

Love Her to No End Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Public Apology

The Wedding Has Been Canceled! Mr. Xander Had Apologized to the Lingard Family Publicly, and Admitted His Failures in Educating His Son!

At ten that morning, Voguish Multimedia's Nixon Magazine published an article with an eye-catching title. It was regarding the highly anticipated cancelation of the wedding between the Xander family and the Lingard family.

Even on the homepage of the magazine's official website, there were reports about the interview.

In the article, Quentin bluntly stated that it was Zack who made a mess that led to the cancelation of the wedding between the two. He even shared that in truth, he and his wife were very fond of Michaela. Considering how things turned out, he hoped the incident wouldn't cause any friction between the two families. In addition, he had offered his most sincere apologies to the Lingard family.

Apart from that, in the interview, Quentin repeatedly emphasized that he hoped the incident wouldn't cause further speculations and criticisms. He also asked the media outlets to respect the Lingard family's privacy. He then announced that the Xander family wouldn't hesitate to pursue legal actions if any parties were to attack or slander the involved parties.

As soon as the article was published, it spread across the internet like wildfire.

Based on the previous reports surrounding the scandal between Zack and Lucille, the public quickly noticed the crux of the problem.

However, if anyone were to make any remarks regarding the Xander family and the Lingard family, the network engine would automatically indicate that an illegal act was being carried out.

At first, Michaela didn't notice the interview done by Quentin.

When she eventually tabbed into the article, however, she noticed there wasn't a single negative remark made by the public.

Even after a few attempts to refresh the page, the same result was shown. Right when Michaela tried to search for keywords regarding the wedding, the same illegal act indication appeared.

She tried to search for the keywords several times, but her attempts proved futile. At that moment, she suddenly recalled the words Jonathan said to her previously. How did he manage to get it settled so fast? It hasn't even been a day!

What surprised Michaela more was the attitude Quentin and his wife had shown regarding the matter. After the article was published, they'd have to bear all the responsibilities in this incident so that the Lingard family would suffer less damage. For an influential figure like him in Quakersville, it means a lot.

Since the matter had seemingly come to an end, Michaela's mood had been lifted quite a lot. She got changed and headed downstairs. After what happened the night before, the living room looked much more spacious and empty.

Although the butler had already cleaned up the place with the others, one could still see the signs of Jacob's monstrous tantrum.

At the moment, Hannah was sitting on the couch reading a magazine. When she saw her daughter coming down the stairs, she quickly kept the magazine aside and stood up with a smile. "You've come down just in time! We'll head to the furniture store after our meal. Since we've used those for over twenty-odd years, it's time for a change! You should come along and see if anything else is needed!"

Although Hannah's expression wasn't in any way unusual, her reddened and puffy eyes indicated that she had been crying.

Their mother and daughter looked at each other, and neither of them broke the tacit understanding. Evidently, they were both deliberately avoiding talking about Jacob. However, they knew for certain their family would never be the same again.

"Don't you have to be at work today?" Without revealing her mother's deliberate cover-up, Michaela glanced at the magazine before heading toward the dining room with Hannah.

"No. I'm not going to work today. It seems like we'll have a lot of shopping to do. So we're going to be busy for the next few days." Hannah tried her best to steer the conversation away from the solemn topic, but it was still obvious she was choosing her words very cautiously. Naturally, Michaela knew she was just doing her duty as a mother.

With her heart aching for her mother, she held Hannah's arm and smiled faintly. "Mom, you don't have to—"

"What's wrong? Are you unwilling to go out with me because I'm old?"

Hearing those words, Michaela instinctively retorted, "Nonsense! Mom, you're still young, pretty, and—"

Before she could finish her sentence, Hannah smiled smugly and interrupted, "It's settled, then!"

Before long, the dining table was filled with all of Michaela's favorite breakfast dishes. Still, Hannah was busy bringing her more food. Indeed, her love for Michaela was evident.

At that moment, Michaela had temporarily forgotten about the disappointment she felt last night. The love her mother had shown her made her feel less lonely after what she had gone through.

At the same time, a fancy Maserati was seen driving into Shappiray Mansion's front porch.

The young man that got out of the car had fair skin with a faint lip color. He had thick eyebrows and handsome facial features. With a dazzling diamond on his left ear, he looked especially handsome and gave off a rebellious vibe.

With a smile hanging on his face and a rolled-up magazine in his hand, he walked quickly across the front hall to the backyard.

"Jonathan! Where are you?" His voice was deep and husky, and he sounded like he was on cloud nine.

The moment Wayne heard the car stopping on the front porch, he rushed out and greeted, "Mr. Vincent, Mr. Xander is having his breakfast."

In response, Vincent Sullivan smiled and greeted back, "Good morning, Wayne."

With that, he strode toward the dining room and saw Jonathan having his breakfast at the dining table while reading the newspaper at the same time.

Jonathan was wearing a linen gown. Apart from his usual elegant and aloof temperament, he looked to be in a rather peaceful state with his languid movements.

Although he heard Vincent, he ignored him. Vincent laughed and teased, "Jonathan, I think you're aging way too fast! You're living like a retiree! In fact, you're acting like my dad!"

"Then perhaps you should address me accordingly." Jonathan folded the morning newspaper with his fair and slender fingers before putting it aside. He then gazed at Vincent and flashed him a faint smile.

His talk of seniority had struck a chord in Vincent.

As a child who grew up with Jonathan, he had witnessed how cunning Jonathan had become. Hence, Jonathan was definitely more distinguished than him and was indeed his elder.

However, Vincent had never been one to play by the rules.

Not only was he extremely close to Jonathan, but he was also involved in an unorthodox importing and exporting business.

At first, the Sullivan family thought he was going to fail, but he managed to grow his business until he had a net worth of over a hundred million.

Since he knew Jonathan's antics with his words, he wasn't bothered for long. Instead, he raised his eyebrows and tossed the magazine onto the table. "Why are you doing this? How could you burn the bridges before utilizing them? Isn't that too obvious?"

"It doesn't look too bad to me."

The huge title on the cover was very eye-catching. Jonathan flipped through a few pages and smiled slightly before lifting his head. That was when he saw Vincent looking back at him, seemingly amused.

Vincent's dark eyes were gleaming when he smiled wickedly and said, "You asked me to get someone to expose Zack cheating, only to go through the trouble of cleaning up his mess after that? Why do I have the feeling there's something else at play here?"

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Chapter 22 Fake Friends Hurt Each Other

Underneath Vincent's scrutinizing gaze, Jonathan finished his bowl of pasta without looking up. Subsequently, he took out a tissue and wiped the corners of his mouth elegantly.

Getting to his feet, Jonathan's steady voice rang out. "Zack is my nephew. What's wrong with me helping him?"

After a busy morning, Vincent was already hungry. Just when he thought he could catch Jonathan off guard to reveal some clues, the man remained as composed as ever.

When he saw Jonathan about to leave the dining room, Vincent sprang to his feet and grabbed his sandwich. Following the former, he continued to rattle on, "Theoretically, there isn't. However, taking into account what you have done previously, why do I get the feeling that you're just using your nephew as a stepping stone?"

Suddenly, Jonathan stopped in his tracks. Giving Vincent the side-eye, he cracked a faint but gentle smile.

“Let me remind you to keep your mouth shut. After all, you were the one who got someone to leak the rumor. If Quentin finds out about this, he will probably complain to the Sullivan family. When that happens, you will be the one to suffer the consequences.”

Jonathan’s eyes glistened as if they were smiling. Ignoring the stunned expression on Vincent’s face, he walked to the couch and sat down.

The sight of Jonathan’s nonchalant expression exasperated Vincent. He plonked his butt down on the couch opposite the man. “Jonathan, I can’t believe how heartless you can be.”

It was true that he leaked the rumor. In fact, he even found a few other magazines just to avoid Quentin’s suspicion. Nevertheless, he wouldn’t have dared to do it without Jonathan’s permission.

After deliberating on the matter, Vincent’s suspicions were raised. It was only then that he realized he had fallen into the trap that Jonathan had laid.

D*mn it! How could I have fallen into his trap for so long without even realizing it?

As cold sweat broke out all over his body, Vincent felt a chill down his spine. Suddenly, he felt like crying. Oh, God, how I wish time could go back to before I met this man. I just want to go home. I’m nothing but an innocent child.

Faced with Vincent’s gaze, Jonathan broke into a disarming smile. It wasn’t long before Vincent gave up and raised his hand to block the smile from view. “Wipe that smile off your face. Isn’t it enough for me to admit my mistake?”

Ever since they were young, Vincent would always be terrified by Jonathan’s innocent-looking smile. It was a phobia left behind from the trauma of being sabotaged by Jonathan when they were young.

At that moment, Jonathan’s phone vibrated. When he checked it, he saw that it was a message from Gary.

Gary: Mr. Xander, Ms. Lingard and Mdm. Simmons are at the furniture store.

From the constant updates Gary had been giving him, Jonathan was well-informed of everything that went on in the Lingard family.

She must be bored at home. I guess it's not such a bad idea for her to go out and clear her mind. Nevertheless, Jonathan was still worried due to the special circumstances. Hence, he replied: Keep a close eye on them. Let me know if there's anything.

"Whose message is it that have you so captivated?"

When he saw Jonathan crack a vibrant smile from the corner of his eye, Vincent leaned over boldly. By the time his gaze fell upon the man's phone, Jonathan had already put it away. He then hinted for Vincent to leave. "Don't you have work at the office?"

"I have finally realized how Machiavellian you are for discarding me once you have no need of me," Vincent grumbled.

Cocking his brows, Jonathan looked at Vincent as if he was an idiot. "In that case, are you admitting that you're useless?"

Every time they sparred verbally, Vincent would end up on the losing end.

Feeling the urge to slap himself twice, he got to his feet in exasperation and prepared to leave. On his way out, he grumbled, "Jonathan, from now on, I'll never get involved in your affairs again!"

After taking a few steps, Vincent stopped abruptly and slapped his forehead. He turned around and asked, "D*mn. I was so pissed off I forgot something important. The company has taken on a new project, and I'll be traveling to Gerton for it. If you're staying for the time being, why don't you come along with me? After all, Gerton is famous for their beauties. So don't you dare accuse me of not inviting you along!"

"No," Jonathan rejected outright. What's so interesting about ogling at beauties? I should focus on pursuing my future wife!

After pointing his finger at Jonathan, Vincent turned around in disappointment.

Even though the wedding had been canceled and the matter had become the talk of the town, both mother and daughter went out shopping without a care in the world.

When the engagement was first decided, Michaela was still very young. An engagement banquet wasn't organized since both of them were still students. Hence, the ceremony was just marked by a dinner between both families.

Back then, Hannah felt bad for her daughter. But given what had happened recently, she realized that she had saved a lot of trouble.

The furniture store was located in the city center on Harmony Street. It comprised twenty-five floors and sold many home products that spanned many brands.

As a result, it would take a lot of time and stamina to browse through every single one of them.

As the pair of mother and daughter walked through the store, their similarly exquisite features caused them to easily be mistaken as sisters. Consequently, their beauty and elegance naturally attracted the attention of many.

Over three days, Hannah had set her work aside to accompany Michaela shopping as a way to clear her daughter's mind. They had gone shopping for furniture, home products, clothes, bags, and even makeup.

Ever since the day Jacob smashed everything in the living room, he never returned home. Even Lucille seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

At that moment, the mother and daughter duo were heading to a café on the first floor with their hands filled with shopping bags. Unexpectedly, Michaela's phone rang the moment they stepped out of the elevator.

What was even more surprising was the chaotic noise that rang out from the phone. "Hello, are you Lucille's family? I'm calling from City Hospital. Lucille has committed suicide and is currently being treated in the emergency room. We need you to hurry over to get some paperwork done."

"What did you say?"

Michaela stopped in her tracks, looking stunned.

Faced with Michaela's question, the nurse lost her patience and demanded again, "Are you Lucille's family or not?"

"Yes, I'm her elder sister."

"In that case, come over here immediately because this might be the last time you see her!"

Once the call ended, Michaela remained frozen where she stood. Sensing that something was amiss, Hannah asked anxiously, "Mich, what's wrong? What happened?"

"Mom!" When she finally regained her senses, Michaela's voice was both trembling and choking. "Lucille... Lucille has committed suicide!"

In truth, Michaela had given the matter a lot of thought over the last few days.

Even though Lucille had done something wrong, she was still the sister she had grown up with. Therefore, she was still willing to believe that Lucille had her own reasons for doing what she did.

Even if she has feelings for Zack, she still wouldn't have ruined her reputation like that, would she?"

In fact, Michaela was prepared to trust and forgive Lucille if she was willing to explain herself. Michaela figured that Zack shouldn't be the reason for both of them to fall out with each other.

It wasn't until she received the call from the hospital that Michaela was sure that Lucille acknowledged her mistake. Or else, she wouldn't have chosen to take such drastic action.

During the journey to the hospital, Michaela was seized by helplessness and panic. More than that, she blamed herself. If she had given Lucille a call the night before, the circumstances might have turned out differently.

The frustration, regret, and self-blame culminated in an avalanche of emotions that almost overwhelmed her.

When she frantically arrived at the hospital and saw two figures hugging intimately in the room, the complex emotions she felt earlier were replaced by an icy glint in her eye.

Love Her to No End Chapter 23

Chapter 23 A Complex Agenda

"Why did you save me? Why didn't you let me die?"

Inside the emergency room, Lucille lay on the bed, looking like a lifeless doll. Her palm-sized face had lost all color, while her wrist was wrapped in thick gauze. Blood was already oozing out of it due to how desperately she had struggled, which made for a gruesome sight.

Meanwhile, Zack was attempting to pull the emotional Lucille into his embrace. His towering back had hidden the expression on his face from view. However, one could still hear his trembling voice ring out. "Why were you so foolish to take your life so lightly? Lucille, you shouldn't have done that!"

Just an hour ago, Zack had received Lucille's message. In addition to a photo of her lying in the bathtub, there was also a worded message.

it wasn't a long one, but every word was filled with conviction.

She wrote: Zack, I didn't realize that loving you would result in such devastating consequences. If someone needs to take responsibility for what happened, I'm willing to be that person. All I wish for is to meet you again in my next life. Is that all right?

Realizing something was amiss, Zack called Lucille's phone, but no one answered. Finally, he found clues from the photo that lead him to the hotel Lucille was in.

On the way to the hotel, he called for the ambulance. Even then, the doctor told him that they had just gotten to Lucille in the nick of time. Or else, the consequences would have been unthinkable.

When he saw Lucille's ashen face, Zack was filled with regret.

Ever since their affair was exposed a few days ago, Zack hadn't contacted Lucille at all. Moreover, he didn't even reply to the messages she sent to apologize and show concern for him.

Nonetheless, it never crossed his mind that Lucille would unilaterally take responsibility for the matter. Because of that, he was unable to let her go.

His warm hug caused Lucille to curl the corner of her lips. As tears welled up in her eyes, they gushed out like water that had burst its dam even before she said a word.

"Zack, leave me. I'm too embarrassed to face you or even Michaela and my parents. In fact, I don't even dare to go back home or out in public. Other than death, I have no other way out. Since everything is my fault, I will be the one to bear it. Zack, you should just leave and forget about me!"

Just as she spoke, Lucille was already bawling, causing her tears to flow even more intensely.

As she tried to struggle free from Zack's arms, she attempted to push him away. Nevertheless, she barely had any strength to do so and was so weak that she could collapse anytime.

The scene in front of him reminded Zack suddenly of what Lucille had been through and how she shielded him with her body the day before. At that moment, a pang of pain struck his heart inexplicably.

Blinded by the moment, he declared without hesitation, "If you don't know how to face it, then don't. Just let me take care of you, all right?"

"What did you say?"

Lucille froze before her tears continued to drop incessantly. As if his declaration had come as a big shock to her, she stared listlessly at him.

Subsequently, she saw Zack nod with conviction. "From the beginning, this wasn't your fault alone. Besides, both families have already seen us together. So there's no need for us to hide anymore. Since you don't know how to face it, let me do it for you. Come what may, we will shoulder the burden together, all right?"

To Zack, Lucille and Michaela had totally opposite personalities. He found the former passionate and courageous in confessing her feelings and taking responsibility for their mistake.

Given that she liked and cherished him, and was also brave and innocent, there was no reason for him to turn down a girl like that. There's no way I can disappoint her at all.

Unfortunately, he didn't expect his promise to be heard by Michaela who was standing by the door.

"Mich!"

Just a while ago, Michaela was so concerned about Lucille's condition that she had made a beeline toward the emergency room, leaving Hannah far behind her.

The moment Hannah finally caught up, she was greeted by the intimate scene inside the emergency room. As she shifted her concerned gaze toward Michaela, she called out in a sympathetic tone, "Mich..."

"Mom." Michaela turned around and threw her a faint smile. Her voice was so calm that it caused one to worry. "Let's go."

After staring at her daughter's leaving silhouette, Hannah glanced at the two hugging figures in the emergency room. As a cold glint flashed in her eyes, she turned around without hesitation before hurrying in the direction Michaela went.

It wasn't until her mother and sister's silhouette disappeared by the corridor that Lucille recovered her gaze. At the same time, her eyes began to glisten in a frosty manner.

Don't worry, Michaela, this is just the beginning. Soon, you will lose even more. I will take back everything that belongs to me, including the position and honor of being the eldest daughter of the Lingard family.

On her way home, Michaela was strangely at peace.

Worried about her daughter, Hannah took the initiative to drive. She then tried her best to distract Michaela's attention. However, all the latter did was stare out the window in silence.

“Mich, let’s go on a trip. After all, it’s been a long time since we have gone somewhere. Where would you like to go? I’ll accompany you there, all right? Would you like to visit a hot spring? Or perhaps—”

“Mom...”

Before Hannah could finish, Michaela turned to look at her mother. Her deep and tranquil gaze was tinged with a little confusion. “Why do I suddenly feel as if Lucille is different from the person I have grown up with? Why is she so scheming and can put on such a convincing act? I feel as if I don’t know her at all!”

I thought she was feeling distraught because of Zack. It never crossed my mind that Lucille is the reason. Wait a minute...

Hannah’s mind suddenly clicked. As the shocking thought flashed across her mind, she spun the car around and stopped by the roadside. “Are you saying that she had planned everything?”

“What else can it be? Mom, can’t you see that she has killed two birds with one stone with the drama? Not only did she obtain Zack’s promise, but she was also able to warn me to not have any designs on him. Marrying into the Xander family has been her true goal all along!”

Before she left, she had locked gazes with Lucille. The latter’s eyes were so vicious and sharp that Michaela felt as if they could pierce through her anytime.

If it wasn’t for the look in Lucille’s eye, Michaela wouldn’t have been able to tell that it was all part of the former’s plot from the very beginning.

“Mich, let me deal with this. Going forward, you should just ignore her affairs.”

The moment the scandal between Zack and Lucille broke, the Lingard family was forever changed.

To avoid embarrassment and worried that Michaela would be saddened by the sight of her sister, Hannah had originally planned to send Lucille overseas. After realizing what was going on, her conviction to do so intensified.

It wasn’t until she saw Michaela nod in acknowledgment that Hannah’s mind was put at ease. Only then did she start the car again.

Since the incident with Lucille had ruined their mood for shopping, Hannah turned the car around and drove back to Haversville Pavillion.

However, before they arrived back home, they saw a Bentley parked outside their entrance.

Just when the mother and daughter duo were hesitating, the car's passenger seat door was opened from the outside. Subsequently, a man with a distinguished and elegant aura alighted.

He was none other than Jonathan.

Love Her to No End Chapter 24

Chapter 24 A Distinguished Guest

As the Xander family's youngest son, Jonathan was exceptional in every aspect ever since he was young. Given that he was born when his father was old, he was naturally the apple of his father's eye.

In reality, there was a big gap in Jonathan's age with that of his eldest brother, the second eldest brother, and cousin, Quentin.

Due to the fact that Jonathan's mother, Mavis, liked daughters, she got pregnant with Jonathan when she was forty-seven and was determined to give birth to him.

Unfortunately, she was disappointed that he turned out to be a boy instead of a girl. Because of that, she was exasperated over the matter for a long time.

When Jonathan was born, the Xander family's eldest son, Zachary, already had a son of his own who was four years old, Jeffrey. Therefore, no one had expected Jeffrey to end up having an uncle that was younger than him.

In fact, Jeffrey had gotten a lot of grief for not greeting Jonathan appropriately. In the end, he had no choice but to accept Jonathan's seniority just to save himself from more beatings.

As for the Xander family, they were well respected in the community due to the fact that Nick was a famous entrepreneur, and more importantly, a well-known philanthropist. On top of that, he was a staunch supporter of Adrian's charity foundation.

That was how the relationship between both families began to develop.

In the present day, both families still maintained close ties even though Adrian had passed away, to the extent Michaela's marriage was arranged by Nick himself.

Back then, Hannah objected to it but didn't expect Jacob to accept the proposal.

Jacob had assumed that by ingratiating himself with the Xander family through a marriage alliance, his status would be elevated accordingly. However, from how things turned out, Zack was just a jerk compared to Jonathan.

Even though Hannah had no idea what Jonathan's visit was for, she quickly led Michaela out of the car and approached him. "Mr. Xander?"

"I'm sorry for the sudden visit."

His deep voice brought with it a sense of calm. Smiling faintly, he exuded an invigorating sense of elegance, which seemed to contradict his reputation as someone cold and ruthless.

"Don't worry about it. Please come in!"

Cognizant that Jonathan must have a reason for his visit, Hannah didn't waste any time as she stepped forward to guide the man into the house.

Meanwhile, Walter swiftly brought the presents that were prepared beforehand out of the trunk and followed behind them.

After everyone had taken their seats, Hannah realized that Jonathan had not only visited in person but also came bearing expensive gifts. Thus, she remarked cordially, "Mr. Xander, you shouldn't have. Mich, go make some coffee right away."

Given Jonathan's legendary status in the business world, his visit alone was considered a great honor for the Lingard family. Furthermore, he had nothing to do with what happened with Zack.

Consequently, Hannah was grateful for the gesture and had no hard feelings toward the Xander family.

When Jonathan was overseas, he led his fellow citizens in overcoming an economic crisis. Since then, his feats were known far and wide, causing him to be greatly respected and admired.

It was during that time that Nick insisted Jonathan take over the family business despite the fact that Jonathan had his own business empire. After handing the reins over to Jonathan, Nick subsequently retired.

Over the years, Jonathan's fame continued to grow despite the fact that he was overseas most of the time.

Considering how outstanding he was at a young age, Hannah was already impressed with him back then.

Fortunately, all the furniture that had been ordered previously had already arrived. Or else, it would have been embarrassing to welcome Jonathan in an empty mansion.

When he saw Michaela striding calmly into the kitchen and didn't look out of sorts, Jonathan's mind was put at ease. With a gentle expression, he declared, "I'm here today at my father's request. The gifts are just a small token of our sincerity. Mdm. Simmons, I do hope you like them."

When Hannah saw how warm and sincere Jonathan was, she was surprised by the amount of respect he showed. "You're really too kind. Since we're of the same seniority, there's no need to be so formal."

"That might be true, but you're older than me. As such, it's appropriate for me to show you due respect. Since Old Mr. Simmons was my master, it is only right that I address you as Mdm. Simmons. If you don't mind, you can just address me by my first name."

Jonathan was indeed her father's student. Ever since the former went overseas, Hannah was filled with admiration when she heard all the rumors about his exploits.

Therefore, when she saw how humble Jonathan was, Hannah gladly accepted his suggestion. In fact, the favorable impression she had of him grew even stronger.

Even though the rumors made him out to be a vicious and cruel person, she felt that he was someone sincere who did not put on airs and treated others congenially.

Little did she know that if Walter knew what was going through her mind, he would definitely tell her that she had been fooled by Jonathan's acting skills.

Soon, Michaela returned with freshly brewed coffee and personally serve Jonathan a cup. "Mr. Jonathan, please have some coffee."

Mr. Jonathan?

Jonathan furrowed his brows in exasperation over how she addressed him. If only I could get her to call me Jonathan again just like when we were kids. The thought of her gentle voice caused his Adam's apple to bob subconsciously.

With his fingers curled slightly, he touched the tip of Michaela's fingers just as he received the cup of coffee from her, which in turn jolted her into retracting her fingers by reflex.

All she felt was a burning sensation in her fingers that gradually traveled up to her cheeks.

When he saw the look on her face, Jonathan's eyes glistened. Taking a sip of coffee, he smiled plainly at her. "This tastes good. Thank you."

The hell? Is this humble and gentlemanly man still the same Mr. Xander I know?

Countless thoughts flashed across Walter's mind. Not only did you rush here impatiently, you even bribed their daughter. Mr. Xander, there is no one in this world that is more skillful in capturing another's heart than you. Wait! Mr. Xander was the one who insisted on being respectful in how he addressed Mdm. Simmons. Could it be that she isn't the one he's after, and instead it's...

Walter began to shift his gaze between the three people. Finally, he trembled in surprise.

So, Mr. Xander is doing all this because of Ms. Lingard? Does Mr. Xander fancy his nephew's fiancée? No wonder he not only exposed Zack's affair but also suppressed the scandal subsequently. Moreover, he even sent Gary to keep an eye on the Lingard family. It turns out that Mr. Xander has long plotted to take his nephew's fiancée for himself! Oh my God, this is such a mess!

Upon the sudden realization, Walter felt his heart beat furiously. Just when he wanted to restrain Jonathan's actions, the latter's voice rang out instead.

"Initially, my father wanted to visit you in person. But he wasn't feeling well, so he headed to the nursing home with my mother earlier than expected. Therefore, he instructed me to come and apologize for what Zack has done. The Xander family is at fault for not raising him well. At the same time, Mich didn't deserve to suffer from his actions.

"Mdm. Simmons, don't you worry. Even though the wedding has been canceled, Mich is still considered a member of the Xander family. I will personally protect her and I won't allow anyone else to harm her ever again. On top of that, the Xander family will definitely make it up to both you and Mich."

An exchange between adults did not need to be explicit. Hence, Hannah naturally read between the lines of Jonathan's words.

Since the matter between Zack and Lucille involved both families, having Jonathan resolve it personally was the best possible solution.

Furthermore, with the Xander family's reputation, Michaela's safety and happiness would be secured by their promise to protect her.

All this while, Hannah had never imagined that Jonathan was interested in her daughter. In fact, she was even impressed with how comprehensive his methods were.

During the visit, both sides had a pleasant chat with each other. It wasn't until Jonathan took his leave that Hannah nudged her daughter forward. "Mich, you should walk Jonathan out. Back when you had your appendix removed, Jonathan was the one who

helped you catch up with your homework. That was just a few years ago. Have you already forgotten about it?"

Love Her to No End Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Adorable With A Strong Front

In truth, Jonathan was only older than Michaela by five years. The first time they really met was during one particular summer.

Michaela had brought some food to the business school for Adrian as instructed. Coincidentally, Jonathan was in the latter's office then.

At that time, a twenty-year-old Jonathan was working on his doctorate, while fifteen-year-old Michaela was in her first year of senior high after skipping a few grades due to her excellent academic performance.

She remembered how Adrian praised Jonathan and even encouraged her to learn from him.

Subsequently, when Michaela had her appendix removed, Jonathan tutored her on the classes she missed due to how important her studies were. Furthermore, he even gave her his notes for the university entrance exam.

In a twist of fate, Adrian's student would turn out to be the uncle of her fiancé.

The year Michaela completed her university entrance exam, she and Zack held a simple ceremony for their engagement. During that time, Jonathan had gone overseas and never kept in touch.

During that five years, other than a fleeting meeting during Adrian's funeral, she only heard about him when someone else brought him up.

The distance between them grew further along with the passage of time.

If she hadn't run into him at Sommer Gardens the other day, his existence would likely have slipped her mind.

Compared to the charming youth back then, the man in front of her exuded a dignified and masculine aura. Intimidated by his reserved demeanor, Michaela felt the urge to avoid him.

As a result, she kept a wary distance from him as she escorted him out of the mansion.

Sensing her apprehension, Jonathan stopped in his tracks, feeling upset. He turned toward her. "Are you afraid of me?"

Panicking at the candidness of the question, Michaela shook her head in reflex and denied, "No. What's there to be afraid of? It's not like you're some kind of beast, right?"

Even though she had tried to calm herself down while speaking, her shifty eyes betrayed her true emotions.

When Jonathan saw how she was desperately putting on a strong front to cover up her unsettled emotions, he almost laughed in amusement.

She's so cute when she does that!

"I heard that you did well in your university entrance exam and are doing two majors concurrently in university, is that right?"

"Huh?"

Michaela was disoriented by the sudden change in topic. Compared to the genius standing in front of me, I'm too embarrassed to talk about my academic achievements.

Unsure of what Jonathan's intention was for asking the question, Michaela was stunned. By the time she regained her senses, he had closed the distance between them.

His deep obsidian eyes looked like a bottomless abyss that seemed to pull her in. As Michaela felt her heart squeeze, Jonathan's bassy voice rang out beside her ear. "After tutoring you in high school and suppressing the recent scandal, don't you have something to say to me for helping you out twice, Mich?"

His voice sounded especially melodious. Lowering his gaze while speaking, he unleashed his warm breath across her face. The warm sensation she felt added to the amorous tension in the atmosphere.

Furthermore, the tone in which he pronounced "Mich" was simply intoxicating.

When he mentioned it in front of her mother, Michaela thought of it as nothing more than a term of endearment from someone who was more senior than her. But this time, his voice seemed to have the ability to bewitch her, causing her heart to pound furiously.

Gulping nervously, she blurted, "Thank you, Mr. Jonathan!"

"After betraying my own nephew for you, are those two words the only thing you can manage?"

With glistening eyes and a calm expression, he observed her quietly without revealing his emotions.

Even though she had just graduated and wasn't experienced in the ways of the world, she still picked up a thing or two from the environment she grew up in.

Upon Jonathan's reminder, a sudden realization dawned upon her. With a gentle look in her eye, she probed, "Then, why don't I... treat you to a meal sometime?"

"Sure!" The corners of Jonathan's lips curled gleefully. "It's decided then. Call me once you've settled on a date!"

When he saw how Jonathan was shamelessly flirting with Michaela, Walter felt utterly embarrassed.

Isn't he supposed to be famous for staying away from women?

Ever since Jonathan's return to the country, Walter felt that the former was no longer the Jonathan of old. Can he stop staring at her like he's going to ravage her at any moment?

Just when Walter was pursing his lips and grumbling to himself, Jonathan had returned to the car. After warning his subordinate with a look, Jonathan lowered his head and got in.

From the moment the Bentley sped out of Haversville Pavillion, Jonathan was in a good mood. On the other hand, a sense of disquiet had crept into Walter.

Just thinking about the thoughtful look in Jonathan's eyes before he got into the car sent a chill down his spine.

At that moment, he tried to fade into the background as much as he could. In fact, he already had a phobia of hearing Jonathan's voice.

"Walter."

"I didn't see anything just now, Mr. Xander."

The denial-filled response even drew a sympathetic look from the driver.

Closing his eyes, Walter felt like giving himself a slap. Suddenly, Jonathan's voice rang out, "Continue to monitor Lucille. We can't afford to have her cause any more trouble."

He had just been informed by Gary that Michaela had rushed to City Hospital after receiving a phone call. There, she was greeted by the intimate scene of Lucille and Zack after the former's failed suicide attempt.

After realizing that Lucille had plotted everything, Jonathan was so worried that he rushed to Haversville Pavillion and brazenly used his father's name as an excuse for the visit.

In reality, Jonathan had his suspicions about Lucille after he learned of her affair with Zack. It was just that he didn't expect her to be so ruthless in achieving her objectives. Given how vicious she was, he knew that he had to be extra wary of her.

From arriving in an anxious mood to leaving with peace of mind, Jonathan finally understood why he had to stay away back then.

Just the mere mention of Michaela's name was enough to pierce through all his defenses. In fact, he would subconsciously care about everything that was related to her.

Not only did he want to protect her from any suffering and keep her safe from harm, but he also wanted to give her the world. More importantly, he wasn't going to allow anyone else to steal her from his side.

Unaware that someone had claimed her for the rest of her life, Michaela was fussing over the matter of treating the man to a meal.

Usually, treating someone to a meal is just a casual remark between adults. But why do I get the feeling that Jonathan is taking the matter seriously? I mean, he did indeed tutor me for a while back then, but the difference is that he is a lot scarier now!

Even though she admitted that she owed him a debt of gratitude, the thought of sitting opposite him for a meal felt pressuring to her still.

Sighing in resignation, she struggled with herself before deciding against keeping her word. I'm not working and don't have any money. How am I'm going to treat him? There. I finally have a good excuse, perfect!

Having resolved her predicament, a vibrant expression descended upon her face.

It was at that moment that she received a notification on her phone. When she read the contents of the message, the delightful smile she just had was wiped off her face.

It read: Don't forget our promise. Call me. Jonathan.

Love Her to No End Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Hidden Intentions

In a matter of a week, the spotlight on Quentin's interview shifted to the news of some celebrity cheating and becoming a mistress in a relationship.

Even though the behind-the-scenes of wealthy families could attract the attention of the public, it seemed as though people were more interested in the personal lives of celebrities.

Following suit, more and more secrets of famous people were revealed, overtaking the internet. Before long, the Xanders and the Lingards were no longer the topics of discussion.

Meanwhile, ever since they had bid farewell at Haversville Pavillion, Jonathan had been waiting for Michaela's phone call.

Usually, a phone was like an accessory to Jonathan. It was something he could live with or without. However, ever since that day, Jonathan had not let his phone out of his sight.

As Walter put it, it was as though Jonathan sprang up to life whenever his phone rang, but when the caller ID was not who he expected, all of the excitement would drain from his body as he tossed his phone aside.

The desolation in Jonathan's eyes made Walter's skin crawl.

Because of that, everyone in Shappiray Mansion had been actively avoiding Jonathan, afraid that they would accidentally trigger the ticking time bomb and cause themselves unnecessary issues.

In the beginning, Jonathan would even request Walter to check if there were any intercepted messages due to connection problems, or if there were something wrong with his phone that was preventing him from receiving phone calls.

It wasn't long before Walter started avoiding Jonathan as well, praying not to bump into the latter, for he could not bear to trample on the poor man's hope.

However, Walter could not help but think it strange. Many women would have given anything to be in Jonathan's bed, yet Michaela seemed to have no desire to be associated with Jonathan. On the other hand, Jonathan seemed determined to win her over.

Walter could almost predict the storms of the coming days. He had no doubts that life would no longer be simple.

In the end, Michaela still did not call. Rather, it was Gary who brought the news that Jacob had returned to Haversville Pavillion with a mountain of gifts.

From the looks of it, Jacob had finally caved under the pressure.

It was already nearing the end of autumn, yet it did not cool down after the summer. In fact, the humidity was almost overwhelming.

Before dinnertime, Michaela had just stepped out of the shower when she heard someone calling her from outside her room. "Ms. Michaela, Mr. Lingard is back!"

"Okay. I'll be down in a minute," Michaela shouted in response before hurrying into the closet to change.

In truth, she had been thinking if she should find an opportunity to invite Jacob back home for the past two days. After all, at the end of the day, they were a family. If she could not marry Zack, then she would work harder and help Jacob with the company in the future.

She never expected Jacob to return first.

Doesn't this prove that Dad still cares about me?

As Michaela made her way downstairs, Jacob was handing a box to Hannah. In a doting voice, he cooed, "I think this watch would look great on you. Why don't you try it on and tell me if you like it or not?"

"There's no need for that."

Evidently, Hannah was still furious at what Jacob had done. Without even glancing at the box, she immediately shoved it back at him. "If the reason you're back is to talk about Mich's and Zack's marriage, I'd advise you to keep your mouth shut because I will never agree to it!"

"Am I that kind of person in your eyes, Hannah? Mich is my daughter too, so of course I want her to be happy as well!"

A hint of helplessness was detected in his voice as Jacob sighed, seemingly acknowledging that he was at fault.

Michaela had been listening in on the conversation closely. Aware that tension was high, she quickly emerged from the corner and descended the stairs.

The moment her silhouette appeared, Jacob immediately turned to look at her and gestured to her with a loving smile. "Hurry over, Mich. Look what I've got you!"

As he was speaking, Jacob placed the rest of the bags onto the coffee table. Inside those bags were boxes of all shapes and sizes. Inside those boxes was an assortment of limited edition purses, designer gowns, limited edition perfume, and all sorts of luxury goods.

For a long while, Michaela gaped at those gifts on the table in surprise, speechless. "Dad, these..." she faltered.

"Mich, about your marriage, I have thought long and hard about it during my time away and have been self-reflecting. It was my fault. I have failed you and your mom. I promise that this will never happen again. Please, consider all these an atonement for what I have done." As Jacob spoke, he gestured to the gifts on the coffee table. "So Mich... would you forgive me?"

The sincerity in Jacob's voice moved Michaela. Michaela sniffled as her eyes turned red. When her voice failed her, all she could do was nod fervently as her tears streamed down her face.

All she had ever wished for was for her family to live together happily and peacefully, regardless of riches and status, just like the heartwarming scene that was happening at the moment.

That night, dinner was extremely pleasant. Jacob did not eat much as he kept giving more food to Hannah and Michaela. It had been so long since the family had such a happy time together that even Michaela could not recall the last time they had such a fun time.

After dinner, the three of them had tea in the living room while watching the news as per usual.

Just as Hannah was cutting fruits in the kitchen, Jacob took the opportunity to sit next to Michaela. After a moment of hesitation, he broke the silence cautiously. "Mich, there's something I want to discuss with you."

"Sure, Dad. What's up?"

Without a second thought, Michaela answered Jacob with a bright smile. Her amber eyes turned to look at him intently.

"Mich, I want to discuss about your sister."

Taken aback by the mention of Lucille, Michaela's smile faltered. Before she could speak, a cold voice rang out in the living room. "The Lingard family only has one daughter, and that's Michaela. What sister are you referring to?"

Jacob had originally planned to discuss the matter privately with Michaela. If he could convince Michaela, Hannah would have no other choice but to comply.

To his dismay, Hannah had overheard their conversation. However, it was too late for him to take back his words. Without any other choice, Jacob steeled himself and continued the subject. "Hannah, even though Lucille was adopted, she's still part of our

family. With the whole fiasco between her and Zack, the reputation of the Lingard family has been severely and negatively impacted.”

“So what? This is the true intention behind your apology and all those gifts, isn’t it?” Seeing through Jacob’s plans, Hannah pointed it out right in the open.

Although displeased, Jacob bit his tongue. After all, he still needed to exploit Hannah’s relationship with the Xander family. He was well aware that he alone could not persuade the Xander family to let Lucille marry into their family.

“Hannah, it was our choice to adopt her. Naturally, we have to take responsibility for her. Think about it, how will she get married in the future after what happened with Zack? If word got out, people won’t be talking about Lucille’s character. They would be judging us and saying that we didn’t raise her well.”

As an experienced businessman, Jacob possessed a sense of dominance. At that moment, however, he had suppressed his commanding presence in order to gain Hannah’s agreement, but to no avail.

“You want Lucille to marry Zack?” Hannah asked in disbelief.

“Jacob Lingard, have you no shame? How could you do this to Mich? Have you considered her feelings? Does she have a place in your heart at all?” she thundered.

Seeing Hannah’s persistence, a hint of annoyance flickered across Jacob’s eyes, but he managed to reign in his anger.

“Hannah, think of it as showing her pity. Surely you can’t be heartless enough to see Lucille having no future, right? Once she got married, whether or not she’s happy will no longer be our business. That way, we don’t have to feel sorry for her anymore. What do you say?”

Without missing a beat, Jacob continued, “Besides, ever since Mich’s and Zack’s wedding got canceled, many projects of Jacob Real Estate had been forced to be terminated. I can’t afford to lose any of my projects anymore.”

If Jacob had not brought up his business, perhaps he would have a higher chance of convincing Hannah. Lo and behold, Hannah’s wrath went off the rails at the mention of work.

All of a sudden, Michaela, who had remained silent throughout the entire time, suddenly stood up. With a calm expression and a faint smile on her lips, her eyes glimmered as she looked Jacob in the eye. “I agree with you, Dad.”

Love Her to No End Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Happy And Safe

The moon hung high in the dead of night, enhanced by the twinkling stars around it.

The autumn breeze rustled the curtains, bringing along a trace of coolness and chasing away the heat of the day bit by bit. Nevertheless, the breeze had no effect on the dark clouds in Michaela's mind.

The "atoning" gifts that Jacob bought piled miserably in the corner of the room. Ever since Jacob revealed his true intentions, all the joyful and heartwarming emotions she had felt before vanished into thin air as all of her hopes shattered.

As of then, Michaela did not even want to look at those luxury goods, for all they did was remind her once again of Jacob's ulterior motives.

Michaela could not help but laugh at herself, thinking her life was nothing but a joke.

She was not a fool, but it was a compromise she was willing to make for the sake of her family.

Knock, knock.

Just then, the door to her bedroom was knocked on, followed by Hannah's gentle voice. "Hey Mich, it's me. Can I come in?"

Michaela raised her hand to close the glass door of the balcony before turning to open the door. The slight worry on Hannah's face did not escape Michaela's notice. With a subtle smile, she greeted, "Why are you still awake, Mom? It's late."

"Well, you're still awake too, aren't you?" Hannah rolled her eyes in feigned annoyance. "I got you some hot milk. Drink it while it's still warm."

"Thanks, Mom."

Michaela wore a subservient smile on her face. The smile made her look more delicate than most women. Hannah's heart ached as she reached out to nudge Michaela's head. "What were you thinking when you agreed to it? Why cause yourself all the pain?" Hannah's voice was laced with devastation.

"Was I supposed to let you and Dad argue nonstop then? Have you ever thought about what will happen when he finally had enough and cut ties with us? He had done so much today just so that Lucille can marry into the Xander family. There was nothing we could do to convince him otherwise, so why bother?"

Truth be told, it was impossible for Michaela to not feel upset and disappointed after finding out Jacob's true intentions. However, besides compromising, there was another reason why she had done what she did.

"Besides, didn't Mr. Jonathan promise us the other day? He said that he would provide us with a satisfying solution. Since the Xander family would be taking care of it, there was no need for us to do anything," stated Michaela.

"I'll give Lucille my blessing to marry Zack, but if the Xander family refuses to accept her, then the blame would no longer be on our heads. There's such a simple solution to it, so why should you take it on yourself, Mom?" she proceeded to explain.

Before that, Michaela was still a child in Hannah's eyes. However, upon listening to Michaela's reasoning, Hannah suddenly realized that her daughter was no longer the baby that she had held in her arms.

A bittersweet emotion swirled within her. Although comforted, her heart ached at the same time. Tears welled up in her eyes as she held Michaela by the hand. "I'm sorry, Mich. It's my fault that you have to go through all of this."

As of then, Michaela did not understand the full weight behind Hannah's words. She merely viewed it as a mother's rightful care for a daughter. Not wanting Hannah to feel bad, Michaela threw herself into her mother's embrace coquettishly to comfort Hannah. "As long as I'm with you, Mom, I'm the luckiest child in the world!"

"My, my, such a sweet mouth!"

Hannah patted Michaela on the shoulder with a soft smile etched across her face. However, the smile faltered when Michaela's voice rang out once again. "Mom, there's actually something I want to tell you."

She sat up straight and looked at Hannah in a serious manner. "Mom, you should return to work. I know you're worried about me, but I'm doing well, aren't I?"

With a smile, she continued, "Besides, I never liked Zack anyway. I only went along with it since I was forced into the marriage. Now that I don't have to marry him, I'm feeling better than before. So, you can stop fussing over me and go back to work in peace."

In her heart, Hannah knew she could not protect Michaela forever. Michaela's request was the final push that she needed to stop being overprotective of her daughter. "All right, Mich, I promise you I'll go back to work, but there's something you need to promise me too."

"What is it?" Seeing the solemn look on her mother's face, Michaela narrowed her eyes suspiciously as she edged further away from Hannah. "You're not planning to sell me, are you Mom?"

“Yes, I am. I’m selling you to the foundation. What do you think?”

“What?”

The foundation was Adrian’s blood, sweat, and tears. Naturally, Michaela knew what the foundation stood for. In her heart, the foundation was the holiest place to ever exist. Because of that, Michaela had never dared to stain it with her presence.

“Mich, there’s something that I haven’t told you. When your grandfather decided to start the foundation, he did it because of you. Your grandfather wished that the charity would ultimately be passed to you. In fact, it was mentioned in his will. I’m only managing the foundation for the time being.”

With a longing sigh, Hannah explained, “Back then, you chose to study sales and marketing and were adamant about helping your dad in the company after you graduate. Because of that, I never brought it up till now. Mich, right now, I’m asking you to come work at the foundation and fulfill your grandfather’s final wishes. Will you accept?”

In reality, Michaela had been thinking about her future for the past few days. She had originally planned to become a tuition teacher at the school Hannah worked in. She figured that working a nine-to-five job did not sound like a bad option.

However, now that she knew about Adrian’s will, there was no way for her to refuse.

Ever since she was young, Adrian loved her the most. He would always give her the best things he could afford and never want to give her anything less than the best. He also loved to bring her with him anywhere he went.

Michaela could still remember Adrian always telling her that he would be old by the time she grew up. As a response, she would always say that Adrian will never grow old. Instead, she would want Adrian to stay with her forever.

As of then, she had grown up, but Adrian was no longer with them.

If Grandpa could see me today, his heart would probably break at the pain I’ve felt.

After a moment of silence, Michaela finally raised her head to look at Hannah, only to be greeted by Hannah’s caring gaze. With teary eyes, Michaela promised. “I’ll be honored to go work at the foundation.”

“Great! That’s great!” Hannah broke into a wide grin. “Rest soon, Mich. We’ll start this Monday!”

With a final pat on Michaela’s head, Hannah nodded in relief. May you always be happy and safe from now on!

When Hannah went back to the master's bedroom, Jacob had just gotten out of the shower and was just about to carry his blankets to the study next door.

The pair exchange glances. Neither of them spoke a word. Just as Jacob walked past her shoulder, Hannah suddenly spoke up. "Jacob, after things settle down with Lucille, let's get a divorce."

The relationship between the couple had long come to an end. At the moment, they could not even pretend to be at peace with each other. Hannah had lost all hopes in Jacob.

Marrying him was a choice she had made in the past, and she was willing to pay the price. However, she was worried that Jacob would once again throw her daughter under the bus ruthlessly, just as he did this time.

Without boundaries, there would only be countless sacrifices and exploitations.

Hannah would not allow the same thing to happen twice. She definitely would not allow someone as despicable as Jacob to break Michaela's heart again.

Jacob stopped in his tracks. The silence in the room was palpable. After a while, he scoffed. "Sure. I've had enough of someone as cold-blooded as you anyway."

Hannah had long gotten used to his scathing remarks. Hearing those words, there were minimal changes in her expression. Just as Jacob was about to leave, Hannah's calm tone rang out once again. "Don't have any ideas on my daughter. Otherwise, I'll haunt you even beyond the grave."

"Hah!"

With a snort, Jacob exited the bedroom and into the study next door. With a bang, he kicked the door of the study shut.

Love Her to No End Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Keeping A Distance From Jonathan

Adrian's initial purpose in establishing the foundation was to provide financial assistance to poor students and give them a chance to continue their education.

Upon receiving special attention and support from various organizations in society, there had been a large-scale development with regard to the charitable work done by the foundation.

After the meeting on Monday morning, Michaela headed to the project team and reported herself to the Board of Directors with her offer letter.

Since she was a regular volunteer on the project team during summer and winter breaks, she was not a stranger to all the team members.

Everyone was aware that she was the daughter of the president. Nevertheless, her vibrant and genuine character had won the hearts of many. The staff liked working with her because she was frank, and she never grumbled.

Additionally, she also got along well with all her colleagues.

Michaela was assigned to join the foundation's most recent project "A Helping Hand". Her main duty was to obtain and consolidate public resources, including communicating with all collaborators and sponsors to ensure a smooth implementation of the project.

Right then, Michaela was studying the project information at her desk when a neighboring colleague scooted over. She scanned her surrounding before whispering, "Mich, did Alois send you here just now? His voice was kind of hoarse during the morning meeting. Did he catch a cold?"

"Why do you ask me? Haven't won him over yet?" Michaela looked at Lorelei and chuckled.

The latter blushed instantly. She pursed her lips and muttered, "I don't dare to confess my feelings to him. I'm afraid that he will ignore me once I do that. What do you think I should do?"

"You came all the way here for him, anyway. If you don't take the initiative now to woo Alois, don't regret when he's taken!"

Alois was an orphan, who completed his studies through his maternal grandfather's sponsorship.

After graduating from university, he declined multiple job offers from different big companies as he had set his mind to work for the foundation.

Lorelei was his faithful admirer. No matter how she tried to win his heart from their university days to date, Alois had never once responded to her love.

All the project team members knew that Lorelei came for the sake of Alois. It was also not a surprise to see Michaela gossiping with Lorelei since they were about the same age and had similar interests.

Seeing how dejected Lorelei was as she returned to her desk, Michaela shook her head. Just when she was about to continue her work, her phone rang.

The name shown on the caller ID made her heart skip a beat. Instinctively, she hung up but soon received a threatening message.

It's either you answer the phone now or I'll go over to you.

Oh, screw it. Is this a blessing or a curse? It's not like I can actually run away from it, can I?

It had been days since that incident happened, so she thought that she could close the chapter already. To her horror, her nightmare had just begun.

The phone rang again. She picked it up and headed to the hallway. "Sorry, Mr. Jonathan, the line was quite bad," she uttered politely.

The line was bad?

Jonathan narrowed his eyes. Can't she put in some effort to come up with a better excuse?

He turned around and glanced at the staff who were left unattended in the conference room. "How's the new role coming along?" he asked in a crisp voice.

"It's good."

It was not a secret that she had joined the foundation. So, she nonchalantly gave him a laconic reply.

After a brief moment of silence, Jonathan asked, "Mich, did you mean it when you said you wanted to treat me to a meal? You were just paying me lip service, right?"

"Absolutely not!" she blurted.

"Then?"

Jonathan kept pursuing an answer. Though they were just talking over the phone, she could feel his imposing aura suffocating her.

"Well, I just graduated from university and haven't started working officially. I was planning to treat you once I get my first paycheck."

By the time she gets her salary, I'm probably living abroad again. Jonathan had always been focusing on his career overseas.

While she was smiling smugly at her own wit, Jonathan twisted her words. "In that case, you joined the foundation because of me?"

“I...”

“I appreciate what you’re doing for me. Never mind, I can lend you some money first.”

“Huh?” Michaela shuddered at his suggestion.

Though she could not see his devilish smirk, she heard him asking loud and clear. “Are you reluctant to go out with me?”

“It’s not that... I...”

“Great. I’ll pick you up after work then.”

He hung up right away before Michaela even realized that she had just been tricked.

Suddenly, her recent two interactions with him flashed across her mind. First, she was forced to treat him to a meal. Now, he had gotten the upper hand again. Not only must she treat him once more, she even landed herself as his debtor.

Mr. Jonathan is a dangerous man. I must keep a distance from him.

When she thought about having dinner with him, she felt so uneasy and lost her appetite completely.

At first, Lorelei was planning on discussing her grand confession plan with Michaela, but to no avail, because the latter was very distracted.

Soon, a day had gone by in the blink of an eye. Moments before their office hours ended, the blue sky changed drastically. Dark clouds crept up on the horizon, and a storm swept through every nook and cranny of the city.

Shortly after, it was followed by a fierce thunder.

Torrential rain poured down, raining cats and dogs.

There was a twinkle in Michaela’s eyes as a thought suddenly dawned on her. Thank God for this timely rain! I bet Mr. Jonathan won’t brave the weather and show up at the office.

At that naive thought, Michaela began to like rainy days and the beautiful scenery that came along with it like a package. At that moment, she felt that her life was bliss.

“We’re leaving now, Mich.”

“Bye! See you tomorrow.”

Her colleagues left the office by twos and threes on the dot. Everyone was cursing the sudden rain which had caused some inconvenience for people getting off work.

Lorelei asked, "Mich, let me take you home since there's a heavy downpour."

"Okay, thank you so much."

"Don't mention it, please!"

During lunch, Hannah called to inform her that she wanted to visit the training school and that the driver would pick Michaela up in the evening. However, the latter rejected the offer.

She thought that she would have dinner with Jonathan, but the rain ruined all of her plans.

"I hope it keeps raining forever."

"What?"

Lorelei frowned at Michaela's weird passing remark as they exited the elevator. The former did not explain herself. Instead, she smiled and shook her head.

As long as it keeps raining, I don't need to eat with that terrifying guy.

She was secretly delighted. Unbeknownst to her, a gentle voice called out, "Mich!"

She stopped in her tracks, and her smile stiffened. Has Mr. Jonathan been starving for days? Why is he so eager to have me buy him a meal, even in this ungodly weather?

The towering figure had already walked up to her by the time she turned around.

Jonathan departed from his office half an hour earlier because he was afraid that he would arrive late. Hence, he was still dressed in his working attire.

He looked utterly dapper and charming in a suit. Staring and smiling at Michaela like the boy next door, his domineering and imposing aura was not detected at all.

"Mich, who's this handsome guy?"

Lorelei thought that her beloved Alois was the most gorgeous and perfect man in the whole wide world until she saw Jonathan with her own eyes. Indeed, there's always someone better out there.

Although she vowed to stay committed to Alois, she could not take her eyes off Alois. I must exercise my rights to feasting on eye candy, right?

She nudged Michaela by the elbow, and the latter was snapped back to her senses. "This is Mr. Jonathan, an elder I know," she hurriedly introduced him.

Love Her to No End Chapter 29

Chapter 29 A Shameless Seductress

The whole world knew that the engagement between the Xander and the Lingard families had been called off.

Hence, Lorelei was curious to find out about the good-looking guy who braved the rain to pick Michaela up after work. Upon hearing how she addressed him courteously, Lorelei bowed and introduced herself in a serious tone, "Hi, Mr. Jonathan. I'm Lorelei Summerfield, Mich's colleague."

She seemed like a well-mannered and composed girl, but she was in fact, fretting deep down like one who had ants in her pants.

This is my first time meeting Mich's elder, who is so young and handsome. If it weren't for Alois, I bet I'd have fallen head over heels for him.

"Hmm," he briefly acknowledged without any emotions.

His eyes remained fixated on Michaela's delicate face. "Let's go," he urged softly.

An elder? What on earth is she trying to do? Who wants to be her elder?

"I'll take my leave now, Lorelei. See you tomorrow!"

Michaela could sense the air growing thicker. She was also puzzled when she noticed a slight change in Jonathan's expression. Did I say something wrong? Why is he even angry? What a bad temper! There's no wonder rumor has it that he doesn't get along well with the opposite sex. With an attitude like this, which girl will ever be willing to stay by his side?

After bidding Lorelei goodbye, Michaela quickened her steps and trailed behind like a mouse. She was afraid to step on his toes again. His mood swings are so unpredictable!

When they were about to exit the building, he stopped abruptly. Michaela was not able to stop in time and bumped into him.

"Ouch!"

She felt a sharp pang on her forehead and let out a groan. Before she could rub it, someone else's hand was already doing the action.

Surprised, she looked up and was met by Jonathan's worried gaze. His palm on her forehead was so warm.

A red spot became pronounced on Michaela's fair skin. Frowning, Jonathan questioned, "Why are you so careless?"

Feeling aggrieved, she complained, "I was trying to catch up with you."

Unexpectedly, Jonathan did not get upset. Conversely, he was listening to her attentively. Then, he replied with a smile, "There's no need for you to play catch up. I'm always here, Mich."

"Huh?"

She looked up and was captivated by his bright, alluring eyes.

One could easily fall into that mesmerizing abyss.

Her face flushed as they locked eyes with each other. Subconsciously, she took a step back, but he pulled her back into his embrace. "Let's go now and not stand here in the cold weather."

She could feel the warmth exuding from his body despite being separated from the fabrics of his suit. Additionally, there was a fresh scent lingering around him. Michaela's heart raced rapidly, and she could not resist burying her head deeper into his arms.

Upon catching a glimpse of Jonathan stepping out of the premises, Walter quickly got out of the car with an umbrella.

When Michaela was finally seated, she realized that Jonathan's suit was all wet. He's probably worried that I'd be drenched in the rain. Therefore, he sacrificed himself just to make sure that I was fully covered under the umbrella.

Feeling rather bad about it, she took out a tissue and handed it over to him. "Hurry up and wipe yourself dry. Don't catch a cold."

Hearing that, Walter immediately hid away the towel that he was about to pass to Jonathan. Subsequently, he held his breath and tried to make his presence go unnoticed.

What Mr. Xander needs right now is Ms. Lingard's care and concern, not this towel.

He took a peek at the backseat via the rear mirror, and he almost burst into a series of loud cheers when he saw the corners of Jonathan's lips curled upward.

At that moment, nothing seemed more satisfying than making the right move for the sake of his boss' happiness.

Shortly after, he heard Jonathan tease her shamelessly, "Mich, you care for me, don't you?"

Walter nearly choked on his saliva. Oh my, why is Mr. Xander acting like a drama king?

A conflicting expression flashed across Michaela's face. A while later, she exclaimed, "Well, Mr. Jonathan, you are my elder. It's only natural that I show concern toward a senior."

Though he cringed at her word choice, a warm and fuzzy feeling still rose within him. Whatever it is, the bottom line is that she cares about me.

Feeling delighted, Jonathan accepted the tissue. However, he did not use it. Instead, he kept it in the pocket closest to his heart.

I must treasure this like a collectible. It's the first time this girl proactively does something nice to me.

His action did not go unnoticed. While Michaela was still staring at him, Jonathan turned and saw her scrutinizing him.

Instantly, a pinky blush spread through her face to her ears, and her heart pounded furiously.

In the next second, she quickly averted her gaze and faced the window.

She's actually shy? How cute!

About half an hour later, the car pulled over. The weather was rather chilly since it was still drizzling.

It was Michaela's first day reporting to work. Hence, she picked a body-hugging pastel power suit paired with high heels to look prim and proper.

Previously, she would often dress casually like a university student. Donning in a set of formal working attire made her look more mature and femininely attractive. However, the thin outfit was certainly not good for a rainy day.

Suddenly, she felt warmth on her shoulders as a familiar scent drifted into her nose. Someone had wrapped a long black trench coat around her.

As far as she could recall, Zack had never showed her any affection during the few years they were engaged. She felt so uncomfortable having a man's coat around her body. "Mr. Jonathan, this..."

"Wear it, for it's cold outside. You can return it to me next time."

What? Is there next time? Can I choose not to wear it?

Before she could reject, he grabbed hold of her shoulder while taking the black umbrella from Walter, and strode into the restaurant. "It's a small umbrella, so don't fidget," reminded Jonathan.

Not knowing what to do, Michaela side-eyed Walter who had left them for the car. She tried to pursue further, "Is that gentleman not going to join us for dinner?"

She was dying to find another person to join them, so that she could be spared from the awkwardness of eating alone with him. Who would have known that her question fetched a sharp glare from Jonathan! "Did you just call him a gentleman?" A tinge of grimace laced his tone.

The next moment, he snapped without waiting for her answer, "He doesn't need to eat!"

Unbeknownst to Michaela, he was not going to let Walter off so easily just because she asked an innocent question.

That night, the poor Walter starved for the entire night as a punishment by his boss. He had nothing but only water to drink.

Love Her to No End Chapter 30

Chapter 30 His Considerate Words And Actions

Upon entering the restaurant, Michaela realized that Jonathan had picked a fondue shop.

As a hard core foodie, fondue was her top favorite.

When she was gazing at the falling rain through her office windows earlier on, a big pot of piping hot cheese fondue was what she was craving.

Great minds think alike! Suddenly, Michaela did not find Jonathan as annoying and frightening as he was before. In fact, she thought that he was quite friendly.

The change in perception made her feel more at ease. As soon as they entered the restaurant, someone came up to them and collected the umbrella from Jonathan's hand. At the same time, he addressed him reverently, "Mr. Xander."

"Hi, just go ahead and carry on with your work. We'll head upstairs ourselves."

He did not want to be bothered by anyone when he had the chance to spend quality time with Michaela.

"Noted."

As the restaurant manager retreated, he took a glance at her.

Subsequently, Jonathan led Michaela to the second floor. They walked past a row of private rooms, took a few turns, and arrived at one with a striking wooden carving on its door.

Mich in My Heart.

She hesitated to take a step forward. A peculiar feeling rose within her but vanished a moment later.

"What's wrong?" he saw her gaze fall on the block of wood and asked the obvious.

His voice snapped her back to her senses. Michaela shook her head and said, "Nothing."

Meanwhile, a hand appeared from behind and turned the knob to open the door right before her.

Though it was a simple action, she felt like he did it on purpose, seemingly hugging her in a way. "Let's go in." He continued to behave indifferently.

"Okay."

She strode into the room, not realizing a smirk had settled upon Jonathan's face.

The private room was so huge that it could easily host about thirty people at any one time. Yet, there was only one long table inside.

Jonathan removed his jacket and went ahead to make a pot of hot tea, whereas Michaela made her way to the French windows by the balcony.

She had always found them fascinating.

Coupled with the pitter-patter of the rain, she was also captivated by the hustle and bustle of the vibrant city. Cars zoomed past the busy roads, and the pedestrians quickened their steps to get to their destinations; everyone seemed to know where they were heading to.

Michaela was so engrossed in the eventful scenes unfolding before her eyes until a familiar baritone voice resonated behind her and interrupted her thoughts.

By the time she turned around, the room was filled with a faint fragrant of earl grey. Jonathan waved at her. "Come on over and try the tea that I've made for you. It will warm you up in no time."

"Thank you, Mr. Jonathan."

She kept on addressing him formally as if he was a stranger. On the other hand, she spoke casually to Walter.

Am I that old?

Jonathan's gaze darkened. Right when Michaela was about to take another sip, a crisp voice said sarcastically, "I remember clearly that back in the days, you refused to use honorifics when Old Mr. Simmons insisted that you do so when talking to me. Ironically, you've not dropped the title once these days."

Cough... cough...

Michaela's face was flushed a crimson red when he brought up the past. She choked on a gulp of warm tea and started coughing violently until tears filled her out.

Jonathan shook his head helplessly when he saw that she was all tensed up. He knew that he was growing impatient.

"Why did you drink so fast? No one is fighting for the cup of tea with you," he said languidly as he approached her and gently patted her back.

I wouldn't have panicked if he didn't startle me like that!

Admittedly, she was repulsed by the honorific terms back in the day. Moreover, she was going through a rebellious stage then. Due to that, she even threatened Jonathan before.

At that time, she was reluctant to acknowledge him as an elder because he was only a few years her senior.

Well, kids say the darndest thing. How could he take it seriously? He must have an elephant's memory to remember such a thing that I've said before and try to use it against me now. How vengeful and petty!

While she was still cursing him in her head, the restaurant manager knocked on the door courteously and entered the room thereafter.

After supervising the waiters to serve an array of gourmet dishes, he intended to leave two waiters in the room to wait on the duo. However, his suggestion was rejected by Jonathan. The manager was astounded to see the latter rolling up his sleeves, ready to serve his guest food.

Whoa, this lady must be a special someone to Mr. Xander!

The cheese fondue was absolutely delicious. Jonathan was very good at pairing the cheeses and keeping the burner at the most ideal temperature. Michaela enjoyed herself thoroughly. In contrast, Jonathan had very little because he was busy tending to her needs.

By the time dinner was over, it was already nightfall.

And so, it's not exactly that bad to dine with Mr. Jonathan after all. I'm supposed to treat him to this meal, but I clearly ate more than him.

Thus, she came up with an excuse to go downstairs, wanting to foot the bill. The manager saw her and asked immediately, "Is there anything that I can help you with, Miss?"

"Please get me the check."

The manager chuckled. "You must be joking. This restaurant belongs to Mr. Xander. There's no need for you to pay, Miss."

What? This place is owned by Mr. Jonathan? There's no wonder he's so familiar with it like he's a regular here. Oh no, I was supposed to give him a treat. Now, it's apparent that I owe him another favor.

Left with no choice, Michaela thanked the manager with a smile and headed to the stairs. Suddenly, a couple who were walking down caught her attention because they were publicly displaying affection for each other.

Wait, aren't those two Lucille and Zack? What a pathetically small world to run into this pair at dinner!

Ever since the incident at the emergency ward, Lucille had officially moved into Zack's condominium.

The few days before their engagement was called off, Zack was grounded by Quentin. However, the grounding period did not last long. Yvonne felt so sorry for her son and restored his freedom in the name of work.

Now that the two finally lived together, they were inseparable and could not keep their hands off each other.

Zack was stunned to bump into Michaela. Upon noticing that the arm wrapping around his was trembling, he patted Lucille's hand and consoled her, "Don't worry, I'm here."

Michaela was taking in all their reactions and little interactions. She burst out laughing and decided to go up the stairs. Surprisingly, Zack took the initiative to greet her, "It's been a while, Mich."

Michaela ignored him and continued walking upstairs. When she was passing them by, she heard Lucille called her name under her breath, "Michaela."

She wanted to disregard their presence and strode forward, but a hostile voice held her back. "Michaela, must you be so heartless? Do you want to see Lucille dwell in sorrows and guilt forever? Is that what you want? To err is human, to forgive divine. Why can't you stop being so overbearing?"

"I'm heartless and overbearing? Wow!" Michaela repeated his words through her gritted teeth. She looked him straight in the eyes and faked a skin-deep grin. "Zack, who are you to lecture me after doing all those disgusting things?"

"You!"

Zack had been a favored child all of his life, and no one had ever publicly humiliated him.

"I see your true colors now. Thankfully, I called off the wedding. A woman like you don't deserve to bear my surname. Nobody will find you lovable." Feeling embarrassed, he responded with a grimaced look and harsh words.

Her fiancé cheated on her with her sister, and she became the victim. Although Jonathan managed to suppress all the rumors and hate messages that had gone viral, he could not stop anyone from gossiping.

She had never expected Zack to rub salt on her wound with no qualms about hurting her deeper.

Instantly, tears welled up in her eyes. Before she could react to anything, a calm voice spoke on her behalf, "So, that's how you roll huh, Zack?"