

Her Seven LBG 231

Chapter 231

Hearing his self-introduction, Melanie sized him up once again. She didn't know much about show business, but she had heard the names of both the company and the talent agent. Having produced a lot of big-name celebrities, Epic Media Inc. was of considerable repute in the industry. Moreover, Chris Jonas was said to be the company's top talent agent, with extraordinary capabilities and a good eye for new talents. Because of this, he had quite some reputation in show business as well. At the thought of this, Melanie instantly became friendly toward him. "Hi, I'm Melanie Greyson."

While hearing Melanie's name, Chris was inwardly startled. However, he worked in show business, after all, so he was able to feign impassivity. "Oh! Uh, hi. Nice to meet you." So she's Melanie Greyson, huh? he thought. As a talent agent, he was naturally aware of the rumors circulating on Twitter. He attended the celebratory party mostly to get into contact with Vania, with whom he hoped to establish some collaboration. His company was considered to be way ahead of others in the industry, but it showed some signs of plateauing, so he desperately wanted to break through such limitations. As a result, Vania instantly caught his eye, thanks to his discerning eye as a talent agent.

However, little did he expect that as soon as he entered the conference hall, he would notice a woman in a black cutout dress staring blankly at the entrance from a corner, which drew his attention at once. Her fine appearance instantly aroused his interest in scouting new talent, so he came over and spoke to her. However, he never expected the woman to be Melanie.

In reality, Melanie was quite good-looking in appearance, but she often displayed an unsightly pettiness in front of Vania. Not only was she far less self-confident and easy-mannered than Vania, but her features weren't as delicate as the latter's, too. After all, although they shared a father, they were born to different mothers. Josie, Melanie's mother, couldn't hold a candle to Roseanne, Vania's mother.

After learning of Melanie's name, Chris was half-disappointed deep down. Apart from the rumors on the internet, Hanson was another reason he dared not rashly make contact with her. Otherwise, not only would he be unable to liberate his company from its current constraints, but he might even end up bringing the company down with him.

Still smiling politely, Melanie stared at him without saying a word, as if waiting for him to explain his purpose in speaking to her.

Having started the conversation himself, Chris couldn't excuse himself right away, so he could only bite the bullet and go on. "Sorry if I bothered you, but I just saw you sitting here alone and noticed your extraordinary deportment," he said, before handing his business card to Melanie. "Miss Melanie, if you're interested in entering show business in the future, we can discuss it anytime." This was merely an excuse, though. There was no way he would invite Melanie to enter show business. He only said so as he had really intended; he presumed that the heiress to Greyson Realty wouldn't venture into show business.

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Vania was wearing a turquoise peacock dress that reached down to her ankles while hugging her hourglass figure. Not only that, but it had a fishtail design and was embellished with feathers of the same color. As a result, she looked like a dazzling peacock fairy, drawing the gaze of everyone present from the moment she came in. Even Chris, who had just greeted her, looked at her with profound admiration.

Melanie was filled with jealousy when she saw Vania looking like this.

Moreover, it was obvious that Hanson's tuxedo matched Vania's dress, with its lapels and cuffs having the same design. One needed not take a closer look to see that the couple were dressed in matching outfits.

Hanson had never been so fashionably dressed before. In fact, he was usually clad in drab suits. Melanie remembered how Finley had once persuaded him to dress younger when she was at the Luke Estate, to which he replied outright that it wasn't necessary. And now, he changed his clothing style for Vania's sake.

Melanie's fingernails dug deep into her flesh, but she couldn't feel the pain at all. Trembling all over, she stood where she was, staring at everything with unblinking eyes and an expression that seemed somewhat scary.

Seeing that Vania and Hanson had arrived at the scene, the emcee of the celebratory party immediately said, "Today's celebratory party is specially organized by the Luke Corporation to thank all of its employees. Everyone who is here to attend the celebratory party today may feast and have fun to your hearts' content, while the company will bear all the costs. Also, everyone's invitation card has a number on it. Please keep your invitation card with you and remember your number. At the end of the celebratory party, we'll randomly select a lucky fellow who will receive an elaborately prepared gift from President Luke." Keeping the guests in suspense, he said toward the end of his speech, "The gift is said to be invaluable and is the only one of its kind."

His speech was followed by a piece of cheerful and relaxing music, upon which everyone squealed with delight.

The scene was full of lively atmosphere. At the celebratory party, some danced lightly to the music, whereas some got together and chit-chatted about work. While some made new friends at the party, some who weren't good at having fun sat in a corner and enjoyed their desserts.

Hanson had never stopped being approached for conversations ever since he entered the conference hall, and Vania had been conversing with the guests as well.

"How lucky we are to see you in person, Ms. Greyson! You look a million times more beautiful than in the commercial."

"Yeah, Ms. Greyson. You're so beautiful and talented; I wonder when we'll be able to work with you. We've been admiring your talent for a long time."

"That's absolutely right! We're looking forward to working with you and President Luke, Ms. Greyson."

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At the same time, however, Vania deduced instantly from the look of surprise on Hanson's face that the piano music Melanie was playing had to be of great importance to him. Could they have shared some wonderful memories together? Her heart twinged subconsciously as she didn't know how to describe her feelings. Seeing how he kept staring at Melanie's location, she only felt like an eyesore while standing here. She wanted to turn around and leave, but he grabbed her before she could do so.

Hanson had resumed his usual countenance at this moment. Seeing through what Vania was thinking, he whispered in her ear, explaining patiently, "This was my grandpa's favorite song, written by my grandma herself at their 50th wedding anniversary. I'd never heard anyone play it for years since his death, so I was startled to hear it all of a sudden. I wasn't startled because of Melanie."

I see. Vania felt somewhat embarrassed for having made a big deal out of something trivial just now. Since when did I become so emotional? She gave a sigh of helplessness.

Seeing her expression, Hanson beamed with pleasure. "Are you being jealous again?"

Am I a green-eyed monster who gets jealous every single day? And besides, why should I be jealous? thought Vania. She denied it categorically, saying, "I just wanted to go over there to get something to drink."

Hanson didn't believe her, though. "Oh? Is that so?"

Vania replied, "Of course. I've spoken so much just now; now I'm thirsty." She thought she sounded innocent, but her expression seemed very unnatural.

Hanson didn't expose her either. "I'll go with you, then," he said. Then, he subconsciously took her by the hand to the beverage section.

Vania didn't know what was on her mind, but she didn't break free of Hanson's grasp. She wanted Melanie to see them holding hands, knowing that Melanie had been keeping a close eye on them. On the other hand, Hanson was more than willing to go along with her. He was only too eager for her to often care so much about him, so he was happy to oblige her even if she was only holding hands with him on purpose.

Of course, their holding hands didn't elude Melanie's gaze. Despite playing the piano, she had been keeping a close eye on the couple the whole time. Seeing how Hanson stared straight at her after being

startled just now, she was immensely overjoyed. She had thought that he would stop in his tracks for the song, but to her great dismay, as soon as Vania turned around, he went after her without the slightest hesitation.

Melanie's eyes reddened when she saw the couple holding hands and chatting happily. She wished she could go after them, but now that she was already halfway through the piano music, she couldn't stop here, so she had no choice but to keep on playing the piano.

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That's weird. Aren't they in the beverage section? How come they disappeared as soon as I came out? I've been keeping an eye on them the whole time. Where could they've gone while I bowed to thank the audience?

Just when Melanie was searching for the couple in confusion, she heard the sound of the piano being played again; it was the song she had just played. She looked back at once, only to see Vania sitting before the piano with rapt attention, her fingers dancing so smoothly and fluidly across the piano keys.

At the sight of this, Melanie instantly turned as white as a sheet. When did Vania learn how to play the piano? As far as she could recall, Vania had always been engrossed in songwriting as a child, but she wasn't good at playing musical instruments. Moreover, this piano piece wasn't well-known. After all, it was written by Hanson's grandmother, so very few people knew about it. She had paid the earth for it, and besides, this piece was so difficult to play that she only managed to play it in full through countless practice. How did Vania learn how to play the piano piece? Not only that, but she's playing it so well! She clenched her fists tightly. Why is she able to spoil my plans effortlessly every single time?

Just then, some people began to whisper among themselves. "I never thought Miss Vania could also play the piano so well."

"Yeah, she's really good at playing the piano. She plays more smoothly and expressively than the one just now."

"The person just now got a few notes wrong. Not only that, but her playing lacked emotion, as if she made a special effort to memorize the notes."

Indeed, Melanie had to admit that she had become nervous and missed a few notes when Hanson left with Vania just now. Still, she didn't expect this many music connoisseurs among the guests who could even notice such a trivial mistake.

Meanwhile, Hanson never expected Vania to drag him here to play the piano. It was clear from her expression just now that she had never heard of this piece before. How could she play it so well on her first try? He stared at her with a visible flicker in his eyes.

Sensing the man's gaze, Vania looked up to meet his eyes. The instant their eyes met in the dimly lit

banquet hall, sparks seemed to fly between them, which took everyone's breath away.

Upon seeing this, Melanie was filled with resentment; now she exploded with rage whenever she saw Hanson being with Vania. She trembled all over as her fingernails dug into her flesh again, the pain of which she didn't feel at all.

Under the colorful lights, Hanson strode steadily to Vania's side before seating himself next to her. The next instant, his fingers also began dancing across the piano keys. Joining in at just the right moment, he picked up the music seamlessly.

With that, they played a piano duet together in perfect coordination.

The song was tuneful, smooth, and pleasant to the ears. One could tell the love contained in its music from the couple's playing, so much so that one couldn't help losing themselves in it. Hanson and Vania had never practiced the piece before, nor had they rehearsed it in advance, but their piano duet was so well-coordinated that it gave a feeling that their minds were in sync. As a consequence, those on the dance floor praised them in whispers.

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The audience broke into continuous applause. Indeed, the crowd were fascinated by the couple's tacit coordination and how they had expressed themselves in the music.

Standing under the light, Vania and Hanson accepted the crowd's applause together, as if they were at their own wedding.

However chagrined and resentful Melanie was, she couldn't stand out like a sore thumb at this very moment, so she could only applaud along with everyone else. She really couldn't describe her feelings. She had painstakingly practiced the piano piece, only to have Vania steal the spotlight from her.

After such a brief interlude, everyone began to chat, dance, and have fun again.

Wrapping his arm loosely around Vania's waist, Hanson whispered softly in her ear, "You learned how to play the piece after listening to it just once?" He could clearly see from her expression just now that she had never heard the song before, but her performance just now was so skillful that he was inwardly astonished. She can always bring me surprises, he thought.

Vania merely raised an eyebrow without answering his question.

Hanson still looked at her with a smile on his face. "I feel that there's a growing number of secrets about you, which will only attract me even more." Indeed, whenever Vania showed up, she would bring him something different. And besides, her latent capabilities made him feel that there was much more to her than that. There were still many things about her that he had yet to discover and see with his own eyes.

She was just like a book that he couldn't help but read page after page. At times, he would get impatient; he wanted to know the conclusion of the story, but couldn't bring himself to skip to the end of the book, fearing he would miss out on the enthralling plotlines. Because of that, he could only be patient and read the book bit by bit, pondering over its contents little by little. However, the more he did so, the more fascinated he became. He was so curious about her that he felt he had become somewhat obsessed with her.

Vania pushed him lightly with her hands to keep his warm breath away from her. Just as she wanted to speak, she saw Melanie coming toward them from a distance, and the corner of her lips turned up for a moment. The next instant, she leaned straight toward him, as if she was going to fall over.

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As she had expected, Hanson stopped what he was doing at this moment. He didn't get annoyed, but he didn't look at her either. Instead, his eyes were glued to Vania the entire time.

Rather than avoiding his gaze, Vania met his eyes and said in a deliberately sweet voice, "I'm so hungry, Hanson. Let's go over there." Speaking with a studied drawl, she sounded so coquettish that it left one's bones tingling. Furthermore, she looked seductively charming in the first place, which really made her seem like a captivating seductress when coupled with such a voice.

Hanson felt like his body was on fire the instant she called his name. When has she ever called my name in such a way? Even when she called his name back then, it was enough to make his body and soul feel burning hot. As a result, the instant she called out to him right now, he couldn't stand it anymore. His body had a visible reaction, while his eyes lit up and became bloodshot. Like a rising male lion staring at its prey before it, he stared fixedly at the woman before him with possessive eyes, fearing that she might run away. After a long time, he finally gathered his breath and said in a somewhat husky voice, "Call me like that from now on." Then, without waiting for her reply, he put his arm loosely around her shoulders and took her to the dining area, during which time he didn't even take a glance at Melanie.

At this moment, Melanie was really upset. She could tell from how Hanson had reacted just now that he was really aroused. When has he ever been aroused in front of me? He gave no response even when I stood naked in front of him. All Vania did was call his name. Did he have to react so strongly? Heartbroken, she watched the couple leave before sniffling to hold back her tears.

Meanwhile, Vania immediately recoiled from Hanson's embrace and moved her shoulder uncomfortably as soon as they reached the dining area. She had never had such intimate physical contact with any man other than him, and this made her feel somewhat bashful.

Hanson smiled helplessly. I guess I'm just a tool that she gets rid of as soon as I've served her purpose. Still, he couldn't seem to get angry with her, and he still looked at her affectionately.

On the other hand, Vania was so hungry at the moment that she couldn't be bothered by everything else. She had never eaten anything since noon, plus she had used up so much energy just now. As a result, her stomach rumbled with hunger at this moment.

Among the numerous desserts, she settled on the strawberry-flavored dessert at a glance. However, before she could reach for it, Hanson picked up the dessert and held it in front of her. "Let me feed you," he said in a bewitching voice that made her heart itch.

The atmosphere between them was way too romantic, so much so that Vania felt her hair stand on end in resistance, like a cat whose tail had been stepped on. "Nope." There were so many people watching them on such a public occasion. Since she could eat on her own, she didn't want to do something so intimate with him.

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"Haha..." Hanson burst into another rare guffaw. He liked it the most when Vania blew up in annoyance like a harmless and adorable angry kitten.

Seeing how her face reddened slightly, she appeared even more irresistibly adorable to him.

At this very moment, he really had an urge to become one with her. While feeling an abnormal burning sensation within him, he realized that he should stop teasing her.

Otherwise, he might bring trouble upon himself, one in which he would suffer in the end. He could only go along with her by saying, "Okay, you didn't do it. I'm the one who's imagining things here."

Vania gave him a bashful glare. It's enough that you know it. Why do you have to say it out loud?

Hanson had never given way to others like this, but he had lost all his principles when it came to Vania. He stretched out his hand and pushed all the desserts she had her eyes on earlier toward her. "These are the new desserts made specially by the hotel's new patissier. Have a taste and see if you like them. If you don't, I'll replace them with others."

With a smile on her face, she resembled Jacob who looked somewhat simpleminded in front of desserts. "Really? They seem delicious," she said before swallowing the strawberry-flavored dessert at a gulp with no concern for her image in front of Hanson.

In fact, Vania never seemed to care about her image; she was always her most comfortable self regardless of who she was around. From start to finish, every expression she showed in front of him had always been completely genuine without the slightest affectations.

The instant Vania tasted the dessert, her eyes widened in amazement and she nodded with satisfaction. "Wow! It's indeed delicious. It's completely different from the previous desserts. It melts in the mouth," she said while slurring her words with food in her mouth. As she spoke, she picked up another piece of dessert.

Such a childlike side of hers made Hanson feel as though he was raising a daughter. For some reason, it appeared in his mind that he should have a daughter as lovely as Vania someday. The sudden

inexplicable idea distressed him slightly, but he shook his head and banished such an unrealistic idea from his head soon after. Seriously, what was I thinking? How can I possibly have a daughter? Still, it would be nice to have a daughter with Vania...

He looked at her and replied affectionately, "Glad you like it."

Needless to say, he would not tell her that he had gone out of his way to hire a five-star patissier just to give her palate a change of taste.

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As the emcee was fired up by the atmosphere, he then continued, "Next, let's count from three to one as loud as you can while we draw today's lucky winner!"

The numbers had started shuffling on the big screen and everyone held their breaths as they waited in anticipation to reveal the lucky winner. They shouted in unison along with the emcee, "Three, two, one... Stop!"

As soon as they finished their countdown, the numbers stopped rolling. An enlarged number was then displayed at the center of the big screen—520.

It was simply stirring that such a number corresponded to the lucky prize. Everyone looked at their numbers, and when they saw their numbers were not matching, they could not help being somewhat disappointed. At the same time, they turned to look around them, trying to discover the lucky winner amidst the crowd.

At that moment, the emcee announced, "Let's welcome our lucky guest No. 520 onstage!"

Everyone at the scene shouted along to the cheerful music.

As everyone watched with anticipation, Vania gracefully walked up onto the stage while illuminated by the spotlight. Her evening dress glittered in various colors under the spotlight and made her look like a peacock of unparalleled beauty.

The emcee said excitedly, "Congratulations to Miss Vania on becoming tonight's lucky winner!"

"Thank you." Vania took the present before smiling sweetly at the audience. Among the numerous eyes was Hanson's eyes, which she spotted almost instantly. Despite the long distance between them, they could sense each other being reflected in each other's eyes.

Seeing her on stage, Melanie followed Vania's gaze and easily spotted Hanson. They really do share a lot of tacit understanding, huh? Look how much Hanson cares for her. She knew at a glance that the event was held specially for Vania by him. Such a colorful diamond was difficult to grow synthetically, let alone for it to exist in nature. Since it was rare to see such a diamond, one might as well say that it was

priceless.

At the sight of glory and love, Melanie was filled with nothing but hatred. She had been with Hanson for such a long time; not only that, she was also Morales and Morgan's mother on paper. Forget the diamond; when had he ever given her presents? Perhaps it'd never crossed his mind to give me anything while we were together. At this moment, she wished she could rush on stage and smash the colorful diamond into pieces just to vent her resentment.

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They had just assumed that the lucky draw was over, but much to their surprise, it had not even started yet!

Everyone's eyes brightened again with anticipation as they shouted, "Couple up, President Luke and Vania! Couple up! Couple up..." The room was full of cheers and shouts of approval.

Hanson had never plotted this in advance. He wondered who it was that gauged his mood so well and was able to liven up the atmosphere, but of course, he was satisfied deep down. He smugly whispered in Vania's ear, "The will of the people."

Evading the subject, Vania waved the diamond in her hand. "Thanks."

"I'm glad you like it."

At that moment, she stopped meeting his eyes, which were ablaze with passion. Instead, she turned to look at the stage.

This time, the hostess went on stage with a tray in her hands.

It was fairly obvious that there was a car key on the tray. At that sight, everyone covered their mouths in surprise. Not only was a car practical, but it was also useful in life! As such, they looked forward to the car even more than the priceless diamond.

After the emcee introduced the car, everyone at the scene cheered louder and more passionately. Now that they had fully approved of Hanson as president, they had also approved of Vania.

"It's just a trick to win people's hearts," Melanie swore to herself in a whisper. As she found herself out of tune with the delightful mood of the scene, she turned around and left resentfully.

A new round of lucky draws then began. This time though, the lucky prize went to an ordinary employee of the corporation; therefore, one could tell that there was no monkey business involved in the draw.

Everyone congratulated the winner, while needless to say, those who did not win the prize were also inevitably disappointed.

The emcee comforted everyone by announcing something exciting, "Everyone, please don't lose heart if you didn't win any prizes. Our president has prepared exquisite souvenirs for everyone in order to thank every employee for their hard work and contributions. At the end of the celebratory party, everyone may claim an exquisite gift box at the exit with your invitation card."

While purposely keeping everyone in suspense, he continued, "The gifts are jointly designed by President Luke and Miss Vania, and everyone's gift is different in design. The gentlemen will get a watch whereas the ladies will get a bracelet. We hope that everyone likes them and can work together to move forward to a new chapter. Please hold on to see what kind of gift it is."

As soon as his announcement dropped, the crowd offstage instantly broke into wild applause. Everyone's gift is different! The Luke Corporation had so many employees, so one could only imagine how much thought and effort Hanson and Vania had put into the gifts.

Chapter 240

"Well... Okay..."

With that, the celebratory party ended in a merry and blissful mood with everyone glowing with happy smiles.

The night breeze was howling gently as it formed glistening ripples on the surface of the river on both sides of the road. The weeping willows swayed in the breeze whereas the shadows of the two figures walking side by side lengthened under the streetlight.

Hanson and Vania walked shoulder to shoulder without uttering a word, as if neither of them had any intention to break the silence. They were not communicating with each other, but their hearts seemed to have gradually come together—from being at opposite ends of an intersection to heading in the same direction.

At this moment, a group of punks whose bodies were covered in tattoos popped up from nowhere and charged straight toward Vania.

Unbaffled by the bunch of punks, Hanson instinctively turned around to hold her in a protective embrace. However, the punks appeared too unexpectedly and snatched Vania's purse.

She cried with fright, "Ah! My purse!"

Hanson knitted his brows while shielding her with his arms. "Don't worry. I'm here." Then, he leaped forward and kicked a punk running at the back of the gang to the ground.

"Ouch! It hurts!"

Distracted by the punk's voice, the others immediately turned around and saw that their buddy had been knocked down with Hanson as the sole fighter. "Beat him up, gang!" they yelled.

At their leader's command, the group of punks swarmed toward Hanson and threw punches and kicks toward him, regardless of who the man before them was. Having been paid in advance, they already knew what would become of them, so they did not care what would happen if they hit Hanson.

Hanson looked coldly at the group of punks. What makes them think they can get near me? They're overestimating themselves.

Meanwhile, Vania had regained her composure while standing aside. Within a short time, she called the police as well as Larry.

The seven punks kept surrounding Hanson while trying every way possible to finish him off in one blow. However, after fighting him bitterly for a long time, they lost the upper hand against him. Not only that; they did not even get to touch him. Instead, they were beaten until they were out of breath and could hardly attack anymore. Even so, they kept circling around him without the intent to back down.