

Menu 173

Chapter 173: Choosing to Accept

Dennise held her head high, looking at Jason.

Her face bore an expression that screamed ‘I’m so clever.’

Jason couldn’t hold it in.

He raised his hand and smacked her smooth forehead.

Thwack!

In the crisp sound, Dennise covered her head, her steps faltered, her lips pouted, and she looked quite aggrieved.

However, the next moment—

“You can’t use your hands to eat at dinner,”

Jason reminded.

“Okay~”

Instantly, Dennise cracked a smile and hopped toward Jason, chasing after him.

When she saw Jason standing in a corner contemplating, she didn’t bother him and just walked around nearby, full of anticipation.

As for helping Jason solve the problem?

Dennise remembered what her mother had said: not to be a nuisance is the greatest help you can offer to others.

Dennise took it to heart.

In her heart, she was just an ordinary person.

A problem even Jason couldn’t solve.

How could she possibly solve it?

This wasn’t like reading a novel where a flick of the fingers and a page-turn made everything better.

So, she kept silent.

Jason glanced at Dennise who was within 'arm's reach' and, after assuring himself she wouldn't get into trouble, he started to muse.

How could Gerard's wedding be postponed?

Unconsciously, Jason slipped into the 'Nightless City' mindset—

Take out that 'aunt' Lym!

I can't solve the problem.

But I can take out the person causing the problem.

It was the most direct and simplest solution, and it's the everlasting kind.

But he was destined not to do that.

Shaking his head, he pulled himself out of the 'Nightless City' mindset.

Jason tried his best to think of a normal solution.

Then he realized...

There was none!

There really was none!

Gerard, who respected his own mother, was destined not to outright defy her.

And his 'aunt,' who had gone through so much and was incredibly resolute, couldn't be swayed by ordinary persuasion.

This ordinary included Jason himself.

"Tough,"

Jason sighed and looked toward Gerard, weaving through the crowd.

Although Gerard walked among the people, his attention was always on Jason; when he saw Jason look at him, the harbormaster immediately showed a hopeful expression.

However, when he saw Jason helplessly shrug to indicate there was no solution, the harbormaster immediately became dejected.

But it was only a fleeting moment.

As he looked to the next person, Gerard returned to a smiling demeanor.

Only...

The smile seemed a bit stiff.

At this moment, for the first time, he thought, wouldn't it be nice if I weren't the harbormaster?

If I were not the harbormaster, I wouldn't have so many worries and wouldn't be so exhausted.

Walking on the beach and sparring with my cousin every day, swinging swords and shedding sweat—that would be the most exhilarating life.

Unfortunately, there were no ifs.

Gerard's character meant that he wouldn't cowardly flee.

Nor would he lay the burden that was rightfully his on others.

He would bear it all on his own.

Therefore, such thoughts merely circled his mind before disappearing without a trace.

Then, Gerard resigned himself, waiting for his 'verdict.'

About ten minutes later, an elderly woman clad in black walked into 111 Duron Street.

Suddenly, the relatives that had gathered around Gerard swarmed toward the old lady, bustling about her with warm greetings and flattery.

Gerard seized this rare moment of respite and quickly walked over to Jason's side.

"I never thought I would have my wedding like this,"

Gerard sighed softly.

Jason wanted to comfort Gerard, but he couldn't find the words of solace.

In the end, Jason said:

"I'll be by your side, now or in the future, it's all the same."

"Me too!"

Gerard responded.

As the harbormaster, Gerard looked at Jason and made a promise-like declaration, "No matter if it's now or in the future, I too will stand by your side to face any dangers together."

Having said this, the two men exchanged a smile.

This was the pure friendship between men.

Though it had begun from kinship.

Afterward, the two talked softly about trivial matters.

They didn't stop their chat until 'Aunt' Lym came over, and they walked out of the corner of the banquet hall.

"Gerard, you are the master of this place, you should always stand in the most dazzling spot."

"Jason, you are Gerard's cousin; even if you want to avoid tiresome socializing, you can only do so after the party has ended, not during it, by staying away in a corner."

Aunt Lym came over and chided Gerard and Jason.

The two looked at each other and spread their hands together.

This made the old woman frown.

However, she didn't say anything more.

Instead, she turned around to look at the relatives.

"Welcome to Hans Port, to number 111 on Duron Street."

"Today is a special day."

"It was today that Hans left us."

The old woman said, her expression filled with sorrow.

Jason glanced at the black clothes on the old woman and realized with a start.

Today was the anniversary of 'Uncle' Hans's death.

But to have a wedding on the day of someone's death...

It seemed quite odd.

Jason couldn't help but look towards Gerard.

Then he saw Gerard's surprised and astonished expression.

"My mother rarely talked about my father's passing."

"Today is the first time I learned the date of my father's death."

"When I used to ask, my mother would fly into a rage, and after several times, I just stopped asking."

Noticing Jason's gaze, Gerard explained softly.

Jason listened and frowned.

He felt something was off.

But he remained silent, just quietly listening to the old woman continue.

“At that time, Hans was aboard the ‘Queen Mary’ heading to the Southern Archipelago.”

“Sadly, a storm engulfed the ‘Queen Mary’.”

“Hans and all the passengers aboard perished.”

“Because it happened so suddenly, Hans left no will behind, and I, with young Gerard, became the manager of Hans Port...”

The old woman narrated with a heartbreaking voice.

Then, she began to talk about some memories of Uncle Hans.

Bit by bit, Jason formed a clearer picture of his ‘Aunt’ in front of him and the uncle he had never met.

Watching his mother, Gerard’s gaze was full of respect.

Only Gerard, who had lived through these events, could understand what his mother had endured.

To say it was a narrow escape from death would not be an exaggeration.

He distinctly remembered, when naive and young, trying to help a fallen lady, she drew a knife, and his mother stepped in front of him to take the hit.

The blood sprayed directly onto his face.

It was warm.

Just like his mother's comforting smile at that time.

'Gerard, it's okay.'

'It's just a minor wound, rest a bit and it will be fine.'

The once-blurred memories became clear all at once.

This made Gerard's last bit of reluctance disappear without a trace.

Even for my mother, I should not run away.

Gerard admonished himself, feeling guilty about his own 'willfulness.'

And it was at this moment that young Reed suddenly entered the room. He avoided most people and quietly came to Gerard's side, whispering—

"My lord, Princess Carol Klara has been assassinated!"