

Chapter 37

Stanley looked up to find Fiora's eyes filled with anticipation, reminiscent of how Iris used to gaze at him.

However, that spark had faded from Iris' eyes long ago.

"Thank you," he said, acknowledging her effort.

Fiora shook her head vigorously. "It's nothing. I'm willing to do anything for you."

Seemingly nostalgic for the taste of tortellini, he spooned up a piece and sampled it.

It was not the flavor that he was familiar with, lacking the usual chewy texture. The skin was overcooked and melted in his mouth. It tasted like salty noodle soup and did not go down smoothly.

He furrowed his brow.

This was not how tortellini should taste at all.

It's completely different from the tortellini he remembered.

"Is it delicious?" Fiora asked, her eyes sparkling with hope.

"I'm not that hungry," he replied.

Disappointment flashed across her face. "Does it taste bad?"

"No, I'm just not hungry," he reiterated, "It's getting late; you should go home."

Fiora stared right at him and asked, "Aren't you going to ask me to

stay?"

An advantage in the relationship between adults was that one could be more direct.

Stanley was taken aback. Fiora's boldness contrasted sharply with her appearance, which suggested someone more reserved. Perhaps her time abroad had made her more outgoing.

"You should go home," he repeated.

His refusal was unmistakable, and if Fiora still insisted on staying, she would appear too cheap, so she had no choice but to leave.

As night fell, the city's nightlife buzzed to life. Lester and Henry were frequent patrons of various nighttime entertainment venues.

Amid the pulsating DJ music, dim lighting, and bodies swaying to the rhythm, the atmosphere became charged with sexual tension. Holding a glass of whiskey with his eyes half-closed, Henry moved with the music on the dance floor, while Lester sat at a couch, reading the palm of a pretty girl.

Yvonne was wearing a fiery red strap dress. Her curvy figure was captivating as she danced wildly, her waist moving like a snake in water.

"You should tone it down a bit," Iris advised, trying to rein her in.

"What?" Yvonne asked.

Iris put her mouth to Yvonne's ear and said, "I said, you should tone it down a bit."

"Get out of here! I just broke up. Can't I let loose a little?" Yvonne

protested. Looking at Iris with a frown, she asked, "Are you sure you're here to dance? You're not showing any skin at all."

"What?" Yvonne asked. The music was too loud for her to hear clearly.

Instead of answering, Yvonne simply removed Iris' coat. "I want to have fun today; you have to join me." She tossed the coat onto the couch.

Not long after that, when Lester turned around, he saw Iris on the dance floor in a black fishtail dress. With her short hair framing her face, she looked especially striking – smooth and distinct facial features, a high nose, and red lips, resembling a perfectly sculpted doll.

"Holy crap," Lester exclaimed in shock. He immediately abandoned the girl he was talking to and rushed to the dance floor to pull Henry aside.

Henry was displeased. "Can't you see I'm having fun?"

"Look over there," Lester urged, pinching his face and turning it towards Iris.

Henry's eyes widened. "Holy crap!"

"Do you think Stanley knows?" he asked.

Lester pursed his lips and shook his head. "I'm not sure."

"How are things going between them right now? Did they really split up, or are they just having a quarrel?" Henry asked, a hint of gossip in his tone.