

## Chapter 44

"Fuck off," Henry shot back, glaring at Lester. "When have I ever gotten worked up over a woman? It's just a fling."

Ted, unable to tolerate their banter any longer, stood up. "Excuse me."

"Hey, don't go. You haven't eaten anything yet," Lester called after him. "This is just how Henry is, you know that."

Ted said, "I'm not staying to listen to this."

"Alright, I'll shut up," Henry agreed, also feeling the conversation had become tedious.

Buzz...

Stanley's phone rang, and he glanced at the screen. It was Fiora. He immediately hung up.

Lester gestured at the phone with his chin and asked, "Stanley, are you just appeasing your mother, doing it out of spite, or are you serious?"

He paused, then continued, "Fiora just seems to really like you. How many years has it been? She's still so devoted to you. Do you think she came back from abroad because she found out about your divorce?"

All of them had heard about Fiora's feelings for Stanley.

Stanley remained silent. He had indeed agreed to his mother's request purely out of spite, but the attention from a woman who admired him was a feeling he couldn't deny enjoying.

The phone rang again.

Stanley picked it up. "I'm leaving; you guys can stay for the food. I've already paid."

"It's your treat but you're leaving first?" Lester rolled his eyes. "Is that allowed?"

"Order a good bottle of wine and put it on my tab," Stanley instructed before walking out of the private room.

"That's just how he is. Don't mind him, let's order the most expensive bottle of wine," Henry said, standing up to get the wine, but Ted interjected, "I need to go too; you two enjoy the meal."

Ted left as well.

Lester glanced at Henry, who instantly lost interest in the wine. "Forget it. It's a waste not to eat all this food. Let's fill our stomachs."

He sat back down and started eating, but Lester had lost his appetite.

With food in his mouth, Henry asked Lester, "Why do you think Stanley treated us to a meal? He left before he ate anything."

Lester thought for a moment and replied, "How would I know?"

Meanwhile, Stanley answered the phone after exiting the restaurant. Fiora's soft voice came through. "Stanley, what's the passcode for your front door? And why didn't you answer the phone just now?"

"I was busy," Stanley replied, clearly being perfunctory.

Fiora sounded a bit aggrieved. "Never mind. I'm at your place right now. Tell me the passcode so that I can open the door."



Stanley asked, "Is something the matter?"

"Yes," Fiora replied firmly. "Just give it to me, please."

Stanley told her the six-digit passcode.

Fiora repeated, "That's 981230, right?"

Stanley grunted in confirmation.

"Is that your birthday?" Fiora asked with a smile.

Stanley paused. It wasn't his birthday; it was Iris'. Iris was the one who took care of both the old house and the new one. He had never needed to worry about a thing. Every bowl and every carpet in the house had been personally chosen by Iris.

"Come home early this evening," Fiora said before hanging up.

Stanley stared at his phone, lost in thought. He got into his car, started the engine, and headed to his law firm. Instead of going inside, he circled the area but didn't see Iris.

However, knowing she lived nearby brought a faint smile to his lips.

Clearly, she still couldn't move on from him. She had never worked before, so without him, even surviving would be a real challenge for her. He believed she would eventually come back to him and be the one to ask for reconciliation.

Around five in the afternoon, Iris finished work. Just as she was about to leave the law firm, someone suddenly blocked her way.