

The Crafts 292

Chapter 292: Vienna's Guilt

"Seeing that you're both here, I'm guessing you won." Vienna smiled at the group of three that walked into the room.

They were Lucas, Melissa and Mr Jermaine. As for the occasion, it could be said to be a celebratory dinner for Lucas' victory. However, because of her earlier meeting with her cousin, Vienna didn't hold it at Astero's Palace, but in another high-end restaurant.

"You made an impressive friend in Mr Lucas, Miss Vienna." Mr Jermaine complimented and took a seat opposite her.

Vienna smiled and didn't say a word.

Meanwhile, Lucas brought Melissa over and sat beside Vienna. He didn't really think much when doing this and simply took a seat, but Mr Jermaine took notice of this and smiled mysteriously.

There was a rumour going on in the Versoa team that Lucas was Vienna's new man. Although there was no tangible evidence to support this rumour, the fact that Vienna gave him more than half of her shares was mind-boggling and seemed to support this statement. The original explanation for this was that Lucas had saved her life and so, she gave him the stocks as a reward. But even so, there were multiple different ways she could pay him back without suffering such a loss. Naturally, this garnered some of the staff members to think too deeply into the matter.

"Please, order whatever you want. It's my treat." Vienna said as she pointed at the menu.

"Then I won't be holding back." Mr Jermaine chuckled as he picked up a paper menu.

In some fancy dining places, especially the really high-end ones, digital displays weren't used for the menu but a unique paper made out of desolate beast tissue. It felt more comfortable to the touch, held ink nicely, and could last for decades without any signs of damage.

Melissa's eyes shone as she stared at the menu with rapt attention. She was almost at the point where she would begin salivating as she perused the list and read the short descriptions of the dishes.

Most of the time, Melissa was a matured and intelligent young girl, but when it came to food, she revealed her true nature as a glutton. Lucas suspected that it had to do with her unique nature as a hybrid. Considering how fast she progressed with her stellar refinement, her body needed to meet up with the necessary nutritional requirements to be able to keep up with her growth.

Lucas was actually in a somewhat similar situation, but this was because his soul strength was too powerful for his body. It is a well known fact that the brain consumes more energy than any other organ in the body. With his brain being constantly enhanced by his soul strength, Lucas had to ensure that the organ had enough energy to function well, and enough nutrients to grow properly. As such, he had to consume a lot of nutrients —the appropriate ones to be exact— to quickly improve his brain and his nervous system.

Since the meal was being sponsored by their 'boss', there was no reason to hold back, so Lucas let Melissa handle the ordering. One reason for this was because it would be shameless of him to take advantage of a woman by ordering a lot of food. But if a child did it, then there was no problem.

'This isn't taking advantage of the cuteness of a little child or being shameless. It's called being smart.'

Lucas justified his actions mentally.

Soon after, the robotic waiter who stood by the side had taken down a total of twenty orders. Because she already had a meal at Astero's Palace, Vienna only ordered two dishes, both on the light side. Mr Jermaine was the same as he didn't intend on spending a long time here. That meant that the pair of Lucas and Melissa had ordered sixteen dishes. What's more, apart from six light dishes, the others were on the heavy side.

The other two on the table couldn't help but raise an eyebrow at this development, but as the host, Vienna didn't think much about it. The meals might be costly but it couldn't even make a dent in her wallet.

"That's...a lot." Vienna lightly commented.

"Well, our little Melissa likes to eat and I've been working a lot these days, spending little time on meals."

Lucas gave a lie of an explanation which was quite convincing.

As a top class restaurant, it didn't take long for the freshly cooked meals to be ready. The cooking standards, whether it be taste or preparation time, were well ahead of Earth's.

Looking at the table filled with luxurious dishes that he could not afford, at least at the moment, Lucas couldn't help but sneakily gulp.

"It's appealing, isn't it?" asked Mr Jermaine who noticed Lucas' slight actions.

"I have to admit, I've had nothing like this before." Lucas honestly replied.

"Well, feel free to dig in." Vienna smiled.

Wasting no second again, Lucas tried out the first plate before him and his eyes almost sparkled right after.

Food was the key to every man's heart. This was an undeniable truth no matter the universe, because every man was a slave to his stomach.

For Lucas, smithing came first, but closely on its heels was good food. Part of this had to do with the fact that growing up in his first life, he didn't eat a lot of home-cooked meals and even lived in the wild where he survived on berries, raw vegetables, fruits and insects. Even after his foster-father took him up, they couldn't afford quality meals. It was only in his later life and his time on Earth that Lucas got exposed to fancy dining.

But the meals in Erete were on a whole other level. The proteins were sourced from exquisite desolate beasts, tasting like nothing he had ever had before. The vegetables were unique to this world and unlike what he was experienced with. Lucas even had a weird green that tasted like a cross between an apple and a mushroom. It was a unique flavour he had never had before, but it wasn't off-putting. Instead, it was really appealing to his tastebuds.

A few minutes later, Mr Jermaine was done with his meal and took the time to leave the room. He figured to give the two 'lovers' some space, and he was also quite busy with work.

As such, only Lucas, Melissa and Vienna were left alone.

Despite finishing faster, Vienna didn't leave but ordered a bottle of wine and waited for Lucas while she drank.

After the food, Lucas also decided to take a few glasses of wine as well. The fragrance of the wine was too enticing and he couldn't help but want to try it.

"Esteren 3122 De' Marc." Vienna said with misty eyes.

"That's the name of the wine. It's a vintage drink, and quite generic to be honest. But it's warming."

Lucas glanced at her and for a second, he could feel that the atmosphere was weird. Vienna was probably drunk.

He was actually on point with the guess. After having met her cousin, some of Vienna's scars were opened again. As she drank from the bottle of wine, she inadvertently began to let herself lose. With Lucas having a lot on his plate, literally, Vienna spent the majority of time drinking more wine. There were two empty bottles by her side when Lucas was done eating.

'Why are rich young girls always so careless?' Lucas sighed.

"Don't worry. I'm not drunk. I'm not a lightweight." Vienna smiled.

'That's what drunk people say.'

Lucas didn't believe her, but he didn't argue either.

"You're probably still not trusting me, right?"

Lucas froze, confused as to how the discussion kept moving in an unpredictable pattern.

"Well, I can't blame you. I know everything there is to know about you and have investigated you, but you know nothing about me. Sometimes I even wonder, who am I exactly."

Vienna bent her head and smiled. However, there was no ounce of joy in her smile; instead there was only sadness and pity.

"It's not that I'm hiding it. I just don't want you to go. Or to find out that you're like the others."

At this point, Lucas was confused, but he didn't mind. Instead, he was savouring the taste of the wine. Despite looking like one, it didn't taste like typical red wine. Lucas could even swear that the wine wasn't made with red grapes, but a different ingredient as the base. Even so, it was still sweet and alcoholic; it wasn't too strong, but it wasn't weak either.

'Makes sense why she got drunk.'

Lucas glanced at Vienna.

"Lucas, was it? You remind me of him." Vienna abruptly stared at Lucas with reminiscing eyes.

"Him?" Lucas asked.

"When I was younger, around nine years old, I had a childhood friend. We played together, went to school together, and our parents were quite close. Whenever I got injured, he came to my aid. Whenever I was in trouble, he came to rescue me. And after each incident, we would always go back home holding hands together. However, when I was twelve, a certain incident occurred and he came to my rescue. But unlike the previous times, I was the only one who went back home alive.

"Some might say that I like you, but in truth, I'm just being selfish. I'm just using you to repay all the help I've received, and wipe away my guilt."