

The Return of the Cannon Fodder Trillion Heiress

Chapter 6 - Chapter 6 Hera's past

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When Hera was 8 years old, despite being raised in an ordinary household where her parents were often busy with work, they always made time to pick her up from school and share family dinners together. Hera cherished the warmth of her family, and her grandfather would frequently visit their small apartment to spend time with her. She couldn't have asked for more loving and supportive parents.

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On her parents' 9th wedding anniversary, they planned a trip to Bali, Indonesia, to celebrate, with Hera eagerly included. However, the night before their departure, Hera caught a cold. Not wanting to spoil her parents' excitement for their vacation or their time together, she chose to stay home, comforted by her grandfather's promise to take care of her in their absence.

Reluctantly, the Avery couple embarked on their vacation. Little did they know that it would be the last time they would see each other.

Tragically, the airplane they were on experienced engine failure while flying at thousands of feet above the ground. The aircraft crashed into the sea and sank to the ocean floor. Retrieving the passengers' bodies proved to be a challenging task for the search and rescue teams, requiring the use of Deep-Submergence Rescue Vehicles (DSRVs). Due to the extent of the damage, many of the bodies were unrecognizable, and it took the team months to recover and identify them.

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Upon hearing the news of his son and daughter-in-law's tragic demise, the elder Mr. Avery was overcome with shock and grief. Though he managed to recover physically, the toll of the news was evident—the distress had turned his once-black hair white overnight. He grappled with the daunting task of breaking the devastating news to his young granddaughter. While devastated by the loss, he knew he had to remain strong; he was now the sole guardian responsible for Hera's well-being. Aware that there were opportunistic wolves waiting to pounce on their family's vulnerabilities, he understood that if he faltered, Hera would be left vulnerable. She wouldn't stand a chance against them on her own.

On the day of the Avery couple's funeral, a multitude of well-known individuals, friends, and business partners gathered to pay their respects. However, it was evident that some attendees were more interested in assessing the state of the remaining Avery family members and strategizing their next moves.

In the solemn atmosphere, the elderly Mr. Avery and his granddaughter silently stood by the couple's coffins, their grief palpable. Hera struggled to contain her sobs, grappling with feelings of guilt for what she perceived as jinxing her parents.

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Sensing Hera's internal turmoil, the old master Avery gently addressed her, his voice thick with emotion. "Don't blame yourself, my dear. No one wished for this tragedy to unfold. If I may be selfish for a moment, I am grateful that you fell ill, sparing you from sharing their fate. If you were to leave me too, I couldn't bear it. So, Hera, you must persevere, face adversity head-on, and live as long as possible. I long to see my great-grandchildren one day," he implored, his words punctuated by tears.

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Hera, a perceptive and intelligent young girl, grappled with the weight of her emotions, though she was still just a child. Despite grasping her grandfather's intentions, she couldn't shake off the burden of self-blame, unsure of how to navigate life moving forward.

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Meanwhile, amidst the guests entertained by the old Master Avery, Hera sought solace outside, retreating to a quiet corner. There, she unexpectedly encountered Athena, nestled near the fragrant flower garden, joyfully indulging in a lollipop as if festivities were afoot instead of mourning.

Unperturbed by Athena's contrasting demeanor, Hera understood that others weren't obliged to mourn as deeply as she and her grandfather did. In fact, she longed for the carefree demeanor Athena exuded. Yet, at that moment, loneliness and sadness engulfed her.

Observing Hera's doll-like appearance, Athena, a small figure herself, marveled at the sight, realizing that real people could indeed resemble dolls.

"Would you like some candy?" Athena offered, her innocence radiating.

Though Hera knew that mere sweets couldn't dispel her sorrow, she appreciated Athena's kindness. Accepting the candy, Hera sat beside Athena in silence, finding solace in each other's silent companionship.

"What's your name?" Athena inquired, eager to forge a connection with the captivating girl beside her.

"Hera" came the melodious reply, echoing in Athena's ears.

Upon hearing her name, Athena's astonishment was palpable. Unintentionally, her mouth fell open, causing her lollipop to tumble to the ground. "You said, Hera? Hera Avery? The sole heiress to the Avery Consortium?" Athena sought confirmation.

In response, Hera nodded, her expression a mix of confusion and surprise. She had yet to grasp the significance of Athena's mention of the consortium.

"Woah! You are really pretty."

"T-thank you"

"So, your parents..." Athena began to say, but she halted mid-sentence. She recognized that mentioning them would only exacerbate Hera's pain.

Hera's head drooped even further upon the mention of her parents, tears threatening to spill. Witnessing her distress, Athena felt a mixture of surprise and sympathy.

"I'm sorry, I shouldn't have brought it up," Athena apologized softly.

Hera shook her head slightly. "It's alright," she murmured.

With heartfelt sincerity, Athena extended an offer, "Would you like to be my friend, Hera?"

Meeting Athena's gaze, Hera lifted her head and nodded, a glimmer of hope shining in her eyes.

3

"Then, Hera, as my friend, would you believe me if I told you that I'm a transmigrator?" Athena ventured, her tone tinged with a hint of uncertainty.

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Puzzled, Hera's head tilted to the side. "What's a transmigrator?" she inquired.

"It means I came from a different world; I'm not originally from this one," Athena explained, her voice carrying a childlike innocence that might lead others to dismiss her words as mere imagination.

Intrigued, Hera momentarily set aside her sorrow. "Then, what world did you come from?" she asked, her curiosity piqued.

With a sense of pride, Athena declared, "I came from Earth."

Hera's confusion deepened. "But isn't this Planet Earth we're living on?"

Athena paused, considering how to articulate her explanation. "Ah, right, it is. What I mean is, that I came from the real Earth. The world we're currently inhabiting is merely a fragment of imagination—a world confined within the pages of a book," she clarified.

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Perplexed, Hera sought further clarification. "What do you mean, a world inside a book?"

"I mean precisely that. In my world, this world is nothing more than a romance novel that people read. I encountered your story once, which is how I knew about Hera Avery," Athena elucidated.

Now that Athena had brought it up, Hera reflected on their initial encounter. She recalled how she had been veiled, shielding her face from view, ensuring her identity remained hidden while attending the funeral and faced with the attendees, and only now did she take off the veil. Despite this precaution, Athena had managed to recognize her nonetheless.

2

"Then, what kind of character am I in the book?" Hera inquired with hopeful anticipation.

Athena hesitated, uncertain how to broach the subject delicately in front of Hera. "Um..."

"Am I the princess? Did... did my parents come back to life?" Hera's eyes shimmered with expectation.

Athena nervously scratched the back of her head before responding, "They did not. Although you are indeed the princess of the Avery family, you're portrayed as a mere 'cannon fodder' in the story."

"What's a cannon fodder?" Hera inquired, her voice tinged with confusion.

"It means... it's a term used for a character who's often sacrificed or meets an unfortunate end to further the development of the main character's storyline," Athena explained, her tone cautious.

4

Hera's eyes welled up with tears. She couldn't comprehend why her life seemed to be so fraught with hardship. Despite always trying to do what was right, obeying her parents, and striving to be good, she couldn't understand why leading a decent life felt so challenging.

At just eight years old, Hera was already burdened with worries about her future.

"Don't worry, remember I told you I'm a transmigrator, right? I've read the book and know what's going to happen. I'll help you," Athena reassured, gently patting her chest to convey trustworthiness.

Athena was genuinely eager to assist Hera, feeling a pang of sympathy for her plight.

Losing her parents at such a tender age and with her grandfather occupied, Hera will spend the last decade navigating a life of solitude and hardship, concealed among the common folk, not only did she have to follow their family practice but also to evade their family's enemies.

As Hera matured, she would unwittingly become entangled in the romantic affairs of the story's secondary female lead, ultimately meeting a tragic demise. Hera's existence barely warranted a mention, her life fleeting and insignificant, barely filling a page in the narrative.

"Will you really help me?" Hera's voice trembled, tears staining her cheeks.

With unwavering determination, Athena nodded. She couldn't bear the thought of letting someone as strikingly beautiful as Hera meet a senseless demise. To her, it felt like squandering a divine gift. Why hadn't the book mentioned Hera's breathtaking beauty? Even in her youth, her radiance was undeniable. Athena envisioned Hera blossoming into an even more enchanting figure as she matured. Having pursued beauty in all its forms in her original world, her passion and talent for fashion design led her to become the chief editor of Vogue.

The idea of Hera's life being snuffed out prematurely felt like an affront to Athena's core beliefs, fueling her resolve to intervene.

Athena harbored a desire to make Hera her muse, and thus, their brief encounter blossomed into a decade-long friendship. Through countless conversations, Athena fervently shared details about the book she had mentioned, inadvertently causing Hera to commit its contents to memory.