

Mistaking the CEO for a Gigolo Chapter 1256

“Well, you can’t leave him barefooted forever, right?”

Davin looked at Crystal Rose and let out a deep sigh. He could clearly see her heartfelt concern toward Levant.

“I’ll return his shoes then. Will you still be curing Nina after Levant leaves?”

Crystal Rose hesitated, reluctant to part with Levant. But what could she do if he insisted on leaving? She would accept any outcome as long as he was happy. “Give him his shoes. He can do whatever he wishes to do. Don’t worry. I’ll still cure Nina.”

Davin’s brows knitted together. Crystal Rose doesn’t seem like an unreasonable woman at all. I’m sure she wants Levant to stay more than anyone else. However, she’s not forcing him to do so. It seems she cares about Levant’s feelings, after all. If that’s the case, then why would she...

“I can tell that you care about Levant a lot. Why did you abandon him at the orphanage back then?”

“Back then...” Crystal Rose smiled bitterly. “Back then, I was poisoned, and I thought I wouldn’t stay alive much longer. To my surprise, I encountered a master to cure me of the deadly poison. She was the former Lady of the Valley, and she brought me back to Nepenthe Valley to cure me.”

The truth was revealed. Davin finally understood the reason Crystal Rose stayed at Nepenthe Valley and changed her name.

“How were you poisoned?” Davin continued asking.

In that instant, Crystal Rose’s eyes filled with burning contempt. “Someone poisoned my drink.”

“Who did that to you?”

“Who? Who else would dare to poison me at Wicked Palace? Of course it’s Murphy!”

Her answer disconcerted Davin. He couldn’t believe how cruel Murphy was to have poisoned his own wife!

“It’s lucky I survived this incident. He must pay for what he did, and I want him to pay for it with his life!”

Davin was too stunned to speak. He had assumed her drive to seek vengeance on Murphy was caused by his betrayal toward her. However, it appeared there was more to this story than he had expected.

Uncle Morris, how could you be so ruthless toward your wife? This is a life we’re talking about!

“That’s enough. Return his shoes to him. It’s inconvenient for him to stay barefooted.” Crystal Rose left as soon as she reminded Davin to return the shoes to Levant.

With a mind full of worries, Davin wandered to Levant’s house. Should I inform Levant about Crystal Rose’s backstory? If he knew, would he shift his hostility toward another target? Will he develop resentment toward Murphy instead? After all, Levant’s relationship with Murphy is way closer than with Crystal Rose.

After some deep contemplation, Davin was still unsure whether he should speak the truth as that would likely hurt Levant and Murphy's relationship.

"What are you doing just standing there? Are you that obsessed with my shoes?"

Levant's teasing pulled Davin back to reality from his inner conflict. He tossed the shoes in front of Levant and forced an unnatural smile onto his face.

After wearing his shoes, Levant looked up at Davin and was immediately confounded by the latter's awkward expression.

"Why were you willing to return my shoes? Did you come up with a new idea to stop me from leaving?"

Davin shook his head in silence.

He had asked Draven to bring Levant to Nepenthe Valley solely because he needed Levant to get help from Crystal Rose to cure Nina. Now that she had promised to lend a hand even if Levant left, it was no longer important for him to stay.

"You're free to go. I won't make you stay any longer if you don't want to."

Startled by Davin's response, Levant stared at him and asked, "Don't you want Crystal Rose to cure Nina?"

"Don't you worry about that," Davin replied with a strange expression on his face, then glanced at Levant. "Compared to curing Nina, I think you should worry about your father. I'm certain Crystal Rose would never give up on her mission to seek revenge on Murphy."

Levant stayed quiet. Hmph. Revenge?

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Levant scoffed. "Don't you think the twist of events in my family is too ironic, considering the relationship between my family members? My father betrayed Crystal Rose, so she abandoned me. Then I hate her for doing that to me, while she hates my father. I don't accept her as my biological mother, yet she wants to kill my father. What a series of melodramatic plot twists! There's no love in this household, only hatred and vengeance!"

Davin stood off to the side and wondered if Levant would feel bad when he discovered Murphy's wicked intention to poison Crystal Rose to her death.

"Fine, I'll leave right now. Please take care of yourselves. This woman has no heart, so you can imagine what she'll do to you. After all, she was cruel enough to abandon her own son. Be wary of her imposing onerous terms on you in exchange for her help!"

You're mistaking Crystal Rose for a bad person. She did what she did for a painful reason. It must have been difficult for such a heavily poisoned woman to abandon you in an orphanage. I'm sure you'll find out the truth someday.

As Levant opened the door to leave the place, he bumped into a woman in white, who was standing outside the door and glaring at him.

“Get the hell out of my way!”

“Are you leaving?”

“Yes. Now get out of the way!”

“I have something to tell you.”

“Did Crystal Rose send you? I’m not interested in what she has to say. I’m not interested in hearing any of it!”

Suddenly, the woman in white let out a burst of laughter. “Are you really not interested? Or are you just too afraid to hear it?”

“I simply don’t give a d*mn about the lies she made up to defend herself!”

“She’s your mother. Aren’t you curious why she abandoned you and came to Nepenthe Valley? Don’t you want to know how she became Crystal Rose?”

“I don’t care!”

“Even so, you must listen to her story before you leave. After that, you’re free to go. If not, you will regret it for the rest of your life,” advised the woman in white.

She then started narrating Crystal Rose’s story to Levant, “If Crystal Rose hadn’t been fatally poisoned, she would never have had the heart to hand you over to an orphanage. The orphanage’s dean was her best friend, and she gave the dean her entire life savings just to ensure you were going to be well-taken care of. She expected she only had a few days left before she met her end.

“She was fortunate, however, to come across Scarlet Witch, Nepenthe Valley’s former Lady of the Valley, who then cured her of the lethal poison. Scarlet Witch also demanded that Crystal Rose agree to some harsh terms. Crystal Rose would have passed away if it hadn’t been for Scarlet Witch’s intervention.”

Never in a million years would Levant have expected to hear this explanation. Crystal Rose was poisoned back then?

“Was she really poisoned? How did she get poisoned?”

“Who do you think would poison her at Wicked Palace?”

Levant was speechless. Did someone poison her? Was it Murphy who did that? Why didn’t he mention anything about it when we were on the phone earlier?

Levant’s face fell. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“She would’ve gone and sought revenge on Murphy if it hadn’t been for Scarlet Witch’s cure and the establishment of those harsh terms.”

Speechless and appalled, Levant was stunned for a short while before he turned around and went back inside the house. Next, he contacted Murphy on the phone.

This was a serious matter, and Levant wished to know the truth immediately.

Finally, the call was answered.

“What’s the matter?”

“Did you poison Jordyn back then?” Levant didn’t bother to beat around the bush.

Murphy was puzzled. “Hold on a second, Levant. What are you talking about? Are you accusing me of poisoning her?”

“That’s right. What kind of poison did you use on her?”

“You... Where did you even hear that from? This is such a ridiculous accusation!”

“So you’re telling me you didn’t do it?”

“Of course not! Did Crystal Rose tell you about this, Levant? Is she with you right now? Pass her the phone and let me talk to her for a second. I’ll ask her when exactly I poisoned her!”

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Levant was stunned for a moment and went to look for Crystal Rose with his phone. She had said she was poisoned, but Murphy refused to admit it. Hence, he decided to let them confront each other to see if there was really such an incident.

Initially, Crystal Rose was puzzled when she saw him walking in. Before she could ask anything, he handed the phone to her and inquired, “Did he poison you back then?”

Once he finished his question, they heard Murphy’s voice from the other end of the phone. “I didn’t poison her...”

After so many years, she still could not help trembling the moment she heard that accursed voice that kept reverberating in her mind.

Immediately, she took the phone and cursed while gritting her teeth, “Murphy, you scoundrel! I gave birth to two children for you, but you were in an illicit relationship with Portia and were found out by me. Worried that I might hurt her, you poisoned me and wanted to kill me. What a brutal and heartless man! You should die a painful death!”

“Jordyn, what are you talking about? When did I poison you? Back then, Portia and I were drunk. I explained it to you, but you didn’t trust me and insisted on running away from home. Why are you saying that I poisoned you? No such thing happened!”

Hearing that, Jordyn was rendered speechless and sneered. “You won’t admit it? Too afraid to own up? What a coward!”

“I’ll definitely admit it if I did it, but you can’t wrongly accuse me of something I didn’t do.”

“I wrongly accused you? Back then, I was poisoned by Scelerus. If I hadn’t met the Scarlet Witch, I would be dead. It took three years for the poison to be completely removed from my body. Thank God that I’m still alive and have the opportunity to settle the score with you! Just you wait, Murphy! I’ll kill you one day!”

Murphy was taken aback when he heard what she said.

Scelerus? It's indeed a type of poison from Wicked Palace, and it doesn't sound like she's making things up. Could it be that she was really poisoned back then? But I didn't poison her! What the hell is going on?

"Why aren't you saying anything? It's because you can't refute me, can you? You won't get away with this! I'll claim your life soon!"

Jordyn handed the phone to Levant with a shaking hand after she finished speaking.

She was emotionally unstable, and if Murphy was in front of her right now, she would definitely do her best to kill him at all costs.

Seeing her distress, Levant was convinced that she was not spouting nonsense. She truly had been poisoned back then.

Shortly afterward, he glanced at the phone, saw that it was still connected, and stated, "Dad, I didn't expect you to do such a thing. You actually poisoned a woman, the woman who gave birth to two children for you. You're too ruthless!"

"Levant, I didn't poison her. Jordyn, even if you were really poisoned, it wasn't me. I know nothing about it. If you hadn't brought it up today, I wouldn't have known about it."

Upon hearing that, Crystal Rose blurted out emotionally, "Stop denying it! Who else knows where the poison is kept in Wicked Palace except you?"

Needless to say, Murphy found it strange as well. Who else could get their hands on Scelerus and poison my wife?

"Jordyn, Levant, I'll investigate this matter and give you an explanation."

"You'd better not be lying about the truth. Otherwise, I'll never forgive you!" enunciated Levant coldly before hanging up the phone.

Looking at him, Crystal Rose wanted to say something, but he left before she could utter a word.

"Levant! Levant, Le—"

At that moment, Levant felt conflicted. Before he found out what exactly happened, he had no idea how to face Crystal Rose.

He just wanted to be alone so he could clear up all these past incidents and figure out how to face each one of them.

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Meanwhile, on the other side of things, Davin told Evan everything, sparing no details. "Evan, I think Uncle Morris has gone too far. No matter what, he shouldn't have done that to his wife! Initially, Levant hated Crystal Rose. Now that he knew how Uncle Morris treated her back then and that she had her reasons for abandoning him, do you think he'll redirect his hatred to Uncle Morris?"

Having said that, he stared at Evan solemnly and inquired, "If Levant really hates Uncle Morris, will he help his mother, Crystal Rose, to kill Uncle Morris?"

Evan's gaze darkened at those words. If Murphy really did do such an unacceptable thing, he should be punished.

However, he knew Murphy pretty well. Although Murphy was hot-tempered and would sometimes use some despicable means to achieve his goals, he had his principles. He was not a cruel and heartless person.

"Let's go and check on Levant first. We'll call Uncle Morris to ask about the situation later."

"All right."

Then, both of them walked toward Levant's room. Coincidentally, Levant came back from outside and saw the two of them. Hiding away the gloomy expression on his face, he pretended to be calm and queried, "What's the matter?"

Davin scrutinized him from head to toe and frowned when he saw that Levant seemed calm and poised. "A-Are you okay?"

"Why wouldn't I be?" Levant tried to sound relaxed.

Being incredibly observant, Evan detected the hint of sadness in his eyes.

"Uncle Morris might not necessarily do such a thing. Everything might be a misunderstanding."

Hearing that, Levant snorted coldly. "Evan, do you think you're the only one who's smart and that others can't tell that there's a misunderstanding?"

Davin's eyes instantly lit up when he heard Levant's words. "Levant, does that mean you also think that Uncle Morris wouldn't do such a thing? I was worried that you would hate him and want to kill him."

"No matter what I'm going to do to him, that's my business. If you've nothing else to do, go and ask Crystal Rose to cure Nina. I'm tired of eating the vegetables from Nepenthe Valley. After Nina is cured, I'll leave with you."

Davin was puzzled as he thought that Levant would be reluctant to leave his mother, Crystal Rose. He had never imagined that Levant would want to leave in such a hurry.

However, Evan felt that the meaning behind Levant's words was that he was willing to get along with Crystal Rose now. After all, before this, the latter could not wait to leave immediately. Leaving with us after Nina is cured? I bet he just said that halfheartedly. By that time, he would probably be reluctant to leave his mother.

"It's good to know that you're fine. I'll go and check on Nina now. You can call me anytime, and I'll chat with you. Although your parents' love story has some twists and turns, I believe your relationship will be smooth sailing."

Smooth sailing? Davin, you're obviously rubbing salt on my wound. My love story is the same as my parents' love story, full of twists and turns! Likely, it'll never be smooth my whole life!

However, he did not want to argue with Davin and said impatiently, "Both of you can leave now. I think I should go and meet Crystal Rose. There are some things that I want to ask her."

"All right. Do you need me to accompany you?"

Levant ignored Davin and shot him a sharp glare before walking toward Crystal Rose's residence.

He was a little nervous when he knocked on the door. While he was standing alone in the open space, a lot of thoughts crossed his mind. Even though Crystal Rose had not abandoned him on purpose, he still had doubts and wanted to ask her some questions face to face.

Soon, Crystal Rose opened the door, and the moment she saw him, she was pleasantly surprised.

"Levant, come in!" Her voice was full of the tenderness of a mother.

When he entered the house and looked at the furnishings inside, he felt a sense of peace that he had never had before.

Moments later, she prepared tea for him and remarked, "This is my most prized tea. Try it and see if you like it."

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Levant accepted the teacup and took a whiff of the tea. It was fragrant and fresh. Then, he had a quick sip. Not only was the tea mellow and smooth, but the aftertaste was sweet too. It was indeed a good tea.

"It's pretty good."

Hearing his compliment, Crystal Rose grinned happily.

Never had she imagined that she would be able to see her son again, let alone make tea for him and listen to him saying that the tea was delicious.

"Levant, what do you want to eat? I'll cook it for you."

Meanwhile, Levant finished the tea and gently placed the teacup on the table. Lifting his head, he fixed his gaze on her and piped up, "I came here because I have some questions for you."

"What is it?"

"How long did it take you to completely remove the poison from your body? When you were talking on the phone earlier, I vaguely heard that you used three years to get rid of it. Is that right?"

Crystal Rose let out a sigh at his question. Even though many years had passed since then, the detoxification process was so painful that it still haunted her to this day.

"Yes. There was no antidote for Scelerus. When Scarlet Witch tried to remove the poison from my body, she kept on experimenting and researching. You could say that I was her test subject. Fortunately, she succeeded, and because of that, I managed to survive."

"Three years. Why didn't you leave the valley and look for me after that? Since you hate Murphy so much, why didn't you seek revenge against him all these years?"

As soon as he finished speaking, he stared at her face intently. Despite growing old, Crystal Rose still had a refined air about her. Upon closer inspection, he could see that his eyes and brows were somewhat similar to hers.

“It was because I lost my memory after I recovered. I forgot who I was, and I didn’t remember what happened before that. Scarlet Witch forbade everyone from telling me the truth. She told me that I was her descendant, and I had amnesia when I came here. She made up a lie so that I would learn the secret art of detoxification from her in peace. Two years ago, she tried a type of poison on herself, but it spread to her internal organs rapidly. There was no antidote to cure her. Before she died, she gave me medicine, and I suddenly remembered everything again. When I regained my memory, she made me swear that I would never leave Nepenthe Valley and forget all the resentments I had. It was her last wish. I know she did all that because she didn’t want me to live in hatred. She was also afraid that I would seek revenge against Murphy because if I failed, I might lose my life. Anyhow, I’m willing to believe that she made me lose my memory for my own good. Nevertheless, because of that, I failed to become a certifiable mother. I’m sorry!”

So that’s why. No wonder she asked Evan to kill Murphy for her when she was removing the poison from Nina’s body. It turns out that she can’t leave the valley.

“If you hadn’t lost your memory, would you have come and find me?”

“Yes! I definitely would have,” she answered confidently. After staying silent for a moment, she continued, “Levant, it’s up to you what you choose to believe, but I would have definitely gone to look for you. I gave birth to you and Avril, and I can give up everything for the rest of my life. I only hope that both of you can live a peaceful life.”

“Really? Then can you let go of your hatred toward Murphy?”

In an instant, Crystal Rose’s expression darkened. She hated Murphy to the core.

Ever since she regained her memory, she felt a heart-wrenching pain whenever she recalled his betrayal and poisoning, as if someone was stabbing a sharp blade into her heart. It’s so painful. How can I let go of that hatred?

“Levant, I’m willing to use my life to exchange for a peaceful life for both you and your sister, but I can’t let go of my hatred for Murphy until I breathe my last. You don’t know how it feels to be betrayed by the person you love. I hope you can understand. If he didn’t hurt me that much, how could I have such unquenchable hatred for him?”

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Hearing that, Levant fell silent.

After a while, he looked at Crystal Rose and asked, “If he wasn’t the one who poisoned you, would you still hate him so much?”

Murphy didn’t administer the poison?

Crystal Rose did not believe that at all. “Levant, stop looking for excuses to exculpate him. Scelerus is the poison of Wicked Palace. No one could get their hands on it except him. Besides, I treated everyone well

when I was in Wicked Palace. Except for Murphy, I had never offended anyone, so he was the only one who wanted me to die. After I died, he could live happily ever after with Portia.”

Speaking of Portia, Levant could not decide if he should tell Crystal Rose that it was Portia who took him away from the orphanage and later gave him a warm home.

After giving it some thought, he decided not to tell her. After all, it would not be good news for her that her biological child was adopted by her love rival.

“But he said that he wasn’t the one who administered the poison. He’ll investigate the matter thoroughly and give you a reasonable explanation. Let’s wait for him patiently. There may be another truth.”

Another truth?

Crystal Rose sneered. “If it wasn’t him, then I would’ve hated the wrong person. Nonetheless, I really hope that there’s another truth. At least it proves that I didn’t make a bad choice marrying him back then, and I won’t dream of killing him every single night anymore.”

It was obvious that the hatred she had for Murphy was bred-in-the-bone. At that moment, Levant wondered if she still had a tad bit of love for Murphy.

“If it wasn’t him, would you be willing to get back with him?”

“No! From the moment he betrayed me, I’ll never forgive him! What is done can never be undone. It’s impossible to patch things up between us.” With that said, she was suddenly interested in Levant’s love life. “Are you married?”

Despite being surprised by her question, he shook his head in response.

“Why aren’t you married at this age? Did you not meet any women you liked?”

Hearing that, he smiled bitterly. “I met the woman of my life, but she’s someone else’s wife.”

Unrequited love?

Crystal Rose sighed distressedly. “In this case, you should forget her and find someone suitable for you. Those at your age, their children are already at the age where they go to school.”

“Yes, he’s in kindergarten now,” he replied softly.

Confused, she asked, “Y-You have a child?”

In response, Levant nodded.

“What’s going on? The woman who gave birth to your child married someone else?”

Looking at the confused woman, he stood up. “No, my child’s mother isn’t the woman I love. I don’t want to marry her as well. She should find her own happiness.”

For a moment, Crystal Rose could not tell what was going on. Just as she was figuring things out, he suddenly sneered. “Maybe letting my lust go unchecked after getting drunk is hereditary. I inherited

Murphy's genes and had my son. However, Murphy said that it wasn't hereditary; it was because I couldn't resist temptation. I suppose so. Since I'm his son, I'm a b*stard just like him!"

Having said that, he smiled wryly and left.

Staring at his back as he walked away, she recalled his expression earlier. Although she could not understand what was going on, she could see that something was weighing on his mind. He had regrets and felt remorseful. He was not happy.

Unexpectedly, my son's love life is full of obstacles as well. Is fate toying with us? He even said that he's a b*stard just like Murphy.

Thinking of that, she felt a tug in her heart. If I had been by his side, all these things might not have happened. Son, I'm sorry that I wasn't able to give you any maternal love.

Meanwhile, at Wicked Palace, Murphy was shocked when he read the information he found.

Is this true? How could she be the person who poisoned Jordyn? How could it be her?

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Murphy pondered over the matter for a long time, but he could not quite put a finger on why she did it. It seemed that only she could give him an explanation for the matter. Hence, he asked her to meet him at the manor in the suburbs.

"Why do you suddenly want to meet me?"

Hearing that, he scrutinized the woman in front of him from head to toe. Over the years, they had only met each other a couple of times. Of course, she would find it strange that he asked to meet her out of the blue.

"Portia, we haven't met many times over the years. I asked you out because of an old matter, and I hope that you can be honest with me."

Frowning, Portia noticed that his expression and the way he talked to her were different from before, as if he was about to say something important.

"Just ask me anything you want to know," she responded straightforwardly.

"Do you know where Jordyn is?"

Hearing Jordyn's name, Portia's heart missed a beat. Jordyn has been dead for so many years. Why is he suddenly asking about her? Oh right! He only knows that she went missing and doesn't know that she was poisoned to death. I must answer with caution.

"Jordyn? Back then, she left in a fit of anger when she caught us in the act. Didn't you ask people to find her whereabouts after that, but there was no news about her? Why? Have you found any useful information?"

In the meantime, Murphy remained silent and fixed his gaze on her face, trying to read her expression.

However, he did not expect Portia to be such a master of acting. She had an innocent look on her face, and it seemed as though she was truly concerned about Jordyn's whereabouts.

All of a sudden, he felt ridiculous. This is the woman I fell in love with back then. Is she really that sort of person?

Noticing that he was staring at her, she felt something was amiss. "What's wrong? Do you have something to say to me?"

"What do you think I want to say to you?"

Portia was confused. What does he mean? He mentioned Jordyn at first and asked me this now. Jordyn should've been dead after being poisoned by Scelerus. Could it be that Murphy heard the news about her death and suspects something? No, that's impossible. After so many years, Jordyn's corpse would've rotted. Even if he suspects something, there's no evidence. Moreover, I planned everything meticulously. There's no way he'll suspect me.

"I don't understand what you mean. What do you want to know? Just cut to the chase!"

"Cut to the chase? Fine!" After a moment of contemplation, Murphy questioned, "Portia, do you love me?"

It went without saying that Portia was stunned by his question. Could it be that he suddenly wants to be with me again now that Jordyn has left him for so many years?

"You shouldn't ask me that question. The incident back then happened because I was drunk. You should know that the only person I love is Stephen. Love can't be forced. Don't you understand that at our old age?"

Out of the blue, Murphy burst out laughing. "If you don't love me, why did you kill Jordyn in the first place? If you love me, I would think that you killed her because you wanted to replace her and be with me, but if you don't, why would you want to kill her?" he asked decisively.

There was no trace of hesitation in his words.

In an instant, Portia's expression darkened.

He actually knows that I killed Jordyn?

Clenching her fists, she forced herself to calm down. "I don't understand what you're saying. When did I kill her? I didn't!"

"Stop denying it! Since I asked you to come and dared to ask you so directly, then I must have evidence. Just answer me. Why did you kill her?"

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He has evidence? Immediately, Portia grew nervous. But so many years have passed. What evidence could he possibly have?

Glancing at Murphy, she clenched her fists tight and refused to admit it.

“I didn’t kill her. Did someone feed you lies about me killing Jordyn?”

“Portia, are you sure you don’t want to come clean? Should I call Nick? Then you can confront him.”

When she heard Nick’s name, she started to panic.

Meanwhile, Murphy continued, “My trusted aide has found out how you bribed Nick to get your hands on Scelerus back then. If you think that it’s necessary, I can call him now.”

At that moment, Portia was growing increasingly anxious. Never had she expected that he would manage to find out what happened after all these years. Does justice always prevail?

The next moment, Murphy called Nick and put it on speaker. The latter explained what happened that year in detail. He mentioned how Portia bribed him and asked him to keep it a secret.

Hearing that, Portia was at a loss for words as what he said was irrefutable. She gritted her teeth and cursed Nick under her breath for not keeping his words.

“Since you’ve found out everything, why are you still asking me? What are you going to do now? Kill me to avenge Jordyn?”

“I’ve found out the truth, but I can’t comprehend why you would want her to die.”

In response, she sneered. “It had nothing to do with you! I didn’t want her to die because I wanted to replace her and be with you. The real reason is that I was afraid that she would ruin my happiness. Therefore, she had to die!”

Murphy was bereft of speech and knitted his brows.

“You saw her state when she found out what happened between us. It would have been fine if she only didn’t want to give up on you, but she still wanted to tell Stephen about it. If he found out, I wouldn’t be able to maintain my happiness. Hence, I couldn’t allow her to mention any of this to Stephen!”

“Even after you poisoned her to death, Stephen still found out about the matter, didn’t he?”

Abruptly, Portia shot him an icy stare. “Were you the one who informed Stephen about the matter?”

“It wasn’t me! Before you poisoned Jordyn, she had already sent someone to inform Stephen about it. You were too late! All these years, he has treated you coldly. Portia, do you think you’ve lived a happy and blissful life? You’re together with the person you love, but he doesn’t love you. Furthermore, he was never yours.”

“Enough! Even if I can’t have him, I won’t give up, and I won’t be with you!”

“Portia, are you dreaming? Even if Stephen doesn’t want you, I won’t want you either. Jordyn isn’t dead, and she’s my one and only wife!”

“Jordyn isn’t dead? How could it be?”

A look of disbelief spread across her face.

There’s no antidote for Scelerus. How can she still be alive?

“You’re disappointed? But I’m extremely happy! It’s true that I liked you back then, but now, I think that you’re pitiful. On the surface, you’re Sir Musgrave’s wife, but Stephen was never yours. Portia, you’re the most pitiful, pathetic, and despicable woman in this world!”

Portia glowered as she was riled up by his words. When she first came, she had thought that she was someone he looked up to, but now, his words had crushed her pride to dust. The disparity was so huge that it was hard for her to accept.

“Jordyn will settle the score with you when she comes back. Just you wait!”

With that said, Murphy got up and left resolutely.

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Stunned, Portia felt a feeling of suffocation as though a fist was wrapped around her heart and squeezing tightly.

At the same time, her self-comforting thoughts were shattered, and Murphy’s words were the main reason why.

He had used a rather cruel way to let Portia see that she was the most pathetic woman in the world.

She had no idea how she made her way back to the estate. She saw Stephen in the living room as soon as she stepped inside. Walking up to him, she questioned, “Why are you doing this to me, Stephen? How dare you do this to me?”

Stephen looked at her quizzically, not knowing what she meant.

“Why did you marry me and do this to me? You’ve ruined me. You’ve ruined my happiness! All these years being with you, I’ve never been happy, and it’s all because of you!”

It was then Stephen understood.

“Portia, I’ve told you long ago that I wouldn’t love you. You used your family to threaten the Musgrave family and forced me to marry you. I told you back then that you can’t force someone to love you and that I loved Rosalie, but still, you insisted. You’re the cause of this situation today.”

I might have something to do with this, but you’re the one to blame for it. Your obsession has not only ruined your happiness but also destroyed the happiness between Rosalie and me!

Portia saw a pit of disgust in his cold eyes and could not help but feel that they were cursed for tragedy. There was nothing between them other than resentment.

“I thought, maybe with effort, I could melt your stone-cold heart. What I didn’t expect was that your heart would die along with Rosalie. You’d rather let your heart follow her to the afterlife than give me even the slightest warmth. I shouldn’t have expected anything more!”

Looking at the pain written all over her face, Stephen said grimly, “Portia, you still have a choice to leave now. You can bring anything you want with you. I can give you anything as long as it’s in the estate.”

“Anything I want?”

“Anything you want.”

“What about your life? I want your life. Will you give it to me?”

Stephen’s lips curled into a relieved smile after a brief pause. “Sure. I’ve been wanting to see Rosalie again since a long time ago. Everything between us will be put to an end once you take my life.”

Portia was deeply disappointed. “You’re still thinking of seeing her at a time like this? You’ve never forgotten her, have you? I can’t believe I lost to a dead woman. What a pathetic woman am I?” she yelled.

She then turned and ran back to her room.

...

Disbelief was written all over Jordyn’s face when she and Levant got the phone call from Murphy telling them that Portia was the one who had poisoned her.

“What? How could it be her?”

“She did it because she was afraid that you might tell Stephen about the time she and I slept together when she was drunk. You can ask Nick about it. She admitted it herself, too.

Jordyn sneered, “Guess I did the right thing telling Stephen about it beforehand. If I hadn’t and wasn’t cured, I’d have died a worthless death by taking that secret to the grave.”

“Yes, you were right. Stephen has never loved her, nor have they ever consummated their marriage her whole life.”

Jordyn was surprised to know that Portia had been so poorly treated by the man she loved. I guess even the most hateful person deserves some pity.

“Murphy, are you feeling sorry for her? Stephen has never loved her, but you have. You guys have even slept together, right? Why not just marry her? That way, you can care for her however much you want.”

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“I’m not going to marry her! You’re my wife, and you always will be!”

“I wasn’t your wife anymore since the moment I saw you two together. Murphy, even though it wasn’t you that poisoned me, you’re still connected to it somehow. I won’t forgive you for that!”

With that, Jordyn ended the phone call and turned to Levant. “Did you hear what he said?”

“Yes.” Levant nodded.

“So, will you kill Portia for me?”

Levant fell silent at the request.

Kill Portia?

He was feeling rather hesitant. After all, Portia was his adoptive mother and had cared for him when he was in the estate. He did not think he could bring himself to do it.

“What? Do you not want to?” Jordyn asked.

“How is it so complicated between you and Portia? You bumped into her and Dad, and you told her husband about it. Now, you find out that she was the one that poisoned you. You’ve already been cured, but she adopted your son by chance and treated him like her own child...”

“What are you talking about? What do you mean by adopting my son?”

“Portia adopted me! She took me from the orphanage to the estate and gave me a home. She took good care of me. I think of her as my adoptive mother.”

Why would Portia adopt my son?

Jordyn was taken aback upon hearing that. She had always thought that it was the head of the orphanage who sent Levant back to Wicked Palace as they had agreed on. Levant was supposed to be with Murphy. Since when did Portia adopt him?

“I’m not a heartless person. I can’t bring myself to kill her for you,” Levant uttered.

“Why did she do that? Why did she adopt you?”

“Maybe it’s because she felt sorry for poisoning you, so she looked after me in your stead. Or perhaps she adopted Murphy’s son to get back at Stephen for ignoring her. I guess she’s the only one that knows the real reason behind this.”

Why would she do that after poisoning me? Are you trying to repent for your sins, Portia?

Jordyn stopped asking Levant to kill Portia, though her expression turned gloomy after that.

She remained silent until Davin knocked on the door and asked when was the time to treat Nina’s poison. “Maybe a few days later. We’re still missing two important ingredients that can only be found in the valley,” she replied.

“Do you mean the Resurrecting Herb from Wicked Hill and the Exquisite Flower from Jade Hill?”

“That’s right. Those are the two main ingredients to cure the bone erosion poison.”

“Don’t worry about that. Evan had already sent someone to get them when we got here.”

Jordyn was surprised to see Evan being so thoughtful.

“Great, but it will take at least two days for the herbs to be effective.”

“Two days? That’s not a long time, but...”

“But what? It takes time to clear the poison. This can’t be rushed.”

“That’s not it. It’s just that, can you change your meal plans? I can’t eat only vegetables every day. Look at Levant! He’s lost so much weight eating only vegetables for the past few days!”

After listening to him, Levant looked down and checked himself out. Have I lost weight? I don’t think so.

“Don’t use me as an excuse for not wanting to eat more vegetables. I think vegetables are fine.”

“Levant, didn’t we agree to eat the rabbit in the courtyard? Didn’t you say you don’t want to eat vegetables all the time? Are you saying this only because you don’t want to trouble your mom? Don’t worry, Levant. A mother would do anything for her child. My mom has always taken good care of you. She would always cook a big feast for you when you went to the Seet Residence. Even she would never feed you only vegetables, not to mention your mom! I believe she won’t do that to you, too.”

Levant was speechless at how much effort Davin put in, all because he did not want to eat vegetables.