

Love's Second Chance

Chapter 3

The atmosphere between Zara and Jonathan was slightly tense as if they had a cold war. However, when this happened before, Jonathan always broke the tension with surprises.

Zara glanced at the image on the phone before forcing a smile. "Maybe."

It wasn't long before Jonathan joined her in the backseat. Knowing she had suffered unfair treatment today, he held her hand and comforted her. "Don't take Mom's words to heart."

The warmth from his palm radiated onto her hand.

Zara no longer wished to continue their cold war. So, she leaned against his shoulder. "How will we explain the marriage situation to them in the future?"

Jonathan couldn't help but kiss Zara's head since she admitted defeat first. "I'll handle it. Don't you worry."

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After learning about the company gala from Joel, Zara arranged her schedule beforehand. She even turned down the chance to participate in a dance competition because of the gala.

Yet, Jonathan didn't tell her about the gala until the day.

Zara watched as Jonathan changed into a suit and left the door. She said nothing but changed into a coat before following him out.

When she arrived at the gala's massive hall, she stiffened like a statue.

As the company's president, Jonathan needed to have the first dance. Not far away, Harper was in the middle of the hall. She donned a blue gown and danced with Jonathan as everyone watched.

That blue gown was the one Joel had shown Zara. It turned out that Jonathan wasn't gifting it to her. Instead, he intended it for Harper.

The woman he wanted as his dance partner tonight wasn't Zara. It was Harper.

As the dance ended, all the lights shined on Jonathan and Harper. Everyone clapped enthusiastically. No one noticed Zara, who stood at the entrance.

Meanwhile, Zara's eyes fixed on Jonathan. She watched as he only focused on Harper, and it seemed like many emotions welled in his eyes.

Harper's ears reddened as she spoke abruptly. "Jonathan, can I kiss your cheek? Consider it a goodbye kiss."

Jonathan stayed quiet, but it seemed to be a silent approval.

Harper gathered the courage to tip-toe.

When she was about to kiss Jonathan, Jonathan's gaze landed on Zara, who stood in the audience. He tensed and instinctively pushed Harper away.

Zara stared at Jonathan for a few seconds in silence. Then, she turned to leave. She had just exited the hotel when a great force grabbed her wrist.

Jonathan slightly panted as he ran outside to stop Zara. "Zar!"

Zara shot him an indifferent glare. "Let go of me!"

She had always been this way. Whenever she experienced injustice, she never cried or caused any fuss. Instead, she behaved coldly to conceal her heartache.

That was because nobody supported her during her parents' deaths. So, she couldn't allow herself to appear weak. Even if her pain were unbearable, she would force herself to endure it. She would tell all those who wanted to see her suffer that she wasn't in pain.

Jonathan used to feel bad and concerned for her back then. However, he only felt panicked now that he was the target of her frosty stares. "Please hear me out. The truth isn't what it looks like.

"Harper's internship is ending. I promised to fulfill one request from her if she could get excellent results during her internship. Her request was to be my dance partner.

"Plus, you've been busy working until late these days. I didn't ask you to be my partner because I was worried you'd be too tired. Besides, I was only trying to brainstorm a way to lecture her for asking to kiss me earlier. That's why I blanked out and let it happen."

It wasn't long before Harper rushed outside, too. She teared up at Zara, murmuring, "I'm so sorry, Zara. I grew up abroad, where kissing people on the cheek is normal.

"I just wanted to give Jonathan a proper goodbye. I swear the kiss doesn't mean anything. Please don't be upset."

She put on a pitiful act. Rather than appearing apologetic, she seemed more like a victim who had been picked on.

Zara suddenly felt exhausted when dealing with Harper, who whimpered the entire time like a wronged victim. She refused to make things difficult for the young Harper. So, regardless of whether she believed the latter's excuse, she could only convince herself to trust Jonathan.

Once Jonathan calmed Zara down, he no longer reached out to wipe Harper's tears. Instead, he remained silent and kept his distance from Harper.

Hayden soon arrived at the scene. He merely glanced at Zara before forcibly dragging Harper away.

Harper likely wanted to avoid getting involved in scandals because of this incident. So, she left the company before her internship ended and returned to her university.

The night she left, Jonathan came home late. When he did, he looked Zara dead in the eye. "Harper left early."

Despite his calm tone, Zara couldn't help feeling as if he were blaming her for a split second. It sounded as though he were blaming her for making a big deal of things and scaring Harper away.

Since that day, the two's relationship turned tense again. It felt like something was different, even though nothing had changed between them.

Jonathan treated her with growing indifference every day when he came home. There were also times when they had nothing to say to each other despite lying on the same bed. He no longer hugged her to sleep like before.

Instead, they lay with their backs facing each other like strangers.

That went on until one night when Jonathan came home extra late. Yet, Zara could sense Jonathan's mood had improved. He wasn't indifferent all the time anymore, and he gradually regained his smile.

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Jonathan went to shower in the bathroom after waking up one morning.

Zara heard the former's phone vibrate on the desk. Thinking it had something to do with work, she wanted to bring the phone to the bathroom for Jonathan. However, every muscle in her body froze once she saw what was on the screen.

It was a text from Harper. "Thanks for accompanying me to my class reunion party last week, Jonathan! I said I'd buy you a meal today, so hurry out of your house! Can we go to the amusement park today?"

Chills traveled down Zara's spine as she silently clicked on the two's chat history. It turned out that Jonathan came home late last Thursday because he accompanied Harper to a party.

"So, Harper's the reason his mood improved?" Zara thought. She put down the phone and turned to look at the bathroom. Her heart felt empty as she listened to the faint sound of the shower water.

Jonathan later returned to the bedroom and saw Zara sitting at the bedside. "What's wrong?"

Zara spoke with a neutral voice. "Are you free? We haven't had a meal together in a while. If you're free, let's go out on a date."

Jonathan realized he had indeed been overly cold to her. He massaged the spot between his brows and didn't refuse her request. "Sure, I'll make the reservations at the restaurant."