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Alexander didn't even notice how his frown faded. He could hardly contain his exhilaration.

Taking one bite after another, he finished the beef stew in a flash, leaving his mouth with an unfulfilled sensation. All of a sudden, the corners of his lips turned upward as the resistance that was once in his head vanished. *You and your unique taste buds, Elise!*

The following day, Elise woke up to a familiar scent of disinfectant. When she opened her eyes, she was dazed to find Alexander seated on the chair beside her bed. He was sitting in a rather slothful posture with his legs crossed. Yet, there was a hint of dashingness on him, which left Elise staring at him for a few seconds before she hastily blurted, "Why are you here?"

He lifted his gaze and looked into her eyes. "You're finally awake. Good. Pack your things and let's head back."

Hearing that, Elise grew joyous and even forgot to question Alexander regarding his presence. She delightfully stated, "I can go back to school already? That's wonderful!"

Only God knew how long she had stayed in the hospital. She would've died from boredom if not for the discharge.

Alexander didn't speak much despite her glee. Tactfully, he stood up and glanced at the lunchbox placed on the table beside him. "Tidy up and eat. I'll handle your discharge at the reception."

It wasn't until he finished his sentence that she noticed the lunchbox beside her. *But why does it look so familiar? Is... Is this the beef stew from last night?*

"You..." Before she could say another word, Alexander had already exited the room.

She then took another look at the lunchbox before feeling the warmth on its surface with her palms. With a doubtful frown, she started wondering and realized that he must have only done that because of Jonah.

After packing her things up, Elise started munching on her favorite beef stew. Later, when Alexander came back from settling her discharge procedure, she followed him out of the hospital.

In the rather cramped car, Elise sat in the back seat. Not long after the car started moving, her phone rang in her pocket. She pulled it out and saw it was a call from Cynthia.

She merrily answered the phone. "Morning, Aunt Cynthia!"

"Oh? Sounds like someone's in a good mood," Cynthia exclaimed in a mischievous tone.

"What are you talking about? When was I ever in a bad mood? Every day is a happy day!"

"That's my Ellie! There's something I forgot to tell you yesterday, so I figured I should remind you now. Through my observation, among those five Griffith men, Alexander's the only one that's husband material. It's now or never, Ellie. Better seize the opportunity and win a nephew-in-law for me, you know!"

Hearing that, she guiltily glimpsed toward Alexander and revealed a helpless expression. She deliberately suppressed her voice. "Gosh, Aunt Cynthia! We... It's not what you think."

Cynthia cheerfully cackled. "Oh, Ellie! Maybe not now, but who knows how the future will unfold? Anyhow, I, Cynthia Sinclair, like that boy, so he deserves to be with my Ellie!"

"Aunt Cynthia!"

"Okay, okay. I know you're still young and you get shy talking about this. I do understand. However, the opportunity is right before your eyes. Make sure you hold tight to it. As I said, Alexander's pretty good, but I've yet to see his mannerisms and whether he's capable of satisfying my Ellie. Other than that, I can only be your advisor, so you're ultimately the shot caller. No matter what your choice will be, know that I'll always have your back."

Regardless, Elise couldn't grasp Cynthia's motives. "Got it, Aunt Cynthia. Don't worry about it."

"Good. I'll be busy the next couple days, so I won't be seeing you. Give me a call if you need anything, alright?"

After hanging up, Elise put her phone back into her pocket. Meanwhile, Alexander peeked at her in the rear mirror and revealed a knowing look as the infatuation he had for her instantly dispersed. Although he didn't listen to the entire conversation, he could still hear mentions of his name from Cynthia's loud voice. Since every person was rather sensitive to their own names, he undoubtedly acknowledged Elise and Cynthia's conversation was pertaining to him.

Nonetheless, Elise's expression seemed as if she was unwilling to talk about him. Then, he withdrew his gaze and silently gripped the steering wheel as he hit the gas and sped away.

After sending Elise to school, Alexander drove away without even bidding her farewell.

Watching as the car faded away, she thought, *Ah, that's the Alexander I know.* Without reading too much into it, she walked into the building. Due to the incident during the fan meeting, she was considered to be infamous now.

Everyone in school who was a fan of Jack instantly gnarled their teeth at the sight of her. If it weren't for his tweet urging everyone not to harass her, she wouldn't have ever survived a day in school. Nevertheless, although they couldn't do anything to her, they definitely had cards up their sleeves.

For instance, the students would rank Elise the "Queen" on the newly published "Ugly Bee Chart" on the school forum.

Elise, oblivious to such a happening, cluelessly minded her own business on her seat. Nothing was out of the ordinary except some turbulence every now and then outside the classroom and some judging eyes.

"Say, E-Ugly Elise, you're quite the calm one, aren't you? Or have you developed some sort of immunity to losing confidence on your face?" Danny bluntly scorned in a somewhat indecent posture.

With a still face, Elise answered, "Every strand of hair and cell on my body is a gift from my parents. There's no shame in that. A pretty vessel or a purposeful soul? I think I prefer the latter."

Immediately, Danny blatantly burst into laughter. *She must be out of her mind! A lowlife like her dares to claim herself a purposeful soul! Out of all the jokes in the world!*

Regardless, Elise disregarded him as she took out a book of Math Olympiad exercises and started solving the questions.

After getting first place in the previous Math Olympiad, her math teacher had come to her a few times in private and suggested she participate in the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition, which she had rejected initially. However, after countless measures of goading from her teacher, she eventually

gave in and agreed to take the challenge.

On the other hand, seeing how his insults were going nowhere given how Elise didn't respond the way he wished, Danny was discontented.

Seeing as Elise was concentrating on the math questions, he couldn't hold himself back from voicing more teases.

"Look at you, can't succeed in beauty so you're turning into a total nerd, hoping to go somewhere. Know that it's only luck that you managed to get first place. You actually think you're something, huh?"

She subtly glowered at him and coldly blurted, "Clown much?"

When she said that, the flame within Danny's heart surged and stormed into his head. He was infuriated, especially when he looked at her tremendously hideous face. Losing his temper, he snatched the exercise book from Elise's hands. "Cut the act, Ugly Elise! You must find pretending to be a scholar fun, don't you?"

I heard you're going for the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition. With your shitty standards? I should warn you: better wake up from your dream before you humiliate yourself out there. Of course, you wouldn't know anyone better than you 'cause you're always living in that pathetic, little fantasy of yours!"

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Elise found him to be childishly funny. Why does he even care whether I participate in the Math Olympiad, or if I humiliate myself? It's not like he's the one to be humiliated!

"Give me my book back!" She was angered.

However, the foolhardy Danny couldn't care less about her. He then countered with a provoking face, "Nope. What are you gonna do?"

Somehow, she was amused as the vexation in her diminished. *If that's how you wanna do it, I'll play along with you.*

"How are you so sure I'd be shaming myself? What if I got first place again?" Upon those words, Danny couldn't contain himself and instantly chortled aloud.

Despite his stupidity, he was well aware of the standards of the City Mathematics Olympiad Competitions' participants.

The participants viewed studying as life, and had never rested from training themselves, which allowed them to achieve such a level. You, Elise Sinclair, on the other hand, are just a country bumpkin who merely got first place in the Math Olympiad out of sheer luck. Know your place, bumpkin!

If she were to go head to head with those life-long learners, she'd die from embarrassment!

"Don't worry about getting first place, Elise. If you could even get a consolation prize, pigs would start to fly."

After all, the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition isn't meant for amateurs. And with Elise's level, all she can do is be a filler.

Danny was pretty confident about that.

Elise proposed, "Oh, is that so? Why don't we make a bet, then?"

Upon the suggestion, Danny started hesitating. In spite of his words, he felt somewhat timid. If she somehow managed to harvest all the luck in the universe and got herself a participation prize, he would be in grave loss.

Hence, he added, "Let's make this clear. Participation prize doesn't count. Your choices are the winner, first runner-up, or second runner-up."

Elise lifted the edges of her lips and grinned, as if she had seen through his hesitation.

"Fine by me. So are we doing this or not? Not gonna chicken out, are you?"

Hearing that, Danny was visibly tilted. "What for? It's on, then. What do you want a bet on?"

Elise, seeing how her provoking was effective, raised her brows. "If I win the competition, you'll have to stay out of my way from now on. Oh, and greet me as 'Boss' too while you're at it."

The nerves she has to make such demands! Danny was still hesitating for a moment earlier, but he instantly grew resolute.

"Very well. It's on now. But I shall warn you now: if you lose, leave the Griffiths alone and get the hell back to your countryside."

"Deal."

And so, the two reached an agreement. Danny seemed to have noticed nothing odd, confident that she

would lose. When she eventually bid farewell to the Griffiths, he would never have to face such an unglorified mug any longer. *How refreshing!*

With that in mind, he couldn't hold back the joyous look on his face. Then, he returned the exercise book to Elise and stopped bothering her.

Of course, he had to spread the news.

Danny: 'Valorous news, mine own brethrens! Elise the ugly monster is about to packeth her bags! Praise to the Lord!

Jack: 'For real?'

Danny: 'Trusteth in me, for the day shall cometh very lief! And brethrens, thou sh an't forget a mead fest for me!

Jack: 'Hast the hero perhaps slain the monster?'

Danny: 'Yo, what are you talking about? Am I that messed up to you? I'm only making her retreat with the power of justice!'

Jack: 'The power of justice? Care to explain?'

Danny was so boastful that he laid out every detail about the gamble he had with Elise.

Danny: 'Anyway, broskis, just get the celebration ready as I bring home the flag o f victory!'

Meanwhile, Alexander, who heard the nonstop dinging from his phone, put down the documents in his hands and unlocked his phone. When he saw the message m entioning a flag of victory, he hastily pressed on the message before swiping to read the conversation. His index finger ultimately stopped.

A bet?

Even an ordinary man could see the result of the gamble. Yet, for some reason, Al exander was rather reluctant to see Elise lose.

And that was where the bet started to get interesting.

In the evening after school, it was Jack who came to get Elise.

As a celebrity and an idol, he disguised himself well.

On the way home, he couldn't help controlling his urge and quizzed, "Are you real ly having a bet with Danny?"

Elise wasn't surprised by the fact that Jack was informed about the bet. She simpl y blurted a "yes" in response.

Seeing her calm composure, he felt compelled to remind her, "You know, everyon e who participates in the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition is a beast. Ever y one of them is extraordinary. Alexander barely managed to get first place even with his standards."

And Alexander, in the eyes of his brothers, was virtually a deity.

Thus, it was only natural for him to win the competition.

Meanwhile, Elise and Alexander were of different levels, so it was obvious who would prevail.

Therefore, Jack assumed that she was bound to lose the bet to Danny.

Elise acknowledged his point and replied, "Are you saying that Alexander had also competed in Math Olympiad competitions?"

Seeing her so fascinated in Alexander's matters, Jack suggestively stated, "Don't even think about making a move on him. He's not into girls like you."

What.

Her face was filled with confusion. She didn't even mention anything remotely related to adoring Alexander. It was solely an instinctive question.

"Alexander's the best. Back when he was still active in the Math Olympiad, he was the city's number one. Even now, his record is yet to be broken."

As he proudly voiced, he could hardly contain his admiration toward Alexander.

"Oh," Elise lightly answered. Still, it was a surprise for her to know that Alexander was once top of his batch. However, the information didn't mean much to her.

Ever since having agreed on the bet with Danny, Elise had been working seriously on her exercises.

To others, she was merely putting up a facade to make an impression. Nobody believed that she had the capability to even win something in the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition.

'What's been up, Boss?' While she was doing her exercises, she received a text from Jamie, to which she replied, 'Exercises:

Jamie then sent a string of sad-faced emoticons. 'Even an elite like you are so hardworking. I'm truly an insult to trash! Anyway, I probably should get back to studying. By the way, Boss, there's something I forgot to tell you. Somebody's seeking you out for a car race, and he's offering a generous amount. Are you up for it, Boss?'

Without hesitation, Elise rejected the offer.

'Tell them we have seen what happened the last time I raced

Seeing her reply, Jamie immediately acknowledged her. 'Got it, Boss. I'll pass it on.

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Elise took a moment to appreciate Jamie's tactfulness before putting her phone away and continuing to immerse herself in the exercises. Slowly, she found solving difficult questions highly fascinating as she lost herself in the depth of knowledge.

In the meantime, Alexander was in an utterly foul mood as a result of rejection.

His assistant carefully reported, "They rejected our invitation, Young Master Alex."

He immediately stopped whatever he was doing as his frown gave him a unibrow. His mind was constantly drifting to the scene during the car race back then. The woman's slender figure and her stunning posture just wouldn't leave his mind.

All this time, he had been looking for that woman.

However, that woman just vaporized, leaving no traces as she left. Regardless of the substantial amount of money he was willing to offer the woman to join him in a friendly race, she seemed to be uninterested about it, which led Alexander to be even more invested in finding her.

"Raise it to fifty million. Get her to me no matter what it takes."

"Yes, Young Master Alex." The assistant wiped the sweat off his forehead before silently leaving the room.

Alexander was all alone in the spacious office then. He turned his head toward the window and started contemplating. After a short while, he pulled open his drawer and grabbed a CD before inserting the disc into his computer.

With that, a clip of a car race popped up in his monitor. Three years ago in the French Grand Prix, a participant from Cittadel named Sue won the first prize and shocked the world.

That time, Sue left a great impression on him. Since then, he had been trying to look for Sue, personally desiring to receive lessons on how to perform a three sixty drift.

Nonetheless, for some reason, after the international competition, Sue never appeared in the public eyes again.

Despite having countless connections, he couldn't find any trace of hers. It wasn't until a week ago when the woman appeared at the car race that Alexander saw hints of Sue on her.

Could she be Sue?

A dash of profound sensation flashed across his eyes as they were fixated on the computer screen that was replaying Sue's flawless three sixty drift and her steady brake.

Shortly after, the car door was opened and she alighted the vehicle with a subtle smile on her face, her smile lethal to many's eyes, including his.

A simple glance at her face was enough to leave him astounded for years.

From the depth of his heart, he decided to search for her no matter the price. I will find you no matter what!

Meanwhile, Jamie, having assumed that the other party would stop pursuing after getting rejected,

dropped his jaw when he saw them upping their offer to fifty million.

"You're sure? Fifty million?" Jamie questioned to clarify things up, and was stupefied when he received confirmation from the opposite party.

Nonetheless, when he recalled his boss' words, he eventually refuted.

"I'm sorry. Maybe next time. Boss said she's busy, so she'll not have the time."

"Don't worry, Mr. Keller. We are open to discussions if it's about the money. As long as you are willing to come to an agreement, any figure is negotiable."

Hearing that, Jamie could no longer contain himself. They're actually willing to pay anything just for a friendly race with Boss?

As his fingers rhythmically tapped on his desk, he thought it was best that he didn't lock on a definite answer. Instead, he decided to discuss it with Elise. After all, the offer was inhumanely alluring.

"Very well. I shall discuss with my boss and give you an answer later."

At Jamie's consideration, the other party heaved a sigh of relief.
"Great. We shall await your good news."

When the call ended, he had already come up with plans to persuade Elise into it. However, since she had committed herself to the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition, the friendly race could only wait.

Elise wasn't expecting the level of persistence the other party had. In that instance, all her concentration was placed on her Math

Olympiad questions, which she had been working on every day, including during Chinese class, and that piqued her teacher.

“Translate this sentence, Elise.”

When the teacher mentioned her name, she instinctively raised her head, only to see her classmates gazing at her. At that moment, Jasmine Anders, class representative of the Chinese class, couldn't help taking a jab at Elise. “She's from the countryside, Miss. They must not offer Chinese classes there. Maybe you should just speak English with her.”

Upon those words, the classroom was filled with laughter while the teacher angrily stared at Elise. “Pay attention to the class if you know you're bad! Your monthly test is near. I don't want the entire class to fall behind because of you alone.”

Elise revealed a scowl as she casually scanned across the content on the blackboard. She then stood up and answered, “It means that if corruption becomes the norm in the world, innocence itself will be a crime.”

Her calm yet clear enunciation traveled into every ear in the room, including the teacher's. Everyone in the room was left dumbfounded, especially the teacher as she got the phrase from sources that were completely out of the school syllabus. Her intention of presenting the phrase was to keep the students' confidence in check and remind them of their places.

Little did she expect, the bland-looking Elise actually managed to translate the sentence correctly.

“Did I get it right, Miss?” Elise inquired with a straight face, to which the teacher cleared her throat to cover up her embarrassment. “Yes, please be seated.”

The teacher's attitude was obviously different than before.

Having seen that, the other students revealed an amazed expression. The country girl actually speaks Chinese?

And that included Danny who was right beside her. “Hah! Your guessing skills are getting better and better, Elise. You actually got it right.”

Elise apathetically rolled her eyes at him. A couple of right guesses might have been luck, but every time? Do you hear yourself?

Of course, Danny wouldn't have thought about that. He only felt that Elise was really good at guessing, which suddenly made him worried about the bet he had with her.

On second thought, screw my worries. No one's that lucky to get everything right.

Besides, it's the City Mathematics Olympiad Competition, not some entry-level test. There's no way a lowlife country girl like Elise can win. I must be imagining things!

On the other hand, Elise wouldn't have expected to draw so much disconcertment from just correctly translating a sentence. Among the people that disdained her, the one that hated her most was the Chinese class representative, Jasmine.

Before this, Jasmine was the only student that could answer even the most difficult translation questions given by the teacher. Thus, she had always been the spotlight during Chinese classes, and that gave her a tremendous sense of pride.

Unfortunately for her, Elise snatched her limelight today. Jasmine wouldn't have minded or felt any shame if it was anyone else.

But it just had to be Elise, that urban bitch! That's damn insulting! How am I supposed to live with this?

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Jasmine's eyes darkened as she felt her heart drop. During the morning reading session the next day, Jasmine led the class' Chinese reading lesson as she was the class monitor. Halfway through the reading, she deliberately took a Chinese passage and put it in front of Elise.

"Please read this for us later."

Without even looking back at Jasmine, Elise rejected directly. "Sorry, I don't want to."

Jasmine knew that Elise would definitely not dare to do so, so she was even more determined to make Elise read Chinese. After all, Chinese was not their mother tongue. So, many students were often able to score in their examinations but were unable to speak the language fluently. For some, their pronunciation might not be accurate while others might even face difficulties conversing in the language.

Jasmine reckoned that Elise must be terrible in Chinese oral and didn't dare to read the passage in front of the class lest she was embarrassed. However, that was exactly what Jasmine wanted—to embarrass her.

"You have no choice but to read it, otherwise I'll give you a demerit point." Students would be given demerit points if they acted inappropriately. The majority of the students were afraid of getting demerit points, but Elise was an exception. No

t only was she not intimidated at all, but she actually had no intention to be bothered about Jasmine.

“Go ahead and give me a demerit point then.”

Annoyed, Jasmine further threatened Elise with her authority'. “What are you trying to do, Elise? The whole class listens to me but you. You think you're so special, huh?”

Jasmine's words had drawn the attention of the rest of the class to Elise as the students stopped reading and looked toward Elise.

At first, Elise did not understand why Jasmine would insist on her to read the Chinese passage. However, after seeing her relentless determination, she knew that it was because Jasmine was caught in the comparison trap.

In fact, Elise had long comprehended how girls tend to compare with one another inwardly, and she thought that was very meaningless. Thus, she had no intention to be bothered with Jasmine, but Jasmine actually started provoking her first.

“Since the other classmates would listen to you, go ask them to read instead. Why do you have to ask

me?”

Jasmine snorted. “You're a newcomer and you have not read in front of the class before, so I need to understand your situation.”

Although it was a rather awkward reason, it sounded somewhat reasonable.

Jasmine then added, “You just have to read once today and I won't ask you to read anymore in the future.”

“Great!” Elise hummed in response. In order to save the trouble in the future, Elise stopped refusing, She took up the Chinese textbook and started reading the passage seriously under Jasmine's anticipation

However, as soon as she started reading, the entire class went silent when they heard Elise's reading because she was so fluent it was enjoyable to listen to.

On the other hand, Jasmine's expression changed at once. With her face turning pale, she clenched her fists tight. Elise was reading so fluently that it was as if she was raised abroad. Her fluency was much better than Jasmine's, and she didn't seem to be a country bumpkin at all!

No way. This is impossible! Jasmine refused to believe it as she stared at Elise in disbelief.

After reading the passage, Elise lifted her head to glance at Jasmine and asked, “Are you happy now?”

Jasmine still wanted to say something, but she was at a loss for words. Meanwhile, because of this episode, the other students had a completely different impression of Elise.

It turned out that although the new joiner had a rather average look, she wasn't that incapable after all. Not only was she good at Math Olympiad, but her Chinese oral was perfect. They even thought that Elise's fluency in Chinese had way surpassed Jasmine's, who was the Chinese class representative.

At the same time, little did Elise expect that this small episode would cause the others to have a different impression of her. Thereafter, she sat down again and continued practicing math questions. The competition was approaching, so she was determined to practice as much as possible.

On the other hand, Danny was used to being late, and today was no different. Since he was late to class, he didn't know about the incident that had happened in the morning. Nevertheless, during recess, he realized that unlike normal days where everyone would ignore Elise, there were actually some classmates who initiated conversations with her today. Besides, Elise actually got along well with them and didn't seem to be distant.

This made Danny perplexed. *Since when did Elise become this popular?*

“Hi Elise, can I be your friend?” While Elise was solving the practice questions, a shy female voice emerged in front of her. Elise lifted her eyes to see a small-sized girl, who was staring at her with her large, alluring eyes. The girl's face was even filled with excitement. As Elise would gladly receive a classmate who was as friendly, she replied, “Of course!”

The girl smiled brightly upon hearing Elise's response. “Hi Elise, I'm Mikayla Jameson. Nice to meet you.”

Looking at Mikayla's hand which was stretched toward her, Elise was startled. Given that her looks weren't as attractive as others, it was a luxury for her to make friends. After pausing for a while, Elise

shook hands with Mikayla and said, “Nice to meet you too, Mikayla.”

Mikayla was glad at Elise's response. To be frank, she wanted to learn Chinese from Elise. Her Chinese examination results were far from satisfactory, and her oral was even rustier. Hence, she wished to learn Chinese from Elise after seeing her fluent reading in the morning. “Elise, you're so fluent in Chinese. Can you teach me the language?”

Initially, Elise thought Mikayla was going to ask her for a huge favor, but it turned out to be a small matter, so Elise was more than willing to help out a friend.

“Sure. Bring your Chinese textbook. I’ll teach you.”

As such, Mikayla quickly brought her textbook and started learning from Elise seriously. Before this, her oral was bad, so Elise taught her ways to correct her pronunciation. Not only that, Elise even recommended some methods to learn Chinese, which benefited Mikayla a lot.

In the afternoon when school was over, it was the first time that Elise did not walk out of the school alone. Instead, she was with Mikayla, and the two girls chatted happily all the way to the school gate. Soon, Elise spotted the familiar car of the Griffith Family, so she bid Mikayla goodbye and walked