

## Chapter 11 The First Visit

As they prepared to depart, Joanna's phone rang with a call from Kason, altering her demeanor instantly. She glanced at Norah, uncertain how to explain.

"Joanna, is everything okay?"

Joanna's reaction caught the attention of both Bryson and Norah.

"Who's on the phone?" Bryson asked.

Joanna moved closer to Norah and quietly said, "Kason's on the line. He mentioned Mr. Scott is looking for Supernatural Doctor. They've taken Kason into custody and need to know if he can reveal your identity to them."

Norah's interest was piqued. "It's curious that after two years away, I'm still sought after. Inform him that if Mr. Scott takes the first place in the Krusa Mountain Racing in five days, I'll agree to meet with him."

Norah planned to attend the Krusa Mountain Racing, aware that Nocturne would also be there. She was curious about Sean's performance.

"Norah, that's impressive," Joanna commented, applauding her decision.

Bryson observed their quiet conversation with a puzzled expression. He narrowed his eyes and asked, "What are you two talking about behind my back?"

After a brief conversation on the phone, Joanna ended the call, looked up innocently, and said, "Oh, it's just some women's talk. What's got you so intrigued?"

Joanna leaned on Norah's shoulder, suggesting, "Norah, why not stay at my place? Now that you've moved out, you're without a place to stay."

"Tomorrow, I'll show you the villas I own. You can pick whichever one you like."

Bryson chimed in, "I've got a few properties myself. Norah, feel free to choose any."

Norah mischievously smiled and said, "Why would I be homeless? I might lack many things, but houses aren't one of them. Bryson, please drop me off at Dreamview Villas."

Joanna was taken aback. "You have a place in Dreamview Villas?"

Dreamview Villas stood as Glophia's top-notch community. Renowned for its privacy and security, its properties were limited, attracting only the most influential or affluent individuals.

Joanna knew of it through Bryson's casual mentions, having only a slight idea of its prestige.

Bryson, too, was taken aback. He instructed the driver to take a different route. "Let's go to Dreamview Villas."

"Well, it was a present from a friend," Norah mentioned indifferently.

At the Glamour Club's top-floor chamber.

"Kason, what are you doing at Glamour Club? I noticed you are speaking with Joanna. Are you acquainted? Derek's former wife is also present," Sitting beside Spencer, Kaiden glanced at Kason and asked with curiosity.

Since Kason stepped into the Glamour Club, Kaiden had been curious about his motives. Kaiden understood Kason very well. He knew Kason had no interest in women and wouldn't even step into entertainment spots.

Seeing Kason in Glamour Club with Spencer sparked his curiosity further. Learning Kason had just met with Sean would have intensified his surprise.

Once the call ended, Kason listened to Kaiden and asked, "Derek's former wife? Are you referring to the lovely lady next to Joanna?"

Spencer answered, "Yes. I presumed you were acquainted. The earlier disturbance at Glamour Club is resolved. Perhaps we should seek a quieter place for our chat?"

Kason pondered for a moment. Having only recently assumed leadership of the Hayes family, he was still getting to know the influential figures of Glophia, including Norah from the Wilson family who joined the Carters two years ago.

Kason responded with ease, "Proceed with your plans. I have matters to attend to here."

Spencer leaned in closer to get a peek into the chamber Kason was heading for and asked, "Who's inside? He seems like an important guy. His men also helped in during the earlier commotion."

"Don't let curiosity get the better part of you," Kason pivoted abruptly and replied sharply, giving them a brief look. "I'm off."

Without waiting for their reaction, Kason stormed forward and positioned himself outside the chamber Sean was in, saying to Phillip, "I've consulted with Supernatural Doctor. Please arrange for me to meet Mr. Scott."

Even though he wasn't familiar with Glophia's affairs, Kason had heard plenty about Sean's reputation. In Glophia, nobody dared to cross paths with Sean.

Even the most prominent individuals showed Sean respect. The Scott family's high status in Glophia was greatly attributed to Sean's remarkable contributions. Sean had done a lot to boost the Scott family's status.

Phillip led Kason in after knocking.

In the softly lit chamber, the classy Sean lounged on the sofa, cigarette in hand, casually looking around. "Mr. Hayes, any updates?" he asked.

Kason straightened up and stated, "I've consulted with Supernatural Doctor. Supernatural Doctor claimed if you win the Krusa Mountain Racing in five days, she'll reach out to you."

Hearing this, Sean smiled. "Well, thanks for relaying messages. Phillip, would you escort our visitor out?"

Sean inhaled deeply from his cigarette, exhaling a circle of smoke that momentarily obscured his refined features.

As Phillip led Kason away, Kason found his thoughts drifting back to the striking Norah. He instructed his assistant, "Find out everything about Derek's former wife. I want all the details."

Upon reaching Dreamview Villas, Bryson said, "Let me know if there's anything you need."

Norah smiled and said, "Will do!"

Joanna, clinging to Norah's arm, eagerly asked, "Norah, may I stay with you? I'm curious about life in Dreamview Villas."

"Perhaps another time. Today, I'm looking forward to some rest," Norah gently refused Joanna's request with a pat on Joanna's head.

Feeling weary, Norah returned to the villa where she first entered. Settling into a bath of warm water, she sighed in relief. She found herself thinking these moments of luxury were exactly what she deserved!

Reflecting on her days taking care of Derek and his family humbly, she admired her patience and endurance.

Resting her arms along the tub's edge, enveloped in steam, memories began to surface.

Back then, she hadn't finished her task. She was starving, shivering in the icy streets, and burning with fever.

A young man had braved the snow, offering her shelter under his umbrella, directing his guard to rush her to a hospital, saving her life.

This young man's face often visited her dreams, providing comfort. Norah was determined to repay this kindness.

That young man was Derek.

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Norah stirred the fresh rose petals in the warm water, plucking one and rolling it softly between her fingers, staining them with its red essence.

She cast her gaze downward. What she had once thought was love in her youth now seemed uncertain. She realized it might just be an obsession with something out of her reach.

Before Madeline's return, she comforted herself with the thought that if she stayed a little longer, Derek would eventually grow to care for her.

But Madeline's return shattered that hope. She realized Derek might care for many people but not for her.

She pretended to be happy, but deep down, her heart felt sad. Leaning against the bathtub, she held her chest and let her mind wander.

She comforted herself by saying there were plenty more men out there. She believed that neither she nor Derek owed each other anything anymore.



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## Chapter 12 Think It Over

In the grand halls of Carter Manor.

The butler threw a quick look at Madeline who had been closely trailing behind Derek, barely hiding his disdain. He thought Madeline a calculating figure, a stark contrast to the graceful Norah.

The entire family gathered around the dinner table.

Juliana, eyeing the fragile-looking Madeline seated next to Derek with displeasure, burst out, "Derek, we're having a family gathering today. What's the reason for inviting strangers?"

Derek's face tensed. Next to him, Madeline lifted her gaze, her eyes welling up with tears, as she silently stared at Juliana, words failing her.

Kathy stepped in, "Grandmother, Madeline is an old friend of Derek's. How can you consider her a stranger?"

While serving soup to Juliana, Kathy added, "Grandmother, anger harms the body. Please don't have any hard feelings."

Regaining calm, Derek explained, "Grandmother, as you're aware, my heart has always belonged to Madeline. My marriage to Norah was arranged when I was on my deathbed, without any emotional bond between Norah and me. Continuing that marriage would only cause us both misery. In case of a divorce, I'll ensure Norah is compensated adequately..."

Juliana cut him off sharply, "Compensated? With your properties and vehicles? Can they match the years of youth Norah dedicated to you? She devoted herself to your care for two years. Your recovery is due to her efforts.

Remember how you once chased after Madeline like she was your everything? And when you were at your lowest after the accident, she

turned her back on you! Norah was the one by your bedside, not her! Having stumbled once, do you wish to make the same mistake?"

Sharon chimed in, "Madeline becoming part of the Carter family? That's a laughable thought! Not in this lifetime! Over my dead body!"

Madeline rose and knelt before Juliana, her tears streaming. "Juliana, Sharon, I apologize. I know I failed Derek. Since our separation, I've been in agony. Having missed him dearly every day, the past two years without him have been unbearable.

This torment made me realize I couldn't live without him! Now that I'm back, I'm determined to dedicate my life to making things with Derek. My actions will show my true feelings for him!"

Madeline's seemingly sincere plea touched Derek deeply. He moved to Juliana's side, imploring, "Grandma, please, Madeline and I share a genuine love. We seek your blessing."

Juliana sighed deeply, bracing for more conflict. Kathy quickly offered Juliana some food, urging, "Grandma, please try some food."

Sharon, watching Kathy's actions, couldn't hide her irritation. "Kathy, have you forgotten the days Derek was confined to his sickbed? Defending Madeline, do you still consider yourself a part of the Carter family?"

Kathy, standing her ground, responded, "I am, without a doubt, a Carter family."

Kathy looked around at her family, then said, "But, shouldn't Derek have a say in his marriage? Grandma, you were the one who insisted on bringing Norah into our home. Derek was too sick to know this arrangement back then. His heart had always set on Madeline."

The quietness enveloped the Carter family's living room.

Juliana, holding her bowl of soup, looked down into it and stated, "Let's start our meal first."

As lunch proceeded, everyone was lost in thought, trying to read the minds of others at the table.

Juliana couldn't hide her frustration at Madeline's innocent facade and abruptly set down her spoon, demanding, "Derek, I need to speak with you in the study."

Sharon interjected, "We haven't finished eating. Can't this wait until after the meal?"

"Missing one meal won't harm anyone." Juliana's sharp look quickly silenced Sharon, who dared not say anything more.

Derek's hold on his fork grew tense.

"Derek, why don't you head up first? Your grandma must want a private word with you. She's only trying to protect us from the conversation. After all, you're her favorite grandchild. She means well," Madeline suggested kindly, placing her fork down and gently taking Derek's hand.

Hearing Madeline's gentle words, Derek calmed down a bit. "Thank you, Madeline. I'll persuade my grandma to accept you. She'll come to appreciate you."

Madeline modestly averted her gaze. "That doesn't matter. Being by your side is all I ask for. I won't hate your grandma and mother even if they treat me with that attitude."

Sharon exploded, "What exactly are you implying? You bitch! How dare you talk about me like this in front of Derek? Is this how you repay our hospitality?"

Exhausted by the tension, Derek soothed Madeline and Sharon before heading to the study.

Quietly settling down beside Juliana, Derek hesitantly said, "Grandma, Madeline is the woman I want to spend my life with. Plus, the Powell family and Carter family share similar backgrounds. Why are you so against her?"

"You've been with Norah for two years, yet I've never seen you this committed to her. Why shouldn't I have reservations about Madeline? Must I remind you of her past actions?"



Juliana fixed Derek with a stern gaze, standing firm. "While you were bedridden, you were oblivious to the circumstances that led the Carter family to bring Norah into our home."

Derek responded with a touch of indifference, "The marriage between the Carter and Wilson family was nothing more than a strategic alliance. The Wilson family sought financial gain, while the Carter family hoped for a devoted daughter-in-law."

Everyone in Glophia knows about Luna's disgrace. Norah, a lesser-known daughter of the Wilson family, managed to secure her place and remained unproblematic as Mrs. Carter for two years. The reasoning behind it escapes me."

Juliana's voice was calm and measured, saying, "Back when you were confined in bed, I vividly remembered the seer's words who once foretold your destiny when you were just a child. He warned of a grave challenge ahead and mentioned that marriage to a guardian angel would be crucial for your recovery."

Yet, who among Glophia's esteemed young ladies would have looked your way back then? Norah stepped forward, courageously joining our family and dedicating two years to taking care of you with unwavering devotion. Have these efforts slipped your mind? Norah's marked the beginning of your miraculous recovery. Her contribution was vital."

Derek cast his gaze downward, his expression shadowed and complex. "All this was beyond my knowledge. I'll ensure Norah is fairly compensated for her dedication over these two years."

"Is monetary compensation enough to replace two lost years of youth?" Juliana sighed, her greatest concern being her usually sensible grandson's unexplainable stubbornness in a particular matter. "How can you overlook Norah's merits?"

Reflecting on her recent talk with Norah, Juliana concluded, "I've made my point clear. That woman out there is not qualified as your wife. You need to give this some serious thought."

Derek stayed quiet like a statue without uttering a word for quite some

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time.

Meanwhile, oblivious to the discussions unfolding at Carter Manor, Norah enjoyed a tranquil rest, followed by her skincare routine and a leisurely lunch, and then reached out to Derek with a message.

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