

An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 66 -

Chapter 66

Dustin had no interest in wealth or riches. But at the moment, he had a pressing need for rare herbs. The old drunkard's condition had gotten worse day by day. He might not even make it through the year. He needed to gather five types of rare herbs to be able to treat him.

"I am extremely fussy when it comes to herbs. Your collection might not necessarily be useful to me," Dustin voiced out.

"I can get you whatever herb you need!" Duane guaranteed immediately.

"Do you have the Gozoraberry?" Dustin queried.

"Uh... no." Duane shook his head.

"Flower of Crimson Gem?"

"I don't have that either."

"What about Cherusia?"

"Rhys, I've never even heard of these herbs you are naming." Duane's expression turned bitter.

"How about aged Panax root and ancient Heliotrope? I'm sure you've heard of those." Dustin's eyes narrowed.

"Yes, I've heard of those! I know those herbs!" Duane nodded. Those two herbs cost a king's ransom, but at least he's heard of them.

"And do you have them?" Dustin asked.

"I'm not sure about the ancient Heliotrope, but I can get you the aged Panax root. But it'll take a few days." Duane answered.

"Fine, then come back when you have them." Dustin said with a wave of his hand.

“Oh, come on, Rhys! My chest is aching so badly! I can’t stand it anymore! Please help me first! I promise I’ll

send the Panax root in a few days!” Duane lost his cool.

Dustin kept quiet and turned to look at Natasha beside him. He did not trust Duane. What if he went back on

his word once Dustin cured him?

“Natasha, please, persuade him. You know I never go back on my word. I always make good on my promises!”

Duane begged.

“Of course, Uncle Duane. I know that you never go back on a promise. But I think we can do better than just at Panax root,” Natasha bargained.

“What else do you need? I’ll try my best to get it.” Duane quickly got the picture. It was obvious that Natasha

was trying to raise the price now that they were in control. But he was in no position to haggle.

“Uncle Duane, I heard that you’ve got quite a number of properties in Swinton. Hillview Hotel, especially, is doing exceptionally well. Why don’t you give it to Dustin as a gift?” A vague smile crept up on Natasha’s face.

“What?” Duane’s lips twitched. Damn it! Hillview Hotel was his golden goose! If he were to sell it, he could

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easily get up to a billion dollars for it! This woman was demanding quite a lot!

“Are you unwilling to part with it?” Natasha raised a brow.

“Of course not! As long as Rhys will save me, a hotel means nothing to me!” Duane forced a smile. He had no other alternative than to comply with their demands.

“Dustin, seeing how Uncle Duane is being so nice, why don’t you help him this time?” Natasha turned to him

and winked.

“Alright, then.” Dustin nodded. He then pulled out a black pill and tossed it to Duane. “You’ll be fine after eating this.”

“What’s this?”

The pill looked too much like a turd. A frown formed on Duane’s face. Did he lose close to a billion dollars just

for this?

“If you do not believe me, you can opt not to eat it.” Dustin did not pressure him to consume the pill.

“Of course I do!” Steeling himself, Duane swallowed the pill. He had to try it to know if it worked.

The pill dissolved very quickly, and soon Duane felt a warm feeling spreading over his body. As the warmth spread out, the pain in his chest began to dissipate. In mere minutes, the sharp, agonizing pain miraculously disappeared altogether.

“It actually worked?” Duane was pleasantly surprised.

He patted himself all over to make sure that he was really alright. Finally, he heaved a long breath of relief.

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“So, Uncle Duane, what do you think of Dustin’s medical skills? Are you impressed?” Natasha asked with a smirk, evidently proud. After all, this was the man she had taken a liking to.

“Who knew that a single pill could work such wonders?” Duane’s eyes lit up as he said. “Rhys, may I know what this pill is? Can I have a few more? I’ll pay for it. Just name your price!”

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*This is Gemiphen. It’s a confidential prescription. And because the ingredients are too valuable, the pill that you just had was my only one,” Dustin replied, aloof.

“That’s okay, just sell me the prescription then.” Duane was not one to give up easily. He was a tycoon in the medical industry. He knew how immensely precious such miraculous medicines are. If he could manufacture them in bulk, he would have struck gold!

“I told you, the prescription is confidential. There’s no way I’m selling it.” Dustin stopped himself before he continued, “Of course, if you could find me another rare herb, I can give you the prescription for the Gemiphen. No charges.”

“Well...” Duane appeared reluctant. It was hard enough to get him the aged Panax root. How much harder would it be to get the ancient Heliotrope? As for the Gozoraberry, the flower of Crimson Gem, and the Cherusia, he had never even heard of them, much less know where to get them.

“There’s no rush, Uncle Duane. We can continue discussing this after we get the Panax root.” Natasha smiled

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she rubbed her stomach. “I’m suddenly feeling quite hungry, Uncle Duane. Why don’t we go for a meal at

Hillview Restaurant? You can also transfer the ownership of the hotel to Dustin while we’re there.”

Duane’s eyelid twitched. This was one impatient lady! Though it pained him to do so, there was nothing else

Duane could do other than agree. After all, he had made a promise, and he couldn’t very well go back on it. So, after some small talk, they made their way to Hillview Hotel.

Hillview Hotel was situated in an excellent location, right by Lake Vestine. It was famous for its rooftop restaurant, which was Hillview Restaurant. Because of its geographical advantage, it had an extraordinary view overlooking half of Swinton. The night view was particularly breathtaking. With exemplary service and exquisite food, it was no wonder that Hillview Restaurant was patronized by many of the rich and famous.

Furthermore, they only served VIPs, so regular folk were not allowed to set foot there.

Once they reached Hillview Restaurant, the three got a private room to themselves and ordered some of the signature dishes. They soon began to dig in.

Meanwhile, a Mercedes-Benz SUV stopped in front of the main entrance to Hillview Hotel. The car door

opened and Florence stepped out of the car.

“Matt, Hillview Restaurant is a wonderful place. Since you’ve helped us out so much, I’ll treat you to a nice dinner today. Dahlia will be here soon. She’s on her way. Let’s head in without her.” Florence led Matt and James into the hotel, but when they reached the highest floor, they were stopped by a waiter.

“I’m sorry, I’m afraid you can’t come in.”

“What? We’re not allowed to enter?” James glared at the waiter, displeased. “Do you know who we are? How

dare you stop me?”

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“You’re running a business here! Aren’t you supposed to serve guests? What do you mean we can’t go in? Who are you to look down on us?” Florence asked mastily.

They had anticipated having a good meal there, but they ended up being denied entry. Peeved was an understatement.

“My apologies, but we only serve VIPs,” the waiter answered respectfully.

“What’s so great about a VIP? We’ll just apply to be a VIP then!” Florence scoffed.

“May I please know if you’re applying for a regular VIP or a Deluxe VIP?” the waiter asked with a smile.

“Of course we’re going for the Deluxe VIP! Do we look like we can’t afford it?” James asked arrogantly as he lifted his chin.

“Yes, we only go for the best!” Florence whipped out her card.

Matt was watching them. She couldn’t afford to embarrass herself in his presence.

“Sure. You’ll have to put in a deposit of five million dollars for the Deluxe VIP.” The waiter was still smiling.

“What? Five million?”

Both Florence and James were bewildered when they heard what the waiter said. Florence, who had her card in her hand, immediately withdrew her hand.

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“Are you kidding me? Five million dollars for Deluxe VIP?” Astonishment was written all over James’ face.

“Exactly! This is daylight robbery!” Florence flew into a rage to cover up her embarrassment. She was lucky she drew her card back in time, or she would have maxed out on her card.

“These are rules set by our proprietor. If that’s too much for you, you can opt for the regular VIP.”

“And— how much would the regular VIP cost?” Florence probed.

“A deposit of one million dollars will make you a regular VIP.” the waiter informed them.

“One million? That’s not much better!” Florence frowned. “We’re just here for a meal. It won’t cost so much. Can’t you just let us in? I’ll make sure you get handsomely tipped!” Had she known that Hillview Restaurant charged such exorbitant prices, she would never have chosen to go there in the first place!

“I’m sorry, but we only serve VIPs.” The waiter put on a professional smile.

“Hey! Why are you so inflexible? Get me your manager! I’ll talk to him personally!” Florence could no longer hold in her temper.

“I’m sorry, but our manager is currently serving three other distinguished guests. I’m afraid he doesn’t have the time.” The waiter’s smile was slowly fading away.

“You!” Florence was exasperated.

“Mom, forget it. Why don’t we just go somewhere else?” James prompted. As lovely as Hillview Restaurant

was, it was way too pricey.

“We’re already here! We’ll make a joke of ourselves if we leave now!” Florence glared at him.

“Allow me, Mrs. Nicholson.”

Matt smiled as he stepped forward, gracefully producing a gold card and handing it to the waiter. “I am a Gold

VIP, so I get 20% off on all my spending here.”

“Gold VIP?” That gave Florence quite a shock. “How much did that cost you?”

“Not too much, just ten million dollars.” Matt smiled.

“Ten million?”

Florence and James’ eyes widened. Was he joking? Ten million dollars, not too much? They had thought that

they were pretty well off, but it seemed like they were nothing compared to Matt!

“Please step inside, honored guests!” In a flash, the waiter’s attitude changed and became exceedingly

welcoming after verifying that the card was valid.

“Shall we?” Matt gestured courteously for them to go first.

“Hmph! Bootlicker! My friend Matt here is a Gold VIP! See that?” James strutted in pompously after giving the

waiter a dirty look.

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Feeling very pleased, Florence sashayed in with her chest puffed up and head held high.

Just then, Dustin emerged from one of the private rooms. He had been on his way to the men’s room when he bumped into them.

“Rhys? What are you doing here?” James scowled at the sight of him. He was still very much hung up on being slapped a while back.

“If you can be here, then so can I,” Dustin answered coldly.

“Hah! What makes you think we’re on the same level? We are Gold VIPs here,” James declared snobbishly.

“That’s right! This place is exclusively for VIPS, requiring a deposit of one million dollars for even the most basic VIP. Can you afford that?” Florence remarked condescendingly.

“Indeed, I do not have a million dollars,” Dustin admitted. It was true that he did not have much. But it would

not be hard for him to get the money.

“Then what are you doing here if you do not have the money? Get out! Do not lower the standards here!” James’ expression was one of contempt.

“Exactly! Go look at yourself in the mirror! Who are you to appear in such a posh restaurant?” Florence

sniggered.

“Oi! You there! Come here and get this guy out! He’s ruining our appetite!” James waved a waiter over to kick Dustin out of the restaurant.

“I’m sorry, he is one of our guests too.” The waiter smiled apologetically.

“So what? We are Gold VIPs! Is he more distinguished than us? I am telling you to get rid of this person! This is an order!” James barked.

“Um...” The waiter looked uneasy.

“What? Are you going to disregard a Gold VIP? With such service, you better watch out. I have quite a mind to lodge a complaint against you!” Florence threatened.

“My apologies, but we do not have such rules here.” The waiter had his hands tied.

“Hmph! If you can’t make the call, get your manager here!”

“That’s right! Get the manager here! I’d like to see if he prioritizes this miserable man over his Gold VIPs!” Florence and James pressed unforgivably. They were making a big show out of having a Gold VIP card. Even the other diners were throwing them dirty looks.

Under their persistent demands, the waiter dared not say more and rushed off to get the manager.

“Mom, what are the both of you doing?” Dahlia called out as she arrived. She was surprised to see Dustin. Why are you here?”

“I’m here for a meal, of course. Why else?” Dustin shrugged.

“This is quite a pricey place for a meal,” Dahlia reminded him.

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“Oh, so you think I can’t afford to have a meal here too?” Dustin raised a brow

“I didn’t mean that...”

Just as

Dahlia was about to explain herself, the waiter rushed back with the manager.

“I’m the manager here. Is anything the matter?”

“So you’re the manager? Great! There’s a man who sneaked in. I’m ordering you to get him out of here immediately!” James was swollen with arrogance.

“Sir, you must be mistaken. We have very strict security here. No one is able to sneak in,” the manager explained.

“And I’m telling you, there is! I’m warning you, we are Gold VIPs! If you do not want trouble, you best do as I “say!”

“That’s right! He’s affecting me and seriously ruining my appetite. I don’t care what you say, just get him out of here!”

Florence and James were throwing their weight around, not bothering to play nice. 1

“Could you please let me know who you are referring to?” the manager inquired.

“It’s him!” James pointed at Dustin.

The manager’s expression clouded over when he saw that. “Excuse me, sir, please do not try to play the fool!”

“What? You’re defying me? We are Gold VIPs!” James glowered. He sounded like a broken tape recorder.

The manager simply scoffed at that. “It doesn’t matter if you’re a Gold VIP. Even if you were the President of Stonia himself, it wouldn’t matter. Because this man here is the owner of Hillview Restaurant!”

The whole room fell into a breathless silence.

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“What? He’s the owner?!” James was stunned by the twist in events. He could n’t believe his ears.

“You must be joking! How could he be the owner of this restaurant?” Florence exclaimed in disbelief.

“Why would it be impossible? I have never seen such arrogant and snobbish patrons as the two of you. How dare you try to make a scene here?” The restaurant manager replied in disgust.

Earlier, he had seen Duane, the preceding owner, handing over ownership of Hillview Hotel to Dustin in the private booth.

“This can’t be! Dustin is as poor as a church mouse. Where did he get the money to buy a restaurant?” Astonishment was written all over James’s face.

“That’s none of your business. The only thing you need to know now is that the restaurant belongs to me. I have the authority to kick you out instead,” Dustin answered calmly.

At this, the expressions on both their faces turned black with anger and humiliation. They had planned on upstaging Dustin by shoving their privilege as a Gold VIP into his face. Who would have thought that he was the owner of Hillview Hotel? What a disgrace!

“Mr. Rhys, should we remove these troublemakers from the restaurant?” The manager spoke up.

“No need for that. We should provide good service to our customers. Furthermore, they are still our privileged customers. Send them a bottle of red wine on the house,” Dustin replied.

“Very well, sir.” The manager nodded.

“What a showoff. Frankly, he only knows how to leech off women!”

“That’s right! He thinks that he is such a big shot when in fact, he is just a freeloader!”

Florence and James grumbled, cursing under their breath. They were not happy about how things turned out.

“Thanks for the offer. However, I would have to decline your gift,” Matt cut in suddenly. With a winsome smile on his face, he caught the attention of the other women around with his charm and attractive features.

Florence took this opportunity to boast. “Dustin! For your information, Matt is an overseas graduate. Not only is he from an elite family, but he is also extremely talented. He is better than you by leaps and bounds!”

“Precisely! With your measly net worth, you don’t even deserve to be his slave!” James chimed in.

The humiliation they faced just now was instantly forgotten with the support of Matt. What was the big deal? Dustin was only the owner of a restaurant. Moreover, it was not from his labor. In comparison to Matt’s noble

background, he was nothing!

“Florence, you are too kind. I was just lucky.” Matt brushed her praises off lightly. However, there was a cocky smile on his face.

“Look at that! See how courteous and gentlemanly he is. Between you and him, it’s like night and day!” Florence declared, gushing over Matt.

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By now, Dustin was done. Turning to leave, he replied calmly, “Please enjoy your time here. Excuse me as I have other obligations.”

“Wait a minute!” Dahlia caught up to him. “Is this restaurant really yours? Where did you get so much money

from?”

“I don’t have any money. The restaurant’s a gift from a friend,” Dustin answered.

“A friend? Don’t tell me it’s Natasha?” Dahlia continued with a frown on her face.

“You don’t need to know who it is. Instead, spend that energy on catching up with Matt over some wine. Isn’t

he your beloved senior?” Dustin huffed before striding away.

“You...” Dahlia clicked her tongue in annoyance. She was only treating Matt to a meal. Furthermore, her

brother and mother were present. Why was he being such a prick? Where was his gentlemanliness?

Returning to the private booth, Dustin seemed a little down. He couldn’t help but feel frustrated when he saw Dahlia and Matt standing side by side. Matt had the looks and the background. To top it off, they almost got together as a couple before this. It was easy to be suspicious of their relationship. Above all, Dahlia was being

extremely guarded. He couldn’t guess what was going through her mind at all.

“Mr. Rhys, what’s wrong? Your face has been downcast since you returned. Is something on your mind?” Natasha said, lightly teasing him.

“It’s nothing. I met up with some acquaintances outside.” Dustin forced a smile ..

“Acquaintance? Is it Dahlia?” Natasha’s ears pricked up.

“You’re right. It is her. Besides, there’s another guy named Matt Laney,” Dustin replied honestly.

“Matt Laney?” Natasha shot him a mischievous smile. “Mr. Rhys, you should stay away from this person!”

“Do you know him?” Dustin was a little surprised.

“Not personally, but I’ve heard of him.” Natasha took a sip of red wine and laughed. “Matt is notorious among the rich ladies. He is famous for being a real playboy. Not only does he have the looks and the personality, but he is also extremely generous with his money. Who wouldn’t like him?”

“What, are you also interested in him?” Dustin asked hesitantly.

“Of course not! He is not my type and is only good at leeching off women. Besides, with you around, who else

would I be interested in anyway?” Natasha winked at him playfully.

Seeing that Dustin was ignoring her advances, she continued with a charming smile. “To be fair, Matt is from

a family of aristocrats. However, his family’s Influence went down the drain recently, making him a broke aristocrat. Being brought up with a golden spoon, he had to find unscrupulous ways to maintain his lifestyle. Thus, he is now making a living off the support of rich older women. Many women have been blinded by his lies and lost all their wealth. His modus operandi is to use the wealth of his previous victim to gain the trust of his current target, and the cycle continues. Furthermore, he is meticulous in his deception. Many of his victims are still being strung along by his charms. If he has his sights set on your ex-wife, you must be very careful. In the end, she may not only lose her wealth, but her life may even be in danger!”

When Dustin heard about this, he frowned. “Who would have known that he is just a swindler!”

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“Anyway, you should have your guard up when dealing with people like him,” Natasha concluded.

“Thanks for the tip.” Dustin nodded thoughtfully.

“Mr. Rhys, you seem to be concerned about Dahlia. Could it be that you still have feelings for her?” The expression on Natasha’s face was a little dejected.

“No. Even though she is my ex-wife, I don’t wish for her to be hurt in any way.” Dustin shook his head.

“I hope that is true!” With a smirk, Natasha declared in a bossy tone, “Regardless, even if you still have feelings for Dahlia, I don’t mind having a fair fight with her. Once I have my eyes set on you, no one else can

come between us!”

With that, she pompously stuck her nose in the air.

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Seated by the window, Florence and James were still cursing Dustin.

“Who would have guessed that an incompetent oaf like Dustin could be the owner! What has our world come to?” James complained loudly.

“He is nothing but a leech! If it weren’t for Ms. Harmon’s recommendation, he would never have this opportunity!” Florence snarled.

James had a look of pure jealousy on his face. “That’s right! Once she loses interest in him, Dustin will be discarded like rubbish. Let’s see how arrogant he can be!”

“Nothing will come out of being a freeloader like Dustin. Conversely, Matt is the epitome of a real man. Not only is he young and talented, he is also an intellectual!” Florence praised Matt effusively.

“What a pity. Matt, if you hadn’t gone overseas for your studies, you would have been my brother-in-law by now!” James tried to butter Matt up.

“Absolutely! Just so you know, after you left for your studies, Dahlia has been pining after you for a long time!” Florence chimed in as well.

“Mom! Where did you get this idea?” Dahlia frowned in annoyance.

“I’m telling the truth! If it weren’t for Matt going overseas, you would never have married Dustin!” Florence said stubbornly.

Before Dahlia could retort, Matt cut in, “Alright, alright. Let bygones be bygones. We should have our meal before it gets cold. The food here is delicious.”

Florence and James shut up and tucked in voraciously.

“James and I are going down to get some groceries. The both of you can take your time.” In the middle of the meal, Florence stopped eating and gave James a knowing look.

“Oh, yes! I’ll accompany Mom.” James understood his assignment, and they left the table quickly.

Clearly, they were trying to give Dahlia and Matt some private time.

After Florence and James left, Matt spoke up, “Dahlia, I am very sorry for leaving you without any warning. It’s all my fault. Please give me a chance to redeem myself.”

“It’s all in the past now. You don’t have to be concerned,” Dahlia answered nonchalantly.

She had moved on from Matt long ago, so she couldn’t care less.

“That’s great. You have grown more mature since the last time we met.” Matt shot her a charming smile.

“Please excuse me, I need to go to the washroom.” Dahlia patted her lips gently and left the table as well.

Staring at her shapely figure, Matt gave an evil smirk. He took out a small packet of white powder, poured it into Dahlia’s wine, and swirled the glass.

Coincidentally, the restaurant’s manager witnessed everything Matt had done. Without further delay, he

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quickly went to Dustin’s booth and divulged Matt’s evil plan.

“He spiked her drink? Are you sure?” Dustin’s brows furrowed together when he heard this.

“Yes, I’m positive. I personally witnessed it!” the manager affirmed.

“Who would have expected that he revealed his true colors so quickly?” Natas ha narrowed her eyes.

Duane spoke up. "Dustin, you should not let this slide. Do you need me to teach him a lesson?"

"No, I will handle this myself." Dustin got up and left the booth immediately.

At that moment, Dahlia had returned from the washroom. Matt passed her the glass of wine. "Dahlia, this is a

token of my apology. Cheers!" Matt lifted his glass with a smile.

"Alright. After this drink, I need to go home as tomorrow will be a busy day at the office," Dahlia said with

"resignation.

"Sure, let's make a move after this." Matt did not pressure her further and downed his drink.

Just as Dahlia was about to take a sip, Dustin's voice stopped her.

"I would not drink that if I were you."

"What?"