

Standing before Love Chapter 52

“Director Hart... Tony...” She took a deep breath and with a shy expression, she murmured, “You misunderstood me the last time. I’ve never even looked at other men. Perhaps you are unaware of this, but ever since I saw you at Old Master Hart’s birthday celebration, it was love at first sight. I fell in love with you uncontrollably...”

As she walked closer to him, the sorrow and shyness in her eyes became more apparent. Just as she was about to reach him, he suddenly asked, “Miss Hay, do you want me to give you another warning?”

He slowly took out a cigarette and lit it. Compared to her passionate advances, he was like an iceberg.

“I know you must be angry at me for not knowing my employee’s character. But if you delete the picture, Tony, everything can still be salvaged. Tony—”

“Who gave you the permission to call my name?” Tony breathed out a puff of smoke. When he turned around to look at her, there was annoyance in his eyes.

His sensual look right now was precisely the reason Sasha fell for him. Biting her lip, she said, “Yesterday, Old Master Hart said that... he likes me a lot...”

With that, Tony’s eyes narrowed dangerously before he suddenly gave a soft chuckle without any mirth in his eyes. “Miss Hay, I was the one who asked someone to take this picture of Miss Stark working.”

Following his gaze, Sasha looked at the picture once more, not knowing what he was trying to imply.

Tony leaned back in his chair again. His handsome features and well-built body that was enshrouded by smoke made her unable to move her gaze away.

“What do you mean?” she mumbled.

“I’m sure you must have suspected that Miss Stark and I have a relationship that we keep secret,” Tony said flatly.

Sasha's expression immediately changed. It is true that Myra gets special treatment from the Hart Group every time. Just like this time, everyone is so sure that she has plagiarized another person's work, yet Director Hart still helped her to clear her name!

Sasha's breathing froze as she tried to calm herself down. Everything is not confirmed yet, so don't think too much into it. It's also possible that the thick-skinned Myra wants to seduce Director Hart!

Watching the changing expressions on her face, Tony curved his lips and he said in a cold voice that completely destroyed her hopes. "Miss Stark keeps rejecting me, but it so happens that I'm the one who wants her."

It so happens that I'm the one who wants her...

Sasha froze as she looked at the man in front of her incredulously.

"Are you out of your mind? Myra is a married woman!" Sasha yelled, her voice shrill.

"So what?" Tony took another puff of the cigarette before extinguishing the flame in an ashtray nearby. When he looked at her again, only indifference was reflected in his eyes. "Let me give you another warning—don't try to harm her. Otherwise... you wouldn't want to see what the Hay Group will become."

Sasha was so angry that her entire body was trembling. "Tony Hart, how dare you threaten me?"

Initially, she was thinking about having the man in front of her all to herself. Unexpectedly, even though he was rumored to be a monk who was not interested in any woman, he would rather fall for a married woman than spare her a second glance.

Every time when she recalled how he humiliated her, she hated Myra for it.

At that time, Myra was just staying next to Director Hart's room. I bet he deliberately said those words for her to hear!

However, Sasha shivered when she saw Tony's dark expression. After all, based on his capabilities, she knew that he could carry out his threat just now.

Well done, Myra!

“Tony, I did not expect for you to stoop so low! But I’m sorry to tell you that Myra loves my cousin a lot, so it’s impossible for her to fall for you! To her, all your efforts are worth nothing!”

“Is that so?” Tony did not become angry because of her words; it was as if he did not mind at all. This, however, made Sasha even more irate.

“Please remember to publish an official statement, Miss Hay,” he reminded her with a cold smile on his face. “And I’m sorry to tell you that there are no more working opportunities between the Hart Group and the Hay Group in the future.”

Upon hearing that, Sasha merely felt a surge of fury rising within her to the point where she felt like murdering someone. However, she tried her best to suppress it as she ran out of the room after picking up the cardigan she had taken off just now.

Two minutes later, Myra was informed by Leo that Tony had already chosen the Chase Group as the company to take charge of the Sunny Bay Project. Then, he asked Myra to make the necessary preparations before coming back to the Hart Group to sign the contract.

A warm feeling surged through her heart, something that she had not felt in a long time. However, she felt conflicted that it was brought by a person whom she did not really know.

Looking at the door of Tony’s office that was not far from her, Myra suddenly panicked for no good reason. Without even thanking him, she bade farewell to Leo and left the Hart Group directly.

Ten minutes later, Leo entered Tony’s office and reported respectfully, “Director Hart, the hotel called us just now. Sure enough, Miss Hay would like to see the footage of the surveillance camera when we stayed there a few days ago.”

Initially, he did not understand why Tony asked the manager to play that specific footage. After the events that transpired today, he finally understood what Tony had in mind after seeing him deliberately infuriate Sasha.

He’s too sly! Miss Stark has to pray for her own safety now...

Tony stood up nonchalantly and walked to the huge floor-to-ceiling windows before he replied indifferently, "Alright."

He then remembered the sensation when he held Myra's hand yesterday.

He did not want to see her suffer, yet he did not want the distance between them to remain like this.

After Sasha walked out of the Hart Group, she called the hotel immediately and requested to see the footage of the surveillance camera outside of Myra's room. She did not dare to let them know that she was in fact looking to see Tony's actions, for fear that the hotel might inform him. If that happened, the Hay Family would then get themselves into a lot of trouble. Since Myra's room was right next to Tony's, Sasha would get the same results by asking for Myra's footage.

Looking at the footage, her lips curled coldly when she saw Myra running out of Tony's room with a disheveled look.

Now it all makes sense, and here I was wondering how Myra is so capable! She makes Director Hart fall for her so hard that he gives the Hay Group such a serious warning, and she even humiliates me in front of him. Because of her, we are going to be the laughing stock of the other companies in the industry. I can't take this at all! Apart from that, I already have my eyes on Director Hart, yet she took the opportunity from me! She's already married but she's not loyal to her husband at all!

Even though I can't blow this up on the surface as Director Hart will attack me, I can still tell Sean about this.

Looking at the video in front of her, a cruel look that had never been revealed to anyone flashed across her eyes.

As soon as Myra returned to the office, Tilly ran over to her. "Miss Stark, how did everything go?"

Before Myra could reply, Elsie walked up to them immediately. In reality, she was quite anxious just now, since the Hart Group did not call to give an update on whether Myra was being framed. Now that Myra had returned, Elsie heaved a sigh of relief as she laughed at her misfortune even more gleefully. "Tsk! Myra, do you still have the courage to return to Chase Group? I bet you must be back to take your belongings before you leave!"

Myra shot Tilly a look that warned her to stay calm. Then, she looked at Elsie as she tightened her hold on the phone in her bag.

Myra looked straight into Elsie's eyes firmly and decisively, making the latter slightly furious so she shouted, "Why are you looking at me like that? It's not like I can change the outcome!"

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"This is what you get for plagiarizing the Hay Group's design! Speaking of which, didn't you draw a portrait for Director Hart? Why didn't he speak up for you in front of the Hay Group?" Elsie sneered, buzzing with the anticipation of throwing Myra out of the Chase Group.

Myra, however, merely smirked in response. With a cold gleam in her eyes, she marched straight into Mr. Xavier's office.

"Trouble-seeking w*nch!" Elsie cursed aloud, her eyes flashing wickedly. She stood outside the door, waiting to see what Myra was getting up to.

It wasn't long after Myra went in when the door to Mr. Xavier's office opened again.

This time, it was Mr. Xavier himself who stood in the doorway. Fury belied his thunderous face. He had thrown open the door in a fit of rage and everyone in the design department jumped as the door swung back and forth on its hinges, banging loudly against the wall.

A pleased look passed over Elsie's face. With the way things were going, Myra might end up leaving Bradford City altogether!

However, just as Elsie was indulging in the thought of never having to see Myra again, Mr. Xavier marched up to her. Surprised, she wondered if the design director would let her take over Myra's job so she quickly stepped forward.

He came up before her, suppressing the rage that he'd been feeling since hearing the voice recording, and said coldly, "Miss Foster, please come with me to Director Chase's office immediately."

Upon hearing this, Elsie nodded hastily and traipsed after him. As she did so, she did not forget to throw a triumphant glance over her shoulder at Myra, who had already emerged from Mr. Xavier's office.

Meanwhile, Tilly sauntered over with a frown etched onto her face. "Myra..."

Myra turned to address her with a placid smile. "Don't worry; Director Hart found out that Lily from the Hay Group was the one who plagiarized my design." Now that she had seen how Elsie was treated, she deduced that the Hay Group had sold Elsie out in order to save themselves and receive a lighter punishment.

Tilly blinked at Myra's explanation, then broke into a wide grin after it dawned on her. "I knew you were innocent, Myra! I knew my dreamboat wouldn't let us down!" she squealed excitedly, then cast a curious gaze at the elevator doors not too far away. "But what about Elsie?"

Myra's lips pressed into a thin line as she eyed the elevators with a raised brow. "She would probably end up losing her job in the Chase Group."

"Well, good riddance!" Tilly huffed indignantly. "I heard that Director Chase is now looking into this whole debacle too, which means he obviously believes your side of the story. I can't wait to see how this plays out!"

Myra was taken aback to hear that Sean was looking into the matter of the design plagiarism as well, but as she recomposed herself, she frowned.

It was just as Myra had predicted. Elsie had only been in Sean's office for less than twenty minutes before everyone in the company found out that she was the traitor who had stolen Myra's design and given it to the Hay Group.

The Hay Group had clearly sold her out, and they managed to blame everything on her while covering their own tracks. They claimed that Elsie was the one who had stolen the drawing, but gave it to them under the pretense that she was the designer, thereby misleading them into thinking that she was doing them a favor. In short, they didn't know the truth when they accused Myra of plagiarism.

Now that the truth was out, the Chase Group pressed charges against Elsie for stealing company trade secrets, and she was brought away by several police officers. She didn't even come back to the design department.

There were employees who said they had seen Elsie causing a scene downstairs, insisting that Myra was out to get her. However, in light of the warnings issued by the Hay and the Hart Groups respectively, as well as the former's public apology to the Chase Group and Myra, the evidence weighed heavily against Elsie. In the end, the police brought her away without further delay.

Meanwhile, the colleagues who had wrongfully accused Myra before were now coming up to her to apologize.

Myra never took any of their accusations personally in the first place. Mr. Xavier, on the other hand, approached her and spent some time consoling her.

"Myra, your performance this time earned everybody's praise in the board meeting. The company has decided to reward you with an incentive—you will receive five percent of the project profits."

"Thank you, Mr. Xavier," she answered without much enthusiasm. She had never wanted any incentive in the first place, only a chance to clear her name.

"Myra, I'm sorry to have accused you before. To be fair, everyone fell victim to Elsie's lies. I promise this won't happen again!" he continued earnestly. Mr. Xavier gained a new perspective of Myra after Director Chase made him look into this matter.

However, Myra appeared nonchalant as she said, "Don't worry about it."

Then she thought about the man who had helped clear her name, and glanced down at her phone pensively. She felt bad for not apologizing to him when she was at the Hart Group earlier today. She had wanted to give him a call after everything was settled, but after all that had happened—and even after scrolling through her contacts several times to look for his number—she just couldn't bring herself to do it. Her instincts told her to stay away from Tony, because she didn't think he would help her out for nothing. While he'd told her last night that all she had to do was to follow him back to the Hart Residence, she still had a strange feeling about it.

But at the end of the day, he was the one who had helped her.

Snapping out of her thoughts, she decided that she must thank him properly.

With that in mind, she made the call, but there was no answer on the other line. She let out a breath she didn't know she had been holding and stored her phone away. She did not call him a second time.

Meanwhile on the other side, Tony had already seen Myra's incoming call. Instead of picking it up, he held the phone in his hand thoughtfully, wondering what she could be calling him for.

It didn't take long before the ringing stopped. He waited for what seemed like a long time but she did not follow up with a second call.

The smile slipped off his face. What an impatient kitten indeed, he mused inwardly. He'd done her a huge favor and now she couldn't even bother to thank him. She didn't even try calling him again after he did not pick up the first time.

He swiped his phone to unlock it. He was just about to call her back when he heard a knock on the door and Leo entered his office. "Director Hart, the next meeting is starting soon. Here are the data and statistics."

Tony's finger hovered above the phone. He stood up and kept his phone without much expression, then took over the documents from Leo before walking out of his office.

There wasn't much for Myra to do, seeing as she would be going over to Hart Group tomorrow to sign a contract. As such, she got off work earlier than usual and began to make her way home.

Upon reaching the Chase Residence, she saw that the lights were on in the house.

Meanwhile, Eve heard the front door opening and hurriedly asked Greta to bring out the dishes to the dining table, then happily made her way over to the foyer to greet Myra.

She had heard about what happened at the company. It turned out that Myra was the one who had come up with the design that impressed the Hart Group, thus proving that she was innocent all along. More importantly, Myra was heading over to Hart Group the next day for the contract signing—she really was the lucky star in the Chase Family! After Eve had caught wind of the good news, she asked Greta to cook up a storm so that they could properly celebrate Myra's achievement.

“Myra, you’re home at last!”

This Eve was different compared to the one last night. She looked happier today and there was a bright smile plastered on her face.

Unsurprised, Myra merely nodded and hummed in response.

Upon seeing that Myra was less enthusiastic than she had hoped, Eve thought that perhaps the former was still mad about the hurtful things she’d said last night. She reached out and took Myra’s hand, guilt flashing in her eyes as she placated, “Myra, are you still angry at me? I only said those things last night out of anger, but I’ve never once doubted you. I was only worried that the Hay Group would go after you, so I panicked. Please don’t hold this against me.”

Eve sounded so genuinely sorry that Myra couldn’t help but soften. She paused, then clasped her fingers around Eve’s as she said, “I’m not angry at you, Mom, but I have to admit I was pretty upset yesterday.”

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The guilt in Eve tripled at the hurt in Myra’s voice. The latter did not have a scheming nature but she had been framed anyway. Eve grew angry at the thought of this and she said, “I never thought Miss Torres from the Hay Group could do something as distasteful as this! As for Miss Foster, I’ve called Sean and told him that he ought to take strict disciplinary actions against her. It wouldn’t be fair to you otherwise.”

She paused and gave Myra a comforting pat on the hand. “Besides, Richard told me that Sean’s been looking for evidence to clear your name. He doesn’t say it, but he truly cares for you.”

When Richard—Sean’s secretary—told her about this, Eve felt a huge sense of relief. She thought perhaps this might be an open gambit for both Myra and Sean to mend the broken pieces of their relationship.

Myra’s hand stiffened at this piece of news.

She still remembered what Mr. Xavier had told her in his office yesterday. Tilly had also mentioned something about Sean trying to clear her name. Could it be that he had believed in her all along though he refused to admit it?

Meanwhile, Eve was aware of Myra's feelings for her son. For the past two years, the latter had stood by him despite all the resentment and hurt that he put her through. All the pain she had sustained, she kept to herself—Eve's heart went out to her, but she couldn't help but worry for her as well.

Seeing Myra like this, Eve was sure that Sean still held a special place in Myra's heart. Relieved, she patted Myra's hand and said placatingly, "You know how Sean is. Talk to him after he gets home from work. I know you're attending Old Master Hart's birthday banquet with him and according to the staff at the atelier, he's had an evening dress made for you in Paris. It's a limited edition and it's being flown over as we speak! Myra, Sean really is changing for the better, and although he's made mistakes in the past, I hope you won't hold them against him. Try your best to look at the bigger picture and spend your days happily with him..."

That night, Myra tossed and turned in bed, but she could not find slumber.

She had grown desperate and hopeless over the span of the last two years. She even asked Sean for a divorce, but she knew she would not be able to live that down.

She had spent her best years loving him and she had given up so much for him; how could she leave without putting up a fight? Would that not mean that her love was as flimsy and fragile as a house of cards?

But should I put my trust in him again? Each time that she did, she ended up hurting herself more than the last and with every drop of blood she spilled, her courage went with it. Eventually, she was drained, and if she were to trust him again this time—

Her thoughts were cut off when the bedroom door slammed open with a bang.

She bolted upright in shock and saw that the man she had been thinking of was presently stumbling into the bedroom.

He appeared to be drunk as he staggered into the bedroom. He slammed the door shut behind him and began walking unsteadily toward her.

Seeing this, she hurriedly switched on the lamp on the bedside table, worried that he might trip over his own feet in the dark.

Under the dim lighting, his handsome face looked as cold as a frozen lake. His almond-shaped eyes were a wintry slate as they stared at her.

He came up to her before she could react and out of the blue, his hand shot out and clasped her chin firmly.

She didn't know what had happened, only that her chin was suddenly in his iron grip. The stabbing pain that radiated from her old injury made her eyes tear up. Without another thought, she pushed him away, shouting, "Let go of me, Sean!"

However, he did not yield even as she pushed at his arm. If anything, his grip only tightened on her jaw. Against her face, his breath smelled strongly of alcohol and his chiseled features twisted into a menacing grimace.

"You have some nerve, Myra Stark! Some nerve!" he spat.

She let out a gasp of pain. "What the hell are you doing?"

"What the hell am I doing?" He let out a cold bark of laughter, his poisonous gaze slithering over her body. Her skin glowed smooth in the dimness, her neck and collarbones exposed beneath the nightdress. His hand slid down past her jaw without thinking and when his fingers clasped around her neck, he seethed, "What the hell am I doing? I'm going to kill you, Myra!"

"Do you believe me now that you've seen the video, Sean? Myra just can't stand being lonely. She went into Director Hart's room just so she could have the upper hand in the Sunny Bay Project, and we all know exactly what two grown ups could get up to in a bedroom. I'm only telling you this so you wouldn't get caught up in her lies. You can't let her walk all over your dignity like this—she'll ruin the reputation of the whole Chase Family!"

And to think, he had believed her enough to ask people to look into the plagiarism incident, just so he could help clear her name, only for her to betray him like this!

"Do you have to be so cheap, Myra?" he snapped presently. Sean felt a bit of his anger relenting when he saw the fear that flashed across her face, but it was not enough to placate his rage. "Are you so desperate to climb into bed with other men? Have I deprived you so much that you would rather sleep with someone else than be lonely?"

The rims of his eyes were growing red—he looked terrifying.

Trembling, Myra stared at the man before her in a mixture of shock and disbelief. “Do you even know what you’re talking about, Sean?”

“What do you think I’m talking about?” he hissed. His heart was beating like a sledgehammer. He knew that she was despicable enough to kill his child without batting an eyelash, and now that he had found out about her vulgar lifestyle, he ought to divorce her! But that would be playing into her devious plans and he refused to let her get away without a scratch!

He suddenly flung her away heavily.

Myra let out a cry as she fell onto the bed. Fear rose in her when she looked up and saw the menacing look on his face. However, before she could scream, he pinned her down on the bed. His lips slammed against hers and he didn’t let go.

“Let go of me, Sean!” Myra cried out in between muffled groans of protest as she tried to struggle against him, but she couldn’t move. There was no gap in between them. With one hand, he grabbed both of hers before she could claw him and with the other, he held her head so she could not move beneath him.

“Isn’t this what you wanted all along? So let me give it to you!” he growled.

The fear in her deepened when she saw the ominous look in his arctic eyes.

She didn’t know what she had done to deserve any of this from him!

“Let me go right now, Sean! Don’t you dare touch me! Get off of me!” she cried out desperately, her voice turning hoarse; her hair was ruffled and her cheeks tearstained. She knew there was no point struggling against him and she was seized by a sense of helplessness.

He had already torn open her nightdress and it hung loosely on her frame. Hovering above her, Sean could see the soft curves of her bosom peeking out over the fabric as they rose and fell with every breath she took.

Upon seeing the dark fire that lit up in his eyes, Myra quivered. She closed her eyes and let fresh tears stream past her cheeks.

“Why are you doing this to me, Sean? The Hart Group has already proven that I did not plagiarize anything, and I’m the one who secured the project for our company. Aren’t these enough for you? What more do you want from me?”

The tears did not stop and her eyes started to swell.

The scene he saw from the video flashed in his mind. Seeing her disheveled look, he realized that this was exactly how she had looked when she left the other man’s bedroom!

The vein near his temple throbbed as he pulled out his phone to look for the video. When he did, he threw the phone at her.

Myra could not dodge it in time. The phone crashed against her forehead with a thud and for a moment, she thought she was seeing stars. Instinctively, she reached up to touch her forehead and her fingers came away red.

Meanwhile, the video on the phone was already playing.

She watched herself running out of Tony’s room, her clothes disheveled and her face flushed.

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Myra closed her eyes, refusing to watch the video any longer.

“Are you trying to tell me this isn’t you?” Sean hissed above her, clearly sober now.

Her lips tugged up into a bitter smile. “It doesn’t matter what I tell you. It’s not as if you’ll believe me anyway. You’ve convinced yourself that I was cheating on you from the moment you saw this video. What use is there for me to say anything else?”

There was a stubborn look in her eyes, and the blood flowed down from the gash in her forehead past her temples. The bright red color made her look even paler and more fragile.

He was regarding her with a pointed gaze, as if wanting to pierce a hole through her body.

A long time passed, long enough for Myra to feel herself growing numb beneath him. It was only then that Sean heaved himself off of her.

He glared at her icily and his eyes swept over her rumpled state with bare disgust. “I won’t touch you, Myra. I wouldn’t want to get my hands dirty!”

With that, he turned and walked out of the bedroom. He did not spare a single glance at her pale, frightened face.

Work kept piling in these days. Tony could not remember how much overtime he had put in thus far, but he would rather keep himself busy than constantly think about a certain person. It was only when he got a call from Elliot that he remembered about their dinner plans tonight.

“You don’t happen to be working overtime again, do you, Tony?” Elliot asked in disbelief on the other line, then added mischievously, “I’m not trying to scare you, Tony, but if you keep working overtime like this, it’s going to badly affect your performance in the bedroom. How are you going to please your wife in the future?”

Hearing this, Tony leaned into his chair and loosened his tie, a devilish grin playing on his face as he countered, “Don’t worry about my endurance—it’ll still be better than yours anyway.”

Elliot choked, then broke into a dry laugh. “Alright; pretend I didn’t say anything. Will you still be joining us tonight?”

Tony blinked, remembering the phone call that he hadn’t made earlier, and turned to glance at the nightscape outside his window. His gaze softened as a sudden thought came to his mind and he replied plainly, “You guys can go on without me.”

“I thought you might say that.” The other man scoffed. “If you love those statistics so much, why don’t you marry them?”

Following this, a beeping sound from the other line indicated that Elliot had hung up.

Tony scrolled through the contacts on his phone. His finger hovered momentarily above the one saved under ‘Kitten’, then pressed it.

Unfortunately, for some reason, the other line went unanswered for a while.

He raised a brow and his gaze darkened under the lights. After a while, he texted, 'You called? I was in a meeting during the day.'

However, much like the call just now, the text went unanswered, too.

Ten minutes later, a frown etched itself onto his face. He stood up abruptly and grabbed his jacket, intending to drive over to Myra's house, but stopped when he recalled that she was staying with the Chase Family. At this, he pursed his lips, disgruntled.

Meanwhile, Myra had dragged herself into the shower after Sean left. She stared at her reflection in the mirror, and was suddenly clueless as to how she should live the rest of her life. There was a saying that you reaped what you sowed, and she had been the stubborn fool who thought time could change everything.

Numbly, she rubbed the plain, silver ring on her necklace between her fingers. She had been wearing it like this after what happened the last time.

She took off the ring robotically and placed it on top of the sink before leaving the bathroom.

When Myra arrived at work the next day, Tilly noticed the gash on her forehead and exclaimed, "Myra, what happened to you?"

"I fell," Myra answered stoically. The bruise along her jawline had faded significantly after she had used the ointment Leo gave her, and with her bangs framing her face, it was almost undetectable.

"You're a grown woman, for goodness sake. You ought to be more careful! By the way—" Tilly broke off mid-lecture and scooted over excitedly. "Are you really married, Myra? What's your husband like? What does he do? Are you having fun being a married woman?"

There was a mischievous lilt to her voice.

Myra stiffened but she smiled plainly as she answered, "Yes; I'm married. We're just like any other family, so I guess my marital life's pretty much average."

When she saw that Tilly was on the verge of pressing further, she quickly switched subjects. “I’m going over to the Hart Group later to sign the contract. You should come with me.”

Tilly burst into a devilish giggle and quipped, “I was just about to tell you—I’ve signed up to be your assistant and Mr. Xavier has already approved my application! Myra, I’ll be working with you from now on!”

Upon hearing this, Myra blinked and then grinned. She shot Tilly a teasing glare as she said, “As long as you don’t muck things up for me.”

“As if! I promise I’ll follow all your orders down to every last word!” Tilly promised, sticking out her tongue playfully.

They looked at each other, exchanging a heartfelt smile.

By the time they arrived at the Hart Group, they saw that Leo and Mr. Logan were already waiting for them. Upon seeing Myra and Tilly, the two men hastened over to greet them.

“Miss Stark, Director Hart is expecting you upstairs.”

They were both well aware that Myra held a special place in their director’s heart. In fact, they had seen what happened to Lily, the disgraced designer from the Hay Group. As far as they were concerned, her career in Bradford City was over.

In other words, the Sunny Bay Project had been set aside for Myra from the very beginning.

Presently, Myra nodded in greeting and went up the building with Tilly in tow.

The contract signing process went smoothly and after everything was done, Mr. Logan suggested for them to adjourn to the Ritz Carlton to celebrate. Myra made no objections. After all, she ought to thank the Hart Group for the opportunity to work with them. She also wanted to express her gratitude to Tony for helping her out.

Everyone had drinks in the private room at Ritz Carlton. On several occasions, Mr. Logan and Leo came up to Myra to clink glasses. Her alcohol tolerance was only average and at some point, she began to feel tipsy.

However, just as she thought she could take a breather, Tilly, Leo and the others pushed her to give a toast to Tony.

Tony had been silent throughout the entire dinner and the least excitable too. The employees from the Hart Group dared not approach him to make a toast, and it might have something to do with his cold demeanor, or perhaps it was because he was their superior. Myra and Tilly, on the other hand, were making friendly conversation with everyone.

With Tilly having such a bubbly personality, the table was in a cheerful uproar within seconds.

Presently, Leo winked at Myra as he persuaded, "All things aside, Miss Stark, you should know that Director Hart played the most important role in your company's successful procurement of the Sunny Bay Project. You must make a toast to him!"

"That's right, Myra! You have to make a toast to him!" Tilly chimed in, buzzing with excitement.

Myra blinked hard, forcing herself to stay awake, then stood up and raised her glass in Tony's direction.

Indeed, she must toast to him.

Her heart softened when she thought about all those times he had come to her aid. She delivered her speech in a gentle tone, saying, "Thank you, Director Hart, for the help you've given all this while. Here's to a wonderful and bountiful partnership between the Hart Group and the Chase Group. Cheers!"

Myra's eyes looked brighter in her mildly-inebriated state and there was a pink flush on her cheeks. She was unaware of how sultry she looked at that moment, with the ends of her eyes curved upward and her soft lips parting ever so slightly. Having ended her speech, she gulped down her red wine.

Everyone cheered and applauded at the end of her toast.

Tony, on the other hand, was looking casual in his white shirt, having taken off his suit jacket after coming into the private room. His sleeves were still cuffed meticulously but he had loosened the top two buttons, revealing the subtle beginnings of a well-toned chest.

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Tony's gaze lingered on Myra throughout the entire dinner. He stared at her as she stood before him with her glass raised, the indifference in his eyes interwoven with other emotions.

On the other hand, Myra winced at him after she had downed her drink.

Everyone turned to look at Tony in anticipation. After a long pause, he raised his own glass and downed his wine slowly.

As he did so, he returned Myra's gaze. She saw the dark fire that burned in his eyes and there was the faintest hint of a smile playing on his lips.

It was merely a toast of appreciation but for some reason, her heart fluttered when she saw how Tony was looking at her. She hastily turned away from him, seeking respite from the intensity of his gaze, but she was quickly barricaded by Mr. Logan.

"Something's not quite right here, Miss Stark. I counted three toasts from you to Mr. Clark, but you made only one to Director Hart. You ought to make another toast. Come on, then; pour out another glass!" he chimed.

Myra's head was already spinning from all the drinks she had, and the ground seemed to be moving beneath her feet. She might end up humiliating herself if she kept drinking at this rate. When she tried to come up with an excuse, however, she accidentally nudged Mr. Logan and the drink in his hand spilled over her.

"I'm sorry, Miss Stark!" Mr. Logan was apologetic as he hastily grabbed a napkin off the table and handed it to her.

He could not have prevented this from happening; his inhibitions were just as lowered as everyone else's after all the drinks they had. Glancing down, Myra saw that the wine had soaked through the front of her pencil skirt and the soiled fabric stuck uncomfortably to her skin.

"It's alright." She smiled, not wanting to make a fuss while everyone was having such a good time.

Meanwhile, Leo hurried over to Director Hart after the latter shot him a look from across the table. He lowered himself so Tony could speak close to his

ear, then nodded and left the room. He returned with a waiter, who approached Myra and said, “Miss Stark, I could bring you up to the changing room if you’d like.”

Seeing as the sodden skirt was sticking to her skin uncomfortably, Myra nodded and followed the waiter to the upper floors.

She had dressed formally today for the contract signing, but her alluring figure was not lost in the modest cut of her office lady attire. The blouse accentuated her curves, and the close-fitting skirt drew in her narrow waist and showed off her long, slender legs.

The waiter was smiling courteously as she handed a similar outfit to Myra, saying, “You have such a gorgeous figure, Miss Stark. This outfit should fit you well enough.”

Myra returned her smile as she took the clothes and thanked her, then turned to enter the women’s changing room.

She was feeling tipsy, probably from all the drinks, so it took her a while to change into the new set of clothes. When she was done, she had to admit that the waiter had a good eye—the clothes fit her perfectly. She bent over and packed her soiled clothes into a carrier bag, then opened the door to leave the room.

However, she had only just looked up when she froze in place at the sight before her.

The waiter must have left when Myra had been in the changing room, and the person who was presently standing at the door was none other than Tony himself.

There were a couple of cigarette butts littered on the floor, indicating that he had been standing there for a while.

Upon seeing Myra, he shifted slightly and leaned against the doorjamb, his gaze locking with hers. A cigarette dangled gracefully between his lips and his eyes looked darker in the cloud of smoke.

“Director Hart?” Myra couldn’t hide her surprise, eyeing him curiously as she asked, “Do you need the changing room as well?”

As she watched him, she found herself thinking how the heavens must adore him. There was an indescribable grace to his carefree stance, even as the cigarette dangled from his lips. She would have cringed if it was anybody else.

Having heard her question, Tony threw his cigarette on the floor and stubbed it out with the tip of his shoe. He raised a brow as he surveyed her face with mild amusement and answered flatly, "I was waiting for you."

For a moment, Myra was lost in his gaze. Belatedly registering what he said, she instinctively craned her neck and peered over his shoulder, thinking that he was teasing her again. However, she saw only an empty hallway, with no sign of the fluffy Samoyed named Meow anywhere.

Waiting for me? Why would he abandon the others just to come up here and wait for me?

Seeing her like this, Tony's eyes darkened and without warning, he reached up to caress her forehead.

He had noticed the dressing on her forehead when she was over at the Hart Group for the contract signing, but he refrained from asking about it. He was distressed at the thought that she might have gotten hurt as a result of what he had done, but he knew he couldn't wait any longer.

"Does it hurt?" he asked, his voice low and gravelly.

His concern took Myra by surprise. Her skin prickled under the warmth of his hand as he gently caressed the wound on her forehead. She flinched away, growing flustered. "It's nothing serious; it's just a small cut, is all."

She wondered if he was drunk but she grew wary at the same time. She cleared her throat and said, "We shouldn't keep the others waiting, Director Hart. Shall we head back downstairs?"

As she said this, she tried to steer past him to leave the room. However, she had only just reached the doorway when he pulled her back and pinned her against the wall, taking her into his embrace.

He smelled like peppermint and tobacco, and while the scent was pleasant, it made her blush and sobered her up instantly. She struggled against him, but it seemed as though he was intent on keeping her in place despite his leisurely demeanor.

“What do you think you’re doing, Director Hart?” she demanded with her voice raised as she glowered at him warily.

A feeling of déjà vu washed over her. She blushed furiously as she thought about that night at the hotel when he pinned her against the wall in this exact manner. However, just as she felt her face reaching boiling point, Tony leaned forward.

His lips found hers—he tasted like red wine and she felt herself growing intoxicated.

She could not believe that he would actually kiss her. Indignant, she raised her knee to attack him, but he sensed this and pinned her legs down with his own.

His eyes bore into hers and though he saw the anger in them, he couldn’t help but find her extremely endearing. He shook his head and wondered if he had fallen head over heels for her.

He appraised her outfit through narrowed eyes, and his lips quirked up in an amused smile as he drawled, “Looks like I have a good eye, after all. The size of these clothes fit you perfectly.”

It was as though the air around them became still and Myra’s face grew hot. He had told the waiter her size, but how did he know her measurements in the first place?

“Let go of me right now, Tony Hart!”

He was far too complicated and dangerous, and when he looked into someone’s eyes, one couldn’t help but let their armor fall away. But there were times when he was a rogue, like he was in the present. Myra couldn’t believe that he could be so blatant as to do something like this to her.

Blood was pounding in her head. She brought her gaze up to look into his eyes and she did not know if it was her own illusion, but she thought there might have been a trace of tenderness there.

She felt herself growing hot all over. She was embarrassed and outraged when she seethed, “Tony, I think I’ve made it very clear that I’m a married woman. Don’t you think you’ve overstepped your boundaries here, Director Hart?”

“How so?” he asked breezily, as though he could not see the anger flashing across her face.

Upon hearing this, she choked. How was she supposed to answer him?

She was turning white with rage. Seeing this, Tony did not try to force an answer out of her and instead, he let her go.

Standing before Love Chapter 57

As soon as Tony released her from his arms, Myra backed away and put some distance between the both of them. She kept her eyes on him, wary of his every move.

Her thoughts tumbled over one another as she struggled to come up with a reason for what Tony had done. She allowed the possibility that he might have been misled by her the last time, when he thought that she was one of those women who slept their way into procuring a project, but this time was different!

He was not drunk—in fact, he looked more sober than she was. His advances tonight were neither those of harmless flirting nor good-natured teasing. If Myra didn’t know any better, she would think he was...

But he knows I’m married, she countered herself.

Myra wanted to run out of the room, afraid of what might happen if she continued staying with him in there. However, just as she passed him, he reached out and gently squeezed her backside.

She stiffened at this and turned to shoot him a deadly glare. A lazy, devilish smile played on his lips as he looked at her, and she bristled.

This... this rogue! Myra was infuriated. How could she not have known this side of him? She had thought of him as a gentleman, but it turned out that his cold and distant façade was nothing more than a sham!

“Don’t you have any self-respect, Director Hart?” she hissed through gritted teeth, clearly outraged at his behavior.

Upon seeing the anger in her eyes, Tony merely nodded and drawled, “As you said, we shouldn’t keep the others waiting. Let’s go.”

With that, he turned and made his way toward the stairs, as though nothing ever happened between them.

Myra wanted to punch a wall. She bit her lip, feeling the resentment and rage building up in her.

As if knowing that she did not follow him, Tony paused and turned slightly, eyeing her nonchalantly. It seemed as if he was waiting for her to catch up to him.

However, Myra drew in a deep breath and surveyed him icily, then walked in the opposite direction to where the elevators were. She had no desire to spend another minute in his company.

He watched her storm away from him, his eyes glinting with amusement.

When she returned to the private dining room, she saw that Tony was already back in his seat. Tilly was flushed as she leaned forward, her face close to Myra's as she asked curiously, "Myra... did someone piss you off? Why do you look so upset?"

Myra had no intention to share the details of what happened in the changing room, so she smiled tightly and answered, "I ran into a rogue, is all."

As she said this, she felt a certain piercing gaze directed at her but she pretended otherwise.

"Hey, Myra, since my dreamboat is here, you should have him take care of that rogue for you!" Tilly was clearly inebriated and her words came tumbling out in slurs, but her lack of a filter only served to aggravate Myra even more.

If only Tilly knew that the rogue was none other than the dreamboat himself. How can I be naïve enough to think that a man like Tony is so rare a find in Bradford City?

And what about that lover of his that he mentioned?

At this, Myra grew even more frustrated. She grabbed a glass of wine, but stopped herself when she remembered that Tilly was already drunk. Before this, she might have thought that she and Tilly would be safe as long as Tony was around, but his charming illusion was shattered, and Myra simply couldn't afford to lower her inhibitions any further.

It was clear that those from the Hart Group were far better at holding their drinks, seeing as they were still standing and sober after dinner despite all the alcohol they had had.

Meanwhile, Myra had an arm around Tilly as they headed out of the room, but she fumbled under the latter's drunken weight. In the end, Leo rushed over and helped her carry Tilly into the back seat of the car.

Having settled the ever-nagging Tilly into the backseat, Myra let out a huff of relief. She was about to get into the car when a deep male voice spoke up from somewhere. "Why didn't you text me back last night?"

There were a couple of manager-types from Hart Group who were within earshot, and seeing as Tony didn't even try to lower his voice, they all heard what he said.

While they did not glance over, Myra could tell that their ears had pricked up in an attempt to listen in on any conversation that might ensue. The anger in her was ignited once more as she answered coldly, "I have no idea what you're talking about, Director Hart."

Presently, Tony held a cigarette between his slender fingers. He was standing by the entrance of the Ritz Carlton, his imposing appearance and defined features already causing passersby to turn their heads to steal a glance at him.

Myra slid into the backseat of the car, not wanting to be stared at like a monkey in a zoo. She reached out to close the door, but Tony had come up to the car and was gazing down at her with a raised brow. She looked at him incredulously, wondering if he was being deliberately vexing. He exhaled and the smoke unfurled around her as he asked, "Then why did you call me last night, Miss Stark?"

Upon hearing his emphasis on the words 'last night', Myra stiffened and inhaled sharply.

She flushed all the way to her neck. Tony was definitely trying to flirt with her in front of everyone else!

"I didn't call you last night; I called you yesterday afternoon!" she argued.

"Oh—is that right? So why did you call me then?"

He sounded deadpan as he asked the question, as though he enjoyed provoking her. Her chest rose and fell angrily, and she had no idea how she should respond. She had called him yesterday to thank him for all his help. However, seeing she had done that at dinner just now—coupled with the fact that he had kissed and groped her—she found it impossible to utter the words ‘thank you’ again.

When she did not answer, he offered placidly, “Do you not wish to talk about it in front of everyone else? That’s fine; you can call me tonight.”

How dare he act all innocent like this after the things he had done to her? She glared at him murderously, her chest tightening painfully as rage filled her. When Tony shifted away, she pulled the car door shut with a bang. Without sparing him another glance, she asked the chauffeur to drive away.

“Myra, were you arguing with my dreamboat?” Tilly slurred between hiccups, scooting close to assess her with bright eyes.

Myra pressed her lips into a grim line and refused to speak, clearly beside herself with rage.

At the sight of this, Tilly beamed before she added drunkenly, “So this is how you look when you’re angry... You know, Myra, you used to... you used to always look like you have a lot of resentment pent up in you, and you always looked so down...”

Upon hearing this, Myra stiffened.

Tilly pouted as she continued, “Myra, I think... I think you and Dreamboat Tony are made for each other.”

Myra’s face darkened and she reached out to pat the other girl on the head. “Did you forget that I’m married?”

Tilly grinned like an idiot. “You can always get a divorce. Besides, you never talk about your husband anyway—he must be horrible to you!”

Myra froze and the light seemed to go out of her eye.

Is Sean horrible to me?

A bitter smile played on her lips. Tilly’s right—he does treat me horribly.

But there was nothing she could do about it. She was married to him and she liked him, even though he despised her.

The Chase Group was already starting work on the Sunny Bay Project, and they were putting in every bit of effort in order to pave their way into more real estate projects. Now that they had gone through all the building materials and done all the advertising work, they only needed to wait and see how the first stage of construction would turn out.

The weekend flew by and Myra was back to a busy schedule on Monday.

At four in the afternoon, Richard dropped by to see her. It was only then that she remembered what Sean had told her last week—he had asked her to attend Old Master’s Hart birthday banquet with him.

But after their big fight the other night, she wondered if he still wanted her to go with him to the banquet.

“Are you sure there hasn’t been a mistake, Richard?” Myra asked flatly, lowering her gaze.

Richard pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and said mildly, “There’s no mistake, Miss Myra. Director Chase has asked me to escort you to the atelier so that you may try on your dress for tonight. It’s Old Master Hart’s birthday banquet after all, and Director Chase insists on making an entrance with you. These are his exact instructions.”

Standing before Love Chapter 58

Sean hadn’t wanted to bring Myra to the banquet, having changed his mind at the last minute.

However, when he got home today, an angry-looking Eve came up to him and demanded, “Sean, did you and Myra have another fight?”

He did not answer but his own expression was sour after all that had happened recently.

After a long moment of hesitation, Eve pressed on, “I’ll ask you this, Sean—are you still holding a grudge against Myra for what she did to the other woman and her unborn child?”

Eve hadn't wanted to bring this up because she hated talking about the other woman, but there was one other reason that kept her from asking Sean about this. Her heart clenched tightly. She knew that there was no easy way to go about this conundrum—it might even end up making things worse between Myra and Sean.

Sean's face grew darker. "Mom, I've married her just like you asked. What more do you want from me?"

"How dumb can you possibly be?" Eve snapped, then sighed heavily as she continued, "Why do you still blame Myra for hurting that child? Do you still love the other woman? Is that the reason?"

He looked up abruptly and his gaze darkened dangerously as he hissed, "You know as well as I do what that woman did to me. Why would I still be in love with her if she's already moved on with another man?"

"So why are you treating Myra so horribly?" Eve argued, her heart pounding wildly in her chest. "You say this isn't about the woman—so does this have anything to do with her child? Is that child the reason why you're being so cruel to Myra?"

"That child wasn't just hers, he was mine, too! And he was supposed to be your grandchild!" Sean thundered, his voice threatening to freeze the air around them.

"Mom, think about it—that child wasn't even born yet, and Myra didn't think twice about getting rid of him. How do you expect me to live with a woman like that? Haven't I done enough? She asked for marriage and I gave it to her, but I never promised to love her."

Upon hearing the words 'that child wasn't even born yet', Eve took a couple of steps back. She trembled as the past flashed in her mind.

She clenched her fists and her voice was hoarse as she said, "Regardless of what you think of Myra, can't you at least see all the things she's done for you all these years? I know what kind of person she is and you know this too, but you refuse to admit it. What if what happened in the past was only a misunderstanding? What if Myra didn't know the woman was pregnant? Sean, all I'm asking is for you to stop treating Myra the way you do. The affection she has for you won't last forever..."

Sean spent the entire afternoon cooped up in his office. He didn't change his mind in the end, and instead called Richard into his office.

Myra's fingers tightened around her pen after she heard what Richard had said.

In the two years of their marriage, Sean rarely brought her along to formal events. She had thought that he hated her and after their relationship soured, he was even more unlikely to bring her along as a date.

Anxiety rose within her as she thought about the idea of attending the banquet with him.

As if reading her mind, Richard consoled, "Please don't fret unnecessarily, Miss Myra. You are his wife, after all. Director Chase was only putting on an act with all those other women."

"Putting on an act?" she repeated with a cold chuckle. After their big fight the other night, Sean had left to spend the night with a young model. Both of them made headlines in the tabloids the next day, with pictures of them looking as though they could not bear to part from one another. If all those were only an act, Myra dreaded to think how much he could truly hurt her.

Richard was still standing before her, looking awkward. Upon seeing this, Myra said flatly, "Go and get the car. I'll wait for you outside the building."

She had only agreed so that the rest of the office wouldn't grow curious about Richard's presence. It was only a banquet, after all; Sean was probably only trying to put up a decent front. Though their marriage was kept under wraps, there were still many in the upper-class who knew about them anyway. She only had to do this for show, so there was really no reason for her to be bothered by it.

The traffic was clear along the way. When they arrived at the atelier, Myra was greeted by the service staff who came out to open the car door for her.

A woman—who was the manager of the atelier—stepped up from among the staff, smiling at Myra as she said, "Mrs. Chase, we've readied the dress that Director Chase picked out for you. It's a limited edition and air-flown from Paris, too!"

Myra nodded and was about to head into the atelier when she suddenly stopped in her tracks. Hastily turning back with a stony expression, she caught a glimpse of the red Ferrari that was parked not too far away.

She had seen a woman get into that car after the latter came out of the atelier. That woman...

Myra stiffened and without another thought, she rushed over to where the car was. However, the car started before she could reach it, and it drove away from the curb.

Myra stared after the red car in shock. If my guess is correct...

Presently, the manager from the atelier approached her and asked cautiously, "Mrs. Chase, is everything alright?"

"Miss Sherwood, who was that lady just now?" Myra demanded, her tone anxious.

The manager looked as though she wanted to evade the question and she chuckled awkwardly. "That would be Miss Fisher. She was here to pick out an evening dress."

"Miss Fisher? Wouldn't that be Ly—" Myra broke off. She ought to be relieved but for some reason, her heart raced even faster.

The dress that Sean picked out for Myra was exquisite. It was a simple, ivory-colored dress, worn off-the-shoulder and hemmed at the knee. The only embellishments on it were the mother-of-pearls that were strung along the waist. The skirts were flared underneath a thin layer of tulle, adding a somewhat romantic touch to the dress.

This is the dress Sean picked out for me?

Standing outside the Ritz Carlton, Myra felt as though she was in a daze.

She couldn't remember the last time she had attended a banquet like this. She fidgeted in her dress and was beginning to feel out of place when a gentle female voice said close to her ear, "Miss Stark."

She looked up and locked eyes with Serena—the eldest of the Hart siblings. Myra had seen her once at the Hart Residence and remembered that she was Henry’s mother.

Seeing as Serena was Sebastian Hart’s eldest granddaughter, she had been standing by the entrance to greet the guests and usher them in. She was surprised to see Myra but she was delighted too, if not more so.

She wasn’t sure what Myra had said to Henry the other evening in the garden but later that night, he had come up to Serena and solemnly told her that he would stand by any of her decisions, as long as she was happy. After that, it was as though his entire demeanor shifted. Henry started making little gifts for her just to make her smile, which comforted and surprised her to no end. Serena hadn’t expected any of this from him—after all, this was the same child who had avidly protested against her divorce.

No matter how she saw it, Henry’s change in attitude could only be attributed to his conversation with Myra. Serena had wanted to thank her ever since, but there was no opportunity for her to do so, until today.

“Are you here today as Tony’s date?” Serena asked, a meaningful smile playing on her lips. She came up to Myra, then clasped the latter’s hand in her own. “By the way, Miss Stark, I’ve been meaning to thank you. You know you’re welcome at our place any time—Henry absolutely adores you.”

It took a while before Myra realized what Serena was thanking her for. She recalled Henry, the little boy with whom she had a conversation the other night, and shook her head as she said, “You don’t have to thank me, Miss Hart. I like Henry, too. As for the banquet...” she trailed off and winced slightly, unsure as to how she should phrase her words. “I’m not here with Director Hart.”

“Aren’t you here because Tony invited you?” Serena asked with wide eyes.

“Myra—” someone interjected, his voice a pleasant baritone.

Before Myra knew it, she was pulled into a loose embrace. The same voice then said, “You’re here at last. I’ve been waiting for you for a while now.”

Standing before Love Chapter 59

Serena was suspicious and she stared at the man who was holding Myra in his arms.

When Henry had mentioned that Miss Stark was a friend of Tony's, Serena thought that she might be Tony's girlfriend. After all, Tony did not have friends who were women, let alone bring them home. However, it seemed that Miss Stark was already in a relationship.

Serena frowned slightly before she asked with a pleasant smile, "And who might this be?"

Before Myra could answer, Sean replied, "Miss Hart, it looks like you've already met my wife. I'm Sean Chase, by the way, from the Chase Group. We're here for Old Master Hart's birthday banquet."

His wife?

Serena's smile faltered slightly. She sighed inwardly as she glanced at Myra, then turned to address Sean, "On behalf of my grandfather, I thank you for coming. Please go on in."

Meanwhile, Myra nodded silently at Serena, then proceeded to walk through the entrance with Sean's arm wrapped around her shoulders.

Suddenly, the hand that gripped her shoulders tightened ever so slightly, making her turn to look up at him.

As they entered the Ritz Carlton, the bright lights brought out Sean's defined and attractive features. He looked dapper in his black suit and crisp white shirt, the dark teal of his tie adding an understated pop of color to his outfit. He was tall and broad-shouldered, easily standing out among the other guests who were gathered by the entrance.

Myra's heart dropped to her stomach. Did he just introduce me as his wife?

When was the last time she had felt this way?

Or was he only putting on a show?

Tears pricked her eyes, and it took a moment for her elation to die down as she told herself that he was only acting for the sake of the event. All she had to do was to play along with him, and she shouldn't allow herself to believe any of this was real.

They were glued to each other as the night breeze picked up but even so, there was no warmth between them.

As if sensing someone's eyes on her, Myra halted in her steps and glanced over to the side, only to see a flurry of people hurrying over to the car that was pulling up at the entrance.

She saw that it was a silver gray Bentley Musanne. Someone called out 'Director Hart', and a familiar figure stepped out of the vehicle, looking cool and distant. He was dressed in his usual black suit and white shirt, the simplicity of which brought out the chiseled angles of his face. Every one of his movements was regal and imposing, and he looked as though he was glowing under the lights of the hotel.

Myra had long known that Tony drew attention everywhere he went. The panther-like grace with which he carried himself made him stand out in any crowd, even if there were millions of others around him.

From a distance, he appeared to be unruffled as he looked ahead, but he turned and let his gaze fall upon her.

Myra pursed her lips as she thought about how shameless he was.

Just then, an abrupt pain shot through her arm, and she thought the bones in her wrist were about to shatter.

"Be sure to address him." Sean turned to cast her a cold, warning gaze.

However, when he looked up and saw a business acquaintance standing not too far away, he quickly resumed his gentlemanly front.

Myra's lips pressed into a grim line and she looked away from Tony.

When Tony saw the 'happily married' couple who were standing at a distance, his eyes darkened like a stormy sky over tempestuous waters.

“Tony, please don’t tell me you actually have feelings for Miss Stark—or should I say, Mrs. Chase,” Serena said in a warning tone. She had seen the look in Tony’s eyes; he’d been openly staring at Myra since he got down from the car. Her heart grew heavy as she lowered her voice and added, “She’s married. I just met her husband—”

“So what if she’s married?” Tony cut her off, shrugging nonchalantly. With that, he walked straight ahead, disinterested in whatever else his sister might have to say.

Resigned, Serena sighed to herself and watched as he walked away.

Sebastian Hart’s birthday banquet saw a full-fledged Hart family gathering, save for his wife—Lisa Hart—who was down with a fever and had to stay home. The titans from nearly half of the business industry in Bradford City were present at the banquet as well. Myra looked around—the event was refined and proper, which explained why Sean had wanted to make an appearance with her in the first place.

In social events like this, men often grouped together to talk about business, while the women stood by the sidelines.

Myra was tired after going around the hall with Sean to greet a couple of directors who had close business relations with Chase Group. She was also tipsy after downing a few glasses of red wine. She had never been good at holding her drinks and though Sean knew this, he did not offer to drink the wine for her.

They had only just moved away from a conversation with another group of acquaintances when they ran into the two Hart brothers—Tony and Damian.

Tony was renowned in Bradford City ever since he had taken over the Hart Group, but Damian served in the military and was thus an elusive character to most. However, it was not hard to guess who the latter was, seeing as his military rank insignia was embroidered on his uniform. Furthermore, standing side by side, both brothers shared a strong resemblance between them.

Sean’s eyes narrowed slightly when he saw them, but he smiled courteously and abruptly wrapped an arm around Myra’s shoulders before going up to the two men. “General Hart, Director Hart, it’s a pleasure to meet both of you. I saw Old Master Hart, but he looked so busy that I didn’t get to wish him a happy birthday.”

Damian suddenly froze.

He and Tony had initially planned on heading over to have a chat with Mr. Engleham, but the moment he took a step forward, Tony discreetly blocked his way. Not long after that, they found themselves being greeted by the couple before them.

Damian did not spend much time in Bradford City, so he had no idea who Sean was. Tony, on the other hand, casually raised a glass at them, a light smile playing on his lips. “The pleasure is ours, Director Chase. Thank you for taking the time to attend our grandfather’s birthday banquet, and thank you as well... Mrs. Chase.”

His gaze openly fell on Myra as he muttered the last two words with an amused undertone.

“Speaking of which, I truly admire your work, Mrs. Chase. Now that our companies are in a partnership, I look forward to working together with you,” he added.

He might be smiling but his eyes were as cold as ever, and Myra couldn’t help but think about the things he had done to her even after he found out that she was married.

Her fists clenched instinctively.

Sensing that something was off with Myra, Sean recalled the scene from the video. He frowned as he stepped smoothly in front of her, cutting off Tony’s line of sight.

“Pleasure to make your acquaintance, Director Chase,” Damian chimed in lightly, having quietly observed the scene before him. He was surprised to see his little brother make the first move. He had heard about the Chase Group, but he couldn’t figure out why Tony was getting worked up all of a sudden over a small real estate project. Nonetheless, he smiled as he continued, “We have a lot of guests today, so we apologize for not being able to attend to you.”

The smile on Sean’s face was a distant one as he said politely, “Don’t worry about it.”

“Well then, if you’ll excuse us, Director and Mrs. Chase.” Damian did not wait for the couple to say anything. Having sensed that there was something off with Tony, he steered him in the direction of Sebastian Hart, who was standing not too far away from them.

Meanwhile, Sean was frozen in place as he watched Tony leave with a cold gleam in his eyes. He was a man, after all, and he did not miss the look in the latter’s eyes when they fell on Myra.

A rush of anger seized him and without pausing to think, he dragged Myra toward the back gardens.

Some distance away, Damian still had a genteel smile tugging on his lips, but his tone was suspicious as he asked, “Tony, did you go up against them on purpose?”

While this was Old Master Hart’s birthday banquet, everyone knew that the old man preferred quiet affairs—the dinner party was only a lavish guise for him to play matchmaker for his two bachelor grandsons. Gambling on their chances to climb up the social ladder, respectable families in Bradford City were now bringing their unmarried daughters before the old man, hoping he would spare them a glance.

Standing before Love Chapter 60

Both of them had tall builds with similar handsome features and unique temperaments, which made the ladies around them whisper among themselves while intermittently casting alluring glances at them.

Tony, who was unfazed by their responses, narrowed his eyes and suddenly raised his head to gulp down the red wine in his glass.

“I heard that Katie is pregnant, so your holiday is almost over, right?” Tony did not seem to hear Damian’s words.

Damian gazed further and looked at the woman who was beside Sean just now. Currently, she was following behind Sean, and they seemed to have had a disagreement as their expressions were dark. With his brows knitted, Damian didn’t reply to him but instead he commented in a stern manner, “Tony, she is a married woman!”

If my guess is correct, he has a crush on that woman. Damian was older than Tony by three years. Other than him, nobody else at home could say anything that would affect Tony's decision.

Upon hearing the words that had been stressed on by others earlier, Tony's expression became slightly icy. "Damian, when did you become such a nosey person?"

When Damian saw Tony's surly attitude, his brows furrowed even deeper. Just as he was about to say something, Tony suddenly interrupted him in a seemingly casual manner, "Katie is coming over here. I'll make a move first."

With that, he immediately left.

Damian felt a little helpless as he looked at Tony's disappearing figure. Tony has always been intractable. If he really wants to... Then, Damian's lover, who was standing right before him, drew his attention back to her.

There was a stage at the center of the hall in the Ritz Carlton, where Sebastian Hart had stood earlier to thank the guests who came with their wishes.

Currently, behind the stage sat a woman with an elegant figure.

With exquisite makeup on her face, her eyes were as stunning as the sunset and under her petite nose were pink tender lips, which resembled the softest of petals. She was wearing a light pink one-shoulder gown which was taken in at the waist line, accentuating her sexy yet slender figure; a kind of spiritual beauty was slowly radiated from her.

"Miss Fisher, Director Hart said that it's your turn to perform next." Leo appeared backstage and looked at the woman before him impassively.

There was a gleam in the woman's eyes as she chuckled. "It's a rare chance to get Director Hart to think highly of me. I shall try my best later." Her voice was crisp and gentle, sounding pleasant to the ears.

Leo nodded and soon left.

After he had left, a female staff member appeared backstage. She approached the woman and said something to her, bringing a bright smile to the woman's lips. The woman then nodded and the female staff left silently.

“Sean, be gentle!” Myra was following Sean. As she had drunk too much earlier, the alcohol started to take effect, causing her to feel dizzy and stagger when she walked.

They arrived at the back garden of the hotel. It was dark there, with only a few people around, unlike the buzzy hall. When they arrived, Sean stopped concealing his hatred toward her and brushed her hand away. “Myra, you are such a sl*t! How dare you try to seduce another man right in front of me?”

Rage welled up inside Sean. He knew that he did not love Myra, but the anger he felt now was born from her betrayal. I even thought of talking things out with her when we returned home from the banquet later.

His push caused Myra, who was unsteady on her feet, to fall onto the ground. Afraid that she would knock her head, she subconsciously used her elbow to support herself. A soft crack was then heard and a sharp pain exploded in her arm.

“Aargh!”

Seeing her pale instantly, Sean subconsciously attempted to help her up but the moment he extended his hand, he retracted it with a cold expression.

Myra was in so much pain that her body trembled. Looking at the heartless man before her, she felt that she brought this upon herself. A tiny hope that he gave me was enough to make me agree to attend this banquet with him yet in the end, the person who was humiliated is still me!

When he dragged her out of the hall without any consideration about her pride before the eyes of so many people in the hall, the pity and mockery in everyone’s gazes almost destroyed her.

“Who did I seduce? Tony Hart?” She felt heartbroken yet enraged. Before they came, Myra told herself that she would just put up with everything as she had no intention to cause a scene with him at the banquet, but it turned out that she was just too naïve. A glimmer appeared at the corner of her eyes, which she then discreetly wiped away with her hand. Her face was pale as she looked coldly at the man before her. “Sean, please be logical if you want to accuse me of something. I don’t think that I have the charm to do that, and I have no intention to make a pointless effort as well. You know better than I what kind of person Director Hart is. Do you think that he is the kind of person who would be easily seduced by me?”

His sarcastic words might have triggered her, causing her to drop her politeness when speaking to him.

When she tried to get on her feet, merely moving her elbow caused her so much pain that she inhaled sharply, a dense layer of sweat appearing on her face.

Yet, Sean only looked at her icily.

She wanted to laugh but no sound came out. It was as if she had been enchanted these few days—although she knew that the man despised her deeply, she still tried to search for all the clues and details in an attempt to make herself fall for him again.

However...

Myra's eyes reddened but she stubbornly forced herself to not utter a word. Then, she spun around and headed toward the hall.

Looking at her miserable figure as she headed toward the hall, a strange feeling emerged inside Sean again. He had been bothered by the feeling for quite some time. Every time he had a disagreement with Myra, he would have this strange feeling—a feeling that made him lift his feet and go after her without a second thought, despite his resentment toward her.

When he was approaching the hall, he was rooted to the spot by a sudden soothing melody of the piano that came from the inside.

Myra heard the sound of the piano as well. It relaxed people's minds, as if the scenery of spring had appeared before them—birds chirping and the fragrance of flowers, as well as a gurgling stream.

The guests around all looked at the stage at that moment. Words and gazes of admiration appeared along with the melody of the piano.

For some inexplicable reason, Myra seemed to hear the call of destiny. She raised her head in a daze and looked in the direction of the stage, just like everyone else.

It was dazzling on the stage, but there were many people off the stage.

One glance was all it took to cause Myra to take two steps back incredulously. A pang of disbelief hit her so hard that her mind went blank.

On the stage was a white piano and on top of it was a bouquet of pink roses. There were water droplets on the petals, which glimmered gloriously under the brilliant light above the stage. A woman, who was even more stunning than the pink roses, was sitting elegantly in front of the piano in her light pink evening gown. The piano piece slowly blossomed from her nimble fingers, resembling little fairies. From Myra's angle, she couldn't see the woman's face, but a glance at her exquisitely gorgeous features from the side would be an unforgettable view to almost everyone, let alone when her face was one that had been deeply engraved in Myra's mind.

It shook Myra to the core and she subconsciously looked behind her. Sean, who had caught up with her, was currently gazing at the stage with his eyes narrowed. Astonishment, anger, gloom and all sorts of emotions flashed across his eyes and finally, the emotion that settled in his twinkling eyes were hints of fascination. Yes; it was fascination, no matter how much he used to despise that woman. No matter what sort of harsh words he had said before, he would still have emotions that even he himself was unclear of when he faced that woman.