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Listening to these tittle-tattles rendered Bruce in relief. I told you so.

These two men are more like a couple than Louis and Charlotte.

Zachary glowered upon hearing the whisperings. This gossip happened to back Bruce's suggestive remark earlier.

"Goodness! What are they talking about?" Louis was so embarrassed that his cheeks flushed. "They actually thought that you and I..."

He pointed at Zachary and then at himself. Right after that, he covered his face bashfully.

Zachary couldn't help but roll his eyes. Ugh... this is just great. How typical of you to use such exaggerated body language.

"Louis!" Charlotte called out.

"Here!" Louis was just about to rush to her side, but Zachary held him back. Tense, Louis tried to push Zachary away. "Hey, let go of me. Everyone is thinking that there's something fishy going on between the two of us, and yet, you're still holding my hand. We're never going to be able to clarify this."

"You trust her instead of me?" Zachary asked with his furrowed eyebrows.

"No..." Louis was hesitant to make a choice, so he returned, "Well, you can stay and dine with us. Whatever there is, let's leave it until after the meal, alright?"

"Okay!" Zachary released his grip on Louis.

The three of them took their seats, with Zachary and Louis sitting on one side while Charlotte sat on the other side.

The restaurant was still abuzz with the murmurs and chatters of the onlookers.

Tentatively, Louis asked, "Charlotte, can I sit with you?"

"Sure." Charlotte agreed heartily.

Immediately, Louis changed his seat to the other side and sat next to Charlotte.

His movement was so swift that it seemed like he was running away from some sort of threat.

Meanwhile, Zachary shot him daggers and took the menu handed over by the restaurant manager. He quickly ordered a bottle of wine and then passed the menu to Louis.

"I've pre-ordered the meals for Charlotte and myself." Louis added as he took the menu over, "Are you sure you don't want anything?"

"I've had dinner." Zachary raised his glass and took a sip.

"Then why are you here?" Charlotte raised her eyebrows and glared at Zachary surlily.

Zachary shot an indifferent glance at her but didn't say anything.

"Charlotte, don't be like that..." Louis quickly defended Zachary, "Zachary is my best friend!"

"Then what about me?" Charlotte asked purposefully.

"You..." Louis was a little nervous as he continued, "You're my favorite girl."

"I see!" Charlotte raised a glass of red wine and asked Louis, "If this were a glass of poison and in between him and me, one of us had to drink it so that the other could survive, how would you decide?"

"I..." Louis was in a distressing predicament and couldn't make a choice.

Right then, Zachary took the glass from Charlotte directly and downed everything in one gulp.

Both Charlotte and Louis were utterly stunned.

Charlotte's expression turned inexplicably complicated, and she frowned, glancing at Zachary...

Louis was astounded at first, and then, he was sensibly touched.

Zachary put down the glass and looked up at Charlotte. "Are you satisfied now?"

"What do you mean?" Charlotte was plainly puzzled.

"I won't let you be in danger again..." Zachary splurted out, but he diverted hastily, "Women are made to be protected. Hence, it is men's duty to be gentlemen."

"That's right! Well said, Zachary!"

Louis couldn't stop complimenting him and cast him a grateful look in appreciation of Zachary giving him an out.

"You must understand that it was supposed to be a glass of poison. You'd die for taking it." Charlotte gave him a displeased stare. "Did you really pay attention to what I said?"

"Yes, I did." Zachary looked at her with a deep gaze and answered in an earnest manner, "I'd rather die myself than to let you die, okay?"

A sudden brief chill came over Charlotte, and for some reason, she was a little moved upon hearing those words.

It was as if she had been waiting a long time just to hear these words...

"Zachary, you..." Louis was baffled as he looked at Zachary. "Wh-What did you say?"

"That should solve your problem." Zachary was quick-witted as he added promptly, "So what do you think about this friend in me?"

"What a great friend you are!" Louis nodded his head repetitively.

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Looking deeply into Zachary's eyes, Charlotte understood perfectly that his words were clearly some fibs that a lecher would use to lure and woo girls...

But strangely, she was touched.

It was a weird feeling for her.

Zachary could feel Charlotte glancing at him, but he didn't turn to her. He continued savoring the wine in silence and engaged in a casual chat with Louis.

Meanwhile, Louis and Zachary had a lot in common, so the exchanges and interactions between them were frequent and relaxed.

Zachary was also much friendlier around Louis compared to how distant and overbearing he was in front of others.

As they chatted, a sumptuous dinner was served.

Charlotte ate in silence while Louis was taking care of her very considerately. Even so, she could feel that he was paying closer attention to his discussion with Zachary.

That made Charlotte rather speechless as she felt like she was unwelcomed at this dining table when the only person who was supposed to have this feeling was Zachary.

At the same time, other diners and waiters at the restaurant also started another round of hushed gossiping when they saw what happened at the table.

"See? Among them, he's really closer to the other man than the woman. Goodness, it looks like she's unwanted. How sad is that?"

"I know, right? I have a feeling that these two men are setting her up for a sham marriage. Ugh, how shameless!"

"Well, it's not really shamming though. That girl seems to know about their relationship..."

"Gosh! It's too tangled and complicated."

"I know..."

Surely, none of these subdued tattles were overheard by any of the persons in question. Instead, it was the bodyguards – Bruce, Lupine, and Morgan, who caught every word of the chitter-chatter distinctly.

Bruce didn't care as he was mentally tough and impervious. Besides, he knew the actual intention of Zachary so he wasn't affected at all.

However, the same could not be said about Lupine and Morgan. Both their faces flushed red with anger, and they were disgruntled for Charlotte.

Ring-Ring-

Zachary's phone chimed all of a sudden, and upon seeing the caller identification shown on the screen, he waved at Louis and Charlotte and went out to answer the call.

Finally, only Louis and Charlotte were left at the table.

Seeing as such, Louis quickly took out an exquisite gift box and handed it to Charlotte. "Charlotte, open it and see if you like it."

"Thank you." Charlotte took the box and lifted the lid. It was a sparkling diamond necklace. "It's beautiful. I like it very much. Thank you."

After that, she placed the lid back on the box, put it aside, and continued eating.

"You don't seem to like it." Louis glanced at her with a hesitant look. "Is it the diamond or the necklace? What is it that you don't like about it? I'll buy you something else next time."

"She just doesn't like you." A young good-looking man from the table next to them couldn't hold back his rage anymore and lashed out, "What a shameless person you are! Fooling with other girls when you already have a boyfriend."

As soon as others heard this, they started gesticulating again...

"You shouldn't hoodwink a young girl just because you're good-looking."

"Yes. That's immoral!"

Louis was notably dismayed and looked at them perplexedly as he hurriedly explained, "No, you've misunderstood..."

Unfortunately, his voice was soon drowned out by the chatters around.

Louis was on the brink of tears. If he had known things would turn out this way, he would have booked the entire restaurant.

He thought the more the merrier, and such a romantic and memorable moment between him and Charlotte should be blessed with a cheerful and lively atmosphere. Thus, he did not proceed with booking the entire restaurant. However, never would he have expected things to unfold into such a regrettable embarrassment.

At that moment, Charlotte restrained herself from laughing and asked Louis deliberately, "No wonder I've always thought there's something fishy between the two of you. Be honest and tell me. Are you two really in a relationship?"

"No, I swear." Louis raised his hand as he exclaimed, "Zachary and I are just friends. We're not in a relationship."

"Then why did you ask him to come?" Charlotte asked rather sullenly. "I thought it was only you and I."

"I really didn't invite him. He came on his own..." In a hurry, Louis blurted out, "He was afraid that I would be deceived, so he came to warn me."

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"Deceived? What do you mean by that?" Charlotte gave him a dubious look.

"Um..." It was only then that Louis realized that he had let it slip out, and all of a sudden, he was at a loss for words.

Right in that instance, Zachary came in from outside.

Louis uttered hastily, "Charlotte, we'll talk about that later."

Charlotte didn't press him, but the gaze she cast at Zachary turned even more piercing. This filthy man took Louis to Sultry Night on purpose and even slandered me in front of Louis, huh? I'll take care of this. Just you wait.

Earlier, Zachary received a call from Henry, who questioned why he wasn't accompanying Cynthia at the hospital and where he was.

Zachary told him that he had some business to deal with Louis and would be visiting Cynthia later.

As a result, Henry compelled him to be at the hospital before ten o'clock.

At that, Zachary agreed.

Looking at the time, it was already past nine o'clock, and it would take some time for him to get to the hospital. Hence, he was only left with around ten minutes before he had to leave.

"Zachary, your wine is ready. Let's taste it."

Louis felt guilty for letting it slipped earlier, so he tried to please Zachary.

The waiter had already poured half a glass of wine for him.

Zachary took a sip and returned placidly, "Not bad."

"Mr. Nacht, stalking is against the law. Are you aware of that?" Charlotte started suddenly.

"What?" Zachary squinted.

"Why? Do you want me to show you the evidence?" Charlotte scrolled for a picture on her phone. "Isn't this a gadget from your company?"

Zachary turned and saw two mechanical doves which had been blown up completely. Isn't that the prototype of Robbie's research project? How did it end up with her?

"It's been twice in a row that you infiltrated my house with this sort of inferior technological products to film and stalk me." Charlotte took her phone back and added detachedly, "I'm considering taking legal action against you."

"Stalking? Is that true?"

Louis looked at Zachary with an appalled expression. It seemed as though he didn't think that Zachary would actually commit such an act.

"Sue me then." Zachary didn't seem to be bothered. "I can sue you for trespassing and triggering your pet's prey drive to attack others. Oh, right, that pet eagle of yours is one of the nation's protected species of which breeding is prohibited!"

"Oh, what do you know? I've obtained a permit, and I'm a legal breeder." Charlotte glowered at him indifferently.

"Are you really keeping an eagle?" Louis paled upon listening to that.

"I do keep one," Charlotte answered placidly.

"[..."

"That eagle is predacious. Here's what it did to me."

Zachary raised his hand and showed the few deep scars on it which had yet to fully recover.

"My goodness, are these left by the eagle?" Louis was utterly perturbed. "Even a person like you have been hurt, let alone me..."

"That time at the forest near Ashenville Garden," Zachary looked at Charlotte indifferently as he continued, "if it wasn't for me, your pretty big eyes would have been long gone."

"I didn't ask you to save me." Charlotte returned crankily.

"Fine." Zachary nodded and solemnly warned, "Your pet eagle frightened my children at home today, and I have yet to settle this score with you. This is the first warning. If it happens again, I'll be sure to rid it of its feathers and braise it!"

"How dare you!" Charlotte raised an eyebrow.

"Try me." Zachary shot her daggers and rose from his seat to leave. "I'm leaving. Take care, Louis."

"Zachary, Zachary!" Louis called out to him.

But Zachary didn't respond.

Louis watched as Zachary's figure slowly disappeared from his sight, and he then turned to Charlotte agitatedly. "Charlotte, why are you keeping an eagle as your pet?"

"I like it, so I keep it," Charlotte replied coldly. "Is there any problem with that?"

"No..." Louis continued to look at her meekly. "I just think that an eagle is too ferocious, so I have a suggestion. Why don't you keep some other small pets? If you like birds, I'd recommend keeping a little parrot!"

A little parrot?

For some reason, those words sounded inexplicably cordial to Charlotte.

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"Charlotte, I've bought tickets for an opera. Shall we go see it together later?" Louis asked tentatively.

"I can't. I have other things to attend to." Feeling bored, Charlotte got up and left.

"Charlotte, Char-"

Watching as Charlotte left, Louis didn't feel reluctant; instead, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Looking down, there was a scar on the purlicue of his right palm.

It was a bite mark left by the pet snake kept by Danrique. He almost died then.

Hence, even until now, he was still terrified of feral wild animals.

Initially, he thought that Charlotte would be different from her brother, but he didn't expect that...

Thinking about ferocious beasts sent a chill down his spine.

At that time, Zachary was still driving on the road when a dash of silver darted forward at the speed of lightning by his car.

Eyeing the silver glint in front of him, his lips curled up into a half-smile.

"Is that someone from the Lindberg family?" Bruce saw the silver dash, and he was greatly astonished. "Such staggering driving skills!"

"Yeah," Zachary responded and then added, "Go after it."

"Yes." His bodyguard floored the gas pedal and chased after it.

Nevertheless, the speed of the car in front was too fast for him to catch up.

Zachary frowned and ordered, "Move. Let me drive!"

"Yes, Mr. Nacht." The bodyguard activated the cruise control and shifted to the passenger seat.

Zachary took over the driver seat from the backseat, and with several smooth operations, the car accelerated immediately and shot ahead at the speed of light toward the car in front.

In the blink of an eye, Zachary's car had already caught up with the silver one.

Staring at the rearview mirror, Morgan shouted anxiously, "Damn, they've caught up."

"It can't be. They were so far behind just moments ago."

Lupine quickly turned around. There it is. The car has really caught up to us.

Very soon, both cars were in parallelism and unison. They were like two flashes of lightning, one black and one silver, which dashed forward at a heightened speed.

Morgan turned around and gasped. "The driver seems to be Zachary!"

"Not the bodyguard?" Lupine turned around again.

Charlotte followed suit, and from the blurred sight outside the window, she saw the familiar figure.

At the same time, he was also looking this way.

"Drive faster!" Charlotte ordered.

"Yes." Morgan was still speeding up, but no matter how she accelerated, the Rolls-Royce next to her could always keep up without slowing down by even a wee bit.

She was so flustered that she broke into a sweat, and her grip on the steering wheel tightened. At that instant, she dared not slack at all.

"It seems like Zachary's skills surpassed that of his bodyguards greatly." Lupine was very concerned for Morgan.

"You're stating the obvious!" Morgan's eyebrows were almost knitted together. "His bodyguard's skill is on par with mine, but Zachary's adeptness was far beyond my level."

"Is he really that incredible?" Charlotte stared at the car beside them and uttered all of a sudden, "Get off the highway from the side exit."

"What?" Morgan was very surprised. That's a sudden change of route.

"Just do as I said," Charlotte growled out lowly.

"Yes." Morgan immediately changed lanes and slid down the ramp.

The sudden departure of the silver Rolls-Royce left its black twin deserted. It was back on its own again.

However deft he was, without any competition and comparison, there was no one to witness his pre-eminence.

Back in the black car, Zachary was rendered utterly speechless. He could never understand how the mind of a woman worked.

He thought that it could be another match for him to showcase his driving skills, but never would he have expected that they were playing foul again...

Women are indeed naturally shameless!

Zachary was disinterested and didn't even feel like driving anymore, but since the speed had already been heightened, there was no way he could return to the backseat and let the bodyguard drive anymore. Thus, he could only continue driving.

Soon, they arrived at Serene Hospital.

As soon as he got off the car, Zachary saw Spencer, which caught him by surprise. "Mr. Spencer, you're here?"

"Mr. Nacht was worried and insisted on coming, so I had to accompany him," Spencer explained. "He asked me to come and wait for you here when he sees that it's about time."

"That's even better than how he treats me."

Zachary was a little surprised. He knew that Cynthia had been taking care of Henry in these two years, which created a bond between them. Nonetheless, Zachary didn't expect that it would be so strong.

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"Mr. Nacht is a decent man who cherishes the people around him," Spencer lamented. "Ms. Blackwood has been sparing no effort in taking care of Mr. Nacht these two years. Now that she met an accident, it's only normal for Mr. Nacht to be concerned."

"Yeah." Zachary nodded and didn't say anything else.

Reaching the ward, they were about to knock on the door and enter when they heard Henry's voice from the ward. "Just stay with us with some peace of mind in the future. It so happens that a small building there has been modified into a clinic, which will be convenient for you to recuperate."

Upon hearing that, Zachary pushed open the door and stepped in.

"Zachary, here you are!" Taylor greeted him enthusiastically, "Quick, come and take a seat."

"Alright." Zachary nodded politely and greeted Henry, "Grandpa!"

"What took you so long?" Henry glowered at him in displeasure.

"Something's up with Louis, so I went over," Zachary explained again patiently.

"That's fine. Come and sit." Taylor beckoned him with great warmth.

Zachary walked over to the side of the hospital bed, and it was only then, did he finally look at Cynthia and ask, "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine, thanks." Cynthia gestured in sign language.

She had recovered a lot even though her countenance was still pale. Generally, there was no problem with her situation anymore.

"That's good. Get treated and recover soon," Zachary uttered courteously.

"Alright. Thanks." Cynthia nodded and smiled at him.

Rather awkwardly, Zachary sat by the bed. He was at a loss for words, and such was the situation he was most afraid of dealing with as he had nothing to talk about.

"Cynthia would be discharged tomorrow." Henry announced directly, "I've already told them to let her stay at your house. It's more convenient for her to receive treatment."

"I'm afraid that's not really appropriate." Zachary frowned.

"What's wrong with that? It's not like she has never stayed there." Henry was very insistent. "When Ellie was sick, Cynthia stayed there for a month and spent all her time taking care of Ellie. Have you forgotten about that?"

Zachary was speechless, but he refrained from saying too much in front of Taylor and Cynthia.

Besides, Cynthia did take care of Ellie previously, and she deserved credits for that.

After the incident with Charlotte, Ellie had been falling sick very frequently. At first, it was still manageable for Raina. However, as time passed, the drug resistance accelerated, and most of the medication was rendered ineffective.

Ellie fell sick again, and even Raina was panicked. At that time, Henry arranged for Cynthia to treat Ellie. She applied the acupuncture treatment in traditional Chinese medicine, physiotherapy, and massage to help cure Ellie.

Under her attentive care and treatment for a month, not only did Ellie recover, but her body had also grown stronger.

Because of that, Zachary always felt indebted to Cynthia.

"It's settled then." Seeing that Zachary didn't object to it, Henry proceeded with affirming his decision. He said to Raina, who was waiting by the side, "Arrange to send Cynthia over next morning."

Raina took one look at Zachary and replied to Henry respectfully, "Yes, Mr. Nacht. I will."

"Wouldn't that be too much of a hassle for you?" Taylor only showed courtesy after it had been decided.

"Of course not. It's such a spacious house with so many maids around. What hassle is there?" Henry laughed as he added, "Besides, we're like a family. Don't worry about that!"

"Thank you so much." Taylor nodded with a smile and continued, "Mr. Nacht, it's too stuffy in here. Let me wheel you outside to get some air."

"Sure, I need some fresh air as well." Henry tapped Zachary's leg with his crutch and uttered, "You stay here and accompany Cynthia."

There was nothing Zachary could do but only remained silent.

As soon as the two men left, he suddenly remembered something, so he asked, "What happened in that car crash? Was it accidental or intentional?"

Listening to that, Cynthia's expression turned nervous, and the glint in her eyes flickered with guilt as she gestured in agitation, "It was an accident!"

"Really?" Zachary looked at her with a long gaze and sensed that there was something wrong. Despite that, he didn't say anything.

Cynthia nodded and didn't dare to look at him.

"Rest well then." Zachary got up and leave.