Chapter 2189 Protective

"I'm glad you like it. I asked my men to prepare it a long time ago. Please bring these back too." The way Federico was all smiles made him seem as if he was a friendly and kind man.

"You have my thanks." Danrique nodded, smiling. Sean then stepped forward to receive the box of black tea with a bow. "I've brought a gift for Your Majesty too," Danrique said, gesturing to Sean.

After Sean passed the box to Mylo, he handed a fancy gift box to Silas, who was beside the king. When Silas opened it and took a peek, his brows raised, and he quickly whispered something to Federico.

Federico's slight furrow of his brows relaxed, and he burst into laughter. "Hahaha! Mr. Lindberg, you're too kind."

"It's nothing, Your Majesty." Danrique curled his lips. "I've been friends with William for many years. In fact, you'll be akin to my grandfather, so please just call me by my name." "Sure, Danrique."

The king was delighted, for his eyes were even crescents from beaming. Francesca stared at the box as frustration bloomed like a flower in her chest.

What did Danrique give to make Federico as happy as this? If I knew that he was going to lose so much on this trip, I wouldn't have let him come. I'd rather risk my life to get out of here than let him shower the king with money and gifts... That's so much money... My heart aches.

"How is Mr. President? It's been a while since I've seen him. The last I saw him, he looked as healthy as a horse."

"He's pretty good. He has asked me to convey his greetings to you."

"Hahaha! I've always talked about visiting Xendale, but alas, I'm old and no longer as sturdy as I used to be. I'm afraid I can't stand the cold, so I didn't dare to visit."

"Your worries are for naught, Your Majesty. The spaces within Xendale's buildings are warm."

"I was there a few years ago. The way the snow fluttered toward the ground was a grand sight to behold."

"Danontand is a beautiful land as well. I was fortunate to have witnessed the magnificent night view on the plane."

"Do stay for a few days more. I've already prepared a guest room for you and Francesca."

"Thank you, Your Majesty."

The two men exchanged polite small talk that Francesca did not pay attention to at all. Her eyes were fixed on the gift box, wondering what Danrique had given to the king.

"This is the second time Francesca has visited the palace. The last time she was here, it was with William. When I saw the intimate way they interacted with each other, I thought that William had brought his fiancée to me! Haha!"

All of a sudden, Federico shifted the topic to Francesca, and he even seemed like he was deliberately trying to create a misunderstanding.

Francesca froze and subconsciously glanced at Danrique.

After giving Francesca a long look, he smiled and said, "My Francesca has a pure and righteous heart. She's good to my friends. William sought her out for medical issues, so she came over, wanting to treat William's legs like a good doctor would want. Who knew that she would have encountered the poisoning incident at William's castle? This silly girl knows nothing and has a straightforward nature, so she accidentally meddled in your family affairs."

Despite the nonchalant tone of Danrique's words, he was actually drawing a fine line between their relationship.

Francesca had always thought that Danrique was not good with his words, so she was shocked to hear him being smooth in the negotiation.

Of course, he had to possess a certain amount of capability to have been able to lead Lindberg Corporation to such great heights and acquire so much power in the international corporate world.

It was just that he did not like to interact with others. However, if he had to socialize, he was not any lousier than the rest.

"I see." Federico nodded in revelation. "I was right. Francesca's innocent and kind. She's a good girl. Hahaha!"

"She's young and insensible. If she has done anything to accidentally offend you, Your Majesty, let me offer my apologies on behalf of her."

With that said, Danrique lifted his cup of black tea and made a toast to the king.

Chapter 2190 The Sly Danrique

"Hahaha!" Federico lifted his own cup to clink it against Danrique's before downing his drink. "Danrique, Francesca's naive, and I like it. Please do inform me when you marry her in the future. I'll surely send you a big gift!"

"Of course I will." Danrique nodded, smiling. "But... Prince Charlie has dealt quite a heavy blow."

The change in the topic came quickly and suddenly. Even Francesca was taken aback by it. So Danrique has already made public the news when I was being hunted down. I didn't know.

Federico's expression stiffened, and it took him a while before he recollected himself and said with an apologetic smile, "Charlie didn't know who Francesca was at the start. If he had, he wouldn't have laid a finger on her. Of course, this is partially my fault for not keeping an eye on him. My apologies."

"How can I possibly blame you for this, Your Majesty?" A confused look crept upon Danrique's face. "There is one thing I don't quite understand. I've already announced her identity while she was getting hunted down. I don't know why the media in Danontand was so slow with their news coverage. That must be why you didn't know about her identity."

"I really didn't," Federico insisted grimly. "If I knew who she was, I wouldn't have allowed Charlie to do this. Most importantly, I heard the news from the outside saying that you were going to get engaged to the daughter of the Atkinsons." Federico sighed. "Do you see the misunderstanding? Pah! The media is evil to have spread nonsense as news. I'm old too, and I was slow to realize that there were issues with the news coverage."

"You're right, Your Majesty." Danrique nodded. "It's understandable that you didn't understand the news. However, Prince Charlie seems young, and he has his own account on the internet. It looks like a party there too. He can't have not known about her, can he?"

"T..."

"At the end of the day, he just doesn't have much respect for me."

Danrique heaved a deep sigh, seemingly resigned. "Young people nowadays are fearless once they have someone backing them up. They are nothing like us, who had to pave a way ourselves with our own hands."

With that, Danrique crushed the teacup in his hand.

Crunch! The teacup shattered, and the tea sprayed all over him.

Francesca jumped in fright before whipping her head to the side to stare at him in surprise.

"It's true that Charlie wasn't thinking clearly when he did this," Federico hastily blurted out. "The lesson you've taught him today has been a good one. Otherwise, he would have continued being a conceited boy."

Federico was skillful with his words, too, for he had managed to draw a line between him and Charlie's incident in seconds.

That lesson Danrique had taught Charlie—that arm he had broken—would take at least three to five months before it could fully recover.

Furthermore, Danrique had broken Charlie's arm in front of the king and the other princes.

Federico was already offering Danrique due respect to not have commented on it at all.

What else does he want?

"My, Your Majesty, don't misunderstand me." Danrique put on an innocent look. "I didn't say anything. The one who did it was my mindless subordinate."

He then pointed at Gordon and asked, "Gordon, did I ask you to do anything?"

"No, sir."

Regardless of how slow Gordon was to react, he could understand what Danrique wanted him to do—to become the scapegoat.

The king was dumbfounded by that, his eyes as wide as saucers as he stared at Danrique.

In contrast, Francesca was thrilled.

Oh my. Oh dear. I never knew how sly Danrique could be until now! Since the king says that Charlie's actions had nothing to do with him, Danrique can similarly say that Gordon acted on his own. He's giving Federico a taste of his own medicine! F-a-n-t-a-s-t-i-c!

"Idiot," Danrique began cursing at Gordon. "How dare you hurt His Majesty's grandson? Pay with your life!"

Chapter 2191 The Sly Danrique Part Two

"What?" The shock made Francesca's heart lurch. He's kidding, right? Is he really doing this? "Yes, sir!" Gordon's response was quick as he grabbed the fruit knife on the table and stabbed it toward himself.

"Stop, stop, stop!" Federico cried out, nearly falling off the couch in his haste. The two bodyguards at the back promptly stopped Gordon as well.

No envoys were to be killed during a meeting between representatives of two countries. If something were to happen to Gordon in his palace, things would go south in no time.

"Danrique, what are you doing?" Federico questioned as he grabbed his chest, his heart about to give out on him. "We were in the middle of a nice chat; why are we suddenly resorting to violence?"

"Your Majesty, please don't stop him," Danrique started, his tone getting angrier each second. "The Lindbergs are strict with their household rules. Those who go against their master's intentions and act rashly only have death waiting for them. That was what my aunt did to me as well."

"But..."

Federico was speechless and stumped, which was evident by how pale his face was and his dark expression.

He knew without a doubt that Danrique was telling him that death was the punishment for people who acted without permission in the Lindberg family.

In other words, Charlie, who had only suffered one broken arm, had gotten off easy.

Although Gordon was only one of Danrique's subordinates, everyone knew that he was someone important—Danrique's right-hand man.

Even if Charlie did not need to be punished with death, his current punishment was not enough to compensate for the mistake he had made.

Danrique's consecutive attacks brought Federico to his wits' end.

After all, Danrique had just criticized the Danontand royal family's teachings.

Danrique was not going to let the matter slide until Federico did something about it.

With that thought in mind, Federico smacked the table and hissed, "That b*stard Charlie's too much! Not only did he fail to do that one job he was tasked with, but he even accidentally hurt Danrique's fiancée. Heed my order: Lock him up in the dungeon right away!"

"Your Majesty..." the princes behind the king began, hoping to plead for mercy on behalf of Charlie.

"Shut up, all of you!" Federico snapped. "Anyone who pleads for him will be thrown into the dungeon too."

Upon hearing that, no one dared to utter anything else. Fear was written all over their faces.

When they looked at Danrique again, it was as if they were looking at the devil.

Meanwhile, Berthold had another emotion in his eyes other than fear, and it was admiration.

"What are you waiting for?" Federico snarled.

"Yes, sir!" Silas immediately sent his men to work on it.

Soon, Charlie's screech came from the outside. "Your Majesty, why are you sending me to the dungeon? Your Majesty! Your Majesty, I won't accept this! Your Majesty—"

Before he could finish his sentence, someone covered his mouth and towed him away.

Monica, who was outside and had heard Charlie's shouts, was even more taken aback than those inside the room.

She had not known Danrique's charm previously, but now, she finally witnessed it.

This is marvelous!

Francesca was completely dumbstruck as her eyes flitted toward the outside of the window before looking at the king and Danrique.

"Danrique, is this to your satisfaction?" Federico asked with a half-smile.

Danrique sighed and muttered, "Your Majesty, why did you have to do this? Gordon's just a subordinate, and it's my duty to give him a stern lesson. On the other hand, Prince Charlie is your grandson. You could have just given him a scolding. Did you have to punish him so severely? Horrible criminals are locked up in that dungeon. He's going to be traumatized after a few days, and if he's locked up there for a month, he'll surely end up dead..."

Francesca's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. Did I hear him right? He was the one who subtly forced Federico to punish Prince Charlie, but he's saying this now? Looks like I really can't simply make this guy mad from now on. He's unbelievably smart!

"He offended you, so naturally, he has to be punished severely for that." The smile Federico had on his face was an ugly one. "I'll be sure to educate him well in the future and not let him make another mistake like this. I hope your anger will dissipate after this."

Chapter 2192 Rescue William

"I'm not angry." Danrique flashed a faint smile. He then pointed at Francesca and said, "I'm just afraid that she might get pissed off. You know how women are, right? I'm not so good at appeasing her."

With that, he turned toward Francesca and asked, "Are you still mad?" Francesca shook her head absent-mindedly because she was still dumbfounded.

"That's good." Federico forced a smile. In order to ease the tension, he changed the topic by asking, "Are you guys hungry? Would you like to have some food?"

"That won't be necessary," Danrique replied while putting his cup aside. While acting as if he was leaving, he said, "I would like to visit William."

"Huh?" Federico was stumped. What is he up to now?

"Not only is he a good friend of mine, but he's also a business partner of Lindberg Corporation. Since I've come to Danontand, how could I not visit him? By the way, Your Majesty, I heard he has fallen sick. Is it serious?" Danrique asked with a straight face.

"It's just an old illness." Federico smiled. "Since it's already so late and Francesca is injured, perhaps you all shouldn't go to the hospital. Why don't you stay in the palace? I can get someone to bring him here."

"That sounds good." Danrique nodded immediately.

Federico gestured at Silas, who immediately obliged his king's instructions. Before Silas left, he even shot Francesca a grateful look.

Meanwhile, Francesca was looking at Danrique gratefully. He knew what was on my mind. Before I even said it, he had already done me the favor.

Federico smiled and asked, "Should we have some food now?"

"Sure. She's famished." Danrique held Francesca caringly and led her into the banquet hall.

Federico was right behind them. He threw a vicious glance at Danrique before putting on a warm smile.

While following from behind, Sean and Gordon glanced at each other and snickered silently.

The moment Monica saw Francesca, she quickly went up to Francesca with an agitated look on her face.

Seeing that, Francesca sent her an "okay" sign. Right away, Monica knew what she meant. Moments prior, she had seen Silas leaving hastily while instructing some men to go to the hospital. She figured the men were going to fetch William, and Francesca had just confirmed her speculation.

Monica was so touched that tears welled up in her eyes. She was extremely grateful to Francesca.

The group took their seats in the banquet hall and started eating.

As Federico was chatting with Danrique, Francesca hung her head low and ate. At that moment, mixed feelings were stirring within her.

Once they were done with the meal, a subordinate came in from outside and informed everyone about William's arrival.

Francesca hurriedly turned toward the voice and saw Silas walking in with a group of men. Behind them, a medical staff was pushing a wheelchair into the hall. The skinny man in the wheelchair was none other than William.

Poor William was unable to sit up straight after all the hardships he had endured. When he was wheeled in, his entire body was curled up.

Although he wanted to sit up straight to greet Danrique and Francesca in an elegant posture, his body simply couldn't do so.

Within a little over ten days, he had lost so much weight that he was almost unrecognizable. With his disheveled hair and pale face, he looked rather miserable.

"Your Highness!" Monica rushed over to him and squatted down to help him straighten his body. At that point, she couldn't hold back her tears anymore.

Francesca's eyes reddened, and she quickly turned away to recompose herself.

Danrique gazed into her eyes for a moment before turning toward William and greeting, "Hi, William!"

"L..." William lifted his head with great effort and squeezed out a weak smile. "You're here!"

"Yes." Danrique smiled faintly. "Francesca misses you, so I've come with her to see you."

"Thank you. Thank you," William replied. He was thanking Danrique and Francesca both because he knew they were the reason he could show up there.

"Dr. Felch." Danrique patted Francesca's shoulder and said, "Attend to your patient, okay?"

"Okay." Francesca cast him a grateful glance before getting out of her seat.

Two maids came over to help her up, and they all brought William into a room to check on him.

Chapter 2193 Extorted

Even until then, Federico still hadn't said a word to William, and William didn't bother throwing him a glance either. It was as if they were strangers instead of grandfather and grandson.

"The medical standards in Danontand are quite bad, it seems!" Danrique exclaimed while holding his glass of wine. "The last time I saw him, he was in high spirits. Although he had trouble with his legs, he was still elegant and graceful. That's not the case now."

"His illness kept relapsing, and it never got better." Federico looked broken-hearted. "I've gotten a lot of famous doctors for him, but none of them could make him better. Francesca is good, though. Maybe she's going to cure him."

"Well, the legendary Francesco is bound to live up to her name." Danrique added proudly, "When I was poisoned back then, she was the only one who could cure me."

"I see..." Federico seemed surprised. "When I heard she was Francesco, I couldn't believe my ears. After all, she's so young. Who would've thought she had such impressive medical skills? I believe it now, though. If something were to happen to me in the future, I'll turn to you guys for help, okay? I hope you won't turn me down then!"

"Your Majesty, you're in good health, and you look energetic. I doubt you'll ever need it." Danrique flashed a faint smile. "William, on the other hand, is terribly sick. You're worried, aren't you, Your Majesty? After all, blood is thicker than water."

"Of course, I'm worried." Federico nodded profusely. "He's my grandson and—"

"In that case, let me bring him back for treatment," Danrique interrupted. "In a few months' time, your grandson will be in good health."

"If you would be kind enough to do that, I would be extremely grateful, Danrique." Federico raised his glass and said, "I'll need to trouble you, then!"

"It's no trouble at all. All you need to do is pay the medical fee for William," Danrique uttered.

"Huh?" Federico was stunned. What is he getting at?

"Well, Francesca demands a high fee, and it could be as much as hundreds of millions in M Nation's currency," Danrique answered with a straight face. "Before this, William has been paying for the fees on his own. Since he's now under your care, you should pay for him, no? After all, he's your grandson."

"Haha! Sure! I'll do that." Federico nodded right away. He then instructed Silas, "Transfer the amount to Danrique."

"Oh! Don't do that," Danrique responded. "That woman of mine is rather materialistic. What's mine is hers, and what's hers is still hers. I think you should just transfer the amount to her. I wouldn't dare to receive the money!"

"All right, then. I'll transfer the money to Francesca!" Delighted, Silas bowed.

"You're on cloud nine, aren't you?"

"I am!"

An hour later, Danrique was about to bring Francesca, William, and Monica out of the palace.

While sending them off, Federico told William to take care of himself and get well soon without troubling Danrique further.

William responded politely and respectfully. It seemed as though he was on good terms with Federico.

Right then, Danrique teased, "It's no trouble at all, Your Majesty. Since you've already paid the hefty medical fee, it's now our duty to take care of him."

"That's right." Francesca beamed from ear to ear. "Thank you for the payment, Your Majesty. I'll do everything I can to cure William. Don't worry!"

"All right. Thank you." Federico smiled and nodded.

"By the way, the people in William Castle were poisoned. They haven't gotten treatment yet, right? Should I help them?" Francesca asked in a serious tone.

"If you have time for it, that would be great!" Federico smiled.

"How about the fee?" Francesca deliberately dragged out the last word of the sentence.

"The palace will pay it off, of course." Federico knew what she meant. "How much do you require? I'll get Silas to transfer the money to you right away."

"Eight hundred million to a billion will do," Francesca replied quickly. "Since we know each other so well, I'll give you a discount."