

Read Novel Love Change Of Heart Chapter 221-230

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 221-Most of the employees from Constellation Tech were already downstairs by the time Leanna got to the hotel lobby, except for Elijah.

Minutes later, there was still no sign of him.

The employees from Constellation Tech started craning their necks and peering around as though expecting him to pop out of thin air, then whispered in a frenzy among themselves.

Just as the assistant was about to go upstairs to look for him, Elijah emerged from the hotel building. He chuckled apologetically, "Sorry to keep you all waiting. Shall we go?"

The restaurant was only a ten-minute walk away. As the employees began to make their way down the sidewalk, Elijah fell in step next to Leanna and said, "Come along now."

She nodded, but that was when she noticed the trace of blood crusted over the corner of his mouth. She gaped at him with wide eyes. "What happened to you?"

When he realized she was referring to the cut on his lip, he quickly turned to wipe off the dried blood. "Nothing. I bumped into something, I guess."

Leanna clutched his arm. "Don't move." With that, she hurriedly pulled out some alcohol wipes from her purse and handed them to him. "You'll infect the wound if you touch it with your bare hands. Here, sterilize the area."

Elijah didn't take the wipes. "I can't see where the wound is. Can you help me, Leanna?"

She hesitated for a moment, then nodded as she carefully cleaned his wound. Her gaze was focused, and her touch was gentle but firm.

While this was happening, Aidan stood not too far away, observing their exchange. A grim look passed over his face as the air around him dropped to freezing temperatures.

Even Jonathan had to take a wary step back in case the man combusted on the spot.

On the other hand, Leanna was oblivious to the hostility projected in her direction as she cleaned Elijah's wound. Still, when she caught Aidan's smoldering dark gaze, she paused in her ministrations. She stiffly drew her hand back and stammered, "I-I think we're done..."

Elijah flashed her a smile. "Thank you."

She rubbed the back of her neck self-consciously and looked elsewhere.

"I think the others should be halfway to the restaurant by now. Come on. Let's catch up with them," Elijah suddenly said.

"Alright."

An awkwardness hung between Leanna and Elijah as they walked side by side to the restaurant. Neither of them broke the silence, and Elijah, uncharacteristically, did not try to make any small talk.

When they finally got to the restaurant, they saw that the others had already taken their seats at their respective tables.

Leanna was meant to sit with Elijah at the executives' table. The executives of Constellation Tech were all young-ish men in their mid-twenties to early-thirties, and they were close to Elijah. When they took their seats, one of the executives immediately teased, "Had I known we were allowed to bring our girlfriends along, I'd have brought mine as well. Now I'm trapped here watching you rub your relationship in my face, President Parker."

"Yeah, President Parker. You could've given us a heads up so that we wouldn't feel so left out. This is borderline unethical!"

Elijah laughed. "Alright, give it a rest, boys. I told you guys beforehand that you could bring a plus-one."

At once, the executives started heckling him. One piped up, "Come on, prez, make the introductions already. Your girlfriend's looking a little awkward."

Elijah corrected, "Stop it, guys. She isn't my girlfriend yet."

Leanna smiled politely and nodded as she introduced herself, “Hello, everyone. I’m Leanna McKinney.”

The men at the table glanced at each other. From the looks of it, the great President Parker was still courting the girl. These men were at the top of their game in the industry. Fortunately, they were emotionally intelligent enough to stop fooling around. They returned Leanna’s greeting with matching graciousness and moved on to a different subject.

After a while, someone asked, “Miss McKinney, have we met before this? You look awfully familiar.”

His friend jested, “Come off it. You’re always using the same line when you meet a pretty girl.”

“No, I’m serious this time. I must have seen her somewhere before...”

Elijah offered helpfully, “Maybe it was at a launch event for Lux Jewelry. Leanna was a designer there.”

Then, one of the executives chimed in, “That makes sense. No wonder she looks so familiar. Haha...”

The men laughed good-naturedly before changing topics. The only one who seemed deep in thought was the executive who claimed to have seen Leanna. He was frowning as he searched his memories. I seem to have met her before she was a designer for Lux Jewelry.

After lunch, the employees went about their own itinerary for the day. Some of while others opted for a leisurely round of golf or archery.

The resort took up sprawling acres of land, and it understandably had enough room to accommodate a myriad of activities. It became the top choice for a young but prominent company such as Constellation Tech.

Leanna realized, of course, that she could no longer chalk her random run-in with Aidan up to a coincidence. She had to admit that the b*stard was well-accomplished if the many enterprises under the Pearson Group umbrella were anything to go by.

Just like that, Leanna and Elijah strolled around the resort while having a lighthearted conversation. When they arrived at the golf turf, however, a

young lady ran up to them and accosted Elijah. "President Parker! I'm so glad I bumped into you. I can't seem to make sense of golf, and I was wondering if you could teach me?"

Taken aback by her forward approach, Elijah stammered, "But I..."

The girl glanced at Leanna and batted her large doe-eyes, then asked innocently, "You won't mind if I borrow him for just a moment, will you? You can have him back after I get the hang of the basics."

Leanna gave her a small, humorless smile but did not make a reply. She could already tell the young lady was dangling herself in front of Elijah on purpose. However, seeing as Leanna was not his girlfriend, she couldn't very well turn down the girl's advances on his behalf.

When Leanna did not respond, the girl took it as a triumph and began whining while tugging on Elijah's arm. "Come on, President Parker. Everyone's waiting."

Elijah was not exceptionally skilled at saying no to these things, so with an exasperated sigh, he relented, "Fine."

"Thank you, President Parker!" The girl beamed, then turned to look at Leanna with glittering eyes. "And thank you, Miss."

The smile on Leanna's face grew frigid. Skank, she thought as she cocked a brow at the girl.

Oblivious, Elijah said, "Shall we go over to the golfing area, Leanna?"

She nodded. "Alright."

The girl dragged Elijah along as she bounded over to the turf while Leanna trudged after them. As she watched the both of them walking ahead of her, she couldn't help thinking what Aidan might say if he were in Elijah's shoes. He'd probably say something along the lines of, "Your ineptitude doesn't concern me." or "How did you get through the interview if you can't even manage something as simple as this?"

All in all, Leanna supposed that the one thing she could count on the b*stard was his sharp tongue and acerbic wit.

She sputtered at the thought of this, but she quickly regained composure a second later. Are you out of your mind, Leanna? Why are you thinking about him all of a sudden? She patted her face to snap out of her own reverie. She couldn't understand why he was still occupying her thoughts even though he had stopped bothering her for a while now.

Meanwhile, the girl who had accosted Elijah just now had dragged him over to the golf turf and jerked her chin in a gloating manner at her peers. Then, she turned to Elijah and said coquettishly, "President Parker, they said I should hold the club like this to get an optimum swing. Does this look right to you?"

Elijah stood behind her and kept a polite distance as he helped adjust her posture. "No, it should be like this."

"Like this?" She deliberately held the club wrong a few times.

Ultimately, Elijah let out a breath of frustration and chivalrously held her wrist to adjust her grip. "Here."

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 222-The girl feigned enlightenment as she exclaimed, "Oh, so that's how it's done! No wonder I couldn't get the right swing before. You're a brilliant teacher, President Parker!"

Elijah managed a smile and let go of her wrist.

She looked down and mumbled self-deprecatingly, "Gosh, I'm so stupid. I hope I didn't take up too much of your time."

"It's fine. You just need some practice, that's all," Elijah said politely.

He decided to leave because he didn't want to stay and coach her any longer. However, to round out her act, the girl gasped and purposely tripped forward, stumbling right into his arms.

Elijah caught her instinctively but frowned without saying anything.

The girl blushed and said slowly, "Ugh, I'm such a klutz. Thank you for catching me, President Parker."

He said curtly, "Seeing as you're alright, maybe you should get on your feet."

She reluctantly detached herself from him after hearing this.

When Elijah had walked away, the girl gripped her club and traipsed over to where her peers were gathered on the other side of the driving range.

One of them gave her a thumbs-up while praising her earnestly, "That was amazing, Miranda! I can't believe you got President Parker to toss that woman aside just to help you out with golf."

Miranda quirked her lips as a smug look flashed in her eyes. "Well, that was nothing. I have more tricks up my sleeve."

"You know, I'm still a little confused as to why President Parker would want someone else's old toy."

"What's so confusing about that? He probably likes a pretty face. I mean, celebrities sleep with rich and powerful men all the time. It's practically an open secret in the entertainment industry."

"That's true. I bet President Parker sees her as only a plaything. Nothing serious will come of it."

"But there must be something extraordinary about that woman if she could have history with someone from the Pearson Family. I just hope President Parker isn't on the losing end of the bargain."

Miranda was unperturbed. "How extraordinary can she be? That pretty face is probably the only thing she has going for her."

"I suppose that's an advantage in and of itself," someone mused wistfully. "Everyone was calling her a homewrecker and a tramp for a time."

While Miranda and her friends tore into salacious gossip, Elijah walked up to Leanna on the opposite end of the driving range. He said, "Sorry to keep you waiting, Leanna."

Leanna smiled. "Don't worry about it. It's not as if I had anything planned to begin with."

He glanced around the range and asked, "Do you play golf? Want me to teach you?"

She likely hadn't expected him to offer, for she gave him a bewildered look. "Huh?"

“It’s easier than you think. Why don’t you give it a try?”

Now that he had encouraged her, she thought it might be rude to turn him down. After all, she was going to try golf one way or another, so it was pointless to refuse his coaching when he offered. Nodding, she said, “Okay.”

Then, Elijah took out the clubs from the locker. He was about to teach Leanna the basics when his assistant hurried out onto the range and whispered something to him. Whatever it was made him blanch, and he quickly said, “Tell them I’ll be there in just a moment.”

The assistant nodded and hastily went back.

Elijah set the clubs down and apologized to Leanna, “I’m sorry, but something came up. Stay here and wait for me. I’ll be right back.”

“Go,” Leanna replied understandingly.

He opened his mouth as though to say something, but in the end, he slipped away without another word.

Leanna looked around the turf, sat on one of the benches, and then pulled out her phone to text Zoe.

It took all but a second for Zoe to call her. “Hey, Sweetie. I can’t text right now. Did something happen? Are you alright?”

“You’re not actually dropping college kids home, are you?” Leanna asked doubtfully.

Zoe sputtered on the other line. “I was joking! I can’t believe you’d fall for that.”

“So, then, what are you doing?”

“I’m applying makeup; I have a very important date tonight. What about you? Are you and Elijah having a good time? Is he boyfriend material?”

Leanna pursed her lips as she paused in thought. She looked up at the cerulean sky and sighed, then said, “Would you believe me if I told you that I ran into Aidan here?”

There was no answer from Zoe at first, then she replied, “I actually would.”

After Aidan threatened her the last time, Zoe decided that the b*stard would go to any length just wanted. She didn't have the heart to tell Leanna about it; rather, she was coerced into secrecy.

Leanna exhaled. "I almost believed he followed me all the way here, but as it turned out, I was reading too much into it. Thank goodness I didn't confront him about it, otherwise he'd have mocked me for thinking so highly of myself."

Zoe inquired carefully, "But what if he really did follow you all the way there?"

"No," Leanna said, shaking her head. "I asked the hotel manager. Apparently, this resort is part of the Pearson Group. Surprise, surprise. Aidan's only here for the yearly assessment. Besides, he got here last night, so he couldn't possibly have tracked my schedule."

"Huh... Well, that sure is a coincidence, then." Zoe would sooner believe in the existence of elves than believe Aidan's presence at the resort was nothing more than a coincidence. That said, perhaps it was less of a coincidence and more of a mole's handiwork. Specifically, a mole from Elijah's company.

In light of this, Zoe couldn't help but click her tongue in dismay. She should have expected something like this from that lowlife Aidan.

Presently, Leanna clutched her phone and stared blankly at the sprawling hills of the golfing turf. For a moment, she said nothing, then, "Zoe, if everything at the workshop is going well, I'd like to go back to Weavside in two days."

Zoe froze. "Weavside? You've been there before, haven't you?"

Leanna nodded. "They mentioned that the demolition and rebuilding work would kick in after the new year, so I'd like to drop by to take a look before then."

"Well, it should be fine, seeing as Louis is away on holiday and the workshop has enough staffers. You should go and get a breather." Having said this, Zoe quickly remarked on how she should be changing into her date outfit and promptly hung up.

Leanna set her phone down and sat on the bench. She let her mind wander as she stared into the distance.

Elijah did not come back even though some time had passed. She was starting to get bored, so she rose to her feet and loosened her joints. Then, she noticed the golf clubs Elijah had left in the corner.

She walked over and grabbed one of the clubs, then made a swinging motion. I've seen players do this on TV. Should be easy enough to imitate, she told herself.

Alas, she was proven wrong when she tried swinging a few times and missed the golf ball entirely.

She tutted in annoyance. This exercise is pointless, she concluded indignantly.

Just as she was about to give up, a large hand covered hers while she gripped the club. She turned around in shock to look at the b*stard who had decided to swoop in without notice.

Aidan paid no attention to her sharp gaze and merely guided her hand lower down the club. "You're supposed to grip here. Even a child knows this. I'm starting to think your head is more of an ornament than an actual vessel for your brains, if you had any, that is."

Leanna gaped at him incredulously. It seemed she was wrong earlier; he was far more detestable than she had made him in her head.

She tried to pull her hand out of his grip as she snapped, "I didn't ask for pointers, President Pearson. Let go."

An unaffected Aidan shot back, "I was merely walking by when I saw an idiot swinging a golf club like a madwoman on my driving range. I had to stop you before your stupidity puts the resort's image into jeopardy."

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 223-Leanna had half a mind to swing the club right into the back of his head if it didn't constitute murder.

Aidan again covered her hand, holding it firmly as he snapped, "Don't look at me; look ahead."

Not at all bothered by her obvious aversion toward him, he reached around her to grip the club, but in doing so, he caged Leanna in his arms. He asked thoughtfully, "Did Elijah decide to just leave you here on your own?"

She countered matter-of-factly, "He probably didn't think a scumbag would approach me in broad daylight."

Aidan scoffed. "Don't blow things out of proportion. I'm only trying to teach you how to golf."

She shot back, "Thanks, but no thanks."

"It'll look bad on me if you don't even know how to swing, even though we've been married for three years," he pointed out icily.

Leanna was rendered speechless by how brazen he was.

Not wanting to waste another moment on inane small talk, Aidan instructed curtly, "Bend your waist and keep your grip on the club."

She took a deep breath. She couldn't get out of his arms now, so she did as she was told. A few seconds later, she couldn't help saying, "I have a question, President Pearson."

Aidan kept his gaze on the club and looked focused as he asked icily, "What?"

"Do coaches normally keep such a close distance to their pupils during golf training?"

He raised his brow. "Yes."

A small smile curled on Leanna's lips as she said, "I saw Elijah teach someone how to play golf earlier, and it's nothing like this."

As things were, Aidan was but an inch away from pressing up against her entirely, which was further proof of his scumbag tendencies.

However, he was not in the least bit guilty as he cast her a frosty sideways glance. "That just means Elijah isn't much of a golfer. It's either that or he did not intend to teach that person how to play golf."

She felt the vein near her temple start to bulge.

Leanna was about to argue with Aidan when he suddenly released her and took a step back. "Forget it. Your lack of talent in golf makes this session wholly frivolous. It'd be a waste of my time to try and coach you."

With that, he spun on his heels and walked away.

She glowered at his back and gritted her teeth. Never had she been so exasperated and angry that she was at a complete loss for words. He's insufferable!

Leanna tossed the club back into the holder, realizing everyone on the driving range had gone. She took deep breaths and regained composure, but when she was about to leave, Elijah came through the entryway and said, "I'm so sorry that took a while, Leanna. Shall we pick up where we left off with the golf?"

She turned him down without hesitation. "No, it's fine. I tried swinging on my own just now. I guess the sport just doesn't agree with me."

Elijah did not take this to heart and merely suggested, "How about we just stroll around the resort, then?"

They did just that, and by the end of their stroll, the sky was already darkening with twilight colors.

Most employees had returned to their hotel rooms to prepare for the gala tonight. Elijah walked Leanna back to her room and glanced at the time on his wristwatch. "Another two hours to go before the gala starts. Get some rest. I'll come and pick you up later."

She was rather tired as well, so she nodded and said, "Okay."

When Leanna entered the room and shut the door, she trudged over to the bed and set her alarm for an hour, then slipped under the covers to take a short nap.

However, her eyes had only just fluttered closed when she heard the sound of a cartoon playing from the balcony, and the cacophony of exaggerated voices was making it hard for her to drift into sleep.

Leanna bolted upright, got out of bed, and slipped into her shoes before padding out to the balcony. That was when she realized that the sound was coming from next door.

While she had seen the b*stard on the same floor, not earlier this morning, she couldn't be sure he was actually staying here. After all, he was only here

to assess the resort's overall performance. She had run into him this morning while he was inspecting the room next door for all she knew.

More importantly, she didn't peg him as the type to watch cartoons.

Leanna returned to her room and called the front desk, then told the receptionist to give the guest next door a gentle reminder to turn down the volume on their television. The receptionist agreed and promised to handle the matter swiftly.

Reassured, Leanna shuffled back to bed and tried to get some rest. Unfortunately, she had only lied down for about ten minutes when the noise started again from next door. This time, it was accompanied by thumping sounds.

She groaned as she opened her eyes, exhaustion, and frustration washing over her. Of course, her luck would take a turn for worse after she ran into Aidan. It was as though seeing him had granted her an affinity for unpleasant experiences and nothing more.

The thumping and the noise continued while she lay in bed. At last, she pushed the covers off her, stormed out of the room, and then knocked on the door next to hers.

When the door swung open, she immediately regretted her decision to confront the person.

Presently, Aidan eyed her without much interest. However, his eyes glimmered darkly like she had come to his room for other not-so-obvious reasons.

Leanna let out a bark of laughter. "Can you please keep it down, President Pearson? Some of us are trying to sleep here."

Aidan appraised her with a raised brow as if he was sure she had come with an ulterior motive. "I'm afraid I've heard that excuse before. Try another one."

She gaped at him with wide eyes. Excuse? Don't flatter yourself, you jerk!

Taking a deep breath, she forced herself to calm down as she bit out grimly, "You know exactly what you did, President Pearson. Don't you think you're being—"

“Actually, I have no idea what I did. Care to elaborate?”

At that moment, the hotel manager Leanna had met previously came walking out of the room, and behind him were two men who looked like executives. They had heard the commotion and wanted to see what was happening. “Is something the matter, Miss?” the hotel manager asked in concern.

Leanna froze, and the anger drained out of her voice. “I’m staying next door, and I came to see what all the noise was about…”

“Noise?” The manager frowned. “We were having a meeting this whole time, and we didn’t hear any noise at all.”

She was flustered when she heard this. When she saw Aidan come to the door just now, she had been sure that he was the one who made all that noise on purpose. She certainly never expected the hotel manager and the rest of the executives to be in the room having a meeting with him.

Looking supremely pleased with himself, Aidan crossed his arms and leaned against the door. He even raised a brow at her in wordless mockery.

Leanna pursed her lips, and after a long moment, she said, “I’m sorry. I must have gotten the wrong room.”

Aidan craned his neck and asked, “Come again?”

Her fists clenched at her sides as she grunted, “I’m sorry for bothering you, President Pearson!”

“You don’t look like you mean it,” he pointed out sardonically.

She froze at this. For some reason, she remembered someone saying something similar to her on a previous occasion.

But now was not the time for her to search her memories for some ambiguous line. She brushed past Aidan and into the room, then bowed her head in apology to the other executives inside the room. “I’m

sorry for interrupting the meeting. Please don’t mind me and carry on.”

Everyone in the room let out a sigh of relief when Leanna finally left. They glanced at Jonathan at the same time, and the question was clear in their eyes. Is this what President Pearson and his wife normally do for fun?

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 224-Leanna went back to her room, but she couldn't sleep anymore. She stared at the wall for a while and looked at the balcony. Nothing. No movements. Was I hallucinating? This is odd. There's no reason for Aidan and the hotel's top brass to lie to me, though... unless I'm overestimating his ethics.

She shook her head and went to get a hot shower to relieve her tension. Just as she was drying her hair after a shower, someone rang the doorbell.

Leanna thought it was Elijah. She turned her blow dryer off and said that she was coming. Then, she changed into her clothes and went to open the door, but the first thing she saw after opening the door was the hotel's manager. Standing behind him was an inscrutable Aidan. His hand was in his pocket while his focus was on the ground.

The manager smiled. "Ma'am, you said you heard something? Is everything well?"

Leanna forced a smile. "It's alright. I was hearing things..."

Aidan looked at her and said coolly, "You should try to solve your problems instead of running away from them."

Shut up, she thought.

The manager said, "May we head inside, ma'am? If something is wrong with the room, we can move you to another one."

Leanna mused over it and nodded. I should let him check the room. If I hear that sound one more time at night, I'll lose my mind. She let them in.

The manager checked the room and knocked on the wall. He said, "There's nothing wrong with the room, ma'am, but you can have a change of rooms if you want. Someone will check this room again later. As a token of apology, we'll give you a free nighttime sightseeing session."

Leanna glanced at Aidan and smiled. "Thanks, but it's alright. The change of room is enough."

"Um..." C'mon, come up with an excuse. "Ma'am, it is our fault this happened, and you deserve compensation. Our motto is to make every guest feel at home. Please, you must take the gift."

Leanna was about to say something, but Aidan's phone rang. He picked it up and left the room. "What is it?" The caller said something, to which he answered, "Tell him to wait for me. I'll be there in ten."

After he was gone, Leanna shifted her gaze to notice that the manager was still looking at her.

There was a hint of desperation in his eyes. "Ma'am—"

Leanna asked, "Is he leaving?"

"Yes. He's leaving for Highside tonight."

She pursed her lips and contemplated on her answer.

The manager added, "Ma'am, nighttime sightseeing is one of our most iconic events, so..."

"Sure. Thanks."

As he didn't expect her to say yes so quickly, he was caught by surprise before he responded a few moments later, "Very well. Seven to eight in the evening is the perfect time for sightseeing. It's almost time now. Someone will lead you there."

Leanna said, "It's alright. I can get there by myself." A pause later, she asked, "Can I bring a friend with me?"

The manager hesitated. "Um..."

"I can't? Forget it then. It's late, and I don't want to get into any danger, so..."

"Please, don't!" The manager wiped his forehead. This is beyond my pay grade. "Of course you can. Of course. You call the shots, ma'am."

She smiled. "I see. Thank you."

He coughed. "I'll take your luggage. Your new room is upstairs."

"I can do it myself." Leanna didn't have a lot of stuff, so she could shove it all in her bag and that was it. Once she was done, they made a move.

Once they exited the elevator, the manager said, "Come with me, ma'am."

After they entered the new room, Leanna looked around and scratched her brows. "I want a room switch. This is large."

The manager apologized, "Sorry, but it's a full house, ma'am. This is the only one left. It's not the best, but please bear with it."

"You're being modest. This looks like the best of the best." This room can house about fifty people. It's like living in a mansion all by myself.

The manager continued, "I'll be leaving now. There's work to be done. Call the reception if you need anything." He closed the door and left right away, just in case Leanna refused this room.

Leanna stood around and heaved a long sigh. She didn't want to be paranoid, but everything that happened today felt off.

She gave Aidan the benefit of the doubt and excluded the possibility of his involvement in these 'coincidences', but if he were to show up during the sightseeing, then it would confirm her suspicion that Aidan wouldn't stop harassing her. He was just changing his ways at most.

She placed her stuff down and was on her way downstairs when she saw Elijah coming out of his room. He's going to look for me.

Leanna called out to him.

Elijah looked at her, surprised. "That's not where your room is, Leanna."

She answered, "Yeah. My room's faulty, so I got a switch."

He fell silent. Aidan. He didn't press her for answers, though, and instead extended his arm before smiling at her. "Almost time for the banquet. Let's go."

Leanna hesitated for a few moments, after which she held his arm.

The banquet was held in the ballroom. When Elijah and Leanna made their appearance, the crowd almost roared.

She was in a black dress, and her makeup was exquisite. Nobody could avert their gaze since she shone like a diamond in the room as she held his arm and smiled at everyone. They looked like a perfect couple.

Suddenly, a man in the distance said, "Oh, I remember where I saw her now."

The person beside him asked, "She used to work for Lux Jewelry. Where else could you have seen her?"

The man answered, "I think it was during a banquet? Details escape me, but I think she's Mr. Pearson's wife. You know, the boss of Pearson Group."

The news shook the people around him, and they turned their gazes of disbelief to him. "What?"

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 225-The hotel manager went to Aidan's room and reported, "Sir, the madam has agreed to join the session, but..."

Aidan was on the sofa. "But what?" he asked calmly.

The manager felt his heart skip a beat, but he said, "But she wants to bring a friend with her."

Aidan's eyes narrowed dangerously, and he tapped his fingers on his knee. The man was deliberating over something, and then he asked, "When is she going to the session?"

"She's attending Constellation Tech's banquet. My guess is after the banquet has ended."

Aidan stood up. "Make the preparations. If Elijah is going with her, stop him."

...

The banquet was underway. Constellation Tech's top brass made their speeches, and Elijah was the last in that line. After the boring speeches were done, it was time for the wheel of fortune.

Leanna looked at the time. It was already half past seven. She leaned in and whispered, "I need to go, Elijah."

Elijah paused for a moment. "Where?"

"Somewhere. I need to settle something." She gave him a smile.

Elijah knew it had something to do with Aidan. A moment of silence later, he said, "I'll go with you."

Leanna answered, "It's fine. I can handle this myself."

Elijah's assistant came to him and said the next event was starting. As the company's boss, Elijah couldn't leave when the event was underway.

Leanna said, "Go. I'll be leaving now."

Elijah had no choice but to nod. "Call me when you're done. I'll pick you up."

"Sure."

She left the ballroom and went down to the first floor. A car was already waiting for her outside.

A guy approached her. "Might you be Miss McKinney?"

"Yes."

"I work for the resort. I'll be taking you to the observatory deck now."

She cracked a slight smile. "Thank you."

The crew member drove up a slope. Ten minutes later, they came to a clearing, and what stood before them was a villa decked out with hot springs. There were a lot of stargazing gear in the garden as well as some tents. If the weather agreed with them, this would be a good place for sightseeing.

The crew member got out of the car and led her to the villa. "Take a seat, ma'am."

Leanna looked at the food and wine on the table, and she nodded as thanks. Once the guy was gone, she took her seat and stared coolly at the wine.

A while later, she heard a loud explosion in the sky in the distance. She turned around and saw fireworks blooming in the heavens and shining on the resort. The little show caught her by surprise.

The fireworks kept going off like flowers of flame that the sounds of footsteps coming from behind. I knew this would happen.

She swiveled around, ready to snap, but it was just the guy who took her to this villa.

The guy was a little bit surprised by her turning around and getting ready to yell at him. "Is everything alright, Miss McKinney?"

Well, this is awkward. She picked the wine up and took a sip, and then she laughed dryly. "What is it?"

The man handed her a gift box. "A token of apology from us. Please, take it."

Leanna didn't take it immediately. She then realized something. "About the fireworks..."

"It's included in the sightseeing."

"I see." Leanna wanted to hide in a hole.

The guy said, "You can stay the night in the villa. I'll pick you up tomorrow morning."

She shook her head. "I'll have to go back in a bit."

"I'll be waiting in the car, then."

He left, and she finished the wine. Ever since she ran into Aidan here, Leanna couldn't stay calm anymore.

She kept thinking he would come after her, and everything that happened earlier seemed to be his elaborate little plan, but reality told her she was just reading too much into it. What happened might seem unbelievable, but they were actually just coincidences.

She heaved a sigh and poured herself another glass of wine. Seems like he has affected me a lot. I'm getting oversensitive. She got up and headed to the observatory deck. Leanna leaned against the balcony and stared at the motes of light in the distance.

The night breeze felt chilly, and the mountain's low temperature didn't help. It didn't take long for her to start sneezing. Her limbs felt chilly.

Just when she was about to leave, someone appeared beside her. "Seems like you're disappointed that I didn't show up," he said coolly.

"I thought you had gone back to Highside," she said.

He gave her a glance. "You knew I was lying, and yet you still came."

"I..." She had no answer for that.

Leanna wanted to expose him right here and now to humiliate him, but for some reason, she lost the interest to do so.

She pulled her coat closer. "A good show, Mr. Pearson. I would have believed it was all a coincidence had you not shown up. What made you change your mind?"

He put one hand in his pocket and stared ahead. "I couldn't take it," he said coolly.

All the wine she drank got to her head. She wondered what he was talking about. "You couldn't take what?"

"Seeing you all alone."

She laughed but said nothing.

Aidan continued, "Did you forget what day it is?"

That only confused her more. "What day is it?"

"It's our wedding anniversary."

She retorted, "Yeah, right. The anniversary was six months ago."

He gazed at her. "I see you haven't forgotten."

Of course she didn't forget. In fact, she remembered that day like it happened yesterday. She proposed the divorce on the same day. It was her 'gift' to him.

Before she could say anything, Aidan uttered, "This is to make up for our lost first anniversary."

And then silence fell. Even the air stopped moving for a moment. She stared at him dumbly, feeling like the world had come to a standstill.

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 226-He met her gaze, cocked his eyebrow, and smiled. "Did you regret it?"

She looked away nervously. “R-Regret what?” she stammered.

“Refusing me.”

“No. You’re reading too much into it.”

He looked ahead again. “The look in your eyes tells me otherwise,” he said calmly.

Huh. She coughed and stopped talking. Don’t wanna say anything wrong. But I’m confused. “Why? Why do you do this? I thought you ran out of patience with me.”

“And you believed that?”

Goddammit, what a pain. He’s more brazen than I thought. She pursed her lips and said, “I’m grateful for what you did. I have to admit that I’m surprised and…” I’m moved. She didn’t say that out loud. A pause later, she continued, “But it’s been six months since we got divorced, so—”

He interrupted, “Leanna, don’t you see it? I’m trying to woo you.”

I must be hearing things. “I beg your pardon?”

He turned around and leaned against the guardrail, his eyes on her. “I’ll make it up for the rest of the lost anniversaries too.”

Leanna froze. She had no idea what to say at first, but a moment later, she answered, “President Pearson, whatever you’re doing means nothing to me. You’re disturbing my quiet life.”

“Your quiet life? You mean dating Elijah?” He said, “He’s not as simple as he looks. Do you think he could have founded Constellation in a few years all by himself?”

“None of my business. I don’t care.”

Aidan asked slowly, “Do you know why you don’t care about it?”

She took a deep breath. “It’s his private affair. I don’t have any reason to—”

“Because you don’t like him, so you won’t care no matter what he does.”

Leanna pursed her lips silently.

He continued, "There's no quiet life if you be with someone you don't like."

"Wrong. My quiet life doesn't involve him." She looked at him in silence. "My quiet life involves you not showing up."

Aidan smiled. "Ask what you really want before saying anything."

Dammit. He just keeps throwing out random stuff. Somewhere, somehow, it was no longer hard for him to see through her. He could expose her lies every single time. "I made it clear to you, President Pearson. The problem isn't about love or affection. It's—"

"Not as complicated as you think. You say you were unhappy with the marriage, so I'm making it up to you. Once you calm down and forgive me, then it's all water under the bridge."

She laughed. "Do you think it's actually that simple?"

No, no it's not. He whispered, "I'll settle everything you're worried about."

"I know. I know you can get rid of Anna and even Sienna, but so what if you do? There are some things you can never change."

"And how would you know that?"

She refused to argue with him. "Elijah is still waiting for me. I need to go back."

She turned around, and he held her wrist. "I'll take you there."

"No, thanks. Someone else can do—"

"I sent him on his merry way."

Leanna clenched her fists. Damn it! He has no shame! "Still don't want your help." She flung his hand away and headed into the darkness, but Leanna regretted her decision a moment later.

The path leading downhill was dark. There were no lights on the way, and her flashlight was too weak to shine through the darkness. She could hear the

rustle of leaves in the shadow. In normal times, it would have been relaxing, but the rustle was terrifying in the dark.

She pulled her coat closer around her and hastened her pace while cursing Aidan silently. Damn him. I should never have come here. Me and my stupid plan to expose him. Look what that has gotten me into.

Fury welled up within her, and her pace quickened. Suddenly, the bush beside her rustled, and something leaped into the air. She let out a gasp and took one step back only to fall into someone's embrace.

Aidan wrapped his arm around her waist and patted her back. He chuckled. "That was just a stray cat. Nothing to be scared about."

Leanna was already mad enough, and Aidan's mockery made her snap. She stomped on his foot. "You b*stard!"

He grunted but didn't let her go. "What is it with you and stomping on my feet?"

"I would have punched you in the face if I could." She shoved him away. "Now let me go."

"Hey, you're the one who came to me. That wasn't my fault."

She gnashed her teeth. "You tailed me just for this very moment."

"This is the only path downhill. I wasn't following you."

"That would sound more convincing if you weren't holding me."

"I'm not a saint. I don't reject a good gift."

That's it. She pinched his waist. They were married for three years, and she knew all his sensitive spots.

He tightened his hold on her and growled dangerously, "I'll do you right here, right now. Try me."

"Oh, I know you'd do that. You're an animal, after all."

He pursed his lips for a moment and let her go in the end.

She sneered at him and kept on going downhill. A few minutes later, she ran into a few boulders blocking out the only path downhill. These weren't here when I came. She turned around. "Is this what you did?"

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 227-Aidan answered slowly and calmly, "No. I didn't do this."

Leanna chortled. She didn't believe him at all. She approached the boulders and shone her flashlight around to look for a way out.

At the same time, Aidan said, "We're on a mountain path. It's normal that boulders roll around and block the way. Someone will clean them up in the morning."

She ignored him. Leanna took her heels off and tried to climb over the boulders.

As Aidan watched her climb, he poked his teeth with his tongue and pinched his nose before going ahead.

There were a lot of stones around the boulder. Not only did Leanna fail to climb across, but her feet were also injured as well. She was going for another attempt, but someone suddenly picked her up and took her down from the boulders.

"I have no idea what you think sometimes."

She snarkily retorted, "And I have no idea how you can do something like this without feeling any shame."

Aidan put her down on the ground. "I didn't do this."

"Your words mean nothing to me."

He put a hand on his shoulders and stared down at her. "Suit yourself." He licked his lips. A few moments later, Aidan added, "There's no way out tonight, but there's a place to stay on the mountain."

Wanna come?"

Without hesitation, she answered, "No."

“Sure. Stay here until sunrise, then. I’ll be going now.” He turned around and walked into the darkness.

She clenched her teeth and whipped her phone out to call someone, but there was no signal in the mountains. She tried calling someone a few times near the boulders but to no avail. In the end, she had no strength left, and her phone was nearly dead. Leanna sat down and teared up.

The winds stopped howling eventually. An eerie silence set in, and light snow started falling.

Leanna held her knees and cursed Aidan in her heart. He loves me? Yeah, right. He leaves me behind when I need him the most. His love means nothing but burden.

The more she thought about it, the more unfair this whole thing felt. The darkness around her amplified the fear she felt. Waves of terror crashed over her, and she had to bite her lip down to stop herself from crying.

Just when she thought she might die out here, she heard the sounds of footsteps coming closer. Leanna looked up and saw Aidan in front of her.

He pulled his pants up and knelt on one knee. The weak light from his cellphone’s flashlight shone on her teary eyes. “Wanna come?” he asked slowly.

Leanna turned away and started sobbing. Eventually, the sobs turned into uncontrollable cries.

A little smile curled Aidan’s lips. “Alright, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have left you behind. I didn’t to call me, but you just had to be so stubborn.”

Leanna noticed the laughter in his voice, and it made her angrier. She picked a on his expensive suit. “I didn’t call you. Wh did you come back?”

“But you did call me.”

“I didn’t!”

“I heard it.”

“I said I didn’t call you! I—”

He held her in his embrace and whispered, "But you've been calling out to me in your heart."

She sniffled. "I was cursing you!"

A chortle escaped Aidan's lips as he held her up. "Whatever you say."

She noticed him taking her up the mountain, and she refused, "I'm not huge mansion there, and there's only two of us. He must be up to something!"

He saw through her. "There's a landline in the mansion, and it's connected to the hotel. Do you want to stay here and die from the cold, or do you wanna go back?"

I see. "Are you sure the landline's still functioning?" He might tell me the landline's broken after we get there.

He said, "I told you, I didn't do this."

Leanna didn't believe him, and he didn't bother explaining. They went on in silence, and a moment later, Leanna's phone died. They were plunged into darkness.

Weirdly enough, she wasn't as scared as she had been. The sound of his heartbeat sang beside her ear, and she eased up eventually, but it was then she noticed something touching her lips for a brief moment. A long silence later, she asked, "What did you just do?"

"Holding you in my arms, obviously."

"You kissed me, didn't you?"

Aidan answered without missing a beat, "There are a lot of mosquitoes here. One of them must have bitten you."

Leanna sneered. You started this. A few moments later, a loud slap rang out in the air of the woods, and echoes bounced back from the trees.

Aidan stopped in his tracks. Even in his silence, Leanna could feel his fury. "The mosquitoes sure can make a ruckus. Did you hear anything?"

Aidan clenched his teeth. "Leanna!"

She asked innocently, "What is it? Did a mosquito bite you too?"

Aidan pursed his lips. After all, he was the one who started this, so he went on ahead without saying anything else.

They reached the villa a few minutes later, and Leanna felt her world brighten up. "You can put me down now. I can go on my own."

"But the mosquitoes might come back."

"I don't think so. Bright lights aren't friendly to mosquitoes."

Aidan chortled. He didn't answer her, but he didn't let her down either. After they entered the villa, he put her down on the sofa and took the landline to call the hotel staff.

She perked up. When she heard him telling someone to clear the obstacle, Leanna finally felt relief in her heart. He's probably telling the truth. He didn't put the obstacles there.

Aidan approached her and broke her train of thought. As he took his coat off and tossed it on the sofa, Leanna's eyes went wide with shock. I knew it! He's still an animal! Finally showing me his true colors, huh?

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 228-Just when Leanna was about to run away, Aidan stopped in front of her and picked a pillow up. Then he held her ankle and put it on the pillow.

She reflexively wanted to retreat, but he held her leg. "You're bleeding," he said plainly.

Leanna looked at her leg to find it looking bloody. Probably happened when I was climbing the boulders. She held a pillow. "And it's your fault."

Aidan said nothing. He took the medical kit from the table behind him and cleaned her wound.

She rested her chin on the pillow as she stared at him quietly.

He looked unusually gentle under the light. Putting everything aside, Aidan was a charming man. Until he opens his mouth.

She finally believed Daphne. All the scandals about him were fake, and he was just playing along. Almost nobody could survive his mockery, after all.

And then he coolly said, "Don't stare at me, unless you plan on staying the night."

Is sex all he thinks of?

He placed the medical kit back in its place after her wound was cleaned. "It'll take about an hour." He looked at the time. "You can sleep if you want to."

She kept her eyes wide open. "Thanks, but I'm not sleepy."

Aidan knew what she was thinking. He chuckled and went into the bathroom.

She heard the sound of running water coming from the bathroom. It was supposed to be a regular sound, but the overwhelming silence of the villa unnerved her. Her throat was parched so she wanted to get some water, but then she saw his clothes beside her, and there was dust on it.

No wonder he wanted to take a shower. She moved to the other side of the sofa in an attempt to stop hearing the sounds coming from the bathroom. Eventually, the water stopped flowing, and she heaved a quiet sigh of relief.

At the same time, she heard the sounds of hurried footsteps. Elijah asked, "Are you alright, Leanna?"

Leanna turned around and saw Elijah and the manager. She nodded. "I'm fine."

Elijah looked at her bandaged leg and frowned. "Let's go, Leanna." He approached her.

Leanna got down from the sofa. The moment her foot hit the ground, the pain made her temples throb. She didn't feel anything before that, however.

Elijah came and held her. He pursed his lips and apologized, "Sorry for this." Before she could say anything, he carried her in his arms.

Leanna was surprised. Apparently, she didn't expect that from him.

They were just about to leave, but Elijah saw Aidan leaning against the bathroom's door, wearing nothing but a robe. He was staring at them, and Elijah pursed his lips for a moment before leaving.

After they were gone, the manager came up and wiped the sweat from his forehead. "We couldn't stop him."

Aidan answered coolly, "It's alright. Whether he comes or not won't change the outcome anyway."

...

After Leanna got into the passenger seat, Elijah went into the driver's seat and drove them away.

Leanna asked, "How did you find me?"

He answered, "You didn't come back and I couldn't reach you on your phone, so I asked the hotel staff."

What he didn't say was that he came in a hurry because he saw the fireworks.

He knew everything that happened in the resort was Aidan's plan. He also knew Leanna still liked him, and it made him panic. It was possible she might relent and give Aidan another chance.

And that was why he left before the gala ended. The hotel called, and they finally told him where she was.

A while later, Leanna said, "Thank you."

Elijah smiled. "I should have realized this sooner and came looking for you. It's my fault."

A sigh escaped Leanna's lips. "It's my fault too. I thought I could handle this, but all I did was make a mess out of it." I overestimated my abilities.

"Don't beat yourself over it. A big part of this is my fault. If I just paid more attention to the gala, none of this would have happened."

A slight frown furrowed Leanna's brows. "So we've stepped into his trap the moment this gala started?"

Elijah laughed. "It's my fault. I should have paid more attention. The guy who arranged the venue was bought off."

Leanna knew what happened was all part of Aidan's plan, but she thought he wouldn't do anything to anyone who wasn't related to her. She thought wrong. He dragged Constellation into this? That's going to ruin a lot of people's lives. Damn him. He never thinks about the consequences of his actions.

Elijah noticed her silence, and he clenched his steering wheel tighter. "Pay it no mind. He's the kind of person who would do anything to get what he wants, in business or otherwise."

The path wasn't too long, and with the obstacles out of the way, they arrived at the hotel a while later.

Elijah sent her off all the way to her room. "Get some sleep. I'll take you back to Highside tomorrow morning."

"But the gala only ends in the afternoon."

Elijah smiled. "It's alright. The most important event is over. It doesn't matter even if I'm absent tomorrow."

A moment of silence later, she said, "Elijah..."

Elijah knew what she was going to say, so he interrupted her. "I'm doing this out of my own free will. Don't apologize, and don't feel guilty. All I need is a chance. That's all."

She opened her mouth and was about to say something, but then she saw someone in a white robe emerging from the elevator. His face was inscrutable, and he passed them by without sparing them a look. Then he went into the room next door.

Oh. So, that's why he wanted me to switch rooms.

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 229-After Aidan closed the door behind him, Leanna shifted her gaze back to Elijah. She pursed her lips for a moment and said, "I've been thinking, and I thought we should start by getting along with each other, but I'm sorry."

"And we're just starting to get along. You don't have to reject me right away."

Leanna shook her head. She couldn't try to date Elijah while she still had ties with Aidan. It would be unfair to him.

Elijah said, "I know what you're thinking. But you and he are two different people."

"No, that's not what I meant." She thought about her answer for a moment. "I used to think I know what I want, and I never looked back after the divorce, but now..."

"Now you're wavering."

Leanna couldn't answer for a moment. She was wavering.

For a while in the past, she thought Aidan liked her less than the files in his office, but now she realized he might not just be fooling around. It was tonight that she saw the real him, when before he was hidden beneath layers of veil.

Her silence was affirmation. Elijah paused for a moment, then he said, "You guys were married for three years. It's normal that you have lingering feelings for him. I can wait, Leanna. Until you've forgotten all about him. Until you can start anew."

Start anew. That's what I always tell myself. She thought she could forget the past if she started a new life, but now she realized things didn't work that way.

There were no fresh starts. Starting a new life didn't mean the past would be deleted from memory.

For example, her marriage with Aidan. She knew he despised her, but after living with him for years, Leanna slowly fell for him. Even though she kept calling him names, some part of her would always fall for him. I wish things were so easy.

Elijah said, "It's late. Get some sleep. We'll talk later."

Leanna was indeed tired, so she nodded. "You too."

She went back into her room and lay on the bed. There was nothing to do but stare at the ceiling. Half an hour later, someone rang the doorbell. She went over and opened the door only to be met by a staff member.

He handed her a gift box and a phone. "You left these in the villa."

She looked at the phone, and realization struck her. Oh, I left these on the sofa. The box was the gift that the staff member said was for her. Judging from the situation, this is from Aidan. She took the items from the staff member. "Thank you."

The staff member bowed to her and left.

Leanna closed the door. The wound on her leg was reopening, so she hopped and skipped inside until she got to her bed. First, she took the charger out of her bag and plugged it into her phone before turning around to look at the gift box on the bed.

She stared at the box for a while, wondering if she should open it. Hey, it's already here, so I might as well take a look, right? Throwing this out is gonna be a waste. She wanted to sate her curiosity.

Leanna unraveled the ribbon and took the lid off.

The box contained the chocolate she had been craving ever since she finished the one Aidan brought back from his trip to Gerland, back when they were still married. There was also a necklace and a card inside.

Leanna opened the card. A line that read, 'Third Anniversary' was written on it.

The font was powerful, and the content was simple.

It's his handwriting, and it looks like something he would come up with. She stared at the card for a while, and then an idea popped into her mind. Wait. Is this the gift he wanted to give me on the anniversary?

That's probably it. No reason to write 'Third Anniversary' otherwise. Man, he's stingy. He said the fireworks were to make up for the lost first anniversary, but this gift is meant for the third anniversary.

A smile curled her lips. She unwrapped a piece of chocolate and popped as I remember it.

At this moment, her phone vibrated. Okay. My phone's charged. She took it and saw a lot of missed calls from Elijah. Zoe had texted her a ton as well. She looked at the time. It's not too late. She's still awake, I guess. Leanna called her.

The call went through easily. Zoe said, "Are you alright, Nana? Elijah said you went to see Aidan, and he couldn't get through to you. What happened?"

"It's a long story."

"And I can't sleep. Tell me all about it."

Man. She coughed and changed the subject, "How did your date go?"

That successfully shifted Zoe's attention. Her date didn't go well, and she grumbled, "I should have helped the college students. Daniel's an idiot."

"What happened?"

"He asked Louis and I out for dinner. Before we left, Louis said he had something to do, so I had to go alone. I thought it was awkward, but at least I was given an opening. But guess what Daniel said when I got to the restaurant?"

Leanna asked, "His canned foods are almost expired?"

Zoe sneered. "Worse than that. So all the food was served, and he told me his religion tells him he can't have meat on certain days. Today is one of those days. He got up and left, leaving me alone. That guy is wack. Why did he even ask me out if he didn't want to have dinner with me? And that excuse is stupid. He's the weirdest guy I've ever met."

Huh? But Daniel seems like a normal guy. Never thought he'd be this unreliable.

Zoe still didn't forget about her friend's predicament even though her date went sourly. "But that's nothing compared to your problem. So what did that *sshole do to you this time?"

Love Change Of Heart Chapter 230-The snow that fell overnight covered the resort in a white mist. The good weather that appeared days ago seemed to be a distant memory now. Elijah was helping Leanna into the car. Before they left, she turned around and vaguely saw the villa in the mountains.

Elijah looked in the direction she was staring at, and he pursed his lips. "Time to go."

She looked away and nodded before getting in the car.

After they were gone, Jonathan knocked on Aidan's door. "Sir, Mr. Parker and the madam have left," he said.

Aidan grunted and got up. "Let's go."

Jonathan followed. "Sir, we've received news about the Zielinskies' plan. They're going to send Miss Anna overseas in about two days. Through the Crossleys, of course. Itinerary unknown."

Aidan sneered. "So there's the continuation of their little show."

"Sir, you're saying..."

"Sienna's strength lies in her family. Do you think she's going to go against them just for Anna?"

What happened back at the house was just a show for me. Anna managed to leave with the Crossleys helping her, and it's all thanks to Sienna.

Jonathan got what Aidan was saying. "I've told the men to keep an eye on Miss Anna the moment she leaves the Zielinski Residence."

After a short pause, Aidan asked, "What about Lloyd? Any news on him?"

"Mr. Crossley has been acting weird lately. He's looking into the case of... the madam's father."

Aidan stopped in his tracks and frowned. "Jethro?"

"Yes," Jonathan said. "And one more thing, sir. When I was investigating Lloyd, I found out that his underling paid a private investigator a big sum of money recently. The last client of this investigator was the madam's brother, who went to some magazine publishers to post a missing persons poster."

"Let me see the photo."

Jonathan whipped his phone out and handed it to Aidan.

The photo showed a young girl of about two or three years old sitting in the center. He enlarged the photo and realized the girl looked just like a mini version of Leanna. The woman who held her looked a little like Leanna too. However, the man who got his face blurred out was obviously not Jethro.

Aidan narrowed his eyes. "Did Lloyd start looking into Jethro's case before or after Louis posted the missing persons notice?"

"After," Jonathan answered.

A few moments later, Aidan handed the phone back to Jonathan and walked ahead. "Keep an eye on Lloyd and see what he's up to."

"Yes, sir."

A moment of silence later, Aidan continued, "Leanna's not Jethro's real daughter. I want you to find out who the other people in the photo are."

That reply caught Jonathan by surprise.

They were standing in front of the elevator, and Aidan put his hand in his pocket. "Surprised?" He looked at Jonathan.

"No. I..."

"Of course she's not his daughter. That b*stard can't sire someone like her."

Jonathan nodded. "I'll tell my men to do it right away."

...

Leanna was finally back at her condominium. Zoe helped her out Elijah. "Thanks for giving her a ride home. Wanna come up?"

Elijah shook his head with a smile. "Sorry, but I have work to do." He looked at Leanna. "You need to get that looked at, Leanna. Don't want to get any infections now."

Leanna nodded. "I know. Thank you."

Elijah said, "I'll... be going now. You ladies go home."

When he was gone, Zoe finally helped Leanna upstairs. She asked curiously, "Hey, I feel like you guys are getting a bit distant with each other. What happened?"

Leanna smiled, but she said nothing.

Zoe continued, "Hey, you didn't tell me what happened last night either. What did that arse do to you?"

Leanna gave it some thought and whipped a piece of chocolate popped the candy into her friend's mouth. "What do you think?"

Zoe chewed on it, and her eyes shone. "Whoa, this is good. Where did you get it?"

"It's a gift from Aidan."

Zoe understood what she was saying, and she kept quiet. All she did was slowly swallow the chocolate.

Leanna wasn't reluctant to tell her anything, but she had no idea how to word this. Or more precisely, she had no idea what to do with Aidan.

...

Two days of resting at home later, Leanna felt like she would go crazy. She got up and got changed for work. When she was waiting for the elevator, she met Daniel, who was about to go out as well. They greeted each other, and the elevator arrived.

They got into it, and a moment of hesitation later, Leanna asked, "Can I ask you something?"

Daniel nodded. "Yes."

"How do you feel about Zoe?"

It was obvious that Zoe liked Daniel. Leanna thought he must have noticed it as well. She thought Daniel was a nice guy, but what he did to Zoe was perplexing.

Daniel was surprised that she would ask that. He stayed quiet for a moment, and then he smiled. "We're neighbors. Or friends, so to speak."

"Nobody would ask their friend out for dinner and give them that kind of excuse before leaving them behind," said Leanna.

Daniel let out an awkward cough. “Sorry. I had my reasons. I did try to apologize to her. Even asked Louis to help me out, but she thinks I did it on purpose.”

Georgina was in the same restaurant that day. Daniel was trying to get her trust, and it was going well. He couldn't let his efforts go to waste, so he came up with a stupid excuse.

A moment of silence later, Leanna said, “If you don't feel the same way about her, I suggest you keep some distance from her.”

Daniel pursed his lips. “I know. And tell her I'm sorry.”

“I will.” Leanna nodded at him. “And thanks for taking care of Louis.”

The elevator doors swung open.

Leanna was about to leave, but Daniel said, “Miss McKinney, have you ever thought about the mastermind who tried to sabotage you a while ago?”

Leanna turned around curiously. That question came out of nowhere.

Daniel smiled. “I'm just trying to say... be on the lookout, Miss McKinney.”