

My Dreamy Old Husband Chapter 1166

If Jordan left for Cethos, Ronney City would be under Anna's control. If so, Anna and her two sons would have the opportunity to do many things...

In Bayside city, Linus was trying to investigate who was behind the grandmaster's death. This is just too strange. It wasn't me and it wasn't Sophia. Callum did not admit to it; Cooper would never use such means; and Michael would have said something if it was him. So, who on earth did it? At present, Callum and Cade were the most likely culprits. Only they could place spies among Henry's men, but Callum did not admit to doing it. Could it really be caused by some metaphysical reason? Could it be that they wanted to use the Dragon Blood flowing within the Yard Family's direct descendants to cast a spell on Sophia, but her genes turned out to be stronger than theirs?

Henry and Ryan had stepped on so many toes that countless people were waiting for a chance to kick them when they were down. Now that the Ronney Fashion Week was a wreck, Bayside City's fashion industry was jumping for joy. Everybody was working together to promote Bayside City's fashion brands. They wanted the Fashion Week to succeed so that they could drive the Ronney Group out of Cethos, once and for all.

Still, Linus couldn't rest easy until he got to the bottom of this matter. "Siri, bring up all the surveillance data from the Ronney Group's vicinity, three days before and after the incident, and analyze them for any suspicious individuals."

The housekeeping robot immediately did as was instructed. It downloaded all the surveillance footage from the Ronney Group's vicinity from three days before to three days after the incident. Then, it ran a facial analysis and matched them to the criminal database. The analysis was completed quickly, and it reported, "The wanted criminal, Quinton Clark, was discovered at 9 AM, one day after the incident."

Linus was shocked. Bringing up the surveillance feed, he saw a man in a security guard's uniform cockily leaving through the Ronney Group's main entrance, one day after the incident. That man even looked straight into the camera while he was on his way out. Quinton?! Why is he back here again?! What's he up to now?!

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During this period, Sophia seemed to be extremely busy. She was busier than Michael. She left the house early in the morning and came back late at night, every day. If that wasn't bad enough, she also brought her pets with her to work. Sometimes, they were used for filming purposes; sometimes, they modeled for a fashion show. In short, it was hectic.

Carmen was still very young, and Sophia did not want her to be involved in the entertainment circle at such a young age. Therefore, her acting career was rather intermittent. Instead, she spent most of her time in school, only appearing on 'Where Are We Going, Dad?' or shooting the occasional advertisement for the Michel Group's range of children watches. Once in a while, she would also take on a cameo role in certain international movies. However, Sophia did not hold the same concern for her pets. There was nothing wrong with them following her to work. Besides, those who didn't work, didn't get to eat.

As the trailblazer for pet luxury goods in Bayside City, Sophia felt that she had to own several pets at the very least. When the fans recently learned that Taylor had nearly thirty pets at home, they clamored about stealing his pets from his house. However, nobody actually took any action except for Callum. Due to the frequent fashion shows, the pets were always going in and out of the house. That gave Callum more opportunities to make his move. He constantly sent people over to steal the pets, kidnaping a cat here or a dog there. Finally, Pleiades was successfully stolen too.

Michael was secretly celebrating Callum's success in stealing the chicken. Unexpectedly, he heard Sophia calling Callum. "Return my chicken. In five days, it's going to play a guest role in a movie."

Callum said, "Sure."

Two days later, a well-fed rooster appeared at the entrance of the residential area. At the same time, the giant poodle that was out for work was kidnapped.

At first, Michael was speechless. In the end, he got used to it. Callum would kidnap anything he took a fancy to. Meanwhile, Sophia would make a phone call to urge him to return the pets she needed. Two days later, the stolen pet would be dumped in front of their residence. Moreover, they were fed until they were plump and tender. Callum stole everything, except for the three huskies.

Damn retards! What's the point of stealing the pets here and there? Besides, every stolen pet is shipped internationally! Are the delivery costs free?! Why don't we just generously hand them all over to Callum?! Naturally, Michael could only complain under his breath. He had

been paying close attention to his wife's career recently. The fashion business was in full swing. After bringing Russell over to her side, things developed even more rapidly. The Remote Mountains Health Club Project she established in partnership with Daniel was expanding in scale. Plum Technology was gradually growing too. Those that supported Cooper had left Mitchell Group to work in Plum Technology—it was becoming the next 'Mitchell's Technology'.

At the start of the New Year's, Plum Technology, a tech company started up by four university students to develop online games, finally surpassed Mitchell's Technology in its own field. Plum Technology occupied a relatively large portion of the market share. It was comparable to that of the Michel Group's Cethosian branch.

Mitchell's Technology was once Cethos' greatest pride as a national industry. It was Cethos' calling card. Whenever foreign dignitaries visited the country, they fervently hoped to be invited to Mitchell's Technology for an inspection. Bayside University and Mitchell's Technology—one represented the country's education while the other represented the country's economy. However, since the start of the New Year's, no foreign dignitaries were sent to Mitchell's Technology for inspection anymore. That was a huge sign of what was to come.

Now, Mitchell's Technology was declining at a rapid rate. It used to be a powerful dragon, brilliantly soaring in the skies. It used to shock the world with its innovations. But now, it was a withered and ailing dragon that could no longer move. It had lost its brilliance. It was just a matter of time before it died. Even if the Mitchell Family had the backing of the Yard Family, it would be to no avail.

The Mitchell Family's annual family meeting was held as usual. The chairman, Alex, furiously threw the financial statements of the year on the table. Then, he gave a thunderous roar. "The share prices are falling! Our market share is shrinking! Mitchell's Technology is growing weaker and weaker by the day! Who can explain this to me?!"

Nobody dared to say a word. They barely even dared to breathe. Ever since Cooper came back, Mitchell's Technology began to weaken. Although Alex and everybody else understood the reason for its decline, they refused to admit it. Therefore, everybody started coming up with various excuses.

"The marketing department should take responsibility. Our marketing methods are still too old-fashioned. It's a new era after all..."

“The product development department has the greatest responsibility. Our products have too many defects.”

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Pushing the blame around, nobody dared to admit that they had benefited from Cooper’s original technology for more than 20 years. And now, those original technologies were no longer relevant. Feeling guilty, they could only push the blame around. In the end, Sandra stood up. She had remained quiet all this while but now said, “Many reasons led to Mitchell’s Technology’s decline. Not only are there external factors, but we also have many internal factors to blame.”

Stepping forward, she glanced at the Mitchell Family’s senior executives before sternly continuing, “Right now, the entire world is developing rapidly, especially in the high-tech industry. It has reached a point where it’s rapidly evolving. Every other country has been developing quickly, but Cethos is the only country where progress has slowed down. This isn’t solely the Mitchell Family’s fault.

Rather, it’s because the entire high-tech industry in Cethos has become stagnant. The Mitchell Family is still number one in the country. Aside from us, no other families can come up with products that are highly distinguished in the international market. As the entire industry is suffering from this stagnant development, we are no exception.”

Upon hearing those words, everybody nodded. That’s right. It’s not solely the Mitchell Family’s fault. The blame lies with Cethos’ slow development and poverty, which is dragging us down.

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Look at America and Germany. In the Mitchell Family’s opinion, the high-tech industry of both these countries boomed much later than Cethos. However, because these two countries progressed rapidly, it drove the high-tech industry to develop just as quickly as a result. These countries surpassed the Mitchell Family a long time ago, but it was mainly due to the strength of their countries which provided better conditions and foundations for the development of the high-tech industry.

On the other hand, the main reason the Mitchell Family was slowly declining was that Cethos did not place much importance on them. Moreover, they had to pay all sorts of exorbitant taxes and levies to the country, which gradually made the high-tech industry within the country into what it was today. In short, the country did not protect its national industry and even allowed a rival like Michel Tech to enter the market.

Everybody seemed to have found a reasonable excuse, and the atmosphere of the meeting immediately eased up. Then, Sandra continued, “Naturally, we suffer from internal problems too. Firstly, we are suffering from a huge brain drain. As you all know, we have been losing many of our talents over the past two years. Therefore, the top priority is to bring back all the outflowing talents.”

Everybody nodded in agreement. Plum Technology had poached too many of Mitchell's Technology's employees. Those were the talents that Mitchell's Technology had trained and cultivated. The loss of those employees had been a huge blow to the company.

Afterward, Sandra took out her proposal and passed it around. She was going to save the Mitchell Family.

A copy of the proposal soon fell into Sophia's hands. “The carrot-and-stick method? Bringing back the outflowing talents? Vigorously recruit talents within the high-tech industry... Regardless of their origins, those that perform exceptionally will be allowed to take on the Mitchell surname.” Sophia was amused by Sandra's creativity. God damn! Those that perform exceptionally will be allowed to take on the Mitchell surname?! Isn't that just like in ancient times where the great heroes of the country are given a royal surname?!

When Cooper saw that, his entire expression darkened considerably. How dare they make excuses for their inaptitude?! The biggest issue with Mitchell's Technology is that it isn't making any progress! The entire world is moving forward, but they're still fixated on the original but outdated creations! The high-tech industry has always been changing. Mitchell's Technology is part of the high-tech industry. However, it continues using fingerprint attendance systems to clock in when even normal companies are starting to use mobile phone apps to clock in! It's so backward that it doesn't even seem to be part of the high-tech industry!

Still, he was relieved that not all of the Mitchell Family was gone. During the New Year's, Plum Technology also announced that it was undergoing major changes. It was going to split out the high-tech business from the main company and establish 'Dragon Technology Corporation'. Dragon Technology was more or less composed of the people that followed Cooper when he left the Mitchell Family. More importantly, it was mainly led by the Mitchell Family although Plum Technology held a large portion of its shares too.

Cooper was a director at Dragon Technology Corporation. However, the main operation of the company was led by Sean, Derek, and Vincent. Besides, a large number of talents were flooding in from Mitchell's Technology. They planned to focus on the high-tech industry and vowed to bring back the glory days of the past. As such, Cooper was merely a name on the director's board. He practically left everything in the company to the youngsters. He felt at ease with them around—with them around, the Mitchell Family would never collapse.

Although Linus did not take on the Mitchell name, he was still Cooper's son and everybody considered him as part of the Mitchell Family. As a result, Michel Tech and Dragon Technology signed a series of cooperative contracts with each other. The authorities were also paying close attention to Dragon Technology, which seemed to be advancing aggressively.

Cethos used to be a backward country. However, the high-tech industry developed rapidly and the country became known for it. Unfortunately, Cethos' high-tech industry had declined over the past 20 years. It had long been overtaken by other countries. Hence, the authorities had high hopes for Dragon Technology. They hoped that it would advance to the top, bringing the country with it too. Needless to say, Mitchell Energy and Technology under Cooper's direct guidance was not to be ignored either. It had only been established for a year or two, but it was already the country's pride and joy. Whenever foreign dignitaries came to visit, they were brought to Mitchell Energy and Technology for inspection.

The children from the Mitchell Family that had an interest in clean energy went with Cooper; those that were engaged in electronics went to Dragon Technology. Those interested in fashion went to Sophia and those in the entertainment industry came looking for Michael. It was a perfect arrangement. In that way, the new Mitchell Family had created something of its own. They were slowly overwhelming the Mitchell Family of the past and were gaining a reputation as a trustworthy party among the powerful of Bayside City.

During the New Year's, Mitchell Energy and Technology made another major breakthrough. They took another step forward in the clean energy industry, bringing mankind closer to the future. After all, clean energy was the future! Cooper was truly the dragon of Cethos and the hope of mankind! In the past, Cethos remained one of the leading countries in the electronics industry for more than ten years because of Cooper. And now, he was going to make Cethos one of the top leading countries in clean energy for the next ten years!

As a result, the household became rather lively. Sophia quipped, "Dad, reporters from the News Bulletin and Focal Point have been camping out at the residential area's entrance for a few days now. They are requesting to interview you."

Cooper replied, "Not interested."

Michael said, "Dad, the invitation to the New Year Dinner Gala has been placed in your study. Whether you go or not, you should give them a response."

Cooper replied, "Not free."

Linus asked, "Dad, this is an invitation for a party at the presidential palace—"

Cooper replied, "Next time."

Everybody came back with various invitations, but they were all rejected. It was as expected. Whether he was Fass Michel or Cooper Mitchell, he remained as cold as ever.

Then, Carmen came back carrying a pink and fragrant invitation too. "Grandpa, the kindergarten is having a New Year's performance. The teacher says that Daddy, Mommy, Grandpa, and Uncle Linus have to attend together!"

Thus, the cold and distant Cooper finally took the invitation and read it. However, he did not realize that his worth among the kindergarteners would not change much just because of all the amazing things he did.

After appearing on 'Where Are We Going, Dad?', Michael became very well-received among the kindergarteners. The price of a photo with him had risen to 50 apiece, and the price was even higher if they were hugging in the photo. The business was booming recently, so Carmen launched a 'Buy 1 Get 1 Free' activity for New Year's. And, Cooper was the 'free' part of the deal.

However, Cooper's existence was akin to a god among the adults. Even Callum, who was located far away in another country, couldn't help talking about Cooper when he called Sophia to chat. "Your dad is amazing!"

Sophia was extremely proud. "Of course! My dad is the world's most amazing father!"

He jealously answered, "Tsk. Tsk. Tsk. Look at you... By the way, I'm going back to Cethos in a few days. Can you help me clean my house please?"

She was puzzled. "Why are you coming back? Are you here to clean up your brothers' mess?"

He replied, "I'm coming back to celebrate the new year."

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Every newspaper and magazine was trying to get an interview with Cooper. However, Cooper was extremely indifferent. Aside from the invitation from Carmen's kindergarten, nobody could get him to attend their event. Even Maddie, who was related to Joel, came over to request an interview with Cooper several times. Combined with Sophia's mediation, Cooper finally agreed to leave the house for an interview.

Sophia felt that he had to go out more. She did not want him to keep himself locked up in his studio all the time. After all, he was still decently young. She wished that he could fall in love again and give her more younger siblings.

Cooper appeared for the interview at the newspaper office where Maddie worked at. He was dressed very neatly, but his face was expressionless. Moreover, he was extremely cold and aloof. Although he answered every single question Maddie threw at him, his words were curt and his replies were short. On the other hand, Sophia was very talkative. "My dad is single and unmarried. He has no bad habits and no family history of diseases. He is very healthy. Moreover, he has a gentle nature and is very committed. Also, he has no history of being in a relationship. This is very important! Besides, the picture on the cover should be refined. Don't forget to edit the photo to enhance his appearance!"

Maddie nodded frequently in response. Meanwhile, Cooper felt speechless. He felt a sense of déjà vu—it felt like the get-rich-quick scams all over again.

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Once the interview was over, Sophia and Cooper prepared to leave the place. Cooper calculated and figured they would arrive right on time to pick up Carmen from the kindergarten. As they walked over to the main lobby of the newspaper office, however, they happened to see the editor-in-chief welcoming several people into the building respectfully.

Suddenly, a familiar face was reflected in Cooper's bleary eyes, stirring up a great reaction.

"Sophia! What a coincidence?"

Callum had spotted Sophia right away and called out to her in a friendly manner. Beside him, Anna was also looking over at Sophia and Cooper.

But, Cooper did not look at her once as though he had not registered her at all.

Sophia felt both mad and perplexed to see the three of them, but she still kept her composure as she gave them a greeting in return.

“Mrs. Yard, Callum, Cade. What brings the three of you to Cethos?”

Could they have come to spend New Years’ here?

In a mild tone, Anna answered, “We came here today to visit an old friend. I wasn’t expecting to see both of you here as well. This is such a coincidence!”

Sophia suddenly recalled that the head of that newspaper office was also a Yard.

“Indeed.” The two shook hands.

Anna also stretched a hand out to Cooper. “Mr. Mitchell, it’s an honor to meet you.”

Cooper had recently invented a miracle that shocked the world. It was labeled as a ray of hope for humans by foreign media. After Anna heard about it, she started to see him in a different light.

There were only a couple of men in this world whom Anna truly respected.

One of them was the mysterious Fass Michel who held the reigns of power in Michel Group, and the other was Cooper.

To save his daughter, Fass publicly revealed the formula to the cure for Virs-18, shocking everyone. Unfortunately, Anna never got a chance to see him.

Unexpectedly, Cooper acted as if he did not see her and walked right off, leaving her hand awkwardly suspended in the air.

To relieve the awkward tension, the editor-in-chief quickly came forward and grabbed her hand. “It’s great to have you here at our newspaper office, Mrs. Yard. Please come this way.”

A hint of disappointment grew in her eyes, but she did not let it show. As she followed the staff at the newspaper office inside, Sophia followed Cooper out promptly.

Concerned that Cooper would be saddened by Anna's appearance, Sophia glanced at him with a concerned look, but Cooper did not seem bothered and still maintained an indifferent attitude.

When they arrived at Carmen's kindergarten to pick her up, however, a piece of news hit them like a bolt out of the blue.

"We're so sorry, Mrs. Fletcher, but Carmen has gone missing!"

Sophia's mind went blank in an instant.

My daughter is missing?

"How did this happen?"

Cooper kept calm, but there was a slight quiver in his voice; he was staggering slightly as he held Sophia.

The security guard at the kindergarten admitted, "We failed to do our job. An unknown person came in here and took Carmen away!"

Since there was a history of Carmen getting kidnapped at her kindergarten, Michael felt uneasy and had placed someone there to watch over her. The abductor, however, had boldly knocked her bodyguard out cold today and abducted her. When the staff at the kindergarten could not find her, they made a report to the police right away.

Sophia lost strength in her whole body. It felt like someone had dug out a piece of her; she felt scared and helpless.

Who would kidnap Carmen? Could it be the Yard Family?

"Send people to the Yard Residence and Mitchell Residence now!" she commanded, but her body and hands were still shaking uncontrollably.

My baby, please be okay!

Currently, it seemed like the Yard Family had the biggest grudge against them. After Sophia wiped her tears away, she clenched down on her teeth and wanted to go to the Yard Family to ask them personally when she received a picture from an unknown number. The picture showed Carmen's cute and smiling face.

She was happily eating a skewer while sitting on a seesaw. Under her tiger hat, her small face had turned bright pink from the cold.

Below the picture was a message that read, 'Lunaville Children's Amusement Park. Come alone.'

The sight of the picture inevitably sent tears rushing down Sophia's face.

Cooper became enraged when he saw the picture and message.

"I don't care who it is. I'm going to cut them up into pieces!"

Sophia yanked him back. "Dad, Carmen is still in their hands. Let me go and see how things are."

Despite Cooper's attempt to stop her, she hopped in the car and drove off to that amusement park alone. Enraged, Cooper quickly followed after her from behind. Soon, Michael and Linus also received news about Carmen's disappearance and rushed people to the amusement park immediately.

When Sophia got to the place, she noticed that it was very remote with outdated equipment. Because they were at an outdoor amusement park on a weekday during wintertime, it was rather isolated and gloomy. She only saw a middle-aged lady who was knitting and collecting the entrance fee at the gate.

Sophia took out some money to buy a ticket and asked, "Did you see a little girl with a tiger hat come in here today?"

The middle-aged lady was very occupied with knitting, receiving the payment, and watching 'Where Are We Going, Dad?' on her phone. In the midst of everything, she answered, "A little girl went in there with her uncle earlier. She was very pretty, just like this girl on television."

They're really here!

As Sophia made her way inside, she stuck a hand into her coat where she had hidden a stun gun.

Carefully taking steps forward, she started to hear Carmen singing happily somewhere deep inside the spacious place. "La, la, la, planting a sun. La, la, la, planting a sun. La, la, la..."

Sophia held her breath.

She walked with even more caution and was incredibly nervous. Every sound she heard was amplified when it reached her ears.

As she continued to move forward, she quickly caught sight of Carmen. Carmen was wearing the tiger hat that was a family heirloom and squatting on the snow making snowballs. Sophia felt her heart rise up to her throat. When she was about to call out to Carmen, she saw Carmen stand up and run forward with the snowball in her outstretched hands. "Mister, I made this little kitty for you!"

A bare, pale, and big hand reached out to receive Carmen's gift while the other fell on her tiger hat to adjust it. In a gentle tone, he asked, "Can you sing another song for me, Carmen?"

She chirped, "Sure!"

With that, she was off bouncing around and singing again. "Grow quickly, little pine tree. Green leaves and new sprouts. Let the sunshine and rain nurture you. Grow quickly; grow quickly!"

Sophia also caught a glimpse of the man. It's him again—Quinton Clark!

Standing still in place, she was too afraid to move or take another step.

She might not have known the reason for Quinton's return, but she knew that he was very dangerous.

Carmen finished her song and went back to stand in front of Quinton. In a child-like voice, she asked, "Mister, can I have another skewer?"

Quinton pulled his brows together. "You can't eat anymore. Look; your mom is here to take you home."

Carmen saw Sophia right away and started running happily toward her. "Mommy!"

Quinton stood up from the bench he was sitting on for the first time and looked at Sophia with a smile in his eyes. He took a couple of steps forward, but before he could say anything, a large troop rushed in and pressed him down on the spot.

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In the end, Quinton was not charged for kidnapping. Carmen told them that he had brought her out to play. Hence, he was simply released.

Quinton was on the wanted list in many countries around the globe, but he did not have a criminal record in Cethos. After he came to an agreement with the Fletchers, he was granted a pardon and his slate was wiped clean. The whole world had scores to settle with him, except for Cethos.

Alas, Quinton was dragged down to Michael's basement to get interrogated.

Confronting the half-brother with whom he had a love-hate relationship for many years made Michael feel very conflicted. He did not know how to approach the situation.

I can't hit him, yell at him, or kill him, but he's getting into mischief all the time.

"Why did you come back? Didn't we tell you to stay away?"

Quinton was sitting cross-legged in front of him with a nonchalant attitude and a milk lollipop that Carmen had given him hanging out of his mouth. "What else? It's the New Year's. I came back to visit the family and spend New Year's here. I thought I'd drop by to see your wife and daughter too!"

Michael wanted to hit him, but he knew that throwing a few punches now was no use. "Were you the one who pushed the Yard Family's high priest?"

Quinton attested, "Yes, it was me! I pushed him by accident. He was annoying me."

Killing people was a trivial matter to him and did not make him feel guilty.

Even though Michael did not want to spend another second talking to him, he knew that Quinton would not have returned for no reason and that he surely had a motive.

"Tell me; what are you planning to do here?"

Quinton continued to suck on the lollipop in his mouth. "I really did come back to see your wife."

Standing up, Michael left the room and did not bother with Quinton anymore. He locked Quinton in the basement and had people keep watch on him 24 hours a day.

"I'll find a good time for you to leave the country."

Quinton urged, "At least let me spend the New Year's here before leaving!"

"You wish."

Quinton was put in a confinement room with bulletproof glass in the basement. All four walls were clear which did not give him an ounce of privacy. He was also kept on a 24-hour watch where a sensor would go off if any movement was detected.

When Michael left, he settled down and silently watched the elevator go up.

He was back again.

Even if he only got to see her from a distance, he was content.

Back in the living room, Cooper was going ballistic. He was ready to kill both Quinton and Michael.

Michael sat quietly in the corner—too afraid to utter a single word.

Sophia was also silent but was grateful to be holding Carmen in her arms.

Thank goodness Quinton was the one who took her. If it had been someone else, I might not ever see her again.

Still oblivious to the situation, Carmen asked, "Why does Grandpa want to kill Uncle Quinton?"

Sophia explained, "This is a grown-up matter. You won't understand! Sweetie, don't ever go off with strangers again, even if it's Uncle Quinton."

Carmen pouted. "Okay."

But Uncle Quinton is a nice person...

At midnight, someone made a sudden visit to see Quinton.

"Linus? What are you doing here? Are you here to seek revenge for your dear sister?" Quinton mocked as soon as he saw Linus walk in. "Between the both of us, I know everything that you've done. Who would have thought that she was your biological sister? Let me guess. You must feel both remorse and resentment. Are you afraid that she will distance herself from you once she finds out your true nature?"

Linus watched him in silence.

When Quinton finished ridiculing him, he asked, "Why did you come back this time?"

Quinton was still indifferent. "Nothing really. I just wanted to spend the New Year's here, and see Carmen and your sister while I'm at it."

Letting out a scoff, Linus stood up and walked toward Linus. With a piece of bulletproof glass between them, they locked eyes with each other and stayed that way for a long time, each seemingly analyzing the other's intention with their gaze.

Alas, Quinton spoke first. "Stop looking. Even if you keep staring at me, I won't like you. I only like your sister."

Linus shook his head helplessly and lectured, "Stop pretending, Quinton. You know that you don't have much time left. You were injected with an excessive amount of stimulants. These stimulants were never developed successfully, and they have strong side effects. Right now, the side effects are slowly showing up. Your body has started to deteriorate."

Quinton continued to feign ignorance. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"When you came in, I ran some tests on your blood and examined your whole body. I'm also looking into the stimulants that you've been using. The exceptional abilities that you have are all because of the stimulants. The effects of the stimulants might be degenerating now, but the side effects are slowly starting to appear. Both Celie and Sophia lost their memories after you brainwashed them. Sophia is back to normal now, but Celie has the mental age of a toddler. That's because you only used the stimulants on Celie and not on Sophia. Celie ended up this way because of the side effects of the stimulants!"

Quinton fell silent. He was no longer sluggish like he was before, and there was even a bitter smile on his face.

Yes, he was already aware.

Those stimulants were developed decades ago in the Golden Triangle during Tanya's time. It fell into the Phantom Wolf's possession later and continued to undergo improvements. Ever since Quinton was a young boy, he had been subject to the administration of these stimulants to change his body. On top of the extreme training methods, he was able to develop superhuman strength and abilities that eventually made him the king of killers.

Nonetheless, it was not a fully-developed drug and was still being worked on. Both Quinton and Celine were simply lab mice. The side effects were something that had not been predicted.

Over the years, the effects of the stimulants had begun to wear off, and Quinton could feel the side effects slowly coming to the surface.

His intention for returning to Cethos this time was to observe Celine's condition as she also had those stimulants in her system.

"Are you saying my intelligence will slowly decline just like Celine's? Will I become a boy in a middle-aged man's body?" He quickly went back to his previous self and joked, "Well, that would be rather unsightly!"

With a stoic expression, Linus remarked, "Not necessarily. Each body reacts differently. I don't know what will happen to you, either. I came here today just to tell you that you brothers deserve to die."

All of a sudden, the look in his eyes turned cold and piercing almost as if he could freeze Quinton with his gaze. Through gritted teeth, he seethed, "At the end of your strife with your brother, the only person who will be sad is my sister. I want more than anything to be able to cut you two up into pieces right now and get rid of your existence in this world forever!"

Four years ago, Quinton stabbed Michael with a poisoned knife. The poison had traveled into his bone marrow and was impossible to treat. All they could do was try to prolong his life.

His death was not going to make Linus sad, but it would be worse than death for Sophia.

As Quinton looked at a capricious Linus, he seemed to have seen something funny and broke into a guffaw.

"Linus, don't forget who was the one that gave me money to let me experiment with those things! Your money funded those drugs! How many killers have I helped you raise over the years? Plus all those nonconformists that I helped you weed out! How did we do it? Wasn't it with the help of those viruses and stimulants? Why? After you went from being an adopted son to a biological son, and secured your position in the family, are you choosing to forget all the great things you did in the past? Linus Michel—" He pointed a finger at the glass at the same position as Linus' chest and sneered, "If she ever becomes sad one day, it will be on you too."

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Every word pierced through Linus' heart.

He's right. It will be on me too!

Because he wanted to kill someone he did not like without leaving a trace, he gave Quinton money to experiment on those drugs.

I'm an accomplice.

Falling into a deep silence, he turned around and left with haste.

“Don’t even think about leaving any time soon—not until I find a cure for Michael.”

Linus went back up the elevator. Once the doors shut, Quinton returned to a calm state and continued to sit there in a daze.

It was late in the night. Ever since Quinton showed up, aside from Carmen and Celine, no one else could really sleep.

Sophia went to bed with Carmen in her arms. Carmen thought that she had only gone out to play with Quinton today, but Sophia looked like she had been to hell. She was traumatized by the event and had nightmares all night long.

In her nightmare, she was sobbing in agony after someone took Carmen away, and Michael left her. When she woke up, she still felt unbearable pain in her chest.

Meanwhile, Carmen was sleeping soundly next to her and even kicking her legs.

Suddenly, Sophia noticed that Michael was not there. His side of the bed had gone cold.

“Hubby?”

Rubbing her eyes while sitting up in bed, she looked around and found him sitting on the sealed-off balcony.

It was currently 2 AM.

Very discreetly, she slipped out of bed and walked over to the balcony where Michael was drinking some wolfberry water.

When he saw that she had woken up, he asked, “What’s wrong?”

She buried herself in his embrace and hid her face in his chest. “I had a nightmare.”

Michael held her and murmured, “Dreams are always the opposite of reality. It’s okay.”

Hopefully...

There was nothing simple about Quinton's arrival this time. Something definitely happened. The anxiousness Michael felt was keeping him from falling asleep.

"Hubby." She grazed her hand over his chest and said coquettishly, "Am I a burden to you?"

He let out a dry chuckle. "Don't be absurd!"

Even without her, he and Quinton would still have this internal strife.

She was just a victim.

Cooper was so furious today that Michael did not dare to speak up.

He knew that Cooper was not mad that Quinton had kidnapped Carmen, but that Quinton had put Michael on his deathbed while the two were fighting. At the present moment, there was no progress at the labs in Africa. They had spent several years and underwent countless failures before finally conquering Virs-18.

It was the same in this case. They did not know how many failures they would have to go through before they would succeed in clearing the poison in Michael's body. They were even less sure of whether he could make it until then.

If Michael died, Cooper would not be sad—he would probably even catch a salamander to cook and celebrate—but Sophia and Carmen would be devastated.

Cooper would do anything to cross through space and time, and return to thirty years ago. I would hold Annabel back and protect my children, then kill Michael and Quinton on the spot.

His daughter was innocent. Ever since she was little, she had suffered through a lot. Now that she had finally stumbled upon her incompetent father, she also met a doomed fate with Michael.

Michael knew that he was dying, yet he still did not want to let Sophia go!

If Michael had let her go back then, the two could have lived as though they were strangers, and Sophia would not be sad over his death.

Michael also felt remorseful. If he had known that his body would deteriorate this much, he might have chosen not to cross paths with Sophia in the first place.

But, who had a say when it came to fate?

Cooper searched his own heart for answers. Can I really forget about Annabel?

Of course not!

...

Sophia noticed that the people at home were acting strange ever since Quinton arrived. She did not know what was wrong, but the atmosphere just did not feel right.

For example, Linus had not come over to eat in days.

At dinner that night, people were rather quiet. Once the meal was over, they went off to watch television. Since Linus did not show up, Sophia packed some food to bring to him in Villa No. 2.

In the basement, Linus was in a video conference with experts at the lab in Africa.

Linus had funded the research on the poison that was in Michael's body. Not only did he support it financially, but he also provided technical support.

When they were first studying this poison, they never thought that anyone could survive it. The fact that Michael was still alive was a miracle on its own.

Moreover, he did not ever think that this poison would end up being used on Michael.

"Linus, we need time. This task is too hurried," the experts on the other end of the call repeated for the umpteenth time.

Linus was losing patience, but he still stressed, "I know. I know. I just hope you can pick up the pace. I'll give you as much money as you need."

With that, he ended the video conference and flopped on the ground dispiritedly.

How did this happen?

All of a sudden, the doorbell rang. Through the surveillance camera, he saw Sophia standing outside with food in her hands. The frosty cold had turned her face bright red.

Composing himself again, he got up and went to let Sophia in.

As soon as she entered the living room and saw Linus, she spotted a difference in him.

“Ew! Why didn’t you shave, Linus?”

Reaching up to feel his chin, he realized that his stubble had grown all over. His beard started growing extremely fast over the past few years that even just a few days without shaving made him look like Tarzan.

He let out an awkward laugh, but Sophia did not mind. “Come and eat. I’m sure you haven’t eaten yet.”

Once she laid the dishes down on the table, the sweet aroma filled the entire dining room in an instant. Because Linus had been living off of meal replacements and biscuits over the past few days, he felt hungry immediately and began gobbling down the food.

Sophia sat and watched him at the side. She probably thought that he looked interesting with the beard.

He was eating under her watchful gaze, but when he thought about the consequences she would bear because of his wrongdoings, the food became harder to swallow.

Despite being born at the same time, Linus was lucky enough to have met Cooper earlier on, but it was not the case for Sophia.

Midway through, hot tears started to sting his eyes, and he embraced Sophia at once.

“I’m sorry... I’m sorry,” he apologized in a weak, tearful voice.

He wanted to apologize to her a thousand, or even ten thousand times over.

But, he knew that no matter how many times he apologized, she probably would never forgive him; he could not forgive himself either.

Sophia knew why he was apologizing. Michael once gave her a brief account of what had happened. He told her that Linus worked with Quinton and almost abducted her. Fortunately, he came around in time and helped to bring her home.

“Okay, okay, Linus. I forgive you. Hurry and eat your food!”

Suppressing the despair and pain he felt, he forced the food down his throat.

I will cure Michael, even if it costs me my life!