

Chapter 21 - Betrayal At The Altar Novel by Dolores Delia (Rachel Grey & Louis Smith)

From Rachel's every word and action, it was obvious that she had been well-raised. Her mannerisms also showed how she treated the people around her.

These were qualities that could only be learned over a long time. They could not possibly have been developed within a short period.

Judging from her years of experience, Old Mrs. Jones believed Rachel was an extraordinary girl.

She knew David would have to put in a lot of effort to win Rachel's heart. It would not be an easy journey at all.

It was still drizzling sporadically. Rachel reached out and felt the raindrops with her palms.

David stood beside her with one hand in his pocket. His thin lips slightly curled up while admiring her delicate face. "Would you like to come with me to the tea room?"

Rachel looked at him and was caught off guard by his mesmerizing eyes. She felt like she was choking.

She curled her fingertips and exhaled lightly. After trying her best to calm her pounding heart, she smiled and said, "Okay."

The tea room was located in the West Wing. It was an exquisite and elegant place.

The arched shelf divided the tea room into two areas, the inner and outer zone. A bronze incense burner was placed on the table in the outer zone, and the smell of incense smoke complemented the residual tea fragrance in the air.

Rachel looked around her surroundings. She noticed a painting on the wall, and her eyes sparkled.

That painting was titled "Spring Clouds and Morning Haze". It was painted by the famous Leonard DeAngelo, and it had been bought anonymously by someone at the Fujiby auction.

The people invited to the Fujiby auction all had a net worth of at least 40 million dollars.

For someone to participate in the auction anonymously, they must have been at least a mid-tier member for three years and had a net worth of more than 200 million dollars.

Rachel scrutinized David with curiosity.

She thought, "I wonder what this man's background is exactly?"

David sat on the chair. The neckline of his shirt was slightly open, and the lines of his collarbone could be seen faintly.

It made his usual aloof self appear a lot wilder and unruly.

The warm light engulfed the man, making him appear a lot less intimidating.

His gaze was lowered, and there seemed to be an imperceptible smile on his face. He made a pot of tea in an orderly fashion, and at last, he placed one cup in front of Rachel. His deep and intoxicating voice rang out. "When will you be discharged?"

Rachel picked up the teacup in front of her and took a sip. The tea was fragrant, mellow, and sweet. She replied calmly, "Tomorrow."

"I'll give you a ride tomorrow." David's voice was rather deep. It was one that commanded respect.

Rachel shook her head lightly. "I appreciate your kind intentions, Mr. Jones, but I don't need it."

David raised his gaze and stared at Rachel with his dark unblinkingly.

Suddenly, his lips curled into a smile. His voice was low and seductive as he said, "You're afraid of me."

Rachel tightened her grip around the teacup, but her expression did not change. She met his eyes calmly. "Am I?"

David's eyes were very dark, and it was difficult to tell what he was thinking. However, he had an intimidating aura that made Rachel feel almost suffocated just by being around him.

This man was far more unfathomable than she had imagined. Perhaps it would be impossible to ever understand him.

She thought to herself, "I can't afford to offend him, but at the very least, I can still hide from him."

David noticed Rachel's downcast gaze. With dark eyes, he said, "I won't force you, and I don't expect you to answer me. But don't you think your brief answers are too heartless?"

In all honesty, just the sight of David's face was enough to bewitch most people.

Everyone liked beautiful things, and Rachel was no exception. When faced with David's charming face, she felt a profound liking to it. His looks were greatly pleasing to her eyes.

But Louis's betrayal had left a hole in her heart. Even though David was very nice to her, it wouldn't be easy for her to feel moved by another man again.

"Mr. Jones, you seem to have full confidence in yourself, don't you?" Rachel looked at David with an imperceptible smile on her face. Her words sounded slightly mocking.

David leaned back in his chair. His fingertips were tracing the mouth of his blue patterned porcelain tea cup. He said casually, "That's because I know that there is no one in this world, except me, who is worthy of you."

His tone was flat, but there was an air of self-importance that could not be concealed.

Rachel stared at him for a moment. Then, suddenly, a bright smile appeared on her crimson lips. However, there was a trace of coldness in the depths of her eyes.

She slammed her teacup on the table, and in a vexed tone, she exclaimed, "Mr. Jones, are you trying to say that it's inevitable for me to accept you in this lifetime?"

"No." David stared at Rachel's annoyed face, and his lips curled into a smile. He enunciated each word clearly, "I meant that in this lifetime, I'm certain I want you."

That short sentence made Rachel feel like a grenade had exploded in her heart.

Her eyelashes fluttered, and she lowered her gaze as her fingers curled into tight fists.

The faint scent of sandalwood lingering in the air made Rachel feel increasingly breathless. She stood up abruptly and said, "It's getting late. I should go back and rest."

Unexpectedly, David grabbed her wrist.

The temperature of David's palm seemed to burn Rachel. She instinctively tried to break free. However, the man in front of her tightened his grip.

"Once bitten, twice shy," David said. "The thing that a life event teaches us is a lesson for us to learn instead of making us timid." David noticed that Rachel's rigid body gradually relaxed. He then tentatively lifted his hand to hold Rachel's chin, preventing her from evading his gaze. "You can reject me with prickly thorns all over your body, but I won't give up embracing you because of that," he said.

The room fell silent in an instant, and the torrential rain outside became particularly clear.

The pattering raindrops beat against the tiles with a chaotic rhythm, completely disturbing Rachel's heart.

Her eyelashes trembled lightly. Eventually, she slowly closed her eyes and whispered in resignation, "David, I don't have the courage to gamble on an all-consuming love again."

Her gentle voice was mixed with an uncontrollable tremble as if one could feel her shattered heart.

During the three years that Rachel was in love with Louis, she resolutely chose the latter despite her family's opposition.

She regarded Louis as her only choice for the future. She imposed Louis's ideals and aspirations on herself. She loved Louis without hesitation or expectation of reciprocation. But in the end, what happened?

His betrayal came unexpectedly, like a knife thrust into her heart without warning.

She could grit her teeth and bear all the pain without uttering a word to anyone. She could also pretend to have a relieved attitude toward her future life. However, she was the only one who knew that the gruesome and terrifying wound still pierced through her heart to this day.

And she and this man in front of her were just acquaintances. Even though he had been honest about his thoughts, how could she dare to easily reach out her hand to him?

She could not bring herself to do it.

You don't need to love. You just need to be loved." David said. His deep and cold voice softened, like the morning sun dispersing the mist in the mountains. And like the warm stream flowing into the heart, he continued. "My deep affection doesn't need a reason."

He extended his hands. His cool fingertips traced lightly over the damp corner of Rachel's eyes as if he was touching her heart directly. The numb sensation was like an electric current spreading throughout her body.

Rachel suddenly opened her eyes and looked at the man in front of her. Her heart was beating like a drum.

The man's lips curved into a gentle smile. His deep eyes seemed to be filled with infinite tenderness. Merely catching a glimpse of his eyes made it hard for anyone to resist his gaze.

Rachel stood there in a daze, mouth agape but unable to utter a word. Her throat was dry and hoarse, feeling like she had been walking through the desert for three days and three nights.

Actually, when she rejected David, she had expected him to become angry. She had even prepared to have a falling out with him.

However, the fact remained that she had underestimated this man's determination and perseverance.

He was like an experienced hunter, luring her step by step into the trap he had set. She was unconsciously led by him.

Rachel was completely powerless to resist this kind of man.

After a long while, she spoke up and asked, "Mr. Jones, are you always that upfront when it comes to dealing with women?"

"I only have you by my side." David said as his fingertips gently slid from Rachel's chin to her temples, lightly tucking away the stray hair by her ear. His seductive and lazy voice sounded in her ear. "You are the first woman I pursue, the only one, and also the first woman in my life to reject me," he said.

His voice lowered, and it made Rachel's ears turn red. She cleared her throat and replied softly, "I am the one who doesn't know how to appreciate you."

"That's right, David said as he gazed at Rachel. His eyes contained a hint of amusement. "You are the only one who doesn't appreciate me, yet you are the one who captures my heart the most."

Rachel's heart rippled with emotion.

After a while, she calmed down her accelerating heartbeat. She let out a sigh and said, "Thank you for the drink, but I really should go back and rest now."

"Let's leave together," David said.

Three short words that sounded almost like a command made it impossible for people to resist him.

As they walked out the door, David handed his coat to Rachel.

Seeing Rachel hesitate, he raised his hand and opened the coat, draping it directly over her shoulders. "Be careful not to catch a cold," he said.

On the way back, the two of them walked side by side. Their footsteps gradually became synchronized, making it difficult to tell who was accommodating whom.

Under David's escort, Rachel returned to the door of her guest room. Just as she pushed the door open, David suddenly grabbed the hand she had rested on the door lock.

At that moment, their skin touched. The warmth of David's palm spread throughout Rachel's body, causing her to stiffen suddenly. "What... what are you trying to do?" she asked.

"Rae-Rae," David said.

David's deep and magnetic voice, which had hints of tenderness and ambiguous intimacy used only between lovers, caused Rachel's heart to tremble.

She pursed her lips and gazed into David's unfathomable eyes.

David's lips curved into a meaningful smile. His eyes had a mysterious depth that Rachel could not discern. "Would you like to spend the night with me?" he asked.

Rachel forcefully withdrew her hand. Her charming face instantly

became cold. It looked as if a layer of ice had formed on it, causing her to emanate a chilling aura.

"David, you have no sense of propriety," Rachel said. "We are nowhere near the level where we can share a bed together."

"I thought you coming to my room was a hint toward something," David said. His smile grew more pronounced after seeing the anger on Rachel's alluring face. "Moreover, it's late at night, and we are alone. Don't forget that I'm a normal man."

It was inevitable to have some wild thoughts.

Upon hearing David's remarks, the anger in Rachel's chest dissipated instantly. A trace of surprise and indescribable embarrassment appeared on her face. "Did you, um, say this is your room?" she asked.

Seeing her surprised expression, a flash of understanding passed through David's pupils. It seemed that he had made a mistake and unintentionally dashed the hopes of someone who cared for him deeply.

It was no wonder the Old Mrs. Jones kept reminding him to stay there when he was on his way.

It turned out that not only had Rachel become part of Old Mrs. Jones's plan, but he also had.

He knew that Old Mrs. Jones was eager for a grandchild, but being too hasty might backfire.

David furrowed his brows and spoke in a calm tone. "If you don't mind, I will sleep in the next room tonight," he said.

"I'll sleep in the next room," Rachel said. David generously offered the room to her, showing his gentlemanly demeanor. However, she still felt a bit uneasy.

After she spoke, she hurriedly turned around and left.

However, David suddenly reached out and stopped her. His arm blocked her way. He was enveloped in the scent of wood. He slightly lowered his body to trap Rachel in his arms. His eyes, as dark as ink, gazed directly at the woman in his arms. "Rae-Rae, what is the nature of our relationship now?" he asked.

They were in close proximity. Their breaths mixed together. They could even hear each other's heartbeats.

Rachel lifted her gaze, and their eyes met inevitably. There seemed to be a cluster of flames in the depths of David's eyes. His eyes were particularly enticing.

Her heart was beating uncontrollably. She frowned and lowered her head in silence.

"Hmm?" David looked at Rachel's pursed lips. His deep black eyes could not help but become a little hot. His magnetic voice, which was mixed with a hint of hoarseness, penetrated her ears. "Rae-Rae, can you answer me?" he asked.

Rachel's earlobes felt like they were burning, and there was a brief moment of numbness.

She took a deep breath, trying to ignore the heat on her face, and pretended to be calm. "David, everything requires a gradual process," she said. "Achieving something too quickly may make people fail to cherish it."

"So?" David raised an eyebrow and looked at her with great interest.

Rachel's eyelashes trembled in a panic, but she forced herself to remain calm and said, "Didn't you say before that pursuing a woman requires giving 100 percent sincerity; learning to be humble, proactive, and considerate; and, most importantly, being committed to one person? How could you forget what you said?"

Suddenly, low laughter flowed from David's throat. It was like the enchanting sound produced by a cello. "So it turns out that Rae-Rae likes and enjoys being pursued by me," he said.

Rachel was left speechless.