

# Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

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"If Mommy ever comes back, will you love and protect her?" Robbie asked again.

"Of course I will," Zachary replied without hesitation. Then he asked curiously, "Why do you suddenly ask?"

"It's nothing," Robbie said shortly. He didn't want to tell Zachary anything without confirming it for himself first.

"All right. Wash your face and go down to see Great-grandpa. We'll eat together," Zachary concluded, patting Robbie's little head.

"OK," Robbie nodded obediently.

Zachary returned to his own room and changed his clothes, preparing to join his family for dinner. Just then, Ben appeared with the report: "Mr. Nacht, the hospital just notified us that Ms. Blackwood has woken up."

"OK," Zachary acknowledged. "We'll visit her later tonight."

When Robbie came to Henry's room, he found Henry sitting in a wheelchair, staring blankly out at the storm. He looked utterly forlorn.

"Mr. Robinson, be a good boy and bring this cup of hot tea over to your Great-grandpa," Spencer whispered placing a steaming cup in Robbie's hands.

"OK," Robbie said. He walked over to Henry, calling softly, "Great-grandpa!"

The old man remained motionless.

Robbie crossed over to his front, then repeated in a louder voice, "Great-grandpa!"

Henry finally came to his senses. His eyes fixed on Robbie, bewildered for a moment. Then Henry cried elatedly, embracing Robbie, "Robbie, why are you here?"

"To visit you," Robbie replied, handing Henry the cup of tea. "Drink this, Great-grandpa."

"Sure, sure." Henry was delighted. He took a big swig from the cup and exclaimed, "Wonderful, wonderful!"

"Great-grandpa, I was working on my mechanical dove today. It was rather urgent, so I may have been impolite to you. Don't be angry," Robbie apologized meekly.

"No..." Henry patted Robbie's head, looking at him fondly. "Robbie, you can tell me anything. If you're unhappy, let it out. You can argue or debate with Great-grandpa, no problem at all. Just don't keep it to yourself, OK?"

"Got it," Robbie replied gratefully. Great-grandpa's really so good to me. What more could I ask for?

"Let's have dinner together. Daddy's back. We can all eat together as a family," Robbie declared, tugging at Henry's frail hand.

"Sure, sure." Henry nodded.

"Great-grandpa!" A shout suddenly came from outside the room. Jamie and Ellie ran in right after.

The room suddenly grew vibrant from Jamie and Ellie's excited squabbling over who would get to talk to Great-grandpa first.

"It's time to eat! Mrs. Rawlston prepared lots of delicious things for us today."

"Daddy's even squeezed juice for us!"

"Ha, how hard is squeezing juice?" Henry replied, chuckling.

"Great-grandpa, let me give you a hand," Robbie announced, taking over the handles of the wheelchair.

"And I'll hold the cup for you!" Jamie added, grabbing the said item.

"I'll get your blanket!" Determined not to be outdone, Ellie fetched the blanket and covered Henry's legs with it.

The three children surrounded Henry, a perfect picture of a happy family. Time seemed to fall away, and the house reverberated with the warmth and good cheer of old.

"You're still so hungry for attention even at this age?" Zachary demanded. Even as he spoke, however, Zachary had already stepped forward and pulled out a chair. Henry was smoothly wheeled into his place.

"What nonsense are you saying?" Henry said reproachfully with a twinkle in his eye.

As Jamie moved to take his seat, Zachary instinctively lifted Jamie up into his chair. Bemused, Jamie remarked, "Daddy, I've grown up! I'm not a little boy anymore."

"You'll always be Daddy's little boy," Zachary said, patting the top of his little head. He moved on to Robbie.

"No need, Daddy! I can handle myself," Robbie said, hurriedly clambering onto his seat.

Zachary froze. Ellie, however, shimmied over and cried, "Daddy, pick me up! No matter how old I am, I'll always be your baby!"

"What a good child you are, Ellie!" Zachary turned to her, beaming.

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It had been a long time since the house had heard such joyful laughter, much less the jovial chatter that presided over dinner that evening.

For the past two years, whenever Henry came over, Zachary would excuse himself for work.

Robbie had likewise remained aloof and distant.

Jamie and Ellie were the only ones who'd consistently remained on good terms with Henry.

Over time, Henry had stopped visiting.

Henry had only flown all the way back from M Nation this time in order to celebrate Jamie and Ellie starting elementary school.

He'd spent even more effort this time getting to know the children and hoping to resolve the tension between himself and Robbie.

Henry had all but given it up for lost. He definitely hadn't anticipated that this night would come to pass.

He was thus overjoyed. Henry believed that his efforts had not been in vain. At the same time, he began to harbor hopes for the future.

It was Henry's wish that Zachary's marriage would stabilize while Henry was still alive. The three children would acknowledge Cynthia, and they'd all embark on their new life.

After dinner, when the three children had gone out to the garden, Henry turned to Zachary, saying, "Cynthia's awake. Come with me to visit her at the hospital later."

"I'll go. You've been up and about for the whole day. Rest at home," Zachary replied.

Zachary had no qualms about going but thought it rather awkward to be accompanied by Henry.

"That's fine too," Henry said, exhaling. He didn't want to seem too overbearing to Zachary so soon after the ice between them had thawed. "I'll accompany the children here. You go and visit Cynthia."

"OK." Zachary waved to the children and set off.

Along the way, Zachary received another call from Louis. Zachary grimaced when he saw the number flashing luminous across his phone but gritted his teeth and answered. "What is it now?"

"Zachary, I'm just about to meet Charlotte. I'm so nervous! What should I say if she asks me about what happened last night?" Louis' anxious voice came from the other end of the line.

Louis was like a bashful schoolboy who had never been in love, always running to Zachary for the slightest bit of advice.

"Do I have to teach you this as well?" Zachary was speechless. "Why don't you just make up an excuse?"

"I've thought of one. I'm going to say my friends brought me that and forced a woman onto me. I had no choice..." Louis rattled off his plan.

"Why are you still asking me then?" Zachary said curtly.

"But she asked me yesterday who had brought me there. Should I tell her the truth?" Louis asked cautiously.

So this was what Louis was leading up to.

"Up to you. You can tell her if you want," Zachary said easily.

"I'll be honest with her then," Louis decided. "When she was questioning me yesterday, I didn't think that it would be right to sell a brother out behind his back. I had to ask you first."

"So you're going sell me out in my face?" Zachary retorted.

"Uh... well..." Louis stammered.

"Fine, take care of it yourself," Zachary replied.

He hung up the phone. There was no discernible expression on his face to indicate that anything was wrong.

"Mr. Nacht, why didn't you ask Sir Louis to keep it a secret? If Ms. Lindberg finds out that you were the one who brought him there, won't she misunderstand you for a player?" Bruce broke in. His reservations were evident.

"She's already misunderstood me enough. Once more won't make a difference," Zachary scoffed. "Besides, even if Louis didn't tell her, don't you think Charlotte wouldn't have found out on her own?"

"She didn't get anything out of Sultry Night," Bruce said, pondering.

"I'm the only one that Louis knows in H City. Other than me, who would dare bring him to a nightclub? Who else would be able to persuade Sultry Night to cover up what happened in

the private room?" Zachary said evenly. "Charlotte's smart. She'd surely have thought of that."

"That's true," Bruce said, nodding. "But aren't you at all worried about Sir Louis and Ms. Lindberg's date tonight?"

"What's there to be worried about?" Zachary rejoined coolly, raising an eyebrow. "That woman's totally intolerant towards straying of any sort in her relationships. Even if I was the one who brought Louis there, Louis wouldn't have touched another woman if he had indeed resolved to be loyal. He succumbed to temptation and was ultimately caught by her. That has nothing to do with me."

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"I get it." Bruce nodded in realisation.

"I'm pretty surprised, though, that Charlotte was willing to meet Louis," Zachary remarked.

Zachary appeared nonchalant but was fretting inside. The Charlotte he knew two years ago had been an absolute fanatic about loyalty in a relationship, particularly that of the man's.

It was two years since, and Charlotte had evolved from an innocent, naive girl into a cold and haughty woman. Could that domineering woman still have the same outlook as the sweet girl of yesteryear? Zachary didn't dare to say for sure.

"Actually, the fact that Ms. Lindberg even agreed to meet with Sir Louis is proof enough that she doesn't love him," Bruce analyzed. "The more affection you feel for someone, the less accepting you'd be of such behavior. Do you think she really got over it within a day? She doesn't love him!"

"That makes sense," Zachary said with a sigh.

"But that's not to say that she still won't get together with him," Bruce continued. "Sir Louis is a member of F Nation's royalty. Lindberg Corporation has been cultivating close ties with F Nation. A marriage alliance for business relations isn't unheard of."

Zachary's face instantly grew dark.

"The Ms. Lindberg we see now is no longer the Ms. Windt we knew, but another person entirely," Bruce said, completely diffident to Zachary's growing displeasure. "Perhaps over time, love has taken a backseat to politics for her. It's very possible..."

"Shut up!" Zachary bellowed, cutting short Bruce's contemplations. He immediately picked up his phone and dialed Louis.

"Zachary?" Louis answered, puzzled.

"Where are you?" Zachary demanded in return.

"I'm at a restaurant here at South Sea, what's it called... Seacrest or something like that."

Just as Louis blurted out the name of the restaurant, Zachary hung up. Turning to his chauffeur, he commanded, "To Seacrest Restaurant."

"Sure," the chauffeur replied, immediately turning the car around.

"Uh..." Bruce faltered. "Mr. Nacht, are you..."

"You're right," Zachary said, narrowing his eyes. He fiddled with the wedding band on his left hand. "If she's really changed that drastically and is going to get together with Louis for a marriage of convenience, then where am I going to find a mother for the children?"

Bruce could not muster any response. He cursed himself for having said anything at all.

They'd promised Henry that they were going to the hospital and even confirmed it with the Blackwoods. However, they were now racing towards a seaside restaurant.

Old Mr. Nacht's going to be pissed! Bruce thought, wincing to himself.

Another thought followed quickly on the heels of that one.

Bruce suddenly remembered the warning that Henry had issued only that morning. He'd threatened to boot the next person who kept any secrets from him out of the Nacht family altogether.

Shuddering at the thought, Bruce quickly pointed out, "The Blackwoods are still waiting for us at the hospital. Besides, Henry has already ordered us to visit Ms. Blackwood at the hospital. If you suddenly change your mind, won't it..."

"We can go to the hospital later," Zachary said dismissively, glancing at his watch. "Tell them that we'll head over later."

"This..." Bruce was about to speak, then caught himself when Zachary turned an icy glare to him. Lowering his head in acquiescence, Bruce replied meekly, "All right, got it."

Bruce thus gave Taylor a call, citing urgent matters that were currently delaying them. Bruce reassured him that they would definitely be there later on.

Over the phone, Taylor concernedly told them not to worry. Zachary was to focus on his own matters first.

Bruce hung up the phone with a look of resignation on his face.

Zachary, meanwhile, was fixed on urging the chauffeur to drive as fast as he could.

"Sure," the chauffeur nodded. They flew towards Seacrest Restaurant.

In the meantime, Louis texted Zachary a string of several flustered texts.

Why did you call me just now?

You're not coming to look for me, are you?

You'd better not come to look for me! I'm on a date with Charlotte. Do not bother us!

She's here. I'm not going to reply anymore. Don't bother us!

Louis ended it off with a photo.

The restaurant was a cozy, intimate affair. Pink roses and heart-shaped balloons were scattered all around. Louis, in center stage, was decked out in a white tuxedo that made him look even more dashing and distinguished than usual.



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Louis was even smiling charmingly at the camera with that kind of smile that countless women would definitely fall for.

On the contrary, Zachary frowned, and his face darkened as he stared at the picture and asked Bruce, "Pffft... Just look at his face! He thinks he's so good-looking and all that, huh?"

Bruce was at a loss for words and looked at Zachary rather submissively. "Eh-hem... Are you jealous, Mr. Nacht? Might I remind you that he's your only friend?"

It was true that Zachary had been aloof and arrogant since young. His unapproachable temperament left him with very few friends, and because of that, Louis was his only true friend.

Louis was two years younger than Zachary. From an early age, he had been cautiously protected and unduly pampered. Hence, he grew up in a strict household, where there were all sorts of rules imposed on his life, studies, and even his social circles.

He was raised in the castle and seldom explored the world outside. Everyone he knew was but the noble and prominent men from the upper echelon of the society. Due to conflicts of interests, others from the royal family were somewhat scheming against him.

Apart from that, some businessmen were too mercenary and guileful, and Louis couldn't really associate with them.

Thus, Zachary was the only one whom he could actually confide in. Even though he appeared a little distant, he would never plot against Louis at the very least.

Besides, they were like the two poles in dualism. While one was reticent, another was expansive. They contrasted each other like ice and fire.

Nevertheless, contemporaneously, the glaring polarity between them was also complementary. Hence, by degrees, a seedling of friendship grew between them.

"And you, Mr. Nacht, are also his only friend," Bruce added.

Zachary frowned in bewilderment. "What do you mean by that?"

"The two of you always hang out with each other... It makes me wonder if you guys are, perhaps..."

"Bruce!" Zachary cut Bruce off and asked very solemnly, "Do you know why I've always arranged for you to work outside?"

"Is it because I'm not a smooth-talker like Ben?"

Bruce himself was also curious about this. He came to the Nacht family together with Ben, and both of them started working for Zachary ever since. Nevertheless, he was always stationed outside, and Ben always seemed to get to stay around Zachary.

He broke his back, but the outcome was often unenviable. On the other hand, Ben could please Zachary effortlessly.

In his opinion, Ben was always in the desired position, and if they were not brothers, he might have long been dissatisfied with such differential treatment.

"You're bullheaded and not versatile enough." Zachary eyed him detachedly. "Ben is much more agile than you."

"I get it now..." Bruce lowered his gloomed face.

"From now on, stay quiet and don't talk when you're not required to," Zachary ordered menacingly.

"Yes." Bruce lowered his head and went silent.

Soon, their car arrived at South Sea Restaurant.

From afar, Zachary could see the Rolls-Royce of the Lindberg family and the black Maybach, which he had lent Louis.

Getting off the car, Zachary walked toward the restaurant with his bodyguards.

One could hear a romantic piece played on the piano just outside the door, whereas the air was filled with fresh floral fragrance and a hint of sweetness.

As he walked into the restaurant, Zachary paused in his tracks when saw the scene in front of him.

At the piano by the window, Louis and Charlotte were having a piano duet. Together, they were performing Beethoven's fifth symphony – the Symphony of Fate.

Alongside their remarkable skills, they were so seamlessly and perfectly in sync that they sounded utterly flawless.

The waiters and other diners in the restaurant couldn't help fixating their eyes on the performing duo. Not only that, but some of them even started snapping photos to capture such a memorable moment...

On the other hand, Zachary was bitter as he looked at them detachedly.

It's just the piano...

What's so great about knowing how to play it?

I, too...

Fine, I can't!

Finally, when the piece ended, tumultuous applause flooded the restaurant.

Right then, some of the diners and waiters were engaged in exhilarated discussions.

"They must be some of the greatest pianists in the world. That was spectacular."

"That's right. It's just that we have totally no idea about their background. I don't think I've ever seen them covered by the media."

"A truly great maestro doesn't need any publicity."

“Not only their skills are phenomenal, but they both look like real-life characters from the fairytales – so beautiful and charming!”

“Exactly! What a perfect match!”

“Judging from the harmonious way they’re interacting with each other, they’re probably a couple!”

“I heard that these roses and balloons in the restaurant today were put up by this man. Maybe he’s planning for a proposal.”

“Wow, that’s great. Who would have thought that we would be able to witness such a beautiful love story today?”

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These utterances brought about an even sullen look on Zachary’s face. With his eyebrows closely knitted together, he strode over...

At that moment, the duo at the piano was smiling tenderly at each other.

Louis’ keen blue eyes were looking at Charlotte with a dotting gaze. On his face, his lips curved into a sweet half-moon which portrayed the gratification within his heart.

As with Charlotte, there was also a broad, genial smile on her face. The glint in her eyes was particularly gentle when she looked at Louis.

Side by side, they were sitting on the piano stool, looking so intimate and affectionate toward one another.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

Out of the blue, they heard someone rapping their knuckles on the piano.

Everyone in the restaurant shifted their gaze at this mysterious, arrogant, and indifferent dark-suited man.

There was inherent savagery emanating from him, which propelled others to stay away in fear.

Not only that but there was also a piercingly cold glint in his eyes. It was as though he was Lucifer who had risen from hell just to shatter the relationship between these two lovebirds.

In that instance, the dreamy atmosphere dissipated...

All the onlookers retreated timidly and didn't dare to get too close for fear of being involved in the forthcoming peril.

"Zachary?" Charlotte looked up and showed a long face as soon as she saw that it was him. "What are you doing here?"

"He- He's coming for me."

Louis didn't know the complicated relationship between Zachary and Charlotte and thought that Zachary had indeed come to the restaurant to look for him. Hence, he yanked Zachary to the side and spoke in a hushed voice, "Haven't I told you not to come? Why are you here?"

"I told you..." Zachary took a glance at Charlotte and reminded him in a solemn manner, "This woman is not a kind soul."

"Don't worry about me. I know what I'm doing." Louis sighed and elbowed Zachary anxiously. "Leave now. Otherwise, Charlotte would be chiding you. She already knew that it was you who brought me to Sultry Night last night."

"So what if she did?"

Zachary raised his eyebrows and stared at Charlotte dispassionately.

In return, Charlotte was also glaring bitterly at him.

The two of them regarded each other as enemies, and none of them would yield before the other did.

"I know you're doing this for me, and you've come to warn me because you're worried that I might be deceived..." Louis put his hand around Zachary's shoulder and added in a low

voice, "But I'm already a grown-up. I'm able to discern the difference between what is good and bad."

"You're too naive. You don't understand..." Zachary leaned over and whispered in Louis' ear, "Not only does this woman have a dangerous identity, but she's also sulky and violent. Plus, she keeps a wild animal as her pet. It's said to be an eagle which specifically feeds on men's eyes!"

"What?" Louis paled in an instant as he was terribly frightened. "It can't be."

Bruce, who was watching by the side, lamented in silence. Sir Louis is really a kind and simple soul! Meanwhile, Zachary was not relenting yet.

"Why not? Why don't you ask her yourself if you don't believe me?" Seeing that Louis started wavering, Zachary continued persuading him, "There's one more thing. I heard that she's sadomasochistic!"

"No!"

Louis' eyes widened in horror, and he turned around, taking a gander at Charlotte, and quickly turned back as he said hurriedly, "Where did you hear all these things? That's impossible! Charlotte is such a virtuous and impeccable girl. She's not that kind of person!"

"You're such a silly man. Why would she reveal this hidden side of her to you?"

"But..."

"Alright, let's cut this out." Not giving Louis the chance to say anything else, Zachary held his wrist and was about to take him away, "Come with me!"

"Hold on..."

Louis turned around to look at Charlotte and then at Zachary again. He was in two minds.

Right then, the onlookers couldn't stand by in silence anymore and started lamenting...

"My goodness. All this while I was under the impression that this blue-eyed handsome was a couple with the lady. And it turns out—"

"I thought this fine young man in the dark suit was here for the girl. Who would have expected he's actually here for the guy!"

"I know!"

"You people are way too conservative. I've seen it coming. This is true love!" A pretty young girl in the crowd rolled her eyes and continued with a smug on her face, "These two handsomes are a glaring contrast which also complements one another. They're like yin and yang – one is stand-offish when the other is amiable. They are a truly perfect match together!"