

My Dreamy Old Husband

Chapter 417

The meal went by awkwardly. Sophia kept her head down as she ate, all the while fully aware of every single one of her hairs standing on end as she thought that she should find some time to clarify things with Claude.

Everyone hastily gobbled their food, leaving Claude and Michael to talk to each other.

“How old are you?”

“I’m 27 this year, Sir.”

“An older man trying to snap up a younger woman. No go. What’s your zodiac sign?”

“I’m a Pisces, Sir.”

“Your signs aren’t compatible with each other. I don’t approve of this. What do you work as?”

“I’m part of the performance branch in the military...”

“That doesn’t bring in the money. You’re not getting my seal of approval! How tall are you?”

“1.81 meters.”

“Too short. No thank you.”

Claude's head was beaded with sweat due to his anxiety. It was the first time he was eating with this strict potential future father-in-law.

Michael's face was as frosty as a primordial glacier, making Claude look as though he was about to ravish the former's girl.

Then, Claude gave Sophia some food. "Here, Sophia, eat this. You'll be able to recover faster if you eat more."

Michael smacked Claude's fork away with his own fork. "She doesn't like that."

After that, Claude poured some juice for Sophia. "Here, have some."

Again, Michael smacked Claude's hand away. "She doesn't like that juice."

Even when faced with Michael's deliberate sabotage, Claude remained even-tempered. He simply accepted things graciously. Even Harry was so moved by this 'future son-in-law' of Michael's that he couldn't resist putting in a word for him. "Hey old chap, this is Claude's first visit here. Quit heckling him."

Michael shut up at last, but he still glared hard at Claude.

Claude did his best to adjust to Michael's murderous stare. After all, he was about to take the girl that Michael had painstakingly raised all this while away. It was expected that Michael would antagonize him. When Claude thought about how Michael's twenty year-old precious daughter was about to marry himself, he suddenly understood the older man's mindset.

After the meal, Claude still did not leave. Instead, he wanted to stay behind to spend time with Michael. The whole party sat in the living room, unsure what to do. They either watched TV, patted the cat, or played with the dog; no one dared to be the first to speak up.

Michael sat wordlessly on the couch, his demeanor as cold as an iceberg. At the same time, Sophia didn't dare to speak as she sat next to him, her eyes darting to look anywhere but him.

Claude was doing his best to find a mutual topic with Michael, but unfortunately, Michael was having none of it. He would simply grunt here and there at best, making the atmosphere extraordinarily awkward.

When Claude noticed that the Fletchers had a karaoke machine, he decided to say something bold. "Why don't I sing something for everyone?"

Nathan toddled over to ask Maria to get everything ready. Soon, the machine was up and running, so Claude picked up a microphone and began to pour his heart into his song.

"When the mornings are warm, and the valleys are green, I'll come back from wherever I've been,

Oh the longer the waiting, the sweeter the kiss,

It's better my darlin', I promise you this,

The next time I hold you, I'm not letting go,

I will give up the ocean forever I know,

Forever I know."

As he sang, his gaze fell upon Sophia. It was as though he put all his feelings into the lyrics, pouring all the love deep in his heart into the song that he was singing for Sophia.

Sophia had an awkward look on her face as she shuffled closer toward Michael.

Meanwhile, Michael's expression had visibly darkened a few notches. The air in the living room had turned chilly as if a cold wind had blown over everyone. Even though they could feel the chill running down their skin, everyone's hearts felt even colder as a figurative frostiness wrapped itself around their hearts. They all instinctively stepped further away from the trio.

Claude was in the military's performance troop, and he had once been a singer in the military band. However, he had retired from the band and now worked behind the scenes handling paperwork. Occasionally, he would compose a song or write some lyrics, but his singing still remained top-notch. His voice was clear and powerful, and he had a flair to his singing.

After Claude ended his song, Michael stood up. "I want to sing as well."

A soulful melody resounded around the living room after Michael selected his song, resulting in more goosebumps on everyone's bodies.

Michael picked up a microphone and began to sing.

"The winter wind blows, stinging my face,

Oh how it reminds me, of my son's betrayal,

His words were like a pickaxe, hacking away at daddy's frozen heart."

Everyone was at a loss for words.

As he sang, Michael's hawk-like eyes remained locked on Nathan's tiny figure.

Nathan remained flippant, but his tightly-clenched hands betrayed him in the end; he felt that he wouldn't be able to escape his fate later that night.

It was nine when they finished their karaoke session. Claude prepared to leave, but Sophia felt that she should clear things up with him properly, so she spoke up unprompted. "I'll see you off."

She glanced at Michael, but since he didn't seem to be unwilling to let her do so, she simply slipped away with Claude.

Michael stalked after them like a wolf tracking its prey to watch them from a distance.

There weren't many residents at The Imperial, so the walkways in the residential area were quiet. Sophia walked with Claude to send him off, an expression of pain on her face, for she had no idea how to break it to Claude.

After all, Claude was a good person, so she didn't want to hurt him.

Meanwhile, Claude's attention was on Michael, who was stalking them closely. He may be involved with clerical work, but he still had the instincts of an active duty soldier. Since the man following behind them had steady footsteps and even breaths, he could tell that the other man was a trained soldier with a glance.

He had heard that Taylor Murray had once been part of the special forces, so this potential father-in-law ranked even higher than he thought.

Claude could see that Michael's adoration for his daughter exceeded his expectations. Even though the path leading out of the area was only a few hundred meters long, Michael still insisted on following them personally.

If guns were legal, Michael would most likely have an AK-47 in his arms already.

Still, the harsher the girl's father, the more determined Claude was. Michael may not approve of Claude now, but that didn't mean he would continue to object to him in the future. The Fletchers were always set on their prospective partners. Since he had feelings for Sophia, he would do all he could to win her love.

Claude had actually figured out Michael's thoughts to a tee, such as the thing about the gun. If Claude so much as displayed a modicum of impropriety, Michael would definitely shoot him dead, for he did indeed have a pistol nestled in his pocket. Fortunately, the two of them kept their distance throughout the walk.

The Fletchers' men were all disciplined strictly at home, so Claude would most likely not do anything improper.

At last, they reached the entrance to the residential district. Sophia reflexively turned back to glance at Michael, who was observing them in the dark. Taking a deep breath, she then told Claude, "Claude, there's something I have to tell you."

Claude looked at her, his smile as pleasant as ever. "What is it?"

Sophia had thought of a few different excuses, but in the end, she still said, "I actually... already have someone I love."

Claude's smile stiffened for a moment, but he soon returned to smiling as usual. "I understand. You don't have to beat yourself up over it."

In truth, Claude could already tell that Sophia didn't seem to like him romantically, but he still wanted to attempt to woo her.

"If there ever comes a day when you're no longer happy, tell me. I will come to you at once."

Sophia froze before raising her head to look at Claude to see that there was still an unbridled smile on his face, tinged with sadness.

He really was a good man, but unfortunately, her heart was too small and cramped for anyone else. After squeezing Michael in forcefully, she was already close to breathless; her heart couldn't accommodate Claude.

Claude stood by the entrance for a moment. Then, he took a look at his watch and said, "I shall leave now. It's late, so you should go to bed soon."

Claude may just be a clerk, but he never was one to drag things out. So, he did what he said and left.

Sophia watched him depart through the bars of the gate. When she looked back, she noticed that Michael had walked over to stand behind her.