

Chapter 8 She Is Mine

Save it for him...

It sounded as if I were merely an object.

But, my heart bloomed with joy and I couldn't help but smile.

Madeline was instantly on guard. She gave me a meaningful glance, her expression serious. “Sophia, I have to warn you. In our line of work, money talks. Don't get caught up in imaginary and superficial things!”

“Imaginary and superficial things” was a local expression. She meant to tell me not to mess with matters of the heart.

“Yes, I know!” I nodded hastily. Despite that, I felt uneasy.

As someone in my early twenties, lacking both money and love, I constantly found myself yearning for a meaningful connection.

Wealthy people used their money to buy time, youth, and love. Those without wealth traded their youth, time, and love for money. Only when they had accumulated enough did they start thinking about preserving what they had sacrificed. Such is the endless cycle of life.

That evening, I finally got my wish and met Oberon.

He arrived with a few friends that day. Dressed in a grey pinstriped shirt and sporting a pair of glasses, he gave off the air of a polished scoundrel.

Upon seeing him, I couldn't help but smile. I walked straight toward him and took a seat by his side.

After our first intimate encounter, the level of familiarity between us skyrocketed. I felt completely at ease, and he naturally placed one hand around my waist.

“Well, well, how did the girl I've had my eye on end up in your arms?” a man exclaimed dramatically, pointing at me and Oberon.

I stiffened.

He stood around one hundred seventy-five centimeters tall, bald with a roll of fat at the back of his head. A thick gold chain hung around his stout neck, and his noticeable belly strained against his shirt. In every way, he paled in comparison to Oberon.

I recognized him as the bald man who was with Oberon that day.

As the saying goes, after having had the best, how can one settle for less?

A genuine fear gripped me—what if Oberon decided to hand me over to him? After all, we were nothing more than commodities, stripped of the right to choose, let alone any sense of self-respect.

I may have been a hostess, but I wasn't an escort.

Later, Oberon once asked me why I refused to take the extra money he offered if I wasn't working as an escort.

I replied, “That's not the kind of work I do. I'll accept what I've earned, but I don't need to sell my body to make a living.”

I was in the car with him, and though the alcohol had slightly loosened my inhibitions, the truth was that I was completely captivated.

“She's mine,” he said with a soft chuckle.

His grip on my waist was just right—firm but gentle. His fingertips lightly pinched my side, a subtle gesture of reassurance.

“Look at you, all scared! Afraid I might eat you up?” the bald man boomed, his voice loud and overbearing. He circled around to my side and roughly pinched my face.

His grip was so strong it sent a sharp pain through my jaw, forcing me to grit my teeth. Still, I managed to plaster on a smile.

Oberon, sensing my discomfort, loosened his hold on my waist and gave the bald man's hand a light pat, signaling him to let go.

The bald man sat down next to me, glancing at Oberon. “You two got close after just one meeting?”

Oberon chuckled, sliding his hand back around my waist. With a smile, he responded, “She's my lover.”

The bald man didn't say much after that. His attention shifted to the women still standing by the door. He raised his hand, pointing at two of them, then hooked his index and middle fingers together, signaling he wanted both.

Only when the two women sat on either side of him did I finally feel a sense of security.

It was almost ironic—here I was, a hostess, actually afraid of attracting a man's favor.

“That's Lorenzo,” Oberon said. “Make sure to offer him a toast later.”

“All right,” I said.

My previous reaction was indeed petty, something highly frowned upon in our line of work.

“Haven't you been here recently?”

“I had an exam at school.”

“Which school are you at?” he casually asked.

I mentioned the name of the school, and a flicker of surprise flashed in his eyes. It was a prestigious university, highly regarded. He gave me an intrigued look and asked, “Which major?”

“Corvainan Language and Literature,” I said.

“It's a great field of study,” he said with a chuckle, then added, “There's a saying, 'a person with knowledge of literature and poetry naturally exudes grace,' right?”

As he spoke, I noticed a shift in his demeanor. While his tone was relaxed, there had been a subtle tension earlier when he asked about my major. It seemed out of place, almost as if he were nervous.

But no, that couldn't be. A man of his stature—why would he feel uneasy about something as simple as my school or major? I must have been imagining it.