

A Lifetime Love chapter 1

Chapter 1

It was the start of summer in Jadeborough. Thousands of guests had just witnessed a ridiculous and embarrassing scene in Tree Peony Hall of Reign Hotel. The wedding of a Hoult and a Salisbury was supposed to be the talk of the town, but at the very last moment, the groom, Denver Salisbury, had fled; he did not appear at the wedding. That was not all. Right as the bride went up on the stage, a piece of news was projected onto the screen. It was a video about how Denver had let a C-list actress stay over and sleep with him in his apartment just the night before. The scene stunned everyone and humiliated the Salisbury family, who flew into a panic. For a long while, they did not know what to do. At the same time, the bride in white with a veil over her head had become the laughingstock of the event. Seated in the first row were the Hoult couple—Zachariah Hoult and Elizabeth Swane. Elizabeth was panicking, and she had a frown on her face as she whispered, “Darling, what do we do?” Zachariah did not reply to her, but there was a visibly dark look on his face. The truth was that he had never encountered a situation like this, for marriage was a serious matter to them. There were four most prestigious families in Jadeborough. In the east was the Hoult family, in the west was the Wardner family, in the south was the Salisbury family, and in the north was the Riviere family. If this was a prank, it was one that Denver might not be able to bear the consequences of. Zachariah, like the others, was equally confused as to why the second son of the Salisbury family had run off on the day of his wedding. For this wedding, the Hoult family had brought Seraphina, who had been living on a mountain for over ten years, back from Mount Malachite. Yet, they never thought this would have happened. Right then, the head of the Salisbury family hurried over and patted Zachariah’s shoulder. “Hoult, the Salisbury family is at fault for this. Is it okay if we postpone the wedding? Once I get Denver back, I’ll give you a proper explanation for all of these.” Right as Zachariah was about to reply to him, the bride on the stage spoke. Almost immediately, the thousands of guests fell silent. Everyone was eager to find out how the humiliated bride was going to clean up the mess. With the microphone in her hand, Seraphina Hoult calmly swept her gaze across the scene. Then, her eyes landed on a man who was using his phone in the first row. *Yes. It’ll be him.* She then softly said, “Mister, the one who’s in a black suit and using his phone in the first row’s fourth table, excuse me.” Lucien Riviere, who had his head lowered and eyes glued to his phone, instinctively flinched. *Is she... talking about me?* The moment he raised his head to look at the woman in the wedding dress, he was taken aback. No one knew what the bride looked like. The Hoult family had a total of five daughters, and Lucien had seen four of them. The youngest, Seraphina, was the only one he had never seen. What he heard was that Seraphina had gone to Mount Malachite with her grandmother since young to live a reclusive life and that she was only brought back three days ago. However, he had also heard that the fifth daughter of the Hoult family was extremely ugly, but the voice he heard earlier was giving him doubts about that. When Seraphina saw the man lifting his head, she continued, “There’s a bit of unexpected trouble today, but I really don’t want to spoil the guests’ merry mood. So, there’s a favor I’d like to ask. Mister, do you have the courage to come up the stage and become my stand-in groom to finish this wedding with me?” The very second those words were out of her mouth, the crowd went into an uproar. “Is she trying to grab a random guy to replace her missing groom?” “I’ve heard of stand-ins for actors and soccer players, but I’ve never heard of a stand-in groom.” The Salisbury family and the Hoult family were equally stunned. Neither family had ever thought that the woman would speak such daring words. Lucien was equally surprised. *Stand-in groom? Me? Is she actually asking me if I have the guts to do that? Is she trying to taunt me into doing it?* It was absurd, and yet, his feet were moving of their own accord and bringing him toward the stage. Lucien was curious. He wanted to know what the woman was going to do next. Not many had the courage to do something as ludicrous as this, especially a socialite from a prestigious family. The stone exterior of his heart was starting to crack. At Lucien’s odd behavior, his mother, Constance, stomped her feet and fumed, “Lucien Riviere, get back here right away!”