

Take My Breath Away Novel Chapter 136 To 145

Chapter 136 Seek Solace In Drink

Michele would have been thrilled if Hayden had told her this before.

But things had changed and she had already moved on. She was not used to the new cologne he was wearing, and the man before her was, for all intents and purposes, a stranger. True, she hadn't seen him in awhile, but the man whose arms she was in now was so alien, so changed from whom he once was when they had first met. Although she was in his arms, she felt there was a huge chasm between them. And that chasm was indeed hard to bridge.

Time does change everything.

Michele pushed Hayden away from her and told the driver, "Stop the car!"

The driver looked at Hayden through the interior rear-view mirror, hoping to get some indication of whether or not he should do this. But Hayden was silent, and gave no cues, verbal or otherwise, that he should obey the girl's orders. He wouldn't do as Michele asked without Hayden's say-so.

Instantly, Michele figured it out. She fumed with rage and shouted at Hayden, "I said, stop the car!"

Hayden was not angry at her behavior. Instead, he coaxed her, "It's freezing outside. Let me send you home." There was a time and place to be angry, and now was not the time.

However, Michele didn't buy it at all. She yelled at the top of her lungs, "No! I'm not going home. Let me out!" She put her hand on the door handle, ready to unlock the door and open it. "I'm not kidding. I'll jump!"

Besides, she was at the end of her rope. Her already frayed nerves had snapped. She had seen Megan and Wilfred together, when he should have been away on business. Her heart hit rock bottom. What was worse, Megan had told the boy that Wilfred was her boyfriend. And before Megan and Wilfred had left the restaurant, he hadn't even cast a single glance at Michele. Michele was so mad she could explode at any time.

Sighing in defeat, Hayden told the driver to pull over. Michele pushed the door open and left without even turning her head.

Hayden watched as the stubborn girl walked off. He rubbed his aching temples and wondered, 'What can I do to make her come back to me?'

Michele trotted along the road, and then started to run.

Finally, she arrived at Arthur's housing community and rang him on the phone. "Hey, Arthur. Where are you? I really need a drink—and a friend."

"Tomboy? Drink? No, no, no! Your husband will beat me to a pulp if he finds out."

"Dammit Arthur! Do this for me! Forget him; he's not worth worrying about!"

Arthur could tell from her tone that Michele was mad right now. "Tell you what, I'm at a friend's birthday party right now. Give me some time to say my

w he'd at least have a taste of the good life.

Arthur entered Room 888 before Michele was able to take a sip. "You're so fast!" she exclaimed.

He nodded and had a look around. He'd never been here before. "Your husband is so rich! Look at this! It's a porcelain vase from the Yuan dynasty. I heard some rich dude bid 200 million for it at auction. I'm guessing that's Wilfred. And now he just hides it here! What a waste! Oh, look at that! The painting is called...er...I can't think of it right now. But this guy was a famous painter. It must have cost Wilfred a pretty penny..."

Michele rolled her eyes and poured a glass of wine for him. "Dude, come on. Your family is by no means poor. So why are you playing the broke card?"

Arthur took a sip of the wine, and his eyes went wide. He took the bottle on the table and checked it carefully. "Oh my God! This wine is from a private winery in Bordeaux!" Michele was getting a little tipsy now. "So?" she asked. "So, if you look at where it was made, when the grapes were picked and made into wine, etc, it's more expensive than Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1982. It costs at least \$500, 000."

"What?!" Upon hearing the price, Michele coughed and almost choked on the wine. While Arthur was looking around, she had gulped down three glasses of wine. She had filled the glass with the expensive wine, and gulped it down in one go!

'I almost drank half the bottle, so that means I just drank \$250, 000! Oh my God!' Michele was at a loss for words.

"Hey, why is there only half a bottle left?! How long have you been here?" Arthur asked in disbelief.

With an embarrassed smile, Michele stammered, "Er... I've been here... more than ten minutes. But I didn't start til you got here."

Chapter 137 Let's Get Drunk

Arthur was stunned by Michele's words. 'You drank this expensive wine like water?' "Tomboy, it's such a waste! If your husband found out, you'd break his heart. By the way, he's on that business trip, right? Let's get some of the hard stuff. I mean, did you see his liquor cabinet? Vodka, whiskey, brandy, Maotai...He has the best stuff. Tomboy, how about a bottle of limited-edition brandy? This isn't that expensive, I think," he said, grabbing a bottle and examining it.

Lured by the alcohol, he completely forgot about Wilfred' warning.

'Limited-edition brandy?' Michele blinked and wondered. 'This is all my husband's liquor. No big deal to drink a bottle or two. Besides, he's with Megan now...'

When Megan popped into her mind, Michele slammed another glass of wine, snapped her fingers and told Arthur, "Sure, why not? Besides, I'm not letting you leave. You haven't drunk enough."

Arthur clapped his hands, cheerful at her assent. "Awesome!"

He took the bottle from the cabinet, removed the lid and poured her a glass, then himself. The smell of alcohol filled the room.

They clinked glasses and drank the brandy. They were feeling pretty good now, the two of them. The room was warm, the lights making the place somewhat indistinct, and their cares were largely forgotten. It was a good time, just these two friends, and in some ways just like old times.

After two glasses of brandy, Michele's mind was a blank—no more Wilfred, no more Megan. She felt great at that moment. And that was the whole point of this little rendezvous.

Arthur was a heavy drinker. He was still playing on his phone—it was the latest version made by Wilfred' company. After the upgrade, a whole world of games opened to him. And so he was busy downloading one while playing another.

They polished off the bottle of brandy and were about to find something else to drink when Arthur's phone rang. He showed Michele the caller ID and said, "It's Regina."

With a red face, Michele stammered, "W-Why is she...calling you now?"

"Not a clue. Maybe she's in trouble." Arthur and Regina were good friends, but he and Michele had a better relationship. He'd known

ing tone, "You need to be more careful next time you want to make friends with someone. Look at you. You have a ho and a tomboy as friends. Good thing you guys are just friends. If you were dating one of them, you'd probably be tearing your hair out by now."

Everyone realized that she was calling Michele "tomboy". They turned to look at Michele and whispered to one another.

Michele was still drunk and you could smell the alcohol on her.

Arthur's face soured at Portia's words. The only person he couldn't offend was Wilfred Huo. As for people from the Gu family, he didn't give a damn about them. He pointed to Portia and snapped, "Who do you think you are? You don't even deserve to be mentioned in the same breath as my friends. Come on, Regina, let's go."

The boys around Regina immediately blocked Arthur's way.

Arthur fumed with rage. "Get the hell out of my way!"

These boys were all young and rich. They didn't like what Arthur said. One of them shouted, "Shut up! Did Portia say you could go?"

"Why do I need her permission?" Arthur's eyes swept over the boys around Portia. "Why do you guys all bow down to her? What do you get out of it? It's not like you need the money...I've got it! You guys f*cked her once, and now you're hoping she'll put out some more, right?"

It was quite normal for these rich boys to have threesomes. As for rich girls like Portia, only a few of them would agree to it.

Chapter 138 Clean My Shoes

Many rich boys had had threesomes and foursomes before, but it was something that upper-class people talked about only behind closed doors.

Most people in the private booth were enraged by Arthur's bluntness, especially Portia. Her face turned pale, and then livid. She pointed at Arthur and yelled, "Arthur, you're so shameless! Don't you dare think that we're as dirty as you are."

'How dare Arthur insult Portia?!' The boy standing nearest to Arthur fumed with rage. He grabbed Arthur's collar with one hand and got ready to punch him in the face with the other. "f*ck you, Arthur! You're really asking for it!"

Just as his fist was about to land on Arthur's face, Regina grabbed his arm and pulled it back. "Don't start a fight!"

Michele staggered to the boy and patted him on his shoulder. "Hey, dude."

The boy turned to the drunk girl. Irritated by the smell of alcohol coming from her, he shouted, "f*ck off!"

Instead of getting angry, Michele gave him a big sweet smile that caught him off guard.

The very next moment, she threw her fist toward his face. It was too late for the boy to dodge; he got a hard punch in the face.

"Ouch!" His hands flew up to hold his face in pain.

Michele blew on her fist. It had been a long time since she had fought with anyone, so she was a little rusty now. Her hand was hurting so much that she wanted to cry.

Now that Michele had started a fight, the room was in chaos. The boys gathered around Michele and Arthur in an attempt to avenge their dream girl, Portia.

Regina didn't know how to fight, so Arthur pushed her aside to protect her.

The room was in a mess.

Several of Portia's girlfriends ran toward Regina, planning to teach her a lesson. Although Regina didn't know how to fight like Michele, she wasn't a doormat. She grabbed an empty bottle, smashed it onto the table, and pointed the broken half at the girls. The girls immediately stopped in their tracks in fear.

Some of the people in the room couldn't afford to offend either party, so they tried to stop the fight but to no avail.

One of the boys tried to catch Michele off guard, but she gave him a spin kick, sending him flying backward. He rolled back a

en it with your own eyes. She has a close relationship with Arthur and even dated another man while you were away."

Wilfred put down the chopsticks, picked up a tissue to clean his mouth, and said with an emotionless face, "Megan, you've misunderstood her. She and Arthur have been good friends for many years. Do not say such things ever again, okay? Go to bed early."

Then, he stood up from his seat, adjusted his suit, and walked toward the gates of the villa.

Megan jumped to her feet, trotted after him and held his waist as he changed his shoes. She pressed her cheek against his back and pleaded, "Uncle Wilfred, please don't be angry at me. I just want you to be happy."

Wilfred was not pleased with how she was acting. He shifted away from her and said in a cold voice, "I know what you meant to say, but you're overreacting. It's very late. You need to sleep now."

Sensing that he was in a bad mood, Megan took a step back and said obediently, "I'm glad you know that, Uncle Wilfred. I'll go to bed now. Have a safe drive."

Megan knew how to manipulate Wilfred's mood. As expected, his face softened at her words. He nodded and left the villa.

Inside his Emperor car, Wilfred leaned back against his seat with his eyes shut.

Mathew, the driver, stole a glance at his boss and then, carefully choosing his words, said, "Mr. Wilfred, we have to attend the open tender in the nearbMirntonberg tomorrow morning. When are we leaving for the city?"

Chapter 139 Your Husband Seems To Be Here

The open tender was very important to the ZL Group and it was why Wilfred had gone out of town in the first place. But after hearing Michele say that she missed him, he'd squeezed out some time in his schedule and rushed back to Mirtonberg.

Silence befell the car. Mathew could tell that Wilfred was in a bad mood. Since Wilfred didn't respond, Mathew didn't pursue the topic again.

Just then, Mathew's phone rang. With one hand on the wheel, he answered it. "Hello, this is... What?! When? Okay, got it. Thank you. Bye!"

After hanging up, he cast a careful glance at his boss sitting in the back seat, then cleared his throat and said, "Er... Mr. Wilfred, something has happened to Mrs. Wilfred."

Wilfred's eyes flew open, and his piercing gaze sent a chill running down Mathew's spine. Mathew wanted nothing more than to hit the brakes and ditch the car to get as far away from his boss as possible.

Meanwhile, the local police station was overflowing with young boys and girls, even though it was usually calm and quiet at this hour.

The boys were behaving as arrogantly as ever, as if they feared nothing and no one. The girls, however, looked completely different from half an hour ago. Now, they were sitting quietly in the cell with their heads lowered.

One of the policemen was interrogating Arthur, whose face was black and blue. "Why did you start the fight?"

Arthur raised his chin and pointed at another boy. With innocent eyes, he said, "Sir, you should ask him. I don't know why they hit me. I'm confused too."

The policeman knew how unruly these rich second generation kids could be. He banged the table and said in a serious tone, "If you refuse to answer, you'll have to celebrate New Year behind bars."

New Year was just half a month away.

While Arthur was being questioned, Michele was sound asleep with her head resting on Regina's shoulder. No matter who spoke to her, she kept her eyes closed. Finally, when

one of the policemen pressed her too hard, she yelled, "Why didn't you bring that woman here as well? She's the one who started the fight!" The woman she was referring to was none other than Portia. Portia had made a phone call to Hayden as soon as the policemen arrived at the private booth. As a result, she hadn't been taken to the police station.

Michele wanted to leave too, but she didn't dare to call Wilfred. Besides, she was still mad at him. There was no way she would call him for help.

Anyway,

closed her eyes.

She dozed off quickly. When cold wind blew in through the car door and woke her up, she opened her eyes in confusion.

Then, she found herself in familiar arms.

It took her a second to remember everything that had happened. But in order to avoid being punished by Wilfred, she decided to play dumb.

"Wilfred Huo, it's you... Who am I? Where am I?"

Wilfred remained silent.

Her heart sank; her tricks didn't seem to be working. In a fit of desperation, she started to sing. "Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are. Up above the world so high..." But before she could finish singing the song, she had an urge to vomit. She ran toward a tree and started vomiting.

She felt much better after she was done. A bottle of water was handed to her. Without raising her head to see who it was from, she rinsed her mouth with the water.

Now that her head was clearer, she could feel the cold Royst of wind blowing past. She shook her head to clear her vision and found a man staring at her with piercing eyes. She was so frightened that she threw the bottle away. Her legs were shaking. She reached out a hand to steady herself against the tree and stammered, "Wilfred..." 'No! Maybe I can calm him down by seducing him.' She put on a sweet smile and said, "Honey, here you are. I missed you so much."

"Are you sober now?" His voice was still cold. Obviously, her plan didn't work. Anger was written all over his face.

'What can I do? God, help me!' But Michele maintained the smile on her face and said, "Yes, I am. Honey, it's late and freezing outside. Let's go home and go to bed."

Chapter 140 Bury Me In The Earth

Michele raised her left leg to walk, but her right leg went soft. She was about to fall to the ground when Wilfred steadied her and pulled her into his arms.

"You are as drunk as a lord. How are you planning to get to the villa?" Wilfred taunted.

Michele covered her face with both hands in shame. "Honey, let's get going." She tried to act in a pettishly charming manner, but she felt like she was going to throw up again.

However, Wilfred didn't buy it this time. He stared at her red lips, and became engrossed in his own thoughts.

"Honey, why not bury me in the earth? That way, many Michele's will spring up next year. I know that you don't like this short-tempered Michele. If you're lucky, you might be able to harvest an obedient Michele and you'll love her."

'Many Michele's? I can hardly deal with one Michele.' Wilfred's head throbbed at the thought. He rubbed his arched brow and said in a cold tone, "After this semester, I'm sending you to study abroad."

According to him, her unruly character had much to do with the environment she was living in. He thought that her friends, Arthur and Regina, were a bad influence on her.

'Study abroad? NO!' Instantly, Michele fumed. "You're sending me abroad? Oh, I guess you want to send me as far away as you can, so that you can date women like Jeanne and Megan..."

Wilfred's lips were reduced to a thin line, but he remained silent.

Michele raised her voice. "Why are you not responding? Say something! You are feeling guilty because I'm right, aren't you?"

"You don't want to leave because you want to get back together with Hayden Gu. Isn't that right?" His voice was as cold as ice.

Michele was stunned by his words. 'Hayden? What does this have to do with him?' "You're judging me by the standards of your own vile mind! I got nothing to do with him!" she snapped back.

'Me? Vile?' Too impatient to argue with her anymore, Wilfred grabbed her wrist and dragged her to the villa.

Michele staggered because of his sudden movement. She struggled hard to break free from his grip, but to no avail. "Let go of me, you bastard! Let me go! Yeah, I drank! So what? I drank from your best collections. I will drink all your limited-edition wine next time. And then,

happened?" Michele asked, scowling.

Frustrated, Arthur shook his head and explained, "That bastard, Damon, kicked me when I got home. I swear he'll pay for this. Why didn't you attend Prof. He's class this morning? Was it because your husband punished you last night?"

"He didn't punish me! I-I had something else to do in the morning. Why did Damon kick you?" Michele changed the topic as her face turned red at the word "punish."

But Arthur was too careless to notice the blush. At the mention of Damon, he said through gritted teeth, "He thought that he needed to teach me a lesson so that I wouldn't get into fights again. Damn him! He really thinks he's my brother! I don't give a damn about that. I'll get even with him next time!"

Michele rolled her eyes and snapped, "Why do you hate him? He did it for your own good." Michele thought of Damon as a good brother to Arthur.

Arthur snapped back, "Oh really? And I think Wilfred Huo does everything for your own good. But you hate him as well."

"I don't hate him at all!" Michele defended herself, frowning at him. 'I love him, ' she said to herself. Although she was still mad at Wilfred, that didn't mean she didn't love him.

"I clearly remember you calling him a scum when we were drinking yesterday. You were saying that he dated Jeanne, Megan..." Arthur had apparently heard Michele grumble last night at the club.

Slapping her hand over his mouth, Michele yelled, "Stop talking nonsense! You obviously misheard me!"

Chapter 141 A Handsome Young Boy

Arthur didn't want to bother arguing with Michele, so he changed the topic and said casually, "There is a poverty relief project to support the people in the Southon Village.

Are you going to sign up for it?" If his memory served him right, Michele was always enthusiastic about this sort of charity events.

"Yes! Of course, I'm going!" Michele replied firmly. In the past, she didn't have much money, but she still actively participated in the charity activities. Now that Wilfred had given her a large amount of money to spend as she wished, of course she would go and put that money to good use. 'I'll just be doing charity on his behalf, ' she thought to herself and she was okay with it as long as she could help others in need.

"I knew it!" Arthur groaned. "But Southon Village is the poorest village in our country. The conditions there are awful. Besides, it's winter and the event will go on for at least a week. Are you sure you want to torture yourself by doing this?"

His words did scare Michele a little. She hesitated, but when Wilfred's face popped up in her mind, she gritted her teeth and said, "Yes, I'm sure. I've made up my mind."

Although Arthur was dressed in a warm down jacket, he suddenly felt the whole world freeze after hearing her reply. A chill ran down his spine when he thought about accompanying Michele to such a remote place where even a heater was a luxury. He couldn't help but pull his down jacket tighter around himself as his body trembled.

In the multimedia classroom

Regina repeatedly shook her head in disbelief. "Tomboy, please. Please! Think about it. Are you even aware of how bad the conditions in the Southon Village are? Most of the people in the village speak the minority language which you don't understand. There will be no heater, not even an asphalt road to walk on, no shower..." She shuddered as she imagined being in such a place. "Gosh! Believe me! You'll turn into a complete mess after spending a few days there."

Echoing Regina's words, Jody nodded her head up and down and then glanced sympathetically at Arthur, who looked visibly depressed now. From the expression on his face, Jody knew that Arthur was definitely planning to accompany Michele in spite of his reluctance. Patting him on his shoulder, she praised him, "I admire your courage, Arthur. I didn't know that you were actually this manly."

Unconvinced by her weak praise, Arthur yelled, "Harry, get a leash on your girlfriend and ask her to mind her words! What does she mean 'actually'? I've always been manly, okay?"

Harry merely smiled and pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose. Then, he said in a calm voice, "Regina. Jody. You two needn't come along. Arthur and I will go with Tomboy." Harry was born in a small village and had lived there before he had come

iful brain, ' Natalie thought.

Hearing Natalie's words, Michele instantly understood the situation. She nodded happily and said, "I think my uncle did it for your own good. You haven't gone through any hardship in your life. It's good for a rich lady like you to experience some hard life from time to time."

Natalie wanted to vent out her anger on Michele at that very moment. But since there were other schoolmates around, Natalie had to pretend to be an elegant and well-educated lady. So she walked closer to Michele and grabbed her arm with a fake smile. In a loud voice, she said, "Yes, you're right! I've brought so much snack food with me. I'll be giving it to the children there. By the way, what are you going to give the children, Michele?"

"Money." The school had already sent the donated clothes and daily supplies to Southon Village. Michele didn't think it was necessary to bring more of that for them. But with a little money, they could at least buy something they wanted most. She had brought something else too. But she wasn't going to tell Natalie that!

Natalie's smile froze on her face. She ridiculed Michele, "You think you have enough money to spend on charity? And what makes you think that money has any use there? In a remote mountain area like that, what can you buy even if you have money?"

Shaking off Natalie's arm, Michele walked a few steps away and said coldly, "That's none of your business. Remember not to drag the whole team down with you."

Among the fifteen students, ten were boys and the other five were girls. Michele knew most of them, except two or three students. She usually met them at school and sometimes greeted them on the campus.

So she was excited about going with all of them. 'It's like going on a trip with friends!'

At Southon Village

Jumping off the bus, Michele quickly ran to the edge of the road and began retching.

Chapter 142 Rebuked By Roy Lu

To get to the Southon Village, Michele and her schoolmates had first taken a two-hour ride on a high-speed train. Then they transferred to a bus, which took them seven hours. By the time they arrived, it was already dark. The bus had bumped all the way along the rugged mountain roads, jolting the passengers on it badly. Michele never had

carsickness, but this time, she couldn't help but feel dizzy. She bent down on the roadside and retched a few times, but didn't vomit.

A few of her schoolmates had begun vomiting as soon as they got off the bus.

The pungent smell of vomit and the disgusting sight of it only made things worse for Michele. Just when she felt she was safe, her stomach churned violently, and in one loud retch she threw up.

Harry opened the lid off his water bottle and handed it to Michele to wash her mouth. "There's no hot water right now. Just take a few sips of this bottle of water first," he said.

Michele took the bottle and rinsed the taste out of her mouth with the water. Now that she felt much better, she was finally in a mood to appreciate the scenery.

As they stood up high and looked around, the students could see the small village in the distance—dozens of houses lined up at the foot of the mountain. Most of the houses were smallish one-storey houses, with the tallest standing only three-storey up.

Still feeling exhausted from the journey, Michele stretched herself. It was refreshing to finally breathe the clean air of the countryside.

But the biggest problem was... the piercing coldness in the mountain area.

A Royst of cold wind blew over, threatening to freeze them into icy stumps sticking out of permafrost.

Although they all came in warm clothing, they were not prepared for biting cold. The girls soon began to complain. Even some of the boys found it worse than they had expected.

Once the villagers learnt of the students' arrival, many of them, especially children, stood at the entrance of the village to welcome the group. As Michele and her schoolmates walked towards the villagers, they were shocked to realize that the children's faces and hands were turning red from exposure while they waited. And it really gripped Michele's heart that the kids wore old, worn-out cotton clothes, which were far from enough to keep them warm in such harsh weather. Worse still, some of the children wore thin, baldly beaten shoes.

With wide eyes, the children stared curiously at the visitors from the big city. Expectation and eagerness to learn about the outside world were obvious on their faces.

Behind the children, there stood a group of old or middle-aged women, wearing genuine, welcoming smiles on their tanned faces. They raised their gnarled hands and waved enthusiastically.

The scene moved most of the students close to tears. Born and brought up in affluence, they were jolted, coming face to face with such abject poverty for the very first time.

Even though they had already mentally prepared themselves before they came, the squalid living conditions here were way too unsettling.

The donated relief supplies would arrive at the village tomorrow, so the students would start their work from tomorrow. After greeting the students, the village head led them to the host families,

meal, the village head's wife came to the dinner table after finishing her housework. A student stood up and politely ceded his seat to her. But she shook her head and chose to sit next to Michele.

As Michele was relishing the special flavor of the peach blossom wine made by the villagers, she finally got to know why the village head's wife chose to sit next to her. She realized that she was specially treated by the village head's wife. The woman happily greeted in her local dialect and proceeded to add more food onto Michele's plate.

Although Michele didn't understand her language, she could feel the hospitality in her tone and suppressed the urge to stop the woman from adding food onto her plate.

Seeing how the two got along so well, Arthur said jokingly whether the village head's wife wanted Michele to stay and marry her son. Michele would probably have a dotting mother-in-law.

Amidst amused giggles, everyone's eyes turned to Michele, who pretended offense at Arthur's joke.

After dinner, the village head took them to attend a campfire party. The bone chilling cold on the way made them yearn for the bonfire so much that when they finally arrived, they couldn't hide their excitement.

A group of young boys and girls dressed in cultural costumes were on the site to entertain their visitors with dance and song. Beaming with glee, they greeted and invited the students to dance together.

Michele joined the dancing group too. On her left hand was a pretty girl dressed in a yellow cultural costume; while on her right hand was the handsome son of the village head, also dressed in a cultural costume and a large woven hat on his head.

The young man and a few of the young villagers had basic compulsory education, so they at least had enough conversational fluency in standard Mandarin to have chit chat with the students. It was sheer fun to finally have locals to talk to, ask questions and learn about the culture.

After the campfire party, Michele went back to her room, feeling thoroughly entertained. But she shivered in cold again when she went back to her room. In a few minutes, without washing her face, she quickly went to her bed.

Chapter 143 The Warm Bed

“Rat-a-tat-tat.” Michele was startled by a sudden knock at the door. It was already well past her usual sleeping time and she wondered who could it be at this ungodly hour. She had just unzipped her down jacket. She had no choice but to zip it up again.

“Who is it?” she called out.

“Young girl, it’s me.” It sounded like the voice of the village head’s wife.

Her guess was right. When Michele opened the door, she saw the village head’s wife and her handsome son standing outside.

The woman smiled pleasantly on seeing Michele and asked, “Young girl, did I wake you?”

Michele shook her head. “No, it’s okay. I hadn’t slept yet. Is everything okay?” she answered, confused as to why these two were paying her a visit at night.

The woman turned towards her son. He immediately lifted up something from the ground and handed it to Michele. “This is our electric warming fan. My mother and I have brought it to you so that you don’t get cold,” he told her coyly.

“But...no... I can’t take this. This is too generous.” Michele was deeply moved. As far as she knew, there was not even a water heater in the village. How on earth did they manage to procure an electric warming fan for her?

She didn’t want to prove a burden to anyone, but the village head’s wife was having none of it and straightforwardly asked her son to carry the fan into Michele’s room.

Before Michele knew how and what, the boy had already plugged the fan into a socket and the room was filled with the slight hum of its motor.

“Thank you so much! But if I keep the fan in my room, what about you? You’ll be cold at night without it,” Michele protested, though she wasn’t entirely ungrateful. If she had guessed right, then this might have been the only electric warming fan in the whole village.

With a genuine smile, the woman responded, “We’re used to this weather, young girl, but you’ve come from the big city. You can’t fall asleep at night without it. Please sleep tight. We should get going now!”

Then, she held her son’s hand and they left together, leaving Michele to her confused thoughts.

With the warming fan on, the room was soon filled with a warm ambiance. Sitting at the edge of the bed in her thoughts, Michele even forgot to lie down.

She was confused. ‘Why does the village head’s wife treat me so well? Is Arthur’s joke true? Does she really want me to stay and marry her son? Truth be told, her son is quite handsome. But...I’m married. I have Wilfred. If that’s why this whole special-treatment-thing is going on, I’m afraid their wish can’t come true, and it’s got to stop,’ she mused.

As it turned out, she couldn’t be farther from the truth. This was proven when she went to get some hot water.

It wasn’t only the village head’s wife who was treating her so well. Michele found that almost every person of the village who was a part of her life at the moment was being very kind. Even the owner of the house which she was staying in gave her special care. When she walked out of her bedroom and told the hostess that she wanted some hot water, the hostess immediately brought three thermoses to her bedroom.

That wasn’t the only thing she did. Earlier, she had

as staring at her without saying a word. Michele looked around and found nobody else here. Confused, she asked, “What do you want?”

Roy kept his eyes on her without responding.

Michele got goose bumps by his gaze. “Dammit. Hey, you’re a man and I’m a woman. Don’t stare at me that way. I’m scared...”

Roy rolled his eyes at her. He snorted, "You're as stupid as all the others!"

Michele was rendered speechless. What did he want? 'Is he here to stir up some new trouble for me?' she thought.

With that in mind, Michele put her phone back and stood up from the big rock. She was about to leave but Roy stopped her. "What's going on between you and Wilfred Huo?" Roy had happened to overhear someone's words. Whoever it was, the person had said that Wilfred demanded people here give special care to Michele.

With Wilfred's name being mentioned, Michele turned around and spat out, "Wimpy kid, just mind your own business and don't poke your big nose where it doesn't belong."

'What? Wimpy kid? Me?'

Roy's face darkened. If Michele weren't a woman, he would surely have punched her black and blue now.

After Michele had walked away, Roy immediately texted his brother. "Brad, Michele called me wimpy kid! How dare she do that? I need to go back to Mirtonberg now. Arrange for someone to pick me up. I don't want to take that goddamn bus again!"

The signal was really bad in the village, and Roy had to try several times before the message went through.

A few moments later, Roy received Brad's reply with only a few words. "Michele is right. Just stay there."

Roy was angry at his cold response. He wondered why his brother always sided with Michele.

He was sure that Brad loved Colleen, so there shouldn't have been any untoward relationship between Brad and Michele. 'When I return home, I need to ask my father if they mistook me and Michele when we were born. Could it be possible that Michele is their biological daughter and I'm the wrong one?'

There were several times when Roy felt like Michele was Brad's real younger sister and he himself was the one who had been adopted to protect Michele.

Chapter 144 Gregory, A Docile Pup

Avoiding Roy, Michele found a quiet corner and sat down, looking blankly into the distance. She was immersed in deep thoughts. 'What's Wilfred doing right now? I've been away for a few days. Has he been missing me?'

Since she was on a trip far away from the city, Michele had left her diamond ring behind.

"Michele."

Her train of thoughts was interrupted by a voice again and she snapped back into reality.

Michele turned to look at the person and gave him a friendly smile. "Hi, Gregory." Gregory had helped her several times in the past few days and she felt the need to be polite to him though she did want to stay alone and allow herself to indulge in Wilfred's memories.

Gregory sat down next to Michele. "Why are you sitting here alone? Are you feeling cold?" he asked in a concerned tone.

"No, I'm okay."

She thought about her quarrel with Wilfred a few days ago, so she wasn't in the mood to talk much. Gregory was a man of few words, so he didn't know what to say next either. Awkward silence filled the air.

He unwittingly stole glances at Michele, who had loneliness written all over her face. Finally, he broke the silence and asked, "Michele, you look upset. What happened?"

"Oh...Um... It's nothing, really." Not knowing how to explain what had happened, Michele gave him an embarrassed smile and then suggested quickly, "Let's go and find the others!" Being alone with someone who had nothing in common with her made Michele feel uncomfortable.

Gregory stood still, watching his favorite girl walk away from him. He had a lot of questions for her, but they were all stuck in his throat.

He wanted to ask her about her relationship with Wilfred. But he knew that he wasn't in a position to ask such a private question. Left with no choice, he hurried to catch up with her to find their other schoolmates.

On their way, they bumped into Natalie, who was complaining to another girl about how dirty the village was. She was telling the girl that she was afraid of catching some infectious disease.

Michele had been hearing Natalie's constant complaint ever since the day they had arrived at Southon Village. Every time she felt like rambling, she would complain to the same girl. But in front of others, she would pretend to be tender and sweet.

And once again, Michele got to witness Natalie's instant change in character. A boy approached Natalie and called her name while she was talking to the other girl. She instantly stopped wearing her long

bie had asked, he said in a haste, "Rest assured, Michele. I'm not petty enough to try and get even with a girl. I'm going back now."

He quickly turned around and ran into the courtyard of one of the villager's house.

Soon after Gregory left, Arthur showed up and slowly walked towards her. With obvious worry in his eyes, he shouted, "Michele, where have you been? I've been looking all over for you since noon. Why are you just standing here? Aren't you cold? There's a stove inside the house. Come and warm yourself up."

Michele sniffled lightly. She felt touched by what all her friends did for her.

Gregory had defended her in front of Natalie and now Arthur was worried about her health. But somewhere in her heart, she felt like something was lacking. She wondered what it was.

But she soon realized what she had been missing.

When Michele was close enough to him, Arthur whispered, "Hey, I got some interesting news for you. Mr. Wilfred had apparently arranged for someone to tell the village head to give you special care. Did you know about this? Okay, no need to answer that. I just saw a huge question mark pop up on your face. You had no idea, did you? Your husband is really warm and caring." Arthur was so envious of Michele at that moment. She had received some electric appliances to keep warm at night, but he had nothing. He only had a man to sleep together with in the same bed to keep warm, yet, the man wouldn't allow Arthur to hug him.

Michele blinked her eyes, unable to process the information. "Who told you this?" She had no idea at all. She couldn't believe that Wilfred's influence could reach such a remote village.

Chapter 145 If A Bear Mauled Me To Death

“I heard it from the village head!” Arthur replied. He had gone to the village head’s house in an attempt to get an electric warming fan or at least, an electric blanket. Much to his disappointment, he hadn’t gotten anything. Perhaps, the only thing to help him keep warm now would be wine, which thankfully, their hosts had supplied in plenty. So he joined the village head for a drink with the accompaniment of some hearty talks. But the elder was no heavy drinker. Only a few glasses down and he dropped the guard, turning into a blabbermouth.

In between his juicy tales, he let slip to Arthur that someone had requested the villagers to give special care to Michele. Although he didn’t know who that person was, he remembered someone mentioned about a name “Mr. Wilfred”.

From the village head’s words, Arthur could put two and two together. The surname Huo was a rare name, and even across the city, there was only one “Mr. Wilfred” whose influence could reach a remote village like the Southon Village.

Touched by Wilfred’ gesture, Michele flashed a sweet smile. But she didn’t want to admit the happiness exploding in her heart. Instead she faked a retort to Arthur. “No, I don’t think the village head was telling the truth.”

“Oh, really? But I can see you smiling from ear to ear. Why don’t you just admit that you’re on cloud nine now?” Arthur teased.

Michele turned around and glared at him. “Just go and do night running. It will help you keep warm!”

‘Do night running? No way! I would rather stay under the quilt, though I have to tolerate Harry, ‘ he thought.

In Mirtonberg, by the time Wilfred came back, Michele had already been away for about three days. She had left without giving him a phone call, not even sending him a message.

Sulking silently, he took out his phone and called Brad. “Have they arrived there?”

“Yes, they arrived safely, although my brother lamented the living conditions. Seems a little seedy over there,” said Brad on the other end of the phone. ‘His brother? Roy Lu?’

Closing his eyes tight, Wilfred said in a stern tone, “It serves her right. She made her own bed.” ‘She didn’t even ask for my opinion before deciding. I didn’t know it until the name-list was submitted to the school, ‘ he thought to himself.

“Rest assured. I’ve done as per your instructions and asked the people there to take good care of her. I’ve also sent Roy there to protect her. I know you feel bad, but it’s only a few more days and she’ll be back.” Brad understood what was going on in Wilfred’ mind.

Wilfred wasn’t convinced that Roy could be of any help. “Do you think I can bank on your unreliable brother for anything meaningful?” he asked. If he hadn’t known that Roy had shown no interest in women in the past 22 years and had been suspected to be gay, he wouldn’t have agreed Brad to send Roy there to help Michele.

The sharp manner of Wilfred’ question left Brad doubtful. H

old pillar, planted on permafrost. It shouldn’t disturb you even if a bear mauled me to a horrific, painful death.

Written from a poor girl who will be bored to death, freeze into a cold pilar and be mauled to death by a bear.”

Finally, she signed off. “Date: Unclear. (I forgot to charge my phone. It’s already out of power. I don’t know the exact date, nor do I want to ask anyone. That’s it! Goodbye!”

From top to bottom, she had written on every single inch of the postcard, as if it was a novel she intended to write.

Seeing the thin smile on the corners of Wilfred’ lips, Mathew heaved a sigh of relief, as if a burden had been lifted off his shoulder.

For a moment, he assumed that the postcard would restore calm to the office, but unexpectedly, Wilfred angrily threw the postcard on the table and demanded, “Who allowed you to open my letters?”

The smile on Mathew’s face froze. “Mr. Wilfred... Mr. Wilfred... but you...” Mathew felt wronged. It was him and Orven who had been handling Wilfred’ letters in the company all the time.

But he swore that he hadn’t read the content of this postcard when he noticed the name was “a poor girl”. He knew it was from Michele, so he immediately hurried to the meeting room and handed it to Wilfred.

Out of the blue, Wilfred stood up from his seat and announced, “This project is well planned and very creative. The Planning Department has done a good job and everyone in the department can get a bonus equal to your monthly wage.” He then

turned to Mathew and instructed, “Mathew, ask the directors of the charity foundations to come and discuss about the investment.”

There were some non-governmental charity foundations under the ZL Group. Mathew instantly understood what Wilfred was going to do.

‘Ask the directors to come and discuss about the investment? Oh, if I’m guessing right, Mr. Wilfred is going to invest in the development of the Southon Village!’ he thought excitedly.

