

Love Hate 171

Chapter 171

That afternoon, Elizabeth created a ruckus in the kitchen as though she were venting her frustrations.

When it was time for dinner, Nina was still asleep, and Elizabeth refused to wake her up.

Margaret was afraid that Christopher would return suddenly and take off his clothes to shower without realizing there was someone else in his room. She pondered for some time before deciding to give Christopher a call.

The call connected within seconds. Margaret didn't bother beating around the bush and said, "Nina is in the Lewis residence, and she's currently sleeping in your room. I had to rest in the guest room. When you return, you'll have to be careful."

Christopher was miffed. "Nina? Nina Moore? Mr. Moore said that she'd be putting up with us temporarily, but I thought she won't be here until much later. Tell her to sleep in the guest room. I'll call her when I'm done with work."

After hanging up, Margaret relaxed slightly. It was past ten when Nina finally woke up. Feeling drowsy, Margaret told her, "I can only sleep in my own bed. This afternoon, I couldn't sleep well in the guest room. Why don't you sleep in the guest room? Christopher will be back a few days later."

Nina grunted in acknowledgment and went to the kitchen to grab a bite. After filling her stomach, she changed her clothes and went out.

Elizabeth grumbled while she cleaned the master bedroom. Right after lying down on her bed, Margaret let out a contented sigh. *I used to hate sleeping in this bed, but I gradually grew used to it.*

Some time later, a commotion sounded downstairs. The door was slammed shut, and someone's heels were clicking against the floor noisily. Margaret was jolted awake. Her mind was in a daze as she sat up. Glancing at the clock, she realized it was four in the morning

It was clear that Nina was back, but Margaret couldn't really yell at her. Tamping her frustrations down, she buried her head beneath her pillow and went back to sleep.

The next morning, she only woke up at ten in the morning. When she came downstairs, Elizabeth immediately complained, "Nina stayed out and only returned at around four in the morning. She was drunk and vomited everywhere-downstairs,

on the stairs, everywhere. It was so disgusting! Mr. Lewis will fly into a fit of fury when he comes back and finds out about her actions. How long will she stay here? If this isn't coming to an end soon, we'll all go crazy!"

The usually quiet Fredrick spoke up. "She'll be here for at least two months."

Elizabeth's entire being shivered. "I hope Mr. Lewis comes home as soon as possible to teach her a lesson. I can't take it anymore!"

Margaret found her reaction amusing. "All right. Elizabeth, she's a guest. Just put with her for the time being."

Indeed, Margaret wasn't someone who would start an argument or vent her anger at someone else.

When she was taking a nap that afternoon, heavy metal music pounded from the guest room. She woke up abruptly, drenched in sweat. *Nina will never stop kicking up a fuss when she is awake, huh? I can understand Elizabeth's feelings now.*

Before she was discharged from the hospital, the doctor reminded her to have more rest. Half an hour later, Margaret lost her composure and went to knock on the guest room's door. "Nina, keep it down! I need to rest!"

Nina opened the door and scrunched her brows. "Why are you that weak? You do nothing but eat and rest all day. Are you a patient? Look how skinny you are. I bet Christopher won't dare to go all out when you're having sex, right?"

Margaret's face soured at her words. Everyone had their own limits. She hated it when someone joked about sexual matters, especially when it was someone she wasn't familiar with.

"Ms. Moore, this is between me and Christopher. We're in Chanaea, so please watch your words. After all, we have different mindsets. Not everyone acts like you. I have just been discharged from the hospital, and I need to rest. When you're at home, can you please keep it down? There is plenty of entertainment in Dellmoor. You can have fun at all times outside. It won't hurt to go around the city and get familiar with the surroundings."

Nina's expression soured. She turned and switched off the speakers. "All right."

There was no telling whether she was happy or upset from her voice, Margaret wasn't in the mood to ponder over Nina's answer. She then spun on her heels to return to her room.

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It was around five o'clock afternoon. Christopher pulled up the car at the Lewis residence while everyone in the Lewis family sighed a breath of relief. When he stepped out of the car, Tabby limped forward and stomped on his feet. It was as if it was venting its frustration.

Goosebumps rose all over Christopher's body at the sight of the chubby cat. However, when he saw Margaret staring at him at the door, he had no choice but to pick Tabby up into his arms.

Margaret was puzzled at the sight of it. *Since when did he become so close with Tabby?*

At the same time, Nina was watching through the window from upstairs with a frown on her forehead. *Since he was a child, he hated furry animals. I can't believe he's holding Margaret's cat right now.*

"The wind is strong today. Don't be out here and rest in bed. Ask Elizabeth to deliver the meal to your room," advised Christopher as he walked up to Margaret and placed Tabby in her arms.

Once again, Margaret was stunned. *He hates it the most when one doesn't have good manners. He had never allowed me to eat in my room too. I can't believe he's suggesting it*

*now.*

She then twitched her head and asked, "Can Tabby enter the room too? He'll be scared if I'm not by his side for the whole day..."

Christopher stopped in his tracks briefly. "Don't push your luck. I'll get rid of him if I see him in there," he said without raising his voice.

The corner of Margaret's lips quirked up. *Does that mean I'll be fine as long he doesn't see Tabby?*

During dinner, Marget thought that it was unnecessary to have her meal sent to her room. It was not like she was disabled anyway.

Nina was talking incessantly at the table, "Christopher, you still look the same after so many years. I thought men would start to gain weight and turn ugly after thirty years

old, but it seems you're rejuvenating instead, You sull look charming after getting married. Among all the good-looking guys I met overseas, they're still no match for your looks."

Christopher chuckled at her words. As Nina was no stranger to him, he then said with a smile, "You look prettier now compared to how you were when you were young."

Rolling her eyes at him, Nina exclaimed, "You used to ignore me when I was young because I looked ugly, right? As they say, a lady undergoes tremendous changes after they grow up. I have turned beautiful sooner than you thought. Too bad you were married back then."

At that moment, Margeret felt as if her existence was redundant. Furrowing his brows, Christopher said, "What do you mean by that? It doesn't matter to me how you look. I felt bad for Mr. Moore, who used to worry about you not being able to find a husband."

"My dad asked me to marry you if I couldn't," added Nina suddenly.

Silence sank in after Nina said those words. The memories of Margaret being tormented by Megan flashed across Margaret's mind. *Is she another love rival?*

As if pouring out all her feelings she had been keeping to herself for a long time, Margeret exclaimed, "Mr. Moore must be joking! Christopher accompanied me to have a meal with him last time. Nina, you do resemble him a lot."

Elizabeth almost cried in joy when she heard Margaret's words. *It seems like she's not afraid to hold herself back anymore and knows how to stand up for herself.*

With that, Nina pursed her lips without a word. An indescribable expression hung on Christopher's face with a sudden surge of joy. Even he couldn't tell how he was feeling himself. It was Margaret's first time addressing Christopher casually,

After dinner, Nina and Christopher had a chat in the living room, Margeret decided not to join them as she didn't know much about their past and didn't want to feel left out of the conversation. Thus, she secretly sneaked Tabby into her room.

Despite wanting to take a rest, her mind was wide awake. She was feeling ecstatic as if she had taken stimulants, and she could hear the sound from downstairs clearly without her realizing it.

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After a while, the noise tuned down while approaching footsteps were heard outside the door.

Margaret could tell it was Christopher. As Tabby was sleeping soundly on the blanket, she quickly hid it underneath the blanket and left a slit so that it could breathe.

The next second, the door was pushed open. As she had expected, it was Christopher.

Feeling slightly guilty, Margaret lowered her head while her cheeks blushed from nervousness. Her heart was beating fast. *Luckily, Tabby is behaving well.*

Christopher seemed to be in a good mood today. Even when there was no one around, the smile on his face remained. "Are you feeling unwell?" he asked.

At this point, Margaret was panicking like crazy. She couldn't care much about the unhappy situations they had back then. "I'm fine and lively as ever. I guess I can go to work tomorrow."

Christopher then muttered in a displeased tone, "Stop messing around. You have to lay in bed for at least a month. Don't get on my nerves anymore. It won't do you any good. Can't you be like the other women and make me happy?"

Raising her head to look at him, Margaret asked, "Do you mean like Megan?"

His breath froze while his face fell. Ignoring her, he then changed into his pajamas. *She sure knows how to agitate me anytime and anywhere,*

When he was about to go to bed, she hurriedly snatched the blanket and stuttered, "C-Can you please help me take something from downstairs?"

Although he was slightly flustered, he nodded and asked, "What is it?"

"I... I want a banana." Obviously, she was just making an excuse so that she could smuggle Tabby out of the room. She did not think of the fact that Christopher would go to bed earlier due to exhaustion from his business trip. Usually, he would sleep

late.

A confused look hung on Christopher's face as he turned and left.

Then, Margaret quickly picked Tabby up and put it outside the room. However, the latter leaped onto the bed again, making her heart sink.

"Come on, Tabby. A tiger is coming to eat you. Aren't you scared? You're not allowed to enter the room. Why don't you go downstairs and play with Elizabeth? Be good and hurry now. The tiger will be here soon, urged Margeret with a gentle voice.

However, no matter what she had said, Tabby wouldn't listen to her. Right then, Christopher arrived upstairs with a plate of fruits in his hands. Having no choice, she hid Tabby under the blanket again.

“Don’t eat too much.” Christopher placed the plate next to the bed, lifted the blanket, and lay on the bed.

*He’s acting so strange today. Why is he so good to me?* However, she couldn’t be bothered by anything else now. Then, she lay cautiously next to Christopher while keeping Tabby on her left.

“Why aren’t you eating?” he asked suddenly.

“What?” Gripping Tabby’s moving paws, Margaret was lost in her thoughts.

“The bananas.”

“I-I don’t feel like eating now. I-I’ll keep it for later,” stuttered Margaret as she came up with an excuse.

However, Christopher sat up and brought a piece of the peeled banana to her mouth and said, “Finish it and go to bed. It’s late now. I have a meeting early in the morning.”

As she didn’t have any appetite, she refuted, “You can have it. I don’t want it.”

Raising his brows and curling his lips, he replied, “I don’t eat bananas.”

Her cheeks suddenly blushed as she wondered if his words were implying something else. *Is he getting horny?*

To lighten the mood, she took a bite and swallowed hard. “I have enough. Can you take the rest out? It’ll smell if we leave them here.”

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At the sight of Margaret’s slightly parted lips, Christopher’s eyes darkened. He involuntarily leaned over and kissed her.

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Immediately, Margaret’s was blown. *Huh? What on earth is he doing? There are plenty of unresolved problems between us. Shouldn’t we be at each other’s throats now? What’s with him kissing me?*

“Mmm... Stop...” She wanted to turn his advances down, but as soon as she opened her mouth, he seized the opportunity to slip his tongue in. To prevent her from struggling, he even pinned her down with his body through the covers, rendering her entirely immobile. Of course, he didn’t put his entire weight on her.

She was completely taken control, forced to endure his attention. Due to the shortage of oxygen, her mind went blank. All of a sudden, Tabby slid out from under the covers and meowed.

Christopher stiffened and reflexively leaped off the bed, looking as though he had suffered a fright.

Margaret flipped open the covers and scooped Tabby up, dashing out of the room with her face flushed bright red. “Elizabeth, change the sheets and covers, please!”

Bewildered, Elizabeth queried, “Didn’t I just change it a while ago?”

*found out!*

At that, Elizabeth quickly responded in the affirmative. Just then, Christopher's voice rang out from upstairs. "Forget it!" Then, the sound of a door slamming shut pierced the air.

The resounding bang had Elizabeth shuddering, and she persuaded in exasperation, "Meg, don't take Tabby into the bedroom since Mr. Lewis doesn't like to have a cat in there, lest the two of you have a row again. It's far better to live peacefully, no? Hand it over to me, okay? It can sleep in my room at night."

However, Margaret hesitated, "But there are already four people staying in your room. Is it appropriate for Tabby to stay there as well?"

Elizabeth patted herself on the chest and reassured, "That's not a problem. Although four people are staying there, the room is rather big and spacious. Don't worry about

it anymore. Hurry up and freshen up before going to rest. You need quite some time to recuperate."

After reluctantly handing Tabby to the woman and watching them leave, Margaret grew worried. *Should I go back to the bedroom now? But Christopher slammed the door shut...*

As she recalled the sudden kiss earlier, sheer panic inundated her, and she subconsciously felt averse to returning to the bedroom.

Out of the blue, Nina appeared at the bottom of the stairs. She leaned against the banister just like a cat sunning by the window, her eyes fixated on Margaret. "Do you need me to take you in for the night? Why would Christopher treat you so dismally when he's such a gentle person? I've never seen him get so angry or speak in such a loud voice before."

*Really? She had never seen him so angry or speak in such a loud voice before? Margaret inexplicably breathed a sigh of relief. He only reveals his true nature before those with whom he's close, so it means that she's only an acquaintance to him.*

"No, it's okay. No matter what, this is my home, so it makes no sense for you to so called take me in." After saying that, she brushed past Nina and headed toward the bedroom door.

"Do you think you and Christopher are suited to be together?" Nina asked in a lowered voice.

Halting in her steps, Margaret looked at her. "What do you mean by that?"

"Well, I just feel that you two make a strange couple. You're an orphan he took in, and your father caused the death of his entire family. That's more than a dozen lives there. Oh my. Why would he marry you? In terms of status and family background alone, your father used to be the Lewis family's private pilot. The two of you aren't from the same world at all. Oh, I'm suddenly reminded of a saying—first come, first served. You look weak and fragile, entirely harmless, yet you actually have some tricks up your sleeve."

Nina's voice was so mild that it was as though she was merely shooting the breeze, but the words out of her mouth were simply disturbing.

Straightening her back, Margaret demanded bluntly, "What do you mean by that? *You're* merely acquainted with Christopher. At most, your father was close with his father. Don't you think it's pretty

inappropriate for you to say such a thing? I don't think the question of how I got together with him and ended up marrying him is any

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of your business. You're too nosy, Ms. Moore."

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Nina merely smiled without saying anything. Then, she whirled around and went back to her room.

Meanwhile, Margaret pushed open the door and went into her bedroom. Christopher seemed to have fallen asleep, for the room was eerily quiet.

She lay down gingerly, her mind a chaotic mess. Whenever anyone mentioned the plane crash back then, she would feel such a strong sense of oppression that she couldn't quite breathe. That had her determined to find Mr. Xenos as soon as possible to uncover the truth about the incident back then,

Early the next morning, Christopher was about to leave after dressing and all when Nina rushed out of her room.

"Christopher! I want to go out as well, so please give me a lift! I don't feel like driving!"

When Margaret heard the commotion, she instinctively jumped off the bed and opened the door a crack. She carefully observed the situation outside.

Christopher didn't decline, merely querying, "Where are you going? It'll depend on whether I'm going the same way. If it's out of my way, you'll have to drive by yourself. I'm in a hurry."

Unfamiliar with the places in the country, Nina stammered for a long time without a definite answer. In the end, she fibbed, "I scrutinized the map, and it's merely a stone's throw away from your company. Just drop me off when we arrive. It's definitely on your way!"

This time, Christopher said nothing further. Only after they had left did Margaret go downstairs. Elizabeth carried a bowl of oatmeal porridge to the dining table. "Here's your breakfast, Meg. Eat up!"

Murmuring in acknowledgment, Margaret walked over to the dining table and took a seat. She stirred the steaming oatmeal porridge in the bowl lightly, but she didn't have much appetite. "Elizabeth... Yesterday, Nina said some strange things to me. You have more experience, so I'd like to seek your help in analyzing her words."

Elizabeth dragged a chair over and sat down. "Go ahead. I'm listening."

Margaret proceeded to repeat everything Nina had said to her last night. After

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+10 pearls

listening to that, Elizabeth rolled her eyes and scoffed, "I think she wanted to say that Mr. Lewis and her are of the same world, so they make the perfect couple. Hah! She doesn't even bother to look at herself in the mirror! Can she compare to you when you've been by Mr. Lewis' side for more than ten years?"

Speaking of that, I seem to have seen her in the past. Back then, she was still a child and looked plain unsightly. It was so bad that I felt that she was lucky to have been born into a wealthy family. Otherwise, no one would want to marry her in the future. I never expected her to have blossomed after growing up.”

She then explained, “At that time, Nina’s father proposed a betrothal between the two families, but Mr. Lewis objected. He was just a child then and was not even eighteen years old yet. Nina was even four years younger than him. Old Mr. Lewis said to leave it to their children in the future, but unexpectedly, he passed away. It’d been so many years, yet Nina came running over in search of Mr. Lewis as soon as she returned to the country. I reckon she still wants to get together with him. She was ugly when she was young, and she’s not that much better now. She probably had cosmetic surgery. Don’t worry, Meg. Mr. Lewis isn’t a fickle man.”

Hearing that, Margaret felt somewhat perturbed. “I’m not worried. It was just a casual question. Why would I be worried? All right, you should go and get busy first, Elizabeth. I’ll help you out when I feel better.”

At once, Elizabeth threw her a glare. “No way! Did you not learn your lesson? Mr. Lewis can’t bear to see you toiling alongside the servants all day long. Didn’t you notice that he’s been treating you much better ever since your incident? I won’t be able to explain things to him if you lend me a hand again. Just recuperate well and do whatever you’re supposed to do when you’re hale and hearty again. It’s best if you can add to the Lewis family earlier. With a child, your marital relationship will naturally improve.”

At the mention of a child, Margaret’s face paled slightly. The damage from the loss of her child wasn’t limited to the physical sense alone. Instead, the psychological trauma she suffered was even greater. She even felt guilty that she once wavered between keeping and aborting the child. Little did she know that Megan would help her make the decision in the end.

In the afternoon, Christopher and Nina came home together. It was relatively early then, not even time to get off work yet. Christopher had always been meticulous at work, never leaving the office early unless under special circumstances.

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Nina carried bags of food in her hands. Even Christopher was laden with multiple bags. No sooner had Nina stepped in the door than she hollered, “Elizabeth, come and take the groceries!”

Elizabeth languidly strolled out of the kitchen. When she saw the groceries, she questioned, “There’s no lack of groceries here, so why you bought so much?”

Beaming from ear to ear, Nina replied, “Of course, it’s because I didn’t want to eat and drink for free here. I’d be embarrassed since I’d be staying here for quite some time. All I bought are Christopher and my favorite foods. Just cook all this tonight.”

Upon seeing that Christopher wasn’t saying a single word, Elizabeth had no choice but to take everything to the kitchen.

Despite hearing the ruckus downstairs, Margaret didn't plan on going and joining in the fun. She sat on the bed and continued reading her book. The moment she heard Christopher ascending the stairs, however, she scooped Tabby up from the covers and placed it on the carpet.

"Do you feel better today?" Christopher inquired as soon as he entered the room.

At his question, Margaret nonchalantly answered, "I suppose so. I've been fine ever since I was discharged from the hospital anyway. I'd like to go back to work. Otherwise, how am I to provide for myself?"

Frowning, Christopher went to the wardrobe and took out his pajamas. "Let's table that until a month has passed. For now, stay at home and recuperate. There's a black card in my wallet, so use that if you're short on cash."

Margaret turned her gaze to the wallet on the bed, yet she remained indifferent. "I don't want your money. I can support myself now. When I've recovered fully, I'll continue doing a servant's duties after work. Anyway, I'll return everything I owe you."

Christopher inhaled deeply, his expression turning grim. "I apologize for my words back then. I shouldn't have said all that. All you need to do is to do a good job of being Mrs. Lewis. I don't want to repeat myself. When you've recovered, you can work if you want to do so. It's up to you. But for now, zip it."

Tossing aside the book in her hand, Margaret lay down silently,

With a dark look on his face, Christopher stalked into the bathroom. When he came out after his shower, he caught sight of the sleeping Tabby on the carpet in front of the bed. Sighing, he strode past it and went downstairs.

When it was dinnertime, Elizabeth went upstairs to inform Margaret. While at it, she grumbled, "Nina really is impudent. This is the Lewis residence, yet the food has to suit her preference. She went into the kitchen and ordered the chef to make certain dishes as though this was a restaurant! All the dishes she requested were spicy. I had the chef cook two bland dishes for you, or you wouldn't even have anything to eat tonight."

Curling her lips, Margaret muttered, "I'm not going down for dinner. Bring the food up for me, please, Elizabeth."

Considering most of the dishes weren't suitable for her consumption, Elizabeth agreed.

At the dinner table, Nina teased, "Is Margaret not coming down for dinner? Christopher, I remember that you attach much importance to social etiquettes, but it looks like it depends on the other person, huh?"

Christopher merely smiled in response. "She isn't feeling well, so you don't have to bother about her. Let's just eat by ourselves."

Taking one of the dishes, Nina placed it on his plate. "Try this. You loved this in the past. I asked your chef to prepare it just for you. Oh yes, why isn't Margaret feeling well? I heard that she has just gotten out of the hospital? What happened?"

A complicated expression flashed across Christopher's face, and he admitted, "She bled heavily after suffering a miscarriage. It was my negligence. Fortunately, she's fine now."

Nina stuck her tongue out. "It seems that I've touched on a sensitive topic. I'm sorry. Pardon me for asking this, but how did you get together with her? I heard from my father that she's an orphan you took in, and it was her father's fault that you lost your entire family. I'm a bit curious as to why you got together with her. Of course, you're kind, so it makes sense that you'd take her in. However, I found it strange that the two of you got together when you're from different worlds."

Christopher's hand that held a fork tensed up, and the amiability on his face faded off greatly, "Let's eat, or the food is going to get cold. I'm busy these few days, so I don't have time to accompany you around. You can have fun by yourself."

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Discerning the changes in Christopher's expression, Nina knew that she should stop talking and wisely kept her mouth shut.

After dinner, Christopher went straight to the study. Bored, Nina went into the kitchen. "Elizabeth, I've got something to ask you."

Elizabeth had a negative impression of her in the first place, so she continued with her work while saying, "Go ahead."

Pouting, Nina queried, "I'd like to know how Christopher got together with Margaret. You've worked for the Lewis family for a long time, so I'm sure you know about it."

Elizabeth cleared her throat and declared, "Of course, it was because he loves her! What other reason could there be? Mr. Lewis' parents are deceased, and he has full

control over his marriage, so he'll undoubtedly marry someone he loves. The Lewis family is vast and influential, so there's no need for a political marriage. Don't you think your question is rather idiotic? They've been together for over ten years, so their relationship is superb with them interacting every day."

Nina then took out a bottle of iced fruit juice from the refrigerator. "Hey! Do you think I'm a three-year-old kid? Even if they do interact daily, can an enemy turn into a lover?"

In response, Elizabeth rolled her eyes at the woman. "Even if Mrs. Lewis' father made a mistake, what has that got to do with her? They're dead, so shouldn't the matter be put to rest? Mr. Lewis isn't the kind of person who'd hold a grudge against a little girl. Anyway, what exactly are your motives that you're asking about this? They've been married for three years, so don't tell me that you're still thinking of getting together with him?"

Nina's lips curved into a meaningful smile. "I don't mind that he was married. When I like someone, I'll definitely fight for him. I'll leave you to your work, Elizabeth. I'm going on a walk."

Meanwhile, Margaret was rather bored in the bedroom. Recently, she was either at the hospital or at home and had nothing to do. Verily, she felt as though she was going to go out of her mind with boredom.

She had also been eating mild food these days, so she had long since grown sick of it.

When she caught a whiff of the delicious aroma, especially, she found it all the more difficult to stomach her bland food.

Aware that Christopher was in the study, a bold idea occurred to her—to sneak down to the kitchen and secretly eat something tasty. Even if it was just a bite, it could at least stimulate her taste buds.

Cradling Tabby in her arms, she crept to the kitchen. When she saw that Elizabeth was still bustling about, she didn't dare make a move. "Elizabeth, you're almost finished here, right?"

Mistakenly assuming that she wanted to help out again, Elizabeth hastily shooed her away. "Go, go. If you're bored, go and have a walk. Do you not have anything better to do? Why did you come in here anyway?"

Exasperation flooded Margaret. Seeing the few dishes on the countertop that appeared untouched, she couldn't help gulping. "I'm just walking around. Elizabeth, could you please go and see whether there's still water in Tabby's water bowl? Add some if there's none left. I'm worried that it'll be thirsty."

Elizabeth wiped her hands before she spun around and walked out. "Don't lift a finger to do any of the chores in the kitchen. If I catch you when I return in a while, I'll tell Mr. Lewis!"

Margaret agreed with a smile. Only when she had ascertained that there was no one in the kitchen did she extend her grabby hands at the food.

At the thought that Nina ordered them specially made for Christopher, the urge to clean the plate gripped her.

When she took the first bite, she felt her tastebuds finally coming to life. It was just a bit spicy.

At the second bite, however, she started inhaling sharply. *Oh God, this is too spicy! Does Nina have a problem with her tastebuds? Is this even edible? No wonder it all looks untouched!*

"Meg, if you've got nothing to do, brew Mr. Lewis a cup of tea."

Hearing Elizabeth's approaching footsteps, Margaret hurriedly pretended as though nothing had happened. She slipped out of the kitchen, exclaiming, "Sure, sure! I'll do it right away!"

When Elizabeth saw her sprinting away, she chastised, "Slow down! Be careful that you don't fall down!"

*How would I dare slow down? My tongue is burning so much that it has almost gone numb! I need water!*

The instant she returned to her room, she guzzled a whole glass of water. Then, she even drank a carton of milk before the spiciness in her mouth abated slightly.

It wasn't until after Margaret had regained her composure did she remember that she was to brew Christopher a cup of tea. She promptly brewed a cup of black tea and took it to the study. No sooner had she pushed open the door than she was greeted by the sight of Nina leaning against the back of Christopher's chair, the two of them looking so intimate that her eyes stung.

"I don't want to go abroad anymore, Christopher. Do you have a vacancy in your company? How about hiring me? My father will certainly have no objections if I work for you." Nina was so close to Christopher that her every exhale ruffled the hair at the back of his head when she spoke.

"No, thanks. You're the only daughter of the Moore family, so hurry up and help your father instead. In the future, you'll be inheriting your family's company. Why would you come to my company? Besides, there's no vacancy in my company all year round. All right, go on out. I'm busy," Christopher replied as he looked at the work emails on his computer.

It was as though he didn't notice anything amiss.

"Fine, fine, I won't disturb you any further. But then, don't kick me out either. I'm so bored. Carry on with your work. I'll just sit at the side and look on." Shifting a

Margaret went over with the cup of black tea and placed it beside Christopher sedately. "Here!"

When her words rang out, even she herself was shocked. *Why did I speak so loudly? But I don't think I deliberately raised my voice...*

Christopher turned and eyed her in puzzlement. "What's wrong?"

Red splotches stained Margaret's face even as mortification set in. "Nothing. I'm going to bed. Don't make so much noise when you return to the room later. I won't be able to go back to sleep if you wake me up."

Christopher nodded in acquiescence before turning his gaze back to his emails. Picking up the cup of black tea, he took a sip and commented, "It's a bit too steep. Next time, have Elizabeth brew it instead."

Margaret said nothing, rolling her eyes inwardly. She then spun on her heels and

left. *You should be thankful that I even bothered to brew you a cup of tea! Yet, you're nitpicking!*

Only when she had gone back to the room did she realize that her heart was racing. *Why was my reaction so strange in the study earlier? I've never cared about the hordes of women flitting around him in the past. C—Could it be that I'm now afraid after the incident with Megan? I really don't want to fight for him, but I'll still end up being a target. So that's the only plausible reason, no? Before he agrees to a divorce, all I can do is block off all the women around him who could possibly be a threat to my safety. This is only self-defense. Knock! Knock!*

Suddenly, a series of knocks sounded at her door.

When Margaret opened the door, she was greeted by the sight of Nina staring at her with a wide smile. Without giving her a chance to react, the latter barged right into the room.

"Christopher is busy, but I'm bored, so I came over to chat with you. You don't mind, do you?"

*Can I say that I do mind?*

“Of course not. Have a seat. I’m not feeling so well, so I’ll be lying down.”

Glancing at Margaret, who was half-reclining in bed, Nina plopped down on a chair. “How did you suffer a miscarriage?”

Margaret stiffened imperceptibly, and she forced a smile. “Because of an accident.”

At that, Nina pouted in a show of sympathy. “An accident? Well, you should have been more careful. It was a life, after all. The Lewis family doesn’t lack anything, but it’s really a pity that the child is gone when Christopher doesn’t have a child yet at his age.”

Margaret didn’t want to speak of that topic anymore, so she stated, “I’d like to rest now.”

Nina got to her feet and walked to the door. “Go ahead. Do rest and recuperate well. Otherwise, it won’t be interesting without you.”

As the door slammed shut, Margaret frowned. *For some reason, I feel that her final utterance seems to contain an implicit meaning. Or am I just too sensitive?*

A while later, Elizabeth took Tabby away. At a little over ten o’clock, Christopher returned to the room. Margaret was still awake then. Noticing the weariness lining his face, she turned and gave her back to him, for she was of the opinion that she shouldn’t be feeling anguished or distressed on his behalf.

“Elizabeth told me that you secretly ate some of the food,” Christopher uttered without warning.

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Pans deluged Margaret. “1–1 didn’t!”

“Yes, you did. Why are you explaining yourself? It’s not that I don’t allow *you* to eat the food, but you can only eat mild food for the time being. When you’ve recovered, you can eat anything you like.”

Christopher’s voice was exceedingly calm, making it all sound no different from a casual conversation. The lack of his coldness in the past had her feeling very much uneasy.

“There’s no one else here, so you don’t need to... act this way.” Margaret was trying to say that he didn’t have to put on an act, for it would only make them both uncomfortable.

By then, Christopher had her all figured out. Knowing that she just had to ruin his mood, he didn’t bother getting mad at her. Instead, he even chuckled. “Okay. Go ahead and sleep.”

After a moment’s silence, Margaret started, “Uh... Do you mind giving me a bank card? I need some money. I haven’t been to work recently, so I don’t have—”

Before she had even finished speaking, Christopher tossed his wallet to her. “Take one yourself. The PIN is all the same—six zeroes.”

Picking up his wallet, Margaret opened it, only to see at least a dozen bank cards in there. She remembered that he mentioned a black card back then, so her gaze snagged on one of them with a black background and gold lettering.

Inadvertently, she glimpsed a photo in his wallet. *Why would he put someone's photo in his wallet and carry it around with him?*

She hadn't even the time to make out the person's countenance when Christopher abruptly reached out and snatched the wallet away. He took out the black card and handed it to her. "Go to sleep."

Taking the bank card, Margaret couldn't resist asking, "Who's that in the photo? Your first love? I saw that it was a woman, but I didn't get a good look" The photo was taken from far away, so she naturally couldn't discern the person's countenance without taking a closer look.

With his gaze fixated on her, Christopher arched an eyebrow and drawled

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+10 pearls

mumkingly. "Yeah, that's right,

At that. Margaret didn't say anything further. Nonetheless, she felt a fad resentful. *His for lone has the freedom to love whoever she wants, yet I can't do the same. He ruined the only prison / cuer had feelings for, Jenson, and even caused things to end up in such a wretched conditron*

The next morning, Christopher and Nina had both left the house when Margaret received a text message from Jodie that read: *Meg, my mother arranged a blind date for me. My family is now in dire straits, yet she still has the mood to do that. Verily, I salute her! I initially didn't want to attend, but she had already made all the arrangements. I don't want to embarrass her, so I'm planning to go during my lunch break today. I hope it isn't a weirdo. When I see the man, I'U furtively snap a picture and send it to you. Help me take a look and give some comments, okay?*

Attending a blind date was a positive thing, If one could meet the right person, one could close the chapter on the past and begin a new chapter. Therefore, Margaret was supportive of her attending it and replied: *It's okay. Just go and have a look. Send me a picture later, and I'll help you take a look at him. Who knows, you might meet the right man.*

At noon, she kept glancing at her phone, but she didn't receive any pictures from Jodie.

At that moment, Jodie and a bald, middle-aged man were staring at each other in a high-end western restaurant.

Never in her wildest dreams had she ever thought that her mother would introduce such a man to her, who looked old enough to be her father. Right then, all her attention was on making an escape, not at all in the mood to look at the man.

"You're so young! Didn't the matchmaker tell you that I'm a divorcee? My ex-wife is still alive. We're just not suited, and we got divorced rather late in life." The bald, middle-aged man rubbed his head in embarrassment, and there were even splotches of red that looked suspiciously like a blush on his face.

"No. I didn't know anything. By the way... mister... I mean, sir, what's with your hair?" Jodie was on the brink of breaking down.

“Heh! Well, I was too concerned about making money when I was young, so things ended up like this. Otherwise, how could I possibly have my accomplishments today? I’ve got a company of my own, and though it’s a small company, the profit goes up to a million. It’s more than enough to support you. What do you think?” The bald, middle-aged man was rather proud of his achievements.

“I’m sorry, but I think our age... Well, the age gap between us is rather huge. I’m not disdaining you for being bald, nor is it because you’re a divorcee. I just don’t think we’re suitable.” Jodie was so nervous that she downed half a glass of water in a single go.

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“All right, then. In that case, you’ll have to foot the bill for this meal. This is just the kind of person I am. I never spend on a woman unless she’s my woman. If the matchmaker hadn’t assured me that this definitely wouldn’t be a trip made in vain, I wouldn’t even have come.” The bald, middle-aged man’s face soured at once.

Jodie cursed inwardly. She didn’t even have to think before a lightbulb went off in her head that the matchmaker must have been one of her mother’s poker buddies, for they were a bunch of unreliable women.

*I’ve just started working, so how would I have any money? He’s the one who decided on this restaurant, and it was also him who ordered. Yet, he wants me to pay for everything. Argh! How I wish to tear into him right now!* “Mister, don’t you think it’s more suitable for us to split the bill? How could you ask me to pay for you as well? You don’t spend on a woman who has nothing to do with you, so it makes no sense for me to spend on a man who has nothing to do with me either. Don’t you agree? I don’t know what the matchmaker told you, but you can go and talk to her about your complaints. I’m only going to pay for my share.”

Upon hearing that, the bald, middle-aged man instantly objected, “I only ordered so much food because I thought you’d agree to date me. I ordered all this for you, no? Shouldn’t you be footing the bill, then? Are you thinking that I’m easy prey because I look honest and gullible? Young women like you nowadays are always lazing around, hoping to dupe men into treating you to a drink and a meal. I’ve seen too many such women! As long as I’m willing to pay, you’d even keep me company for a night, right? Name your price! I’m not strapped for cash. As long as you can please me tonight, you don’t need to pay for this meal!”

Never mind that he was a parsimonious divorcee with unsightly looks despite being an owner of a company with an annual income of a million, but his character was also so odious that he could utter such words and make such a demand of someone of the opposite sex whom he had only met for the first time.

*Jodie felt as though she had been struck by a bolt of lightning. His so-called advantage of making a million every year is nothing in my eyes, yet he dares to utter such audacious remarks!*

“Excuse me, mister! Oh no, I should be calling you a scum. Where did you get this confidence of yours? To put it frankly, you’re not even worthy of carrying my sandals! Please don’t think that your meager money is almighty in my eyes. Even to buy a house, I’m sure you’ll have to save up for a few years, right? Fine, I’ll pay for this meal. The food hasn’t yet been served anyway, and you hadn’t eaten a single bite.

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+10 pearls

Of course, you also can't eat it anymore. You may leave now. I'm hanging on to the last shred of my manners that I'm not cursing you out here. Please get out of here posthaste, okay?"

The bald, middle-aged man jumped to his feet and shot daggers at her. "What did you just say? Repeat it if you dare! I just have to make a single trip to the club, and women like you are all a dime a dozen there. Yet, you think you're so high and mighty! I merely have to spend a thousand for a full package with a woman like you. Why should I invest my emotions and empty my pockets?"

Snapping, Jodie rolled her eyes unceremoniously, "In that case, go and look for one at the club! A thousand isn't a small sum either to someone like you. I recommend that you go to a more high-end place one day. You've never tried those women who cost hundreds of thousands a night, have you? Go and broaden your horizons instead of making a fool of yourself here."

The bald, middle-aged man was so livid that he flushed bright red. He downed the free lemonade on the table in one go. While stalking off, he groused, "The matchmaker even charged me two thousand as matchmaking fees, but she introduced such a horrid woman to me!"

A long time passed before Jodie's anger finally abated. Only then did it occur to her to tell Margaret about it all. However, it would be difficult for her to explain everything in text, so she phoned her best friend straight away.

"It was a weirdo! Not only was he a divorcee, but he was also unsightly. I was afraid that you'd hurl if I were to snap a photo and send it to you. He asked to meet in a high-end restaurant and ordered all the expensive dishes. In the end, when I said that we weren't suited, he told me to foot the bill and even argued that he only ordered so much food because he thought I was going to date him. In other words, he wanted me to also pay for his share just because I declined to date him. What a nutcase! He has now left after I tore into him. Argh! I'm so mad! If my mother dares to arrange another blind date for me in the future, I'm going to haul her over the coals first!"

After listening to the entire story, Margaret found it amusing though she was also slightly worried. "Everything's fine now that he has left. Most importantly, he didn't try to harass you. If the blind dates are so horrible, don't attend again in the future."