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"What a pain!" Lucas spat coldly and made eye contact with a few men in black behind him.

The men immediately apprehended Mary and Penelope and dragged them towards the elevator.

"Lucas, Ashlyn, just you wait. I will get you back!" Mary almost went insane with anger as she cursed under her breath.

The hotel manager was pale with fright as he stood before Lucas. His forehead was dotted with cold sweat as he said, "Mr. Nolan, I'm sorry. This is all my fault."

Lucas looked furious. He said frigidly, "I don't want to see the two of them ever again."

"Yes, yes. I will arrange for it immediately." With that, the hotel manager escaped from the scene.

From then onward, Mary and Penelope were barred from stepping foot into any of the hotels under the Nolan Group.

Meanwhile, over at the hotel's lobby, bodyguards dressed in black were dragging Mary and Penelope out of the hotel's main entrance.

Mary's face was flushed with embarrassment and panic. She tried her best to suppress her burning rage at the thought of the other socialites around the lobby. The two women helped each other up and tried to re-enter the hotel lobby.

Nevertheless, they were stopped by two security guards the moment they pushed the door open. "I'm sorry, both of you have been blacklisted by our hotel. Please do not enter."

The group of socialites who had been waiting in the lounge was getting impatient.

They exchanged glances and followed them when they saw Mary and Penelope being thrown out of the hotel.

They stared at Mary and Penelope in shock when they heard the security guard's words. One of the marchionesses spoke up, "Ms. Canter, what is the meaning of this? Are you aware that this hotel is part of a global chain? If you are blacklisted, it means that all of the hotels under this chain will not serve you."

"That's right. What in the world happened?"

"Didn't you say you've reserved the junior ballroom and we were going to have a party?"

"It's getting late now. Are we not allowed to stay in this hotel nor hold a party anymore?"

The hotel manager couldn't afford to offend these women. He quickly put on a professional smile. "Everyone who had checked in just now can still stay for the night, except for Ms. Canter and her daughter."

"That's more like it."

"Ms. Canter, I'm so sorry. I know you mean well. But now that the party's been disrupted, I'm worried they're going to chase us out of Fashion Week tomorrow," the marchioness gave Mary a penetrating gaze. She didn't even try to hide the disdain in her eyes.

"I think we'd better go shopping tomorrow."

"Forget it, let's just have some fun during our stay here and head home."

"I've lost my mood to watch the show tomorrow. How annoying!"

These socialites were not to be taken lightly.

They didn't take kindly to the Count's daughter. Since Mary didn't grow up at the Count's mansion, these ladies of the upper crust never considered her as one of them.

Besides, they found Mary to be extremely petty after having met her.

The Count must have been blind to take back such a daughter.

It was really hard to tell that Mary was related to the elegant Countess.

Mary bit the bullet with a pale face.

Rage burned in her heart. She thought she was finally able to climb up the social ladder and that no one would dare look down on her anymore after the party. However, she never thought she would meet Ashlyn here.

This bi*** must be my bane. If not for Ashlyn, I wouldn't have become a laughing stock.

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Lucas, Ashlyn, and the others walked into the junior ballroom.

The luxurious ballroom was decked out in a romantic and exquisite manner, complete with melodious music in the air.

Ashlyn arched a brow at Lucas, "I thought you have a dinner to attend?"

"What a coincidence; we'll be having dinner together," Lucas smiled and looked at Ashlyn. "Why? Are you mad?"

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"Huh? Are you sure you're not overthinking things?" Ashlyn rolled her eyes.

Lucas caressed her hair gently, stating, "I'll head over and keep Mike company. Take care of yourself while I'm away, okay?"

"Are you the major shareholder of our company that everyone is talking about?" Ashlyn frowned in return because she finally linked up the missing pieces of the puzzle.

The man stared at Ashlyn with his glistening pair of eyes in silence. Suddenly, when Ashlyn thought he would ignore her query, he broke the silence. "What do you think?"

What the heck! Tell me the truth!

"You're so childish!" Ashlyn gritted her teeth as she reprimanded Lucas.

"Honey, do you want me to present LX to you as a gift?" Lucas lowered his gaze while approaching Ashlyn.

"Do you think you'll be able to get your hands on LX if I have my eyes on it?" Ashlyn rebuked, snorting.

Once she finished her sentence, she strode in the direction of her colleagues, leaving Lucas behind. He frowned; he still couldn't figure out whether he should gift it to Ashlyn.

Does that mean other men have the same idea as I?

Ashlyn approached Shannon, who was holding a glass of wine and catching up with her colleagues. Similarly, they were shocked to figure out Lucas's identity as the major shareholder of the company they were affiliated with.

Once they saw Ashlyn approaching them, Shannon asked, "Boss, are you Ashlyn?"

"She's right, Boss! Ashlyn is currently the most sought-after influencer! We have been colleagues for quite some time, but we have never seen your face."

"Boss, please fulfill our wish!"

"We'll take a quick peek. It's all it takes to satisfy our wish."

“Boss, what sort of relationship do you have with Mr. Nolan? Why does it seem like he’s constantly looking after you?”

Ashlyn’s colleagues became engaged in a heated discussion, naming their requests one after another.

Ashlyn shook her head in return, but a woman got ahead of her before she could reply to her colleagues. The woman broke the silence in a scornful manner, saying, “Mrs. Nolan is currently at the Nolan family’s place. It seems like someone is willing to do whatever it takes in order to achieve her goal.”

“Sharon, what do you mean?” Shannon’s expression turned gloomy all of a sudden.

“Isn’t it obvious? It’s literally what it is.” Sharon chuckled scornfully, “Otherwise, why would someone come over just now and yell at her in the face? If she hasn’t done that sort of thing, why would they reprimand her?”

Sharon had always been a close acquaintance of Megan. Ever since Megan left, no one had taken over the role of the design department’s director yet.

Sharon had always wanted to assume this position. Actually, she perceived herself as a qualified candidate deep down.

However, Ashlyn recently received an award and therefore had proven herself to be a threat. Sharon was afraid Ashlyn would land the role she formerly coveted.

It’s merely a trivial award! She shouldn’t be so full of herself! After all, she was just scolded in front of the ballroom.

God knows what the heck this little b**** is up to in her mind! I can’t believe she managed to seduce the capable and wealthy Lucas!

Initially, Sharon did a great job at keeping her jealousy to herself, but she could no longer continue with the facade the moment she detected Lucas’s special treatment of Ashlyn.

We’re both designers, but she has gotten lucky and won an award! Apart from that, the most handsome and wealthiest man has taken a liking to her!

When Shannon was about to rebuke Sharon’s statement, Ashlyn got in her way and held Shannon’s arm. Ashlyn suggested, “Let’s head over to the other side.”

“Boss, why are you getting in my way? I can’t possibly allow her to bad-mouth you anymore!” Shannon, infuriated, followed Ashlyn and made their way to a relatively isolated balcony.

“Let’s forget about the things she has brought up in front of us because none of those matters,” Ashlyn smirked, explaining the rationale behind her action as she looked at Shannon in the eyes.

Once she pacified her irritated colleague, she had her gaze fixated on the scene outside, recalling the reason she had joined LX as a designer.

Let bygones be bygones. I should forget about the past and move on with my life.

“Boss, since the director of the design department has been let go, I’m sure you will take over the position soon,” Shannon asserted Ashlyn with a smile.

“Actually, I’m not interested,” Ashlyn shook her head.

Although Lucas was in the middle of a conversation with Mike, he would glance in the direction of Ashlyn from time to time.

He frowned the moment he noticed the harsh remarks Sharon had made against Ashlyn.

How dare she insult Ashlyn? She must have a death wish, huh?

Shannon, who had detected Lucas’s gaze, was overjoyed deep down because she thought Lucas had finally noticed her presence. Immediately, she touched up her appearance, adjusted her dress, and approached Lucas.

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She reached for a glass of wine from a nearby waiter and made her way over to Lucas’s side ostentatiously. However, she wasn’t aware of the emotions behind the man’s indifferent gaze because she was perceiving otherwise in her mind.

Since Mr. Nolan has given me eye contact, I can’t possibly stand around idly like an idiot, right? I won’t allow such a golden opportunity to slip by my side!

The more she thought about it, the more Sharon became full of herself.

Finally, she made it to Lucas’s side and stood in front of the man. Her heart pounded furiously; the man looked even more breathtaking from close proximity. He was undeniably a heartbreaker. Tall and majestic, his presence was superior to those around him.

Recalling the so-called “signal” from Lucas, she cast a lustful gaze at the man. She raised her glass of wine and invited the man to drink to a toast timidly. “Mr. Nolan, cheers.”

Lucas glanced at Sharon through the corner of his eyes. Ignoring her, he replied to Mike instead, “I must say I’m impressed because you have quite an interesting idea.”

All of a sudden, Sharon, who was still holding on to her glass of wine, had a stiff expression. She felt

embarrassed.

What? This is nothing close to what I have in mind! Why is Mr. Nolan ignoring me? He was the one who had gotten me over, right?

Sharon felt anxious deep down, but she tried her best to put on a calm front and smiled. "Mr. Nolan, since you're one of the major shareholders of LX from now onward, I guess we'll be in your care."

"You? Do you really think you deserve to be in my care?" Lucas scoffed. Smirking contemptuously, he clinked glasses with Mike instead.

Mike knew what Lucas was up to. Therefore, he took his leave and left Sharon and Lucas alone.

"W-What did you just say? Weren't you the one who..." Sharon stared at the gorgeous man in front of her in disbelief.

"Who are you anyway?" Lucas became increasingly irritated because he couldn't figure out what the foolish woman was up to.

"I thought you have a thing for me? Haven't you been eyeing me for quite some time?" Sharon put on a pitiable front because she was certain she would be able to get Lucas to sympathize with her, thus triggering his urge to protect her.

"Oh... Is that what you're referring to?" The woman's motive finally dawned on Lucas.

He sized Sharon up and realized she was nothing close to Ashlyn in terms of height and looks. He was also certain she wouldn't be a match for Ashlyn in terms of personality and talent. This sort of impudent fool actually has the audacity to pick on Ashlyn?

Sharon got her hopes high once again as soon as she detected the expression on Lucas's face. Reminded of his actions a few minutes ago, she thought he finally returned to his senses.

She turned around in an attempt to lean against the man as she assured him, "Mr. Nolan, don't worry. I'll definitely keep you entertained throughout the night. You'll have the best time of your life. I'm sure I'll do a better job than Ashlyn."

In the end, she staggered because Lucas had taken a step back the moment she tried to approach him.

Once again, she stood right where she was, embarrassed, because things didn't turn out the way she had imagined they would.

"Throw her out immediately! I don't want to see her in LX anymore!" As soon as Lucas delivered his instructions in a callous tone, Spencer showed up with a few men in black and surrounded Sharon.

Sharon was dumbfounded seeing the men were about to drag her out of the venue as instructed. "N-No! M-Mr. Nolan? W-What's wrong, Mr. N-"

Once Lucas got rid of Sharon, he grimly strode to Ashlyn, who was in the middle of a conversation with Mike.

She's such a heartless woman! I just got rid of her foe on her behalf, and yet she's having a great time with others.

"Mike, are you serious? Do you want to collaborate with me?" Ashlyn was shocked.

Mike was no longer the strict judge he was on the stage. Instead, he praised her like a loving senior.

"Yes, Ms. X. You have quite an impressive talent."

"I-I'm at a loss for words! Thank you so much, Mike! I'll definitely try my best!" Ashlyn nodded, smiling.

"H Nation is an awesome country! Once I have everything on my plate sorted out, I'll drop by H Nation and work on the details of our collaboration," Mike's eyes gleamed as he made a promise with Ashlyn.

"If that's the case, I'll be waiting for you in H Nation, Mike." Upon finishing talking, Ashlyn initiated a handshake to seal the deal.

Before Mike could return the favor and shake Ashlyn's hand, a gigantic palm showed up out of nowhere and held on to Ashlyn's hand.

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Immediately, she detected the warmth from the familiar gigantic palm of a man.

Ashlyn glared at Lucas because he had gotten in her way when she was about to wrap up her conversation with Mike.

"Lucas!"

"Allow me to shake your hand on Mike's behalf. I'm sure Mike won't mind at all, right, Mike?" Lucas smirked; he was up to no good in his mind.

Ha! How dare you try to shake another man's hand, Ashlyn?

Damn it! You're such a self-centered man, Lucas!

Ashlyn was aware Lucas had gotten jealous once again.

...

In the meantime, Sharon, who had been chased out of the venue by force, collapsed pathetically on the ground in front of the five-star hotel's entrance.

She gritted her teeth wrathfully, looking at her injured palms that were bleeding.

Although she was greatly infuriated, she couldn't vent her anger.

All of a sudden, a familiar voice could be heard coming from above, asking Sharon, "Miss, what's wrong? Please allow me to help you up."

Immediately, someone held on to her arms and assisted her in getting up.

Once Sharon brought herself up, she realized the ones behind her were the mother-and-daughter duo who had scolded X in front of everyone.

Mary was the one who helped Sharon up.

She recognized Sharon and rushed over to her aid the moment the latter was chased out of the hotel by Lucas's personal bodyguards.

Mary was sporting a gentle smile that concealed her true colors. She was now behaving differently than when she scolded Ashlyn outside the junior ballroom. "Have you been chased out of the venue as well?"

"Y-You... Are you a close acquaintance of Ms. X?" Sharon pouted her lips once she felt the pain.

She reached for a pack of tissue and was about to wipe her wounds clean when Penelope handed her a piece of wet tissue in advance. "I used to be a nurse. Allow me to take care of your wound," Penelope explained.

Ten minutes later, the three outcasts decided to head over to a nearby café.

"D-Does that mean Ms. X is Ashlyn? She's the influencer everyone in town is talking about?" Sharon frowned and asked once again, "Why does she have a mask on?"

"I don't know. Maybe she's ashamed of herself? Oh, my. I can't believe we share the same fate!" Penelope exclaimed, pouting her lips.

"You have such a bright future ahead of you, but you've just been fired. Aren't you going to do something about it? I mean, LX is the one leading the market in the industry!" Mary asked rhetorically with an aggrieved expression.

Sharon was equally dejected. "I don't think there's anything I can do about it, either, since I'm already fired."

“Do you want to get your revenge?” Mary placed her hand on Sharon’s hand gently as she cast a tempting gaze at her.

“Of course!”

“Allow me to help you!”

Sharon wasn’t a fool, either. She got on her guard immediately and asked, “There’s no such thing as a free lunch. What exactly are you up to?”

“I want to get my revenge as well! As long as we work together, I’m sure we’ll be able to turn Ashlyn’s life upside down! Once we achieve our goal, you will achieve your prime in life as well! Your mother is in desperate need of cash to carry out the surgery, right? Here’s a million for you.” Mary was frank with Sharon and had no intention to keep Sharon in the dark.

“You...” Sharon was taken aback because Mary managed to get her hands on her background and details within such a short period.

“My dear, do you realize it’s an emergency that we’re talking about? It’s your mother’s life that’s at stake! I’m helping you. I will never try to harm you,” Mary asserted, smiling sincerely, behaving like a caring senior.

In the end, Sharon faltered because she was indeed in desperate need of cash due to her subpar family condition.

Lately, Sharon’s mother had been diagnosed with lung cancer. If she couldn’t gather the required sum to carry out the surgery as soon as possible, the cancerous cells could spread to the rest of her body.

To save her mother, she decided to push her luck and seduce wealthy men such as Lucas.

Sharon had also been working hard on her job, but she couldn’t gather the required sum no matter how hard she worked.

Unfortunately, she lost her job when she needed it the most. On one hand, she couldn’t figure out her next best course of action; on the other hand, her mother’s life was at stake.

In the end, Sharon looked at the card Mary handed over to her in hesitation; she was tempted by money.

Her eyes gleamed as she longed for the fortune that was within her reach. After all, she desperately needed cash.

Mary repeated herself once again. “Sharon, as long as you have this million, you can easily save your mother. I have faith in you and your talent. I’m sure you can easily outmatch Ashlyn.”

Mary affirmed again, "Trust me. I know you can do it. As long as we work together, we'll definitely get our revenge. Money will no longer be your concern anymore."

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"Who are you?" Sharon pursed her lips.

"Does it matter? What matters is the fact that we have the same goal and that I can provide you with what you most need," Mary replied. By then, she was certain Sharon had been lured.

Mary then handed Sharon the card and said, "I'll be waiting for the great news from you."

Once she finished delivering her first instruction, she left the café with Penelope.

Penelope whispered, "Mom, why did you give her so much money?"

"Do you think we need that million?" Mary tapped on her daughter's head lightly as she explained to the young lady. "What's a million as compared to ten million your grandmother has given me to cover the expenses of the trip? As long as we're able to get rid of Ashlyn, it's a trivial price to pay! In fact, I'm willing to spend five million just to get rid of her once and for all!"

"Erm... Are you sure Sharon will listen to us?" Penelope felt awful because her mother had disparaged her.

"I'm pretty sure she will." Mary's eyes sparkled. She had detected Sharon's greed and her determination to seek revenge.

Those who have strong desires are the best pawns. Literally, they'll carry out every single instruction we have for them.

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Silence fell over the manor in the late evening.

Once Lucas returned to the manor with Ashlyn, Lilian came forward to welcome them. She had an odd expression on her face the moment she saw the duo.

Nevertheless, Lilian smiled and greeted them with her gleaming eyes, "Mr. Nolan, Ms. Berry. Welcome back!"

"Are you tired? Do you want to take a shower or a break first?" Lucas asked as he let go of Ashlyn's hand.

Although the Starry Sky Formal Wear was a stunning piece, Ashlyn was exhausted because it was a

pompous and heavy dress.

Ashlyn thought about it and told Lucas, "Let's take a shower first."

Lucas smirked at the exhausted woman in the eyes. He lifted her in between his arms and was about to bring her upstairs.

Since they didn't eat much during the banquet, Lucas instructed Lilian as he ascended the stairs, "Prepare something for us to eat."

"Yes, Mr. Nolan."

Lilian stood right where she was, staring at the woman in between Lucas's arms with jealousy. Finally, she headed into the kitchen once the duo had gone upstairs.

When Lucas offered his help to remove Ashlyn's dress on her behalf, she stared at him. "I'll do it myself."

Lucas frowned, asking rhetorically as he ran his large palm across the dress, "Huh? I have done this on your behalf countless times." He undressed her the moment he found the zip.

"I'll wash up first," Ashlyn snorted as she made her way into the bathroom.

Lucas gulped once the sexy woman was out of his sight. His eyes glinted lustfully—he was up to something else in his mind.

He strode over with his slender legs and placed his hand on the bathroom's doorknob. However, he failed to open the door.

Instead, Ashlyn could be heard teasing him, "I locked the door."

"Do you really think you can get the better of me when you're at my place? I mean, have you forgotten this is my manor?" Lucas found the key and unlocked the door immediately.

Once he stepped into the bathroom, they got themselves engaged in an intimate and passionate session.

After a hectic workout, Ashlyn leaned into Lucas's embrace. She had completely depleted her energy.

She placed her hand on her sore waist and complained, "You're such a jerk!"

"Honey, can you please forgive me?" Lucas leaned over and kissed the woman on her neck.

"N-No..." Ashlyn felt a shiver running down her spine due to Lucas's action. Her knees turned to jelly the

moment she heard his husky whisper.

“Are you sure you don’t feel a thing for me?” Lucas asked, smiling bitterly.

Knock! Knock!

Suddenly, Lilian’s voice could be heard as she stood outside of their room. “Mr. Nolan, Ms. Berry, the meal is ready.”

Immediately, Ashlyn moved away from Lucas and rushed over to answer the door. “I’m hungry.”

She sprinted downstairs as though she was fleeing to conceal the fact she was panicking.

As she made her way down the stairs, she staggered while making a sharp turn at the corner of the staircase.

Ashlyn was about to tumble down, but she responded immediately by somersaulting twice.

In the end, she managed to land on the floor, perfectly safe and sound.

“Ms. Berry, what’s wrong?” Lilian rushed down the stairs the moment she felt the commotion.

Thankfully, the entire space, including the stairs and the floor, had been carpeted. Ashlyn placed one hand on the floor and brought herself up before Lilian could reach her.

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Ashlyn managed to make it out of the accident unscathed, but she was confused. Since the entire space was carpeted, nothing should have made her trip. Thankfully, she was an observant woman and managed to respond in the nick of time. Otherwise, she would be gravely injured if she were to fall from such a height.

Lilian blamed herself with a guilty look. “Ms. Berry, I’m so sorry! I didn’t take good care of you. If anything happens to you, I’ll definitely die of guilt.”

She had a pitiable front blaming herself for what happened as though she was the one at fault. Ashlyn was the one met with the accident, but it was Lilian’s eyes that were brimmed with tears, as though the latter was the injured one.

In return, Ashlyn frowned and remarked sarcastically, “Excuse me? I’m not hurt at all. Why don’t you save your tears for the time being?”

“Ms. Berry, that’s such a cool move! Are you a martial arts practitioner?” Lilian wiped her tears and asked curiously.

“Yes. If anyone tries to assault me, I’ll give them a taste of their own medicine,” Ashlyn stared at Lilian in the eyes as she replied callously.

Once she finished her sentence, she walked into the kitchen right away.

Lilian pursed her lips before going after Ashlyn.

She had prepared a relatively simple meal for them, but Ashlyn savored the food without any complaint.

Once Lucas joined Ashlyn in the kitchen, Lilian served him his meal immediately. “Mr. Nolan, please try some of the dishes I have prepared for you.”

“I only want to eat the things she cooks,” Lucas replied indifferently with a poker face.

Having just bathed, his short hair was disheveled and he looked especially seductive in his black bathrobe.

It was the first time Lilian encountered such a wild side of Lucas, given she had always seen him in formal wear.

Although Lucas seemed extremely different from the way he usually presented himself, the fact remained he was an attractive man.

Lilian flushed involuntarily as she stared at him.

“M-Mr. Nolan, I-I have spent a lot of effort to prepare these...”

“What about it? Leave us alone,” Lucas replied nonchalantly.

Lilian’s eyes widened in disbelief. She doubted her ears, wondering if she had mistaken the man’s words.

“I have completed my meal.” Ashlyn wiped her lips clean. She felt uncomfortable as soon as she detected the lustful gaze Lilian cast on Lucas.

Without a second thought, she leaned over and adjusted the man’s bathrobe to cover his exposed chest as she suggested, “I’m tired. Let’s call it a day.”

Lucas lowered his gaze and smirked, his eyes glued to the hand in front of his chest. “Sure. Let’s call it a day.”

As soon as he finished his sentence, he got up from his seat holding Ashlyn’s hand, and the two left the kitchen side-by-side.

Lilian, all alone in the kitchen now, cast a wrathful gaze at them as she was engulfed by jealousy.

“What’s wrong? Are you jealous?” Lucas asked Ashlyn with a grin.

“Jealous? Are you sure you’re not overthinking things?” Ashlyn chuckled.

Lucas pinched Ashlyn’s reddened earlobe. “Look at your blushing ears. If you’re not jealous, what’s wrong with your ears? Why did you adjust my bathrobe?”

“Ha! I couldn’t bear to see Lilian’s lustful look; it was disgusting!” Ashlyn pretended to be calm as she asserted, “To begin with, why do you even have such revealing clothes on? If you’re trying to seduce her, you should give me a heads-up. I’ll definitely leave you alone the next time you expose your chest in front of her.”

Ashlyn noticed she had accidentally sidetracked with her speech.

What the heck am I talking about? Oh, God!

“Are you sure you’re not jealous? Why does it sound quite acerbic to me?” Lucas asked rhetorically, teasing Ashlyn with a bright smile because he couldn’t hold back his joy.

The moment Ashlyn raised her head and she saw the man’s stunning smile, her heart raced.

Even though Lucas seemed extremely intimidating when he wasn’t smiling, he could easily take a person’s breath away the moment he expressed his joy.

God must have blessed him abundantly because he could easily charm a woman with his handsome face. His stunning visual could easily put other men in the world to shame.

Ashlyn could barely pull herself together because she was right next to the gorgeous man.

Similarly, Lucas’s heart skipped a beat the moment he turned around and noticed the woman’s trembling eyelids.

He lowered his head and kissed her on the forehead affectionately, leaving the warmth of his kiss on her flawless skin.

Ashlyn gasped in return and allowed Lucas to run his lips across her face, all the way down to her lips.

However, Lucas brought an abrupt halt to the intimate session. He stopped kissing once his lips came into contact with Ashlyn’s velvety lips.

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Ashlyn, who was indulging herself in the session, opened her eyes and noticed Lucas staring at her.

Once again, she flushed embarrassedly as her heart raced once more upon seeing the man's intimate gaze.

Damn it! Why is my heart pounding again? What does he want from me? Why is he staring at me in the eyes?

Once they reached their room, Ashlyn's silken shoulders could be seen in the faintly illuminated room because she had a loose sleeping robe on.

While she kept adjusting her sleeping robe, it wouldn't stay on her shoulder. It fell to her arms repetitively, exposing her bare shoulders in front of Lucas.

The man placed his hands on the woman's shoulder, asking affectionately with a husky voice, "Are you trying to seduce me?"

Upon hearing Lucas's words, Ashlyn turned around and stared at him with her reddened cheeks: she found his statement absurd.

What does he mean by me seducing him? It's the fault of this sleeping robe!

She had always perceived herself to have high self-control, but she would often lose her cool in front of this man. Only he had the ability to always drive her crazy.

"That's nonsense! It's time to sleep!"

However, Lucas untied his black bathrobe out of the blue. Holding Ashlyn's hand and placing it in front of his chest, he suggested, "Didn't you want to touch it when we were downstairs? Here you go. Have fun with it to your heart's content!"

Ashlyn's mind was all over the place as she felt the scorching sensation from the man's sturdy pecs through her palm.

Have you lost your mind, Lucas?

Even though Ashlyn's face reddened once again, she wasn't going to give in to the man just yet.

She returned the favor and bit Lucas on the lips with all her might to provoke him. "Why have you decided to submit yourself to me, Mr. Nolan? I thought you have always enjoyed being the dominant one."

Ashlyn leaned against Lucas, whispering into him and panting by his ears in order to tempt the man. Occasionally, she would stare at Lucas's abdominal area.

“Honey, are you sure you want to do this? I’m afraid you’re not ready for whatever is in store for you next,” Lucas warned Ashlyn.

In return, Ashlyn’s cheeks blushed even more. Although she was exhausted due to the session they had in the bathroom a few hours ago, Ashlyn, who had always been a stubborn one, refused to surrender just yet.

“Mr. Nolan, aren’t you the one who started this? What’s wrong? Are you going to quit when we’re about to reach the best part?” She bit the man’s earlobe, asking in a whimsical tone while placing her palms on the man’s sturdy pecs.

After she expressed her tempting remarks, the man grabbed her and turned around, pinning her to the bed.

She’s so charming! I can’t pull myself together whenever she takes the initiative to start something of sorts.

Lucas could not resist surrendering himself to his natural instinct whenever Ashlyn teased him in such a manner.

He couldn’t wait to indulge in another passionate session with her. In fact, he wouldn’t mind spending the rest of his life doing so with her because he couldn’t resist her temptation.

His lips curved upwards into a vicious grin and asked with a husky voice, “Honey, you’re challenging my limits!”

Lucas’s eyes gleamed. He couldn’t wait to devour the woman in front of him so that he could be together with her eternally.

Lucas was now behaving as though he had taken an aphrodisiac pill. He was sweating and shuddering in an attempt to contain his urge.

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Upon the crack of dawn, the golden ray of the sun illuminated the room in which the raunchy session between the passionate pair had taken place the night before.

Ashlyn and Lucas had blankets over them as they slept soundly in the completely messed-up room.

Ashlyn brought herself to open her eyes against her will. The gigantic palm she felt on her waist was making her uncomfortable.

She tried to push Lucas away from her; in return, he inhaled deeply and breathed into her ears.

Scenes from their raunchy night flashed back in Ashlyn's mind.

In an attempt to shrug the images off her mind, she shook her head and made her way into the bathroom.

Damn it! Whenever I'm around him, I can't seem to control my body and resist the urge.

Undeniably, he has satisfied every need of mine. I guess he did a great job because he seems to possess an infinite amount of strength.

As soon as Ashlyn got out from the bed, Lucas, who was still in bed, opened his eyes and smirked at Ashlyn's alluring figure.

The moment Ashlyn stepped into the bathroom, she heard the bathroom door being pulled open, and a man's indolent voice came through. "Are you sure you have had enough sleep? It seems like you're pretty energetic, huh? Have I not given my best to please you last night?"

Ashlyn flushed at the presence of the handsome man by the bathroom doorway. She put on a calm front to conceal her emotions and replied, "Mr. Nolan, could you please keep your lust to yourself in the morning?"

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"Why are you irritated when you have just woken up? It seems like I have failed to please you, huh?" Lucas asked rhetorically, raising his eyebrows.

Ashlyn had no intention to waste her time engaging in such a pointless conversation with Lucas anymore. She turned on the tap and let the rush of the water drown out Lucas's voice.

However, Lucas strode over and insisted on using the same tap as Ashlyn.

Streams of water flowed from the man's body through his sturdy pecs and firm abs all the way down to his pelvic area.

Ashlyn seemed to have figured out why soap operas often featured scenes of male actors showering—because doing so made them look extremely attractive!

Once they got themselves ready, they walked down the stairs and made their way to the dining hall.

Lilian sensed the affection the lovely pair had for one another from their intimate gaze.

Occasionally, Lucas would stare at Ashlyn, grinning. Lilian couldn't believe her eyes because the man was even more attractive whenever he put a smile on his face.

She had never once come across such an intimate side of Lucas before, as he had always presented himself in a stern and serious manner in front of her.

I don't get it! What's so great about Ashlyn? She's merely an ugly w****! If there's anything about her that stands out, it's only her above-average height and voluptuous figure.

Eurasian women are the worst in terms of looks! They are no match for us at all!

Meanwhile, Ashlyn felt Lilian's odd expression.

Lilian's lustful gazes suggested to Ashlyn that the former seemed to have grown fond of Lucas and had started to behave in a proprietorial manner.

The butler was irritated with Lilian because she had been circling Lucas once he showed up. The butler asked her with a hint of displeasure, "Lilian, have you sorted out the things in the garden?"

Apart from Ms. Berry, no one has the right to stay by Mr. Nolan's side. Besides, Mr. Nolan also won't allow others to approach him.

Lilian was reluctant to leave Lucas alone because she deemed herself the best candidate to be his soulmate.

She would never let Ashlyn win Lucas over.

"Mr. Nolan..." Once Lilian broke the silence with her greeting, Lucas turned around and cast a stern gaze at her.

A glimpse from Lucas was all it took to send shivers running down Lilian's spine.

She couldn't bring herself to finish her sentence because she was intimidated by the man's menacing presence.

On the other hand, Ashlyn was enjoying her meal in the dining hall elegantly.

The bright sunlight poured in through the dining hall's window, illuminating the space and highlighting Ashlyn's great facial features.

Lilian stared at Ashlyn. She found the Eurasian woman, whom she had deemed ugly all this while, flawless all of a sudden.

The woman seemed to be ethereal, especially in the way she carried herself. Ashlyn was like a Victorian princess who had traveled across time.

Lilian turned around, looking at Lucas once she had sized up Ashlyn, and noticed they resembled a

perfect match made in heaven because they complemented each other's existence perfectly.

Regardless of appearance or temperament, they were each other's best match. In a way, they even resembled one another.

Once again, Lilian was engulfed by hatred and jealousy like never before.

However, Lucas neglected Lilian. He strode over to Ashlyn's side and swapped the plate of food he had in front of him with her plate of leftovers.

He took a bite of Ashlyn's unfinished sandwich nonchalantly, behaving as though he couldn't be bothered by the fact that he was eating leftover food.

He finished Ashlyn's leftover food so matter-of-factly that it seemed like he had done so countless times before.

Ashlyn rolled her eyes and reprimanded Lucas, "Hey! I'm halfway through my meal!"

"The ones that you have savored are the most delicious ones," Lucas asserted, smirking.

Ashlyn glanced at the man before turning around to take a peek at Lilian.

Look at her. She's head-over-heels in love with him.

Lilian, overcome by jealousy, noticed Ashlyn's gaze. What does she want? Is she trying to brag about her success? Is she looking down at me? What the heck!

Once Lilian formed those ideas in her mind, she felt a strong urge to rush over and beat Ashlyn to a pulp.

"Mr. Nolan, I shall excuse myself." Lilian fled and rushed out of the dining hall.

"Honey, where are you headed today?" Lucas's husky voice sounded extremely seductive.

Ashlyn's heart skipped a beat the moment she turned around and felt the man's glistering pair of eyes.

"I'll be heading home soon."

"Heading back?" Lucas asked rhetorically and frowned. I have shuffled my duty roster and made a trip to London to keep her company, but now she's heading back?

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"Yes. I have a scheduled lecture at University T tomorrow." Ashlyn was determined to uphold her promise since she had a deal with the Chancellor of University T.

Suddenly, Lucas approached Ashlyn with his attractive face and sexy lips.

As soon as Ashlyn detected the man's flawless face, she felt a strong urge to bite his crimson lips.

Unable to pull herself together anymore, she gave in to her urge. She leaned over and bit the man's lips.

All of a sudden, both were taken aback as they felt a tingling sensation coming from their lips.

Evidently, Lucas was surprised.

Then, he grinned. He couldn't believe Ashlyn had taken the initiative to kiss him on the lips. After all, never had she taken the initiative to kiss him.

He wasn't irritated at all; instead, he was indulging himself in the pleasurable session.

Lucas couldn't resist the urge to return the favor. He gently pursed Ashlyn's lips with his own lips.

Ashlyn, surprised by the man's sudden move, abruptly pushed Lucas away.

Immediately, she rushed out of the dining hall in irritation. Meanwhile, Lucas burst into laughter, chuckling in the dining hall all by himself.

Oh, goodness! What on earth is wrong with me? Have I lost my mind? Why did I kiss Lucas on the lips?

Something must be wrong with me somewhere because it feels as though I'm turning into an entirely different person. Ashlyn clenched her fist as she thought to herself. At the same time, she was reminded of the steamy scenes of her intimacy with Lucas last night.

Her body temperature increased involuntarily once more. She was on the verge of losing control of herself again.

Forget about it, Ashlyn! Pull yourself together!

She gritted her teeth and slapped herself in the face in an attempt to keep herself sane. She warning herself not to be deceived by the man's stunning visual.

In the meantime, the butler joined Lucas in the dining hall and informed him about the incident that had occurred last night.

"Are you serious? What happened?" Lucas's expression turned grim all of a sudden.

The butler replied while avoiding Lucas's gaze, "Ms. Berry almost fell down the stairs last night. Thankfully, she managed to respond accordingly in the nick of time and somersaulted twice in the air..."

Lucas couldn't suppress his emotions anymore upon knowing what happened. He started to give off a menacing vibe—he was about to go berserk.

Ashlyn would never stagger and fall down the stairs because she's a skilled martial arts practitioner. I'm sure something is going on behind the scene!

"I want you to figure out what has gone wrong!" Lucas instructed in a callous tone.

"Yes, Mr. Nolan." The butler took note of Lucas's instruction and dove right in immediately.

In the bedroom.

Lilian approached Ashlyn with a gentle smile. "Ms. Berry, I have handpicked some flowers from the garden for you."

Before Ashlyn could respond to Lilian, the latter had already entered the bedroom. Lilian went over to the window and placed the vase she was carrying on the windowsill.

Ashlyn turned around and took a peek at the yellow flowers.

Since it seemed like a great addition to the bedroom, Ashlyn expressed her gratitude. "Thanks."

"Ms. Berry, you haven't dropped by the garden since you came to the manor, have you? Do you want me to bring you around and show you the way to the garden?" Lilian suggested enthusiastically.

Ashlyn smirked upon hearing Lilian's words, staring at Lilian in the eyes with a penetrating gaze. She was aware of what Lilian was up to.

Once again, a shiver ran down Lilian's spine as she thought Ashlyn had seen right through her evil scheme.

She can't possibly figure out what I'm up to, could she?

Just as Lilian was lost in her own thought process and was expecting Ashlyn to turn down her suggestion, Ashlyn replied, "Sure!"

It was a sunny day, perfect for a day out in the garden.

Since Ashlyn wasn't familiar with the way, she followed Lilian. The two walked through a rugged road and came to a remote location.

Occasionally, Lilian would turn around to check on Ashlyn. "Ms. Berry, I'm quite surprised that you're able to follow through these nasty trails at ease."

“Actually, I’m quite surprised that there are so many precipitous routes behind Lucas’s manor,” Ashlyn replied nonchalantly.

Ashlyn had her gaze fixated on the cliff ahead of them. She asked with a smirk, “Why don’t you tell me what exactly you are up to? It seems like you have gone to great lengths to bring me here.”

Instead of the initial bright smile, Lilian now had a vicious grin as she asked rhetorically, “Oh? Aren’t you a smart one? Since when have you figured out we’re not here for a walk?”

Glaring at Ashlyn in the eyes, Lilian frowned and yelled hysterically, “You’re but a pretentious w****! How dare you get full of yourself?”

Ashlyn tucked her arms and raised her eyebrows. Looking at the infuriated woman in front of her, she replied nonchalantly, “Oh? Who are you to question me when you’re but a nobody to Lucas?”

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“I hate you! I don’t want you anywhere near Mr. Nolan anymore! You’re driving us apart! I will definitely get rid of you and have you out of Mr. Nolan’s sight forever!” Lilian cast a furious gaze at Ashlyn.

“Don’t you think you should stay out of our business when you’re but a maid?” Ashlyn scoffed.

“You’re such an ugly woman! You don’t deserve to be by Mr. Nolan’s side at all! I’m the only one who has the right to stand by him!” Lilian was on the verge of losing herself. All of a sudden, she reached for a bottle of black, mushy-looking liquid and approached Ashlyn.

“Allow me to take a guess... That’s something that will disfigure a person’s face, right? Tsk! Tsk! Have you spent a fortune to procure such a thing?” Ashlyn stood casually right where she was. She wasn’t afraid at all because she deemed Lilian harmless.

“You’re right! I will ruin that gorgeous face of yours so you can’t seduce Mr. Nolan again!” Lilian announced with a proud and vicious grin.

Ashlyn frowned. Sizing up Lilian indifferently, she asked, “Don’t you find yourself hilarious?”

“Shut up! You’re the hilarious one! Why aren’t you afraid? You should get down on your knees and beg for mercy! Hurry up, beg me! Perhaps I will change my mind and be merciful!”

Lilian was most irritated by Ashlyn’s calm and collected demeanor.

She felt she was but a trivial character in front of Ashlyn, a natural leader superior to others.

The grudge Lilian held against Ashlyn due to the affection she shared for Lucas had taken over her

rationality.

She raised her head and cast the bottle of black liquid in Ashlyn's direction. "Mr. Nolan is such a flawless man! An ugly woman like you don't deserve him!"

Meanwhile, Ashlyn took a step aside, successfully evading the suspicious bottle. "I have yet to deal with you for pushing me down the stairs last night, and yet you have the audacity to pick on me?"

Once Ashlyn finished her sentence, the bottle of suspicious-looking liquid came crashing to the ground.

As the questionable liquid seeped through the soil, the surrounding weeds withered instantaneously.

Ashlyn frowned and thought about the potential consequences that would be in store for her should the liquid make it to her face instead of the ground.

"Mr. Nolan loves you wholeheartedly... H-He actually smiles because of you! How dare you allow him to finish your leftover meal? I want you to atone for your sins with death! As long as you're dead, I'm sure Mr. Nolan will notice me and marry me."

Lilian announced her ambitious plan while she reached for another bottle, given the last bottle she cast had been in vain.

Ashlyn's lips twitched involuntarily. She was aware that the woman in front of her had gone berserk and lost her mind. "You should visit the doctor. You're sick."

Once again, Lilian raised her second glass bottle, stared at Ashlyn eerily, and warned, "You know what? As long as you're gone, I'll get everything I have been longing for!"

She approached Ashlyn as soon as she finished her sentence.

When Lilian was merely a few steps away from Ashlyn, the latter stopped hesitating. She kicked the bottle on Lilian's hand and got rid of it once and for all. "Have you lost your mind? How could you shift the responsibilities to me? You should blame yourself for not being attractive enough because you're the reason you failed to attract his attention."

Ashlyn raised her leg and kicked Lilian immediately, stepping on her chest once the latter collapsed to the ground. Once Ashlyn rendered Lilian immobile, she leaned over and pinched Lilian's cheeks against her will. "You're wasting my time, you filthy piece of trash!"

Lilian burst out laughing as she asserted, "Ha! I knew it! You have fallen for my trick!"

"What are you talking about?" Ashlyn's heart sank to the bottom of her stomach all of a sudden.

"Since you're a martial arts practitioner, I can't possibly pick on you because I won't be a match for you!"

The bottle was merely a bait to divert your attention!" Lilian laughed hysterically.

Ashlyn's jaw dropped open. She looked at Lilian and felt a tingling sensation coming from her finger. "S-Since when did you poison me?"

"I got you when you came kicking at me. My whole body is covered with poison. No matter where you touch me, you'll be poisoned as soon as you come into contact with me!" Lilian turned around and glared at Ashlyn with her eyes widened in joy.

"Damn it!" All along, Ashlyn had her eyes on the bottle. She didn't expect the crazy woman to resort to such an extreme measure to achieve her goal.