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During this period while she was living with the Cunninghams, Minerva had discerned their animosity toward Matthew.

Thus, she didn't think much of him either.

Based on what Demi told her, he had happened upon his wealth by luck.

It was only because he saved the life of Billy Newman's daughter using a drug produced by Cunningham Pharmaceuticals that he had everything he did now.

Thus, it was only by stealing their credit that he got to where he was.

If he genuinely relied on his own ability, he might have starved to death by now.

Because of those opinions that Demi instilled in her, Minerva came to despise Matthew even more.

After listening to her retelling of the tale, the boys perked up.

"Live-in son-in-law? Oh-does your cousin like boy toys?"

"As if! Look at him! Does he look like he could be a boy toy?"

"Well, if he's a live-in son-in-law, he can't have a good relationship with your cousin. She must be so lonely. Ha!"

One by one, they sniggered.

Glaring at them, Minerva snapped, "Watch your mouth! She's the president of Cunningham Pharmaceuticals! Do you think she'd be interested in a bunch of hooligans like you? Dream on!"

Sullenly, the boys protested, "What's wrong with us? If we don't talk to her, how will we know whether she's a good fit for any one of us? You need only introduce us, Minerva. We'll see who wins in the end!"

However, she waved them away impatiently. "Fine; but you had better fulfill your promise to introduce me to someone hot. Remember—foreigners only. I have no interest in Cathian men!"

"No problem!" They quickly reassured her with wide smiles.

During the time she was abroad, Minerva had felt that Cathian men were useless. Thus, from the very beginning, she sought to date only foreign men.

As for Cathian men, she would not give them a second glance no matter how exceptional they appeared at first glance.

Presently, upon entering the house, Tate located Helen and grumbled angrily, "Aunt Helen, you have to talk some sense into Sasha!"

With a doting expression on her face, Helen asked, "What's wrong, Tate? What did she do to anger you this time?"

He then announced loudly, "This is my girlfriend's first time over and she forgot to bring a swimsuit. I asked Sasha to have her secretary buy one for me, but she refused. This is so embarrassing for me! What now? Is she afraid that I won't be able to pay her back?"

Upon hearing that, Helen quickly reassured him, "Of course not, Tate! What does money matter when we're family? Where is she? Sasha? Sasha!"

Walking out of her room, Sasha asked, "Yes, Mom?"

"Call your secretary and have her bring a swimsuit," Helen ordered with a frown. "This is Tate's girlfriend's first time here, so how could you treat a guest like that?"

Feeling rather annoyed, Sasha replied, "The secretary is off work, Mom! She's tired after working for the entire day. It's not appropriate for me to call her now!"

"What do you mean it's not appropriate?" Helen shot back angrily. "What's one extra trip when you pay her so much? Don't forget your aunt covered all of your expenses when you were young. We were so poor back then that you would have starved to death if she hadn't given me half of her salary each month!"

It frustrated Sasha to no end that the past was dredged up every time she and her mother spoke now.

It wasn't that she wasn't grateful to Chloe and her family, but she had to draw a line somewhere.

Right now, the house was practically Tate and Minerva's base camp.

It was too much to expect her to put up with Joanna's presence and also buy a swimsuit for her as well!

Upon seeing that Sasha was still standing her ground even after a round of nagging, Helen finally snapped, "Fine! If you won't do it, I won't force you. I'll go out and get the swimsuit myself. How about that?"

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With that, Helen stood up and made to leave.

Instantly, Sasha became anxious. After all, she couldn't very well let her mother run off alone to buy a swimsuit.

"Alright, alright. I'll call the secretary!" she said in resignation.

It was only then did Helen beam at her and said, "That's a good girl! Remember, this is your cousin so you must treat him like your own brother. I have no sons—only two daughters. Hence, Tate is like my son. You must treat him well!"

Exasperated, Sasha walked away and made another call to her secretary, instructing her to bring another swimsuit.

Not long after that, the secretary showed up with another Chanel piece.

This time, she had been specifically instructed to do so, as Sasha knew Tate would throw a fit if the swimsuit didn't reach his standards. If that happened, the secretary's efforts would amount to nothing.

Upon receiving the swimsuit, the overjoyed Joanna sprinted to the bathroom, changed into the suit and dove into the pool with Tate.

By now, the courtyard and swimming pool had become their domain.

Not long after that, Demi and Liam returned.

Upon seeing the chaotic scene before her, Demi nearly yelled at the young adults, only for her to be stopped by Helen.

"You and Sasha have to treat Tate and Minerva better in the future. Those are your aunt's kids! Have you forgotten how well your Aunt Chloe used to treat you? No matter how old you get, you can't forget your roots and you mustn't forget the kindness you were shown either!" she lectured them.

Upon hearing that, Demi and Sasha looked helplessly at each other. In all honesty, they had no wish to listen to their mother whenever she lectured them on this matter.

In the end, the visitors stayed for dinner.

Having no other choice, Matthew and Sasha busied themselves in the kitchen preparing food for the guests.

As Helen told them, these were Tate and Minerva's friends and they had to be treated well. Otherwise, Tate and Minerva would be disgraced.

During dinner, Minerva took the opportunity to introduce the three boys to Sasha.

These three boys hadn't taken their eyes off her since entering the house.

The moment introductions were made, one of them stood up with a wine glass in hand and walked over to Sasha. "It's an honor to meet you, President Cunningham! May I treat you to this glass of wine?"

The question made her frown, and there was something about his gaze that she felt off-putting.

"Sorry but I don't drink," she said politely.

Naturally, the boy couldn't help but feel awkward, so Minerva protested, "But you drink every time you eat with us, Sasha. Why aren't you drinking today?"

With a frown, the boy asked softly, "Are you trying to embarrass me, President Cunningham?"

Upon hearing that, Sasha almost blew a gasket. Who does this boy think he is?

On the other hand, Matthew could not stand it any longer and he stood up. "I apologize, but my wife isn't feeling well today so she won't be drinking," he announced. "How about I drink with you?"

Immediately, the boy withdrew the glass of wine and sneered with a sideways glance, "You? What right do you have to drink with me? This glass of wine is for President Cunningham, not a live-in son-in-law like you!"

Behind him, the two other boys proceeded to laugh loudly.

They were trying to purposely ridicule Matthew, for according to Minerva, the entire household hated him.

In their opinion, making fun of him like that would only receive the household's support.

Sure enough, Demi, too, began to laugh at the scene.

On the other hand, Sasha was outraged. "What did you just say?"

"Am I wrong?" The boy chuckled as he continued, "Isn't he a live-in son-in-law? How could he possibly take your place, President Cunningham? Does the live-in son-in-law call the shots for the Cunningham Family now?"

The statement was clearly meant to sow discord among the Cunninghams.

Yet, it worked, for James as well as a few of the others glared resentfully at Matthew.

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Frowning, Matthew snapped, "It's none of your business who calls the shots in this household! If you're not going to drink, sit down."

"And what do you mean by sending me away while I'm trying to offer President Cunningham a glass of wine?" the boy challenged him with a glare. "Do you actually think you're the head of the household? Even if you were, it'd only be polite to allow me to pay my respects. Don't you think so, President Cunningham?"

The boy's friends cheered him on and he shot Matthew a smug, disdainful look.

If he managed to crush Matthew under his foot by the end of the night, he would consider his evening a success.

As long as he could get the older man to admit defeat, he would have more chances to interact with Sasha in the future.

Unfortunately, Sasha begged to differ and she slammed her hand on the table before shouting angrily, "That's enough! Mind your friends, Minerva! If you can't do so, don't come back in the future!"

Upon hearing that, Minerva instantly became anxious. "What are you saying, Sasha? W-We're here to visit Aunt Helen, so how could you send us away?"

Similarly, Helen quickly added, "Exactly! How could you say that, Sasha? Minerva is your cousin. Don't forget that your aunt—"

However, Sasha interrupted her mother and she thundered, "I haven't forgotten, alright? I haven't forgotten anything! But let me tell you something—the name on the deed for this property is Matthew Larson so yes, he is indeed the one who calls the shots here!"

"What do you mean by that, Sasha?" James questioned angrily. "Are you saying you have a problem with us living here?"

"Yes!" Sasha snapped. "Didn't you say you wanted to go to Lakeside Garden? Why are you still here then?"

Just like that, James was struck silent.

When it came to the incident with President White, they were indeed the ones in the wrong. Thus, he had no rebuttal for her.

Upon assessing the situation, Minerva realized that continuing to throw a fuss would not be to her advantage.

Thus, she quickly gave the three boys a look and said with an ingratiating smile, "Very well, then! Since Matthew is being so hospitable by asking you to drink with him, you should!"

The boys understood what she was implying—it was obvious that she wanted to get Matthew drunk.

During the past gatherings she attended with him, he hadn't consumed much alcohol.

Thus, she assumed he was unlikely to be able to hold his liquor so it would be all too easy to make him drunk.

After exchanging a glance with the others, the boy leading the charge boomed, "Of course. Let's do so then, Mr. Larson! How about this—since it's our first meeting, let's drink to our hearts' content! Bring out the largest wine glasses. As men, we must be bold about our drinking, mustn't we?"

Immediately, Minerva walked over with the wine glasses and chimed in, "Look how cordial my friends are being, Matthew. You mustn't disappoint them! Come on, now. Sasha's reputation depends on you!"

Naturally, her words were meant to provoke him and force him to participate.

On the other hand, Demi and Liam turned away, hiding their laughter.

They were well aware of how much alcohol Matthew was capable of consuming, and it was suicide to try and outdrink him.

Nonetheless, they didn't feel like saying anything.

It wasn't as if Minerva was a saint, anyway. They were highly dissatisfied with her behavior, especially now that she had brought home a group of ne'er-do-wells.

If Matthew could teach her a lesson on their behalf, they would be thrilled.

For his part, Matthew didn't bother making small talk. All he did was raise his wine glass and say, "Alright! Let's drink to our heart's content! Whoever stops first is the loser!"

"Aye, whoever stops first is the loser!" The boys cheered.

And so, the leader of the group called out with a complacent look, "I'll start. Let's toast to our first meeting with three glasses!"

Given how large the Cunninghams' wine glasses were, three glasses could hold as much as 42 liquid ounces of red wine.

Proudly assuming that his own alcohol tolerance was extremely high, the boy set out to put Matthew down.

His ultimate goal was causing the older man to embarrass himself by getting drunk and throwing up.

However, Matthew didn't bother to answer him and only started drinking.

After all, when it came to drinking competitions, there was no one Matthew Larson feared. CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR TELEGRAM CHANNEL FOR FAST UPDATES <u>https://t.me/NovelsFuns</u>

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Even after three glasses of wine, Matthew did not appear the least bit affected.

On the other hand, the boy who took the lead was already swaying a little. After all, the alcohol content of red wine was not negligible.

Looking on, Minerva was gobsmacked.

Here she was, thinking that Matthew's limit would be a single glass, yet she was proven wrong.

Nonetheless, he had already consumed three glasses. How much longer can he hold on? she mused as she shot a look at the two other boys.

Immediately, the two other boys rushed over, asking to drink with Matthew.

Each of them consumed three glasses with him.

Yet, he was still completely fine while the boys, on the other hand, were swaying.

Just like that, Minerva stared at him and she was utterly befuddled. Just how much can he drink?

Suddenly, Matthew raised his glass and announced, "Well, you've finished drinking to me and now, I shall drink to you! Come, gentlemen—have three more glasses each!"

As they wobbled in place, the boys' expressions changed.

There was no doubt they would fall unconscious if they drank any more than they already had.

Quickly, Minerva interjected, "There's no need to drink so much, Matthew! You've all had your fun and that's quite enough. Come on, everyone; let's eat!"

However, Matthew only replied to her, "But they've only had three glasses each, while I've had nine. I may have had my fun, but have they? Since I'm hosting them, I have to entertain them properly. Otherwise, word might spread that we Cunninghams are terrible hosts!"

Sasha chuckled as she nodded. "You're absolutely right, honey. It's imperative that we treat Minerva's guests well so that we don't embarrass her. Come, boys—have another glass! I thought you agreed whoever stops first is the loser. None of you want to be the loser, right?"

Annoyed, the three boys announced viciously, "F*ck it! We're not afraid, so let us drink till we die!"

With a cold smile on his lips, Matthew proceeded to toast each of them with three glasses of wine.

Just like that, he had downed twelve glasses, while the boys had downed six each.

Suddenly, one of them immediately sprinted outside to throw up while the other two passed out.

By now, each of the boys had consumed more than half a gallon of red wine.

As Minerva surveyed the scene, she roared, "You've crossed a line, Matthew! How could you get my friends so drunk on their first visit? Look at them!"

However, Matthew replied with a sneer, "They were the ones taking turns trying to outdrink me. How have I crossed a line when they went against me three to one? If the three of them combined couldn't outdrink me, that only means your friends are trash. Surely you're not going to blame their loss on my high alcohol tolerance?"

Minerva stared at him tongue-tied.

In the end, the boy outside even started to vomit blood.

With no other choice, the Cunninghams could only call them an ambulance and have the boys taken to the hospital.

Minerva angrily followed them to the hospital but before she left, she warned, "Watch your back, Larson!"

However, Matthew did not care.

In all honesty, he thought he had been very polite tonight.

Otherwise, the boys would have fared much worse than being sent to the hospital.

While he truly didn't mind that they stayed for dinner, harassing his wife was another matter altogether.

•••

After dinner, Tate left with Joanna.

Although Sasha tried to stop her cousin from taking the motorcycle, he wouldn't listen and merely roared his merry way out of the gates.

Helplessly, she turned to Helen. "You have to talk to Aunt Chloe about this, Mom. Tate doesn't have a driver's license and he's breaking the law by going about like that. He's going to get into a lot of trouble if something happens to him!"

However, Helen answered with a blank expression, "Surely not! He's just having fun riding bikes and that's normal for kids his age. You're making a mountain out of a molehill!"

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"I'm truly not, Mom," Sasha protested anxiously. "It's a huge threat to road safety when he's driving without a license—at that speed, no less! If he gets arrested, he might even have to go to jail!"

Upon hearing that, Helen froze for a moment before she stammered, "I-I didn't realize it was so serious."

"What did you think?" Sasha snapped. "Have you seen how carelessly he drives? His life could very well be in danger if he got into an accident!"

Scratching her head perplexedly, Helen finally conceded, "Alright; I'll call your aunt." And so, she pulled out her cell phone as she walked over to the couch, making a call to her sister. After chatting idly for ages, she finally got to the point, only to have Chloe tell her, "It's not a big deal. Tate is a pretty good biker and he often went out biking while we were abroad. Don't worry about it. He'll be fine."

"But he'll be found breaking the law if he gets caught," Helen protested.

With a laugh, Chloe replied, "It's not as serious as that! Kids just like to play. He never ran into any trouble while abroad despite their stricter laws there, and he hasn't run into any trouble here even after having biked for so long. It'll be fine."

It was only then that Helen breathed out a sigh of relief. "Alright, then."

After she hung up the phone, Sasha cried out indignantly, "That's it, Mom? It's fine simply because Aunt Chloe says so?"

"Tate is her son, Sasha," Helen pointed out. "She must worry about him more than we do. So, don't let it trouble you. If she says it's fine, then it is!"

Upon hearing that, Sasha shouted, "Well, go ahead and spoil him, then! I've said my piece so I don't care if anything happens to him—and don't you come asking for my help, either!"

With that, she stormed upstairs.

Affronted, Helen yelled after her, "How can you say that? He's your cousin and you can't treat him like that! Don't forget how your aunt treated you when you were young—"

The lecture was cut short as Sasha slammed her bedroom door shut. Truly, she was fed up with listening to her mother go on and on. Over the past few days, she had heard it so much that her ears were about to fall off.

When Matthew, who was sitting inside the room, saw the expression on her face, he couldn't help chuckling. "What happened? Did your mom refuse to take your advice?"

Helplessly, she sighed. "They dote on him too much. If they keep going on like this, an accident is bound to happen!"

"These kids are too self-centered," he agreed quietly. "They won't listen to anyone. I imagine they won't learn their lesson until they've suffered a loss."

"But when it comes to this issue, that loss could potentially be the loss of a life," she pointed out anxiously.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" He shrugged. "If his parents say it's fine, what could you say that would convince him otherwise?"

Sasha knew that Matthew was right and she grumbled to herself, If my aunt and uncle don't even care, what can I do?

With a smile, Matthew walked up to her and he comforted her gently, "Alright; let's forget about it. There's no need to stay angry. You seem so stressed out these past few days."

"How could I not be with those two brats living here?" she complained. "Not to mention that I have to wait on them hand and foot from dawn to dusk. Every time I see them now, I get angry!"

With a laugh, he suggested, "Well, if you don't want to see them, would you like to elope with me?"

"Oh-now you want to elope?" Sasha retorted, rolling her eyes. "When I suggested leaving back then, you wouldn't. Where could we possibly 'elope' to now?"

"Lakeside Garden!" Matthew announced triumphantly. "I told you that I have a place there!"

At this point, she couldn't help a snort of laughter. "Yes; I know you have a place there. Let's find a time to pack up our valuables and go there then, shall we?"

Throughout the entire conversation, Sasha thought that Matthew was joking.