

My Dreamy Old Husband Chapter 1036

At the mention of that period in their lives, Callum and Cade fell silent. There were too many incidents like that in their memories.

When they were born, Anna's position in the Yard Family was still insecure and many were out to kill the three of them.

"How did you make your choice, Mom?" Cade asked.

She smiled bitterly.

"They wanted me to choose one and they were going to kill the other. Even if I saved one of you, I would have spent the rest of my life in grief and self-blame for the death of the other! They wanted to torment me and make me feel like I was better off dead!"

That kind and gentle gaze suddenly turned icy. "My choice... *Tsk*. I didn't make a choice. Your father and I teamed up and shot the person who was going to kill you guys! Who were they to kill my child and make me suffer from the guilt afterward? They were the ones who deserved to die! Even if they were torn to pieces, they deserved it!"

Cade and Callum were shocked.

Anna glowered at the view before her. Hidden beneath that image of an honorable and delicate noble lady was a raging tyrannical soul.

Over the years, they killed countless relatives and children out of wedlock to secure the Yard Family for themselves. Their resolute mindset brought them to where they were today.

Standing on her thin diamond high heels, she slowly started to walk away. Before she left, she said, "I like that girl."

Callum and Cade looked at each other as Anna walked off.

What did that mean?

Was she going to let the child go?

Outside, Sophia hurriedly left the place with her people. The group of them were heading toward the parking lot.

*F*cking obsolete imperial family! They won't provide us with a ride now because the talks went completely south!*

Sophia had to walk from the Royal Garden all the way to the parking lot in her eight-centimeter high heels and even got lost along the way. Her tender feet were now rubbed raw.

Since Michael's identity was already exposed, he dropped the act and took off his sunglasses, revealing his handsome face. He carried Sophia on his back and the both of them slowly made their way back.

With her fair and slender arms wrapped around his neck, Sophia kept spitting criticisms next to his ear about the conversation that took place at the Royal Garden earlier. "I saw Anna at the Crimson House yesterday. I thought she was some kind of extraordinary figure, but I was wrong!"

"She wants me to trade the children!"

"I told her that in the future, the Ronney Group will only be able to rely on surrogate buyers to get their products into Cethos!"

"That obsolete imperial family; just because they have that dirty money on their hands, they think they can stick their noses up in the air! The estate we have in Northern Europe is way bigger than their whole palace!"

"The previous dynasty has already crumbled. This is a new era. If they want to silence me, I will stand up stronger and fill them with rage!"

"Did you see the place where they welcomed visitors? In a place like that, did they want me to bow my head before we started talking about business? Bah!"

Michael played along to appease her. "The Yards still believe they're an imperial family! They're such an embarrassment! It's time they got off their high horse! If the ruler wants the minister dead, then the minister will kill the ruler first!"

Michael was impressed by Sophia's courage to talk to the president of the Yard Group in that manner. If she had actually humiliated them, then the child would be in real danger.

But, on the other hand, it also put pressure on the Ronney Group. No one could mess around with the Fletchers' child so easily.

Now that the Fletcher Family was aware of the child's existence, they were going to do everything they could to bring her home.

They might not have as big a fortune as the Yards did, but they were not to be taken lightly either.

Sophia kept criticizing them the whole way. Once they reached the parking lot, however, they found Callum standing there with a child beside him.

Michael and Sophia turned serious when they saw the child. She quickly got off Michael's back and walked in Callum's direction.

Callum said, "We have rules in our family, and that is to not have a Fletcher work for us. So, you can take this child back."

Since finding out that a member of the Fletcher Family was in their domain, they did not want to keep her anymore.

After saying that, Callum headed into the car with an unsatisfied look.

As the car started to move, Callum lowered the car window all of a sudden and said to Sophia, "We might be an 'obsolete imperial family', but we're still an imperial family. If we want the minister dead, and the minister doesn't want to die, then we will have to personally kill them."

Sophia was lost for words.

Meanwhile, Michael was delighted. Who would have thought that Sophia's strategy would be so effective?

He hurried over to the child and kneeled. "Hello, are you Lola? I'm your uncle. You can call me Michael. I've been in films before."

Lola had the same cold expression as she did in the photograph. Currently, she had a numb and blank look on her face. Her eyes showed that she was on high alert toward every person in the world. She looked completely different from the easygoing child in the photographs that her adoptive parents had shown them.

She was missing for a month. Who knew what she could have gone through during this time?

Michael felt an ache in his chest. When he reached out to hold her hand, she quickly pushed him away and he spotted the bandage wrapped around her small hand. He figured that she must have gotten it after undergoing high-intensity training.

In a warm tone, Sophia coaxed, "It's okay, Lola. We will take you home. Okay?"

Eventually, she managed to get Lola into the car, but Lola still felt uneasy. She was on high alert throughout the car ride, keeping her eyes on everyone and not uttering a word.

Michael took a good look at the child. She was a mixed-race child who had already turned seven. Her eyes looked exactly the same as Celine's, but her temperament was more similar to her father's.

She grew up in an ordinary family and was completely oblivious about her birth parents' identities. She did not have a murderous look, but despite being unaware of who her parents were, she still seemed to stand out.

Michael let out a sigh of relief now that they had found the child, but he was quickly met with another obstacle.

Lola definitely had to go back to the Fletcher Family, but what would happen after that?

It was only a matter of time before Justin found out about his wife's child out of wedlock.

Moreover, her father was Blade, the most heinous killer!

Stanley and a bunch of Fletchers caused the death of her biological father in a gang fight. Her mother had no idea about her existence. If the other members of the family found out about her, how would they treat her?

Nonetheless, Quinton still believed that getting her back was better than anything else.

All that mattered was that she could return to the Fletcher Family.

They departed the following day and returned to the small town that Lola grew up in.

Noticing the familiar scenery outside the car window, Lola went from keeping silent to suddenly becoming excited and her stoic little face could not stop looking out.

When they finally arrived at their destination, that pleasant small home appeared before them. Lola raced out as soon as Michael opened the car door and spoke for the first time.

“Daddy! Mommy!”

Upon hearing her voice, her adoptive parents came out and were ecstatic to see her. While they hugged each other, Lola began to sob as she was finally able to let go of all the fear and desperation she felt.

Sophia could not hold back her tears either when she heard the little child’s cries.

It looked like she had lived a good life in this place. Sophia also wanted Lola to continue living here, but since her identity as Blade’s daughter had been exposed, those people could come back to take her again.

Blade killed many people in his lifetime and made countless enemies. Now that he was gone, his enemies would take revenge on Lola; leaving her here would put that family in danger.

But, seeing how happy Lola was, Sophia could not bear to tear them apart. Lola had spent seven years of her life here—this place was her home!

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“Let Lola stay here for the night with her family before we do anything else.” Michael did not really have a choice.

That night, Lola’s adoptive parents cordially invited Sophia and Michael to stay at their house, and they also prepared a big feast for them.

Lola looked a lot happier and was completely different from when they first found her. She had a smile on her stoic face as she played happily with her adoptive parents’ two children.

Sophia was leaning in Michael's embrace and admiring all of it.

This family of five looks so happy.

"Why are you so quiet?" Michael pulled her in gently and placed a kiss on her forehead.

She snuggled up to him and said, "I miss Carmen."

Holding her in his arms, he murmured, "We'll be home soon."

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The next day, Michael was about to take Lola away.

Her adoptive parents were reluctant, but they also understood the severity of the situation. They knew that they could not protect Lola. Moreover, they had two children of their own and did not dare to take the risk. The place that Lola would be taken to was a lot more well-off than they were. She was going to have a better life from now on, so they could only send off her while holding back tears.

Lola's sullen little face was covered in tears. She kept a tight grip on her adoptive father's hand and took one heavy step after the other. Her adoptive mother was busy telling Sophia about her daily routine and the like while Sophia nodded along as she took a mental note of everything.

The moment they had to part ways, Lola kept wailing and was not willing to leave. Her adoptive father sent their Golden Retriever along with her, so she would not be alone and afraid in a new environment. It would make her feel better to have a familiar pet with her.

However, Lola still did not want to go and remained crying at the front door. Biting the bullet, her adoptive parents shut the door and did not come back out again. She continued to stand there and cry. No matter who tried to coax her, she wouldn't move.

Michael, who was carrying Lola's suitcase, was also in a tough spot.

If it were possible, he also wanted Lola to stay here. Growing up in a family like that was a blessing. Unfortunately, she could not stay there because only the Fletchers could protect her.

Eventually, Sophia managed to coax Lola into the car, and they quickly drove off.

Once the car started to move, Sophia saw, from the rearview mirror, that Lola's adoptive parents had come out at some point and were watching them leave.

It had gotten very late when they returned to the hotel. As soon as the door opened, a little being flew out from inside and gripped onto Sophia's leg—it was the youngest Cethosian girl.

That was the first time Sophia had seen her act so clingy.

Sophia had named her 'Poppy'. When she picked her up, she heard her soft cries and consoled, "It's okay, good girl. Don't cry. I'm back now."

Poppy continued to cry. Afraid that she would get beaten up for being too loud, she said in a small voice, "I want my mommy."

When Sophia did not return last night, the children thought they were being sold off again. Now that she was back, those several pairs of eyes were trained on her.

Hearing the soft sobs, she couldn't help but think of Carmen. When she was caught by Katrina and dragged upstairs to be thrown down, she also spoke very timidly.

"Don't worry. I will take all of you to find your parents soon."

Upon returning, Sophia was busy comforting and holding the children. Michael brought Lola inside. She was cold and distant. Even though she knew that Michael was not a bad person, she still had her guard up.

Looking at the place filled with nine children and a Golden Retriever, Michael felt the hairs stand on the back of his neck but also felt like there was not much he could do about it.

Gosh, I almost went broke when we had a house full of fat orange cats. After we've barely managed to send away a good number of them, we have a house full of children now.

He prayed that Sophia would not end up adopting all of them as he would have to take responsibility for everything.

After thinking over it, Sophia decided to let the children get adopted locally into families of the same race as them. In the end, they were left with three Cethosian children whom they brought home with them to look for adoptive families in Cethos.

On the day that they left, Quinton sent them to the airport. He did not have a reason to return to Cethos anymore. He only went back last time because he heard the news about Blade's appearance and wanted to warn them.

He did not expect that it would drag into so many other problems. Fortunately, his deed was done now, and Lola had been found. It was also time for him to leave.

Quinton held Lola by the hand and sent her off into the plane. He was still feeling a bit reluctant.

He watched her board the plane and did not look away for a while.

Michael was holding the dog on a leash. Before he went in, he patted Quinton on the shoulder and said, "Goodbye. We will meet again someday."

Quinton waved at him casually, then saw them off into the plane. He kept watching until their plane disappeared in the sky.

Turning to leave, his eyes were filled with desolation.

If the Fletcher Family had known about his existence back then, they would have done everything to find him just like they did for Lola.

Sadly, that did not happen.

Old Master Fletcher was extremely happy that they found the child and was urging them to hurry home so that he could meet the child. Regardless, that was still a child of the Fletcher Family. No matter how evil her parents were, it had nothing to do with her.

They took the four children on board and headed back to Cethos. The first place they went to was the Edwards Residence. As soon as they entered, Carmen climbed out of the swimming pool and was dumbfounded by the sight of Sophia and the four children.

She ran to look for Cooper.

“Grandpa! Look! Daddy and Mommy secretly had so many little sisters when I wasn’t around!”

Cooper was sunbathing next to the swimming pool. He was in a pair of swimming trunks while his rather fit upper body was exposed. When he saw the children alongside Michael and Sophia, his brows pulled together tightly, especially when he spotted Lola.

He automatically looked at Justin.

Justin still did not know what was happening, but Celine seemed to have realized something. Her eyes were fixed on one of the children that Michael had brought home as though a strong presence was calling out to her. He had brought home a total of four children, but she could not stop looking at that one child in particular.

“Something feels strange...” Celine mumbled.

Michael could feel Celine’s gaze on them. He knew that she was looking at Lola. Even though they had not met before, Celine could still feel something toward her.

He still did not know how to introduce the child. Putting it aside for the time being, he first went to make arrangements for her room, meals, and the like. Lola was nervous to be in a new environment. She kept holding her Golden Retriever and did not take a step away from it.

These days, both Sarah and Sean were at the Edwards Residence recovering from their injuries, so the house was crowded with people. When they heard that Sophia had come home, everyone immediately came out to see her. She even called Nicole on the phone to come over and said she had some gifts for everyone.

Sophia started by giving out the local goods she bought from Ronney—some bags, jewelry, and other luxury goods. Those were the majority of items that were sold there locally.

After she finished giving out the local goods, she started giving out the children.

“Sarah, I bought this baby from Ronney City just for you! She’s a girl; obedient and pretty! She even looks like you! You should adopt her, then Sour Face will have a younger sister. If you end up having another daughter, then it will be perfect!”

“Nicole, you should adopt a child!”

“Sean, it doesn’t look like you’re planning to get married any time soon. Why don’t you adopt a child?”

Sarah held the baby girl that Sophia shoved at her and asked after some hesitation, “Is this also one of the ‘local goods’ that you bought in Ronney?”

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Local goods...

“I guess you can say that...”

Sophia looked distressed. She felt like she should just take in all those three children herself.

Since she bought them, she had to raise them no matter what.

Raising a child was a big deal and something that needed to be discussed at length. It was different from raising kittens or puppies that she could hand over to anyone she saw fit.

Harry and Sarah discussed for a bit, then decided to adopt Poppy who would become a younger sister and friend to Sour Face. He could also learn how to become a good older brother.

At the same time, Hale also adopted one of them. A long time ago, Gwen suffered an injury while working as a secret agent. She was lucky to have given birth to Ashton as the doctor made it clear that she could not bear any more children. Hale wanted to have a daughter and was thinking of going to Nicole’s orphanage to adopt a child, but now that Sophia had brought those children home, it seemed like fate.

On the other hand, Nicole decided not to adopt. She and Sam had already adopted three to four children from their own orphanage. Moreover, she was pregnant now and did not have the energy to adopt any more children.

Sean, too, adopted a girl. He was not planning on getting married, so it was nice for him to have a daughter. There would have been some issues in the adoption process, but Sophia had taken care of everything for him, and all he had to do was take the child home.

The girl he adopted was a bit over the age of three. She was naïve, slightly fearful of people, and quiet. Since he was currently still bedridden and recuperating at the Edwards Residence, Stanley carried the child to the front of his bed.

“Sweetie, I’m your papa now! I will protect you from now on,” Sean said gently as he looked at the child in Stanley’s arms.

The child had also gone through many hardships before coming here. It was fate that he stumbled upon her. He was going to raise her with utmost dedication.

The girl looked at him timidly and did not dare to make a sound, but he did not force her. She was a newcomer and needed time to get used to everything.

Unexpectedly, Stanley rebuked, “Why are you the father? Ever since we were little, I’ve always been the father, and you’ve always been the mother! I can’t accept this. I want to be the father, and you can be the mother. Isn’t that right, my little baby?”

Stanley was trying to get used to the fact that he was already a father. He could no longer go back to his old ways for he had his own family now too. He watched Sophia give birth to Carmen, and Sarah give birth to Ashton, but he was still a bachelor.

It was nice to have a child.

Stanley adored the child in his arms.

Sean did not refute his words. With a tender look in his eyes, he said, “We’re adults now. We can’t play house anymore and I can’t be the mother either. If she calls you papa, then she can call me daddy instead.”

The both of them also decided on a name for her—Maisie Mitchell. Since Sean adopted her under his name, she would take after his family name. She was Maisie for short.

Sophia had Carmen, Sasha had Ashton, and now they had Maisie. Maisie also seemed to enjoy eating cornmeal mush. When they got home, she finished a big bowl of refined and nutritious cornmeal mush, even licking the bowl clean.

“Come, Maisie. Let’s go and meet the other members of the family.”

“This is Judge, and this is Sunset. You can pat them on the head.”

Maisie knew that she was going into a new family, so she tried her best to get used to having two fathers.

The three children had now gone to their new families. Sophia was able to let out a sigh of relief. The only one left now is Lola.

Sophia and Michael brought her back to the Fletcher Residence stealthily without letting Justin find out.

He still did not know that the child was Celine’s.

Meanwhile, Old Master Fletcher absolutely adored the child and even gave her a name.

“She has nice features—even stronger than her mother’s. She’s going to become a public figure in the future. Why don’t we call her Lorelei? Lorelei Fletcher! That will be her name!”

Lola accepted her name with indifference and remained aloof and unresponsive.

After the meeting with Old Master Fletcher, Michael held Lorelei by the hand and brought her into the yard to look around. This would probably be her home from now on.

The both of them held onto each of Lola’s hands as they took her on a walk in the yard. They did not say a word—as though they each had something on their minds.

Alas, Sophia broke the silence.

“Hubby, I want—”

Michael’s steps stopped abruptly, and he finished her sentence for her.

"You want to adopt Lorelei."

She stuck her tongue out in a cheeky manner. Looks like he saw right through me.

From the moment she saw Lorelei, she had come up with the idea. It did not seem to make a lot of sense to let Celine and Justin raise her. They could raise her instead.

Michael stretched his hand out to caress her head. "I had the same thought."

He was also adopted into the Fletcher Family after both of his parents passed away. Even though Old Master Fletcher adored him, there were too many children in the family that they ended up competing against one another. A child's mind was sensitive, and they did not speak up even if they were suffering. That environment might not be the best for Lola.

He felt like keeping Lorelei by his side was the better option too. If he and Sophia could no longer have a second child of their own, then it would not be bad to have Lorelei.

Lorelei grew up overseas and did not know how to speak Cethosian. She did not know what Sophia and Michael were saying, but she did not like the place very much either. There were too many people. She only wanted to go home and be with her Golden Retriever.

Suddenly, they made a turn and a wide patch of green appeared in front of her along with a rhythmic and sonorous sound.

"One. Two. Three. Four. One, two, three, four!"

The military troops were training!

The energy in those shouts seemed to make even the ground shake.

Lorelei's eyes glimmered as she looked at the group of vigorous people.

When she started running toward the field, Michael and Sophia quickly chased after her.

Nathan was also undergoing summer military training at the Fletchers. He had spotted Sophia at the start. When the troops dispersed, he quickly ran over.

"Nate!"

Sophia happily went up to greet him.

It felt like he had grown taller in the few days that she did not see him.

Nathan had a cold expression on his face. After he saw Sophia, he immediately caught sight of Michael holding the hand of a little girl who also had the same cold expression.

The two people with similar-looking faces confronted each other.

Deep inside, he felt a strange sense of fear, but he did not know where it came from.

Michael introduced, "Nate, this is Lorelei; she's also a member of our family. We just found her and brought her back from abroad. She doesn't know how to speak Cethosian. Do look out for her in the future."

Nathan nodded. When the whistle sounded for them to assemble, he turned around and walked away to carry on with his training. Lorelei did not seem to want to leave as she watched them from the side. She looked like she was itching to join them and tried her best to pull Michael to walk over to that side.

Michael noticed and asked, "All the children in our family have to start training like this from a young age. Do you want to join them too, Lola?"

She nodded eagerly.

Seeing that earnest look in her eyes, Michael could only give Sophia a look of resignation. Sophia was slightly dejected, but she complied with it in the end.

He caressed Lorelei's head then said, "Go ahead."

As soon as he let go, she ran toward the Fletchers who were doing their summer military training and seemed desperate to join their troop.

Sophia knew that she would not be able to raise Lorelei, and that the Fletchers were the best option.

Looking at the lively Lorelei on the field like a fish that had returned to the water, Michael hugged a dejected Sophia and comforted, "It's okay. We will try our best to have another child. We will."

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Nonetheless, Michael was well aware of their situation. It would be very hard for them to conceive if they wanted a child.

Aside from Sophia, he also had a problem of his own.

That year, when Sophia got abducted by Quinton, he was stabbed by a killer with a poisoned knife. Even though he survived, there were some consequences.

But, since Sophia had returned, and Carmen was growing up healthily, what more could he ask for?

If they wanted a child, they could always adopt.

He did consider IVF treatments with Sophia, but it was too painful. How could he bear to let her suffer?

Moreover, they did not need to have a second child as Carmen was more than enough for them.

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After sending off all the four children they brought home, Sophia was pleased with herself and felt at ease. Although she did have some regret for not being able to adopt Lorelei, Lorelei was better-suited to live with the Fletchers—she belonged with them.

In the end, Lorelei returned to the Fletcher Residence and was adopted by Joel and Maddie. The Fletchers settled all her legal documents—citizenship, family registry, name change, school admissions, and so forth. Since it was summer break now, she was spending her days at home and training with Nathan.

Lorelei had her mother's vigorous energy that could tire out even a husky. She showed up on the field on time every day and exercised with the other Fletcher kids. It seemed like she was meant to be a soldier.

Her mother was certainly not ordinary, but her father also had an impressive background. Apparently, he was the descendant of an ancient European noble family and had come from generations of soldiers. Both of his parents were well-known figures in the military.

Unfortunately, he was abducted by a killer organization as a child. His family searched the whole world for him, but they could not find him. By the time they found him, he was already the most notorious cold-blooded killer, Blade.

There was no end to Blade's killings. He knew that he could not return to his family, so he kept straying off. His family was extremely disappointed in him, so they never crossed paths.

There were many children like Blade who were the descendants of soldiers and were, subsequently, abducted by killer organizations. Once they were all grown up, they would not usually return home.

Blade died at the hands of the Fletcher Family in Cethos. When the news reached Europe, his family secretly came to ask for the return of his body. They could not acknowledge him while he was alive and could only ask for his corpse when he died.

It was a pity that Lorelei had already been put in the Fletchers' family registry; they were not going to let her go. Left without a choice, Blade's family could only take Blade's body with them and leave.

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When their military training ended, Nathan would often bring Lorelei back to Sophia's to play.

It had gotten quite lively at the Edwards Residence in Riverdale. Sean and Sarah were recuperating there but had also brought along their whole family with them. With all the little children gathered together over summer break, the house looked like a kindergarten.

Amidst all of this, Sophia also miraculously secured a partnership with the Yard Family. The two families were going to produce a series of pet luxury goods and were currently in talks for their contract. Sales for the Dragon Eye mobile phones had also stabilized. Sophia was taking out time to spend with her child.

Meanwhile, the child that Hale adopted was named Audrey.

The four little girls and Lorelei could potentially take over the Edwards Residence together!

A few days before they teamed up, they almost rubbed the fur off all four of Sophia's orange cats.

The most playful sled dogs also had to bow down before Lorelei & Co. and trembled with fear when they heard them coming.

In the past, Sophia's orange cats, Cooper's black dog, and the huskies were known as the 'three devils' of the Edwards Residence.

Now, there was an additional devil. The four devils of the Edwards Residence could make their scalps tingle.

Michael felt like Sophia and her father had too much money to spend. Because she liked orange cats, she always kept dozens of them at home. Cooper liked black dogs, so he would also bring them home by the dozens.

Because of Corrado, all of Bubbles' and Snowball's offspring were born with black fur. They had black Samoyeds and black poodles. Before they even realized it, the Edwards Residence was filled with more than a dozen black dogs.

With so many of them, Cooper could not bother with names anymore and started to call them Blackie #1, Blackie #2, Blackie #3, Blackie #4, all the way to Blackie #19.

These days, Michael was living with Sophia illegally and had even nearly moved in his entire house. Therefore, the Edwards Residence was getting expanded. Sophia wanted to build a place just for Michael to live in. For the time being, he set up an office in that small house of hers and went in and out of the Edwards Residence as he pleased. Every time he saw Cooper's black dogs, he had an affectionate look on his face.

Today, Danny, Michael's assistant from his film crew, came over once again.

The moment he entered the Edwards Residence, he saw Blackie #4.

Whenever Danny showed up, it meant that Michael was going away for a movie shoot again. The film crew was starting to pester him, so he had to get going.

He had packed everything and was getting ready to leave while Sophia sent him off reluctantly.

"I'll be back in a month which just so happens to be in September. I'll accompany Carmen to film 'Where Are We Going, Dad?' when the time comes. Carmen's mom, I'll leave her in your care for now."

Before he left, Michael went on and on about Carmen. He also urged Sophia to wait for his return and not get lured by some strange casanova.

Being in his forties now, he was feeling a bit anxious.

If someone really came and took Sophia away one day, and he lost his fair, rich, and beautiful wife, and his adorable and loveable daughter, then he would lose everything.

Linus spent all day at home today. No one seemed to have seen him, but he kept watch in the dark.

He watched Michael leave in silence. His eyes were cold and unenthusiastic, but on the inside, he was going through a violent struggle.

Once Michael was gone and Sophia came back out from the parking lot with Carmen's little hand in hers, he still remained standing where he was as though he had something to say but did not have the courage to.

At some point, Cooper arrived behind Linus and patted him on the shoulder with his big hand.

"Have some courage, Linus. I will help you with this."

Even though he received Cooper's support, he was still timid and unsure of how to start.

"Cooper, I..." he hesitated.

Cooper patted him on the shoulder a few more times. "Don't be nervous. She will agree for sure."

Picking up his courage, Linus took a deep breath and walked straight to Sophia.

Sophia came home with Carmen's small hand in hers. Carmen could not rest for even a second. Once her father left, she acted up again and got up to mischief with Lorelei & Co.

She walked toward him and noticed a desperate look on his face. "Uncle Linus, what's wrong?"

He hesitated for a long while before he said, "Sophia, someone from my hometown came to visit me a few days ago. They were hoping that I could find a girl to marry within the Michel Family."

At that, Sophia suddenly recalled Linus' life. He was an adopted son. Even though his capabilities gained everyone's approval, blood relation and identity was still his weakness. If he did not have a solid identity, then he would not be able to inherit the position as family head.

Linus certainly did not want any obstacles in his way.

Marrying someone within the family and gaining the status of a son-in-law wasn't too bad.

Sophia was also happy for him. "You found someone suitable? Congratulations, Uncle Linus!"

He nodded and looked at her sternly. "Yes... that person is you."

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Thinking that she had heard wrongly, Sophia simply laughed it off. "Uncle Linus, you must be mistaken. How can I be that person? You're my uncle!"

He wants to marry me? This must be a joke. Not to mention, he's bisexual. I heard he has a bunch of ex-boyfriends.

She had even seen drawings in Sarah's pornography book of him doing various unimaginable things as the main lead like doing explicit things with an anthropomorphic Lucky.

Sarah called that "Cethos' Mutt Violating a North European Noble".

However, Linus was not joking. After hesitating briefly, he continued in a serious manner, "Sophia, you know I was adopted. In this family, it doesn't matter how much more capable and outstanding I become, as I won't be accepted by everyone. I need to marry a woman in the Michel Family and use my status as the Michel's son-in-law to gain a foothold in the family. I came to look for you because you don't have a foothold in the family yet either. If we get married, it will be beneficial for both of us."

When Sophia realized that Linus was not joking, she turned serious.

However, after hearing what he said, she also fell silent.

Getting married to Linus was unthinkable.

Linus went on, "You and Mike are divorced and won't be remarrying for the time being. We can get married now, and if you want to remarry him in the future, we will get a divorce right away. Through this marriage, I can at least become a true member of the Michel Family. It won't affect your remarriage with Mike. I've been wanting to let you take over some business here, but the board of directors still doesn't have an accurate evaluation of your capabilities yet, so it couldn't happen. If you marry me, you will be able to take over as soon as possible."

When he finished talking, he fell silent and lowered his head as though he was afraid to look at Sophia.

She was also serious and extremely hesitant. Lifting her heels, she started to walk toward the garden.

She had designed the garden herself and filled it with all her favorite flowers. Currently, they were all in full bloom, making the garden look like a dreamy labyrinth.

Walking inside, she went to sit down on the swing that was made of rattan.

She understood Linus' intentions, and she knew that their marriage would not be for love, but for mutual benefit.

Even though she was approved by the Michel Family, her position was merely a symbolic family head. She was an honorable daughter in the family, but they only showed her respect because of her father. Her capabilities had yet to be recognized by the family. Hence, she was unable to take over any responsibilities at the company for now.

On the other hand, Linus was recognized for his capabilities, but he was also an adopted son. Cooper had already broken the rules when he adopted Linus back then. All these years, Linus tried hard to live up to Cooper's expectations, but it did not change the fact that he was not a Michel and was discriminated against within the family.

If they could put up a fake marriage, then Linus would gain the approval of the family, and Sophia would gain some power. They were not related by blood, so there was no issue with them getting married.

Moreover, she and Michael were divorced now. A fake marriage would not be a big deal.

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As the Edwards Residence was being expanded, Sophia tore down some of the houses surrounding them. She calculated the price of the land and compensated the original house owners. On average, each of them received around two to three million. She also subsidized an extra amount according to the number of households with a standard of 100,000 for every household.

In order to get more money from Sophia, the married couples who used to live in those torn-down houses got divorced and were able to get compensated 100,000 each, since a married couple only counted as one household. Instead of 100,000, Sophia had to pay double now.

Once they got the money, they got remarried, and the extra 100,000 was treated as extra income.

Perhaps marriage was not meant to be that strict, especially when it involved a great benefit. After all, a marriage certificate was just a piece of paper worth nine dollars.

Linus wanted to use this marriage to gain more approval, and Sophia wanted to use this marriage to gain more time and opportunity for herself and Michael.

She had already taken over the standard Dragon Eye mobile phone business. It was a step closer to success. If she married Linus, then she could easily step through that big door that she had been looking forward to!

However, she remained hesitant and eventually said, "I can't make a decision yet. Let me think about it. I will give you an answer tomorrow."

He gladly agreed.

That night, Sophia went to Cooper to ask for his opinion, and he gave his approval right away. He even advised, "Getting married to Linus will enable you to get more involved in the family business sooner. After all, you're not planning on remarrying Michael any time soon."

"Linus lacks status in the family, but he has status in the company. Whereas you have status in the family but lack status in the company. The both of you can be of help to each other. Besides, it's a fake marriage; no more than a formal procedure. I am quite fond of Linus as well. Even though I've always been rooting for him, blood runs deep in the family. I planned to find someone within the family for Linus to marry when he came of age, but it's been dragged out until now. To get recognized by the family, he has been down the wrong path before. He has suffered quite a bit over the years!"

Sophia was still hesitant, so she decided to give Michael a call. She needed to get his opinion on this sort of matter.

On the other side, Michael had just gotten off the plane and was probably on his way to the filming location in a mountainous region where the line was bad. If she did not call him now, then she might not be able to reach him anymore.

When he picked up, they exchanged greetings for a bit, then she prepared to tell him about her fake marriage with Linus.

She was decently keen to go ahead with the fake marriage. It was just a legal matter. When the opportunity came, she would divorce Linus and marry Michael again.

"Hubby, I think this fake marriage is worth considering. You and I can't keep living in ambiguity for the rest of our lives. If I marry Uncle Linus now, he will gain the family's

approval, and I can use this opportunity to take on more responsibilities in the business. Once I get more authority in internal family affairs, I can fight for us. Hubby, don't worry. Uncle Linus isn't straight!"

...

It felt like Sophia was talking to herself the whole time while Michael remained quiet on the other end, but she could still hear the heaviness in his breathing.

He will probably be quite resistant to this fake marriage.

After staying silent for a while, the familiar clear and robust voice came through the phone. "Sure. We had a fake divorce once. What's the big deal with a fake marriage?"

Letting out a sigh of relief, she did not think that Michael would agree so quickly. Nonetheless, he was a smart person and was able to see the underlying implications.

Meanwhile, in Linus' room, Lucky was sprawled on the ground and looking up at Linus who was on the phone by his desk.

He had a wired telephone hooked up to his computer and some software opened on his screen.

With a blank expression on his face, he said into the microphone, "I'm on my way to the filming location. The line might be bad."