

A Spoonful of Sugar: Don't Beg for Love By Oopsie Daisy

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After Zoya left, she sent Renfrew back to the Duval Manor. She usually would only eat a little when she was hungry, and if she wasn't hungry, she would keep herself busy and not eat properly.

"Let's make something delicious for dinner. Do you have anything in mind, Hesper? I remember you enjoyed the food I made last time. Do you want to have that tonight?" Arthur asked as he looked at Hesper affectionately. When she nodded, he went into the kitchen and asked the chef to prepare the food.

Hesper was sitting on the couch, playing on her phone while waiting for Arthur. Suddenly, a pair of hands holding a glass of milk appeared in front of her.

Hesper raised her head and became surprised. "Uncle Simon?"

Simon nodded, and Hesper took the glass of milk he handed her. Simon then sat across from her. He had a pair of slightly upturned eyes that were different from the other sons of Arthur, giving him a somewhat feminine look.

"Didn't Matthew tell you anything? I'm staying at home now," Simon said.

Hesper nodded, and then she shook her head. "Matt just told me that you'll be staying in Emperion. He didn't mention that you'd be staying here... I just didn't expect that you would come to me, so I was a little surprised."

"Hmm?" Simon narrowed his eyes slightly and chuckled. "Well, it seems like you've heard of that matter as well. Then I won't beat around the bush anymore. I'm sure you didn't come back to celebrate the New Year, right? Just let me know if you have some doubts. I may be able to help

you."

Initially, Hesper had been thinking of how she should persuade Simon to help her. She did not expect Simon to bring it up so directly.

"Thank you, Uncle Simon."

When Arthur came back, he saw Hesper talking to Simon and was a little bit taken aback. "It's surprising to see you two talking to each other. I get angry after talking to him for only two minutes, so you don't have to care about him, Hesper."

Simon let out a long sigh. "I know you don't like me, so I'll go upstairs."

Hesper stifled a laugh. Although Simon and Arthur did not get along, only Simon could argue with him among the younger generation of the Lanes.

After Simon went upstairs, Arthur turned to Hesper and said sternly, "Although we were joking just now, you should stay away from Simon."

"Huh? But why?"

Arthur fell silent as if he had recalled some unpleasant memories. He let out a sigh afterwards and patted Hesper's head. "Simon... He didn't like you very much in the past."

'He didn't like me?' Hesper thought inwardly, but she shook her head after a short while.

'No. This can't be... It must be Rachael who he didn't like, right? But Rachael was only a kid when she went missing, so how could Simon dislike a little kid? It just doesn't make any sense.'

Hesper had a lot of questions in her head, but looking at Arthur's expression, she instinctively felt that now was not the right time to ask any questions, so she threw them to the back of her mind.

"After some time, he's going overseas again, so you don't have to care about him. Just remember, don't talk to him while you're here."

Hesper was already very confused, and Arthur's words made her even more puzzled now. Theodore and Shawn were already a mystery to her, and now there was Simon too.

"We'll be holding a gathering in a few more days. Why don't you come with me and meet the young people of other families?" Arthur said, "You've been busy ever since you came back, and you didn't meet anyone other than the descendant of the Tuckers. Some of my friends said it's really hard to get a chance to see you, so I want to finally show them how beautiful and outstanding my precious granddaughter has become."

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After she returned to her room at night, Hesper made a call to Matthew.

"Did Uncle Simon have any grudges against Rachael?"

On the other side of the line, Matthew frowned and replied, "Where did you hear that? Rachael was only four years old when she went missing. How could Simon have any grudges against her?"

Hesper could not figure it out either, but this was what Arthur told her. In this house, only Matthew and Arthur would not lie to her, as there was no need for them to

“Grandpa told me this afternoon.

After that, Hesper told Matthew everything that Arthur told her, and Matthew was silent for a moment after listening

“... Honestly, I’ve never heard of such a thing before, Why would Grandpa say that?”
Matthew

wondered.

However, what Hesper worried about right now was another matter. “If... I mean what if Uncle

Simon really had a grudge against Rachael?”

Hesper felt that this was somewhat absurd as well, but she continued. “Could Uncle Simon have had an ulterior motive when he forged my identity back then? I don’t want to suspect him, but at this point, it’s better to be cautious.”

Matthew pondered for a moment. “Even if he had an ulterior motive, it’s already been three years since then, so I don’t think anything will happen right now. Anyway, I’ll keep an eye on Simon during this time. You don’t have to worry about it.”

“Okay.”

Hesper did not intend to use Rachael’s identity forever, but it would bring both her and Matthew a lot of trouble if her identity was exposed now.

Putting the Lane Holdings aside, how were they going to explain it to Arthur?

Arthur’s health had been deteriorating over the years. If something happened, the consequences would be unbearable for everyone.

The next day, Arthur began to prepare a dress for Hesper.

“It’s all right, Grandpa...

Arthur glared at her. “Everyone will be dressed to the nines in the banquet, so you can’t show up in a simple outfit. Besides, you’re a designer yourself, Look at the dress that we’ve prepared for

someone else.”

“You should just let him be, Hesper,” Helen chimed in with a chuckle. “Our grandpa wants to see you looking so beautiful that people can’t take their eyes off you. But he

doesn't know anything about fashion. Among us, even though I'm a woman, Theodore knows the most about dressed."

"Theodore?"

Arthur furrowed his brow for a moment. "Yes. When he was young, he had a lover in the entertainment industry who was also an illegitimate daughter of the Riveras. Theodore lived with her for many years, so he should know a thing or two about fashion."

"The illegitimate daughter of the Riveras?"

Hesper had never heard of this before. The Riveras were a well-known family in Emperion, and they were very influential in the design industry. And she had previously referred to the Riveras' designers for reference. At first, some people even suspected that she had some connection to

the Riveras.

Even though Yolanda was a famous singer, not many people knew about her background. The great-grandfather of the Lanes refused to acknowledge Yolanda, and even the Riveras would not acknowledge her.

But the irony was that Yolanda's son had become the Lanes' illegitimate son now.

"How about this? Why don't you go and consult Theodore? The banquet is just around the corner," Arthur said as he waved his hand. "You don't have to be scared of him. Although he looks like he may seem a little bit unapproachable, he has a kind and gentle heart."

"Okay."

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At first, Hesper thought of declining, but she didn't expect the opportunity to interact with Theodore to land in her lap like this. Before, she thought of learning these things through Simon, but that was no longer feasible.

It would be best if she could contact Theodore directly.

Theodore had not worked for many years and had been living in the manor to keep Arthur

company.

He had accumulated enough wealth in his youth to live on it now, and even if he spent the rest of his life doing nothing or squandered all of his savings, he would not have any concerns when he got older since he was one of the Lanes.

When Hesper found Theodore, he was watering the plants in the garden.

It was impossible to grow flowers in Emperion during this season. This was the first time Hesper had seen someone setting up a greenhouse in their yard to grow flowers. As soon as she walked into the greenhouse, a burst of rose fragrance hit her nose.

"I've heard about it," Theodore said, taking off his gloves. "I guess Grandpa must've given you some sort of order again."

He seemed more like a gardener hired by the Lanes than one of the owners of this manor. He did not have any valuable accessories on his body, not even a watch.

"Something must be wrong with his mind. You're a designer, so you know how to pick a piece of clothing that's presentable. There's no need for me to help with anything. I'm just a gardener now,"

Theodore said.

Hesper lowered her head and followed behind him silently. After Theodore had finished taking care of his flowers, he turned his head around..

"I can tell that you didn't come here just to ask about clothes. So, what do you want to know?"

Theodore asked.

Hesper did not expect Theodore to see through her intention right away. She gave a bitter smile. Ever since she returned, all the elders seemed to be teaching her lessons, and their bluntness sometimes left her at a loss for words.

She was accustomed to beating around the bushes, and she did not know how to word her sentence when everyone became so straightforward.

"I want to know about Shawn," she said.

"Shawn? What do you want to know about him?" he replied.

Hesper hesitated for a moment before gathering her hair behind her ear. "Does Shawn know me? Why have I never heard of him before, yet he seems to be familiar with me?"

This question left Theodore silent for a while.

"You don't remember this, but you actually knew Shawn when you were younger," he said, placing

aside the items in his hands. The rose buds stood tall in the serene space around them

“Because of his background, many people looked down on him. However, you were the only one who didn’t follow the others in bullying him, even though you knew he was an illegitimate child

“Shawn wanted to come and look for you when you came back three years ago. But he gave up in the end when he heard that you’d lost your memories,” Theodore continued.

Hesper frowned.

Is that really it?

Even though Theodore had no reason to lie to her, Hesper could not shake the feeling that something was amiss. Theodore’s subtle actions suggested that he was not telling her the whole truth, and although Hesper had no formal education in psychology, she had learned a bit about

She could not be sure about it, but her sixth sense was telling her that Theodore was lying

If that was the case, this further reinforced that there was something fishy about Shawn in that he did not involve just Theodore but all of the Lanes. However, Hesper had no memories about Shawn so

all so when did they meet?

Did they meet in the orphanage?

Hesper’s head was filled with questions when she left the greenhouse

In reality, she could not remember a lot of things from her childhood. Perhaps it was because she had suffered from a high fever when she was young which caused her to forget many things

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In the end, she ended up back at the orphanage where she started.

Hesper rarely went back to the orphanage after she got out of there. She would only donate some supplies occasionally. After all, she had not received any special treatment when she was there, not that she experienced any unfairness either.

To Hesper, the orphanage was more like a temporary place to stay. She never really considered it as her home, so she did not have a sense of belonging there.

She had gone back several times to explore her origins, but she did not get any good results nor did she find any valuable clues.

Hesper heaved out a sigh and rubbed her tightly knitted brows. She had a feeling that the burden on her shoulders was getting heavier and heavier.

Right now, she just wanted to bring Rickard down and take Renfrew back. That was all she wanted to do for the rest of her life, as she just wanted no one else but Renfrew to stay by her side.

When someone knocked on the door, Hesper closed her eyes.

There were only a few people who would come to see her at this time, and she was tired of dealing with anyone other than Arthur.

However, she had to go and answer the door. "Coming,"

Hesper became surprised when she saw who it was. "Matt?"

Matthew nodded, turned around, and walked into her room. Then, he turned back to signal Hesper

to lock the door.

Hesper quickly locked the door as requested by Matthew.

"What's the matter? Grandpa didn't look for you today, so why did you suddenly come back?"

"I kept in mind everything you told me before, so I had my men look into Shawn's past in detail. They've found out that he and Yolanda lived in Genecity for a period of time," Matthew said. "You would have been living in the orphanage during that time, so according to the timeline, it's possible that you met Shawn.

"Shawn was seven and you were a little bit over four at that time, so it's normal that you don't remember anything."

Hesper had already suspected that she might have met Shawn during her time at the orphanage. and this news from Matthew had confirmed her speculations.

"Thank you, Matt. This is exactly what I've been looking for," Hesper said as she smoothed out her long hair. She had not gotten a hair cut in a long time, so her hair was pretty long now.

As if he had just remembered something, Matthew smirked and said, "Is Grandpa going to take you to the matchmaking session this year? I heard Aunt Helen mention it when I came."

"Matchmaking session? Hesper had a bad feeling in her heart. "Grandpa only told me it was a small gathering between families. When did it become a matchmaking session? Besides, I'm

already engaged to Nathaniel.”

“Now you’re bringing Nathaniel up,” Matthew said as he scratched her nose. “Of course, it’s a matchmaking session. What else do you think a group of rich and powerful young people sitting together are going to talk about? Business?”

Hesper was speechless.

“I guess that Grandpa can tell that you and Nathaniel don’t have any intention of getting married. He isn’t someone who’ll force us into marriage. He’s learned his lesson well from Uncle Thed’s failed marriage. It’s exactly because he couldn’t stop our great-grandfather that things ended up

how they are now.”

Matthew paused for a moment before continuing. “I believe that Grandpa blames himself a lot. He couldn’t see his favorite youngest son have a happy life, so... He’ll urge us to get married as soon as possible, but he’ll never force any of us into marriage.”

Hesper felt that Matthew’s expression was a bit awkward when he mentioned the word “favorite”

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Everyone said that the eldest son of the Lanes-Rachel and Matthew’s father-was Arthur’s most favored son. However, they knew very little about Theodore, Arthur’s fifth son.

Hesper was pretty certain that Matthew was speaking the truth. She could not help but think, ‘So Theodore’s Grandpa Arthur’s favorite son? No wonder Theodore has been living in the Lane Manor. Come to think of it, if it were Uncle Simon who stayed at home and did nothing but tend to the flowers and plants, Grandpa would’ve kicked him out of the house a long time ago...’

However...

Hesper knocked her forehead and said helplessly, “I already didn’t want to go before I knew that it was a matchmaking session. And now that I know, I want to go even less. Is there any way I can. escape from it?”

Matthew looked at her for a moment then said, “Well, you can do what I did and bring a sister with you as your shield.”

“Matthew!”

No matter how unwilling she was, Hesper had to attend the banquet.

She did not want to embarrass Arthur, so she asked Roberto to prepare a dress for her. Even if it was not custom-made to fit her perfectly, a dress prepared by Roberto would be presentable.

“This dress looks really good on you, Hesper. You really have good taste,” Arthur commended, while criticizing Theodore for staying at home all day and not going out.

The dress that Hesper wore did not have a fancy design. It was white, and although she stood out in the crowd wearing the dress, she would not attract too much attention with it.

It was true that Hesper wanted to make Arthur proud before everyone, but she was not fond of becoming a commodity that was waiting to be selected by other people. After all, being a member of the matchmaking session was a whole different thing.

“Alright, did Matt tell you something?”

Hesper nodded. She then coiled her arm around Arthur’s and said helplessly, “Grandpa, you should. stop trying to look for a partner for me. I feel pretty good being single. It’s more relaxing and I don’t have too many burdens. After all, I... I still have a lot of things to settle in the company..

“Alright, alright... Arthur cut her short while waving his hand. “I’ll stop teasing you. I just want you to know more people this time. There are a lot of things going on with the families in Emperion, so it’s good for you to know more people.

“Speaking of which, what’s going on between you and the Tuckers? When are you two going to finalize everything? I’m very worried, you know?”

‘Here he goes again...’ Hesper let out a sigh.

Initially, she had planned to clarify everything and terminate her engagement with Nathaniel. But

after learning about Arthur’s thoughts, she knew it would not be so simple.

In any case, Hesper was a bit helpless as she entered the banquet hall holding Arthur’s arm.

As soon as she entered the banquet hall, she was welcomed by a group of young people, each one more beautiful and elegant than the last. They mingled and toasted to each other, and Hesper was momentarily taken aback before she was led into the crowd by Arthur.

This was the first time Hesper showed up on such an occasion, so it was only fitting that she should strive to impress and astonish everyone with her appearance and demeanor.

"It's been a while, Silvan," greeted Arthur, standing with the support of his cane. Hesper saw a young man in the middle of the crowd turn his head, revealing a face so stunningly charming that he looked like a prince coming out of a fairy tale.

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Unlike anyone she had ever seen before, the man in front of her was so handsome that calling him handsome was an understatement. Even Hesper herself paled in comparison to him when it

came to appearance.

When Silvan heard Arthur's voice, he lifted his head and whipped a smile on his face. "It's been a long time, Master Lane."

The moment he smiled, the people around him became agitated, which Hesper found absurd. Everyone in the banquet was competing to gain attention, yet this man standing in front of her was able to gain all the attention without doing anything just because of his face.

When Arthur and Hesper walked over, Silvan was slightly stunned. "Are you... Rachael? It's been a long time."

"She's forgotten a lot of things. Besides, she was still a little kid back then, so there's no way she would remember you," Arthur said before turning his head to Hesper. "You liked Silvan very much. when you were a kid, and you used to follow him around."

It went without saying that Hesper did not know anything about Rachael's past. She could only put on a smile and face Silvan's inquisitive gaze head-on.

"I heard that Ehren has returned as well. How is he doing now?"

Another person that Hesper did not know. She had no choice but to sit on the couch silently while matching up these people and their information in her mind.

'If his surname is Sulzbach, then he may be one of the Sulzbach. Just like the older generations in the Tuckers, they knew each other in the army. They've gradually expanded their market overseas in recent years. Grandpa Arthur has a good relationship with the Sulzbach.'

"Miss, you're so pretty."

Hesper felt that someone was tugging at her dress, and it snapped her out of her thoughts. She turned around and saw that there was a kid behind her staring with his big round eyes at her.

Although it was a small kid, Hesper was able to instantly recognize that the kid in front of her was one of the Sulzbachs. The reason was simple. Other than the Sulzbachs, she could not think of anyone else with such a delicate and pretty face.

“Miss, can you take me out of here? It’s so noisy here, and my daddy won’t let me to eat the cake,” the kid said while pretending to sob. Hesper noticed there were some cake crumbs on the corner of the kid’s lips, and she could tell that he was just playing the sympathy card. For a moment, Renfrew flitted across her mind, and she decided not to expose the little kid. She wanted to see what he was up to.

The kid in front of her had fair skin, looking just like a snow spirit. Hesper rubbed his head and asked, “Who is your father?”

“Silvan,” the kid replied matter-of-factly. “I’m Locke Sulzbach. I’m my father’s son.”

‘His father is Silvan? He’s already married and has a son?’

Charter Jee

Hesper was stunned for a moment, but before she could react, Locke grabbed her hand and said, “Miss, let’s go out and play. I know there’s a beautiful garden outside.”

Honestly, Hesper wanted to get out of here as well. She could not do so because Arthur was holding her arm before, but since he was busy entertaining other people, she figured that she should seize the chance and slip away.

“Okay. Let’s go,” Hesper said. She looked around, and after ascertaining that no one was watching them, she grabbed Locke’s hand and left.

“Silvan? Silvan!”

Arthur called Silvan twice. Only then did he snap himself back to reality.

“What’s the matter? It isn’t like you to daydream while you’re talking,” Arthur said before turning his head. He looked across the crowd to locate Hesper but to no avail.

“I think you should stop looking for her, Master Lane,” Silvan said with a chuckle, “Rachael just slipped away with Locke.”

“She couldn’t sit still when she was a kid. I didn’t expect her to be like this even after she grew up...” Arthur said.

Just like Locke said, the garden was beautiful.

It was a pleasant surprise to see any color other than white during winter in Emperion. Hesper did not know how they took care of this garden, as all of the flowers were blooming madly even in the cold wind.

Hesper did not put on many clothes that day, but Locke was wrapped in a down jacket that looked very warm. She could not help but feel a little jealous, as only children seemed to have the privilege of dressing warmly at these kinds of events.

“Uncle Ehren!”

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Hesper was still observing the surroundings when Locke grabbed her hand. “I saw Uncle Ehren! He’s right there!”

‘Uncle Ehren?’

Hesper was not familiar with the people in the Sulzbachs. But since they were coming out there to catch some fresh air, she followed behind Locke.

“Uncle Ehren!”

Hesper raised her head and saw a man sitting amid several brightly colored flowers. There was a wheelchair at the side; she wondered how he moved himself onto the bench.

It was snowing lightly and the bench was wet.

“Locke?” The young man tilted his head slightly. Although he was blind, his senses were sharp. “Who’s standing next to you? Is it Sil?”

“Nope! She’s a pretty young lady!” Lock replied. He went over and grabbed the man’s hand. “I just picked the prettiest lady and asked her to come out with me to see the flowers!”

Hesper had only come out for some fresh air, but Locke made it sound quite romantic.

Ehren let out a chuckle. Hesper examined the young man in front of her who looked a lot like Silvan. Since Locke called him “Uncle Ehren,” she more or less could guess his identity.

“I’m sorry. Locke is still a kid and he’s been spoiled at home. If he’s caused you any trouble, I apologize on his behalf.”

‘No, you don’t have to apologize. Besides, Locke is adorable.’

Ehren frowned slightly and instinctively tilted his head.

‘Rachael?’ Ehren said.

Even though Hesper was surprised that Ehren knew Rachael, she was even more surprised at the certainty in his voice.

She was indeed "Rachael" right now, but the young man in front of her was blind and could only hear her voice. So how was he so certain that she was Rachael?

Even if they had been friends, she and Rachael were two different people.

When Hesper did not deny that she was Rachael, Ehren's face sank. "It seems to me that you don't like to talk very much, Ms. Lane."

"I'm sorry. I don't remember anything from the past. I'm called Hesper Rivera now."

"Hah." Ehren gave a cold smirk. Locke did not realize the tension between them, so he said worriedly, "Uncle Ehren, your hand is cold. It's freezing here. You might catch a cold."

"I'm fine."

Even though Ehren said he was fine, Hesper could tell that the person who left Ehren there

probably had already forgotten about him. He could not get back inside on his own, so he had no other choice but to sit there despite the coldness.

"Would you like me to carry you to your wheelchair?" Hesper asked.

Ehren was stunned for a moment, then he shook his head. "That's not necessary. I already told you that I'm fine."

It seems like there was no way to talk to the person in front of her anymore.

Hesper could see that the man in front of her had lost his ability to walk a long time ago, as his leg muscles had atrophied severely. Taking a deep breath and thinking of it as doing a good deed, Hesper went up to carry Ehren.

Ehren, who was light, was slightly, taken aback when Hesper picked him up. "I already told you that

"I'm already carrying you. Do you want me to put you down now?"

Hesper had no intention of continuing the argument with Ehren. Her physical fitness was not good either, and she was reaching her limit by carrying a young man like him.

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It was not easy for Hesper to carry Ehren in her arms. Even though he was blind, he could sense that the arms that were holding him were shaking slightly, so he stopped moving around.

'It's not that I'm worried about her. I just don't want her to let go all of a sudden and drop me to the ground,' he told himself inwardly.

The silver lining was that his wheelchair was not far away from the bench. Hesper noticed that Ehren was shivering from the coldness, so she said, "Locke, you should push your Uncle Ehren back inside."

"Okay. Thank you, miss," Locke replied as he went forward to push Ehren. After he walked two steps forward, however, he noticed something and turned his head around. "What about you, miss? Aren't you coming in? It's cold outside."

"I'm fine. I want to stay here for a little while," Hesper replied as she tousled Locke's head.

Locke, nodded understandingly. "Alright, then. I'll bring Uncle Ehren in. You shouldn't stay outside for too long either. Otherwise, you may get sick."

"Okay."

Hesper could see that Locke would grow into a naggy adult in the future since he was so naggy as a kid. Suddenly, an umbrella appeared over her head, blocking the snow that was falling down. from the sky.

"When did you get back?" Hesper turned around and looked at Nathaniel. He was in Genecity. several days ago, and now he was standing right in front of her. "You always show up at just the right time. If I didn't know any better, I would think you're doing it on purpose."

Snow fell from the sky.

When the snowflakes fell on Ehren's face, he caught a sniff of the unique scent of the snow. He fell into thought for a moment and said, "Locke, is it snowing again?"

"Yeah. But it's only light snow. I guess it'll stop in the afternoon."

After they had walked quite a distance, Locke stopped and stood on his tippy toes to look at Hesper. When he saw Nathaniel, he said, "Uncle Nathaniel is here too. He's standing with Hesper Sis right now. They look like they could make a good couple."

"Are you aware that Rachael-I mean, Hesper, is engaged to Nate? You should probably stop calling her "Hesper Sis." She's much older than you," Ehren said, his voice thick with

dissatisfaction.

Locke scratched his head. "But Hesper Sis looks young, and she's pretty too. I like her very much."

Ehren did not say anything in return. When Locke pushed him back into the corridor, someone rushed over in panic. "Oh my god! I'm so sorry, Master Ehren. Someone called me just now and I forgot about you..."

Ehren raised his hand to stop him from speaking.

"I'm blind and I'm crippled, so it's only natural that people will forget about me," Ehren said with a smile on his face. "I won't trouble you anymore next time. You can continue with whatever you were doing. Locke will take care of me."

"Master Ehren..."

"Go," Ehren said softly, cutting him short.

Although he did not seem angry, Locke was not going to let that person get away with it so easily." Uncle Ehren is in poor health. What if he caught a cold in the garden? You should be grateful that he has a good temper and hasn't told anyone about how you've treated him. But do you always bully my uncle like this?"

"What? Of course, I do not! I swear to God this is the first time. I promise I won't forget Master Ehren again in the future."

“Alright. You should stop blaming him,” Ehren said, tugging at Locke’s sleeve. “Let Alfred handle my stuff in the future. Everyone is unused to having me in the house since I came back, so it’s natural that they’d forget about me.”

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“Alfred knows me better. He wouldn’t commit such a mistake, and I trust him with my stuff”

Locke had no choice but to nod. “You’re too kind, Uncle Ehren. If you always act like this, others will take advantage of you. Next time, I’ll have Daddy teach you. When he gets angry, everyone who works for him listens to him...”

As Locke pushed Ehren away, the servant scoffed disdainfully. He’s so cocky because he was lucky enough to be born as a Sulzbach. If he weren’t one of them... Hriph

“So the friend with a bad temper you told me about before was Ehren? Hesper asked.

The reason she was not very surprised was that the Sulzbachs, the Tuckers, and the Lanes maintained a good relationship. It was just that she only learned about Ehrens condition on that day. “It seems to me that Ehren has been bound to a wheelchair for a long time. Was it congenital?

“Nope,” Nathaniel replied. “It was because of an accident. However, it’s been many years since, and so many doctors have examined his legs. Silvan also treats Ehren well, but they have yet to find a way to cure him.”

“Well, I’m familiar with that.” Hesper let out a bitter smile. T’ll be able to relate to him even better when my leg wears out to the limit in a few years and I won’t be able to walk anymore.”

“Please don’t say that. I’m sure there must be a way to heal your legs. Your brother and Julian haven’t given up hope of finding a doctor for you,” Nathaniel said. He turned around, fixed his gaze on her, and continued seriously. “It’ll get better.”

Nathaniel was not the first one to comfort her.

Even though she was aware that it was not that easy to cure her leg, she still forced a smile on her face. “Well, I’ll take your word for it.”

“Nate? I didn’t know you were here!”

Hesper and Nathaniel turned their heads as a few people Hesper did not know walked over to them. Since they were of marriageable age, she assumed that they must have been brought over by their elders to attend the matchmaking session.

Nathaniel knew each and every one of them. While they were talking, Hesper sat at the side and stared blankly at the flower.

“Are you Rachael? We haven’t seen each other ever since you went missing.” The girl who called out to Nathaniel before approached Hesper. With her arm stretched forward and a big smile on her face, she introduced herself to Hesper. “My name is Dianthe Bayless. You’ve probably already forgotten about me, but we used to be very close when we were kids.”

The people around them laughed and Hesper could tell from their reactions that the relationship between Rachael and Dianthe might not have been as good as Dianthe claimed. However, Dianthe seemed like a harmless girl, so Hesper reached out her hand and said, “I’m Hesper.”

Dianthe rolled her eyes. Unlike other adults whose irises turned brown as they grew up, Dianthe’s irises were particularly black and she looked youthful. For a moment, Hesper thought Dianthe was younger than her.

“So, you call yourself Hesper now... Hmm, this a good name. It sounds a lot better than Rachael,” Dianthe said as she shook her head. “Rachael sounds like the name of a hooker, don’t you think?”

“Dianthe.” Nathaniel shook his head.

Dianthe stuck her tongue out. “Whatever. But I really think Hesper is a nice name. Right, Hesper?”

Before Hesper could say anything, Nathaniel sighed helplessly and chimed in. “You can just ignore her. There’s something wrong with her head.”

“Nate!” Dianthe was dissatisfied with Nathaniel’s comment about her, but since they had always looked up to Nathaniel since they were kids, she could only puff her cheeks out. “Alright, alright, I’ll stop teasing her. Let’s exchange our contact information, Hesper.”

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After that, she turned around to look at Nathaniel and asked, “I’m sure this is fine, right? You’ve got to stop being such a control freak. Hesper is just your fiancée. She isn’t your wife yet...”

Dianthe pointed at the QR code on her phone and continued. “Hurry up and scan it, Hesper. I should warn you about one thing though. You shouldn’t marry Nathaniel. He’s so possessive, and he’ll take away all of your freedom as soon as you two get married... My God, just thinking about it is scary. Even my dad doesn’t control me that much.”

Hesper scanned the QR code and lowered her head, trying to hold back a smile. She did not know who gave Dianthe her name, but she felt that they had made the right choice. The name Dianthe meant silent and gentle, and it was true that Dianthe should not speak that much.

“You haven’t stopped speaking from the moment you got here,” Nathaniel commented, his eyebrows tightly furrowed.

“Being able to speak for a long time without stopping is a special gift from heaven as well, don’t you think?” Dianthe said while lifting her eyebrows. She leaned over and bumped Hesper’s shoulder. “What do you think? Someone like him who always keeps a serious face won’t attract girls at all.”

Honestly, when Dianthe first came over with her group of friends, Hesper thought she was one of Nathaniel’s pursuers. However, after talking to her, Hesper felt that Dianthe was there to tell her not to marry Nathaniel.

However, she had to disagree with Dianthe. Nathaniel did not keep a serious face at all times.

“Alright, let’s stop fooling around,” Nathaniel said. He handed the umbrella to Hesper and stood closer to her. “Let’s go inside. The snow is getting heavier.”

“Oh, ho, ho, ho.”

Hesper had come across someone as enthusiastic as Dianthe before; Jessie was one of the examples. Still, she could not help feeling a little embarrassed when it came to this situation.

“What about you? Are you not going in?” Hesper asked.

Nathaniel shook his head before stretching his arm forward to brush off the snow on Hesper’s hair. “I’m not supposed to come to the banquet today. Help me send my regards to your grandfather. I’ll pay him a visit some other day.”

“Alright.”

These actions were a bit too intimate, but Hesper knew Nathaniel was doing this because there were other people watching. Despite that, she could not help feeling a little bit awkward. She waved her hand and said, “Be careful on your way back.”

Nathaniel smiled and nodded. He leaned closer to Hesper and whispered into her ear, “Happy New Year, Hesper.”

Just like Hesper, Dianthe also did not like this kind of occasion. After entering the banquet

she lowered her face in dejection and pulled her face as if she had lost her loved ones. Gone was the confident and assertive Dianthe..

Initially, Hesper felt a little bit uncomfortable at Dianthe's enthusiasm, but when she saw her sitting in the corner like a wilted plant with a piece of cake in her hand, she found her adorable.

"I don't know what the point of this matchmaking session is," Dianthe said. She forked the chocolate crumbs on her cake, looking somewhat dissatisfied. "Don't you think so? They're treating us like those pedigree dogs that have reached the suitable mating age. They bring us out to seek a mate and force us to get married against our wills."

Hesper was speechless. This was the first time she heard someone comparing themselves to dogs. She did not know why but she wanted to introduce Jessie to Dianthe. She had a feeling that they would be able to get along very well with each other.

"Sigh, people like you who're engaged wouldn't understand," Dianthe said dejectedly. Then, she realized something and continued. "Hold on for a second. Why did Master Lane bring you here when you already have a fiancé?"

Hesper felt a little bit guilty and shook her head. "I have no idea either."

Dianthe did not dwell on it, continuing to poke at the piece of cake in the plate that was out of shape.