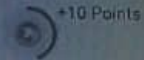


18; She's the one I want.



18; She's the one I want.

Chapter Eighteen- "She's the one I want".

Christian Kingston.

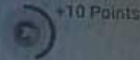
The car came to a halt in front of King Enterprises, Carter stepping out of the passenger seat almost immediately and hastily making a move to open the door for me. Fixing the cufflink of my sleeves one last time, I stepped out of the car, Carter closing it behind as we were welcomed by three workers from the Management team, their heads slightly bowed as they offered their greetings.

I offered them a small curt, one of my hands going to the pocket of my suit pants as I took the lead, walking into the massive building which the Headquarters of King Enterprises situated in America, yet again welcomed by two rows of workers waiting on the inside, collectively bowing their heads the minute I stepped foot in the building.

"Welcome back, Mr. Kingston." They greeted collectively.

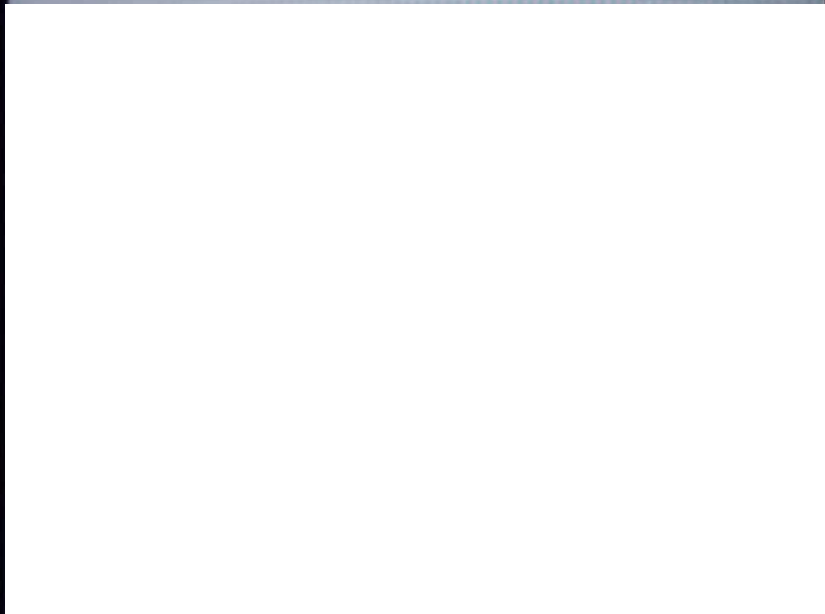
I strolled past them, Carter walking a foot behind me and the three workers that welcomed us from outside tagging along, the other workers all dispersing to their various sites of work. The three

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rambled on, trying to brief me on everything that has happened while I've been away as if I don't know already.

I raised my hand slightly, putting a halt to their reports. They knew what that meant, so they bowed their heads slightly one last time, before



Ads-free >

they turned around and headed back to their respective stations while I and Carter stepped into the elevator that would take us to the top floor where my office is.

The ride to the floor was quiet, aside from the light hum of orchestral music playing. It came to a halt the moment the doors slid open again, and I

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+10 Points

stepped out almost immediately, followed by Carter. The workers on the floor were all quick to get on their feet, each throwing their own collective greetings.

Upon entering my office, I was welcomed yet again by that familiar space I had missed admittedly. Now, this office feels like home to me. No other office could replace it. My hand went to undo the button of the suit jacket, which I shrugged off and placed on the coat hanger before taking my seat behind the table, drawing the chair closer.

"About today's schedule, switch that board meeting tomorrow and schedule it to take place in fifteen minutes, send an email to all the Directors, I want them there ASAP." I picked up the first folder in sight, one about the impending business I need to take care of, then carried on giving my instructions to Carter. "Also schedule a meeting with the CEO of Brian & Co. somehow between 2-3, we need to discuss the acquisition."

Carter's nervous chuckle came, making me halt my action of going through the document in my hand for I just know something is bound to come up, something I wouldn't like. "Yeah, about that..." He chuckled again, though I doubt there's nothing amusing. "...you just came back to the company after two years of being away to handle the overseas business. Why don't you take time off

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today and rest? You know, do something that's not business related."

I drummed my fingers on the table, then lifted my head and fixed my gaze on him, my lips slanted into a tight line. "Spill it." Carter knows better than to suggest I do something else when I have clearly given him instructions. But, for him to say that means there's something.

He visibly swallowed thickly, his lips tilted upwards into an uneasy smile. Then, he hastily dropped another folder in front of me, and before I could ask him to explain, he did the honors himself. "Mrs. Gloria put this together and ordered me vehemently to make sure you go through it as scheduled till she gets what she wants..."

My brows furrowed together, as I stared at him, then at the grey folder that somehow made me feel uneasy. Hesitantly, I reached out to pick it up, getting chills from it almost instantly—I could sense this not going in my favor almost immediately. The unluckiness is rolling off it in waves I could practically see it.

Still, I flicked it open, and the moment my eyes fell on the first page, I could only shudder, dropping it back on the table almost immediately. "What the hell is this?" I flicked my eyes up to meet his gaze.

He offered me a wide, cheeky grin, no doubt knowing it'll get on my nerves. "Mrs. Gloria

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arranged a blind date for you every week for three months." He stated, as if I didn't see it already on the first page. "You have one week with each girl to get to know each other and ponder whether she's the one or not before moving on to the next. And if none of these girls are to your liking," He lifted his phone, "she will prepare a list to last you a year or two if she has to."

I huffed out a breath of disbelief, my eyes dilated. "No." I shook my head, pushing the folder away while shuddering, the mere thought of going through meeting every woman on the list making me have chills all over. "I will not do any of this. I told her I have someone, why is she doing this again?"

Carter's smile fell, as he gave me a look that screamed whether I really just said that. "That was the lie you made two years ago before you whisked yourself overseas and haven't returned till now. You don't think she'd buy that lie again, did you?" There are a few situations where Carter seems to forget I'm his boss, and not the other way around, this is one of those situations.

"Whatever." I threw another creeped out look at the folder, then met his gaze again with my determined one. "I am not going."

"You don't have a choice." He stood his ground as well, and upon seeing the look I threw him, he

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added. "Sir." Still, he carried on. "The first one is the same person that's been on Mrs. Gloria's top list, Zara Rutherford."

"Again?" I've lost count of how many times at this point my mother has tried to set me up with this woman. And I've lost count of how many times I've turned it down. I don't have anything against her personally, in fact, I'm to weigh it all rationally, she's the best candidate I have. However, I can't agree to her, not when there's someone else I've set my mind on.

Carter nodded, to confirm my question. "Under Mrs. Gloria's order, I've sent her a gift under your name to look forward to your blind date on Sunday night." His lips slanted upwards into a smile. "Cute designer heels that are of a limited number—befitting of your image." He then dropped his tablet on the table, pushing it towards me. "I've cleared up your schedule for the weekend, so you don't have a way out of this."

I gave him a deadpanned look, wondering when he became all in on my mother's team. I should probably get a new assistant, yeah? Someone that doesn't follow my mother's instructions back and forth? Then again, Carter is the best I have, and I doubt anyone can replace him—not that I want anyone to. But, if he keeps up with this, I might really just consider getting someone else. Someone that wouldn't force me on blind dates.

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He suddenly added, his words changing my course of thoughts. "Speaking of which, Mrs. Grace's exhibition is starting in thirty minutes. She's sent you an invite, as one of the investors of the gallery."

I waved it off, sinking back on my seat. "She can handle her exhibition on her own. There's no need for me to go there." Art has never been my thing, I think Grace is the one that exhibited the art talent in the family. I on the other hand is the sibling that hasn't quite grasped the talent and love for art. I'd rather not go.

"I've checked the guest list for any potential business clients." As if there's any need for that. "CEO of Brian and Co. will be there, so it might be easier for you to meet than to set another appointment. Don't you think?"

"Set the appointment." I gave him a pointed look.

Still, he ignored me and carried on, "Others are Zara Rutherford." Oh, God. There it is, the reason why he's trying to get me to go there. He didn't stop though. "Kuffer Grande, Prime Minister Joe Ally, CEO of Heralds, CEO of Montague Concept, do you still want me to cancel your invite?" He looked up, offering me an innocent smile.

I blinked, letting the names he just called out sink in because there's a particular one he said that caught my attention. "Wait, did you just say..."

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"Yes. Miss Montague will be there; in case you have a business issue to discuss with her. Should I still cancel it?" Though he's sporting an innocent look, I have no doubt he's doing this intentionally. "I'll take your silence as my cue to get the car ready

Ads-free >

then? Alright. I'll be on it." Then he offered me a curt nod and walked out.

My lips slowly slanted upwards into an instant smile. Remember when I said I'll consider changing an assistant? Yeah, I take it back. I pushed my chair back and got my suit jacket, hastily shrugging it on like an excited kid about to see his crush. Truthfully, I feel like so, and throughout the drive to the Gallery, all I could think

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of is seeing her again, to talk to her, just...anything.

By the time I reached the Gallery, the auction had already started and was ongoing. I stood by the entrance, my eyes skimming the room as I tried to spot her amongst the crowd of guests there. I'd spotted Grace and Zara seated together on the same table, but I couldn't spot her anywhere. I frowned, wondering if Carter fooled me into being here for some other reason. However, before I could dwell on that thought, I heard the voice I had been yearning to hear in two years.

"15 million dollars." Her voice, it was just as I remembered it, only more assertive. It didn't take long to pinpoint her then, considering everyone else pretty much looked in her direction. I couldn't see her face, but the mere sight of her back had me grinning.

She's seated alone in her table, seeming unbothered by the seclusion. If anything, I could tell from her square shoulders and confident posture that she couldn't care less about it. And without much thought, I found myself raising my paddle, raising the bid higher. Why did I do so? Well, certainly not for the piece of art.

Like I said, art has never been my thing. Rather, I'm looking for a way to stir up this woman. I derive joy from it, and it's just what I need to brighten up my day. I was hoping she'd turn around to look at

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me like the others did, but she didn't. Instead, she stubbornly raised the bid till I called for fifty million.

She didn't argue further; I guess she wasn't in the mood nor did she find the little game amusing. And like that, the painting was sold to me. I made my way to the stage to receive the documents of the art, but really, all I was yearning to do was to meet her gaze. Even as my gaze met Grace's one that swirled with question—though something about the knowing look on her face told me she knew what I am up to, and that I would get an earful from her later on.

I wasn't bothered. All I wanted was for my eyes to meet hers, to meet Isabella's, and it did. Because as I looked in her direction, our gazes met, and upon seeing the surprised look masking her expression, I found myself grinning, my heart swelling. However, all it took was for me to look away for a split second, to receive the documents and stuff, then when I looked again, she was nowhere in sight.



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