

# My Dreamy Old Husband Chapter 1081

Still, Carmen continued crying as though she didn't believe Michael. Sobbing so hard that she couldn't even utter a complete sentence, she looked utterly pitiful. Her tiny hands were even grasping his sleeve tightly as if she was afraid that he'd go off on a blind date once she let go of him.

Such a minute action had a shockingly artistic effect, for it easily moved people's hearts. When the Fletchers, who were initially livid because she messed things up, saw her pitiful expression, they decided to let the matter go. Perhaps she has truly misunderstood. Michael is only sitting here today as the person who facilitated this blind date and the male party's uncle, but the person who's going on the blind date is still Stanley. What a poor dear!

As she watched her daughter's performance, Sophia inwardly gave her a round of applause. Good, good. Nice! My baby is simply a genius!

While Michael cuddled Carmen and mollified her, he surreptitiously motioned for someone to add a chair beside him for Sophia. As he carried Carmen with a hand, he pretended as though he was smoothing her wrinkled dress for her, but in actuality, he furtively reached out and pinched Sophia's butt hard. Not to be outdone, Sophia pinched his butt as well. The two of them then proceeded to secretly pinch each other under the table.

After Carmen's outburst, the atmosphere of the blind date shifted. Anne, who was red in the face with fury, sat back down. Although she knew that Carmen wasn't Stanley's daughter, she still threw Sophia a nasty look. She took my Phoenix Harp, and now, she even wants to ruin my marriage! Even if I don't like this marriage, I won't allow anyone else to mess things up!

Frowning, Sophia lowered her eyes, not daring to say a single word. Never have I thought that the tricky Stanley Fletcher would actually set me up! Son of a b\*tch! I wish that your blind date will end in success, and you'll be beaten up by your wife every day after marriage, having no money to your name!

Conversely, beside Michael, Louis's eyes lit up when he saw Carmen. It's my idol's baby! However, due to the blunder on the previous day, he still asked tentatively, "So, this is your daughter, yes?"

Lowering his head, Michael gazed at his daughter, who was still sniffing in his arms, absorbed in her acting. "Yes, this is my daughter," he replied gently.

Staring at the adorable and lovely child, Louis seemed to be over the moon with delight. He extended his arms. "Quick, quick, let me carry her!"

Carmen seemed a tad shy, but still, she went over to him.

When she was in his hands, Louis studied her. Her petite nose and eyes are simply too cute! As he carried her in his arms, his heart pounded wildly. She's just too adorable! She resembles both her mother and father. I like it. In fact, I love her! How I wish I could adopt all three of them—the kid and her parents—into the family so that I can see them every day!

"Your name is Carmen, yes? I've watched your movie before. I've watched all the movies you starred in with your father! Come, come, I'll give you a gift!" He really took a shine to Carmen. She's truly a darling! Then, he hurriedly patted himself down for a gift since it was his first time meeting her. I met her mother yesterday and gave her the Phoenix Harp, so I've simply got to observe the etiquette today!

"No, it's okay!" Michael and Sophia exclaimed in unison. It's already very much flattering that he gave us the Phoenix Harp yesterday, so if he gives us yet another astounding gift, we'll probably make it to an unsigned post on an anonymous forum—Taylor Murray receives exorbitant gifts from a fan! Sophia thought.

However, the elderly man still searched around, feeling that he just couldn't give this little darling nothing. Or else, he wouldn't feel settled. When he couldn't find anything good on him, something abruptly occurred to him, so he called a bodyguard in before whispering into his ear. A while later, the bodyguard brought in a square box. Upon opening the box, a uniquely-shaped porcelain bowl lay within. The porcelain bowl was delicate, the patterns exquisite. "Here, here, I'll give you this bowl. In the future, eat with this bowl and grow up hale and hearty!"

Dashing off her tears, Carmen reached out and hugged the bowl, not at all reserved. "Thank you, sir! I'll definitely eat my fill and grow up hale and hearty! I'll give you a heart sign!"

As Louis stared at the obedient girl, rapture was written all over his face. She's truly a loveable little darling!

The moment Anne saw the bowl, she instantly went ballistic, her heart clenching. That bowl... is even more valuable than the Phoenix Harp! It's actually meant for the President of Cethos! How could it be given to a child? "Grandpa, this bowl... This bowl is—"

Louis impatiently tutted. "It's just a porcelain bowl! It's not like we've only got one! It's intended to be given as a gift, so why not give it to Carmen in this case?" he snapped. Holding Carmen, he lifted her up, pleasure shining in his eyes.

Anne was so infuriated that her face turned bright red and her hands shook, fury and envy battering her.

After Sophia had placed the porcelain bowl back into the gift box, she glanced at Anne, perplexed as to why she was so furious. It's understandable that she was angry yesterday since I took her harp, but this is just an ordinary porcelain bowl gift set. Is it really necessary for her to get up in arms? Such a stingy woman isn't worthy of that stupid dog. As his aunt, I oppose this marriage!

When she'd put the bowl away, she puffed out her chest. I'm Stan's aunt, so I've got to exhibit my authority as an elder! Although he's silly like a husky usually, he's still very reliable when it's something serious. He's handsome, rich, and an expert sniper! Not just anyone is worthy of the most outstanding bachelor in Bayside City!

The blind date went on, but Louis had clearly put his own granddaughter aside. All his attention was on pleasing Carmen, and he badgered Michael with questions about her, so much so that Michael felt that he was probably going to lose a loyal fan.

Meanwhile, Stanley and Anne's blind date continued, but the atmosphere was noticeably tense. With a dark expression on her face, Anne became taciturn, still enraged about the bowl. The parents on both sides were mortified since their respective children seemed to be getting along badly.

Gazing at Anne's dour face, Stanley knew that he was saved for now. I've got no idea whether it's because of Carmen or the bowl, but she doesn't like me, so I'm safe!

The entire meal was rather despondent, yet they still sat there and continued making awkward conversation after they'd finished eating to salvage things. Sophia then went out for some fresh air, and Stanley made his escape on the pretext of taking a leak.

“Come here, you d\*mn stupid dog! Just see whether I’m going to kill you!” As soon as they’d exited the room, Sophia was gripped by the urge to slap him. He knew full well that Michael is here, yet he still asked me to get Carmen here to mess things up! It was downright humiliating!

However, Stanley was also innocent. “How would I know that your husband came as well? Hey, I haven’t even taken you to task! Look what your husband did. He hasn’t even gotten a marriage certificate with you, yet he has started butting into my affairs!”

Just as Sophia was about to counter that, she heard the clacking of high heels. Turning around, she saw that Anne had left the room. Clack, clack... As Anne’s high heels touched the ground, they gave off a crisp and hurried sound. She strode over to Sophia quickly, her face darkened. Then, she stretched out a hand. “Return the Phoenix Harp and the Mise porcelain bowl to me!”

Before Sophia could say anything in response, she turned to Stanley and sneered derisively at him. “I heard from my father that you play online games?” Without waiting for him to reply, she proclaimed sternly, “Stop dreaming. I’m of a lofty status, so you’re not worthy of me!”

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Not worthy of her? Sophia was dumbfounded for a moment. Ha! What a snob! She actually said that my nephew, Stan, isn’t worthy of her? She looked Anne up and down. Is she rich? Nope. She has her mother’s last name, and her father is merely an ordinary Cethosian musician. While her grandfather, Louis Osborne, enjoys a bit of fame, the Fletcher Family is more than worthy of her. If it weren’t for Michael facilitating things, she wouldn’t even have a chance to go on a blind date with Stan!

Derisive thoughts flew across Sophia's mind. Besides, while the world knows that her grandfather is the best calligrapher and painter in Cethos, who is she, Anne Osborne? There's even more information on Judge's page on Wikipedia than her! As for looks? Well, she's in her early twenties, dressed in a classical linen long dress, and her black hair hangs straight to her waist. She might have bright eyes, white teeth, pale skin, and a classical charm to her, but even though she's pretty, she's not a stunning beauty. If it weren't for her grandfather, the Fletchers probably wouldn't even spare her a look!

However, Anne seemed extremely snobbish, arrogance radiating off her. "You can stop studying me. My identity is definitely not something you can discern. Anyway, you're not worthy of me, Stanley Fletcher!"

Likewise, Stanley looked her up and down critically. Where did this ugly girl get her confidence from? All at once, he mocked her in disdain by saying, "You think I'm beneath you? I think you're the one who's beneath me! My buddy looks even more beautiful than you in a wig!"

In reality, he wasn't all that opposed to going on blind dates. He was also interested in getting married and having children that were as cute as Carmen. Indeed, he didn't demand much in terms of the girl's personality, for he was fine as long as she wasn't a sweet and naïve girl. Also, he didn't demand much when it came to her looks, satisfied as long as she was prettier than Sean dressed in women's clothing. There were many who fulfilled the first requirement, but there was none in the entire Bayside City who fulfilled the latter. This girl before me is obviously inferior to Sean. In fact, she has nothing on him!

On the contrary, Anne felt that her status was lofty, so she disdained the Fletcher Family in the first place. If it weren't for Michael Fletcher facilitating this and Grandpa falling for it, I wouldn't have gone on this blind date with the Fletchers! The Fletchers are nothing without Mark Fletcher, so how could they possibly be worthy of my lofty status? And this destitute Stanley Fletcher actually dared to scorn me for being ugly?

"Do you have any taste? There's a long line of people who pursue me, winding around the block up to France! The fact that I went on a blind date with you is your honor! My status is so lofty that it's beyond your imagination. You're not worthy of me at all. If you're smart, make it clear to your parents and ask them not to have delusions of grandeur as well. The Fletcher Family isn't worthy of me at all!"

Sophia almost burst out laughing at her words. Where did this little girl get such confidence? The Fletcher Family isn't worthy of her? But on second thought, since Louis Osborne gave me a harp without hesitation, perhaps their family truly has an identity

unbeknownst to others. They have their own preferences as a scholarly family, so they probably disdain the rough Fletchers who are in the military.

“Okay, okay, let’s all take a step back. If you’re really dissatisfied, then just tell your families so.” Sophia hurriedly smoothed things over. After all, it was her idol husband who facilitated this blind date, so it would be bad for things to get too tense.

After that, she persuaded Stanley to leave, so he finally relented for the sake of his uncle and to avoid getting a beating from his brother instead of taking offense at a little bug who lived in her own world. As he walked away, he muttered, “If you’re so powerful, enter the ancient Imperial Palace without purchasing an admission ticket! Ha! Stop playing dumb in front me, hideous thing...”

Fuming, Anne was just a breath away from blowing a gasket. If it were centuries ago, the ancient Imperial Palace would’ve been my house! I’m blue-blooded, so I naturally don’t have to purchase an admission ticket to enter the Imperial Palace! Not only am I exempted from queuing, but they’d even roll out the red carpet for me! In a few days, when I’ve successfully changed my last name, they’ll then know how lofty my identity is!

When Sophia got back to the private room where the blind date was held, she sat back at her place. Stanley returned a few minutes after her, and Anne also returned shortly after, throwing a dark look at Stanley. Since it was Louis who’d agreed to this blind date, she didn’t dare oppose outright and anger him since she still needed his approval to change her last name. However, she’d put things on the table with Stanley, so she believed that he’d know what to do. She wanted him to voluntarily object to the match.

When the meal was over and everyone had drunk a few rounds of tea, the time came for them to leave. Smiling, Stanley’s father asked Stanley, “Stanley, we’ve eaten and even drank tea, so what do you think of Miss Osborne?”

Glancing at Anne, who had her head lowered while sipping tea but in actuality had her ears perked, waiting for him to decline the match, Stanley neutrally answered, “Miss Osborne’s character is admirable, and she is very knowledgeable besides having an elegant temperament. However, she’s a bit too hideous, so I don’t like her.” Then, he continued boldly, “At the very least, I hope to find a wife who’s as beautiful as my aunt. Anything inferior is too hideous in my opinion.”

As soon as those words were heard, the entire room plunged into dead silence. Nonetheless, Stanley put down the teacup in his hand and said, “I’m sorry, but I’ve got to

take my leave. There's a lot to do at the office." After saying that, he stood up and strutted away with his assistant.

When Stanley's father snapped back to his senses, he almost chased after him to teach him a lesson, but since the Osborne Family was still there, he could only stay. Forcing a chuckle, he commented, "How playful. He's just too mischievous. That's just how my son speaks. He's odd."

Anne and her father were seething, but Louis stroked his beard, finding Stanley's words rather reasonable. Anne is indeed not as beautiful as Sophia. The two of them didn't seem to suit either, so it's a good thing that it went to pieces.

Sophia, however, was extremely embarrassed as she endured Anne's malevolent gaze. Stan left, yet he pushed a wave of hatred toward me!

Michael, on the other hand, ruminated as he sipped his tea. Sure enough, it didn't work...

The blind date then concluded in awkwardness, and they all left. Sophia and Michael left in a car. In the car, Michael said nothing, his expression profound as though he was pondering something solemn as his brows drew together tightly.

Thus, Sophia, who was beside him and Carmen, who was in the child car seat, kept mum as well, their eyes darting around. I just knew that he'd surely be furious!

Sophia felt very much remorseful. Although I dislike Anne, it was still Michael who arranged the blind date, so I'd indeed embarrassed him by bringing Carmen there to mess things up. She hung her head and thought of an apology. A moment later, she stole a peek at his cold and profound profile. He's indeed worthy of being an idol when he's still so handsome despite being infuriated!

She twiddled her fingers, planning to apologize when the atmosphere had eased, but it seemed impossible for the time being. Then, she glanced at Carmen, who did the same, both waiting for the other to apologize. As the mother, she felt that she should take the lead. Thus, she steeled herself and tugged gently on his sleeve. Unexpectedly, Michael seemed completely unaware of it, lost in his own thoughts.

He was in an entirely different state compared to her, for he was thinking about Stanley. The Fletchers sought him out, making it clear that Stanley's parents had heard of the rumors. Some time ago, Stanley came back with a child and said that he adopted a child with Sean.

This matter caused a stir in the Fletcher Family, and rumors abound for a time that it even got to him.

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Stanley and Sean had always been very close to each other and even lived together, but everyone merely thought that they were just business partners who lived together to make work convenient. Now, however, they weren't only living together, but they'd also adopted a child. Thus, the nature of things had changed.

For that reason, the Fletchers asked Michael to introduce someone to Stanley so that he'd be married as soon as possible. However, Stanley didn't give me any quarter even though it was a blind date I arranged. Instead, he just had to mess things up. This is truly a headache! Having traveled extensively and come into contact with all sorts of things besides the fact that the entertainment and fashion industry housed a considerable number of LGBT individuals, he felt that sexual orientation wasn't something a person could choose on his own, so it was fine as long as it didn't cause anyone problems. However, in the Fletcher Family, it was something shocking. And that stupid dog, Stanley Fletcher, is just too stupid...

Upon seeing that he'd been ignoring her for a long time, Sophia grew anxious and tugged at him again as she whined in a kittenish voice, "Hubby, don't be angry anymore. I was wrong..."

Snapping back from his thoughts, Michael couldn't help chuckling in surprise at her pouting expression. I was just lost in my thoughts. Then, he couldn't resist reaching out and caressing her hair. Her hair is still the same as ten years ago, soft and black. Her petite face is still rosy as well, adorable as ever. In the blink of an eye, so many years have passed, and she'll turn 28 in a few days...

Sophia leaned over into his arms when she saw that he wasn't angry anymore. Then, she rubbed against him and kissed him in apology.

"I want a kiss too, Daddy!" Carmen blurted, not to be left out.

At this request, Michael quickly gave her a kiss. I'm truly defeated by them both.

He then opened the gift box given by Louis. Apart from a bowl, there was also a set of cutlery in the gift box. They look no different from the average souvenir, but the fact that Anne Osborne had such a huge reaction made it plain as day that this is something extraordinary! It was actually meant for the president? It must be something else if it was meant for the president. I'll take it home first and ask the ancient Imperial Palace guards when they come over to collect their cat.

When the car was still moving, something occurred to Sophia, and she said, "You two go home first. I'll go over and take a look at Sean." She just couldn't shake off the feeling that the incident on this day was rather strange. Michael usually doesn't bother about Stanley, so why did it occur to him to be a matchmaker now? I just feel that something must have happened. Then, she took another car and went to Sean's place.

To make it convenient when Maisie attended kindergarten in the future, Sean and Stanley jointly bought a house near the school district in Third Avenue, which they'd now moved into.

Upon arriving at Sean's new house, a maid ushered her in. This was her first time here at their new house. When she walked in, she found that the décor was nice, very much pleasant and homey. It was a mid-rise with 200 to 300 square meters, so while it wasn't as resplendent as The Imperial, it was a first-class mansion. To take care of Maisie, they'd even hired two or three maids who kept the house tidy. However, there was still a kid here, so Judge's ball and Maisie's dolls were strewn about the place in addition to multiple walkers.

Stanley had gone back to the office after the blind date and wasn't yet home. Thus, Sean and Sophia sat in the living room to talk, while Maisie obediently played with her dolls at the side. Meanwhile, Judge lay at their feet, slumbering. It's quite cozy with a kid and a dog.

Sean was still recuperating, so his countenance was a tad pale. When he heard about Stanley going on a blind date, he didn't react much, but for some inexplicable reason, Sophia seemingly saw a glimpse of disappointment and despair in his eyes. Although Sean hasn't said anything, I know he likes Stanley, and it's not the kind of like between buddies, but... love. I don't know whether Stanley harbors the same feelings as him, but I do know that he went berserk back when he learned of Sean's death and risked everything to kill Blade. When he knew that Sean, who was recuperating at my home, suffered a wrong, he immediately came over and took him away. They're always together... but what a pity!

After listening to her speak of Stanley's blind date, Sean sighed. With his gaze fixed on the teacup in his hands, he admitted, "Actually... I wasn't planning to go at all."

"Why?" Sophia promptly questioned. "You knew Stan needed your help!"

Finishing the tea in the teacup in his hands, Sean slowly refilled both their empty teacups. Then, he replied helplessly, "The Fletchers came to me."

Sophia was instantly stunned. Never had she expected that the Fletchers would actually seek him out! Judging from their current attitude, they definitely can't accept Stan's current situation. No wonder Michael, who'd never bothered about him, suddenly became a matchmaker! Looks like the Fletcher Family must have asked him to do so. While the Fletchers aren't exactly traditional, they still can't accept the possibility that Stan might one day get married with a man.

Despite the popularity of homosexual fiction on the Internet, homosexuals actually led a difficult life in reality. Sean had even been once regarded as depraved by his family and was sent abroad for a so-called 'treatment'. Sorrow flooded his gaze as he said, "Stan... Well, it's time for him to get married." This remark was filled with helplessness and despair.

"But what about you?" Sophia subconsciously asked. Can he really look on as Stan marries another woman?

Sean flashed her a sad smile. Right now, he truly wanted to feign nonchalance, but his gaze had already betrayed him. "What can I do? I can't stop something inevitable. Anyway, I've got Maisie." Maisie's full name was Maisie Mitchell, for he'd personally intervened and listed her in the Mitchell Family's household register. He'd also compiled a family tree himself and recorded Maisie in there as well, so she was now his family.

A wave of helplessness assailed Sophia. Knowing that she'd only sadden him were she to pursue it further, she gave up asking. I don't seem to have any solution either. After heaving a sigh, she took a sip of fragrant tea and changed the subject.

After sitting for a while, the sound of keys jingling to unlock the door sounded from outside. As soon as Maisie heard the jingling of keys, she knew that Stanley was home, so she sprinted over to the door like the wind. Opening the shoe cabinet, she took out his slippers and placed them before the door.

Having quarrelled with his family on this day, Stanley was in a bad mood, but the moment he opened the door, he was greeted by the sight of Maisie standing there with arms outstretched as she called out, "Papa!"

Joy flooding him, all his worries vanished. As he changed his shoes after stepping into the house, he asked her, "Did you listen to Daddy at home today, Maisie? Did you get along well with Judge?"

"Yeah, I did! I was very obedient today, and it was me who picked up Judge's poop on the carpet today!" Maisie replied sweetly.

At this, Judge woofed.

Looks like the family of three is living happily! Sophia thought.

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After Stanley changed his shoes, he brought Maisie along with him. As soon as he saw Sophia, he mocked her. "Hey, why are you here? Did your husband chase you out? I suppose you reap what you sow! So much for him trying to introduce me to another woman! Hmph!"

Meanwhile, Sean was delighted when he saw that Stanley was back, and his pale face had regained some color. "Stanley, you're back! Why are you wearing a face mask though?"

Wearing a face mask that obscured most of his face, only Stanley's eyes were visible, while his mouth could be seen moving underneath the mask when he spoke. "Yeah, I caught the flu, so I had to put a mask on as I don't want Maisie to get infected." However, Stanley's gaze was shifty when he handed Maisie over to Sean. "Maisie, you can play with Daddy while I go take a shower first." He left after putting Maisie down.

Sophia could sense that something was off with Stanley. Instead of exposing it, she continued to talk to Sean. After Stanley was done showering, he came out in a pair of

trousers with dog fur all over it. Toweling his hair, he walked upstairs while saying, "I'll be drying my hair."

Judge went after him, but Sophia found it weird that he was still wearing his mask after taking his shower. Although Sophia continued to chat with Sean, she couldn't shake off the feeling that something wasn't right, as Stanley didn't seem okay.

Finally, Sean put down his cup of tea before standing up. "I'll go check on Stanley. Wait for me here, Sophia."

The rooms downstairs were being used as a study and as a bedroom for the nanny, so Sean went upstairs to the bedrooms. Stanley didn't close his door, so Sean snuck into his bedroom, only to see Stanley looking into the mirror, checking his swollen face that he apparently got from being slapped.

"Stanley!" Shocked, Sean walked up to take a closer look at Stanley's face. He was indeed given a slap, as there was an angry handprint on his face. "What happened?" Sean asked with much worry.

Upon being discovered, Stanley's eyes darted around, but he could only tell the truth. "My father wants me to marry that wench, Anne Osborne, which I disagreed with, so my brother gave me a slap."

Instantly, Sean's eyes reddened when he realized how hard the slap was. On the other hand, Stanley quickly explained, "It's alright! My uncle hit me even harder when I tried to go after Sophia back then, so I'm already used to it. It will heal soon anyway."

Clenching his fists, Sean had tears rolling in his eyes upon hearing what Stanley said. "Stanley, it's about time that you marry someone, so maybe—"

Stanley tutted while feigning anger. "You're just like my parents whose only concern is for me to produce an heir! Do I look like a brood sow? Must I attach myself to an ugly hag just for the sake of getting married?" Checking on his wound, he muttered, "You didn't see just how ugly Anne Osborne is! She doesn't even have one-tenth of Sophia's looks! Considering how horrendous she looks, I should commend her for even having the guts to go on blind dates! Uncle Michael must be trying to mock me by introducing me to such an ugly hag! The candidates that my family introduced only get ever uglier. I was assuming that my uncle should have a better sense of beauty by now, but he's even worse than my mom! He even

had the audacity to tell me to follow in the footsteps of other people of my age. Sophia's ex-boyfriend was the same age as me, so should I kill myself as well now that he's a goner?"

Smiling bitterly, Sean listened on before saying, "I'll go get some anti-inflammatory spray."

Stanley waved his hand dismissively. "Be quick! Ouch, my brother sure did a number on me! F\*ck! He will be the one at fault if nobody wants to marry me because of my disfigured face!"

While listening to Stanley's complaints, tears rolled down Sean's face the moment he turned around. On the other hand, Sophia had been playing with Maisie in the living room for a while, but Sean and Stanley had yet to come downstairs. She already had quite a lot of tea, so she went to the washroom for a bit, only to return to see Maisie crouching on the floor while wiping the stain on the floor that Sophia made earlier with a piece of cloth. Aside from that, she even wiped the table and rearranged the tea set on it.

Sophia could hardly believe that a three year old kid could work so deftly, as Carmen only knew to stage some silly dramas to show them to Michael when she was two years old. "Maisie, what are you doing? Come, I can do that myself!" Taking the cloth from Maisie, Sophia wiped the floor clean herself.

As soon as Sophia took the cloth away from Maisie, the latter began crying. When other kids cried, they would probably be bawling their eyes out, but Maisie was only sobbing while being careful to keep her voice low, which was not typical of a three-year-old kid at all. Sophia held Maisie in her arms while consoling her. "Honey, what's wrong? Did someone bully you? Tell me, so your father and I can go teach them a lesson!"

With her eyes all teary, Maisie looked at her in silence. It took some time before she finally opened up feebly. "Papa brought me home to meet Grandpa and Grandma, but they didn't like me. They even scolded Papa and told him to send me away." Sobbing, she asked while holding on to Sophia's sleeve, "Aunty, I know how to do chores. Will Papa let me stay now that I know how to do chores?"

Sophia never knew the adults' reactions would have such a profound effect on Maisie. Back then, she bought the girl off Ronney Group's slave market, so she wasn't sure what she went through, but Maisie was such a sensitive girl. As soon as she noticed a minor difference in Stanley's attitude, she knew something was off. For a three year old girl, Maisie already went through a lot; all she wanted was a home.

On the verge of tears, Sophia held Maisie tightly in her arms while reassuring the latter in a hushed voice. “No, nobody will send you away.” She brought the girl upstairs to Stanley’s room, only to hear Stanley and Sean bickering with each other.

“Sean, do you want to kill me? Ouch! It hurts so much!”

“Hang in there. The spray is quite potent after all.”

“Ow...”

Upon her arrival, Sophia saw Sean spraying something on Stanley’s face carefully. Now, she noticed that Stanley’s face was swollen and red, a slap mark evident on it. Hence, she had an inkling of what happened. By humiliating his potential spouse, his father and brother would of course not let him leave just like that.

“Look, Papa is hurt, so he must be in pain. Go comfort him,” Sophia told Maisie.

Maisie scuttled toward them, which surprised both Stanley and Sean. Both of them fought to hold her in their arms. “Baby, you’re here! Give me a kiss! I fell down, so it hurts!”

“Come over here, Maisie. Let me hold you.”

...

It wasn’t until after dinner that Sophia left, but she couldn’t shake off the heavy feeling within her. Although the three of them seemed to be happy for the time being, she wasn’t sure what would happen in the future.

The skies were dark when Michael arrived at home, which coincidentally was when the night-shift security from the ancient Imperial Palace museum came to retrieve the cat. Taking Carmen’s bowl from him, the security shone his torchlight on the bowl while examining it in a professional manner.

“If I’m not mistaken, this is a type of porcelain bowl that once belonged to the ancient royals. As the techniques to make them were lost in history, these porcelain wares—so called ‘Mise Porcelain’—were also given the name ‘porcelain of a mysterious color’. The recipe for creating it is a secret that only the royals had knowledge of. There are three of these porcelain wares in the ancient Imperial Palace museum. Although all of them are national treasures, none are as beautiful as this.”

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Upon hearing that, Michael could hardly suppress a frown. Why is there another item that belonged to the ancient royals? I bet this must be a present from the Yard Family! Does Louis Osborne really have secret ties to the Yards?

However, none of them ever heard anything of it. Both Louis and the Yards seemed to have nothing to do with each other. Even when they arrived at Audistin, they arrived separately. Michael met Anna with Sophia before meeting Louis Osborne. If Louis really had ties with the Yards, he wouldn't have wanted his family to have marital ties with the Fletcher, as the Fletchers had killed quite a few members of the Yards.

While Michael was in deep thought, Carmen only had eyes for her bowl, as her bright eyes were fixated on it. Upon noticing that the guard seemed to have finished his assessment, she blurted, "Sir, can you give me back my royal sweetheart bowl?"

Seemingly unperturbed by her request, the guard said, "Okay, I will give it back to you now that I've done my assessment. I won't be taking it, as it was made in a more recent era, so it lacks the archaeological value that I seek. It isn't the bowl but the making process of it that is being considered as valuable. Besides, the ones in the museum are far more valuable in terms of historical context, as all of them had passed through the hands of ancient royals."

While handing the bowl back to Carmen, he gave Michael a reminder. "Due to it being made in the modern era, it isn't as valuable as the ones in the museum. However, just like the Phoenix Harp, even though both were made during the modern era, they are still prized for their rarity, so using it as one would a normal bowl feels somewhat... overly luxurious."

However, Carmen didn't think so. To her, it was but a bowl with floral prints, so Michael could only tell the nursemaid to be careful while she fed Carmen. When Carmen lost interest in it after some time, they would clean it and put it away as a collection item. Although Carmen liked the bowl a lot, her love for the bowl might not last for a long time. For all she cared, its intricate craftsmanship could hardly compare to that of a bowl printed with a picture of Peppa Pig.

Meanwhile, Sophia also arrived at home. A husky slipped through the doorway as soon as she opened the door, making its way to Carmen before happily going in circles around her. Upon seeing Judge rushing in, Michael furrowed his brows. "Why does the silly dog have to come?"

Sophia replied, "Judge missed Carmen, so it came to visit her."

Although Michael verbally expressed his dislike of the dog, he ended up rubbing Judge's head, incidentally also wiping his sweat on its head. Sophia was tired after a day's work, so she lay down on the sofa as soon as she got home, rubbing Judge's head as well. After some time, Michael's hand touched hers, so they held hands while using Judge's head as a cushion.

Michael switched on the TV to watch the news, but he couldn't focus on it, so he asked Sophia, "How is Stanley doing? He didn't go home even though his father told him to."

Sophia replied, "No, he didn't go home. He's still at Sean's house after being slapped so hard that his face was swelling."

With that, Michael said nothing else, nor did they dwell on the topic any longer. Stanley had always been a rebellious child. Back then, even when his family resorted to violence, he refused to go back into the army once he decided to quit, so Sophia figured she should let things unfold on their own. The Fletchers wouldn't do anything to Sean anyway, considering that he was under Cooper's protection.

Sophia ended up lamenting, "I wonder when that idiot will realize his own feelings."

Looping an arm around her shoulders, Michael said, "One will never lose what is fated for them, but if they weren't meant to be, no amount of worry will change that."

Seeing that Sophia was still perturbed by it, he pulled her closer into his arms before kissing her on the forehead. "Look at us. We managed to get together after having gone through our ups and downs. You are mine since we are fated to be together, and nobody will be able to take you away from me. Even if we are miles apart, you are still mine. Not even your father's disapproval will change that."

However, someone cleared his throat at the corner of the room as soon as he said so. "Ahem!"

Surprised, Michael turned to see Cooper standing in the corner while glaring at them menacingly.

"Dad, why are you here?" Michael was utterly baffled.

Wearing a pair of slippers, Cooper approached them with a morose look on his face, whereas Michael cowered under his presence. "There will be an exhibition of Louis Osborne's works near Bayside National Stadium tomorrow. I will be stuck in a traffic jam if I come all the way from the south, so I decided to stay over for the night." Cooper walked away after explaining himself casually, but before he left, he turned to speak to Sophia while glaring at Michael. "You're coming with me tomorrow, so you'd better go to bed early."

"Okay," Sophia replied while watching Cooper take the lift to the third floor where the guest rooms were, whereas Judge followed merrily behind him.

Meanwhile, Michael had a complicated gaze while pondering about the situation. This old man... Although Sophia moved in with me, I can't even badmouth him if he is going to constantly show up out of nowhere. He's practically haunting this place with his presence! If I can just find someone who is able to pin him down! I must find him a wife with a dominant personality, who has an even more domineering father, so that Cooper will get a taste of his own medicine!

By the next day, Cooper gave Sophia a call early on to wake her up so that they could get prepared for their trip to the exhibition. On the other hand, Michael would also be tagging along.

The exhibition was a private showcase, so only invited guests were allowed entry, with most of them being from the arts or cultural scene. The exhibition wasn't only a showcase for calligraphic works and paintings, but also a gathering for cultured people, so an arms dealer like Cooper wouldn't normally be invited.

Cooper liked calligraphy, and he had also been Louis' fan for a long time, but he never was invited to such an occasion. Fortunately, Michael was able to get his hands on an invitation, so Cooper would of course drop by since he had the time. The exhibition was incidentally held in the same city as his anyway, so there was no reason he wouldn't come.

Not only did Cooper collect a lot of Louis' works, but he was also an admirer of Louis' achievements, so he was looking forward to their meeting. Cooper put in the effort to spruce himself up for the occasion by applying mousse on his hair to help shape it, as well as putting on a new set of clothes. After finally gaining closure over his depressing first love, he gave off a much youthful air nowadays, so he gave off a vibe that made him seem to be around Michael's age, or even younger.

Michael had his team of stylists help prepare him and Sophia for the occasion. After changing his clothes, he tied up his hair using a pink hair band while applying a face mask

before putting on makeup. Sophia was also doing the same, so both of their faces were covered by a black mask, which seemed to annoy Cooper.

“Dad, you should come and get yourself spruced up too!”

As soon as Sophia dragged Cooper to his seat in front of a mirror, Michael signaled his team of stylists to do Cooper’s makeup for him. By doing that, he was hoping Cooper would attract someone during their visit to the exhibition so that he would get married as soon as possible. Seeing that Cooper was only forty five years old, not only would he still be considered as young if he were a celebrity, but he would also attract a lot of mature women in Bayside City.

































