

Are Mine 511

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“Wow!” Emmeline clapped her hands in awe. “This little garden is so beautiful!”

Abel squinted his eyes, memories flooding back and overwhelming him. Suddenly, he saw Emmeline’s lovely figure in his mind’s eye, and a sharp pang of heartache twisted his features.

“Mr. Ryker,” Emmeline asked, breaking his reverie. “Do you know the owner of this place well?”

As Emmeline turned around, she saw a pained expression on Abel’s face.

“Mr. Ryker, what’s wrong?” she asked, concerned.

Abel replied, “I’m just feeling a little uneasy.”

Emmeline’s heart leaped with joy. This must mean that Abel still had feelings for her. It seemed that Waylon’s Worryfree medication wasn’t a foolproof solution after all.

But how could she awaken Abel’s dormant emotions for her?

“Mr. Ryker,” Emmeline said, perched on a swing. “Is someone weighing on your mind?”

Abel gave a subdued nod in response.

“Would you like to share your story with me?” Emmeline suggested gently.

Abel let out a deep sigh. “There’s not much of a story to tell.”

“Is it because of unrequited love?” Emmeline tilted her head, studying him closely.

A shadow crossed Abel’s handsome face. “No, it’s not that.”

“Then what is it?” she asked softly.

“...forget it,” Abel said, his voice heavy with reluctance. “Let’s not talk about her.”

Emmeline’s heart sank. It seemed that this situation was more difficult than she had anticipated.

Sam brought them their coffee and they sat on the swing, sipping and chatting. Before they knew it, it was late into the night and Emmeline had dozed off, leaning against Abel’s shoulder.

“Emmett, Emmett,” Abel nudged her gently, trying to wake her up.

The little one was sleeping soundly, completely oblivious to the world around her.

“Kids,” Abel chuckled. “Once they’re asleep, they’re out. Coffee doesn’t seem to bother them.”

Concerned about “Emmett” catching a cold in the chilly night air, Abel decided to carry her to the guest room on the second floor.

As he was tucking her into bed and pulling the covers over her, he heard Evelyn’s voice downstairs.

“Luca, is Mr. Abel still here?” she asked.

“Yeah, he’s still here,” Luca’s muffled voice replied.

“I brought him a jacket. It’s getting cold outside,” Evelyn explained.

Sam’s voice came from inside, “Get out, get out! Can’t you see I’m cleaning up? We’re closed.”

“Closed?” Evelyn exclaimed, “Is Mr. Abel not leaving yet?”

“Are you kidding?” Sam replied, “This is Mr. Abel’s home, why would he need to leave?”

“But...”

Before she could finish, Sam’s mop poked at her feet and he pushed her out the door.

“Mr. Abel, Mr. Abel,” Evelyn yelled through the glass door, “I brought your coat, are you cold?”

Abel walked down from upstairs.

Evelyn spotted Abel through the glass door and pushed it open to enter.

“Mr. Abel, I...” she started to say.

“Splash!” A bucket of dirty water for washing rugs was thrown over her head, soaking her to the bone.

“Ah!” Evelyn shivered violently and fell on her butt.

“Get out and stop trying to seduce men in Ms. Louise’s house!” Sam yelled, holding the bucket.

“Sam!” Abel frowned and scolded him, “Watch your words!”

“Right, Mr. Abel,” Evelyn wiped the dirty water off her face, “What’s with this girl’s attitude?”

“What attitude?” Sam glared back.

“Mr. Abel is Ms. Louise’s man,” Sam seethed. “You came here to seduce him!”

“Ms. Louise is dead,” Evelyn retorted. “And Mr. Abel is still unmarried!”

“Shut up, you jinx!” Sam lunged at her with the mop. “I’ll beat you to death!”

“Mr. Abel, save me!” Evelyn cowered behind him. “Stop this crazy woman!”

“That’s enough!” Abel pushed her away, impatient. “This is not your place. Go home.”

“But—” Evelyn looked hurt. “I brought you a jacket.”

“I don’t need it,” Abel replied coldly. “Take it back.”

“Take it back?” Evelyn was bewildered. “Aren’t you going back tonight, Mr. Abel?”

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“Hmm,” Abel nodded. “Emmett’s fallen asleep, and I’m here with him.”

Evelyn choked up at the news.

Abel was going to stay here with that... little guy?

Stamping her foot in anger, Evelyn stormed off and hailed a cab, heading straight for Levan Mansion.

Meanwhile, Abel turned back towards the stairs. After the commotion earlier, he didn’t want to risk waking up “Emmett”.

Returning to the guest room, Abel checked on the little guy who was sleeping soundly.

With delicate and soft features, the child’s face was almost like that of a little girl.

Smiling to himself, Abel couldn’t help but extend his finger and pinch the child’s cheek.

The skin was indeed smooth and delicate, even more so than that of a little girl.

“Abel,” Emmeline turned over in her sleep and murmured softly.

The sound of her voice sent shivers down Abel’s spine, leaving him with an indescribable feeling of contentment.

It was as if his lonely soul had been soothed by a soft, gentle touch.

A deep sense of affection swelled up within him.

“Emmett?”

He couldn’t resist the urge to pick up “Emmett” and hold him close, but he felt ridiculous for even having such thoughts.

Could it be possible that he had fallen for this young boy?

Just as he was pondering these thoughts, Emmeline sneezed suddenly.

He must have gotten chilly.

Abel quickly leaned down and tucked her in, making sure she was warm and cozy.

Emmeline’s arm reached out and wrapped around Abel’s solid waist.

Abel tried to gently push her away, but he didn’t want to wake her up either.

He ended up lying next to her, with one arm around her.

“Abel...” Emmeline snuggled closer to him, curling up like a little kitten.

Abel held her close, planting a kiss on her forehead, and the two of them drifted off to sleep.

Downstairs, the first floor had closed for the night, and Sam had returned to her room.

She had originally planned for Luca to stay in one of the guest rooms on the third floor.

However, Luca had decided to sleep in the Rolls-Royce for the night.

As the sun streamed in through the windshield, Luca stirred awake.

Checking his wristwatch, he realized it was already seven in the morning.

He rubbed his bleary eyes, feeling like he had slept for too long.

Blaming it on the luxurious interior of the Rolls-Royce, which was just too comfortable.

As he was about to open the car door and step out, he noticed a stretch Lincoln pulling into the parking lot.

Luca recognized it as Lewis’s car.

As the Lincoln pulled into the parking lot and parked, Rosaline got out followed by Evelyn.

Oh no!

Luca thought to himself, this must be Rosaline coming to catch Abel and “Emmett”!

It was all Evelyn's fault, she must have told Madame Ryker something to set this up.

Luca pulled out his phone to call Abel, only to realize his phone was dead.

He forgot to charge it last night.

Luca smoothed down his messy hair with his hand, got out of the Rolls-Royce and followed behind Rosaline and Evelyn.

As Sam got up to answer the door, Rosaline barged in with an imposing demeanor.

"Where is Mr. Abel?" Rosaline demanded in a cold and stern voice.

Sam was taken aback at the sight of Abel's mother and immediately understood what was going on when he saw Evelyn behind her.

Evelyn must have gone to Abel's parents and told them everything.

It was clear that Madame Ryker had come personally to "catch the cheating."

"Madame Ryker," Sam hurriedly stepped away from his work station, "Mr. Abel is still asleep upstairs. Shall I go and wake him?"

"Never mind," Rosaline said, "I'll go up myself!"

With that, she hitched up her skirt and stormed up the stairs.

Evelyn hurried to keep up with her, while Sam, who had tried to race ahead, was left behind.

Rosaline climbed the stairs, her heels clicking against the wood, until she reached the landing on the second floor. Without hesitation, she pushed open the door to the living room, but found it empty.

She moved on to the master bedroom and pushed the door open with a loud "bang."

The master bedroom was empty too.

Rosaline pushed open the first guest room and saw Abel sound asleep in bed, holding someone in his arms.

They were both sleeping soundly.

Rosaline rushed over and grabbed Abel's arm.

"Son, how could you do this? How could you do such a thing!"

Abel hadn't slept this deeply in a long time.

He was in the middle of a dream when he was abruptly awakened by someone pulling his arm.

Reflexively, he was about to strike back, but he saw that it was his mother standing by the bed.

Abel forced himself to hold back his fist and asked, "Mom, why are you here?"

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Rosaline was seething with anger, tears streaming down her face as she pointed at the “little mustache” in the bed sheets and her lips trembling.

“Abel, I never would have thought that you would have this kind of preference. What kind of woman can’t you find? Do you have to like a man?”

“Evelyn told me, and I couldn’t believe it until I saw it with my own eyes! Abel, you’ve really hurt your mother!”

“What did you say, Mom?” Abel’s eyebrows furrowed.

“I said what?” Rosaline pointed at Emmeline. “Who is this mustached man? You don’t like him, yet you’re cuddling with him and sleeping together?”

Abel turned his head to look at Emmeline, who had just been awakened and was looking confused.

Her little face was buried in the sheets, revealing only a pair of fluttering peach blossom eyes, making her look like a cute little child.

“Mom, you’ve got it all wrong,” Abel said. “Emmett is just a kid, I treat him like a little brother. It’s not what you think.”

“You expect me to believe that?” Rosaline snapped. “I’ve never seen a man sleep with a little brother for a whole night! What else did you two do? It wasn’t something shameful, was it?”

“What are you saying, Mom?” Abel furrowed his brow. “It’s not what you’re thinking. I was just really tired and fell asleep like that.”

“You’re telling me you didn’t do anything serious?” Rosaline still seemed unconvinced.

When she had walked in, she saw her son holding Emmett with such tenderness and care, as if he was cradling a beautiful woman.

“Enough already,” Abel said, growing impatient. “I told you, nothing happened.”

He did have a strange fondness for Emmett, but that didn’t mean he was gay.

Emmeline wasn’t sure if Abel had done anything to her last night. She lifted a hand and gingerly touched her little beard and eyebrows.

Thank goodness, everything was still intact.

But Abel’s handsome face had turned blue.

Emmeline knew he couldn’t explain it anymore.

His mother thought he was gay.

But she couldn’t explain it to him, or else it would be busted.

“Who is this kid?” Rosaline asked angrily. “Whose child is he? I’ll find his parents and tell them their child is misbehaving at such a young age!”

“Auntie!” Emmeline jumped off the bed. “You’ve got it all wrong. Mr. Ryker is not that kind of person, and neither am I. We just happened to fall asleep together, see, we’re still fully clothed!”

“You want to take your clothes off?” Rosaline accused. “You little scoundrel, you’re full of dirty thoughts!”

Rosaline’s voice was sharp and commanding, “Who are your parents? Tell me now, I’m going to find them and give them a piece of my mind for not raising you right!”

Emmeline shrank back, intimidated by the fierce look on Rosaline’s face.

“Mom,” Abel held Emmeline close, “Emmett is just a kid, don’t scare her like that!”

“And you’re defending her!” Rosaline fumed, “You even bullied Ms. Evelyn because of this little troublemaker?”

“I didn’t!” Abel knew it was pointless to argue with his mother.

“You’re still denying it,” Rosaline scowled, “Who poured dirty water all over Evelyn last night?”

“It was all a misunderstanding!” Abel said, “Just drop it, Mom.”

“Abel,” Rosaline said sorrowfully, “it’s not that your mother is nagging, it’s because I’m really worried about you!”

“It doesn’t matter if Emmeline is gone, you still have Evelyn, right? Look at how great Evelyn is, gentle, virtuous, obedient, and kind. Why do you have to fall in love with a man? Our family doesn’t have that kind of tradition!”

“I told you, I didn’t!”

“Do you admit that you don’t like this stinky kid?” Rosaline pointed at “Emmett”.

Abel glanced at “Emmett” in his arms and himself felt a little puzzled.

He didn’t admit that he didn’t like “Emmett”.

He not only liked her but also liked her very much.

Abel’s strange feelings made him feel uneasy.

He suddenly wondered if he was really going to turn gay.

Just then, Rosaline spotted Luca at the door.

She rushed to Luca and angrily said, “Luca, you also have a responsibility for Mr. Abel’s behavior!”

Luca was taken aback and quickly avoided her, “Madame Ryker, you really misunderstood. Mr. Abel and Emmett really have nothing going on.”

“Nothing going on?” Rosaline pointed at the big bed, “Nothing going on with two grown men sleeping together?”

Sleeping together?

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Luca leaned in for a closer look. “Emmett” was still wrapped up in blankets, snuggled in Abel’s arms.

Now it was Luca’s turn to be dumbfounded.

He approached, staring at the pair as if he didn’t recognize his own boss.

“Mr. Abel, what’s going on...” Luca began to ask.

Abel furrowed his brow and turned his head, unsure of how to respond.

He didn’t know how to explain the situation to Luca.

Last night, Abel had held “Emmett” in his arms as they slept, and it felt amazing. He inexplicably felt at ease and content. He slept soundly and sweetly, even in his dreams.

So what was the big deal?

“Mr. Abel,” Evelyn approached and took hold of Abel’s arm, speaking softly. “Just apologize to Auntie so she can have peace of mind.”

“There’s nothing to apologize for,” Abel shrugged her off and spoke coldly. “I just love Emmett, so what?”

Suddenly, Rosaline felt her vision darken and her body sway.

Her son had actually admitted it himself, he liked this man!

Abel stood up and tried to support his mother, but she pushed him away.

“I don’t have a son like you!” Rosaline cried. “I’ve lived half my life and never imagined my son would be a pervert, let alone my future son-in-law, a man!”

“Mr. Abel,” Evelyn’s voice trembled with tears. “You must be joking. How could you like men? You’re just joking, right?”

“I’m not joking,” Abel lifted Emmeline with one arm. “I just suddenly found myself drawn to this little guy. I can’t explain it myself, so I might as well just admit it.”

Rosaline was speechless and rolled her eyes in frustration.

“Mom!” Abel quickly went to support her.

“Auntie, Auntie!” Evelyn also supported her. “Take care of yourself!”

“Abel!” Rosaline pushed her son away and took a deep breath. “If you still recognize me as your mother, come home with me now. I’ll make your father give you a good lesson!”

Abel remained silent.

He didn’t think he did anything wrong. He just liked this little guy.

Nothing shameful had happened between them, so what was the problem?

“Mr. Abel,” Evelyn said hesitantly. “Auntie is so upset, just give in to her for now.”

“Mr. Ryker,” Emmeline was afraid that Rosaline would have a heart attack. “You should go home with Auntie first, and I’ll contact you later.”

“Alright then,” Abel nodded, not wanting his mother to get into any more trouble.

He gently rubbed Emmeline’s head and his eyes softened as he spoke in a soft voice, “Little kid, don’t wander around, remember that I’ll call you back later.”

“Mhm, I won’t move, you can rest assured,” Emmeline obediently nodded her head.

“Good boy,” Abel said before he helped Rosaline out of the room.

As everyone left, the room fell silent. Emmeline took off the fake mustache and eyebrows and lay sprawled on the bed.

“Oh my god, I’m so tired!” Emmeline exclaimed.

“But Ms. Louise,” Sam closed the door behind them, “it’s worth it, isn’t it? You can see how much Mr. Abel cares for you.”

“Yeah,” Emmeline blinked her dark peach eyes, “even though he’s lost his feelings for Emmeline, his soul still recognizes me!”

“If that’s the case,” Sam suggested, “why don’t you just confront him directly?”

“That won’t work,” Emmeline’s expression darkened, “don’t underestimate Waylon’s medicine. It really does work. I’ve tried testing Abel several times, and he’s completely indifferent to Emmeline. If I showed up as Emmeline, he would just push me away, and I wouldn’t even be as welcome as Evelyn.”

“Ah,” Sam pouted, “Waylon, why did you have to resort to such a stupid plan? It’s turned two lovers into strangers!”

“It’s not Waylon’s fault,” Emmeline sighed, “he didn’t want anything bad to happen to Abel, and this was the only way he could think of.”

“When will Mr. Abel fall in love with Ms. Louise again?” Sam asked, concerned. “I’m really worried.”

“I have no idea,” Emmeline rubbed her own head, “we’ll have to take it one step at a time.”

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Abel and his mother, Rosaline, returned to Levan Mansion to find Lewis sitting on the couch with a scowl on his face.

Since last night, when he had heard Evelyn’s tearful confession that his son was “in love” with another man, Lewis had been livid.

The thought of his successful son, the CEO of Ryker Group, suddenly turning out to be gay was enough to make Lewis feel like his world was crumbling.

He couldn’t bear the thought of his reputation being tarnished by such scandalous news.

As he wallowed in his despair, Abel and Rosaline entered the room.

Without a word, Lewis kicked off his slippers and lunged at Abel, ready to strike.

Abel effortlessly dodged as his father lunged toward him, looking unimpressed.

“Dad, what are you doing?” Abel asked calmly, his handsome face composed.

“What am I doing?” Lewis trembled with anger. “You want to kill your old man with this news of yours!”

“I haven’t done anything wrong,” Abel replied coolly.

“What more do you want?” Lewis fumed. “Do you have to marry a man just to stir up trouble in this family?”

Abel remained silent, unsure of what to say.

What kind of talk was that?

Abel had never even considered the idea of marrying a man.

Lewis then noticed Luca standing nearby and swung his slipper at him as well.

“Keep an eye on Mr. Abel, you have a responsibility too!” he barked.

Luca, afraid to dodge, closed his eyes and braced himself for the impact.

If Mr. Abel truly had fallen in love with that “young man,” Luca didn’t know what he would do.

He’d just have to take the beating.

Abel quickly raised his hand to deflect his father’s slipper, sparing Luca from being struck.

“Dad, Luca has nothing to do with this. Why are you taking it out on him?” Abel asked, frowning.

“Nothing to do with it?” Lewis seethed. “What kind of assistant is he if he can’t keep an eye on you?”

“If Struyria finds out that the CEO of Ryker Group is gay, how will you survive?” he continued.

“Dad, you’re so outdated,” Abel replied, his brow furrowed. “What’s wrong with being gay? Besides, I’m not even gay!”

“Not even gay?” Lewis sneered. “So you’re planning to be one then?”

“That’s right, Abel,” Rosaline added. “I saw you sleeping with that boy with my own eyes!”

“Sleeping with a boy?”

Lewis slumped onto the couch with a thud.

This was it, he thought. Their family’s reputation was ruined.

His son slept with another boy? That was just sickening. If this news ever got out to Landen, they would be laughing at them. Worse yet, they might even report it to Oscar.

At his age, Oscar wouldn’t be able to accept homosexuality at all.

Can their son still keep his position as the CEO of Ryker Group?

As Lewis thought more about it, he became angrier and angrier and coughed violently.

Rosaline hurried over to pat her husband's back, and said to Abel, "Son, do you want to kill your parents with your anger?"

Abel furrowed his brows and didn't want to explain.

"Just tell me," Lewis pointed at his son, "can you stop associating with that man?"

"It's not as serious as you guys make it out to be," Abel said, annoyed. He couldn't believe his parents were so closed-minded.

"You still think it could get any worse?" Rosaline said. "Do you really plan on us getting a son-in-law who's a man?"

Abel was about to answer when Luca's phone rang.

Luca glanced at the screen and saw that it was the customer service line for the automotive repair center.

He didn't answer, turning instead to Abel. "Mr. Abel, the car's been fixed."

"Okay," Abel nodded, then added, "Don't bother Emmett for the repair cost. We'll pay for it ourselves."

"Yes, Mr. Abel," Luca replied.

"What's going on?" Lewis could sense something was wrong and stood up abruptly. "The car was hit by that kid?"

"Yes," Abel nodded.

"Why didn't you make him pay for the damages?" Lewis was getting angrier. "You just pity him, don't you?"

"He's still a kid," Abel reasoned. "Besides, it was an accident, and his car was damaged too."

"You're just being too soft!" Lewis jumped up, "You won't change your ways, will you? You'll only stop when I'm dead!"

"Dad!"

"Don't call me dad, you're the dad!"

Lewis's face turned red, and his blood pressure skyrocketed. He took a deep breath and sat back down.

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"Abel," Rosaline urged urgently, "quickly apologize to your father, his blood pressure is rising."

Abel was also worried, as high blood pressure could lead to a stroke.

"Dad, please don't be angry, I really don't have anything going on in that department," he said.

Lewis rolled his eyes in frustration and glared at his son. "Really?"

"When have I ever lied to you?" Abel replied.

"Then what about that boy..." Lewis trailed off.

"I do like Emmett, but I treat him like a little brother. He's really fun to be around," Abel explained.

"Are you sure there's nothing else going on?" Lewis asked suspiciously.

"Nope!" Abel replied.

"But you slept with him last night," Lewis pressed.

"We didn't do anything, and we were both fully clothed," Abel explained.

Lewis finally breathed a sigh of relief and said, "Never mind about the car money, it's just a small matter. But you have to promise me one thing."

"What is it?" Abel asked.

Lewis pointed at Evelyn, "Starting today, you have to officially date Ms. Evelyn. We don't want the upper class of Struyria to think you're a weirdo."

Abel didn't respond. He didn't think of himself as a weirdo, even though he couldn't explain why he liked that boy. He didn't want to date Evelyn either.

"You don't want to kill me, do you?" Lewis' face was starting to turn red again.

Abel remained silent, not wanting to anger his father but also not willing to compromise on his own feelings.

"I'll let you treat Ms. Evelyn as your girlfriend," Lewis said. "I don't want my future daughter-in-law and the stepmother of my precious grandchildren to be a man! Can you promise me that?"

"Of course, the mother of the four kids will be a woman," Abel said. "You don't have to worry about that. I've never planned on marrying a man. It just doesn't feel right for me."

"That's settled then," said Lewis, pointing to Evelyn. "You can go for Ms. Evelyn. She's a heiress from the Altney family, and you two even had an engagement before. It couldn't be more perfect."

Evelyn blushed and lowered her head in shyness at his words.

Abel stayed silent, deep in thought. He never really considered this option.

Rosaline chimed in, "You should just agree to your dad's request and date Ms. Evelyn. You don't want to keep his blood pressure up all the time."

"Ah, darn it," groaned Lewis, clutching his head. "I've been so confused. Maybe we should just take me to the hospital."

"Abel," Rosaline's eyes were red, "as your mother, I'm begging you."

"I'll give it a try," Abel said calmly, "but I can't guarantee there will be any progress between Ms. Evelyn and me."

"As long as you two start dating, it's good enough," Lewis said. "I have enough patience to wait. Evelyn is gentle and beautiful. Any man would fall in love with her, unless you're not a man!"

Abel thought to himself, I am a man, but I won't fall in love with her.

Ding dong, his phone beeped.

Abel swiped the screen, and it happened to be a message from Emmett.

"I'll go change my clothes," he said, leaving the room in a hurry.

As he walked up the stairs, he checked the message from Emmett.

"Mr. Ryker, did your parents spank your bottom?" Emmett asked.

Abel couldn't help but smile mischievously, feeling a sudden urge to play a prank on the little guy.

So he replied, "Yeah, they spanked me, and the soles of their slippers hurt so bad."

Emmeline, on the other end, felt a pang in her heart upon reading the message.

She knew that Abel was usually serious and reserved, not one to joke around.

As he spoke, it became apparent that he had indeed been physically disciplined. Emmeline felt a pang of sympathy for him and quickly initiated a voice call.

The ringtone echoed, and Abel darted into his bedroom, shutting the door and answering the call.

"Emmett." A hoarse, gentle voice emanated from his phone.

"Mr. Ryker, did you get spanked? Do you want me to go and give that old man a piece of my mind?" Emmeline asked on the other end.

Abel smiled faintly. For some reason, he felt happy hearing the little guy's voice, despite the teasing.

"I was just kidding, nobody is spanking me. I am a grown-up," he said.

"I see," Emmeline said, touching her chest. "You made me worried there."

"Emmett," Abel said, "where are you? Don't go driving around recklessly."

"I'm at my own villa," Emmeline replied. "I just can't stop worrying about Mr. Ryker."

Abel felt a warm sensation in his chest, sensing that this little guy was truly thoughtful and caring towards him.

"That's good," Abel said warmly. "I'll contact you later. Be good, okay?"

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"But Mr. Ryker," Emmeline said, "the car should be fixed by now. You can have Luca send the bill to me. I have no shortage of money."

"I don't either, so let's not worry about it," he replied.

"It's not a small amount, a few hundred thousand at most," Emmeline insisted.

"It's nothing, really," Abel said dismissively.

"Then how about this," Emmeline suggested. "I'll take Mr. Ryker out to dinner to make up for it. It'll make me feel better."

Abel considered for a moment before nodding his agreement. "That sounds fine."

"I can invite some friends of Mr. Ryker's too," Emmeline offered. "The more the merrier, right?"

Abel wondered who to invite.

"Mr. Ryker, pick a time," Emmeline said on the other end of the line. "I'm available anytime."

"How about today at noon?" Abel suggested. "I don't feel like being at home."

Emmeline knew Abel wanted to avoid Evelyn.

"Sure, I'm free at noon too," she replied.

"Let's go to Nimbus Hotel then, how does that sound to you?" Abel proposed.

"That sounds great," Emmeline said. "I'll be there in a bit."

"Okay," Abel said. "Just be careful when you're driving. I don't want you getting into another accident and hitting someone."

"Don't worry," Emmeline laughed. "I don't care about anyone else. I only have eyes for you, Mr. Ryker."

Abel smiled, feeling his heart swell with affection. He couldn't believe he was starting to feel like he was in love.

But a small part of him was also nervous. Could he really be falling for this guy?

He pushed those thoughts aside, not wanting to overthink things.

Abel shrugged to himself, figuring that as long as he was happy and not hurting anyone, there was no harm in indulging in his own desires.

Just then, his phone rang again. It was Benjamin calling.

"Abel?" Benjamin said in a bored voice. "I'm feeling lonely and bored. How about we grab lunch together?"

"Actually, I already made plans with a friend," Abel replied. "But it just so happens that you're here, offering to keep me company."

"That sounds good," Benjamin said. "What time and where?"

"Noon, at the Nimbus Hotel," Abel replied.

"Okay, see you then," Benjamin said.

...

Abel had booked the Golden Tier VIP room at the Nimbus Hotel and changed his clothes. Before leaving, he checked himself in the mirror to make sure he looked perfect.

Finally, he opened the door, only to find Evelyn standing outside, about to knock.

As Abel opened the door, Evelyn pushed her way in.

Abel caught her and looked at her with a stern expression.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Mr. Abel," Evelyn blushed, "Auntie asked me to come and ask you what you would like for lunch, so the kitchen can prepare it."

"I won't be eating at home," Abel said coldly, "I have a client."

"But Mr. Abel..."

Abel brushed past her and headed downstairs.

Evelyn was left standing there, looking lost and confused.

It was clear that Abel was avoiding her.

At the Nimbus Hotel, Abel ran into Adrien and Lizbeth in the lobby.

"Abel," Adrien said, holding Lizbeth's hand as they approached, "you're looking sharp. Who are you meeting here?"

"Adelmar's Benjamin," Abel replied calmly, "we're discussing some business. And another young chap."

"I thought you were meeting a lovely lady," Adrien chuckled, eyeing Abel up and down, "dressed to impress, like you're in the throes of romance."

"Don't be ridiculous, Adrien," Abel retorted, "I'm not like you, all caught up in the passion of new love."

Adrien quipped, "Well if there's someone suitable, you have to keep going."

Abel nodded absently, "Hmm."

Just then, a cool voice chimed in, "Mr. Ryker."

Abel turned his head and saw "Emmett" approaching.

"He" was wearing a silver suit, white shirt, and a dark blue tie with subtle stripes.

With clear-cut features and a touch of gracefulness, "he" exuded an air of elegance.

Abel was suddenly taken aback, feeling something stir within him.

He couldn't help but feel a hint of what Adrien had described as being in love.

Adrien himself was struck dumb by the sight of Emmett.

How could anyone be so beautiful, so delicate and captivating, like a work of art come to life?

It was almost overwhelming, like a sensation that surpassed even the allure of women.

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“Hello, hello, I’m Adrien, welcome to Nimbus Hotel.” Adrien extended his two large palms, his eyes sparkling with mischief as he reached out to shake Emmeline’s small hand.

Her hand was soft and smooth, and Adrien felt a jolt of electricity run through his body as he held it.

His instincts kicked in, and he found himself leaning toward her.

“Adrien!” Abel and Lizbeth came over together, pulling Adrien away from Emmeline.

Abel wrapped his arm around Emmeline’s shoulder and picked up the hand that Adrien had just held, blowing on it as if to brush away any lingering dust.

“Abel,” Adrien’s eyes sparkled mischievously, “are you sure you’re not in love? Who is this beauty? Where did you find him?”

Abel remained silent, unsure of how to respond.

“Adrien!” Lizbeth stamped her foot in frustration, “I can’t believe you’re like this. Are you gay or something?”

“What do you mean? How am I gay?” Adrien retorted, “Just look at this face. He’s more pretty than you are, Lizbeth. To be honest, when I saw him, my heart skipped a beat!”

Lizbeth was so angry that she stomped her foot again, twisted her waist, and stormed off in a huff.

“Adrien,” Abel said, “enough joking around. Go after Lizbeth.”

Adrien reluctantly tore his gaze away from Emmeline and went off to chase after Lizbeth.

Just then, Benjamin arrived on the scene.

When he saw “Emmett,” Benjamin transformed into a full-fledged actor, with an exaggerated expression of awe.

“Oh my, who’s this little guy? He’s simply stunning!” Benjamin exclaimed.

Abel stepped back, still holding onto Emmeline, and warned Benjamin, “You can talk, but keep your distance.”

But Benjamin ignored him and extended his large palm, saying, “Hello there, handsome. I’m Benjamin. It’s an honor to meet you.”

“Smack!” Abel swatted Benjamin’s hand away. “No need to shake hands. I’ll introduce you guys.”

“I think I can handle it myself,” Benjamin replied, smiling slyly at Emmeline. “My name is Benjamin. And what’s your name, little brother?”

Emmeline hesitated for a moment before Abel spoke up for her. “He’s called Emmett.”

“Emmett?” Benjamin repeated. “The unparalleled and handsome young gentleman, Emmett, am I right?”

“You flatter me, Benjamin,” Emmeline said, her voice dripping with sweetness.

In her heart, she thought, this guy has some acting skills. I should give him a bonus later.

Benjamin shuddered and said, “You’re making me feel tingly. I didn’t come here for nothing.”

“Benjamin, be serious!” Abel frowned, “Emmett is just a kid. Don’t scare him with your lecherous look.”

“Come on, Mr. Abel, you’re being stingy,” Benjamin said, “I just appreciate how good-looking Emmett is. I haven’t done anything else.”

“Okay, okay,” Abel waved his hand, “Let’s go to the private room and eat while we talk.”

“Sure, let’s go to the private room,” Benjamin pretended to come over and put his arm around “Emmett’s” shoulder, only to be blocked by Abel.

At that moment, Adrien had already comforted Lizbeth.

Seizing the opportunity to go to the restroom, Adrien made his way to the Golden Tier VIP room.

Luca and several bodyguards were standing at the entrance, along with Benjamin’s security team. The two groups stood there with a solemn air.

Feeling intimidated, Adrien didn’t dare to approach and just waved at Luca from a distance.

Luca walked over to him. “Mr. Adrien, is there something you need?”

Adrien grabbed Luca by the arm and pulled him around the corner.

“I’m asking you, where did your boss Mr. Abel find such a beautiful woman? He’s making me so envious,” Adrien said, rubbing his hands together.

Luca shook his head. He couldn’t exactly tell Adrien that “Emmett” was a result of a car accident, could he?

“This kid is really handsome,” Adrien continued, “except for that time I saw Emma dressed up like this, he’s just as stunning. I’ve never seen such a beautiful man before, he’s making me itch with envy.”

“Right?” Luca nodded with a silly grin on his face. “When I first saw Emmett, I thought the same thing.”

Adrien’s eyes suddenly lit up and he blurted out, “Could this kid be Emma? Otherwise, where else would we find such a beautiful man in this world?”

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Luca was stunned, to be honest, he had felt the same way before.

But he shook his head, “It’s impossible.”

Ms. Louise was still in Osea, and he had no idea whether she was alive or not.

“How could it be impossible?” Adrien insisted. “The more I think about it, the more it makes sense!”

Luca remained silent, but deep down he still believed it was impossible.

However, he couldn't help but feel excited at the prospect of Emmett being Ms. Louise. If it were true, he would bow down and apologize a hundred times.

Luca shook his head and let out a sigh. "Things aren't that simple," he said.

"Adrien!"

Just then, Lizabeth's voice could be heard from down the hallway. "Did you fall in the toilet or something?"

Adrien hastily waved to Luca and rushed off.

Luca returned to the door of the private room and peered through the crack. As luck would have it, "Emmett" was facing the door, providing Luca with a clear view of her profile.

He scrutinized her carefully, thinking to himself, "It really does look like her. The more I look at her, the more convinced I am that Mr. Adrien might be onto something."

The three of them ordered their dishes in the private room.

Benjamin turned to Emmeline and asked, "Emmett, are you still studying or working?"

Emmeline replied, "I've graduated from university, and I'm currently unemployed."

Abel narrowed his eyes and asked, "Benjamin, what are you thinking?"

"I was just thinking," Benjamin tilted his head and looked at Emmeline, "that I need a secretary by my side. Why don't you come to work for me, Emmett? The salary won't be a problem."

"That sounds great!" Emmeline clapped her hands happily. "I was actually looking for a job to gain some experience and eventually take over Em's business."

"Forget about working for Benjamin," Abel shot Benjamin a glance and pulled the chair over to Emmeline. "of positions available at my company. You can choose whatever you want to do."

"Abel," Benjamin frowned, "this is not okay. I just offered the job to Emmett."

"That doesn't matter," Abel replied, "Emmett is my brother. If he wants to work, he has to go through me first. Ryker Group has all sorts of positions available, and he can choose whatever he wants to do. Salary is up to him."

"Wow," Emmeline laughed, "that's amazing. I can set my own salary?"

"As long as you choose my company," Abel ruffled her hair. "The salary is up to you!"

"Then of course I choose Mr. Ryker!" Emmeline winked at Benjamin.

"I can't believe you," Benjamin pretended to be unhappy with Abel. "Okay, fine. I won't compete with you."

"Emmett," Abel turned his head to look at Emmeline's face, "what do you want to do? Tell me."

"I..." Emmeline hesitated for a moment, "I want to study business management so that I can help my dad in the future."

"Then stay with me," Abel said, "intern directly in the CEO's office with me."

"That's great," Emmeline said happily, "Thank you, Mr. Ryker!"

"Don't be so polite to me," Abel rubbed her little head again, his face full of indulgence.

This time it was Benjamin who winked at Emmeline.

Emmeline made a victory "V" gesture towards him.

Benjamin's lips curved into a slight smile, feeling both heartbroken and helpless.

This little girl is really going all out to awaken Abel's feelings for her.

After dinner, Benjamin returned to Adelmarr.

"Mr. Ryker," Emmeline said to Abel, "are you going back to Ryker Group now? Can I intern with you?"

"I have to make a detour to see someone," Abel said. "Follow me in your car."

Emmeline figured Abel was probably talking about Kendra, and she was also worried about Kendra and Quincy.

"Okay, lead the way, and I'll follow you," she said eagerly.

Two cars drove out of the Nimbus Hotel parking lot, one in front and one behind, heading to the ravioli shop where Kendra was doing a part-time job.

Abel's security car followed closely behind.

The ravioli shop was quite far away, and it took nearly forty minutes to get there.

By the time they arrived, it was already past mealtime, and there were no customers in the shop.

The owner and a worker were cleaning up.

Suddenly, a suave and dignified man walked in, exuding a strong aura.

Following closely behind him was a delicate and handsome young man.

The owner stood there with her mop, stunned.

Holy moly, these two guys are the epitome of male beauty!

She had never seen such a handsome man in her life.

The shop owner was dumbfounded and lost in her own thoughts. Abel's voice broke the silence, "I'm here to see Kendra, where is she?"

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"Oh," the owner finally snapped back to reality. "You're looking for Kendra. She took the afternoon off."

“Took off?” Abel furrowed his brow. “Is everything okay with her?”

Emmeline, standing behind him, grew tense. Kendra and Quincy, could something be wrong?

“Her daughter had a high fever,” the owner said. “She went to the hospital for an IV drip.”

“Do you know which hospital?” Abel asked.

“The private one across the street,” the owner pointed a finger.

Abel turned around and walked towards the door, with Emmeline hurrying to keep up with him.

Kendra and Quincy were alone and vulnerable, and Emmeline couldn’t bear the thought of something happening to them. She hurried across the street to the small private hospital and found the pediatric observation room.

Sure enough, she saw Kendra holding Quincy in her arms, with an IV drip in her head as she slept soundly.

Then, a pair of shiny leather shoes appeared in Kendra’s line of sight.

Without guessing, she knew who it was.

Kendra suddenly looked up.

“Mr... Mr. Abel?” Kendra tried to sit up and hold Quincy, but the IV line was tangled up.

“Don’t move,” Abel pressed her back gently. “Be careful of the child.”

“How did you find us here?” Kendra was a little excited.

“I heard from the owner at the ravioli shop,” Abel said. “I told you to call me if you have any difficulties, why didn’t you?”

“I’m fine,” Kendra lowered her eyes, tears welling up in them. “Quin just has a cold. You don’t have to bother, Mr. Abel.”

“Kendra,” Abel said with a hint of bitterness. “Although you used to work for me, we’re still friends. Don’t make it so awkward.”

“I know, I’ve always been grateful to Mr. Abel and Ms. Emmeline,” Kendra said despondently, “but now that Ms. Emmeline is gone, things have changed. It’s better for me to keep my distance from Mr. Abel to avoid any unnecessary misunderstandings.”

“Things have changed?” Abel furrowed his brow. “Are you talking about Evelyn?”

“I don’t know Evelyn well, she’s not Ms. Emmeline,” Kendra said. “I don’t want anyone to misunderstand, so it’s better for me to stay away from you. It’s better for everyone.”

“You know that there’s nothing between me and Evelyn!”

“That’s not my concern,” Kendra lowered her eyelashes. “With Ms. Emmeline here, the Precipice was still my home, but with other women coming in now that she’s gone, it’s not my home anymore. I’m not their servant.”

“But I need you now,” Abel said. “Can you come back to the villa with me?”

Kendra raised her head and asked bitterly, “To serve Evelyn? She wants to take Ms. Emmeline’s place, and I can’t do that!”

Emmeline stood behind Abel, listening to the conversation with a sour feeling in her and tears welling up in her eyes. She quickly turned her head and sniffed.

“No,” Abel held Emmeline’s hand and explained, “It’s this young man. He’s going to stay with me for a while, and I want you to help take care of him...”

Only then did Kendra turn her gaze to “Emmett”. When she saw him, she was first stunned, then said, “This is a young man?”

“Yes,” Emmeline nodded hastily, “a real man.”

“I must say, you’re quite handsome for a young man,” Kendra said. “If you shave that beard off, you’d look like a pretty lady.”

Emmeline chuckled. “You jest. I grew this beard precisely because people kept mistaking me for a woman.”

“Mr. Abel,” Kendra turned to him, “you want me to take care of this little brother?”

“Yes,” Abel nodded.

“I understand,” Kendra said with a hint of bitterness, “I also know that you’re using this as an opportunity to help me and Quin.”

“That was Emmeline and my intention from the beginning,” Abel replied. “We didn’t want you and your daughter to be homeless.”

“Alright,” Kendra wiped her eyes, “I’ll do it.”

“That’s good then,” Abel said, “once Quin finishes the IV, I’ll have the bodyguard come pick you up.”

“Mm-hmm,” Kendra nodded.

“Let’s go then,” Abel took Emmeline’s hand and left the observation room.

“Mr. Ryker,” Emmeline said, “you didn’t mention that I was going to move in with you.”

“Better late than never,” Abel said, “since you’re interning with me, it’s more convenient for you to live with me rather than drive back and forth every day.”

“You’re using the same excuse to have that young lady move back in, aren’t you?”