

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

Chapter 291

We'll see what Hesper thinks."

Arthur Lane waved his hand. "It doesn't matter if she changes her name. She would still be part of the family. Rivera is what she grew up with, so she shouldn't forget where she came from even after becoming part of our family. That's good."

Hesper gave a sigh of relief after hearing that. She turned around and wined at Arthur.

Matthew was done with work and went home not long after they started chatting.

The relatives didn't dare to do anything to Hesper when Matthew wasn't around and were even more cautious when he got there.

If Arthur was protective of Hesper, Matthew downright spoiled her. No one would dare touch his baby sister, or they would be in big trouble.

"There's nothing in your mind other than work."

Matthew was immediately chided by Arthur when he got home. He was used to it, so he didn't even look up when he heard that. "You dropped your cane, Grandpa."

Hesper looked at them gleefully, then picked the cane up. Being stuck in the middle, she felt a little helpless. "You two keep arguing every time you meet. It's Grandpa's birthday tomorrow, Matt. Can't you just let him win this time?"

"I don't need him to do that." Arthur was annoyed. Matthew walked over and gave her a 'he started it' look, then sat next to her.

Hesper didn't know what to do, so she just sat there as if she was transparent.

It was Arthur's birthday the next day, so Hesper and Matthew stayed in their own rooms in the family home. They didn't stay there usually because the office was far away. Only those who had nothing better to do like Helen and Theodore would stay here.

"I wonder if Shawn will show up for Grandpa's birthday tomorrow."

Theodore never officially got married or had any children. If it wasn't because of Shawn, that illegitimate child of his, Hesper would think that he just wanted to be a bachelor forever.

Matthew suddenly remembered that he sent someone to investigate Shawn Lane, so he said, "Even though Shawn is illegitimate, his mother wasn't a nobody. She was a famous singer named Yolanda Chisholm."

"Yolanda Chisholm?" Hesper raised her brows. "She really was famous. I don't pay a lot of attention to the entertainment industry, but I still know that she was one of the top signers."

However, families that were like the Lanes looked down on people in the entertainment industry. They were conservative and would call them 'performers'. They still looked down on people based on their jobs in this era.

"Great-grandpa was very much against their relationship, but after Yolanda passed because of a sickness, Uncle Theo never got married," Matthew explained. "This was a taboo in the family, so we never mentioned it before this."

Hesper nodded.

"I guess Uncle Theo really loved the only son that he had with his lover. Shawn." Hesper thought about it, then continued. "Uncle Theo looked pretty friendly. I guess it was a coincidence."

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Chapter 292

It was Arthur’s birthday the next day. Hesper didn’t work overnight and just gave Renfrew a call before she went to sleep and explained why she didn’t go visit him.

Even though she asked Rickard to explain to Renfrew, to not disappoint him, she still wanted to explain to him personally.

Renfrew knew that he wouldn't be seeing his mother that day but was still happy when she called. He kept repeating that he missed his mommy, and that made Hesper's heart melt. She sat next to the window and smiled.

"I'll visit you when I'm back, even if it's a weekday."

"Yay! I'll be waiting for you!"

Hesper smiled and nodded but realized that Renfrew wouldn't see that. When she wanted to speak again all she heard was the steady breathing of her child.

After some ruffling, Rickard's voice came from the phone. "He fell asleep"

"Alright," Hesper replied. Rickard didn't hang up, so Hesper didn't either. They sat there in silence for a moment, then Rickard spoke.

"You went back to Emperion for Grandpa Arthur's birthday?"

It was a big celebration because Arthur was turning seventy. Everyone knew about it if it wasn't because of his insistence on having the party at home, many would have fought for a chance to host his party.

Maybe because it was too quiet in the room, as the snow silently fell outside the window but Rickard's voice seemed to be next to her. Hesper said yes, then they went back to sitting there silently.

"It's getting late, so you should rest. Good night." Rickard's voice was so gentle as if he was afraid that he would scare her. Hesper didn't speak, then when she wanted to talk, all she heard was the dead tone of the phone.

"...Good night."

Even though Arthur requested to keep the party small and to just invite family and close friends since it was a big milestone, the family still had a lot prepared. Hesper woke up early, but when she walked out of her room, the home looked different.

Matthew was used to waking up early too, so they seemed to have washed up at the same time. When they left their room at the same time, they both paused, then without a word, started laughing.

"I was wondering why this place wasn't decorated when I got home yesterday. I guess it was just a little anxious." Hesper smiled and said, "After waking up, I realized that I have more work to do, and I'm hungry I'm going to see if there's any food in the kitchen."

"Sure, I'm hungry too."

It would be unusual to not have food at this house. The helpers woke up early to prepare the food, but Hesper didn't want to take too much, so she just took two small slices of cake.

"Take this for now." She handed a slice to Matthew. The freshly baked cake was still hot, so she pinched her earlobes and realized that Matthew was looking at her when she looked up

"...What?"

Matthew looked uncomfortable. She looked down to check if her buttons were done wrongly, or maybe

there was a stain... Was there something on her face?

Chapter 293

Matthew snapped back when he noticed that Hesper was looking around, then looked at the cake and shook his head. "Nothing."

"Hmm?" Hesper knew that something was wrong, but he tried to cover it up. She remembered that Matthew told her she looked a lot like Rachel Lane, and it dawned on her.

"Are you thinking about Rachel?"

Matthew didn't hide it and nodded. He kept his eyes on the cake but they weren't in focus. "Whenever we have a party at home, everyone wouldn't have time to take care of me and Rachel. She would always sneak into the kitchen and bring cakes out."

"The cakes were usually hot, and she would pinch her earlobes like how you did and look at me with a cheeky smile."

There were so many memories. Matthew would smile sadly because he had to remember his sister based on his memories... and he was glad that they were all good ones.

Hesper covered her mouth. "You don't have any updates on her yet? You've been looking for her for years. Do you think she just forgot about her past? As you said, it was so long ago and she was really young when she went missing."

"Maybe..."

Matthew shook her head. "I shouldn't have brought this up. If you're still hungry, we can get them to cook something. Even if there's a party that night, we can't let you starve."

"I know." Hesper took a big bite of the cake. "Don't worry, I won't starve myself."

The friends and relatives that arrived the day before were the closer ones. The guests that arrived on the day itself came in groups. Hesper hid upstairs and didn't feel like going down.

Hesper met all the guests before this.

Some were talkative, some were nosy, and some just loved to cause drama. Hesper hated all that and

always wondered if they just had too much time on their hands.

Hesper just poked her head out from upstairs but someone saw her.

"Is that Hesper upstairs?"

"Help!"

Hesper turned and wanted to escape, but the random relative's voice managed to draw everyone's attention to her, so there was no way she could get away.

Matthew was chatting with Uncle Simon, the fourth uncle who rarely went home. When he heard the voice, he looked up and saw Hesper trying to run away and couldn't help but smile.

"The girl really is a lot like Rachel."

Simon's eyes were on Hesper. He saw Hesper smiling and nodding at him, so he nodded back and looked back to Matthew. "I didn't know why you took her in, but I guess I could see now."

I

Matthew didn't speak then Simon continued. "Don't worry, I won't tell anyone about her. When you came to me for a fake DNA test, you probably knew that I'm good at keeping secrets."

"Yes."

Simon was always overseas and rarely returned. Hesper never met the legendary Uncle Simon. All she knew was that he was a good-looking man. Theodore, who was younger, already looked like an old man, yet when Simon stood next to Matthew, they looked the same age.

Chapter 294

Unable to hide upstairs, Hesper had to go down.

Arthur couldn't hide his smile when he watched her walk down. Hesper looked around at the same moment and glared at him while still looking like a well-behaved person.

"Hello everyone! Happy birthday Grandpa"

Arthur smiled and walked over to her. Hesper took a seat next to him and smiled at everyone.

The first person who noticed Hesper kept praising her, but she couldn't remember who she was.

When she turned around, Arthur seemed to be enjoying it, so she just politely let her continue singing her praises.

.Hesper had no idea that she was so highly regarded.

Arthur waved his hand after having enough fun with the situation. "Alright, alright, this girl is just alright. Don't praise her too much, or it'll get to her head!"

Hesper turned around and beamed at him, but he winked back at her.

"Oh by the way, I think it's time for Hesper to get married. I remember that she has an arranged marriage with that Tucker boy, right?"

Hesper sighed when she heard that. She had to face this sooner or later, but bringing that up at this time was just bad timing.

Arthur was looking forward to the wedding. When they were young, his eldest son and Nathaniel's dad. met each other while they were in the army. Since they had a similar background and saw eye to eye on a lot of things, they became best friends very quickly, and that was how the marriage arrangement came about.

He knew that child was best friends with Matthew... just like their fathers.

When he remembered his eldest son who passed away at a young age, he felt sorrowful, but when he looked at Hesper, he felt better.

"It's still up to Hesper. Her work in Genecity just started, so there's no need to rush into a marriage." Hesper was relieved that Arthur had her back.

While they were talking, Nathaniel arrived.

"Nate?"

Nathaniel walked in and saw Matthew and Simon standing there. He nodded at Simon. "It's been a while, Uncle Simon."

Simon smiled and nodded back. "It really has been a while. The last time I met you, you were still studying overseas."

"Yes." Nathaniel scanned the crowd, but Simon teased. "Looking for your fiancée? We were just talking about her."

Nathaniel didn't understand, then he heard them asking about their marriage.

Hesper sat in the middle of the crowd and was in a red fluffy dress. Her ears were read under the light. I'm not planning to get married yet. Grandpa is right; I'm focusing on work right now..."

Hesper's voice wasn't too loud or too soft, but they heard her.

Chapter II

Matthew knew Hesper didn't have feelings for Nathaniel. Seeing how they interacted, Nathaniel seemed

to know too.

He didn't have an opinion about that. Having a marriage arrangement was ridiculous. Even though both their parents were no longer around, the agreement still stood. If the parents just wanted their children to be happy, there was no reason to have that agreement.

Especially when the agreement was made on Hesper's behalf.

Chapter 295

She had the right to turn it down.

She was almost done talking, so she made up an excuse to escape. When she left, she saw Nathaniel and Matthew standing together, so she waved to them then turned and left.

Hesper couldn't be sure she would be able to maintain her smile if she kept getting asked about her marriage.

Everyone split after Hesper walked away and Arthur saw Nathaniel there. That was when Matthew and Simon went over.

"Happy birthday, Uncle."

Simon wasn't interested in blending in with the crowd, so he only walked over with the present for Arthur when that happened. It was a tea set, nothing too lavish. Arthur didn't really like the tea set he had before this, so this gift was just perfect.

He didn't say if he was happy or unhappy about the gift but instead just placed it on the table and asked, "Are you going to stay here for a while, or are you leaving soon?"

"I came back for your birthday," Simon said. "You know that I don't have much going on here, and I have something to get to when I get back."

"You're just not doing proper work!" Arthur tapped his cane on the floor and cleared his throat. "If your dad knew that this is how you're living life, he would climb out of his grave to give you a knock on your head."

Simon didn't know what to do. "My psychologist clinic overseas is well known now. Even though it's nowhere near as successful as Lane Holdings, I'm still doing quite well."

"Say that again? What about..." Arthur paused, then sighed. "Go away, you're hurting my eyes. I don't want to speak to you anymore."

Matthew stood there with no expression, which made Arthur angrier. Before he could put his thoughts into words, Matthew spoke. "Nathaniel is here. I'm sure you want to speak to him."

Nathaniel tilted his head and looked at Matthew who nodded. "I know you have something to say

to Grandpa."

Simon smiled as Nathaniel accepted his fate and nodded. "Matthew, you... alright. I do have something to talk to you about. I think Matt is at an age to get married."

Simon started laughing. Arthur looked at the three men and frowned then waved his hand. "You three just can't be compared to Hesper. Go away, I don't want to be angry."

The three men nodded and left.

All the guests had arrived and the night slowly crept in.

Hesper was looking at the newest designs on her computer when Matthew knocked on her door. She suddenly realized that it was late, so she closed her laptop and checked her makeup in the mirror.

Great, it was still on..

She opened the door and saw Matthew and Nathaniel standing in front of her door. "Grandpa didn't talk about marriage after I left, did he?"

"No," Nathaniel smirked. "Don't worry, today isn't the best time to bring this up. We'll get another chance. I'll do what I promised."

Hesper nodded and looked relieved. "Thanks."

Matthew looked at them suspiciously. "What are you hiding from me?"

Chapter 296

What Nathaniel mentioned was their agreement to cancel the marriage agreement.

There was no reason to hide this from Matthew, but seeing how curious he looked, Hesper became playful and winked at Nathaniel. "What could we hide from you? Right, Nate?"

"Yeah."

Matthew didn't believe them one bit but just shook his head.

"I don't want to know. You're just teasing me."

The party was in full swing. Hesper had a set of chess made from jade. It wasn't something unique, but since Arthur loved to play chess, he would usually use top-quality chess pieces. It wasn't something that was rare, but Hesper had to get it custom-made for his birthday.

Hesper put a lot of effort into the present. Even though it wasn't the most expensive gift there, it was the one that he loved the most.

Arthur loved it so much that he asked Theodore to play a game with him after the party.

Hesper knew her gift was definitely not the most expensive, but Arthur's love for her gave the gift a different meaning, and the recognition made her eyes well up.

Sometimes she would think it would be so nice if she really was a Lane, but then she would realize that what she had was more than she deserved, so she shouldn't wish for more.

However, Hesper looked over when Theodore was mentioned. There was a familiar yet unfamiliar man standing next to him, and that was Shawn Lane.

Hesper admired him for bringing his illegitimate son home. However, he wasn't exactly illegitimate. Yolanda just never had the chance to marry into the family when she was alive.

Shawn saw her and paused then nodded as a greeting to her.

Did he know her? Hesper paused but Shawn looked away. Hesper looked in his direction with a confused expression and only looked away after a long time.

If Shawn knew her, he wouldn't be the one spreading the rumor.

But why didn't Shawn go see her during the competition? Hesper wouldn't know that his person existed if it wasn't by chance.

Before she could think about it any further, the gifting session was over.

There weren't any outsiders during the party, so everyone talked to each other casually. Hesper listened to an hour of family gossip before she finally couldn't take it anymore. She saw Matthew leaving, so she followed along.

The air outside was better than inside. Hesper socialized with people a lot, but she didn't feel comfortable during the party because she had to keep smiling.

Matthew and Hesper stood on the balcony and snow fell.

Hesper stretched out her hand to catch some, but the beautiful snowflakes would melt in her

2/2

hands quickly. It was like the happiness that she was currently experiencing. It would one day disappear.

"It's cold outside. Put on a coat."

Matthew lit up a cigarette. Hesper rarely saw him smoking. When the cigarette between his fingers turned red in the dark night, Hesper shook her head. "I don't want to go back in there."

They stood there quietly until Matthew finished smoking.

"Alright. Let's go back."

Matthew snubbed the bud and turned around but realized that Hesper was looking at him with

clear eyes.

Chapter 297

"Matt, if Rachel returns, I'll leave immediately."

"...Don't say that." Matthew frowned. "I said this before. You're my sister, no matter what. Even if she comes back, you'll still be my sister."

Hesper shook her head and smiled, but it looked broken in the cold wind.

"When she comes back, I'll return her brother to her."

The time she had at Emperion was short. Hesper returned to Genecity, but this time, Matthew didn't come along.

There was a lot of work to do in Emperion, especially since she had to take part in the competition. The hype that it brought benefited Lane Holdings, so Matthew was busy.

The fourth stage of the competition was around the new year. The most important project in Genecity was the design competition. Hesper didn't get involved in it, so there was nothing much to do at home.

That morning, she went to room 345 earlier with a bag of flour.

The live-streaming room was still very quiet at that hour. Even Hesper wouldn't show up so early usually, but a lot of viewers who had nothing else to do started watching the stream and saw Hesper.

"Oh, she's so early today. I thought I was the only one who would be watching so early because I'm on holiday."

"Me too..."

After watching her open up the container of flour, they thought that she was going to make some ravioli because it would be a nice thing to have during the new year countdown.

"I feel like I'm watching a cooking show, but this is supposed to be a designer?"

"Ever since I found out that she's married, when I watch her cook, she suddenly looks like she has

the halo of a mother."

Hesper didn't make too much. After getting the flour ready, she let it sit as she went to read the news. When the flour rose, she got ready to make them into raviolis.

Hesper didn't know most of the people mentioned in the entertainment news. She was usually busy and didn't have a lot of time, and since Lane Holdings were rarely involved in the industry and the endorsement deals were made by those lower down the command chain, she had no idea who these celebrities were.

She read through the news blindly and noticed a post about her.

The title was 'Hesper Rivera, a sugar baby.'

Hesper was confused about what was happening.

When Hesper clicked on it, a lot of viewers started reading the same article and the readership rose so quickly that it went straight to the first spot for entertainment news.

The post talked about how she left school, went through her divorce, went back to university, and joined the competition. There was nothing wrong with everything said.

But then the further it went, the more ludicrous it became. It included a few photos of Isaac picking her up from the university!

Someone managed to find out that Isaac was in the senior management team at Lane Holdings. The reason Hesper managed to do so well during the competition was because the 'senior manager' leaked the themes to her!

Hesper read and didn't know how to react. When she left the page and went to read another article, her smile froze.

Why was this the top trending topic?

1/2

Chapter 298

Hesper was just reading the news out of curiosity, but now she was worried because the fake news had become the top trending post.

Who could have been so creative? Isaac was just an assistant and was nowhere close to being on the senior management team. Her relationship with Isaac was... What was going on!

Hesper wanted to contact Renee to remove the post, but the phone the production team gave her couldn't be used for communications. All she could do was watch as things happened.

Renee would definitely try to remove the post... right?

Even though she knew that Renee would take care of it, she was still worried. That post had been shared many times and it would affect the views about the competition. Covering it up would only do so much.

Should she expose her true identity? That would just make the story that she had an insider more believable.

"I'm here for the tea. Someone said that Hesper was a sugar baby, but no one believed them?" "Hesper seems anxious. Did she see the news?"

"The truth will eventually come out. I used to like her a lot, but I guess I can't feel sorry for her."

"I don't believe that she would do that... Could there be a misunderstanding? I believe in my beautiful lady!"

The chatroom turned into an argument, but Hesper didn't know that. All she wanted to do was get in touch with the outside world. The best way to do that would be to reach out to a crew member, but that would mean that she would break the balance.

After the flour rose, Hesper still made the ravioli and dropped them in the water to boil.

Celine was not there yet. Hesper watched as the ravioli bobbed around and covered the lid. She zoned out for a second, then someone rang the doorbell.

At this hour?

Hesper checked her watch. Celine knew the password to the room, so who would be there so early in the morning?

The ravioli was still boiling when Hesper turned to get the door and saw someone unexpected.

“Shawn?”

Not only was Hesper curious, everyone in the live-streaming room was even more curious. The room that was previously silent suddenly became full and it was filled with people who wanted some juicy stories. Among those was a group who were interested in Shawn.

“Did he just get there? He went straight to 345 to see Hesper as soon as he got to the hotel.”

“Do they know each other? I don't remember seeing them interact. Do I have amnesia?”

“No, I love this guy. They never interacted.”

2/2

“I think Shawn left too hurriedly and probably came back to tell Hesper when he read about her. They seem to know each other quite well.”

Shawn went into the room and smelled the food. He didn't know what to say. “It's a mess outside, yet you're here making ravioli?”

Hesper beamed at him, wondering about just when she had become close to Shawn. He then pulled her over and whispered, “Matt is going to tell everyone who you are. This is the best solution. It's not up for discussion.”

Even though she expected that to happen, Hesper still sighed. “Can't we talk about it?”
“What do you think?”

Chapter 299

Shawn slapped his forehead. "Don't worry, this won't affect your competition. I'm sure you know the PR team of Lane Holdings. They'll be able to turn anything around. Don't worry."

"There's nothing to turn around!"

Their whispers weren't captured by the live stream, so everyone watching was anxiously waiting to know what they were saying. No one was able to hear anything.

"I don't know why, but I have a feeling that this will change. Even though something seems to be off about Hesper, she doesn't look guilty."

"Yes... I think so too, but everyone in the chat seems to be trying to tear her down, so I didn't want to oppose."

"Hesper must have grown up in a good environment. If there really was something fishy going on, I'll admit that I've misjudged her."

"No way someone is still on her side. Why would people like a divorced sugar baby?"

"Hold on, stop arguing. Shouldn't we check Lane Holdings's announcement?"

Matthew quickly took action. During the age of information, anything could change in the blink of an eye, so managing things quickly would contain disaster.

Most importantly, Matthew just couldn't stand seeing people slander her.

Lane Holdings:

Have you watched the interview with Ms. Lane? (Shock) click the link and enjoy one minute of the beautiful Ms. Lane! @hesperL

The official account of Lane Holdings had always been cold. They would never use a playful tone even when they were announcing endorsement deals. They were so formal people thought that a robot made all their posts.

After seeing the shocked emoji, a lot of people felt that they were mocked as if they were saying how could they not know who Ms. Lane was.

The video was Hesper during an interview in Genecity. After Juniper introduced 'Ms. Lane', the background music sped up and Hesper's picture was shown like it was a video for publicity.

Matthew posted a lawyer's letter on his account, saying that anyone who slandered his sister, Hesper Rivera, would be getting the letter and they would take things to court.

Within an hour, the problem was resolved.

Isaac was worried too. He woke up and read the news that he and Hesper were having a fling.

That was a terrible accusation!

“It’s so funny. It took less than an hour for the netizens to shut up.”

“Lane Holdings is so efficient they managed to bring the big guns out.”

“To the person saying that they were efficient, if your sister was wrongly accused, wouldn’t you punish the person who spread the rumor?”

“I didn’t know that Hesper was such an important person. I’m shocked. She’s beautiful and capable. Plus, she was born into a good family. When is it my turn?”

None of the online comments said anything bad about her. She was no longer just a designer. She was Ms. Lane of Lane Holdings, the beloved daughter of the family. No one would dare test her.

In the meantime, Michelle hid in her car and read the news on her phone.

How could Hesper be Ms. Lane? When she was in school, she...

Hesper had always kept a low profile, so Michelle never would have thought that she was from an affluent family, and she would definitely not guess that Hesper was a Lane!

She was glad she hid her identity when she sold the photos.

Chapter 300

She didn’t want things to link back to her.

However, she was never as glad as when she made the decision previously. She hated how dumb she used to be. If she knew that Hesper was a Lane, she definitely wouldn’t have offended someone like her.

Michelle regretted it.

If she was nice to Hesper like Jessie, she would have all the resources and network she wanted. Hesper now had a bad impression of her. Would it affect her career in the future?

Michelle grabbed her hair in the car, but since the time to be at the venue was approaching, she had to get out of the car even if she didn’t want to face Hesper.

She tossed her phone into her car. After she left, her phone screen lit up.

Lucy: I just saw the news and remembered that the person at the reunion was really Hesper's fiancé! They just reunited with Ms. Lane three years ago, but Nathaniel Tucker was always meant to be the fiancé.

As Hesper's identity was revealed, the fourth stage of the competition took a turn for the unusual. Everyone was so interested in the news they forgot to show their best works

They were lucky that Roberto wasn't there, and everyone calmed down.

The people who weren't affected were Shawn, Celine who became very excited when she saw ravioli, and her.

Michelle's mind was a mess. Her rank dropped to somewhere in the middle. On the other hand, Shawn got third place because he managed to show his talent. His ranking finally improved.

"Michelle must be so regretful now. The person that she was bullying suddenly turned out to be Ms. Lane."

"Who would have thought? But I've seen Michelle walking past room 345 multiple times and thought that she was there to get some information.

Hesper didn't pay much attention to the arguments and stares.

Maybe since her family background was normal or maybe it was because Matthew's announcement was too serious, but everyone seemed to be unusually kind.

After Hesper got back to the office, the first thing she did was finish her work.

Without Matthew's help, her job became tedious. She sighed. Ever since she went back to Genecity, Matthew hadn't called her or texted. Chapter 301

The voice hesitated. Hesper thought that she would hear the voice she heard the previous time, but she didn't. After a long pause, a familiar voice was heard.

"Ms. Rivera, it's me."

"Seth."

Renfrew poked his head out and looked around the corridor. Julie and Sophia stopped looking for him, and since his dad was working and didn't have time to look after him, the helpers wouldn't be back without permission.

"Are you ready? I don't have a lot of time..."

The voice hurried him, so Renfrew quickly closed the door and whispered, "Ready, Ms. Myriade!"

“Be more serious. I’m your mentor now, so it’s Madam Myriade!” Myriade pressed her lips together. “Alright, I’m announcing the beginning of the mid-term exam. I’ll be watching your throughout the entire process, so focus on answering!”

“Yes, ma’am!”

Myriade watched the surveillance and remembered the last time-

Renfrew failed to run away and was caught by Rickard. Myriade thought she would be exposed, but Renfrew managed to keep his promise. Even when Rickard tried to form a wedge between them, Renfrew still chose to believe in her.

That was... troubling.

“You’re training your protégé?”

Riley walked over and patted her head. That messed up her nicely tied ponytail. Myriade shook her head. “Don’t do that, or else I won’t grow tall!”

“Oh, that’s just an old wives tale. It’s not true.”

“You’re just gaslighting me.”

Myriade removed her hair tie and retied her hair. Riley approached and looked at the surveillance but Myriade quickly tapped a button and the screen went dark.

“This baby is your protégé...” Riley was just teasing her and didn’t really intend to see what he looked like, so he took two steps back and pretended to be hurt. “When I get to Halwanest, I’m going to kidnap your protégé to run tests on him to see why you like him so much.”

“...You won’t be able to,” Myriade mumbled and removed her earpiece. When she heard some tinkling noises coming from a room nearby, she understood. “Are you here because the psycho lost it again?”

“Not exactly. I just like talking to you...” Riley leaned down and smiled. “I’ll tie your hair for you. Can you speak to Big-T for me please?”

Myriade was unmoved. “I couldn’t care less about that psycho. His going crazy isn’t important

enough to contact Big T. I won’t speak to him just because of your personal issues. If there’s nothing more important, I need to focus on my protégé.”

Riley was beautiful, even in the public’s eyes. He was tall and slender, had beautiful eyes, and was well-dressed. He wore something different every other day.

Myriade was curious as to whether he spent his money on clothes when he wasn't spending it on the psycho, but she wouldn't budge, because not only was Riley not a beautiful woman, but he

wasn't a woman at all.

He managed to trick everyone who didn't know the truth. Myriade hated the psycho the most among the people in the organization, and Riley was in second place.

*

Chapter 301

The voice hesitated. Hesper thought that she would hear the voice she heard the previous time, but she didn't. After a long pause, a familiar voice was heard.

"Ms. Rivera, it's me."

"Seth."

Renfrew poked his head out and looked around the corridor. Julie and Sophia stopped looking for him, and since his dad was working and didn't have time to look after him, the helpers wouldn't be back without permission.

"Are you ready? I don't have a lot of time..."

The voice hurried him, so Renfrew quickly closed the door and whispered, "Ready, Ms. Myriade!"

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*

Chapter 302

Myriade was usually nice, but whenever Big T was involved, she would be impartial. Riley knew that about her, so he said, “What if this is related to Hesper? Would you still keep it from him?”

—

Myriade heard Renfrew's voice coming from her earpiece when Riley brought Hesper up. Even though she knew he wouldn't be able to hear them, she still felt nervous.

"Riley, I don't know why you're being so nice to the psycho, but a word of advice, stay away from him or you might get burned." Myriade's expression was cold. "I'll speak to Big T. Anything else?" "Nothing else, sweetie."

Riley smiled, his protruding canine making his smile sharper. His friendly-looking face suddenly looked evil. "I just hope that you'll stop calling him a psycho. He hates it. Even I won't be able to stop him if he loses his mind, you know."

Myriade glared at Riley, who returned to his friendly look a second later. "Thank you, Mimi. I'll get you some candy-"

Hesper hung up after speaking to Seth, with more questions than answers.

Looking back to ten minutes ago, she heard Seth's voice and immediately linked it to the young cook from the other day.

This was an unknown number and not the one he gave her previously. That was why she didn't make the connection at first.

"Last time I called, someone else picked up." Hesper thought that he would call her again but he didn't, so she forgot about it.

Seth cleared his throat, then said, "I don't have much time, so I'll get straight to the point. You know about my restaurant in Genecity. When you go there this weekend, come see me if I'm there, but if not, wait for my call."

"Why?" Hesper didn't understand. "I don't know you very well, so I'd like to know why you're contacting me first. Everything you're saying now is just confusing me."

"...Please do as I say. I can't explain on the phone, but just trust me."

Seth's voice trailed off. After Hesper realized that he stopped speaking, she wanted to hang up, but then he spoke again. "Ms. Rivera, please pay my restaurant a visit this weekend."

Hesper tapped her pen on the paper on the desk. "Alright, I'll do as you say this time. I hope that it'll be worth my time. And I won't tell Nate about this before I see you."

"Thanks."

They ended the call. Hesper looked out the window and it was still bright outside, but she felt something stuck in her chest.

Why did it have to be set during the weekend? She wouldn't be able to meet Renfrew again.

She sighed again and sent Rickard a message. She hadn't slept the previous night because she was working, and maybe the sun was too warm and the call gave her some anxiety, but she suddenly felt sleepy.

After hesitating, she laid down on the table and took a nap.

Meanwhile, Renfrew looked at the results of the first test he ever took and was a little proud. If he had a tail, he would have wagged it.

"I didn't well, didn't I, Ms. Myriade?"

Chapter 303

Myriade felt proud because Renfrew was indeed talented. What she taught was far more than the basics. Renfrew being able to do so well at such a young age reminded her of herself when she

was younger.

"Even though you did well this time, you need to stay humble. I'll teach you more."

Myriade was very organized. Suddenly, a faint alarm went off. It was something she set up after what happened previously with Rickard to monitor whenever he showed up.

"Your dad is coming back. I need to go."

Before Renfrew could say anything, Myriade cut off.

Why would his dad be back at this hour?

Renfrew looked out at the sun and ran his eyes in confusion. "Isn't it just the afternoon? Why does dad always come home early whenever I'm speaking to Ms. Myriade?" He was a little sad.

Ever since his communication with her was exposed, Myriade had been very careful whenever she was in touch with him.

He was very worried that Myriade would stop playing with him when she met some other kid.

Rickard came back to see Renfrew.

Hesper suddenly changed her plans, so Rickard was a little confused. Even though he said okay in his messages, he still wanted to find out the reason behind the change of plans.

However, he didn't get a reply.

Even though he knew that Isaac would be with her and she would be safe, he still worried.

“Go see Mommy together?” Renfrew’s eyes shone when he heard what Rickard said, but he hesitated, then shook his head. “But Mommy probably has something going on right now. Didn’t we plan to meet during the weekend? Why are we going to see her now?”

Rickard didn’t know how to explain to him and ended up telling him about her change of plans.

“Mommy is very busy. It’s fine if I don’t see her this week.” Renfrew shook his head. “I won’t bother her when she’s working. You’re just using me because you’re the one who misses her.”

Seeing how Rickard was tongue-tied, Renfrew giggled. “Why are you shy about missing Mommy?”

Rickard was going to say something when the door was shoved open and Julie walked in.

“No, you can’t see her!” She grabbed Rickard’s arm. “My dear son, how long are you going to stay blinded? That woman isn’t a good person! You’re being stupid!”

Renfrew frowned at her before Rickard could speak.

“Don’t talk about my mommy that way!” He shoved her.

Julie didn’t think that Renfrew would push her, so she lost her balance and fell. When she realized what happened, she threw a tantrum and kicked around.

“Look at him! This is what Hesper taught him! See what he has turned into!”

4

Chapter 304

“He’s just three years old now and he’s putting his hands on older people. What is he going to turn into later on?”

Julie continued to sit on the floor. Rickard frowned and looked tired. “Mom, can you stop? Renfrew was right and there’s nothing wrong with Hesper’s parenting either. You’re biased.”

“Oh, so it’s my fault now?” Julie slapped the floor. “I’m doing this for your own good. Have you forgotten who your mother is because of that woman and this kid? Rickard Duval, you’re my son. You came from me! Why would I do anything that’s bad for you?”

Renfrew pouted. "My mom wouldn't do that either. Mommy is the best mommy in the world! You can't talk badly about her. You're horrible to her!"

"You know nothing, kid!"

Julie tried to grab Renfrew but Rickard pulled him behind him. "Mom, stop this."

Julie heaved and pointed at him with a shaky finger. "You've been bewitched. You've always been the son I was proud of! How could you end up like this?"

Sophia came over when she heard the voices.

She had been behaving a lot better recently because she was worried that Hesper would frame her again when she was out having fun, so she just stayed in and gamed.

"Rickard... Mom?" Sophia looked at them and rubbed her eyes as she yawned. "What's the noise? Is this about Hesper again?"

"Ask him!"

Rickard closed his eyes. "I need to get some things sorted right now. I'm not going to walk away from Hesper. I know everything that you did. Juniper is not who you think she is either!"

"So Hesper is? You've lost your mind!"

Rickard nodded as he clenched his jaw. "Yes, I've lost my mind. Happy now? I'll get her back. I promise you this."

"Rickard Duval!" Julie was still on the floor when Rickard left with Renfrew. "Rickard, don't walk away if you still think of me as your mother! Rickard!"

Renfrew pulled a face.

Julie was so angry, she almost got to her feet, but she fell pretty hard before so she couldn't get up. All she could do was watch them walk away.

"Are you blind? Help me up!"

Julie went all out. Sophia, who was still not sure what was happening, complained. "Why are you yelling at me? I'm not him. Even if you yell at me, he'll still go to Hesper-

"Shut your mouth!" Julie grabbed her hand and pulled herself up. "Your brother has been bewitched. I have to make sure he snaps out of it... As for Renfrew, that bastard, see how I deal

with him!"

Sophia was ambushed by Hesper a few times, so no longer wanted to be on her bad side. She looked down on her because Hesper was poor and demure, and she thought she was nice to push around.

How could the person who grew up with monetary assistance from their family be worthy of marrying into the family? Only an elegant and proud woman like Juniper would be worthy of marrying her brother.

However, Juniper had been messing up a lot lately. Hesper returned with a different identity and turned into Ms. Lane, and she became prettier too...

She felt that she must have been blind in the past.

"Maybe you should stop arguing with him. It doesn't matter who he ends up with, does-?"

Before Sophia could finish her sentence, Juline glared at her, so she stopped.

Chapter 305

Hesper slept for a long time, and when she opened her eyes again, it was nightfall.

She rubbed her arm, which had gone numb and turned around to see Renfrew staring at her.

"Mommy, you're awake!"

"...Ren?" Hesper couldn't believe her eyes and was stunned to see him. She thought that she was still dreaming. "Why are you here?"

Renfrew tilted his head. "Daddy had some work to attend to and won't be able to spend time with me for the next few days, so I came to see you!"

Hesper still felt that this wasn't real, but he had his usual bag with him and there was a little luggage at the other side of the room as if he packed his bags and came over.

"Aren't you glad?"

Renfrew looked at her worriedly and looked sad as he thought about the idea that his dad came up with.

He had to do so much just to get his parents' attention.

"Of course, I would love to have you around me all the time!" Hesper patted his head. "I have some work to finish up. Wait for me right here, and we'll go home together, okay?"

"Okay!"

Hesper sent a message to Isaac. If Renfrew wanted to get to her office, he must have gone through Isaac or Renee. Otherwise, a child wouldn't be able to get there on their own.

It looked more like Rickard dropped him off. Renee never liked Rickard, so he would probably avoid her. That meant Isaac was the one he spoke to.

As she deduced, Isaac replied very quickly and said that after Rickard dropped him off, he left. He called her on her phone but she didn't pick up, so he guessed that she was either resting or very busy, so he escorted Renfrew up himself.

"Is there a problem?" Isaac was a little nervous until Hesper said that everything was alright.

"Carry on. I'm going to give Rickard a call."

"Alright."

Hesper was still feeling suspicious. She hadn't heard the Duvals doing anything drastic recently that needed Rickard to be so busy that he didn't even have time for Renfrew.

"Ren, can I ask you a question?"

Hesper pulled him over because the easiest way to find out was to ask. She trusted him.

Renfrew nodded and without hesitation said, "Go ahead!"

"Good." Hesper patted his head. "My question is... do you know what Rickard. um, Daddy is going to do for the next few days?"

Renfrew beamed.

"All I know is that he's going to another country..."

Another country?

Hesper nodded and let go of him as she went into deep thought. Was he conducting business with a foreign company?

Chapter 309

Now that he finally had a clearer picture of how old 'Hessy' was, he looked at her in shock, then looked toward Renfrew. He looked as if the sky was falling.

"Hessy has a kid!"

"It's Aunty Hesper..." Yohanna corrected him.

To Renfrew, these two people were strangers, so he hid behind Hesper and sighed after hearing the conversation. Why did they keep bumping into weird people that day?

Yohanna was a little embarrassed, but Hesper understood that Gabe had a little crush on her, which is why he said what he said. She shook her head with a smile. "Don't worry, Gabe is very cute."

Gabriel finally accepted that 'Hessy' had a son around his age and he looked away- to Renfrew.

"You're Ren, right? You're so adorable. Candy?"

Renfrew wasn't afraid of the child, so when he heard what Gabriel said, he walked forward and stretched out his hand but was quickly pulled back.

"You're so cute. Have you played" Gabriel started talking a lot about games, but Renfrew had never played any games before, so he only listened, but his eyes shone.

The games all sounded interesting!

"Alright, let's not talk in the corridor."

The corridor wasn't narrow, but with four people standing there, the way was blocked, so Yohanna said, "Why don't you come to our palace? I bought some food for Gabe on the way back. The children can talk while they snack."

Hesper rarely had the chance to socialize. Going to their neighbor's home would mean that they would be guests in the home of someone they weren't very close to, and that meant...

But before Hesper could think about it, Renfrew grabbed Gabriel's hand and turned back to look at her with anticipation.

Hesper sighed. She could tell that Renfrew was interested in Gabriel, so she nodded. "Alright, sorry for bothering you."

"Not at all." Yohanna smiled. "We're neighbors."

The layout of their homes was the same, but Hesper focused on practicality when she renovated her home, and she had a higher budget. Even though it looked like a normal home, it was obvious that the owner was well-off.

Their neighbor's home was very different. It was a standard family home. Random household items cluttered the space. It looked cozy and full.

"I'm sorry. We've been getting more and more things the older Gabe gets..." Yohanna said with a little embarrassment as she led her guests to the living room. "It doesn't look... very neat."

In reality, although it was filled with things, they were all neatly arranged. It was crowded but not messy. They could tell that Yohanna did keep her home tidy.

Chapter 306

But since Renfrew was there, Hesper just went with it.

After napping for a bit in the afternoon, she felt energetic. Even though the call with Seth that afternoon confused her, she knew she would find out the truth when the weekend came.

She finished her work, and with one hand on the luggage and the other holding Renfrew, she was ready to leave the office.

She immediately felt eyes on her the moment she walked out of the building, but when looked over, she couldn't tell who was staring.

"Mommy, all these people are acting weird," Renfrew whispered, tugging at her shirt.

"Why are they peeping? They did that when I came here..."

"Really?" When she heard that, she understood. Her employees were silently observing them. Even though she never hid the fact that she had a child, this was the first time he was there, so everyone was probably curious.

Especially because Renfrew was Rickard Duval's son too.

Even though she understood that everyone loved a bit of gossip, she still felt annoyed. When she saw them all suddenly start typing away, she suspected they all had a group chat without her.

Hesper's suspicions were true.

Employee A: Ms. Lane's son is so cute. Who would have thought?

Employee B: I bumped into her son at the pantry earlier. He looked like a chubby bunny the closer I got. He's so adorable and beautiful! He even greeted me. He's so polite!

Employee C: Honestly, with Ms. Lane and Mr. Duval's genes, if the child didn't turn out to be good-looking, there must have been some cheating going on.

Employee D: So adorable.

Employee A: I've realized that whenever you speak, the mood just drops. Which department are you from?"

Rickard switched his phone to airplane mode. He turned around and realized that it was already dark outside. He wondered if Hesper and Renfrew got home safely.

Even though dropping Renfrew with Hesper was a last minute idea, his trip overseas was planned

long ago.

He asked Benji to go find a doctor that could help Hesper's legs recover, but all the doctors that he met said that it was near impossible except one strange doctor, but he stopped replying after a while.

Even though Rickard didn't manage to contact the doctor, Benji managed to find out where the man usually frequented. Rickard was going over to bring the doctor back so he could give her a physical assessment.

The area wasn't large and there was no guarantee that the doctor would show up. However, Rickard wasn't going to let any chances slip away.

Even though Zikmund was usually a playboy and wasn't a serious person, what he said the other night made sense.

The side effects Hesper suffered were because of his family. Even if he pushed emotions aside, he could still see how much pain and sequelae she felt on her knees.

He had to make sure that she recovered to her healthy self before he started making up with love.

“I hope everything goes smoothly...” Rickard looked out the window and watched as the sky. turned cloudy. The pilot announced that they were going to take off soon and reminded them about safety precautions. Rickard suddenly became anxious.

Chapter 307

He had a bad feeling.

Renfrew’s room had always been cleaned so that it was ready whenever he came over.

Hesper unpacked his luggage and thought that his little pajamas were so adorable. Even the tips. Rickard left in the bag looked fine.

Even though she had no idea when Renfrew would come over, she still bought ice cream and kept it in the fridge. She wasn’t a huge fan of ice cream because she found it too sweet, but now that Renfrew was there, he could have it all.

“I love you, Mommy!”

Renfrew jogged over with his box of ice cream and gave Hesper a kiss on the cheek. “Were you waiting for me to come back?”

Hesper nodded. She felt happy when she saw how delighted he was. “You’re my baby and the little master of this house. Of course I’ll have something you love here.”

“You’re the best, Mommy!” Renfrew suddenly remembered his dad and pouted. “Daddy is just

second best.”

Hesper couldn’t help but laugh.

It was the winter holidays, so Renfrew didn’t have to go to school. Hesper was worried that it. would be dangerous for him to stay at home alone, or that he would be bored, so she brought him.

to work.

Renfrew would play on the couch while she worked and would sometimes go outside and play with the other employees.

Hesper could tell that he was very popular there. Even though everyone was nice to her, she knew that they feared her.

Renfrew did enjoy some special treatment at the office. He had a mountain of snacks and everyone would always surround him.

“Is Ren your nickname? It’s so cute!”

Renfrew wasn’t afraid of strangers; when he heard the lady praising him, he immediately acted like a gentleman. He was only wearing sportswear but he looked dapper.

“You’re really pretty too.”

Everyone laughed at that, but he didn’t know why. These adults were weird.

Hesper had been a little worried that he would be shy, but seeing how popular he was, she was relieved and quietly went back to her office.

If she suddenly showed up behind the group, everyone would freak out and split up. Although Hesper was strict when it came to work, it was fine if everyone had some fun during their break.

There was no reason for her to break it up.

Renfrew was surrounded throughout the break. When he went back to Hesper’s office, he was tired, but he had an armful of snacks from the people there.

“Mommy... the people are all so... nice.”

Renfrew placed the snacks on the couch and sighed. “But I don’t think they’re very clever. Why would they ask if I’m your child? We look so much alike. It’s so obvious that we’re related!”

Hesper chuckled, but Renfrew sighed again. “You have to work and also provide jobs for the silly people outside. It must be tiring...”

Chapter 308

Hesper couldn’t hold in her laughter anymore. The employees weren’t useless. Everyone who was hired by the company had to work very hard to get where they were, the cream of the crop, yet Renfrew said they were dumb.

“You need to be more understanding. They just think that you’re adorable.” Worrying that Renfrew would show his disdain toward them and hurt their feelings, Hesper decided to give him some advice. “You’re a mature child, so you need to understand.”

Renfrew nodded and looked somewhere distant.

“I will.”

Meanwhile, the plane that flew the entire night over the ocean finally landed.

Rickard didn't take his private helicopter and just chose to travel like a normal traveler to avoid drawing too much attention to himself. Even though he didn't know why the doctor suddenly stopped replying to him, if he missed this chance, there might not be another person who would be able to heal Hesper.

"I've emailed the information about the area to you. I found out through my investigation that a mysterious group seems to be active there. The doctor might be one of them or could be hired by them." Benji's voice came from the earbuds.

The bell of a church tolled. Rickard looked around that foreign land and looked determined.

"Hesper, I'm going to find this doctor to help you."

After coming back from the office, Hesper held Renfrew's hand and bumped into the neighbor who was coming home with their child.

Hesper wasn't very interested in socializing, but since they were her neighbors and they saw each other often, she knew them.

The neighbors were a small family of three. The husband seemed to work as a manager in a small company. Even though he didn't have a huge paycheck, he was able to buy a house in Genecity, so that meant that he was good at what he did.

"Hes?"

Hesper walked over with Renfrew. "Hannah. Just got off work too?"

Yohanna shook her head. She was a small woman who spoke slowly like ladies in books. Her tone was soft and she sounded meek, which made people feel protective over her.

"Gabe says he wants to see some snow. The weather report said that it was going to snow, but we didn't see any."

"It might snow later..." the boy mumbled. He wasn't happy, but he didn't throw a fit. He politely greeted Hesper, only to suddenly realize that there was a boy behind her.

"Hessy, you look so pretty today. Do you want some candy?....And is that your brother?"

Hesper was surprised to hear that, but Yohanna was stunned too. She knew that Hesper had a son, and although she never met him, from how much alike they looked, it wasn't hard to tell that he was her son.

Even though Gabriel was a little older than Renfrew, he was still in preschool.

"This is... Hesper's son."

Yohanna didn't know how to feel. She wanted Gabriel to address Hesper as Aunty Hesper, but he

insisted on calling her Hussy because he said she looked too young to be an aunty.