

Chapter 1431

Elaine pushed open the door and went inside.

The waiters had already finished their work and gotten off work, and only the cafe owner was sitting at the front desk, going through the ledger.

The wall lamp glowed faintly.

A vest covered the man's dark gray shirt, his sleeves were rolled up, and his forearms were revealed.

The leather strap watch on his wrist was a retro-style watch that was very scarce on the market.

None of his clothing and accessories were of any luxury brand, but they were all custom-made instead.

His fashion style looked simple, comfortable, and refreshing. He lifted his head and opened a cabinet.

"I thought you'd come back in the evening to pick up the things you left behind."

Elaine stepped forward awkwardly and watched him place her employee card on the desk.

"I'm really sorry. I didn't know that I left it at your store."

She remembered that it had been in her bag and had not taken it out.

'Could it be that it accidentally fell out when I took out my wallet to pay for my coffee?' She thought of something.

"Then how did you know my cell phone number?" He gave off a faint smile.

"The solution came to me all of a sudden, and I called your company to ask for your cell phone number."

The employee of J Tech Inc. was working overtime tonight, so he had gotten lucky.

Elaine kept the employee card away with a smile, and her gaze landed on the wine glasses that were neatly arranged on the shelf.

There were various cocktails in the transparent kitchen cabinets.

"You run a cafe and are into all these too?" She propped her arms against the surface of a table.

"I didn't see any of these earlier today."

The man was caught off guard for a split second and turned around to take a look. He immediately walked to the side, pressed a button, and the walls and cabinets moved.

Everything soon returned to what she saw during the day.

Elaine was flabbergasted.

"Sorry, I forgot to change it back to how it usually looks." The man held up a self-mixed cocktail and shook it lightly.

"No one else knows about this except for the staff of my store." Elaine chuckled.

"Then does this make me the first customer to know the secret of your cafe?" The man drank the cocktail slowly, raised his gaze, and laughed.

"That's true."

"Have you ever owned a bar or a lounge before this?" He nodded.

"Yeah."

Elaine supported her chin with one hand.

"That's no wonder. However, it's already so late, so why haven't you gotten off work?"

He lifted his head to look at her.

"I'm here waiting for you, ain't 1?"

Elaine was momentarily stunned.

If it weren't for the fact that she had passed the age where a teenage girl first experienced the dawning of love, she would have thought that this man had a thing for her.

She laughed.

"Yes, now that I've got my card, you can get off work already."

She picked up her handbag and was about to take her leave when she suddenly remembered something, so she turned around and looked at him.

"May I know your name?"

The man shook the glass lightly, glanced at her face through the pane, and gave a faint smirk.

"You can call me Mr.Saldana."

"Mr.Saldana."

Elaine smiled before pushing the door open and leaving the cafe.

The next day, Madam Vanderbilt fell ill and was hospitalized.

Hector hurried to the hospital after receiving a call from his father.

Lucy came along with him.

Since she was about to meet the elderly of his family, she could not go there empty-handed.

Thus, she also bought some supplements and brought them to the hospital.

Hector stepped into the ward with Lucy.

Heidi was sitting on the bed drinking broth.

Besides Yorick, the two relatives were in the ward as well.

"Grandmother."

“You finally know that you should come and visit me.”

Heidi put the bowl down, and she did not look sick at all.

“As long as I’m still alive and kicking, I think you won’t even remember that you have a grandmother, will you?”

Hector frowned.

“If you’re not feeling well, just stay at home and don’t travel to Bassburgh so frequently.”

Seeing his attitude, Heidi became upset.

“What do you mean, Hector? I’m the person who raised you since you were a child. You’ve become more disrespectful to me ever since you came to Bassburgh to find Maisie. Sure enough, that wretch Maisie has taught you to disrespect your elders, hasn’t she!?”

Chapter 1432

Hector’s expression dimmed slightly.

“Grandmother, it’s okay if you dislike Maisie, but you have no right to slander her.”

Madam Vanderbilt was about to lose her temper, but Yorick stopped her instantly.

“Mother, Hecky has brought his girlfriend here to pay you a visit. Why are you acting so irritably?”

‘His girlfriend?’ The two relatives and Heidi looked at Lucy immediately.

Lucy smiled politely at them and then brought the supplements to her.

“Madam Vanderbilt, don’t get so worked up if you’re sick and hospitalized. Getting angry will only worsen your condition. These are some supplements that I bought for you.”

Heidi took a closer look at her.

‘She’s dressed in ordinary clothes. At first glance, she looks like a daughter from a poor family. So, perhaps she’s only gotten together with Hector because of his status’

“What’s your parents’ status?”

Lucy’s smile stiffened slightly.

Heidi did not accept her gifts.

Instead, she crossed her arms and claimed, “You have to be a daughter of some wealthy family or someone with great influence if you want to get into the Vanderbilts. As for an ordinary woman like you, keep dreaming.”

“Hector has just become the owner of an entertainment company, and I think you’ve only gotten together with him for his money and status.”

She did not utter any swear words, but her choice of words and tone sounded extremely offensive, as if she was mocking Lucy.

Hector's expression looked gloomy. He stepped forward, snatched the bag of supplements from Lucy's hand, and threw it into the trash can.

"You can refuse them if you don't want to keep them. There's no need to make things difficult for her."

He then grabbed Lucy's hand and left the ward with her.

"Hector Vanderbilt, you brat, get back here!"

No matter how loudly Heidi shouted, her grandson did not even turn his head around.

She was so angry that she swept all the items on the table to the floor.

"This brat really has picked up all the bad traits from Maisie."

"Mother,"

Yorick took a deep breath, and his cheeks bulged, "I've really misread you. You haven't changed a bit after so many years. All the misfortunes that the Vanderbilts have undergone throughout all these years originate from you."

Yorick slammed the door and left.

Heidi sat on the bed, feeling astonished and speechless.

Chapter 1433

Hector took Lucy to the front of the car.

Seeing that Lucy looked distressed and did not say a word, he grabbed her by her shoulders.

"Lucy, you don't have to take her words seriously."

"But isn't she your grandmother? But why..."

Hector took a deep breath, turned around, and leaned against the car door.

"My family's affairs are very complicated. I didn't think so before this because I'm a boy, and my grandmother favors sons over daughters and pampered me a lot.

"She had never taught me what's right and what's wrong. She would do anything for me as long as I wanted that thing, no matter whether it was right or wrong. So much so that I thought she could save me even if I were to get into any huge trouble.

"But it turned out that I was wrong. I degenerated, became depraved, and didn't know that society was a sinister place. If it weren't for Maisie, I'm afraid I would've fallen into an abyss, step by step.

"Do you know about my sister, Linda Vanderbilt? My grandmother looked down on her very much because she was a girl. Her whole life was ruined by my grandmother's pedantic and obstinate upbringing. She didn't even shed a tear when my mother and Linda died. Those relatives of hers have always been more important than the members of her own family."

Lucy's heart trembled, and she cupped his cheeks with both hands.

"I understand you." Hector hugged her, buried his face into the side of her neck, and smiled.

"As Maisie said, this is my life, and I can make my own decisions. I don't have to be a puppet who's at the mercy of others. Even my relatives can't tell me what I should do with my life."

At noon, Heidi called her son and grandson several times, but the phone calls did not get through.

She panicked and hurried out of the ward.

As she was passing by the stairwell, she suddenly heard someone's voice, took a few steps backward, looked into the stairwell, and saw the two relatives standing in the corridor, chatting.

Chapter 1434

"This old hag is still trying to save her face in front of us. After running around the city with her for a few days, we've gained nothing. She keeps on claiming that she's able to accomplish anything, Hector will definitely listen to her, and the list goes on and on. We shouldn't have trusted her so much in the first place."

The two relatives discussed among themselves and decided to pack up and return to Coralia.

They then turned around and saw Heidi standing at the door, and they were petrified for a moment.

Heidi felt piqued as she listened to the two of them talking about herself behind her back, but she was still trying her best to maintain her composure.

Especially when facing her relatives, she laughed instead of losing her head.

"Why are you planning to return home so quickly? Why are you in such a hurry? Give me a few more days. Hector has always been close to me ever since he was a child. It's just that he's been led astray by Maisie. After all, I'm his grandmother. There's no way that he'll cut ties with me."

The two relatives exchanged gazes and understood they had run out of patience.

"Alright, aunt, let's just forget about this incident."

"That's right. You're getting old already. You should have recognized that long ago. You've already faked a diagnosis and have gotten yourself hospitalized, but your son and your grandson are still not here accompanying you. We really can't afford to waste any more time on you."

Heidi had always liked to show off, and all her relatives knew clearly that this was what her genuine life looked like.

The ex-daughter-in-law had died, the other son had died, the granddaughter had died, and the other granddaughter was now beyond her reach. It was said that all people should enjoy their retirement when they were old, but that was not the case for her.

Everything in her life was a mess.

If Heidi had not flaunted that her grandson had become the owner of a company and said he would help his relatives, they would not have gone to the company to see Hector shamelessly and gotten humiliated while they were at it.

The two relatives were too tired to follow her around town and torture themselves anymore.

Thus, they departed one after another, leaving Heidi alone behind, feeling extremely embarrassed.

Saydie stood at the stairwell entrance and watched as the two relatives left. She picked up her cell phone, went elsewhere, and called Maisie to report the situation that Heidi was in in the hospital.

Maisie listened to her report and continued to color her design draft with a brush. She had no sympathy for what happened to Heidi.

'She faked a diagnosis and got herself hospitalized to force Hector back. That was rather over the top'

Saydie asked, "She's discharged from the hospital. Do you still want me to follow her?"

The tip of Maisie's paintbrush stopped moving.

"Yes, I think she'll create a fuss and cause someone trouble. Continue following her just in case something bad happens."

'Uncle Yorick and Hector embarrassed her in front of her relatives. Judging from her arrogance and stubbornness, who knows if she'll be so exasperated that she'll do something dumb?'

Heidi bought a ticket to Coralia as soon as she got discharged from the hospital. She had failed to convince her son and grandson to help herself out and had gotten mocked by her relatives.

Thus, she vented her anger on her pregnant daughter-in-law when she returned to her hometown.

Bella was well aware of Heidi's temperament, so she endured her attitude and poured her a cup of tea to quench her thirst.

Heidi took the teacup into her hand, took a sip, felt it was hot, and splashed the teacup on the floor.

"Is this how you serve your mother-in-law? This tea is so hot. How can anyone drink it!?"

"Mother, I'm sorry. It's my negligence."

She could only apologize in a low voice and pour her another cup.

Heidi thought the tea was too bland and smashed the new teacup on the floor.

"You're totally useless, even worse than Hector's mother."

Heidi got up and pushed her aside.

"Get out of my sight. You're such an eyesore."

Bella lost her footing and fell to the coffee table.

Heidi was annoyed immediately and scolded her, "I didn't even try to push you, and you've managed to fall? Are you trying to frame me?"

"Mother...I-I think my amniotic fluid has broken and is leaking."

She held her big belly, and her face paled in pain.

Chapter 1435 Heidi looked disdainful.

"I only gave you a slight nudge. How is it possible for you to go into labor? I used to chop firewood when my stomach was as big as yours. Just how squeamish can you be?"

It was not until blood flowed out between Bella's legs that Heidi realized something was wrong.

Before Heidi could react, Saydie had already rushed in from outside.

Heidi was stunned.

"Who are you!?"

Saydie ignored her and quickly took out her cell phone to call an ambulance.

Yorick received a call that his wife had gone into labor and had been sent to the hospital, so he immediately rushed back to the Maternity and Child Health Hospital of Coralia.

Because the baby was born prematurely and the mother was bleeding profusely, the nurse asked a family member to sign the consent form so the hospital could arrange an operation immediately.

However, when Yorick was about to sign it, Heidi stopped him.

"What do you think you're doing? All mothers bleed when they're giving birth to a baby. And think about this, the operation will surely cost a fortune."

The nurse standing on the side immediately put on a cold and gloomy face.

"Ma'am, the woman lying on the operating table is your daughter-in-law. The bleeding will become life-threatening if not stopped immediately. The most crucial thing we should do now is to ensure the safety of both the mother and the child."

Yorick pushed Heidi away and signed the form directly.

Maisie and Hector arrived later.

While they arrived at the corridor, they could hear Heidi arguing with Yorick from a distance.

The nurses tried to persuade them several times but still could not stop them.

Heidi sounded extremely wronged as she yelled, "I'm the one who gave birth to you and raised you! Yet, you're treating me like this for another woman? I only gave her a slight nudge! Who would know that she's this squeamish and has to give birth prematurely? And you're blaming me for her weak body?"

This excuse astonished Yorick.

Saydie walked up to Maisie and reiterated the facts to her.

And Hector and Yorick's expressions changed drastically when they heard it.

Heidi still did not think it was her fault at all and even blamed Maisie.

"It turns out that she's one of your people. I should know that you don't mean well. Both of you actually colluded to frame me, didn't you?"

Maisie gazed at her and said nothing.

Yorick lowered his head, walked to the side silently, leaned against the wall, and squatted down slowly.

His face looked downcast and haggard.

A few hours later, the nurse came out with good news, saying that both the mother and child were safe and that the baby was a girl.

Yorick finally heaved a sigh of relief.

When Heidi heard that Bella had given birth to a daughter, her expression dimmed instantly.

“After going through all that trouble, the baby she’s given birth to doesn’t even have a wiener. If I were to know that she’s so—”

Yorick finally could not help but yell, “That’s enough!”

Heidi was taken aback and became even more upset because her son was yelling at her.

“What’s wrong with that statement? I’m your mother. Are you rebelling! ?”

Yorick let off a pathetic scoff.

“I’d rather not have you as my mother.”

Heidi’s expression slightly stiffened.

Yorick entered the delivery theater to see his wife. He stopped midway but did not look back.

“I’ve had enough. Living with you makes me feel very tired. Since you dislike my daughter, we’ll move out starting today. We won’t have anything to do with you from now onward.”

Heidi was trembling with rage.

“Y-You...”

She immediately walked up to Hector.

“Hecky, look at your father! He doesn’t even recognize his mother now. You mustn’t follow in his footsteps!”

“To be honest, I don’t want to recognize you either.”

Hector stood in place with a numb expression.

This was his first time seeing how outrageous and selfish his grandmother was.

Heidi was stunned.

“What did you just say!?”

“You’ve turned this family into a mess. Since you love those relatives of yours so much, you should live with them instead. There’s no need to torment us any longer.”

“My mother died, my sister died too, and my father and stepmother are the only ones I have left. If Maisie hadn’t kept an eye on you from the shadows, I’d bet my money on Bella not being able to keep the baby.”

Chapter 1435

“It’s your own fault if Dad renounces you.”

Hector ignored her and walked into the delivery room.

Heidi turned pale, and her arrogance dissipated.

The next day, Yorick moved out of the ancestral Vanderbilt mansion.

The neighbors said Heidi almost caused her daughter-in-law to lose her child and had no sympathy for her.

They had been living on the same street for a long time and had witnessed how she pushed people around.

After the incident involving Yorick and Hector, she had been more passive, but unfortunately, she was still the same person inside.

Her family had broken up, and her children and grandchildren had abandoned her.

Even though it was sad, she deserved it.

After a week...

Maisie visited her aunt, Bella, at the hospital. She was holding the baby girl in her arms.

The baby was asleep after she was fed.

Maisie sat down next to the bed.

“How are you feeling?”

“Much better.”

She smiled and nodded. She was grateful when she found out that Maisie was the one who had saved her.

“It’s all thanks to you that this child was saved.” Maisie smiled.

“Don’t mention it.”

There was a big difference between this aunt and Yannis.

All one could say was that Yorick was lucky to be able to get a good wife at his age.

“By the way, I heard Hector will be coming over with his girlfriend. Honestly, I’m quite surprised that Hector is fine with me as his stepmother.”

“Girlfriend?” Maisie paused.

Bella was curious.

“Didn’t you know?”

Before Maisie could reply, Hector walked in with Lucy next to him.

When Lucy saw Maisie, she was surprised.

“M-Ms.Vanderbilt.”

Hector was holding her hand.

Maisie suddenly smiled and stood up.

“It’s Lucy.”

Lucy was a little awkward because she wasn’t ready to tell Maisie yet, but now she knew.

“How could you hide this from me?”

Maisie pretended to be serious.

Lucy lowered her head and didn’t know what to say.

Hector spoke up.

“Maisie, we started dating recently.”

She crossed her arms and asked, “The night of the party?”

He paused, “Not yet.”

Maisie chuckled, walked over, and patted his shoulder.

“I guessed something was going on, but I didn’t know it was true.I guess I was right.”

Lucy pressed her lips together.

“Alright, you’re here to see Aunt Bella, so I’ll be off.”

Maisie smiled and left the room.

After walking out of the hospital, she looked up and saw someone familiar in a handsome suit standing next to the car.

It was hard for anyone passing by to ignore him.

Maisie jogged toward Nolan and fell into his arms.

“Why are you here?”

Nolan hugged her.

“You’re not in Bassburgh, so I had t o come over to get you.”

His hand slipped to her waist, and he buried his face in her neck.

“Did you miss me?” She said she did.

Nolan whispered into her ears, “How much?”

Maisie was going to say something when she noticed Saydie and Quincy standing next to them. She pushed him away.

“Let’s go home!”

On the way back, Nolan leaned back on the seat and rested his eyes, his handsome face looking tired.

Maisie let him lean on her and take a nap. She looked at Quincy, who was driving.

“Why did you let him come all the way here? He’s so tired.”

The flight from Hewston City to Bassburgh was three hours long, and after he got off, he didn’t rest and came straight to Coralia.

He must have been drained.

Chapter 1436

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Chapter 1437

Quincy felt wronged.

“Mr. Goldmann insisted on coming to see you.”

She asked, “How was it at Hewston?”

He replied, “It was good. It wasn’t smooth sailing because the company fighting Hannigans Inc. for the development of Bronze Bay, the Synergy Group, played some tricks during the event. Still, Mr. Goldmann saw through them.”

“The Synergy Group?”

Maisie squinted because they sounded familiar.

Quincy explained they were the company that had been working with Hannigan Inc. three years ago.

When Tanner took over, he stopped working with them.

It was because the Synergy Group wasn't very honest with their business dealings, and they had even invested in the company that Linda owed money.

Tanner had gotten out early, so he wasn't involved in the scandal.

Quincy looked into the rearview mirror.

"Mr. Goldman ignored the women the investors sent over because he only has eyes for you. If it weren't for that, he would have been seduced."

Saydie, who was in the passenger's seat, turned around.

"What does that mean?"

Quincy held onto the steering wheel.

"They'll try to lure you into making a mistake, and once you fall into their trap, you'll be caught red-handed."

After that, he shook his head.

"It's true that beautiful women are really good at tricking people."

He felt that something was off after saying that, so he immediately clarified, "You're an exception."

Maisie chuckled before putting on a serious expression.

"Don't try to lick my boots. I'm not paying you."

He smiled.

"As long as Mr. Goldman does."

"You're not getting paid this month,"

Nolan frowned with his eyes still shut but mumbled that sentence.

Quincy's smile immediately faded. He looked at Saydie.

"Do you want to lend me some money this month?"

Saydie agreed. He was surprised.

"Really? That easy?"

Saydie looked at him.

"If you borrow \$100, you pay back \$1,000."

Quincy was rendered speechless.

The night grew dark, and the lights of the Glitz Club shone through the darkness.

Elaine was drinking there with some clients and had to find an excuse to escape through the side door because she couldn't drink anymore. She stumbled to her car, leaned against the door, and got her phone out to call someone to come pick her up.

A few thugs suddenly walked toward her, and a woman among them pointed at her.

"Clayton, it's that b*tch there!"

Elaine looked up, and it was the woman from the cafe that had been trying to pull a con.

Cindy had been put to shame because of that incident and was furious. She didn't expect to bump into Elaine that night.

"Hey, you ruined my plan. I've been doing this for so many years and have never met someone as arrogant as you are. I'm going to teach you a lesson today!"

Elaine was drunk and didn't expect to bump into trouble. She stumbled backward and pointed at her phone, "Stop where you are, or I'm calling the police."

The thugs walked toward her.

"You can try."

Elaine knew she was in trouble and was about to leave when someone pulled at her hair and dragged her backward. She was in heels, so she lost her balance and fell to the ground.

The man raised his leg to stomp on her, but before the pain kicked in, he was sent flying and fell to the ground.

The few people stood there shocked with terror written all over their faces.

The man who hit him stood with his back facing Elaine and stared at them.

"Just a couple of small-time thugs, yet you're trying to pick a fight? You better get out of here while you still can."

Chapter 1438

The few men next to Cindy saw the white Land Rover parked nearby and knew something was wrong, so they didn't dare advance.

This wasn't their turf, and they would be in trouble if they offended someone.

They picked up the man that was down and left.

Without her backers, Cindy was a lot less intimidating and ran away too.

Elaine was still processing what happened when the man helped her up.

"Ms. Xavier, are you alright?"

She looked at him, stunned.

"Aren't you..."

She was familiar with him. It was the manager of the cafe.

He smiled and replied, "I was in the club with my boss, and we saw you when we came out."

The man in the Land Rover walked over in his casual suit with a black turtleneck top.

The top was fitting, and the lines could clearly be seen. He was fit but not muscular.

Muscular people wouldn't look great in fitted clothes, and people who were too skinny would make it look hollow. He wore it nicely. He was a good-looking gentleman.

"Are you alright?" Elaine finally recovered and smiled.

"I'm fine, thanks to you." The man frowned when he smelled the alcohol.

"It's not a good idea to drink and drive. Where do you live? I'll send you."

He then gave the keys to the manager.

The manager took the keys and got into the Land Rover.

Elaine sobered up after what happened, but her head was aching. She could drive back, but she was afraid the police might arrest her for a DUI.

Thus, she accepted the offer.

After getting into the car, she noticed that the car was spacious and cool looking.

"Thank you. Please send me to the Xavier mansion at South Lake Avenue. The manager nodded, then started driving. Elaine had a splitting headache on the way back until the man handed her a sealed water bottle.

"Drink up. It's help."

"Thanks."

She took it and twisted the cap.

"What a coincidence that you were at the club too."

He didn't reply, but the manager smiled and said, "That was indeed a coincidence. He went over because there was a meeting."

Ian Summer smiled.

"Why were you there then?"

"To speak with some clients."

She threw her head back and drank from the bottle. She drank half the bottle and burped.

Ian turned his face to look at her and chuckled.

"You need to speak to clients too?"

Elaine looked into his eyes.

“How did you know who I am?”

The carriage was dark, so the outside lights lighted his face on and off. He looked away but answered truthfully, “You were at Beyond Tech. I’ve heard of you.”

“I think you’re quite an interesting person.”

“I’m not as interesting as you think.”

They looked at each other, and the atmosphere changed in the dark car.

Unfortunately, it was ruined by Elaine’s sudden burp.

He laughed.

“You should drink more water.”

Elaine was ashamed, but she could only drink to ease the tension.

The car stopped in front of the mansion.

Elaine got out, waved at them, and walked into the yard.

The white Land Rover finally disappeared into the night.

At Blackgold...

Quincy was speaking to Nolan in the office.

“Mr. Saldana knows some people in Hewston. I didn’t expect him to still hold a grudge against Tanner for not giving him the Bronze Bay project. Mr. Saldana wouldn’t dare play tricks against Nolan in Bassburgh, but it would be different once Nolan went to Hewston.”

Chapter 1439

Since Nolan wouldn’t bring any benefits to the businesses in Hewston and Mr. Saldana had a bunch of spies there and knew enough people, it would be easier for him to take action on his own turf.

His little tricks were all related to escorts, and a lot of businessmen fell for that. He just trapped the men for their lust and knew what they wanted.

All he needed to do was to make some arrangements, and he would pounce when the men had their guards down.

Nolan twirled the teacup around while he stared at the tea swirl.

“He owns the big casino in Hewston?”

Quincy replied, “He owns some shares there but doesn’t interfere so that he can get out of it easily if something happens.”

Nolan laughed dryly.

"I guess it's time to make them do some work."

He put his hand above his head and wanted to get rid of him. Did he think that he would be powerless just because he wasn't in Hewston? The cafe was full as usual.

Elaine went in and ordered a latte to go.

The manager walked out of the employees' room in an apron.

This man who looked quiet was actually quite the fighter. He walked toward the cashier register.

"Ms. Xavier, here for your coffee as usual?"

"Yes,"

She took out her card to pay and looked around, "Looks like it's pretty busy here."

The manager gave her the receipt.

"The college students are on a break, and that is usually good for business."

She took the receipt and waited at the side.

A few college students came over to ask if the owner was there.

The manager said something to them that Elaine didn't hear.

She noticed that the patrons there were mostly female students and a few couples.

The cafe was well decorated, so it wasn't surprising that people went there for pictures, dates, and gatherings. The owner was also a good-looking and mature man. The younger ladies couldn't deny his charm.

Ian walked down from upstairs—his black, immaculate shirt matched with white slacks looked exquisite.

The few girls happily walked toward him when they saw him.

Elaine watched everything in surprise.

The manager looked at her and smiled.

"Ms. Xavier, Mr. Summer was an instructor in the college a few years ago, so the students who visit mostly know him."

Elaine was surprised.

"An instructor?"

"Yes, he graduated from the police academy and worked in the force for five years. He was once the leader of the major crimes unit but was transferred to the highest department soon after. It was a unique job, and he resigned just four years ago."

He then explained, "He knew who you are because of old habits. He loves to find out about people."

Elaine didn't say anything.

Her eyes were on Ian, who was still surrounded by the students. He didn't look impatient and was very humble and polite. He would bend lower to listen even when people were standing around him.

Elaine's drink was ready, so she took it and was about to leave when Ian called out to her. She looked back, and the students were all back in their seats.

When she saw Ian standing in front of her, she smiled.

"You're quite the popular guy."

"Am I?"

He paused and was casual about it.

"All my customers are very friendly."

To him, being popular and people being friendly were two different things.

Elaine smiled.

"Have you sobered up?"

"I've slept all night."

Her head ached when she woke up, and she reeked of alcohol.

Chapter 1440

"You shouldn't drink with your clients too often. If you can't get out of it, drink less."

Ian paused for a few seconds, then jokingly said, "Or you could pretend to drink."

She paused before sniggering.

"Have you pretended to drink before?"

Pretending to drink was just a way to avoid drinking, pouring the alcohol into another glass or just pouring it away when people weren't paying attention.

That would be possible to pull off at a party with friends, but it was not advisable with clients.

They would think you were insincere if you got caught, and the deal might fall through.

Ian chuckled.

"I'm a man, so I wouldn't be in danger if I got too drunk." Elaine paused.

When she was at Beyond Tech, she was the owner's daughter when she went out drinking with the clients, so they were courteous to her.

However, it was different now that she was just another employee.

Women got taken advantage of because they had to drink for their bosses and make the clients happy.

It was bad for health, and there was a chance of sexual harassment.

There weren't a lot of bosses who would help their employees.

She looked at him.

"Are you always so caring to women?" Ian was honest.

"Every man should respect women."

Respect and caring were two different things.

Respect all women and caring for all women; the former was about upbringing, and the latter might cause misunderstanding.

'Nice guys' treated all women equally well, so it didn't feel exclusive.

On the other hand, men who respected women could be 'nice guys' too, but they would keep a distance.

Elaine didn't stay long and left the cafe soon after.

Two days later...

There was a report about the three biggest corporations in Hydra KLake being involved in tax evasion.

The three companies were on the top in Hewston's Eastern Business District, but these companies had a solid partnership with Synergy.

Quincy opened the private room's door, and the man inside immediately stood up when he saw Nolan.

"You're here, Mr. Goldmann."

Nolan unbuttoned his suit, walked to the round table, and sat down.

The man handed him a pack of cigarettes, but Nolan declined the offer because he said he was trying to quit.

The man poured him a glass of wine.

"How can I help you?"

Nolan looked at the red wine being poured into the glass.

"I heard that you have some dispute with the companies of the Eastern Business District."

The man paused and looked up.

"Why do you ask?"

Nolan took the glass and swirled the content.

"What if I told you I could help you take over that area?"

Mr. Washington was startled.

"Are you serious?"

“Yes.”

He looked at Mr. Washington and calmly said, “We’re on the same side. We both have a bone to pick with Mr. Saldana.”

Mr. Washington was shocked but understood what he meant.

“You were the one behind what happened?”

Nolan drank the wine.

“Mr. Saldana was dishonest and tried to ambush me while I was in Hewston. I had to teach him a lesson.

“I’ll help you take over the Eastern Business District, which is beneficial to me. I have to remove the obstructions in Bronze Bay.”

Mr. Washington suddenly understood.

Mr. Saldana had offended Nolan because of Bronze Bay, which was why he was going against the three biggest groups in Hydra Lake.

Mr. Saldana was a shareholder of the three companies, and everyone respected him.

Thus, he could have his way.

On top of that, Mr. Saldana had a good life due to the ten casinos’ messy accounts.