds to stay on her good side and impress her at every opportunity.

Meanwhile, Harriette had arrived at the company early that morning. She had seen Chloe coming and fully expected her to stir up trouble, but things hadn't gone as expected.

Harriette scowled silently, her gaze sweeping over the employees, who were now praising Rose, before shifting irritably toward the conference room.

"Chloe isn't going to let Rose inherit Young Group without a fight. I'm sure taking over the company wouldn't be easy for Rose," she thought as her lips curled into a cold smile.

Inside the conference room, Chloe's

expression changed when she saw

the people seated there. The room was filled with some of Young Group's most influential figures, including several of Oliver's most

trusted confidants.

She had been at the office early, monitoring Miles' actions. Yet, somehow, she hadn't seen these key players arrive.

Her face darkened, for she hadn't expected Miles to be so well-prepared.

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Chapter 566 Any Objections

[1,125 words]

Miles had indeed planned everything in advance.

The guests present had arrived before dawn, all waiting patiently because he had shared a crucial piece of information with them-Rose would be joining them that day.

Unaware of these arrangements, Chloe grew increasingly agitated as she surveyed the room. However, upon recognizing the faces of the distinguished elders present, she swiftly forced a smile. "Mr. Yardley, Mr. Langster, Mr. Cox..." Although these gentlemen had long retired and no longer held significant shares in Young Group, their close friendship with Oliver made them highly respected figures.

As Chloe spoke, they rose from their seats and made their way toward her. She paused for a moment, assuming they were approaching to greet her, and extended her hand for a handshake.

But to her astonishment, the elders merely brushed past her, leaving her outstretched hand awkwardly suspended in midair, her forced smile frozen in place.

The words she heard next compounded her discomfort.

"You must be Rosie! What a beautiful young lady. I'm Irvin Yardley. I held your mother when she was a baby."

"You old coot, why would you bring that up? Rietta never liked you, you know? Don't you remember she once peed on you? Rosie, I'm Campbell Cox, and let me tell you, I was your mom's favorite!"

"Rosie, I'm Luka Langster. I remember thinking you looked familiar during Oliver's funeral, and now I know why-you're Rietta's daughter. This is simply wonderful!"

These elders were all well past their 70s. Usually stern with their grandchildren, they were all smiles that day, their faces beaming with affection as they looked at Rose.

Their warmth left Rose momentarily flustered, but she quickly regained her composure and understood that they must be Oliver's dearest friends.

"Mr. Yardley, Mr. Cox, Mr. Langster," she politely greeted them, her face brightening with a genuine smile.

"What a good child you are!" The elders nodded approvingly, following up with a barrage of compliments about Rose being adorable and how they would love to have her as their granddaughter.

Meanwhile, Chloe, who had been completely ignored, felt her anger reaching a boiling point. She couldn't believe that everyone was so quick to accept Rose as Oliver's granddaughter.

While the elders might have accepted Rose, Chloe certainly didn't. "So, some random woman shows up, and just because someone says she's Oliver's granddaughter, that makes it true?" she questioned skeptically. The three elders frowned, their eyes narrowing. Irvin was the first to speak up. "There's a DNA report, and we saw it ourselves. How could it be fake?"

Chloe smirked. "Maybe you're unaware, but when Oliver was alive, he found another woman and even conducted a DNA test on her. The report showed that she was related to the Young family by blood, but guess what?" She paused, her smile widening. "It turns out that she wasn't his granddaughter, and there was no real blood connection. Even Oliver was fooled. And now you all..."

Although Chloe didn't finish her sentence, the implication was clear-if Oliver could be deceived, so could they.

Her mocking tone didn't sit well with the three elders.

Eventually, Luka spoke up. "Rosie's eyes are identical to Rietta's. That can't be a coincidence, right?"

Chloe scoffed at the notion. "You're basing this on her eyes? Oliver adopted two girls, Harriette and Anastasia, both of whom had eyes similar to Rietta's. Are you saying they're all related to the Young family?" It was Rose's eyes that initially convinced Oliver of her lineage, and as Chloe examined them once more, a flicker of doubt crossed her mind.

Campbell also studied Rose's eyes and shook his head in disagreement with Chloe's argument. "We've met all the girls. Sure, Harriette and Anastasia's eyes resemble Rietta's, but they lack the same spirit. "Rosie, on the other hand, possesses an uncanny likeness, not just in appearance, but in spirit as well. It's as if she's a perfect reflection of Rietta. If that's not the result of genetics, then what is?"

"Exactly. Rosie is Rietta's daughter and Oliver's granddaughter. There's no doubt about it."

"Indeed, I've seen countless people at my age, and I'm certain Rosie is Oliver's biological granddaughter!"

Their unwavering conviction left Chloe's doubts feeling as futile as punching at the air.

Chloe's rage was reaching a boiling point. "These stubborn old fools!" she fumed inwardly.

"There's something else you all should know," she snapped. "The woman who previously pretended to be Oliver's granddaughter was named Kelly, and she's Rose's sister!"

The three elders frowned, clearly taken aback by this revelation.

Then, Luka turned to Miles. "Isn't Rosie the daughter of Lerain Group's Xanth family?"

Miles, who had been silent since entering the room, finally spoke up, uttering just one word. "Yes."

Campbell raised an eyebrow. "Does the Xanth family have two daughters, then?"

Miles answered, "No. Just one."

Irvin concluded, "Well, then, there's no problem!"

Chloe blinked in disbelief. "No problem? How could they just brush it off so easily?" she thought.

Luka and Campbell exchanged a knowing glance before nodding in agreement. "Exactly. Kelly and Rosie aren't biological sisters. Since Kelly is the fake one, that makes Rosie the real granddaughter!"

Chloe felt as though her heart would burst from frustration. She wanted to protest, to make them see how

absurd their reasoning was, but

before she could even get the

words

out, Luka had taken Rose by the arm

and was leading her to the main

seat at the conference table.

Irvin stood to the side, his face grave as he addressed the room, "Young Group is Oliver's legacy and belongs to the Young family.

"You've all had the chance to

thoroughly examine his will and the DNA test confirming Rose's lineage, both of which have been verified by our legal experts and found to be devoid of any forgery.

"Henceforth, Rose will lead the Young family and assume her rightful position as head of the Young Group. If anyone has any objections, speak up now!"

His sharp gaze swept over everyone present.

Just then, Campbell's voice boomed, amplifying the challenge. "Speak up if you have any objections!"

The room fell into an intimidating hush. None dared to have any objections. Even if doubts lingered, fear stifled their voices.

Besides, everyone had thoroughly examined the documents and found them authentic, without any signs of forgery.

"Ms. Shaffer, I am Andy from Young Group's business division. I shall work tirelessly to serve the company and support you in every way possible."

"Ms. Shaffer, I am Misha from Young Group's legal department. I shall do my best to handle all legal matters for the company and for you."

"Ms. Shaffer, I am..."

"Ms. Shaffer..."

One by one, the people in the room introduced themselves and proclaimed their allegiance to Rose. It was as if they had rehearsed the whole sequence in advance.

The sight of these middle-aged men, many in their 40s and 50s, humbling themselves before a young woman who was barely in her 20s was nothing short of shameless flattery. Chloe was fuming, her head throbbing with anger.

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- Chapter 567 Officially Taking Over Young Group

Chapter 567 Officially Taking Over Young Group

[1,153 words]

The scene unfolding before Chloe was a blatant display of people desperately trying to curry favor with Rose.

"I have an objection!" she nearly shouted.

The previously orderly introductions in the conference room came to an abrupt halt with Chloe's outburst, and for a moment, the room fell silent. However, almost instantly, the introductions resumed one after another as if the interruption had never occurred.

Chloe couldn't believe they were actually ignoring her. After all, she was the sole second-generation member of the Young family left.

"How dare they act as though I'm invisible? This is outrageous!" she thought.

Determined to regain control of the situation, Chloe raised her voice even louder. "I said I have an objection! Didn't you hear me?"

Still, the introductions continued without interruption, as though no one had heard her.

"Stop! I said stop it! Everyone, stop right now!" Chloe's voice took on a desperate edge as she gritted her teeth.

Just then, the door to the conference room swung open. The person entering seemed to be in a hurry, pushing the door with more force than intended, causing a loud bang.

The sudden noise caught everyone's attention, and the introductions finally came to a halt.

For a fleeting moment, Chloe believed that her protests had finally managed to break through the chaos. Her gaze remained fixed on the scene before her, not noticing that everyone else had already turned their attention toward the entrance. Gabriel stood in the doorway, momentarily frozen as he took in the scene.

Although he wasn't involved in managing Young Group, he recognized many of the key figures present, including his grandfather's old friends-Irvin, Campbell, and Luka. But what caught his attention the most was Rose, who was seated in the most prominent position.

He had already heard about the rumors circulating in Regalia that day, and now it was clear that the conference room discussion was about something significant. There, amidst it all, was his mother, Chloe.

His face tightened with unease as he quickly made his way toward Chloe.

Meanwhile, the woman in question remained oblivious to Gabriel's arrival. Before he could call out to her, Miles' voice echoed across the room.

"Aunt Chloe, I'm only addressing you respectfully because you're Grandpa's adopted daughter. I'm willing to overlook the disturbance you caused just now, but you'd better

stop testing my patience. "Otherwise, we'll have to discuss the numerous Young family assets under your management that have quietly transitioned to the Yones name."

Chloe bristled at the word "disturbance", but her face paled as she understood the implications of Miles' words. Panic surged within her as she met his gaze.

"All those covert actions I took over the years to transfer assets, things even Oliver never noticed-has Miles uncovered it all?" she mused.

"Miles, you..." she began.

She thought maybe he was bluffing. Perhaps he knew but didn't have evidence. However, a hand seized her wrist before she could finish her sentence, and she spun around to see Gabriel. Confused, she asked, "What are you doing here?"

Gabriel didn't bother explaining how he ended up in the conference room. Instead, he urgently whispered, "Mom, something's happened..."

Not wanting to air their issues publicly, he leaned closer to Chloe's ear and spoke softly enough that no one else could hear. Nevertheless, his words visibly shook Chloe, turning her face deathly pale. Without waiting for Gabriel to finish, Chloe stormed out of the conference room, seething with rage. Silence hung heavy in her wake.

Gabriel shot a disapproving glance at Miles, initially furious at how harshly Miles had handled things. However, his heart wavered when he caught Rose's gentle and kind smile.

He paused for a moment, then gave Rose a slightly awkward nod before quickly turning and leaving the conference room.

Irvin was the first to break the silence in the room. "Ha ha ha! Oliver must finally be at peace now. Rosie, if you ever need anything, just say the word.

"We're a few years younger than your grandfather and still in good shape. We've got a few more years left in us, so don't hesitate to ask for help."

Luka nodded. "That's right. You're Oliver's cherished granddaughter. With you at the helm, Young Group will be in capable hands."

Campbell added, "Rosie, our doors are always open even if you don't need anything. We're retired now and have plenty of time on our hands. It'd be nice to chat with you whenever you're free." The three men shared a hearty laugh, and Rose couldn't help but feel grateful for their support.

Standing up, she bowed respectfully to each of them. "Thank you, Mr. Yardley, Mr. Langster, Mr. Cox. I promise to come and bother you as often as I can."

"Ha ha ha... Please do! We look forward to it!"

Their laughter echoed throughout the conference room, even reaching beyond its doors.

Outside, Harriette had been eagerly listening for signs of commotion, hoping that Chloe would create a scene significant enough to strip Rose of her inheritance rights.

However, the soundproof walls left her waiting in uncertainty. Finally, she witnessed Chloe emerge with a grim expression, hurrying away as if rushing to extinguish a house fire.

Chloe's expression clearly did not

look like someone who had gained the upper hand. Shortly after, Gabriel followed her out, and the door to the conference room opened a crack, allowing the laughter of the elderly men to seep out.

A while later, the three older gentlemen emerged.

Having diligently researched the Young Group, Harriette recognized these influential figures. Although, the three no longer held official

company positions, they still net

welded

considerable power within its affairs.

She wondered when they had arrived and what had occurred in the conference room. She couldn't deduce the situation, but the cheerful expressions on their faces hinted that things might not be favorable. Just then, a secretary from Miles' office approached her. "Ms. Harriette, your presence is requested in the conference room."

Harriette's heart skipped a beat, but she quickly regained her composure. "I'll be right there."

This was her chance to find out what had transpired in the conference room.

Pushing open the door, she was startled by the number of people inside. Just like Chloe before her, she couldn't help but wonder when they had arrived.

Before she could ponder further, Miles' voice broke through her thoughts. "Etta, please take a seat."

"Okay." Harriette conjured her trademark smile with effortless grace, seamlessly transitioning into her well-practiced role. "Miles, I saw Aunt Chloe leaving in a huff

earlier. Did something happen?" Rather than addressing her concern, Miles simply smiled and explained, "The heads of Young Group's various subsidiaries have been informed of Grandpa's will.

"Since you were already aware of the

details yesterday, your presence

wasn't necessary earlier. However

now that Rosie is formally taking

over Young Group, I thought it's appropriate for everyone to gather."

"So, Rose is officially taking the reins of Young Group! It appeared that Chloe's outburst had been futile after all. How useless!" Harriette mused.

Though she secretly mocked Chloe in her mind, her face maintained a warm and supportive smile. "Congratulations, Rosie! Don't worry. We'll all be here to help you!"

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Chapter 568 He Is Leaving

[1,233 words]

Harriette's eyes radiated warmth and kindness, yet her words came across as ironic to Miles.

"Help her? How exactly will she help?" he wondered skeptically. If it weren't for Jonathan's plan, he would never allow this imposter Harriette near Rose. However, some concessions had to be made for the scheme's success. Not wanting Rose to endure more insincerity, Miles shifted the conversation. "Rosie, now that you've officially taken over Young Group, my task is complete."

Rose glanced at Miles, noticing a hint of relief in his expression as if a heavy burden had been lifted. The notion of a burden caught her attention.

"Miles, I'm not adept at managing a company, let alone one as vast as Young Group. I accept Grandpa's will, but I'd prefer a nominal role. It's better if you continue to make decisions for the company," she confessed earnestly. This was her honest sentiment. Even after inheriting Young Group, she didn't see it as solely hers.

Miles' smile was tinged with weariness as he responded, "Rosie, I'm tired."

Despite his gentle expression, his exhaustion was evident. It finally dawned on Rose how tirelessly he had worked to ensure that Young Group was handed over to her completely. "Miles..." she began, her voice echoing with guilt and worry.

Feigning concern, Harriette joined in. "Miles does look tired. Rosie, stop making things harder for him. Let him rest for a while. After all, you still have us to help during this period."

Of course, by "us", Harriette meant herself, although she refrained from being too explicit. Just as she hoped, Miles seamlessly followed up with, "Etta will also assist you."

This was precisely what she wanted to hear. "I'll do everything in my power to help, Rosie. After all, Grandpa took me in all those years ago, and I haven't been able to repay his kindness. Assisting you would be my way of honoring him."

Her words rang earnestly and sincerely, yet Rose felt an inexplicable sense of unease. There was something oddly familiar about it, but she couldn't quite put her finger on what it was.

Ultimately, Miles declared his intention to take a break, handing over all major and minor decisions of Young Group to Rose.

Simultaneously, he also granted Harriette a title second only to Rose's, giving her a degree of power that made her momentarily lose herself in the illusion of authority.

She thought that perhaps maintaining this status quo wouldn't be terrible. However, upon recalling Lizzie's instructions and her true identity, Harriette quickly snapped out of her reverie. "Madam wanted Rose dead, and as for me..." her thoughts trailed off.

Scanning the conference room, Harriette observed the Young Group executives gazing at Rose with admiration and reverence, acknowledging her undeniable authority.

Outside the conference room, it was no different. The employees looked upon Rose with awe and wonder. As for Harriette, despite holding a high position, Rose's presence made her feel invisible. At that moment, an intense desire filled her heart. She wished for Rose to disappear so that she could take her place.

Perhaps it was the illusion created by her new title as Rose's second-in-command, but a dangerous idea began to take root in Harriette's mind.

"If I could somehow isolate Rose and arrange for an accident to befall her, wouldn't I become the sole heiress? After all, Miles decided to distance himself from the company's affairs, didn't he?"

Driven by these thoughts, she cast a furtive glance at Miles, only to realize that he was looking back at her. Their eyes met, but both of them instantly masked their true emotions and exchanged smiles.

Feeling slightly anxious, Harriette desperately tried to hide her racing heartbeat behind her forced smile. But amidst her unease, she failed to notice the chilling wariness in Miles' gaze, which lingered on her just before he returned her friendly smile. She walked up to Miles before affectionately looping her arm through his.

"Miles, I never imagined Rosie would be held in such high regard within the company!" she exclaimed, her tone laced with admiration.

Along with the admiration was genuine happiness for Rose, but Miles knew that the admiration part wasn't real.

"Rosie has a natural talent for winning people over, no matter where she is. She's true member of the Young family, all right." Miles' gaze shifted to Rose, his expression filled with genuine fondness.

This only intensified the discomfort in Harriette's heart.

"A true member of the Young family?"

So what if she is? With Oliver dead and Celeste gone, all the true members of the Young family are already lost. If Rose were to

disappear too, no one would elect

Id be left

to claim that title," she thought.

"Miles, how are you planning on spending your break?" Harriette turned her gaze to Miles, feigning nonchalance as if she were asking a simple question between siblings, effectively masking her attempt to probe for information.

Miles appeared to have everything planned out. "Do you remember the island we visited on our first trip abroad as kids?"

"An island?" Harriette mused as she quickly scanned the memories she had been provided. Nowhere in the information she had memorized was there mention of any island.

However, since Miles brought it up, she thought it must have been something beyond Lizzie's knowledge.

Harriette had no reason to doubt him and quickly nodded. "I do. Are you planning to go there?"

"Yes. I'll be able to relax there." Miles suppressed the smirk that threatened to surface. There was no island-he had fabricated the entire story on the spot.

Unaware of how foolish she appeared, Harriette leaned against Miles' arm and said coquettishly, "Miles, take all the time you need to rest. Don't worry about Rosie or Young Group. I'll take care of everything." Indeed, she would take good care of everything.

Seizing the opportunity presented by

Miles' time off, Harriette knew that she needed to act swiftly. By the time Miles returned, the dynamics would have shifted entirely. Silently,

she started plotting her next move.

Throughout the day, as Miles handed over the company's responsibilities, Rose and Harriette familiarized themselves with the inner workings of Young Group.

To Harriette's astonishment, the company was even more prosperous than she had imagined, fueling the insatiable greed growing within her.

...

Outside the Young Estate, a luxury car had been parked there since morning, and over ten hours had passed.

The passenger inside had grown increasingly impatient, but when the driver suggested returning home multiple times, the resolute occupant refused to budge. She was determined to see Rose in person that day.

A few more hours passed before Rose, Harriette, and Miles finally arrived at the Young Estate in a single car. As they neared an intersection leading directly to the estate, their route suddenly changed. "Miles, aren't we going home?" Harriette inquired in a seemingly innocent voice.

Recalling an earlier call from Patrick, Miles replied, "We're entering through the back entrance today."

"The back entrance? Why are we returning through the back?" Harriette wondered.

Rose was resting with her eyes closed in the backseat, so she didn't notice anything amiss, but Harriette caught on to Miles' unusual behavior.

Nonetheless, she chose to remain silent until the car came to a halt at the back entrance.

"Rosie, we're home." Miles' gentle voice was clear and pleasant.

Rose opened her eyes to find that Miles had already opened the car door for her. As she stepped out of the vehicle, she couldn't help but overhear Harriette's playful yet undeniably jealous comment. "Miles, it seems you only have eyes for Rosie now. I want you to open the door for me, too!"

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Chapter 569 Adding Fuel to the Fire

[1,299 words]

Miles shook his head with a doting smile. "You really are a handful." Then, just as Harriette wished, he went over to her side and opened the car door for her.

"That's more like it," Harriette said with satisfaction, playing up her cheerful and coy demeanor. Yet, her mind was elsewhere, wondering what was happening at the main entrance of Young Estate that would make Miles take such an unprecedented detour through the back gate.

Upon arriving at the main hall with the others, she excused herself to change and retreated to her room, where she immediately made a phone call.

The person on the other end was a helper of Young Estate, whom Harriette had recently bribed.

She instructed the helper to uncover what was happening at the estate's main entrance. Soon, she received her answer.

"It seems like Mrs. Finch Senior has come. I went to see for myself, and there was indeed a luxurious car parked outside.

"Apparently, she's here to see Ms. Rose and has been waiting since early this morning. It looks like she has no intention of leaving any time soon," the helper explained.

Harriette glanced out the window at the darkened sky. "Eleanor... What could she possibly want with Rose?" she mused.

Suspecting that Eleanor was drawn to Rose's increasing social status, Harriette gritted her teeth in frustration. She reckoned that the elderly woman must have taken an interest in Rose as a granddaughter-in-law. Biting her lip, she quickly decided that she couldn't allow the two to meet. But then, a different thought crossed her mind.

"If Miles is going to such lengths to keep Eleanor and Rose apart, why not do the opposite? After all, if Eleanor seeking out Rose was truly a good thing, why is Miles going to such lengths to prevent it?" she thought. "Interesting," Harriette muttered, her eyes gleaming with excitement.

Without wasting another second, she quickly changed and headed downstairs. She arrived just in time to hear the sound of Rose and Miles' laughter coming from the dining room.

In the warm, gentle light, the two of them sat together, painting a picture of perfect harmony. The sight of their closeness made Harriette clench her fists in jealousy.

Just then, a commotion came from outside, and she raised an eyebrow.

"Is she here?" she wondered.

"Miles, what's happening out there?" Harriette asked as she made her way downstairs.

The noise had also caught the attention of Miles and Rose in the dining room, prompting them to head in the same direction.

"It's nothing. Rosie, you should go back to your room. I'll handle it," Miles instructed Rose.

Naturally, Harriette didn't want Rose to leave as Eleanor would have no one else to meet upon arrival. However, she couldn't be too obvious about it in front of Miles.

"Yes, Rosie. You should go upstairs. Don't worry. We'll take care of this," she said.

Miles' request had already made Rose sense something was amiss, and Harriette's words only intensified her concern.

"But, Miles..." Rose began to protest, only to be interrupted by a helper who rushed in, panting.

"Mr. Miles, Ms. Harriette, Ms. Rose, the woman outside claims to be Mrs. Finch Senior. She insists on meeting Ms. Rose," the helper announced.

Miles' expression darkened. "Tell her that Rosie is already asleep and can't see her," he ordered.

"Mrs. Finch Senior... Miles, it's Mrs. Finch Senior... Wouldn't it be rude to turn her away?" Harriette questioned, her hesitation evident.

Miles shot her a sharp glance, and Harriette quickly added, "Miles, I was just worried... Never mind. It's okay. Even if we offend Mrs. Finch Senior, if you don't want her to meet Rosie, then she won't. Right, Rosie?"

In Regalia's social circles, the Finch family was one of the three most influential families. While the Young family had business dealings with them, their relationship wasn't particularly close.

Offending the Finch family in such a way might not be in the best interest of the Young family. Moreover, Rose thought she had to take Jonathan into account as well.

"Miles, let's just invite Mrs. Finch Senior in," Rose interjected, having come to a decision.

Eleanor was specifically asking for her, and even if they didn't meet tonight, they would inevitably cross paths in the future. It would be better to find out what important matter warranted such a late visit. "Rosie..." Miles began.

He didn't know the exact reason for

Eleanor's visit. He only knew that she had been waiting since the morning and had refused to leave. He feared that once she met Rose, Eleanor would hold the Young family accountable for neglecting her all day. And if she were angry...

"Fine," he said solemnly. Even if Eleanor was upset, he wouldn't allow her to direct it toward Rose.

Miles instructed Patrick to bring Eleanor into the living room.

Soon, Eleanor appeared before them through the floor-to-ceiling windows. A hint of displeasure could be seen in her stride, and Harriette couldn't help but feel a surge of excitement, anticipating the drama that was about to unfold. She secretly hoped that Eleanor and Rose would have a major fallout, which would complicate Rose's marriage to Jonathan.

"Mr. Miles, Mrs. Finch Senior is here..." Patrick led Eleanor into the living room, where refreshments and coffee had been set out.

The moment Patrick finished his

speaking, Miles stepped forward to greet Eleanor personally. "Mrs. Finch Senior, I apologize for not

welcoming you earlier. Had I known about your visit, I would have gone out to greet you." Miles spoke respectfully, showing deference to his elder.

Eleanor's expression was grim. "He didn't know I was visiting? What a load of nonsense!" she thought.

She had parked her car outside the sprawling Young Estate all day. She refused to believe that no one had informed Miles of it. He must have known she was outside, which was why he took a detour on his way home. Eleanor's tone was sharp as she said, "And here I thought you had forgotten all about me."

Back when Miles and Jonathan were young, Miles often visited the Finch Manor. Every time he saw Eleanor, he would politely greet her, addressing her as "Mrs. Finch

el.nét

Senior. At the time, Miles truly was

a well-behaved and sensible child.

Yet, over a decade, Miles' mentality had changed. He was no longer the innocent boy he once was.

Miles smiled apologetically. "Mrs. Finch Senior, what do you mean by that? How could I ever forget you? As soon as I heard you arrived, I prepared your favorite coffee. Please, have a seat."

His attitude was impeccable. He was doing everything he could to calm Eleanor's displeasure, hoping to shield Rose from any fallout.

Naturally, Harriette saw right through his intentions. Not willing to let Eleanor's anger dissipate so easily, she couldn't resist adding fuel to the fire.

"It's getting late, and Rosie needs her rest!"

Her voice was soft, almost inaudible, but Eleanor caught it. She turned her gaze to Rose. At that very moment, Rose, who had been exhausted from the day, let out an involuntary yawn. Realizing how rude that might seem, Rose hurried to explain, but Eleanor spoke first.

"Are you tired?" she asked, her expression inscrutable.

Rose hesitated. Indeed, she was tired, but now that Eleanor was here, she couldn't afford to offend her further.

Rose managed to put on a polite smile, ready to entertain her guest properly. But then Eleanor spoke again.

"It's my fault for being too hasty."

There was a hint of remorse on Eleanor's kind face.

Standing beside her, Harriette was momentarily stunned. "Hasty? What on earth is happening? Shouldn't Eleanor be chastising Rose for being inconsiderate and disrespectful?" she thought.

Both Rose and Miles were equally taken aback by Eleanor's sudden change in demeanor. Just moments ago, the elderly woman's face had been clouded with fury. Yet, now it seemed as though her anger had never existed in the first place. Eleanor stepped forward, taking Rose's hand in hers. "Rosie, I need your help. You're probably the only one who can help me."

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Chapter 570 In Ten Days

[1,125 words]

Rose was baffled, and so was Harriette. This was completely different from what Harriette had expected.

"Shouldn't Eleanor be reprimanding Rose instead of approaching her with such an unusual gentleness? Why would the formidable Mrs. Finch Senior seek assistance from Rose of all people?" she thought. "Mrs. Finch Senior, how can I possibly help you?" Rose finally asked, dismissing several possibilities that crossed her mind.

"You are the only one who can help me," Eleanor repeated softly before beckoning her driver, who held a delicate, antique-looking box in his hands.

Though the box itself appeared to be a priceless artifact, it was evident that its contents were the focal point.

Eleanor's eagerness was palpable as she stepped forward, taking the box from the driver without waiting for him to hand it over.

"Rosie, take a look at this," she said, opening the box to reveal what lay inside.

Within the box was the embroidery pattern Rose had previously seen in Eleanor's study at Finch Manor. However, the embroidery looked different this time. The stitching technique seemed altered, leaving the final result somewhat... lacking. Rose gave Eleanor a discreet, knowing look. Her earlier dismissed guess had been correct after all.

"I tried to follow the embroidery technique you described when you visited the manor that day, but it seems like I still haven't fully grasped the essence of it after so many attempts," Eleanor admitted humbly.

She assumed that, by saying this, Rose would immediately agree to help her to earn favor. Yet, Rose maintained her polite smile, looking at the embroidery without saying anything further.

Eleanor purposefully paused for a while, but Rose showed no sign of taking the initiative to help, nor did she offer any words of comfort.

This left Eleanor somewhat frustrated, but she couldn't afford to display her irritation given Rose's elevated status.

Realizing that subtlety would not suffice, Eleanor opted for a more direct approach, for she was determined to achieve her goal.

With a gentle and pleading tone, she said, "Rosie, I have no other option but to ask for your help..."

"Help... with what?" Rose blinked in feigned confusion.

Eleanor was momentarily stunned. "Is Rose really not understanding, or is she pretending?" she wondered.

Of course, Rose was merely acting oblivious. Eleanor's words had made the situation painfully clear, and if Rose couldn't grasp it by now, her years growing up in the scheming Shaffer family would have been wasted. Eleanor desired Rose's help in repairing the evening gown, but her visit seemed far from coincidental, especially since it was so soon after yesterday's events.

She recalled Eleanor's presence at yesterday's banquet, with Lizzie holding an exquisite gift that appeared quite valuable.

Rose couldn't help but wonder if the gift had been intended for a specific individual, possibly Elijah. When Rose considered her current status, Eleanor's reason for being here tonight became increasingly clear.

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Eleanor continued, "Rosie, you're the only one who can restore my evening gown. You must help me!"

Her tone carried an undeniable insistence, making refusal difficult.

Nevertheless, Rose refused. "Mrs. Finch Senior, I... really can't." She waved her hands frantically as if she was startled.

Eleanor persisted. "But you can! I've looked into it. Before the craftsman passed away, he shared his knowledge and skills with a woman... and that woman is you!"

Rose's eyes widened in surprise as

she realized the extent of Eleanor's

knowledge, but upon further reflection, she found it unsurprising. After all, there was nothing the Finch

family couldn't uncover.

However, it appeared that Eleanor knew Rose could repair the evening gown even before yesterday's events. The realization struck Rose as increasingly amusing.

"Don't you want that evening gown restored to its original state?" Eleanor asked, coaxing gently.

"Not really." Rose had no emotional attachment to the gown, so there was no reason why she should care.

Eleanor was caught off guard by Rose's straightforwardness, making her wonder if she should also be more direct.

Her heart tightened in frustration, but she maintained a loving smile. With a thoughtful sigh, she continued, "If the craftsman were alive and saw the damaged gown, what would he think?"

Rose's mind flashed to the gown on

display at Finch Manor. "What would he think? He'd most likely feel regret,

an eagerness to repair it, and a

line

to restore it to its former

desire to

glory, she mused. After all, she had

felt the same when she first laid

eyes on the gown.

Being the shrewd and experienced woman she was, Eleanor quickly noticed the fleeting spark in Rose's eyes.

Recognizing a glimmer of hope, she hastily suggested, "Rosie, why don't you take a look at the gown first? Then, you can decide whether or not you want to help me."

Rose frowned, contemplating Eleanor's proposal. Seeing that Rose was about to refuse again, Eleanor quickly cut her off.

"You simply mustn't say no."

"I can't refuse, huh?" Rose thought as images of Jonathan flashed through her mind. Ultimately, Eleanor was his grandmother.

"Alright," Rose agreed hesitantly and almost instantly regretted her decision.

Having finally achieved her goal, Eleanor's face lit up with excitement. "Then it's settled! I'll see you ten days from now at Finch Manor. I'll have a driver to come pick you up!"

She set the time and place as if

afraid Rose would back out at the last moment. Without waiting for

response, she swiftly turned and exited, her figure swiftly disappearing from sight. The remaining individuals exchanged looks of bewilderment.

Speechless, Rose pondered the situation. Considering its value and uniqueness, it made sense to inspect the gown at Finch Manor.

However, the proposed ten-day delay left her puzzled. Eleanor had been in such a hurry to visit that day, yet she hadn't asked Rose to examine the gown immediately.

The circumstances seemed rather peculiar and she couldn't help but wonder what could be happening in ten days.

Miles shared her bewilderment, thinking, "I can't believe Eleanor just left without allowing Rosie to refuse!"

He then firmly stated, "Rosie, don't worry. You don't have to attend if you don't want to. Whatever consequences arise, I will handle them."

Initially disinclined, Rose found herself growing increasingly curious as she wondered what could possibly happen in ten days. She thought she might as well satisfy her curiosity by attending. She smiled reassuringly at Miles. "It's fine. The Finch Manor isn't some treacherous dragon's den. Besides, Mrs. Finch Senior seemed to need my help. I doubt any harm will come of it."

The evening gown appeared to be a mere pretext, and Eleanor's true intentions remained elusive. Rose's exhaustion grew as she pondered the mystery, culminating in an unintentional yawn. Miles gazed at her with concern. "We can discuss this further later. For now, you should get some rest."

"Alright," Rose agreed, bidding Miles good night as she retired to her room.

Meanwhile, Miles' phone rang, causing him to step away to take the call and unwittingly leave Harriette behind. It was only then that Harriette realized she had been completely ignored.

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Chapter 571 He Can Still Last

[1,272 words]

As Rose retired to her room and Miles stepped away to answer a call, Harriette was left alone. Miles hadn't even spared her a glance, almost as if from beginning to end, only Rose and Miles existed, and she was invisible. Even Eleanor, who seemed intent on troubling Rose, hadn't directed any of her pent-up frustration from waiting outside the Young Estate all day toward anyone.

A bitter chuckle escaped Harriette's lips, her outward smile starkly contrasting the churning fury within. Silently cursing Eleanor, she then recalled the invitation for Rose to visit Finch Manor in ten days to examine the evening gown. The real purpose of the visit was crystal clear. Eleanor wanted to flatter and curry favor with Rose.

Rose's newfound status as the heiress of Young Group and daughter of the former head of Lerain Group had elevated her to such heights that even someone as proud as Eleanor was compelled to step down from her pedestal and seek her favor. Jealousy surged within Harriette, filling her with a suffocating frustration. Witnessing Rose's success was nothing short of revolting, and she knew she had to do something to change this.

"Ms. Harriette, why are you alone here? Where are Mr. Miles and Ms. Rose?" Patrick asked as he returned from escorting Eleanor out. He noticed something unsettling about Harriette's expression.

However, in an instant, her face lit up with a bright smile, causing him to doubt his initial observation.

"It must have been my imagination. Ms. Harriette is sweet and kind. She would never wear such a frightening expression," he thought.

"Rosie was tired and went to rest. As for Miles, he just went to take a call," Harriette explained. "Anyway, I'm feeling a little tired too, so I'll head to my room now, Patrick."

Beneath her bright smile, even the raspiness of her voice seemed less grating. With a final wish of a good night, she made her way upstairs. However, the moment she turned her back on Patrick, her smile evaporated.

She couldn't maintain the facade for even a second longer, her mind awash with thoughts of Rose's success.

Unbeknownst to Harriette, Miles, who appeared to be fully engrossed in his phone call, had been observing her with keen interest. Through one of the many mirrors adorning Young Estate's lavish decor, he watched Harriette's retreating figure.

Her lack of familiarity with Young Estate had become her undoing. Had she known better, she would have realized that in that brief moment when she turned away from Patrick and her smile faded, the mirror's reflection might have revealed her true

emotions. Miles' gaze turned contemplative. Just then, Jonathan's voice came through the line. "Did Rose agree?"

Despite being aware of Eleanor's visit to the Young Estate, he hadn't intervened. He knew that with Miles present, Rose would be safe from any mistreatment.

Moreover, Eleanor's long wait outside the estate didn't seem to be aimed at causing trouble for Rose. Just as Jonathan had anticipated, Miles confirmed that Eleanor had invited Rose to Finch Manor ten days later.

A frown crossed Jonathan's brow as he considered the implications of the invitation.

"Ten days later... What's so special about that day?" Miles asked, aware that Eleanor wouldn't have chosen the date randomly.

"It's Lizzie's birthday," Jonathan replied.

Miles' brows knitted together as he pondered Eleanor's motive. Clearly, her invitation wasn't solely about mending the evening gown. As for Lizzie's birthday celebration, he reckoned it would likely draw a significant number of guests.

"It seems her birthday will be quite an extravagant affair this time." Jonathan sighed. Without further discussion, the two ended their conversation.

The following morning, Rose came downstairs to find the coffee table in the living room covered with a plethora of invitations.

Patrick was struggling to keep up with all the invitations when he noticed Rose descending the stairs, followed closely by Miles.

"Ms. Rose, Mr. Miles, look at this..." he said, gesturing toward the mountain of envelopes on the table.

He continued, "Everything was still calm and peaceful yesterday, but today... This one is from Mrs. Flamel of Centuria Group, inviting you to her daughter's coming-of-age ceremony, and this one is from Mrs. Loche, inviting you to celebrate the anniversary of her eldest son and his wife."

As Patrick picked up each invitation and briefed them, he noticed that almost every notable family in Regalia seemed to have a joyous occasion, and they were all eager to have Rose in attendance.

It was evident they had taken a day to reflect upon the news of Rose's newfound status and were now making their moves.

Patrick looked at Rose and asked, "Ms. Rose, are there any events here that catch your interest?"

Ever since learning that Rose was Oliver's biological granddaughter, he felt a renewed sense of vigor. Not only had he changed the way he addressed her from "Ms. Rosie" "Ms, Rose", but he also believed that he, as an old-timer, could continue serving for many more years.

Rose was now his new charge, and he was determined to take good care of the family.

Rose smiled gently at him, her gaze sweeping over the beautifully crafted invitations. Despite their elegance, she had no interest in attending those events. Besides, many of them were scheduled for the same time, so it would be impossible for her to be present at all of them, even if she wanted to.

"Rosie won't be attending any of

these," Miles declared, fully aware of Rose's disinterest in such social gatherings.

"Instead, we'll just

prepare some gifts and send tbl.net'

to each household in Rosie's name."

Determined to uphold Rose's image, Patrick nodded with determination, promising, "I'll see to it immediately. Each gift will be delivered with the utmost respect and care."

With various matters at Young Group waiting for Rose to familiarize herself with, she quickly finished her breakfast and left the estate.

Outside, several luxury cars were already waiting, their passengers emerging as she appeared. Jonathan leaned casually against his vehicle, his gaze fixated on Rose.

Despite the distance, the intense adoration in his eyes was unmistakable, causing a wave of emotion to wash over her.

Jonathan made no effort to approach her, which brought Rose a small sense of relief. She was still trying to come to terms with their connection and needed time to fully understand and accept it. "Rosie, I'm here to pick you up. Let's go. My car is waiting," Clover called out, hopping out of his own car and rushing over to her.

His eyes were filled with overwhelming affection, his every movement fueled by a devotion that knew no bounds.

At this moment, there was no trace of the commanding CEO of Lerain Group-only a devoted brother, eager to dote on his sister.

Without hesitation, he reached for Rose's hand, gently holding it as if it were second nature. Miles frowned but chose not to separate the two.

He merely interjected in a low voice, "Rosie has to go to the office today."

"Office? Which office? Rosie doesn't need to work..." Clover brushed off the notion with a wave of his hand, disregarding the matter entirely. "Clover..."

"Clover..."

Two voices spoke simultaneously. One was Miles' steady tone, followed by another deeper voice from behind.

Clover spun around to face the source just as the door of yet another luxury car swung open to reveal Elijah stepping out.

Clover's expression fell in an instant. Had he anticipated this, he would never have arranged for his uncle to have a car or better yet, never have allowed him to set foot in Regalia in the first place. Now, there was another person eager to capture Rose's attention, and the frustration

bubbled within him.

Nonetheless, he kept these thoughts hidden. Facing his uncle, his expression morphed into a polite smile.

"Uncle Elijah, what brings you here?" he asked, well aware of the answer.

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Chapter 572 Destroy

[1,282 words]

Without so much as a glance at Clover, Elijah approached Rose, his gaze locked firmly on her. His eyes seemed to drink in the sight of his daughter while simultaneously searching for the reflection of another cherished figure within her. "I'm here to take Rosie to the office," Elijah declared, his natural air of authority leaving no room for argument.

"I doubt anyone would dare to argue with him," Clover thought.

"Since he's here to take Rosie to the company, there's nothing more for me to say," Miles mused.

From a distance, Jonathan reflected on his decision. "I made the right choice. It's enough just to see my wife."

Meanwhile, Rose found herself unconsciously immersed in Elijah's gaze. She couldn't help but wonder if this was how a father gazed at his daughter.

The way he looked at her made her feel warm inside, a sensation she could only describe as happiness. It spread through her heart like sweet honey, leaving her wanting more.

"Let's go," Elijah said, holding out his arm.

Snapping out of her thoughts, Rose responded with a bright smile and naturally took his arm, unaware of how seamless her movement was.

The three men watched silently as Rose got into Elijah's car, their eyes trailing after the vehicle as it disappeared.

Despite his jealousy, Clover couldn't help but smile. "Rosie left the banquet with Miles the previous evening and is now being whisked away by Uncle Elijah. Surely, it would be my turn the next day!" he mused.

His gaze subconsciously shifted toward Jonathan, his expression suddenly becoming guarded. A silent warning flashed in his narrowed eyes as if saying, "Don't even think about taking Rosie from me!"

Seemingly unaffected by the unspoken challenge, Jonathan merely arched an eyebrow and smiled faintly. It wasn't that he didn't want to vie for Rose's attention, but rather, he understood what she needed at this moment.

He would have plenty of time in the future to spend with her, and when that time came, no one would be able to take her away from him.

Now that Rose had left, there was no need for him to linger. Before getting into his car, Jonathan's gaze briefly swept over someone, and a cold glint flickered in his eyes.

Harriette had been quietly watching the entire time. Although she seemed calm on the surface, a storm was raging inside.

The sight of these outstanding men vying for the chance to merely take Rose to work was enough to incite envy and resentment. The happiness they exuded was something she desperately yearned to destroy.

"Etta, are you feeling unwell? You look really pale." Miles' voice suddenly broke through her thoughts, snapping her back to reality.

Only then did Harriette realize Jonathan and Clover had already left, leaving only Miles standing beside her.

"Is there something wrong with my face?" she wondered. Panicking, she quickly touched her face in an attempt to conceal any visible reactions.

She stammered, "R-Really? Maybe I was just too tired yesterday and didn't sleep well last night. Miles, I had a dream... I dreamt about the accident before I went missing..."

Harriette's tale was entirely fabricated. Her real intention was to unsettle Miles and evoke his sympathy so he wouldn't dwell on any unusual expressions she might have displayed earlier.

Unbeknownst to her, her face had not betrayed her at all. Miles' remark had been nothing more than a probing comment.

A glint of coldness flickered in his eyes for a moment, but his expression softened as if touched by her words.

"Don't be afraid. It was just a dream, and it's all in the past now."

"Yeah!"

Harriette's face brightened with a quick smile. She found comfort in Miles' familiar nature. No matter how perceptive he might seem, her appearance as Harriette would always sway him, leading him to believe her every word. She couldn't help but see him as gullible. Just as she was feeling pleased with herself, she heard Miles say, "Since you didn't sleep well, maybe you should stay home today and rest."

"No!" Harriette blurted and immediately regretted the intensity of her response.

She swiftly plastered on a smile and fell into her usual coy demeanor. "I can handle it, Miles. If Rosie can push through her exhaustion to work, how can I justify staying home? I want to help you and Rosie as well."

In reality, all she really wanted was to learn more about Young Group so that she could prepare for her future plans. After all, she longed to claim Young Group for herself.

Miles chuckled, indulging her wishes. "Alright. Get in the car then. I can never say no to you."

With a sigh, he turned his back to Harriette, and his doting expression vanished in an instant.

For the first time, Rose found herself sharing a car ride with her father. Despite the spacious interior, she felt somewhat uneasy and uncertain of how to start a conversation.

...

Thankfully, it wasn't long before Elijah took the initiative, reminiscing about how he had met her mother many years ago.

As Rose listened quietly, she couldn't help but notice the spark in his eyes every time he mentioned her mother.

"You loved her deeply, didn't you?" she asked without thinking.

Elijah didn't hesitate. "Yes, with all my heart. She was the only woman I ever truly loved."

Even now, his love remained steadfast. Just a few nights ago, he had meticulously read through every detail about "Celeste" on his desk. With each page, he felt as if his heart was being gripped tightly.

He understood that she had married

Jamie solely to provide an identity

for Rose. Over the years, she had built Celeste Group by herself, remaining as bright as a star and radiant as she had always been. And that car accident...

The information presented to him revealed that Jonathan had investigated Celeste's death.

Elijah cast a sidelong glance at Rose. It was highly probable that Jonathan had been compelled to initiate his investigation due to Rose's lingering suspicions surrounding the circumstances of her mother's passing. The car accident seemed far from a simple incident, and Elijah had taken it upon himself to launch a separate inquiry, confident that he would soon uncover the truth.

As the half-hour car ride drew to a close, he felt as though he hadn't spent enough time with his daughter.

After arriving at the building, Elijah escorted Rose to her destination. He couldn't help but feel that their journey together had been too brief and that his precious time with his daughter had passed all too quickly. Shortly after they exchanged farewells, he received a phone call from his assistant, whom Clover had thoughtfully arranged in anticipation of his solo visit to Regalia.

"Mr. Xanth, an invitation has arrived for a Finch family birthday celebration in ten days. Shall I mark your calendar accordingly?"

Normally, the assistant would easily

dismiss invitations of this nature

without a need to report them. However a Finch family invitation carried a different weight,

particularly since Elijah had ordered an investigation into Jonathan just the previous day.

Elijah's brow furrowed. A birthday banquet hosted by the Finch family wasn't particularly intriguing to him. Nevertheless, he decided to keep a watchful eye on the situation.

"Find out if Rose will be attending," he instructed.

Taken aback by the request, the assistant paused momentarily. After the call ended, he promptly contacted the person who had delivered the invitation and discovered that Rose would indeed be present.

As the assistant relayed this news to

Elijah, the latter's eyes sparkled with newfound interest. "Clear my schedule for that day and arrange a birthday gift-no, make it two. One for myself and one to be presented on behalf of Rose."

Knowing that Rose would be attending, Elijah knew he simply had to be there as well. Not only would he be present, but he would also ensure that her presence was honored and respected to the fullest extent.

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Chapter 573 He Is Drawing Rose

[1,192 words]

Upon receiving the news about Elijah's attendance, Eleanor was so delighted that she couldn't sit still. She paced back and forth in the living room, murmuring excitedly, "Elijah is coming... Elijah is coming..." Her excitement was palpable. Suddenly, realization struck, causing her to halt mid-step. "Since he's attending, this birthday celebration must be nothing short of spectacular!"

The event needed to be lavish and exude the Finch family's deep-rooted influence. Only then could Elijah, their potential partner, truly grasp the strength and prestige of the family name. However, orchestrating such an affair would require meticulous planning and coordination.

Eleanor considered overseeing everything herself, but her age made the task challenging. Her first choice was Jonathan. However, she knew that this birthday banquet was meant to be in Lizzie's honor, and Jonathan had never accepted Lizzie as his stepmother. After carefully weighing her options, she decided on Cyrus. He would be the one to manage it all.

Having made her decision, Eleanor wasted no time. She immediately called Cyrus and summoned him to the manor.

An hour later, Cyrus and Lizzie arrived together.

"Lizzie's birthday banquet will be held at the manor," Eleanor announced, cutting straight to the point.

Both Cyrus and Lizzie were momentarily stunned. Though Lizzie had her own room at the manor after marrying Cyrus, they had always resided in a separate villa.

In all their years of hosting birthday celebrations, they had never once been held at the manor. It was always the villa.

When Eleanor mentioned hosting a birthday banquet for Lizzie yesterday morning, Cyrus had dismissed it as a passing thought. But now, it seemed that she was being serious.

"Cyrus, make sure to invite plenty of people and make it a lively occasion. The manor should be exquisitely decorated to reflect the Finch family's stature. As for Lizzie..." Eleanor cast a glance her way.

"What role could Lizzie play? There's no need for her to do anything, to be honest..." she mused.

However, since it was technically Lizzie's birthday banquet, Eleanor grudgingly found a way to involve her.

"Lizzie, you should prepare as well. I want you to write a version of the 'Lindisfarne Gospels' at the event," she said. She thought this would serve as Lizzie's chance to shine.

It was only then that the couple realized Eleanor was not joking. In fact, she had quite a detailed plan in mind.

Upon reflection, Lizzie swiftly deduced Eleanor's scheme. The mention of the "Lindisfarne Gospels" implied that the esteemed figure from the Xanth family-the one Eleanor eagerly anticipated meeting-would likely attend the event.

Her sharp mind immediately began unraveling how Eleanor had managed to secure his attendance. Gazing at Eleanor's enthusiastic expression, she swiftly connected the dots.

"Rose! Mom must have leveraged Rose's presence to entice Elijah, leading him to accept the invitation," she thought.

"Mom, don't worry. I'll make sure to prepare thoroughly. I'll practice diligently as soon as I return," Lizzie declared with newfound enthusiasm. She was going to prepare thoroughly for Rose.

Her eagerness caught Eleanor off guard. Considering it was just about showcasing her calligraphy skills to impress Elijah, Eleanor found Lizzie's fervor curious. However, she decided to let Lizzie enjoy her excitement. "Good." Eleanor nodded in acknowledgment before proceeding to give Cyrus several instructions. Cyrus' joy was palpable as he felt a renewed determination.

Even Eleanor had started acknowledging Lizzie's merits and was now arranging a grand birthday celebration for her. This strengthened his belief that the rooftop footage he had seen was a mere misunderstanding.

On the way back, he held Lizzie's hand tightly. "Lizz, I'll do my best to make this birthday celebration unforgettable for you."

His vision of an "unforgettable" celebration meant creating a pivotal moment. In the past, Lizzie hadn't received the respect she deserved due to misunderstandings surrounding her character.

However, he believed that everything would fall into place once those misconceptions were rectified, and this birthday banquet would be his way of clarifying everything.

Lost in thoughts about the upcoming festivities, Lizzie merely nodded in agreement with Cyrus' words. Her face radiated happiness as she said, "Thank you, Cyrus. You're so good to me." Alas, what she yearned for had never been Cyrus' kindness toward her. What she truly desired was something else entirely.

She began, "Cyrus, it's been a while since our entire family gathered. I wonder how Ezra is doing."

Ever since Ezra was hospitalized and placed under Jonathan's vigilant protection, even Lizzie couldn't find his whereabouts. Cyrus, too, remained clueless about his son's current situation. But the idea of a family reunion...

"Lizz, don't worry. I'll find a way to locate where Ezra is." Cyrus promised.

"Okay," Lizzie hummed in agreement. Indeed, it would be better to find Ezra, for the birthday banquet would be far more entertaining with him around.

True to his word, Cyrus diligently searched for Ezra. Despite knowing that Jonathan was the one hiding Ezra, he didn't dare confront him directly to ask where Ezra was. Nevertheless, word of Cyrus' pursuit soon reached Jonathan's ears. Seated in the top-floor office of the Finch Group building, Jonathan wore a dark, brooding expression.

He had disguised the badge as an

ancient coin, and with time, toying

with the coin had evolved into a habitual gesture during his moments of deep contemplation. The coin deftly twirled and flipped between his fingers.

"Mr. Finch, Mr. Cyrus has discovered Mr. Ezra's residence. Shall we relocate him?"

Under Jonathan's orders, Finley had been closely monitoring Cyrus' actions. That morning, he noticed Cyrus lingering outside Ezra's apartment complex, seemingly seeking a way in. "No need," Jonathan replied firmly, his tone resolute.

Ezra's condition had improved

significantly. He was still living in the place Jonathan arranged, not out of necessity, but to avoid facing the outside world. He had expressed a need for respite, which now seemed to have lasted long enough.

Jonathan decided to visit him that night. But before that, he casually asked Finley, "Any updates about that man?" while glancing downward, referring to the traitor from Azure

Clan, who Lizzie had bribed. Finley had been furious about the betrayal and wanted to tear the man to pieces, but Jonathan insisted that he could still be of use.

"Per your instructions, we've taken care not to alarm him. He hasn't contacted Lizzie in the past few days," he reported.

"No contact, huh?" Jonathan mused as he raised an eyebrow, and a sinister smile appeared on his face.

"The birthday banquet will undoubtedly draw a crowd, which means security must be increased. Enlist additional personnel and ensure he's included among their ranks. Moreover..."

He paused, anticipating Lizzie's birthday even more.

Later that night, Jonathan drove to Ezra's residence. Ezra had retreated into his quarters, rarely venturing outside. He seemed to relish the tranquility of solitude. At that moment, he was immersed in drawing. Jonathan's arrival only prompted a brief glance from Ezra, who soon returned his focus to the sketching pencil in his hand, meticulously outlining the shapes on the paper.

Accustomed to Ezra's aloof demeanor, Jonathan approached him and took note of the gradually emerging outline on the paper. His face darkened instantly. It turned out that Ezra was drawing Rose.

Even in the face of Jonathan's observance, Ezra remained unperturbed. His brazenness was infuriating, making Jonathan's fists itch with the urge to strike him.

However, all Jonathan could muster were two begrudging words. "Not bad."

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Chapter 574 Aiming for Her

[1,229 words]

Indeed, the drawing was remarkable.

The sketch captured Rose's eyes and brows so vividly that they appeared almost lifelike. However, Jonathan couldn't help but wonder if it was appropriate for Ezra to sketch another man's woman like this openly.

Despite the subtle edge in Jonathan's comment, Ezra remained unfazed. The soft, rhythmic scratch of the pencil against paper filled the room as he continued to sketch, completely engrossed in his work. Jonathan narrowed his eyes. He had always known about Ezra's love for drawing, a talent inherited from their mother. Ezra had a natural affinity for colors and lines, and as a child, he would often sit beside Nancy, sketching while she painted. Those moments stirred complex emotions in Jonathan. He loved the peacefulness of the scene but resented that he wasn't the one sharing that connection with their mother.

After her death, Ezra had put down his pencil, seemingly for good-or so Jonathan had thought. To see him drawing again was a pleasant surprise.

The room was cloaked in tranquil silence, punctuated only by the rhythmic, soothing sound of the pencil dancing across the paper.

Jonathan settled onto the couch. As Rose's likeness took shape on the page, Ezra's hand finally came to a rest, and Jonathan broke the comfortable silence.

"Do you want to see her?"

Ezra's hand froze as he put away his sketch. For the first time in a while, a ripple of emotion swept through his eyes.

Despite his self-imposed isolation, he was acutely aware of the events happening in the outside world. Rose had found her biological father, taken the helm of Young Group, and transformed into someone far different from the Rose he had known. He wondered whether she had time to see him now or if she even wanted to. A sense of unease crept into his heart. Just then, Jonathan's voice sounded again.

"Cyrus is looking for you. He probably wants you to attend Lizzie's birthday banquet. Rose will be there."

Ezra's gaze shifted to Jonathan. Since his last episode, he had been under Jonathan's "protection", kept at a distance from the Finch family.

Jonathan clearly didn't want him to get too involved with them, so he couldn't understand why the man had invited him to the birthday banquet.

Ezra's questioning gaze remained locked on Jonathan for a moment before he turned away, dismissing his doubts.

"I'll be there," he said simply. With that, he resumed putting away his sketch.

Ezra's frame had visibly thinned, a detail Jonathan noted with a furrowed brow. It was impossible not to understand the implications behind Ezra's simple words.

Being a perceptive man, he must have realized that his presence was required at this birthday banquet, which was why he had agreed to attend.

As Jonathan stood in the doorway, he offered a genuine, "Thank you, and don't worry."

The two phrases seemed unrelated, but Ezra's body tensed almost imperceptibly upon hearing them. Just as Jonathan stepped out and was about to close the door, Ezra's voice softly resonated within the room. "I'm going to see Rosie."

Jonathan was taken aback. "Rosie? He should call her Rose! How inappropriate!" he silently cursed Ezra, feeling an inexplicable discomfort.

That sense of unease lingered even after shutting the door and stepping into the elevator. However, he also made a decision. After the birthday banquet, he would find a way to dispel any unhealthy thoughts Ezra might harbor toward Rose. As for how he would achieve that... A glimmer danced in Jonathan's eyes. He had an arsenal of ideas.

The following day, Ezra finally emerged from his self-imposed isolation, stepping out of his place for the first time in a long while.

Cyrus, who had been waiting for an opportunity, seized the moment. "Ezra, you... you've gotten thinner," he remarked. D

Despite their distant relationship, seeing Ezra like this had stirred a hint of tenderness in his heart. However, the moment was fleeting, and business quickly took precedence.

He quickly got straight to the point. "We haven't had a family meal in a while. Let's have dinner together at Finch Manor the day after tomorrow, alright?"

Cyrus scrutinized Ezra's expression closely, feeling somewhat anxious that his son might refuse. If he did, Cyrus already had other excuses lined up.

Just as he was about to come up with another argument, Ezra surprisingly responded, "Alright."

Cyrus was taken aback, not expecting Ezra's agreement. Fearing that Ezra might change his mind, Cyrus hastily added, "Then... I'll pick you up myself the day after tomorrow."

After a moment's hesitation, he patted Ezra's shoulder. He wanted to say something more, but the words escaped him.

"Well... I'll be going then." With a forced smile that didn't quite reach his eyes, Cyrus waved to Ezra and turned to get in his car.

A cold smirk tugged at the corner of Ezra's lips. This father of his had never shared any real bond with him. Or rather, Cyrus had never put his heart into understanding him.

Ezra had ventured out solely to

"bump" into Cyrus, and now that his

objective was achieved, he had no desire to linger outside any longer. The day after tomorrow would be Lizzie's birthday banquet, and on that day, he would finally see Rose again.

Thinking of this, his expression softened noticeably.

Soon enough, the much-awaited day arrived. The Finch family's grand birthday banquet commanded the attention of Regalia's elite, all of whom received coveted invitations. The manor was soon bustling as guests arrived early.

The Finch family held a prestigious

position in Regalia and was a name revered by many. As for the Finch Manor, it was the grand residence where Eleanor chose to spend her retirement years, and it was rarely opened to visitors. Such a

no

large-scale event taking place at the

manor was a first.

"Mrs. Finch Senior really does have a love for gardening. Look at those flowers. They're such rare, valuable species."

"Oh, and over there! The rock formation in the fountain... Is that jade?"

"It seems like the Finch family is even wealthier than we thought. Madam Lizzie is truly fortunate."

"Fortunate? I'd say it's more cunning than luck. Remember, Mr. Cyrus had a previous wife. Madam Lizzie is merely... his second."

Gossip and chatter thrived among the women. However, mindful of being at the Finch Manor for Lizzie's birthday celebration, they exchanged knowing glances and refrained from

delving deeper into the venom

focusing instead on the floral arrangements in the garden.

The conversation soon shifted to another topic.

"Has anyone seen Ms. Shaffer? I've looked everywhere, but I can't spot her."

"I took a quick look too, but she's nowhere to be found."

"That doesn't make sense. The Finches invited so many guests. Surely they wouldn't exclude Ms. Shaffer..."

Rose was currently the talk of Regalia, and omitting her from the guest list seemed highly unlikely.

"Perhaps she was invited but couldn't make it?"

"That's possible... I heard Ms. Shaffer took over the Young family. I also heard that Mr. Miles is taking a break. She must be really busy."

"What a shame! I begged my dad to bring me here, hoping to meet Ms. Shaffer. If she's not coming, then what's the point?"

"Same here! I only came because I wanted to see her."

Many of them admired Rose, hoping for the chance to meet the most powerful woman in Regalia. The thought of Rose not coming left them visibly disappointed. "It's still early. She could be on her way. Let's wait a little longer."

"Yes! Let's wait!"

The group's spirits were lifted again, yet they failed to notice that behind a wall of flowers, there was someone whose forced smile was gradually crumbling.

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Chapter 575 Tricked Her Into Coming

[1,364 words]

It was Lizzie's birthday, and she was dressed more elegantly than ever. Cyrus had personally gone to pick up Ezra, and after saying goodbye to him, Lizzie made her way to the women's side to greet her guests. However, before she even reached them, she overheard some unpleasant remarks.

Yara had arrived at the flower wall before Lizzie. Ever since Rose had been revealed as the long-lost daughter of the Xanth family from Lerain Group and simultaneously inherited Young Group, Yara had been in a foul mood.

Every gathering she attended with her friends seemed to center around Rose, with words full of admiration and eagerness to get closer to her.

This evening was no exception, as the gathering of influential women inevitably turned to the subject of Rose. Not wishing to engage, Yara sat quietly on a swing chair hidden behind the flower wall.

The surrounding gossip left a bad taste in her mouth, but she took some comfort in knowing that someone else was suffering even more than she was.

As Yara observed the strained smile plastered across Lizzie's face, she couldn't resist stoking the flames.

"Rose seems to be quite popular, huh? But isn't this your birthday banquet, Aunt Lizzie? Somehow, it feels like Rose has stolen the spotlight, and she hasn't even arrived yet."

Despite Rose's conspicuous absence, she had already overshadowed the guest of honor. Naturally, Lizzie was furious. However, as the wife of a prestigious family, she had spent years crafting an image of elegance and grace. Her smile wavered, but she tried her best to keep it in place.

"Aunt Lizzie, isn't it exhausting to force a smile like that?" Yara asked with a light chuckle, her soft voice laced with scorn.

She refused to believe that Lizzie's mask was impervious to scrutiny, for that was precisely what it was a carefully constructed facade.

When Yara married Liam, her heart was already brimming with resentment. As events unfolded and Bella passed away while Jack vanished into thin air, she was convinced that Rose and Jonathan were to blame.

From that moment, she had felt a flicker of fear toward Jonathan. As for Rose, she felt nothing but resentment and refusal to concede.

She wanted to compete with Rose, to trample her, and to humiliate her. It was as if, by doing so, she could exact some sort of twisted retribution for her own fall from grace.

However, nobody could have anticipated that Rose would become the sole heiress of the Young Group and the only daughter of the Xanth family from the Lerain Group in the blink of an eye.

Either of these two identities alone was enough to make anyone envious, let alone when it was one person who possessed both simultaneously. It was infuriating.

Yara was both furious and defeated. With Jonathan's protection, it was futile to even think about challenging Rose. Any attempts would only lead to retribution from the Xanth family, the Young family, and perhaps even some members of the Finch family.

She was at a complete disadvantage, but even in her frustration, Yara knew she had to remain observant and stir the pot when opportunities arose, and Lizzie's distaste for Rose presented just that opportunity.

Over the past few days, Yara had been lurking around the Finch Manor, keeping an eye on the situation. In doing so, she had stumbled upon some unexpected insights.

One of those insights stood right in front of her. Yara's earlier jab had shattered Lizzie's facade, and her fake smile crumbled, revealing her true feelings.

Lizzie shot Yara a resentful look before turning to leave, her anger palpable even in her absence. Yara couldn't help but wonder if that fury stemmed from her comment or if it was fueled by Rose.

"It has to be because of Rose," Yara thought.

Even if there were other reasons for Lizzie's anger, Rose was surely the primary cause.

Over the past few days at the Finch Manor, Cyrus had been busy preparing for Lizzie's birthday banquet, running back and forth.

Lizzie had been by his side, assisting him every step of the way. However, in private, she was a completely different person from the gentle, refined woman she presented in public.

In front of others, she was poised and warm, but behind closed doors, a cold intensity filled her eyes as if she was ready to devour someone.

"Who was that someone?" Yara wondered.

After observing for many days, she finally got her answer from Eleanor.

She vividly recalled Lizzie's expression changing the moment Eleanor mentioned Rose. It was a sight to behold, and Yara felt a surge of excitement. Knowing that Lizzie

harbored animosity toward Rose, she thought that perhaps she could use this to her advantage.

"Where is Ms. Shaffer?"

"She should be here soon."

"I hope she's coming..."

"Don't worry. She'll be here..."

The conversation on the other side of the flower wall continued to revolve around Rose, with everyone eagerly waiting for her appearance.

Meanwhile, outside the Young Estate, Eleanor had indeed arrived to pick up Rose, just as she had promised.

The luxurious Finch family car was conspicuously parked nearby. "Rosie, come on. Get in the car," Eleanor called out.

Over the past few days, Rose had developed a routine. She would spend her days at Young Group and find herself either en route to the Young Estate or making her way back to the villa in Royal Garden. Whenever she stayed at the Young Estate, Clover would be the one to pick her up the next day. Alternatively, if she stayed at the villa, it would be Miles who came to fetch her.

The two seemed locked in an unspoken competition, with neither willing to concede. However, that day was different.

"Rosie, hurry up..."

As Rose searched for Clover's car, Eleanor had already exited her vehicle, seemingly worried that Rose might suddenly change her mind. She pulled Rose toward the Finch family's car, enthusiastically inviting her inside.

Once Rose was seated, Eleanor told the driver, "To the Finch Manor."

Now that Rose was on board,

Eleanor could relax. She wondered if Elijah had arrived and thought that if he had, he would undoubtedly be pleased to see her personally

ve

bringing Rose to the Finch family's event.

"I'm sure he would be pleased!" she thought.

BUMS

Thinking about Elijah's delight made Eleanor happy as well, and she began peppering Rose with questions about the embroidery techniques for the evening gown.

As the car pulled up outside the Finch Manor, Rose immediately heard the lively clamor emanating from within the moment she stepped out of the vehicle.

Stepping inside the manor, the sight

of the bustling crowd greeted her, and before she could even react with surprise, Eleanor chuckled and explained, "It just so happens there's a birthday celebration taking place today. Pay them no mind. We have more pressing matters to attend to."

Eleanor was feeling a bit guilty. Ten days ago, she had used an excuse to bring Rose here, so she felt compelled to maintain the ruse.

She decided to first take Rose to see the evening gown and ask her to help with its repair. Afterward, she would casually invite Rose to stay for dinner, which would hopefully appear natural and unassuming. "Is that..."

"It's Ms. Shaffer! Ms. Shaffer is here!"

"Wow! Eleanor is personally leading her in. I've never heard of her treating anyone with such hospitality before..."

The women in the crowd gasped with excitement upon Rose's arrival, their eyes fixed on her as they began to approach.

However, they couldn't get close. A team of bodyguards had already cleared a path, allowing only Rose and Eleanor to walk through.

Even the businessmen who had been engaged in conversations paused to watch as Eleanor led the young woman into the main hall with a bright smile..

Some people who hadn't had the chance to attend the Xanth family's banquet last time finally learned of the much-discussed Ms. Shaffer's identity from those around them.

Despite her casual blouse, jeans, and simple attire, her presence remained extraordinary.

Someone couldn't help but sigh. "It's no wonder she comes from the Xanth and Young families. Their unique genes truly set them apart."

"Indeed. I wonder who will be fortunate enough to marry her."

"Who else could it be other than Mr. Jonathan?"

The mention of Jonathan brought a fleeting sense of disappointment to those who had harbored hopes, but regardless of their personal feelings, they still held Jonathan in high regard.

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Chapter 576 No Request

[1,230 words]

possessed.

It was only natural they were in awe of Jonathan. After all, the man was the heir of the Finch family. Each family present might have eligible sons of marriageable age, but even if they combined all their assets, they wouldn't come close to a fraction of what Jonathan A comparison would be futile, for there simply wasn't a competition.

Exchanging furtive glances, the crowd couldn't help but speculate that Eleanor's hospitality toward Rose was likely paving the way for Jonathan.

They weren't entirely wrong. Eleanor was indeed laying the groundwork, but not for Jonathan.

As Rose followed Eleanor into the main hall, she was immediately taken to a display case on one of the walls showcasing an evening gown.

Unlike the previous encounter, the damaged gown was not tucked away in a corner but proudly displayed at the center of the case, its imperfection prominently on show.

"This is actually my favorite gown, but..." Eleanor lamented, her gaze fixated on the damaged section. She then turned to Rose, her eyes filled with anticipation. "Rosie, please, only you can fix it. If you can restore it, I will grant you any request." She intentionally mentioned "any request" with an ulterior motive in mind.

From Eleanor's perspective, Jonathan had taken a liking to Rose, so Rose must have felt the same way about him.

After all, her grandson was one of Regalia's most outstanding young talents-unmatched in appearance, family background, and ability. Many admired him, and Rose was surely no exception.

Eleanor believed that by offering this deal, Rose would want to please her to secure a marriage with Jonathan.

With a smile on her lips, she studied Rose's face for a long moment, waiting for a hint of excitement to appear.

Yet, Rose's expression remained unchanged. Eleanor was at a loss for words.

"Have I not been clear enough?" she wondered.

Noticing Rose's attention on the evening gown, she emphasized again, "Rosie, if you have any requests, I'll fulfill them right away."

"Go on. Bring up your relationship with Jonathan and ask for my blessing!" Eleanor thought. Her face lit up with a warm smile as hope rekindled in her eyes.

Rose shifted her gaze back to Eleanor from the damaged evening gown, her expression polite, yet distant. "Thank you, Mrs. Finch Senior, but you're too kind. I have no requests."

With that, she returned her attention to the tear in the fabric, carefully examining it.

Eleanor's smile froze. "No requests? How could there be no requests?" she thought.

She believed there should be a request from Rose as this was the perfect opportunity for her to ask for acceptance into the Finch family.

Rose could become Jonathan's wife, joining their prestigious lineage. It was puzzling to Eleanor that Rose wasn't seizing this chance.

She nearly blurted out, "I approve of you and Jonathan being together," before barely managing to stop herself.

A hint of doubt and uncertainty clouded Eleanor's gaze as she studied Rose's face. She began to consider that Rose might not be interested in Jonathan at all.

The information she had received indicated that Jonathan had fallen for Rose during his time in Aquastead. There was no doubt about that.

But now, she questioned if Jonathan's feelings were unrequited. Perhaps his passion for Rose was entirely one-sided.

As Eleanor reflected on the day Jonathan brought Rose to the Finch Manor, it only seemed to confirm her suspicions.

While Jonathan had treated Rose like she was the most precious person in the world, Rose's demeanor had remained composed and indifferent throughout the entire visit.

"I guess Jonathan is the only one burning with passion. Rose is simply uninterested," she thought. Disappointment washed over her face as the reality of the situation sank in.

As Rose turned to face Eleanor, she was met with a look of disappointment on the older woman's face. Puzzled, she assumed that Eleanor was worried about the gown's repair. "Don't worry, Mrs. Finch Senior, I can fix the damaged area," Rose assured her.

"Oh. Right," Eleanor replied absentmindedly, lacking the enthusiasm Rose had expected.

Upon noticing her reaction, Rose carefully considered the situation.

Eleanor had asked her to return in ten days to examine the gown, and upon her arrival, she had overheard mention of a birthday. It appeared that someone in the Finch family was celebrating their special day, though whose birthday it was remained a mystery to her.

It suddenly dawned on Rose why she had been invited to the manor. Glancing at Eleanor knowingly, she said, "Mrs Finch Senior, with so

many people here today and the net

specific materials needed, perhaps it would be better if I returned home

first to gather what I need"

"Go back?" Eleanor thought. She couldn't let that happen. It had been a challenge to bring Rose here, and there was absolutely no way she would let her leave so easily.

Quickly snapping out of her disappointment, she caught Rose's wrist before Rose could finish her sentence.

"Rosie, your help means a lot to me, and I want to show my appreciation. I have something to give you."

She had just realized that Rose might not have the same feelings for Jonathan, or at least not feel them as strongly as Jonathan's feelings for her. Overwhelmed with urgency, Eleanor guided Rose upstairs without waiting for her response. This was Rose's second time entering Eleanor's study. Unlike her first visit, where curiosity led

her to take in every detail of the room, this time, Rose's eyes remained fixed on Eleanor as she was led to the couch.

Eleanor quickly hurried to the safe hidden behind the bookshelf, retrieving a box.

The box itself was a work of art, and whatever lay inside was bound to be extraordinary. As Eleanor opened it in front of Rose, a breathtaking necklace adorned with top-quality emeralds was revealed, causing

Rose's eyes to widen in surprise.

"I acquired this at an auction years ago," Eleanor explained. "In terms of color and size, there's nothing else quite like it in the world. Here, Rosie, try it on."

Before Rose could object, Eleanor had already removed the necklace from the box and was now fastening it around her neck.

"No, no, I can't-" Rose began to protest, taken aback by the extravagant gift.

"Stay still." Eleanor's tone carried the commanding force of a woman who had once ruled the business world, and Rose found herself hesitating just long enough for Eleanor to secure the necklace in place. Despite her casual attire a simple blouse and jeans-Rose's beauty was undeniable. The luxurious emerald necklace perfectly complemented her elegance, adding a touch of sophistication to her ensemble. Eleanor studied Rose's appearance and couldn't help but exclaim, "Wonderful! Simply wonderful!"

It was perfect. Eleanor couldn't help but silently commend her grandson's taste. "It's only natural for Jonathan to be captivated by someone like this. Not only is she beautiful, but she also comes from a distinguished family..." she mused. She was beyond pleased, her face beaming with delight that she could barely contain.

Rose felt increasingly uneasy under Eleanor's gaze as if she was sitting on pins and needles. Standing up, she tried to remove the necklace, but Eleanor quickly stopped her.

"No, don't take it off! It looks perfect on you as if it were tailor-made for you. Even when I wore it in my youth, it didn't look as good as it does on you. Clearly, it was meant to be yours.

"We've known each other for quite some time, and I've never given you a proper gift. So, consider this necklace a token of our meeting. You must accept it!"

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Chapter 577 Wanted Her To Join The Finch Family

[1,222 words]

"You must accept it..." Eleanor said, her tone and gaze were unwavering, leaving no room for refusal.

However, Rose couldn't bring herself to accept such an extravagant gift. "No, I can't... It's too much, Mrs. Finch Senior," she said, trying to decline.

"What do you mean, 'too much'? You're helping me repair the gown, aren't you?" Eleanor cut her off, giving Rose no chance to refuse.

Just then, Eleanor caught sight of a figure at the doorway. "Lizzie, come and look at this. Doesn't this necklace look perfect on Rosie?"

Most of the guests had already arrived downstairs. Lizzie came up to invite Eleanor to join them but was stunned to see Eleanor personally adorning Rose with the necklace.

"Is she really going to give that necklace to Rose? That necklace..." she mused.

"Lizzie, come in," Eleanor urged, snapping Lizzie out of her thoughts.

Lizzie stepped into the study, quickly regaining her warm and composed demeanor. "Mom, all the guests have arrived."

"Is he here too?" Eleanor's eyes brightened with anticipation.

Lizzie knew precisely whom Eleanor was referring to. After all, that day's birthday banquet was more about honoring the legendary figure of the Xanth family than celebrating her birthday. "Yes, he just arrived. Jonathan's with him," Lizzie confirmed.

Eleanor's face lit up with joy. She could hardly contain her eagerness to rush downstairs and welcome their honored guest.

However, she quickly regained her composure, knowing there was no need to hurry. Since he was already here, her priority was ensuring his happiness, and the best way to do that was through Rose.

Eleanor's gaze softened as she looked at Rose with even more affection. "Lizzie, don't you think this necklace suits Rosie perfectly? It's only fitting to give it to her as a token of gratitude.

"Rosie, for my sake-and in front of my daughter-in-law-please don't refuse. Otherwise, it would seem like you don't value the Finch family."

Rose was at a loss for words, for there was nothing she could say to that. It was clear that Eleanor wouldn't let it go until she accepted the necklace.

"Fine. I'll just return the necklace to Jonathan later..." With that in mind, Rose nodded slightly. "Thank you, Mrs. Finch Senior."

Such a precious necklace wasn't something she could casually wear. It was far too eye-catching. She tried to remove it, but she couldn't unclasp it despite several attempts.

Rose felt a wave of awkwardness when Eleanor suddenly exclaimed, "Oh dear, my memory really is slipping. I completely forgot that the clasp on this necklace is broken, making it quite difficult to remove. I've been meaning to have it fixed, but I keep forgetting." Rose was speechless. "Is this really happening?" she wondered.

She tried a few more times to take it off, but her efforts were fruitless. The necklace wouldn't budge.

"Just leave it on for now," Eleanor said softly before giving Lizzie a pointed look. Lizzie immediately took out her phone and made a call.

Rose sighed inwardly, resigning herself to wearing the lavish piece. However, she knew that stepping out with such a striking necklace would undoubtedly draw unwanted attention.

Unbeknownst to her, that was precisely what Eleanor intended. She wanted everyone to see the stunning emerald necklace adorning Rose's neck.

As expected, when Rose appeared, all eyes were immediately drawn to the necklace.

"Wow, that necklace is stunning..."

"I always thought a piece like that could only be paired with an elegant gown, but Ms. Shaffer's casual outfit gives it a whole new charm..." "Well, that's because Ms. Shaffer is stunning! I doubt it'll look the same if it was on someone else."

"That's true. I think she's prettier than that international movie star."

"Wait, I don't remember Ms. Shaffer wearing that necklace when she arrived. Did I miss it?"

There was no way anyone would miss such a dazzling piece of jewelry. The women exchanged glances before reaching a collective conclusion.

"If the necklace wasn't on Ms. Shaffer when she arrived, then that must mean..."

They looked at Eleanor, who was smiling warmly at Rose, and felt like they had stumbled upon a huge secret.

"The necklace is a gift from Eleanor! Such a necklace is incredibly valuable, almost priceless. Eleanor's decision to give it to Rose could mean only one thing-she wanted Rose to join the Finch family! The same thought flashed in everyone's mind.

Someone whispered, "Mrs. Finch Senior wants Ms. Shaffer to become a part of the Finch family!"

"That must be it! Among the Finch family's grandchildren, Liam from the second branch married Yara. As for Jack, he's a playboy who's done some bad things and got locked up somewhere. Then there's M Jonathan and Mr. Ezra..."

"Mr. Jonathan and Ms. Shaffer would make a wonderful couple!"

"But what about Mr. Ezra? What if Ms. Shaffer is more interested in Mr. Ezra? Actually, has anyone ever seen Mr. Ezra from the Finch family before?"

The socialites whispered and gossiped amongst themselves, their curiosity piqued by this new revelation.

As Rose stood amidst the curious gazes, a wave of uneasiness washed over her. However, her discomfort subsided when she spotted a few familiar figures approaching. "Clo..." Rose's face lit up when she saw Clover, and she immediately broke away from Eleanor's grasp, running to greet him.

Clover greeted her with a warm, doting smile, but before he could utter a word, another voice interjected from beside him. "What about me?"

The voice belonged to Elijah, who was gazing at Rose with a hint of dissatisfaction and knitted brows, expressing his jealousy.

Rose paused for a moment, realizing she had only called out to Clover. Swiftly recovering, she affectionately looped her arm through Elijah's.

"Dad."

Despite not having known him long, addressing Elijah as "Dad" came with unexpected ease. Perhaps it was the inexplicable power of their blood bond.

Feeling a surge of pride at being called "Dad," Elijah couldn't resist casting a triumphant look at Clover.

Clover could only blink in protest. Rose had called out to him first. He was the one who should be feeling smug.

However, he knew better than to challenge his uncle. With a resigned sigh, he sheepishly rubbed his nose. Just then, Clover's gaze fell on the necklace adorning Rose's neck. "That's a lovely necklace," he remarked.

In truth, it was Rose's beauty that truly brought out the necklace's charm.

Unable to contain her delight at the compliment, Eleanor swiftly stepped forward with a bright smile. "I knew it! This necklace truly shines when worn by Rosie. It's as if it was made for her!" Clover's eyes finally shifted to Eleanor. Elijah also looked over. There was an unmistakable implication in her words that they both caught, and they exchanged puzzled glances. "This necklace..."

"It's a token of my gratitude to Rosie," Eleanor explained warmly, her affectionate gaze lingering on Rose.

"A gift? Was she thanking Rose for attending the birthday banquet?" Elijah wondered.

He saw through Eleanor's words but held his tongue. Instead, he turned to Rose. "Do you like it?"

Rose had a deep appreciation for design, and from that perspective, the necklace was indeed skillfully

crafted. The materials used were et

undeniably precious, but as

elf

someone who designed jewelry, she didn't crave the finest pieces for herself.

Yet, she couldn't bring herself to express her disinterest in Eleanor's presence.

"Well... I suppose I do," Rose answered, a hint of helplessness in her voice. "It's just that I can't seem to take it off now." She still intended to remove it later and return it to Jonathan, which, in a way, would be returning it to the Finch family.

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Chapter 578 Not Being Loved

[1,279 words]

With a knowing look, Elijah said, "Since you like it, just keep wearing it."

"As for the other matters..." he mused before turning his attention to the smiling Eleanor. "Mrs. Finch Senior, I am Elijah Xanth, Rosie's father. Thank you for showing her such generosity. I heard that Finch Group is focusing on expanding into overseas markets..." Eleanor's heart raced with anticipation, but she maintained her composure. "Indeed, Finch Group is exploring opportunities in overseas markets. We appreciate any support you can provide, Mr. Xanth."

The Xanth family's influence extended beyond the realm of business. Many issues could potentially be resolved with a single word from Elijah. The challenge lay in convincing him to speak up.

Eleanor knew securing a promise from Elijah wouldn't be easy, but laying the groundwork now was a start. Just as she was about to exchange pleasantries to build goodwill, Elijah continued, "If the Finch family has any needs that I can assist with, I'll certainly do my best to help."

"Huh? Did he really just say that?" Eleanor thought.

The sincerity in Elijah's tone was undeniable. She had anticipated investing considerable effort into winning his support, but he had just given his word without hesitation.

It was clear to Eleanor that Rose was the reason behind Elijah's swift agreement. When she first handed over the emerald necklace, she had felt a pang of reluctance, but seeing how quickly her decision had produced results, she felt that her gamble on Rose was a stroke of genius.

Excitement bubbled up within Eleanor, but she knew well that Elijah's offer of help likely extended to a one-time favor only. However, her ambitions stretched further. She wanted more than just one favor.

Greed welled up in her heart, but she reminded herself not to be hasty. As long as she kept a tight hold on Rose, things would go her way. If she could fully integrate Rose into the Finch family, it would open limitless possibilities.

The warmth in Eleanor's loving gaze intensified as she looked at Rose. In fact, it was a level of affection never before shown to any other Finch family descendant.

Meanwhile, Lizzie's heart grew colder, for she could see through Eleanor's intentions with crystal clarity. It was obvious to her that the older woman wanted to fully integrate Rose into the Finch family as her desired granddaughter-in-law.

A particular figure flashed in her mind, making her all the more agitated. She couldn't bear to watch Eleanor's facade any longer.

This birthday banquet was originally meant to celebrate her birthday, but all attention had shifted to Rose even before the party began. Even Lizzie's departure from the main hall went unnoticed.

As soon as she stepped outside, she froze at the sight of a figure. Swiftly assessing her surroundings, she noticed they were in a secluded spot, hidden from the security cameras.

She rapidly closed the distance between them, lowering her voice despite being alone. "What are you doing here?"

Lizzie maintained a distance, her cautious demeanor suggesting that the person in front of her shouldn't be seen.

Even though Carl Larson was well aware that their relationship had to remain hidden, Lizzie's guarded behavior still sent a dull ache through his chest.

"I'm responsible for the manor's security today."

Carl belonged to the Azure Clan, of whom Finley was the leader. Under him were various group leaders trusted by Finley, with Carl being one of them.

Ever since Jonathan took charge of the Finch family, Finley had devoted himself entirely to Jonathan's security. All other family matters requiring bodyguards were now handled by his trusted subordinates. Therefore, it was no surprise that Carl was overseeing the manor's security that day.

Despite Carl's assurance, Lizzie's brow furrowed with concern. "You're sure no one has caught onto anything suspicious?"

"I'm certain," Carl asserted.

Lizzie's wariness persisted as she cast a quick glance around, preparing to leave. But then, she reconsidered and instructed, "Follow me."

A fleeting look of joy crossed Carl's face.

With an unspoken understanding,

the pair moved in sync, keeping a cautious distance between them. Lizzie led the way while Carl trailed a few moments behind. They soon found themselves at an abandoned warehouse behind the medical building on the Finch Manor.

As soon as the warehouse door closed, Carl could no longer contain himself. He pulled Lizzie into his arms, his hands eagerly exploring her body.

He had long harbored feelings for

Lizzie, and his affection had grown over the years, but he had never dared cross the line as she was Cyrus' wife. Every time Carl was assigned to a protection mission, he felt a surge of emotions just by

619

catching a glimpse of her from afar.

He had assumed that his secret love would remain buried in his heart forever, but to his amazement, the goddess he admired from afar had noticed him.

Ten years ago, when Cyrus was away on a business trip in Aquastead, Lizzie attended a banquet alone and got drunk. Carl had been responsible for escorting her back to her residence.

That night, perhaps due to her intoxication, Lizzie mistook him for Cyrus. He knew he should have pushed her away, but his mind went blank at that moment. Even when his senses returned, he indulged in the fantasy that she had created. Using the intoxication as an excuse, they developed a connection. That night, they were unrestrained, swept up in a whirlwind of passion. She whimpered and cooed beneath him, and he relished the thrill of being with her.

When Lizzie faced him the following day, she was overwhelmed, sobbing, and in her clarity, she even slapped him.

Carl had prepared himself for the

consequences of their affair, expecting punishment from the

Azure Clan and certain net

elnet

However, to his astonishment, nothing changed. He remained with the clan, and on rare occasions

during missions, he would catch

glimpses of Lizzie.

Initially, she avoided eye contact, her gaze laden with remorse, but gradually, she began to offer him occasional smiles.

Carl found himself consumed by those fleeting moments, the memory of their passionate night replaying in his mind, leaving him yearning for more.

On Lizzie's birthday that year, Cyrus had passed out drunk, and Carl overheard her weeping in the art studio. With a boldness that surprised even himself, he stepped into the room.

It was then he learned that Cyrus still loved his late first wife. Lizzie wept as she asked Carl if she wasn't pretty, gentle, talented, or lovable enough.

At that moment, the mental boundary Carl had constructed shattered. He embraced her, their bodies entwined in another passionate night as he whispered in her ear, assuring her of her beauty, her gentle nature, her talents, and the depth of his love for her. Their encounter that night marked a turning point. From then on, Lizzie would sporadically send him messages, and they would covertly arrange to meet.

These secret rendezvous consisted of fleeting moments spent in a hidden apartment where they could lose themselves in each other's arms.

Even though their time together was brief, it was enough to satisfy Carl. He ached for her, knowing she was underappreciated by her husband, and silently vowed to fulfill her every desire.

Yet, Lizzie rarely expressed her wishes. So, when she said she wanted Jack to be released from custody, Carl worked tirelessly to make it happen.

After that, the two did not meet again. Carl's longing had become unbearable, so now he was desperately savoring her scent.

As his hand slid toward the hem of Lizzie's clothes, she caught his wrist. Her voice carried a coquettish tone.

"We're at the Finch Manor!"

Carl paused, his body stiffening. Only then did he realize the precarious nature of their location. This was no place to indulge in their desires as they did in their private apartment. But... "I've missed you so much." Carl's voice trembled with the effort to restrain himself, his desire barely contained.

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Chapter 579 Better Than Killing Her

[1,328 words]

When Carl confessed his longing for her, Lizzie didn't doubt him for a moment. She knew the sincerity of his emotions and capitalized on his yearning to maintain a firm grip on him. She had transformed him into a devoted tool, an obedient dog that loyally carried out her commands from the shadows. With dogs, only occasional treats were necessary to ensure their unwavering loyalty. Had it not been for her need to utilize Carl that day, she wouldn't have bothered indulging this "dog". However, there was a task that required his assistance. So, when he said he missed her, Lizzie nestled softly into his embrace, her hands encircling his neck as she initiated a kiss.

Her sudden display of affection was akin to pouring fuel on a fire, and Carl could no longer restrain himself. Passion took over as he left a trail of fervent kisses across her skin, claiming her hungrily.

Half an hour later, the heated breaths in the warehouse finally calmed down. Carl meticulously wiped away any evidence of their encounter from Lizzie's body before carefully readjusting her disheveled dress.

Noticing the unhappiness lingering in her eyes, he asked with concern, "What's wrong? Is it Mr. Cyrus again?"

"No." Lizzie cut him off. "It's because of Rose."

The mention of Rose sparked recognition within Carl. He was well aware of her identity as Jonathan's beloved woman.

"Did she upset you?" His frown deepened.

Carl's instinctive reaction when Lizzie was upset was to find a way to punish the offender. However, when it came to Rose, he found himself hesitating, as his fear of Jonathan had only grown stronger after the incident with Jack. "It's not that she upset me. It's just..." Lizzie lowered her gaze, her eyes shadowed with thought.

"You know I've never liked Rose. Eleanor used to look down on Rose's background, but now that she's become the daughter of the Xanth family of Lerain Group and inherited the Young family, Eleanor's attitude has changed. She even gave that emerald necklace to Rose today."

Lizzie's gaze darkened as she mentioned the necklace.

Most people were unaware that the necklace represented more than just its monetary value. It was a gift Eleanor had once presented to Nancy. The necklace symbolizes the Finch family's approval of its leader's wife.

Back then, when Nancy and Cyrus' marriage began to unravel, Nancy returned the necklace to the Finch family before departing. Since then, it had remained in Eleanor's possession.

All these years, Eleanor hadn't given the necklace to her or Bella, but that day, she had presented it to Rose.

The injustice of it all burned within Lizzie. It baffled her that Eleanor would give the necklace to Rose, of all people.

She couldn't believe that Eleanor was rooting for Rose and Jonathan. If Lizzie didn't take action, she would be forced to witness Jonathan living happily ever after with the woman he loved—a future Lizzie deemed absolutely unacceptable.

"Carl, if Rose marries Jonathan, with her current status, she will undoubtedly become the most valued and prominent woman in the Finch family."

She lowered her gaze, a calculated plan forming beneath her somber expression. Upon seeing this, Carl's heart ached at the sight of her distress.

He gently pulled her into his arms. "What do you want me to do?"

The thought of eliminating Rose almost escaped Lizzie's lips, but she held her tongue at the last moment.

Instead, she said, "I don't necessarily oppose Rose marrying into the Finch family... But my standing within the family will be lost if she marries Jonathan. If she marries someone else from the family, it might be more acceptable." "Someone else from the Finch family..." Carl mused. As a core member of the Azure Clan, he was well aware of the Finch family's structure.

Liam had married Yara, and although they rarely saw each other after the wedding, they still held the title of husband and wife. Jack was currently detained within Azure Clan.

If Rose couldn't marry Jonathan, that left only one viable option—Ezra.

Seeking to confirm Lizzie's intentions, Carl asked, "You mean you want her to marry Mr. Ezra?"

Lizzie paused, mulling over the idea. "If she marries Ezra, the threat to me would be significantly smaller. But... she and Jonathan are deeply in love. Why would she choose Ezra?" Then, she frowned.

Carl couldn't bear to see the woman he loved furrowing her brows, nor did he want her status in the Finch family to be threatened.

So, disregarding the fact that Rose was the woman Jonathan cared for, he impulsively blurted out, "I... might have a solution."

"What solution?" Lizzie's eyes sparked with curiosity.

Clasping her hand tightly, Carl began to explain, "I saw Mr. Cyrus leave earlier. I heard he went to pick up Mr. Ezra. Since Mr. Ezra is supposed to return today, maybe I can..."

As he laid out his plan, Lizzie listened intently, satisfaction swelling within her. However, despite feeling pleased, she couldn't help but worry.

"Rose is a member of the Xanth family and is currently the head of the Young Group. Not to mention, there's Jonathan by her side... If this plan fails and they find out..."

"Don't worry," Carl reassured her, his voice unwavering. "Even if it fails and they find out, they'll only trace it back to me. It won't affect you."

Seeing the genuine worry on Lizzie's face only strengthened his resolve. He would do anything for the woman he loved and remove any obstacles that stood in her way. Drawing her into his arms, Carl sought to comfort her. "It's going to be fine."

A cold smile crept up the corners of Lizzie's mouth as she leaned against his chest.

"It will be fine. And even if it weren't, it would only be Rose who suffers," she mused.

Lizzie couldn't help but feel a sense of satisfaction as she regarded the man before her. Using nothing but her body as leverage, she had shaped him into her loyal and devoted dog. Whether he could successfully drive a permanent wedge between Rose and Jonathan hinged entirely on that night's events.

Suddenly, Lizzie found this game to be even more thrilling than her previous plan of having Kelly eliminate Rose.

While the two of them hid away in the warehouse, the atmosphere outside was getting livelier. Miles had arrived, accompanied by

Harriette. Cyrus had personal net

orted Ezra back to the manor, though the latter remained out of sight.

There were two reasons behind Ezra's decision to stay hidden. For one, he had no interest in mingling with the crowd and participating in the social pretense. Secondly, although his face was widely recognized throughout Regalia, his identity as a member

of the Finch family was a secret. He intended to keep it that way. His reasons for returning that day revolved primarily around seeing Rose and unraveling the mystery behind Jonathan's insistence on his presence.

Cyrus didn't force Ezra to participate

in the gathering. After all, Lizzie's main intention was for the family to have a private gathering, which they could do after the guests had departed. At that point, they could sit down together, share some cake, and enjoy a simple moment as a family.

"If you feel restless later and want to join, just wear a mask, and it'll be fine," Cyrus suggested before leaving.

Ezra's relationship with his father had always been one of indifference. Glancing at the masks on the table, he couldn't help but think of Rose. He longed to see her and couldn't wait any longer.

Setting aside his original plan to remain concealed, he selected a mask, put it on, and stepped out of his room.

Downstairs, the grand hall buzzed with anticipation as the banquet was about to commence. Meanwhile, Cyrus had been searching everywhere for his wife.

"Where's Lizzie?" he asked the helpers, but none had seen her.

Some of the guests seemed bewildered. Most of them were clustered around Rose, entirely

focused on her, as if they had

forgotten that that day's suppo

main character was Jonathan's stepmother, Lizzie.

Just as Cyrus was about to order a search, a voice piped up, saying, "I think I saw Mrs. Finch heading toward the medical building."

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Chapter 580 How Did Your Neck Got Hurt

[1,240 words]

The person who had spoken was the manor's gardener.

"The medical building? That place's quite a distance away from here. What would Lizzie be doing over there?" Cyrus wondered.

After exchanging strained smiles with the guests, he excused himself and hurried toward the medical building.

The night had already fallen, and though the path was lit with bright lamps, it was eerily empty as all the guests were gathered inside the main hall.

As Cyrus drew closer to the medical building, his heart pounded fiercely in his chest. An inexplicable sense of foreboding enveloped him.

Approaching the building, he spotted a familiar figure standing at the entrance.

"Mr. Cyrus," Carl greeted. His towering figure was clad in a black suit, and his expression was unreadable behind dark sunglasses. Even when standing still, his powerful frame radiated an air of preparedness.

Though there were many within the Azure Clan, Cyrus recognized Carl immediately. As the former head of the Finch family, he knew well who Carl was a man known for his efficiency, combat skills, discretion, and loyalty. Carl possessed many qualities Cyrus valued in a person.

However...

"Why aren't you overseeing the guest security in the main house? What are you doing here?" Cyrus asked, his voice laced with suspicion.

Unperturbed, Carl responded, "Mrs. Finch was injured, so I brought her here "

But before Carl could finish, Cyrus had already rushed past him, disappearing into the medical building. His footsteps quickened as he frantically searched for Lizzie before he spotted a nurse carrying a medical kit. "Where's my wife? Is she okay? How badly is she hurt?" he questioned.

The nurse swiftly led him to Lizzie's location while Carl stood back, watching with an expression of cold detachment.

Lizzie had once confided in him that her husband was accustomed to putting on a facade. Indeed, Cyrus appeared deeply concerned for his wife when in public, yet yearned for another behind closed doors.

Lizzie had married Cyrus out of gratitude, but Carl was well aware of the suffering she had endured over the years. His heart ached for her, and it only steeled his resolve.

That night, he was determined to carry out his plan to give Lizzie the birthday gift she truly deserved.

"Since Cyrus has arrived, I'm guessing Ezra should be here as well." he mused.

Just as Carl was about to slip away discreetly, Cyrus' voice echoed from inside, laden with false tenderness.

"How could you be so careless? Does it hurt? Your neck is scratched... It seems this dress isn't suitable anymore."

Carl's heart skipped a beat, for he knew why Lizzie's neck bore scratch marks.

"It's nothing, really. It's just a small scratch. It doesn't hurt anymore. As for the dress..." Lizzie swiftly pulled off a decorative silk scarf from her wrist and tied it around her neck with practiced ease. "There, problem solved!" The scarf perfectly covered the mark on her neck. As for the origin of that mark...

Lizzie's eyes flicked toward the doorway, where Carl stood. "Thank you for bringing me here. I'm fine now."

Carl's heart pounded in his chest, his mind racing back to their passionate encounter in the warehouse. A flicker of smugness crossed his eyes, barely concealed behind the sunglasses he wore. Thankfully, the shades hid his expression from Cyrus. With a slight bow to both Cyrus and Lizzie, Carl turned and made his way out. As he walked away, a satisfied smirk crept onto his lips.

The unspoken understanding between Carl and Lizzie had existed for years. No matter how intense their encounters were, Carl had always been careful not to leave obvious traces.

That day in the warehouse, he had maintained that same restraint, except for when he kissed her. In the heat of their passion, he had momentarily lost control, leaving a faint mark on her neck.

Though the mark was not deep, it stood out against her porcelain skin, particularly with the low neckline of her dress, making it impossible to conceal.

Even the necklace couldn't cover up the telltale sign of their intimate moment. If she appeared like that in public, the mark would be undeniable.

As for a change of clothes or a strategically placed scarf, Lizzie knew it would not escape Cyrus' notice once bedtime came.

So, she had taken drastic action, gritting her teeth as she deliberately scratched over it with a tree branch. The resulting cut was small but effective, hiding the evidence of their encounter. Although the wound was minor, Carl's heart still ached for her.

"Lizz, I'm sorry," Cyrus lamented, his face filled with self-reproach. "I failed to get Ms. Flora from K&K to design a new dress for you."

Lizzie adored Ms. Flora's designs, and Cyrus had even approached the owner of K&K, hoping to secure her talents. However, his efforts had been met with the same response. "Ms. Flora is busy and has no time to take on new projects."

"Busy? How busy could a fashion designer really be?" Cyrus had wondered.

Even after revealing his identity, he had received the same answer. "Ms. Flora is busy."

Though disappointed about the dress, Lizzie didn't let it show in front of Cyrus. Instead, she offered him a reassuring smile.

"It's alright. I'll just wear the dress Ms. Flora designed for me before. I haven't had a chance to wear it anyway."

So, Lizzie arrived at the banquet in that same gown.

As soon as Cyrus escorted Lizzie

back into the hall, Rose immediately recognized the dress. She remembered when she had worked on that gown in Aquastead for a high-profile client from Regalia, never realizing that the mysterious client had been Lizzie.

"What a small world," she mused.

Eleanor, on the other hand, wasn't as pleased. She had noticed Lizzie's absence and was quick to express her dissatisfaction the moment they arrived. "Where on earth have you been? Everyone has been waiting for you. Hurry up and apologize."

Though Lizzie wasn't exactly the star of that day's event, the banquet was still under the guise of her birthday celebration.

Certain formalities had to be upheld, and Eleanor couldn't show her irritation too openly in front of the guests. Nonetheless, her tone was undeniably sharp.

Lizzie's expression hardened. "Apologize? To the guests? I'm the birthday girl! Is Eleanor even listening to herself?" she thought.

Even though she felt humiliated by the demand, she had no choice. Eleanor's words had left her cornered. With a forced smile, Lizzie complied.

"I'm sorry, everyone. I injured myself earlier and lost track of time."

Her words and apologetic demeanor instantly elicited a mix of sympathy and curiosity from the crowd.

"You're injured? What happened? Where did you get hurt?"

"Is it serious? How did it happen?"

Questions flew at Lizzie from

concerned guests, but Lizzie quickly waved off their worries. "It's nothing serious, just a small injury I had

treated at the medic conne

Thank you for your concern.

She touched the scarf around her neck, unafraid of revealing the injury's location, knowing they wouldn't guess the true cause.

Eleanor's face soured slightly. This party wasn't meant for Lizzie to showcase her injury and garner sympathy. Eleanor had bigger plans and was eager to move on.

"Since it's just a minor injury that's been treated, there shouldn't be any more problems. Thank you all for your concern for my daughter-in-law," she said, stepping forward with a wide smile.

She continued, "My daughter-in-law

truly is remarkable. When she was

younger, she was known for her talent in painting. But she excels most in calligraphy, having studied under the esteemed Mr. York"

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To outsiders, it seemed Eleanor adored her daughter-in-law. Only Eleanor and Lizzie knew the truth-this flattery was just a set-up for what Eleanor had planned next.

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