

Gu Lingfei 771

Chapter 771 | [Serenity & Zachary]

Besides the Hunt sisters and Sonny, Mrs. Stone also prepared a gift for Zachary.

Although it was not possible for him to become her son-in-law, her niece's husband was still her in-law, so she was feeling a little more generous and prepared a gift for Zachary too.

"Mom."

Elisa came down the stairs, dragging her luggage behind her.

Mrs. Stone hurriedly signaled for the butler to get out.

She stood up, walked towards her daughter, and said with a smile, "Why'd you take so long to pack?"

"I had to make sure I packed everything I needed to bring, you know. Where's Clive and the rest?"

"They haven't come down yet."

Elisa lifted her luggage and descended the final few steps of the stairs. Mrs. Stone took a few steps forward, wanting to help her bring it down, but Elisa would not let her.

"Mom, what did you ask the butler to do just now?"

"I prepared some gifts for Liberty and her sister and wanted him to help send them over."

Elisa hummed in acknowledgment, then said, "Liberty didn't want to come with us, or else we could have brought her and Sonny with us. Sigh... I'll have to go a long while without seeing Sonny again. Once we get back, Sonny will already be three years old."

"In a few more days, you'll be twenty-seven years old."

Mrs. Stone reminded her daughter.

Once the new year arrived, everyone's age would increase by one. The young would have grown up, while the old would have aged another year.

"Twenty-seven years old is still very young, Mom. Don't nag me to get married. I haven't found a suitable man for myself. There's no rush—I'll marry when I'm thirty. If a suitable person doesn't appear before then, then I just won't get married. I'll accompany you and Dad for the rest of my life."

Elisa Stone had very high standards. An ordinarily talented and handsome man was not enough for her.

Mrs. Stone said, "Oh, you. Don't be so picky. As long as he's gentle and can tolerate everything about you, it's fine if his family status isn't quite as high as ours."

"That won't do. If we're not of equal status and my in-laws try to leech off me and treat me like an ATM, what should I do then? Men with that sort of background are terrifying."

Mrs. Stone could not find the words to say in response.

In Wiltspoon, there were quite a few families of equal status to the Stones, but those families did not have sons of marriageable age. Most of them had already married or had a large age gap between them and Elisa.

Elisa was not interested in younger men.

Of course, the Yorks who were not in conflict with the Stones had a few suitable sons, but Elisa Stone had once been madly in love with Zachary and had even publicly confessed to and pursued him before. The sons of the York family deeply respected their eldest shoppingmode brother and cousin, so they definitely would not choose Elisa.

There was no other suitable option in Wiltspoon. If they turned their sights elsewhere, it would be too far. Elisa was Mrs. Stone's only daughter and could not bear for her daughter to marry far away from home.

"Mom, with our whole family traveling for the holidays, doesn't that mean we won't be able to meet Seren's husband? I really want to meet him though."

Mrs. Stone smiled and said, "We're all relatives now. Isn't it going to turn out the same whenever we meet him? If you want to meet him that badly, why don't you stay

home for the holidays while we go traveling? When the time comes, you can ask Seren to bring her husband to meet you. What do you think?"

Elisa immediately shook her head. "Forget it. There's no rush anyway. I need the break."

Traveling and seeing new sights to cheer herself up would make it easy to forget Zachary.

Now, when she thought about Zachary, she was not as frenzied as she was before.

Meanwhile, Serenity texted Zachary the moment she drove into her neighborhood.

When she stopped in front of the building she lived in, Zachary was already waiting downstairs.

Together with Jim.

"Seren."

Zachary stepped forward and after Serenity's car came to a complete stop, he chivalrously opened Serenity's car door for her. He was about to help her out when Serenity slapped his hand away.

"I'm not disabled nor am I old. I don't need your help to get out of the car."

Zachary said to her, "You're unhappy when your husband is trying to be thoughtful?"

Putting his arms around her and instead of just helping her out, he carried her from the car.

Serenity blushed.

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Her sister was right there, and so was Jim.

His romantic gesture made her a little... embarrassed.

The moment he carried her, Serenity got a whiff of that familiar scent on his body and could not resist touching his face.

Yeah, that still felt really good.

Zachary was speechless.

She said she did not want his thoughtfulness, but when he hugged her, she took the opportunity to take advantage of him.

Wait till night fell and she-

Zachary hurriedly stopped himself and halted that train of thought, lest he could not help himself.

After placing Serenity on the ground, Zachary went to carry Sonny from the car.

“Uncle Zak,” said Sonny in his childish voice. As Zachary reached out to hug the little guy, he jumped straight toward Zachary. Zachary reacted quickly and caught him easily before raising him high into the air.

Sonny burst into laughter.

After teasing Sonny a little more, Zachary put Sonny down and stopped playing with him. He asked, “Sonny, did you miss Uncle Zak?”

Sonny nodded. “Yeah.”

Zachary had a gentle expression on his face as he bent down to kiss Sonny on both his cheeks. “Uncle Zak missed Sonny a lot too.”

Once Liberty got out of the car, he greeted her as well.

Liberty responded with a smile.

“Ms. Hunt.”

Jim walked over and greeted Serenity.

She smiled and asked, “Are you guys not going home for the holidays?”

Most of the people in the neighborhood had returned to their parents’ homes for New Year. Only a minority had stayed in Wiltspoon.

Jim grinned sheepishly as he replied, “It’s expensive to go back. I can’t save up much in a year and once it’s New Year, I have to spend it all anyway. Every year, I’m left with pretty much nothing. So this year, I don’t plan to go back and spend it with my parents. I’m just going to transfer some money to them. That way, I’ll still have a little left.”

Still smiling, Serenity said, “That’s fair. Or you could also bring your parents over.”

A regular person would only be able to save a few thousand bucks at the end of the year. With all the expenses for the festive season, money would be spent in a flash. Celebrating Christmas and New Year was not cheap indeed.

After buying gifts for one's relatives, elders, and children, one also had to account for gatherings with friends and old classmates. Just like that, a person's money would soundlessly evaporate.

Some who had children who were still studying and had tuition fees that needed to be paid had to be extra cautious about their expenditures.

"They don't like it here. They said they're not familiar with the people nor the environment here with no one to talk to, so it's much more comfortable to stay where they are."

Serenity expressed her understanding.

"Ms. Hunt, Mr. York has asked me to help move the things from your car to his car. He said the two of you will be returning to the old residence for New Year."

Serenity looked toward Zachary. She did not have any particular disagreement with his arrangements.

Thus, Jim removed everything from Serenity's car and then moved them to Zachary's national MPV,

Some of the items were Liberty and Sonny's, so they remained in Serenity's car.

Jim was done with the moving in just a few minutes.

Once he was done, Zachary dug out his wallet from his pocket and opened it in front of Serenity. He took out a hundred bucks and handed it to Jim, saying, "Jim, this is the moving fee."

Jim accepted the hundred-dollar bill and smiled as he thanked Zachary. He then took out his own wallet and shoved the hundred dollars into it. He then said to Zachary and Serenity, "Mr. York, Ms. Hunt, if there's anything you need in the future, just give me a call. I can do anything as long as I'm paid for it."

Serenity chuckled. "Sure. I'll definitely give you a call if there's anything I need help with."

Jim swept a lightning-quick glance at Zachary and said, "Then I'll make a move. I'll be around the neighborhood to see if I can get some more business and earn a little more money to usher the new year."

Serenity nodded.

Jim walked away as if nothing was wrong..

Chapter 773 | [Serenity & Zachary]

Jim had only walked for a few minutes before he received a call from Zachary.

"Jim, come back. We need your help again to move stuff. This time, the things have to be moved to the eighth floor. There are quite a few things too, so the moving fee... Seren, how much should we give Jim?"

Zachary pulled the phone away as he asked Serenity.

Serenity looked at all the gifts her aunt had sent over. It was too much, even if half of them were her sister's. It would take some time for Jim to move all of them alone, so she said, "Ask Jim to come back first. He can take a look and name a price."

After dealing with him a few times, she felt she was now pretty familiar with Jim. It would be embarrassing if she gave him too little for the moving fee, but it would be a loss to give him too much as well, so she simply decided to get Jim to name a fee.

Jim looked like an honest and trustworthy person and did not seem like he would charge an astronomical amount.

“Alright. Jim, just come over first.”

“Sure!” Jim happily replied. He would be able to get a few hundred bucks allowance out of his boss once again!

Half an hour later.

“Seren, I haven’t eaten yet,” Zachary said as he closed the door.

After Jim finished moving the gifts into Serenity’s place, he sent Liberty and Sonny home and while at it, helped to move Liberty’s portion of gifts from Mrs. Stone up her apartment.

As for the moving fee, Zachary had paid for it in advance.

It was pretty good. Ever since Jim had come back from Annenburg with his boss, he had managed to earn quite a bit of allowance from him.

Serenity was still in the middle of organizing the gifts from her aunt when she heard him say that. She instinctively replied, “I haven’t eaten either. I trawled the supermarket for hours. Luckily, you came back, or else I’d be super tired after moving all those things upstairs.”

That was because she would not have thought of asking Jim for help.

If Jim could hear her thoughts, he would agree, “If the boss had not returned, he would not have been able to help either.”

“If you need help with anything in the future, just let Jim know. He’s reliable and he charges reasonably. He does everything competently, too. I’ll go make dinner.”

Zachary thought that his esteemed wife would cook a delicious meal for him upon his return from his business trip.

Now, seeing his wife busily organizing the things before her, he resigned himself to the kitchen.

As he did so, he took off his suit jacket and placed it on the sofa. He then unbuttoned the cuffs of his sleeves and rolled them up.

“You were wearing just a jacket and a shirt?”

Zachary’s movements paused and he said, “I don’t feel cold.”

“The weather gets colder and it rains more over the new year. It’s pretty cold out. You should wear a few more layers unless you still want to get jabbed with long needles every day. I won’t care then. I won’t say anything even if you go naked.”

Zachary was at a loss for words.

“I bought new clothes for you. They’ve already been dry-cleaned. They’re in your dresser.”

A smile spread across Zachary’s face immediately. “Seren, you’re so good to me.”

“If I go shopping with my sister and don’t buy at least a few sets of new clothes for you, she’ll nag me. In my sister’s eyes, you’re more favored than her own sister.”

Zachary walked over to Serenity and bent down. His handsome face approached hers and his warm lips covered hers.

Serenity instinctively pushed him away and chided him, “Be serious. Don’t just kiss me without warning.”

Just as she finished her sentence, she pulled him back and forwardly kissed his thin lips.

The difference was, this kiss was a little frenzied and dazed her, unconsciously making her craving more.

Her man did as she wished and picked her up to head into the bedroom.

“Zachary...”

“Call me Babe.”

Serenity laughed and sweetly called him “Babe”.

They did say absence makes the heart grow fonder.

The husband and wife proceeded to experience the frenzy of reunion.

In the end, the only person who came out of the room was Zachary.

He entered the kitchen in great spirits, humming as he began to prepare a sumptuous dinner for his beloved wife.

Chapter 774 | [Serenity & Zachary]

Zachary finished preparing dinner after two hours.

Looking at the table full of Serenity’s favorite food he had personally cooked, in a rare bout of whimsy, Zachary dug his phone out to take a photo of it and posted it on his social media.

Ever since his last post, his social media had once again gone on a long hiatus.

The moment the photo was posted, his friends and important clients not only speedily clicked like, they even left comments.

“Mr. York, can I still make it in time if I come over now?”

“Mr. York, I’m only just realizing that you’re actually really good at cooking.”

“Mr. York, hurry and send some over—I’ll help you finish it.”

“Mrs. York really is blessed. I’m so jealous! I slaved for you for so many years but I’ve never tasted a single bite of your cooking before.” This was a comment left by Josh.

After Zachary finished posting the photo to his social media, he put his phone back into his pocket and did not see his friends' likes and comments.

He returned to the bedroom.

Just then, Serenity had just finished bathing and exited the bathroom.

Seeing him enter, she muttered in discontent, "This is so unfair."

Zachary laughed and walked to her. He bent down slightly and whispered into her ear, "That's because you don't practice enough, so your stamina can't keep up. We can practice more from now on. You'll be able to keep up then."

He immediately received a pinch from his beloved wife in response.

"Ouch!"

Zachary exaggerated the pained expression on his handsome face as he cried out.

"Honey, that's attempted mariticide."

Serenity loosened her grip. "You sounded like a pig sent to the slaughter. In the past, you didn't even frown when I did the same thing. Does it hurt very badly? If it does, I'll let you pinch me back."

Zachary caressed her face dotingly and said, "How could I bring myself to do that? I'd much rather pamper you."

"Your words are as sweet as honey nowadays.

"In the past, trying to get you to speak was like getting blood from a stone."

Zachary saw that she had washed her hair and went to get the hair dryer. As he helped her dry her hair, he said, "Back then, it was just a marriage of convenience. Now, we really are husband and wife."

It was not the same anymore.

"Is dinner ready?"

"It's ready. Once I'm done drying your hair, we'll go have dinner. I made all your favorite foods."

Serenity felt all the tingly warmth in her heart.

When he cooked, everything he made was her favorites.

When she cooked, his favorites only made up half of the dishes, while the rest was her own favorites.

Indeed, he gave his all to her while she only gave him half.

Serenity realized that her love for Zachary was not as deep as his love for her and felt it was a little unfair toward him. She resolved to make it up to him in the future.

"There's so much food and all sorts of varieties too. Zachary, you haven't shown your full hand while cooking in the past, have you?" Serenity said as she took out her phone when they were at the dining table a few minutes later.

“I’m going to take a few photos to post on my social media and tempt everyone.”

Zachary watched her take the photos with fondness.

Serenity published the photos she took accompanied by the caption, “My husband’s cooking skill surprised me!”

Jasmine, who had been asked out to dinner by Josh, saw Serenity’s post and immediately passed her phone to Josh for him to see.

“What’s up?” Josh asked as he took the phone.

He was struck speechless the moment he saw Serenity’s post.

That couple’s posts one after another were basically a public display of affection, spreading the love for all to see. Was that not too much?!

Jasmine said, “I really didn’t expect the seemingly cold and aloof Zachary to be so good at cooking. He’s multi-talented and he’s so good to his wife. He’s a model husband! I have to admit I’m really envious seeing Serenity so happy.”

Chapter 775 | [Serenity & Zachary]

Jasmine looked at Josh as she said this.

Josh immediately began feeling immense pressure.

As he was bad at cooking, he had no way of presenting a table full of dishes that could rival a professional chef as Zachary had done.

In his heart, he griped about his good friend. He was so exceptional that he was about to thoroughly outshine all the other single upper-class men. It was not easy trying to get a wife.

“Ms. Sox will be very happy in the future too.”

Josh had no skill in cooking, but he felt that he would treat his wife very well. If something came out of his relationship with Jasmine, he would definitely ensure her happiness.

Jasmine laughed. “Who knows at present if they’ll be happy in the future? Love and marriage aren’t the same. Things can be super sweet while dating, but after marriage, everything returns to reality. Every single flaw a person deliberately hides while dating will be exposed without fail. A marriage will only last if they can tolerate each other to the end.

“Mr. Bucham, you can’t cook, can you?”

Josh replied honestly, “I’ve tried, but it wasn’t good. I could probably make

something edible at best. Jasmine, is your standard for a husband someone who has to be great at cooking and housework?”

He no longer called her “Ms. Sox”. He felt that after knowing each other for so long, continuing to address her that way seemed a little distant.

In the past, men always wanted a wife that was good at both housework and cooking. Was that now also the standard for women to choose their husbands?

It was all Zachary's fault for being outstanding. They were both men and came from upper-class families, so why was Zachary exceptional? He was pretty much an all-rounder.

Maybe it was just that Grandma May was too good at raising her kids and grandkids that they were all raised to be excellent in every aspect.

"Our family chef is pretty good," Josh added.

Jasmine picked up a bite of food and said, "I don't expect my future partner to be good at both housework and cooking. I just think that it's something everyone knows how to do, so after getting married, we could take turns cooking and I won't be so tired then."

"To me, husband and wife should be equals. I won't pamper my husband like he's a young lord of some sort. If my other half had any sort of chauvinistic ideals, I'd rather be single than serve him."

"We have a chef at home. There won't be any need for you to cook."

Jasmine was speechless for a moment. "Mr. Bucham, I never said I was going to marry you, so what do you having a chef at home have anything to do with me?"

Josh opened his mouth but remained silent, unable to reply.

After a moment, he said, "Jasmine, wait here for me. I'm going out for a bit."

Jasmine hummed in acknowledgment.

Josh had gone out to buy flowers.

Luckily, there was a florist nearby, and the boss of that florist was a local who was not in a hurry to close for the holidays, which was why he managed to buy a bouquet of roses in such a short amount of time.

Carrying the bouquet, Josh returned and walked straight toward Jasmine. He handed the flowers to her with his black eyes gazing straight at Jasmine. Earnestly, he said, "Jasmine, after getting to know you, I've come to like you more by the day. I feel like I've been single all this while because I've been waiting for you to come into my life. Would you be my girlfriend?"

Jasmine accepted the flowers, put them on the table, and said to him, "First, let's eat."

"If you don't give me an answer, I won't be able to stomach anything."

"If you can't stomach anything, there'll be more for me then."

Josh was struck silent.

Jasmine laughed when she saw his speechless expression. "Mr. Bucham, I don't dislike you, but if you're asking me to accept you right now and become your girlfriend, I don't feel comfortable with that. Maybe

we don't know each other well enough yet. I hope you can give me a bit more time to get to know you better before we define our relationship."

Out of countless blind dates, only Josh left a good impression on Jasmine. She did not run from it, but she could not bring herself to accept Josh right this moment.

She always felt that it was very unfair between her and Josh.

Chapter 776 | [Serenity & Zachary]

Based on the Bucham family's network, Josh was extremely clear about her entire family history stretching back eighteen generations. He even knew about how many children her grandmother had had and how many had survived to adulthood. She did not even know that.

She only knew her father had four siblings and thought her grandparents had only had five children.

Once, she had no idea what they had been talking about before that, but Josh mentioned her father had eight siblings. It was just that only five of them reached adulthood, while the remaining four had died when they were infants.

At the time, Jasmine was struck dumb.

She then returned home and asked her father, but he had no idea either. When she asked her grandmother about it, it was only then her grandmother admitted that that was the truth.

In the past, living standards were bad and many people had many children, but most had at least one child who passed away.

Her grandmother asked her how she knew about that.

It had been her first four children who passed away. The latter five survived and lived to become adults.

That was why even her father had not known he had lost four siblings before him.

This made Jasmine realize how much more powerful and terrifying than she had imagined the Buchams were.

Just as she had put it to Serenity, she was as plain as day to Josh—there were no secrets to speak of.

On the other hand, she knew absolutely nothing about Josh.

She not only felt it was unfair but also scared—scared of Josh and the Bucham family's power.

Thus, she liked Josh but did not dare immediately accept his suit. She thought, 'Let's get to know him a little better.'

Josh felt a little disappointed but was not discouraged. He said, "That's fine. I'll wait for you, no matter how long it takes. I'm willing to wait until you feel like you know me really well and you're willing to become my girlfriend. I'm even going to wait until you're willing to marry me and become my wife.

"But Jasmine, can you tell me why you're so against becoming my girlfriend right now? You could get to know me better during the dating stage too."

Jasmine was silent for a moment before she replied, “Mr. Bucham, I’m afraid of your family and its power. Buchams have always been mysterious and no one has ever really understood your family. You guys have always been able to dig out everything, whatever you guys want to know.

“Before we went on the blind date, you knew I was going, so you dug up everything you could on my family, didn’t you?”

“I feel like I have no secrets to speak of before you. I hope you can stop using your family’s influence and power again to watch me and that you can interact with me like a normal person. Let me have some freedom and some secrets of my own. And when you’re with me, you can just be Josh, and not Josh Bucham of the Bucham family. Can you do that?”

Josh was just the nephew of the head of the Bucham family and was already this formidable.

Would the heir of the Buchams not be even more terrifying?

Jasmine felt that whoever the heir fell for was extremely unfortunate.

No one wanted themselves to be completely exposed by someone else while they knew nothing about the other person.

Josh was silent..

He had only wanted to know more about her.

That was the only reason he used his family network to find out everything he could about her family.

This was the first time he had wanted to get close to a girl, after all. He had been more meticulous than when he helped Zachary look into something. He knew everything about Jasmine and her family, no matter big or small.

Normally, he would continue to pretend in front of Jasmine.

Unfortunately, he had loose lips and was a blabbermouth. Sometimes, he would only realize he had said something he should not have after saying it.

Maybe that was how he managed to make the sensitive Jasmine feel repulsed by him.

He knew it–Jasmine clearly did feel something for him too, so why was she unwilling to be his girlfriend? The reason turned out to be that he knew too much.

Chapter 777 | [Serenity & Zachary]

While Josh’s proposal had failed, elsewhere, Zachary and his wife were happily enjoying their honeymoon phase.

After dinner, Serenity sat on the sofa watching television as Zachary washed the dishes in the kitchen.

A life like this made Serenity feel very fulfilled and also blissful.

After sitting for a moment, she got up and walked to the kitchen. Leaning on the doorway, she watched Zachary wash the dishes.

“Don’t you want to watch TV anymore?”

Her stare was quickly noticed by Zachary. He turned his head to glance at her before he resumed washing the dishes.

“I don’t follow any dramas, and I don’t know which ones are good. I didn’t find any that I wanted to watch after flipping through the channels either. I feel like TV dramas aren’t as good as they used to be. The special effects are over the top. Maybe I’m just old, but anyway, I can’t bring myself to watch anything.”

Zachary laughed and said, “You’re so young, but you’re calling yourself old already. You normally come back late at night too, so where would you have found the time to follow any dramas?”

After a pause, he continued, “I don’t have time to watch TV and I don’t follow dramas either, but I trust your evaluation.”

“We have a film and television company under our group too. I wonder if you’d enjoy watching dramas from productions.”

“Forget it. I’m not interested. What if I get addicted to it and just start binging on dramas all day, every day, and give up on doing anything? I still have a lot of stock I haven’t used. I’m better off utilizing my time to make handicrafts and earn money than to watch dramas.”

Speaking of work, Serenity suddenly asked Zachary, “Zachary, your mother recommended that I take some etiquette classes before this. Should I? Does your mom think my conduct and manners aren’t good enough so that’s why she suggested that I learn some etiquette?”

Zachary arranged the washed dishes neatly and replied, “There’s no such thing. My mother is very satisfied with you. That day, she even wanted me to help out in the kitchen. She’s biased toward you. If she didn’t like you, she wouldn’t help you out like that.”

Even if his mother had a bit of dislike for Serenity, it would not affect him whatsoever. He was not a mommy’s boy.

“My mother felt that you had a pretty good disposition. If you took some etiquette lessons, it would only improve. There’s no other meaning to it. Of course, you should go only if you want to. Otherwise, no one would force you to. I think you’re pretty good as you are right now. I like you just the way you are.”

He had tried to change her, but that ended in a cold war between husband and wife.

Mrs. Lane had advised him not to try and change Serenity.

The reason being, the Serenity he liked was exactly the way she was right now. If he really managed to change Serenity into someone who only revolved around him, put him on a pedestal, and no longer had any opinions of her own, he would not like Serenity anymore.

Therefore, he gave up on trying to change her and wanted to keep her as she was.

Instead, in order to live a normal life as husband and wife with her, he kept doing things he had never done before and continuously grew out of his shortcomings.

“I don’t mind taking some lessons, but it’s very hard for me to find the time to do it.”

After having been dragged to upper-class gatherings by Jasmine previously, Serenity knew that her conduct and manners could not even be compared to those rich young ladies.

In the past, she had not cared, since she would never be part of the upper class in this lifetime. What was the point in mimicking the behaviors of those rich young ladies then?

After hearing her mother-in-law’s suggestion and seeing that her in-laws were all incredibly well-mannered, Serenity began to view the issue of etiquette seriously.

“You could take fewer online orders. You’d be able to make the time for etiquette lessons then.”

“So you do want me to take those classes, don’t you?”

Chapter 778 | [Serenity & Zachary]

Zachary finished wiping down the stove, washed the rag, and proceeded to wash his hands again. Then he turned to walk toward Serenity and stopped before her. His large hands cradled her face and pinched it lightly a few times before he said, smiling, “I told you, you should go only if you want to go. If you don’t, then you don’t. I don’t mind either way.”

Serenity grabbed his hand, walked to the balcony with him, and sat down on the swing. She leaned against his shoulder and together, they looked out at the city lights.

“When all the houses below are all lit up, the huge building opposite us goes all dark. They’ve all gone home for New Year’s.”

“Tomorrow morning, we’re going back to the old residence. I’ve already informed Nana and there’s already a room arranged for us to stay in.”

Zachary had his arm around her shoulders as their heads leaned against each other.

That moment was full of warmth and sweetness.

“Seren, our old York family residence is really old. I hope you won’t mind it when you’re there.”

“How old is it? Is it a clay tile house? Or is it a thatched cottage?”

Zachary laughed, “It’s not that bad. It’s just the old residence left behind by the York ancestors. Although it’s maintained yearly, we can’t deny it’s obviously an old place. And all of us live together there—I think I’ve mentioned it to you before.”

“How big is the old family residence?”

“Our ancestors started doing business in the 1900s and made a small fortune then, so the old residence spreads across quite a wide area. Back then, it was considered a luxurious place. Every family unit has its own wing, although it’s all connected. We go in and out through the main entrance.”

“Is it like a mansion?”

“Yeah.”

“Your old family residence was built in the 1900s and it’s still livable? It’s pretty well maintained then.”

Zachary chuckled. “You don’t think we’re very poor and that we don’t have money to build other houses, so that’s why everyone still lives in the old residence left behind by our ancestors?”

Since their grandparents’ generation, their family had moved out of Whitmore Mansion and built the Wildridge Manor. To the younger generation, Wildridge Manor was considered their old family residence, because all the cousins lived in their own villas and would only return to Wildridge Manor during the holidays.

“You could afford a villa and even paid for our current place in cash. How could you be so poor as to not have money to build another house? The older generation probably kept staying there for nostalgia’s sake.”

Zachary smiled. “My wife is so clever. That’s right. Especially Nana—when she married into the York family, she moved straight into Whitmore Mansion, so she was feeling sentimental about the place. She didn’t want to move out, so everyone could only accompany her and spend lots of money and labor every year to maintain the place to prevent it from collapsing.”

“The older generation is all like that,” Serenity expressed her understanding.

“Look, Nana came to live with us for only a few days before she ran back home. She’s not used to it.

“To us, living here is great, but Nana just feels that the old residence is better. One’s own shack is better than another’s mansion.”

Zachary scoffed internally. Nana only slunk back home early to avoid Mrs. Stone exposing their identities.

“Zachary, can we go for a walk? We’ve been married for a while now, but we’ve never held hands and strolled on the streets like other couples do. Most people have gone home for the holidays, so there should be much fewer people and cars on the streets now. It’ll be quiet, too.”

Zachary said fondly, “I’ll support you and be by your side no matter what you want to do.”

He got up, pulling her with him. “I’ll go get you a jacket from the room. The temperature drops at night. It’ll be cold.”

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Serenity nodded, and also reminded him, “You need to put your jacket on too. If you get sick, there are jabs waiting for you every day.”

Zachary was speechless for a moment. “With you constantly monitoring me like this every day, how could I dare let myself get sick?”

Those few days of daily injections were enough to strike fear into him for the rest of his life.

Zachary went back into the bedroom to get Serenity’s jacket and put on his jacket too.

After coming out of the room, they heard a phone ring. It was not Zachary’s phone but Serenity’s. He saw Serenity scoop her phone out and look at it for a long while before doubtfully picking up the call.

“Hello. May I know who this is?”

Zachary figured it was an unfamiliar number just by hearing her ask that question.

The person on the other side of the line did not speak right away.

Serenity asked again, “May I know who this is?”

“Serenity, it’s me.”

A familiar voice filtered through the phone and Serenity’s expression turned ugly as she was about to hang up immediately.

“Serenity, don’t hang up! I just want to talk to you for a bit. I’m not going to disturb you and go to see you. Serenity, I’m about to go mad because I haven’t been able to see you,”

Shawn Lowe begged over the phone, hoping Serenity would not hang up.

He endured it for a very long time mainly because he was afraid his mother would really act against Serenity in revenge, so he resisted the urge to see her even if he was going crazy from missing her. He had not dared go see Serenity at the bookshop nor call her because his mother had his phone tapped.

Right now, he had spent a big sum of money to bribe one of the bodyguards who were supposed to be watching him and borrowed the man’s phone to call Serenity.

It had been incredibly difficult to make this call.

Serenity hung up without another word.

Shawn Lowe had not appeared before her for a long time, nor had he called her. She knew this was all Jasmine’s effort. They thought this would make Shawn give up on her and start a new life.

Unexpectedly, Shaun called her.

“Who called?”

Zachary noticed her expression did not look good, and other than asking who the person on the line was, he did not say another word. He was curious.

As he draped his jacket over her shoulders, he asked, “Was it a crank call?”

“It was Shawn Lowe.”

It could be considered a crank call.

Zachary frowned.

Shawn Lowe still had not given up?

Mr. Lowe, Shawn’s father, had tried to meet him multiple times to discuss the halted cooperation between their companies. He had been too busy and had not met Mr. Lowe yet.

However, the discordance between York Corporation and Lowe Enterprise was clear for all to see.

Mr. Lowe was under immense pressure.

The conflict between Lowe Enterprise and York Corporation would not make the former collapse in the short term but would still incur losses. The shareholders of Lowe Enterprise had come looking for him one by one to ask him what the hell had happened.

Everything had been just fine, so how did they end up falling out with York Corporation?

What really made Mr. Lowe angry was their rivals taking advantage of this situation to make their move.

York Corporation put on a show of bluster to make it seem like the two groups had fallen out to become enemies, which placed overwhelming pressure on Lowe Enterprise, and with that their rivals would stir into action.

What Zachary was doing was essentially borrowing the hands of another to strike at them.

Zachary decided that once Serenity had fallen asleep, he would invite Mr. Lowe out to meet that very night and hint to him the real reason their companies were now in conflict.

Lowe Enterprise was truly in a sorry state at the moment. Zachary and Josh had wanted to continue, but Josh was pursuing Jasmine and Mrs. Lowe was Jasmine's aunt. They had a good relationship and if Zachary and Josh really drove Lowe Enterprise into bankruptcy and drowned in debt...

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Jasmine and Josh as a couple would probably be impossible then.

For the sake of Josh's love, they would leave Lowe Enterprise with a way out.

"He knows you're married and that our relationship is stable, but he's still bugging you. You even told me you guys were like siblings. If I hadn't been jealous and made a fuss, you probably still wouldn't know right now he'd long had romantic feelings for you."

Zachary cynically poked Serenity's forehead.

Serenity touched the place that had been poked and said in defense of her innocence, "I've known him since I was young and I watched him grow up. I always thought of him as my own little cousin. Who knew he would like me?"

"That's not my fault. I never provoked him in any way."

Serenity said as she hugged his arm and walked outside with him, further saying, "Doesn't him liking me prove that Nana has good taste and chosen a good wife for you?"

Zachary could not help but laugh. "Right, right. Nana has good taste and chose a good wife for me."

"That's right. I'm your good wife. With that bad temper of yours, only I can tolerate it. Any other woman would have raised hell a long time ago and given you the silent treatment to the end."

Zachary thought to himself that if it had been any other woman, he would not have gotten married.

“My beloved wife, you must continue to tolerate me then. We still have a long way to go in life.. I think I could live to a hundred. You’ll probably live to ninety–five, so you’ll have to keep tolerating me for another seventy years.”

Serenity looked at him, no longer leaning on him. “So you alone can live to a hundred, and there’ll be a five-year difference between our ages in the end?”

“I’m older than you by five years. I’ll be a hundred, you’ll be ninety–five. Alive, we’ll be together, and even in death, we’ll be together.”

Serenity was speechless.

What a selfish man he was.

Could she not live to the age of hundred and he to hundred and five then?

That way, they would both be centenarians.

On second thought, she would be content if she could live to ninety–five years old. She was not greedy. It would be remarkable if a person could even live to eighty.

“Zachary, how many admirers do you have?”

“I don’t know.”

“A countless number?”

“Only one has confessed to me before. Naturally, I rejected her. I really don’t know if there are any others. If they don’t say anything, how would I know?”

What Zachary said was the truth.

He really had no clue as to how many admirers he had.

Many people claimed he had countless admirers, but the only person who had confessed to him was Elisa Stone alone.

Maybe the others did not have the courage to do so.

“Is that admirer of yours still bugging you? I’ve never heard you mention it before.”

As the couple exited the elevator, Zachary naturally put his arm around her shoulders and said, “You’ve never asked. When it comes to this kind of thing, I won’t say a word if you don’t ask me lest you get jealous.”

“I wouldn’t get jealous. I’m not like you. You’re so narrow–minded and you’re always randomly getting jealous for no reason at all. Back then you even stubbornly said you’ve never been jealous and that you didn’t know what it felt like. Haha! You’ve got to eat your words now, huh? It looks to me like you’re full every day from the words you’ve eaten and that’s your own fault.”

Zachary leaned his head down and lightly bit at her cheek, with his gaze tender. He admitted, “I was stubborn. I fell for you long ago but wouldn’t admit it, and I was so jealous but I wouldn’t admit that

either. Because of you, I've done so many things I've never done before, and I've done so many things that backfired on myself.

"I think I'm almost about to be burnt to a crisp from all that."

Serenity thought of how awkward he was at the time and felt it was pretty funny.

Their relationship was considered the love-after-marriage sort and their feelings for each other were nurtured bit by bit. They had argued, given each other the silent treatment, and misunderstood each other. Luckily, they safely survived their relationship crises after communicating with each other and their marriage had not ended.

"Then, who's that admirer who confessed to you before?" Serenity asked, beaming with curiosity.