

# Mistaking a Magnate for a Male Escort

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Cynthia bit her lip shyly, her face scarlet. 'Maybe he's just being polite. It couldn't have been romantic.'

"But he's a lot better now, so take the chance, Cynthia," Henry advised her. "He's a softie at heart. Yeah, he might look uncaring, but he's a loyal man. If you make him fall for you, he'll treat you like a queen."

'I know.' Cynthia nodded with a smile.

"Do you still like him then?" Henry asked again.

'Yes,' she answered without missing a beat. 'I have loved him the moment I saw him back when I was fifteen, and that hasn't changed.'

"That's good to hear." Henry smiled warmly.

A short while later, Mrs. Rawlston had prepared lemon and herb lamb skewers and some oatmeal. The servants took Henry and Cynthia to the dining table, and Zachary came down after changing.

They sat around the table, and Henry asked about the company, while Zachary answered him. Henry criticized him, dissatisfied with Zachary's nonchalant attitude.

Zachary was getting impatient. "I've been working the whole day now. Can't you just let me have some peace and quiet at home?"

"Why you..."

Henry was about to fly into a rage, but Cynthia gave him a skewer and gestured, 'The skewer's really nice. Have some, Grandpa.'

Her gentle smile soothed Henry's fury. "You should take a leaf out of her page. She's so gentle, so nice." Henry pointed at Zachary. "You, on the other hand, growls at everyone."

Zachary had his supper in silence. He wanted to get back to his room, but he needed to be there so Cynthia would calm Henry down, or he would have left otherwise.

'Grandpa, you seem to look tired these days. Did something happen?' Cynthia gesticulated.

"Nope. Just taking care of the kids. I'm still fit as a fiddle." He sighed. "But yeah, age isn't on my side, and this is one humid mountain. My whole body's sore and that tires me out easily."

Zachary looked up at Cynthia. We're getting to the main topic now.

'It is quite humid here, but this is the best place to be in summer. It's cool, and the air is fresh,' Cynthia gesticulated with a smile. 'But you can't really stay here. I seem to remember seeing you in better shape back in M Nation.'

"Uh-huh." Henry nodded. "I got used to M Nation's weather."

'I'll give you a massage once I feel better. That should relieve a bit of the soreness,' Cynthia kept gesticulating. 'And your doctor back in Manhattan's a good one too. Why don't we get him here?'

"I don't think so." Henry shook his head. "He's in his eighties now, and his family won't let him go overseas because of his health. He called me last night, said he'd perform a checkup on me once I go back, but I might not have the chance anymore." Henry dwelled in his sadness, for his biggest fear was his old friends' passing.

'But Dr. Leonard looks well enough to me.' Cynthia was surprised.

"He used to be, but not after he tripped and fell." Henry had gotten more solemn. "I tripped once two years ago, and since then, I'm wheelchair-bound. I could kick the ball around with my grandkid before that."

'It's bad for the elderly to trip.' Cynthia frowned. 'I think Dr. Leonard could recover if he has plenty of rest. You should too. Remember to go for your treatment.'

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"Okay." Henry nodded. "Your clinic in M Nation's a nice one. Christopher frequents it since it's hard for a doctor to treat himself. He needs a professional opinion from other doctors."

'Oh, I'm just an amateur compared to him.' Cynthia smiled sheepishly. 'Your previous treatment has been going well, Grandpa. You should keep at it.'

"I think I should. My back's been really sore lately. I think I'll go back once everything's settled down here." Henry fiddled with the board.

"What business do you have here?" Zachary asked casually. "I'll handle the company, so don't worry about it." Finally, Zachary grasped the chance to talk about it.

"I know you can handle it." Henry gazed into him. "But what about your personal problems?"

Zachary froze. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Cynthia's a good girl." Henry peered at Cynthia. "You should talk to her more."

Zachary frowned. He was about to fly into a rage, but then he remembered something. Henry will go back to M Nation if I pretend to date Cynthia, and he wouldn't bother me anymore. I can also take the time to settle business with Charlotte.

Zachary nodded. "Yeah, she's a nice girl. I can try dating her."

"Really?" Henry was overjoyed, and Cynthia was stunned. She had been waiting for him to say that for the longest time.

"Of course." Zachary didn't show too much enthusiasm, or it'd be too fake. "I can date her and see what happens."

"Good. Very good. Excellent." Henry nodded in exuberance. "You'll see how nice Cynthia is once you get along with her."

"Yeah, yeah, I know." Zachary gave her a shrimp dumpling. Touched, Cynthia smiled gently at him.

Henry was overjoyed to see that, and he didn't want to get between the 'couple,' so he said, "Whoops, I'm getting sleepy after I had something to eat. Must be my age acting up. I'll go to

my room now. You guys go ahead without me.” He patted Cynthia’s hand and gave her a cryptic look.

Spencer took Henry back to his room, and Zachary put his cutlery down. “I’m done with supper, so I’m taking you to your room.” He took Cynthia to her room upstairs.

Henry turned around and whispered to Spencer, “Go and see if that kid’s doing what he said he would. He’s one little trickster, that boy is. This might also be his lie.”

“I don’t think so.” Spencer was confident in Zachary’s promise. “The young master has always been an arrogant one. He can’t pretend to like someone he doesn’t.”

“True.” Henry nodded. “He hates putting on pretenses. That kid was cold to Cynthia, but he’s changed quite a bit.”

“Maybe he’s sympathizing with her,” Spencer analyzed. “Pity is the first step to love, you see. Well, some say friendship is.”

“You have a point.” Henry nodded. “Still, take a look just in case.”

“Very well then. After I take you to your room.” Spencer went upstairs in silence after taking Henry to his room.

At the same time, Zachary took Cynthia back to her room, placed her on her bed, leaned closer, and whispered, “Looks like Grandpa really wants us to be together. Why don’t you work with me here? I want him to stop bothering me.”

Cynthia stiffened up, but she quickly gave him a gentle smile. ‘I see. I’ll do it.’

“Thanks.” He nodded. “I owe you one, and I’ll be sure to pay you back.”

‘It’s fine. I want to do this.’ Cynthia suddenly hugged Zachary and kissed him because she saw someone outside her room.

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Spencer was looking through the ajar door and saw Cynthia lying on the bed, while Zachary leaned closer. Then she hugged him and they kissed

Ahem. Someone coughed, and Spencer scurried away, though not without casting a death glare at Ben. Ben only shrugged, and he went to close the door.

Their lips were about to touch, but Zachary instinctively pushed her away. He could pretend to be in a relationship with Cynthia, provided there was no direct contact with her, as he would be repulsed by any kind of skin contact.

Cynthia gesticulated, 'I didn't mean it. Someone was peeping on us, so I—'

"I know," Zachary interrupted. "It was Spencer."

Shocked, Cynthia bit her lip and nodded.

"Thank you." Zachary left the bed. "Sleep tight."

Ben was waiting for him outside. "Mr. Spencer has gone back to his room," he reported once Zachary came out.

Zachary closed the door, but instead of going back to his bedroom, he went to the study. Ben poured a glass of wine for him. "You're pretending to be in a relationship with Ms. Cynthia so Mr. Henry will leave you alone, aren't you?"

"You noticed too?" Zachary arched his eyebrow.

"I've been working for you for a long time now, so that much is obvious for me." Ben smiled. "The same thing goes for Mr. Henry. You can't fool him with half-hearted acting."

Zachary frowned. True. I did tell him I'd try to date her, but if I don't go a mile further, that sly old fox isn't gonna buy it.

"You might have to go to the extremes if you want Mr. Henry to leave you alone," Ben reminded him carefully.

"What do you mean I have to be aggressive?" Zachary barked, "Insolence."

"My apologies, Sir." Ben bowed.

Zachary glared at him, but Ben had a point. This is going to be a headache. I might have to turn to extreme measures to make him leave. But I don't really want to do that. Maybe I can get away with it without anyone noticing. After all, nobody's gonna know what we're doing behind closed doors.

"Good idea." Zachary squinted.

"But you'd have to make sure your kids don't bump into you guys when you're going at it," Ben suggested. "Especially Robbie. He's really sensitive, and it's going to hurt your relationship with him if he sees you getting intimate with Ms. Cynthia. That's probably why he ran away today."

"True." Zachary frowned and nodded. "That's important."

"So what will you do?"

"I'll be surveying Ashenville Garden for the next couple of days. Ask Cynthia whether she would like to come with me tomorrow morning." Zachary wanted to 'get closer' with Cynthia while keeping his children away from his business.

"I think she'll be delighted," Ben said. "But Mr. Henry can't see what you're doing then."

"He's no fool. I bet he'll have spies snooping around." Zachary knew Henry well. "He'd probably check in on us too."

"I see."

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When they had breakfast the next morning, Ben asked Cynthia if she'd like to go with Zachary on a stay in Ashenville Garden. Of course, Henry was there to listen in. Ben even told her the hot spring there could help with her recovery.

Henry arched his eyebrow. "Go get some fresh air, Cynthia. Staying at home all the time isn't good for your health."

'Okay!' Cynthia was still hesitant, but not after Henry encouraged her to go. She smiled. 'Thanks for having me, Ben.'

"No prob. I'll tell Mr. Nacht about it, and Raina's going to go get prepared.

Ben was about to leave for the preparations, but Henry suddenly said, "I can't let her go alone. Take Cain and Kyle with you."

Just as Mr. Nacht has predicted. "Of course," Ben obliged.

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Raina came to pick Cynthia up that afternoon. Cynthia took two nurses with her because of her injuries and Henry sent two bodyguards with her. Ben sent another two bodyguards to tag along, making it a total of four bodyguards, one doctor, and two nurses escorting Cynthia around. It was a crowd.

Mr. Potter knew Cynthia was someone close to Zachary when he welcomed her at Ashenville Garden's parking lot as she had a lot of people protecting her. She was to stay at the same villa where a hot spring was in the backyard, just like how Zachary wanted.

It was already eight in the evening when everything was done, but Zachary was nowhere to be seen.

Even so, Cynthia didn't seem to show any form of anxiety. She told Mr. Potter to keep her arrival a secret, for she didn't want to worry Zachary. Mr. Potter nodded with a smile. Such a gentle lady. She might be a mute, but she comes from a good family, is knowledgeable, gentle, and gorgeous. She's perfect.

Raina treated Cynthia's wounds and told her, "You can't go into the hot spring just yet, Ms. Blackwood, but you can soak your feet in it."

"I see. Thank you, Dr. Langan." Cynthia was a cultured lady who was polite to everyone, including the servants. She'd even smile at the waiters as a sign of gratitude for their service.

"Don't mention it. Rest up. I'll unpack."

"Of course."

After Raina went to the room beside hers, Cynthia quieted down and pushed herself to the window, and looked at the rain that was pouring outside. It's a downpour. I wonder if Zachary is trapped in the congested traffic.

Indeed he was, and congested traffic was an understatement. Zachary was stuck at the exit, and he couldn't even move an inch. Zachary was reading through the documents when Ben suddenly pointed at the rear-view mirror and gasped. "That looks like Ms. Lindberg's car!"

Zachary looked into the rear-view mirror and saw the silver Rolls-Royce that belonged to Charlotte. The traffic finally inched forward, and the Rolls-Royce moved up and stopped beside his black one.

"Goddammit! They're everywhere!" Marino glared at that car. Even though he couldn't see the interior, he could feel the woman inside glaring back at him.

"Tell me about it." Ben felt a headache coming up at the thought of that woman. "Wait, they can't be heading the same place as we are, can they?"

"What?" Zachary frowned. "Did Louis invite her too?"

"..." Ben didn't see that coming. "That's going to be a sticky situation. If Ms. Lindberg bumps into Ms. Blackwood, you're going to have a hard time explaining."

"I don't think they're heading to Ashenville Garden," Zachary refuted. "Remember what happened at the seaside restaurant? Things were pretty ugly, and I don't think Louis would be so dumb as to invite both of us at the same time."

"You have a point." Ben nodded.

The traffic loosened up a short while later. Zachary's car was about to go ahead, but Charlotte's cut in, much to Marino's chagrin. "These women are barbaric."

"Take it slow. We're not in a hurry," Zachary said.

"Yes, Sir." Marino stopped grumbling.

They moved on at a snail's pace and had to wait for ten more minutes before exiting the highway. Instead of going to the hotel with hot spring when he arrived, Zachary went to the banquet hall instead.



Sir Louis' banquet was held there, and there were the partners from F Nation who came to talk about the upcoming project. The moment he came out of the car, Mr. Potter went to welcome him. "Mr. Nacht, Sir Louis has been waiting for you. Ms. Blackwood is all settled down. Shall I invite her?"

"No."

Zachary wasn't planning on having Louis know that Cynthia was there. Louis' villa was on the racecourse, which was some distance away anyway, so they wouldn't bump into each other.

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"Alright." Mr. Potter led them to the banquet hall without further ado. Zachary scanned the cars in the parking lot, but he didn't see the silver Rolls-Royce. Looks like Charlotte isn't here. His frown subsided. Now I can get into business.

An uplifting piano tune was heard upon their entrance, and thunderous applause followed. Zachary didn't pay any heed to it, since Louis was an outstanding pianist, and he just had to show off at every banquet.

But he was shocked to see the pair in front of the piano when he got close.

"Ms. Lindberg came!" Ben was stunned.

"But we didn't see their car." Marino was baffled.

"Ms. Lindberg came twenty minutes earlier. She went to Sir Louis' villa and came with him," Mr. Potter whispered.

"Damn woman." Marino glared at Morgan.

"This is going to spell trouble." Ben frowned at Zachary.

"Shut up," Zachary growled.

They lowered their gazes and said nothing more.

"What's wrong?" Mr. Potter had a bad feeling about it.

"Mr. Potter," Ben whispered something to him, and Mr. Potter nodded. "I understand. I know what must be done."

Another song had concluded, and thunderous applause filled the banquet hall. Sir Louis held Charlotte's hand politely and bowed at everyone.

Everyone praised them for looking like a perfect couple, while Zachary spared nothing but a cold gaze, though he clapped politely too, and his entourage followed.

Louis gave Zachary a warm welcome when he saw him. "You're here, Zachary!"

The guests only noticed him at that point, and they stood up to greet him. Zachary gave them polite nods, but he noticed a problem. All the partners brought their own date with them, and even Louis had Charlotte with him. Only Zachary came alone.

"Have a seat, Charlotte." After Louis had settled Charlotte down, he quickly welcomed Zachary. "What took you so long?"

"What is going on?" Zachary was asking Louis, but his eyes were on Charlotte. Charlotte had mingled nicely with the partners and their family. She even brought gifts for them, though Morgan and Lupine were the ones holding them.

"I have to tell you something." Louis took Zachary to the side and whispered, "Can we have one more partner for this project?"

"No," Zachary refused without any hesitation.

"Oh, don't be a party pooper, Zachary," Louis calmed him down. "Charlotte's acknowledged by the partners, and they agreed to it. I can't do anything about it."

"So you set me up? You're forcing me to agree?" Zachary frowned, looking serious. "Who asked you to do this?"

"I..." Louis glanced at Charlotte subconsciously, but he looked away moments later.

"Nobody. This talk was going to happen anyway. We're just having one more member here."

“So who told them to bring their partners, and who allowed the Lindbergs to attend this banquet?” Zachary was upset. “And who told you to keep this a secret?”

“I did,” Charlotte said coldly. She walked up to them with elegance and smiled at Zachary. “You seem to dislike this surprise, Mr. Nacht.”

Zachary glared at her coldly and looked away. He couldn’t bring himself to get angry at her.