

Chapter 881

“Apart from the birthday celebration,” Maisie turned around and looked up at him, “There’s another important event.”

Nolan stared at her, “What’s the important event?”

Maisie grabbed his hand and grasped his palm playfully. “I won’t tell you just yet.

You’ll know it by tomorrow night.”

At Soul..

“Ms. Vanderbilt, can we really get off work early tonight?” During the town hall business meeting, Maisie stood on the stage and announced that everybody could get off work early, and everyone in the audience was excited.

Maisie held on to the microphone. “You’ve worked so hard at Soul Jewelry for so long. As the owner of this company, it’s only natural for me to pay you back with some benefits. It’s Mr. Goldmann’s birthday celebration tonight, and I want to invite everyone to attend the banquet. How does that sound?”

“Since our boss has spoken, we’ll definitely be there!”

Looking at the employees who were cheering under the stage, Maisie laughed.

After the meeting, Maisie and Kennedy left together slightly later than the others.” Uncle Kennedy, you should come too.”

Kennedy smiled. “We’ll see how things turn out.”

“See how things turn out?” Maisie tilted her head in doubt. “By the way. Uncle Kennedy, you seem to be a little busier than you normally were recently, and you look like you’re in a good mood. Are you in love?”

Kennedy choked on his saliva and coughed. “There’s no such thing, don’t let your imagination run wild.” “Okay, just come if you’re free tonight. I won’t say anything if you aren’t.”

Kennedy nodded. “I’ll try my best.”

Maisie returned to her office, and she was frightened by the woman whose face was severely swollen as soon as she opened the door.

“Boohoohoo! Zee, I’m doomed! Do I look extremely ugly now?!” Maisie took a closer look and gasped.” Ryleigh, what’s going on with your face?” Ryleigh picked up a mirror, looked at it, and cried hysterically. “I had an allergic reaction. Boohoohoo, what should I do tonight!?” Maisie walked up to her and sat down beside her. “Everything has been fine. How did you get the allergic reaction?” “... I used a facial cleanser last night, and that’s it!” Ryleigh covered her face. “I’m going to sue that platform for selling fake goods. I’ve been disfigured!” She hugged Maisie and wept. “How am I going to attend the birthday party tonight? I don’t want anyone to see me like this. If... If Louis were to see me like this, he’d surely make a laughingstock out of me!”

Maisie patted her on the back with a serious expression. "Ryleigh, now be honest with me. Did you buy the facial cleanser directly when you saw it being sold at a lower price online?"

Ryleigh lowered her head "It's only about a few dollars cheaper. I bought... I bought it mainly because many anchorwomen and online influencers use it too. It's the brand that's said to be able to remove acne, whiten the skin, and moisturize it all at the same time!"

Maisie covered her forehead with her hand. "You really are so carefree when it comes to such things. This is your own face that we're talking about! How can you put it through so much just because you want to save a few bucks?"

Seeing that Ryleigh was pouting and giving off an aggrieved appearance, Maisie squinted. "You've never paid any attention to your appearance's upkeep before..." "That... That's different." Ryleigh puffed out her cheeks and muttered softly, "I was a single lady back then."

"Oh." Maisie propped her chin against her hand and smiled. "I know someone who once vowed that she'd never marry Louis, but it seems that love is now in the air?"

Ryleigh pushed her away and turned her face away. "Stop making fun of me! Are you even my best friend!?"

Maisie chuckled. "Just admit that you've fallen for him. What's there to hide?" 'Although Louis is rather cheeky and presumptuous whenever he's speaking, at least he's always been loyal when it comes to how he treats others.

'I once thought that Louis agreed to marry Ryleigh only because he didn't want to go on arranged blind dates with other strange women

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"Later on, I asked him why he wanted to marry you when he came to me to learn more about what happened to you back when you were still studying. And he told me that he had seen you a long time ago, way earlier than three years ago.

"So exactly when was it? It was on the night of our college party, which he attended as a music student invited by our college. He watched your solo during the orchestra performance and thought it was extraordinary. He also met the three of us backstage by chance, but no one knew anyone at the time.

"But who would have thought that years later, one of the three would become his cousin and the other would become his fiancée?"

Ryleigh blinked with a surprised expression. "These... Why... Why didn't you tell me all these?" Maisie crossed her arms and leaned back into the chair. "You never asked, and I've been too busy ever since, so I forgot."

Ryleigh pursed her lips.

"By the way, I have no impression of him at all. I didn't even know that the boy who played the violin at the party that night was Louis! 'So is this the legendary love at first sight? It can't be so cheesy, can it?'

Thinking of something, she puffed out her cheeks again. "But I didn't realize that he recognized me when I met him at the cafe three years ago..." "If it's love at first sight, how would he forget about me?"

Maisie fiddled with her earrings, lowered her gaze, and smiled. "He really didn't recognize you when we met again."

Ryleigh stopped talking.

'See? He had forgotten all about it long ago.' Maisie added slowly, "After all, who would have thought that the genius from the department of orchestra back then would be the good-for-nothing daughter from the Hills, who only wanted to loaf around and do nothing every day?" "Zee, that's a very hurtful thing to say!" Ryleigh almost vomited blood.

"How could she rub more salt into my wounds?"

Maisie smirked and said nothing. Ryleigh rubbed her swollen face. "Faster, think of a way for me! How can I attend the banquet tonight?"

Maisie stared at her for a while, and the corners of her lips twitched slightly. "I've thought of a great idea, but I feel sorry for you."

The lights on both ends of the Bass Wave Port were brightly lit in the evening, and a large sightseeing cruise ship was moored on the shore under the magnificent night sky.

The empty parking lot was full of dozens of luxury cars, and the glamorously dressed guests showed the receptionists their invitations and then boarded the ship one after another. The birthday party would be held on the open-air deck, the decorations of the venue looked gorgeous and romantic, and the blue and white tables had a variety of wine and delicacies placed on them. There were even barbecued seafood and other delicacies.

A live band played melodious music by the side. Quincy, Saydie, Barbara, and Louis were the first batch to arrive at the venue and started welcoming others.

"Mr. Goldmann is the main focus of the party tonight. So why haven't he and Mrs.

Goldmann appeared yet?"

"I think the two of them are going to appear at the finale of the arrival session. It's said that Mrs. Goldmann secretly arranged this birthday celebration, and she's planning to surprise Mr. Goldmann with something."

Barbara was busy grilling skewers for others. After welcoming his friend, Louis put down his wine and looked around. "Didn't Ryleigh come with you?"

Barbara raised her head: "I thought she would arrive with you, Mr. Lucas. She didn't come with me."

Louis squinted.

'This woman won't miss this occasion for no reason.'

He took out his cell phone, walked aside, and called Ryleigh. Barbara shook her head helplessly. "I really envy those who are in love. At least they have someone that cares about them." A black car was parked

on the shore, attracting the cameras of most of the reporters on the shore. Helios was the first to get out of the car, followed by his parents, Yael and Christina.

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Larissa wore a snug fit evening dress and had a hand fan with her. She took a glance at Yael and leaned into Christina's ear. "Haven't you always been rather reluctant to get associated with the Goldmanns?"

Christina cleared her throat and whispered, "That's all in the past. I can't keep all those things on the top of my mind all the time, can I?" Larissa realized the change in her mindset at first glance and wrapped her arm around Christina's arm. "Then let's board the deck together."

Yael and Helios followed the two best friends closely, and that was everyone from the Bouchers and the Lucases. The banquet became even more lively after their arrival.

After a while, Daisy and Colton arrived with an adult-sized mascot, the mascot's costume tightly covering the person inside. No one would be able to recognize that it was Ryleigh at all

Ryleigh stared at the people around the venue from within the costume with tearless grief.

'Zee said she had a brilliant idea in mind, ensuring that no one would recognize I'm the person in this costume, but now... I look even more eye-catching with this outfit!' Colton looked up at her.

"Godmother, do you feel hot?" "Shh!" Ryleigh motioned him to keep quiet. "Don't address me as your godmother in front of the crowd. I can't let others know that I'm the person in this costume. .

Otherwise, there goes my reputation." Colton responded to her request while Daisy ran toward Helios. "Godfather!" Helios put down his wine glass, raised his hand, and rubbed her little head. "Why did the two of you come first?" Daisy was very excited. "Mommy and Daddy will come later because Mommy is going to surprise Daddy!"

"Where's Ryleigh?"

Louis walked to Helios' side. Helios was startled by him and looked around. "I don't see her." Daisy took a glance at the human-sized mascot standing beside Colton and said with a wicked smirk on her face, "Uncle Louis, are you looking for Godmother? She's actually here!"

Louis looked around suspiciously. "But I don't see her at all."

Daisy grinned while Helios noticed the mascot standing next to Colton and squinted his eyes slightly.

Ryleigh felt a cold gaze that was focusing on her, and her heart skipped a beat. She took a glimpse in the direction of Helios and the others and just so happened to exchange gazes with Helios.

'Sh*t, this can't be it, right? Has Helios recognized me? But I'm already all dressed up in this costume!'

However, Helios looked away only after just a few glances and gave off a pregnant smirk. "Maybe she's just playing hide-and-seek with us."

Louis frowned.

'Hide-and-seek? Could it be that she's been hiding in the crowd all this while?'

He took a closer look at the crowd again, and the motionless adult-sized mascot caught his eyes.

'Since when did we order a mascot?'

A Rolls-Royce was parked at the entrance of the red carpet, and everyone on the cruise ship glanced toward the luxury car.

Maisie stepped out of the car, and a red and black dress fell off the edge of the car and onto the ground. The evening dress' bareback design and sleeves were made out of tulle, and the dress had a snug-fit cutting around her slim waist, which complimented her figure gracefully.

The retro crane earring design looked vivid when coupled with the red and gold crane embroidery on her dress.

The tuxedo that Nolan had on had the same design as that of Maisie's, and the hand-stitched crane embroidery that took up the whole half of his tuxedo made him look extremely ethereal. The charming man and the elegant woman looked like a dazzling match made in heaven through the reporters' cameras.

Maisie wrapped her arm around Nolan's arm. "What do you think of the venue that we found?"

13:22

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Nolan laughed. "Hmm, I'm very satisfied." The couple boarded the cruise ship, and a group of people celebrated their arrival with champagne and party poppers.

At that moment, Daisie and Colton dashed straight up to Nolan. "Daddy, this is your birthday present, and we wish you a happy birthday!"

Nolan looked at the two rugrats, and a gleeful grin appeared on his face. "I like it very much, thank you."

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Colton's cell phone rang all of a sudden." It's Wayion!" He picked up the video call and handed it to Nolan. "Daddy, Wayion, and Greatgrandpa want to talk to you!"

Nolan picked up the phone. The video was a blessing from Wayion and Titus.

Maisie leaned over and exclaimed," Wayion!"

Wayion's indifferent face turned a little warmer after seeing his mother again." Mommy, I miss you." "Your daddy, your younger siblings, and I are waiting for you to return to Zlokova during the winter break. Have you been a good boy and listened to your greatgrandfather while you're abroad?"

Wayion nodded. "Yes."

Nolan placed his arm around Maisie's shoulders and looked at the person on display. "Take care of yourself while you're there, don't get sick."

Listening to his father's concern, although Wayion did not give off any expression on his face, he accepted it with a tough attitude. "I know. You're being way too wordy."

Wayion then handed the call to Titus, and the latter exchanged a few words with the couple before ending the call.

At the beginning of the banquet, the people on the cruise ship feasted their eyes on the bustling night scene found on both sides of the strait, and the melodious and beautiful music sounded and pervaded the entire venue while everyone drank fine wine and ate barbecue delicacies. The scene looked very boisterous.

Ryleigh only removed her headgear in a corner where no one was looking and ate the barbecue skewers that her little angel, Daisy, handed to her. "Daisy is the best!".

"Ryleigh Hill!"

A voice that came from behind her made her tremble. She put the skewers in her hand down and quickly put the headgear back on.

Louis stepped forward, intending to snatch her headgear from her, but she bumped him away from her. "Don't take it off, or you're dead!"

"What are you doing?" Louis felt a little helpless. "Are you planning to appear as the mascot throughout the whole night?" "I can't help it either!" Ryleigh was about to cry. "I can't see anyone in this condition." "What's wrong with you?" ; "Don't come here! Don't come anywhere near me. Get away from me!" She turned her back on Louis to avoid him and refused to let him see her face.

Louis narrowed his eyes, stepped forward, forced her to the corner, and lifted her headgear.

"Louis Lucas, you b*stard!" Ryleigh lowered her head and covered her face. He threw the hood aside and held her wrist. "Let me take a look."

Lifting her cheek, Louis was stunned in an instant.

Who... Who's this? After confirming that the person standing in front of him was Ryleigh, whose face was so swollen that all her facial features were on the brink of becoming one whole pile of mess, he could not hold back and laughed out loud.

Ryleigh cried immediately. "I told you not to look, this is so embarrassing. Boohooohoo

Louis held back his laughter, placed his palms on her swollen cheeks, lowered his head, and approached her face. "You still look cute even though you look like a pig now." She was about to die of anger. "Do you actually know how to speak to a lady?"

"It's true. I won't lie to you." Louis wiped away the tears from the corners of her eyes with his fingertips. "Your face is already swollen. It'll become even worse if you continue to cry."

Ryleigh was out of words.

On the other side, Tanner, Helios, and the others were with Nolan, drinking wine and chatting. Maisie walked to Barbara with a wine glass and saw that she was drinking juice. "You really don't drink anymore." Barbara looked away. "I wasn't kidding when I said so. I wonder, where did Ryleigh and Louis go? "By the way, why haven't seen Ryleigh?" Barbara pondered. She had not seen Ryleigh ever since she boarded the ship.

Maisie could not help but laugh. "Didn't you see that teddy bear?"

"Is that adult-sized mascot Ryleigh!?"

Barbara realized all of a sudden and chuckled. "What's wrong with her?"

"She used an inferior face cleanser and is suffering from an allergic reaction. Her face is so swollen that even her father probably won't be able to recognize his own daughter."

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Barbara finally could not help it as she seemed to have a picture of how Ryleigh looked now in her mind and laughed out loud. Helios and the others just happened to look in this direction when they heard the peal of laughter. Some of the wealthy socialites who had never seen Barbara asked, "Who's that woman standing next to Mrs. Goldmann? Haven't you seen her before?" Tanner cleared his throat. "She's the daughter of the Chases." "Ah, so that's the daughter of the Chases?"

"Didn't someone break the news before that, saying that she's a murder-" Before that person could even finish speaking, Tanner had already bumped him with his elbow, motioning him to shut up.

That man looked at Helios as the latter lowered his head and lightly shook his glass of wine. Although his attitude did not change much, that man noticed the slight and almost imperceptible split-second change in Helios' expression when the word "murderer" was mentioned.

Larissa came over to have a drink with Maisie, and the two chatted for a moment while Madam Hera, Tristan, and his grandnephew arrived late.

Maisie did not expect Tristan to arrive together with Madam Hera. She took a glance at Holan, who did not seem surprised. It was just that Christina did not look too good when she saw Tristan again.

Maisie stepped forward and greeted

Madam Nera, "Godmother, you've come."

Madam Nera smiled, nodded, and asked someone to bring forward two precious-looking gift boxes. "This is my present for you and Mr. Goldmann."

Maisie was dumbfounded, "I have one too?" Madam Nera placed the gift box in her hand. "Keep it, and don't forget that I'm still waiting for your wedding banquet."

Maisie accepted with a smile. "Thank you, Godmother."

Nolan also walked toward them at that moment as Tristan placed his hand on the boy's back. The boy looked as delicate and captivating as ever, and his complexion looked as fair as snow under the blazing white lights. "Nolly. Don't forget to address your uncle.

Noilace looked at Nolan, and a warm smile took over his beautiful yet indifferent face in an instant. "Nice to meet you, Uncle Nolan."

Everyone at the scene was shocked. 'Uncle?'

Colton was surprised. 'Is this fella our cousin? Oh my God! How could this be!?'

Daisie still could not return to her senses. "Noilace... How could he be our cousin?" Although Nolan did not want to admit it, his mother was still a nominal member of the Knowles. Excluding all the other details, the Knowles had treated his mother kindly, nurtured, and raised her back then, so he could only accept it.

Daisie approached Noilace, looking delighted. "Noilace, are you really our cousin?"

Noilace turned his head around and took a look at Tristan, who was standing not far away. "I think so." "That's great. We can play together more often in the future!" Daisie grabbed his hand and gave off a bright grin. Noilace did not say anything. Colton, who was standing on the side, crossed his arms and snorted. "Who wants to play with him?"

"Colton, how can you act like that? Noilace is our cousin."

"Maybe I'm even older than him!" Colton turned his face away. That kid had always been an eyesore, no matter how he looked at him. Daisie pulled Noilace away. "Let's go. I'll bring you to grab some barbecued food!"

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13:23

Before Noilace could even speak, Daisie had already pulled him away.

Colton, who was left on the spot, was rendered speechless.

Tristan clinked his wine glass with Nolan, and his gaze landed on Yael, who was walking toward them. "Mr. Boucher."

Yael let off a polite smile. "I didn't expect the eldest grandson of the Knowles to be staying in Zlokova."

"There's no other way out of this. He's the only heir of the Knowles. That's why we have to protect him with everything we've got."

Yael glanced in the direction of the three children. "If only you had considered settling down and giving birth to a few more kids for the Knowles, that kid wouldn't have been the only heir."

Tristan lowered his gaze and chuckled. "I've gotten too used to my freedom, so I don't like being bound by marriage."

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“Really? That’s a shame.” Yael finished the rest of his drink.

Tristan patted his shoulder and leaned close, “If that weren’t the case, Mrs. Boucher would probably be my wife instead.”

Yael didn’t say anything but frowned.

Maisie and Nolan were enjoying the drama. She got close to his ears. “Did you invite Tristan?”

She had informed Madam Nera about it since it was Nolan’s birthday party. She probably wouldn’t have brought Tristan along, right?

“No.”

Maisie was curious. “Party crasher?’ Nolan’s lip twitched. “He’s an old, shameless man. I wouldn’t be surprised.”

“He actually just brought his greatgrandnephew over.’

Upon recalling something. Nolan put down his glass, leaned in, and said, “I need to tell you something.”

She paused. “What?”

He played with her hair behind her neck.” That old man plans to send the eldest grandson of the Knowles to stay at the Goldmann mansion for a while. What do you think?”

Maisie was surprised.

“Let that child stay at the Goldmann mansion for a while?’

Her eyes shifted to the beautiful boy next to Daisy. She seemed to enjoy being around him and probably thought of him as an actual friend.

Maisie lowered her eyes. “You’re his distant uncle. Do you disagree with that?”

Nolan’s smile broadened. “You’re his distant aunt too.”

Maisie turned around and leaned on his shoulder. “Our family could afford a little nephew.”

Nolan’s smile could have melted like snow when he heard her say ‘our family’. Quincy, Saydie, and the children pushed a 6-layered cake out. The lights dimmed, and Ryleigh duetted the Birthday Song with Louis in costume. She stood in front of the piano while Louis played the violin.

Maisie pushed Nolan to the cake stand.

Make a wish!

Nolan smiled helplessly and could only make a wish. At that moment. Maisie quietly retreated.

When Nolan made his wish and blew out the candle, everyone popped party poppers.

The song switched to another one, and fireworks went off on the banks and danced around in the night sky. Under the dim lights, two rows of guests held neon-colored rose bouquets and parted into a walkway in the dark.

Maisie stood at the front of the ship, slowly walking forward.

Ryleigh played her song and started singing.

“You never hesitated

“And walked straight into my life

“I yearned for you

“Like I’ve walked a thousand miles in the wind

“Making wishes under the stars, I kept my secrets deep down

“You’re brave like the sea

“Only caring about the whales in the deep “You’ve walked past millions of souls

“For our meeting

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To spend the seasons with me

“And the spring flowers and the autumn moon

“Clear skies ahead

Cannot compare to you Ryleigh’s sweet voice sounded even better with the piano and violin.

Maisie stopped in front of Nolan, took out a ring box, went down on one knee, and smiled. “Mr. Nolan Goldmann, would you marry me?”

Cheers erupted from the crowd.

Everyone took out their phones to take pictures, and all the flashes were on them.

Nolan was stunned his heartstrings had been pulled!

His smile was wide as he answered, “Yes!”

Maisie got up and put the ring onto his ring finger. It fit perfectly.

Nolan took out another ring and went down on one knee as well. “Ms. Maisie Vanderbilt, do you want to marry me and spend the rest of our lives together?” “Please get married! Get married!” Ryleigh started the chant, and everyone followed.

Chapter 887

Maisie put out her right hand, crying tears of joy. “Yes, I do!”

Nolan hugged her, cupped her face with his hands, and kissed her.

Helios and Barbara covered the children's eyes.

The two rugarats were rendered speechless.

Madam Nera and Larissa smiled broadly while Yael and the others were clapping.

The ship started to sail across the sea. In contrast with the rowdy deck, two people stood at the stairs of the second floor.

Tristan lit a cigarette and looked to the port that was far away. "I guess you've decided to stay with Yael and have a good life." Christina had a silk shawl over her shoulders, standing in the dark. The light from the sea only illuminated half of her body. "Yes, Yael knows about our relationship. We've accepted it." Tristan breathed out a puff of smoke and chuckled. "Really? That's nice."

"You approached me not because you loved me." Christina turned around with her back facing him. "I admit that I fell for you once. Your sweet nothings were a comfort to me when I was lost in my marriage. I found out what love felt like with you, but you weren't sincere. You found out that Yael was in love with Natasha, and that was why you seduced his wife to put him in a tough spot."

Tristan was silent. The light from his cigarette dimmed, then the ash fell to his leather shoes.

"Tristan, we're no longer young. Our relationship was a mistake."

Christina was going to go upstairs when he said, "If I had really fallen for you and wanted to marry you, would you have come with me?" Christina was stunned, but she quickly recovered and calmed down. "But you didn't want to marry me, did you?"

Tristan turned sideways and looked at her. "What if I did?"

She still had her back toward him. "That's all in the past now."

Christina left without looking back, while Tristan stood in his spot, unmoving, and his back dimmed like the night sky.

Christina returned to the deck and walked toward Yael, who turned to look at her.

You went to see him?"

"Yes," Christina didn't plan to hide it, "I made it clear. Yael, I did you wrong." Yael put down his wine glass and placed his hand on her shoulder. "Let bygones be bygones. I didn't do my part as a husband, so I should apologize too."

Christina leaned on his shoulder, and they both enjoyed the view in silence together.

Ryleigh stood in the guest room on the third floor and stretched, finally getting out of the heavy bear costume. She turned around and saw two familiar figures walking toward her. Surprisingly, a n arm pulled her back right when she was going to approach them.

She was shocked but moved her hand away when she saw it was Maisie. "Zee, you scared me."

Maisie teased her. "You shouldn't scare people when your face is that swollen." Ryleigh frowned. "Why do you keep using my swollen face as a joke like my cousin?" She laughed. "Alright, even if your face is swollen, no one is complaining." Ryleigh's lips twitched, and she looked Maisie up and down. "Why are you here instead of spending time with Nolan in your room?" Maisie looked toward the corridor and raised her eyebrow. "I'm here to see if you'll get a cousin-in-law tonight."

Chapter 888

Ryleigh didn't know what to say.

"Hold on!" Ryleigh finally understood. "Me getting a cousin-in-law... are you talking about Helios?"

"Who else?"

Ryleigh was shocked, but her eyes started sparkling. "My cousin and Barbara?"

The two of them stuck their heads out, their gossipy hearts burning.

Barbara and Helios stood at the end of the corridor, watching the night view far ahead.

"Why aren't you with them? It should be quite lively downstairs."

Barbara turned to look at Helios. His white suit was whiter than the moon in the night, still as clean and unblemished.

Helios looked back, put his arm on the railings, and then leaned in. He looked up, and the wind blew over his smooth hair. "I'll be asked to drink if I go down."

He was just there to avoid drinking!

Barbara's lips curled. "You should have quite a good alcohol tolerance."

Helios looked at her. "Who told you that?"

She crossed her arms and smiled. "I've never seen you drunk."

Helios loosened his tie and smiled back. "Would you believe me if I said I'm drunk now?"

Barbara looked at him, her eyes filled with doubt. "You seem quite sober." He looked down and laughed. "Some people look sober but could be quite drunk." His eyes were fixed on Barbara. "You are the total opposite when you're drunk."

Barbara froze, stared into his deep, dark eyes, then awkwardly looked away. "Really? I have no idea."

Helios smiled. "When Uncle Chase introduced you to me three years ago, I thought you were a classy, unapproachable lady."

Barbara frowned.

She had met Helios three years ago after her father introduced them at a party. She had attended that party because the Bouchers would be there.

Her father had intended for Helios to introduce her to more friends in Bassburgh, so she had decided to attend. This was also how she had come to meet Ryleigh.

When thinking back at that party, she had been very nervous and afraid that people would see through her intentions.

Barbara sighed. "I pretended to be classy. I just didn't want to put my father to shame at the party." Helios laughed. "I didn't know that, but I do now. Girls who read comic books and collect figurines are mostly nice."

"How did you know?"

"I saw them when I sent you home."

Barbara didn't know what to say. She had almost forgotten that Helios was the one who sent her back when she got drunk. He must have seen them when he entered her room.

Helios suddenly approached when he saw the embarrassment on her face. She held her breath upon seeing his face so close to hers while her heart was pounding like a drum.

His breath had a light smell of alcohol, which made her feel like getting closer.

The two hiding ladies stared straight at them and had to stop themselves from pushing their heads together.

Maisie quietly said, "Ryleigh, do you think it's going to happen tonight?"

Ryleigh knew the answer. "I don't think so. They haven't even kissed!"

Maisie raised her eyebrow. "If they kissed, who do you think would make the first move? Your cousin or Barbara?"

"Undoubtedly, Helios."

Maisie smiled. "Let's make a bet. If your cousin makes the first move, I'll pay you \$ 100. If it's the other way around, you'll pay me \$100."

Chapter 889

Ryleigh looked at Maisie and took a deep breath before nodding. "Okay." She strongly believed that Helios would make the first move if they kissed that night! Maybe because the night was too beautiful or because the wine was too sweet, their lips got closer and closer, and Helios stopped because his conscience took over.

When he was going to move backward, Barbara tugged on his tie and pulled him forward, then pressed her lips against his.

Helios looked at her. It lasted just a moment, and before he could respond, Barbara looked as though she had gotten what she wanted. "You seduced me after getting drunk, and I didn't manage to fight the urge and kissed you. You started this."

She smiled, turned around, and hurriedly walked away.

Ryleigh was stunned. Helios didn't make a move and was instead played by Barbara!

That was too much!

Maisie tapped her shoulder. "You've known Barbara for so long, yet you haven't noticed that she isn't what she looks like? She's not a passive girl. If she's aggressive even when she's sober, do you think she's going to tie him to the bed after she has had a few drinks?"

Ryleigh's face dropped. Barbara looked like a serious woman, even more serious than Maisie. Thus, it was illogical that she would be aggressive toward men!

However, Ryleigh witnessed the exact opposite tonight and lost \$100!

When Maisie returned to the guest room, Nolan had just gotten out of the shower. He had a towel around his waist and was drinking, his Adam's apple moving up and down, looking extremely sexy.

The ring on his ring finger shone brightly under the light. Maisie jumped over and hugged him from behind. "Dear."

Nolan placed the glass on the table, touched her hand, and turned his head to look at her. "Hmm? You're back."

Maisie put out her hands and held the hand with the ring. "We finally have rings."

Nolan put out his arm and pulled her into his arms. "It'll be perfect once we have our wedding."

She hugged his neck and smiled brightly. "It would be too lonely to have a wedding with just the two of us. Why not wait for Ryleigh and Louis, and Helios too?"

Nolan frowned. "Helios?" He was momentarily silent before asking, "Someone would marry him?"

Maisie laughed and pushed him to the bed. Nolan looked up at her, smiling.

"Maybe," she ran her fingers across his chest, "Want to bet?"

Nolan's burning chest was thumping and heaving while he looked at her. "What are we betting on?"

Maisie fell into his arms and kissed his lips. "If Barbara can get Helios. If I win, you'll give me 15,000—"

She paused before staring straight into his eyes. "15,000,000 stars."

When the sea and sky blended together in the morning, Maisie woke the kids up and went to the cafe on the ship for breakfast.

The cafe served breakfast from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and it was still quiet at that hour.

Daisy saw Barbara right away and waved at her. "Aunt Barbara, good morning!"

Daisy sat next to her and yawned. "Mommy says that kids shouldn't sleep in and should make it a habit to have breakfast."

Maisie and Colton sat in their seats. "You don't look like you slept well last night."

Insomnia?" Barbara played with her soup. "I miss my bed." Maisie put her hand on her chin and smiled. "Oh, is that all?"

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"What are you trying to say?" "I thought you couldn't sleep because you were too excited." Barbara's hand that was holding the spoon froze, and she looked at Maisie curiously. "What would I be excited about?"

Maisie smiled knowingly. "I made a bet with Ryleigh last night, and she transferred \$100 to me." Barbara was still confused. "What did you bet on?" Colton took a drink of his milk. "Mommy and Godmother betted on you and Godfather to see who would make the first move on kissing. Mommy betted on you while Godmother betted on Godfather." The air froze, and it finally struck Barbara, who then started to blush. "You..."

Maisie was surprised and looked at Colton. "How did you find out?"

Colton took a big bite of his croissant." Godmother was complaining to us last night."

It was impossible for Ryleigh to keep her mouth shut!

Barbara was so embarrassed all she wanted was to hide in a hole. She had been seen!

She hadn't thought about how she was going to face Helios yet-she had lost control last night! "Daddy, Godfather, good morning!" Colton stood up and waved toward the two men who appeared at the cafe.

Barbara immediately ducked and covered her face with her hands.

Nolan walked to Maisie and put his hand on the back of her seat. "Why didn't you wait for me?"

"You said you wanted to go to the gym with Helios." Maisie cleared her throat and got up. "Let's go sit somewhere else?"

"Yes!" Daisy and Colton could tell what was going on and hopped toward another table behind Maisie with their food in hand. Nolan patted Helios' shoulder. "I'm going to spend time with my wife." Barbara's heart almost stopped. She slowly spoke as she watched the man sitting down across her. "About last night... I'm sorry."

Barbara lowered her head and played with her fingers as she found a lame excuse. "I had too much to drink last night."

Helios looked at her. "I don't think you drank last night." "Yes... Oh, no, I drank... cider." Barbara looked into his eyes, then immediately away, her heart almost jumping out of her throat. Helios picked up the teacup. "They didn't serve cider last night." Barbara choked when Helios called on her lie, and she stuttered for the longest time. Helios took a sip of his tea and looked down. "Is it that stressful?" "No.. Not really," she said. However, she wanted to bite her tongue off after that.

A few pairs of eyes were staring at them from the other side. Nolan picked up a bowl of soup. "Do you think it will work out for them?"

Maisie took over the bowl. "Why not?"

People sometimes offer themselves to the people who have saved their lives.”

Daisy turned to look at her. “Mommy, what does offering themselves mean?”

Before Maisie could answer, Colton replied like he was a grown-up, “That means they marry the person who saves their lives.”

Daisy seemed to understand, but not really. “Is that how it works?”

Maisie cleared her throat and flicked

Colton’s forehead. “Don’t learn from your brother, watching those soap operas.”

Colton rubbed his head. “Did you say that yourself?” _.

Maisie squinted. “Doesn’t mean you kids should learn it.”

The two immediately focused on eating, or they wouldn’t be able to watch any television shows after that. Helios and Barbara had their breakfast quietly, feeling that it lasted hours. Neither of them spoke, but after a while, when Barbara was going to say something, Helios spoke too, and their eyes met.