

Love Her to No End Chapter 71

Chapter 71 Wretched Woman

Michaela and Jonathan didn't leave the dining room after they finished their meal.

It would be awkward if they did. Besides, she was in the Xander residence at the moment, so it wouldn't be nice for an outsider to make things worse.

It wasn't until she heard Mavis' harsh words that she hid behind the dining room's entrance and carefully observed the situation inside the living room.

She always thought the old woman was kind and warm. It wasn't until that moment she saw what Mavis was capable of.

Even the crafty Lucille was taken care of in seconds when the old woman unleashed her sharp tongue.

However, Lucille wasn't the type to go down easily.

She might look weak, but she would never stop fighting for an opportunity to stand up for herself. "I know I don't deserve to be with Zack based on my status, but we're truly in love with each other! It was something I tried to prevent from happening before, but no one can control an emotional affair with logic. I admit, I was wrong, but I'll never regret loving Zack!"

Her tears poured out of her eyes even harder, so much so that almost everyone would've pitied her. It was a shame that her opponent was Mavis, who had lived for far longer than her.

The old woman had seen all kinds of woman in her long life. While she wasn't a scholar, she certainly picked up the ability to read people by observing them over the years.

It was something that no beautiful young woman could compare to her.

Intending to get her sympathy with some tears would never work.

Mavis' mouth curved upward as she spoke in a mocking tone. "A woman can live humbly but not lowly. Do you think I said all that because of your status? No! I said all that because you are a wretched woman!"

Lucille's heart tightened as she stared at the old woman in disbelief.

When her eyes met with the old woman's, she felt as though her thoughts were laid bare for Mavis to see. It made her feel scared and want to hide in a hole.

"The Lingard family adopted you from that orphanage and gave you a comfortable life. Yet, when you managed to climb up to the top, you'd go as far as to kick them down. If you knew what's best for you, you would be spending your time in Quakersville right now and let your foster parents find another partner for you to marry. You could've lived comfortably for the rest of your life, too, but you chose not to. Do you think I'll let any random person marry into the Xander family? Sorry, but we don't accept people who could perform vile acts without even a hint of remorse. You're not marrying into the Xander family for the rest of your life! If it wasn't because I wanted to tell you where the Xander family stands, you wouldn't have been able to stand inside this building today! If you're smart, you'll leave Zack right now, and you shall preserve your dignity. Otherwise, things will get very ugly for you." Mavis' harsh reprimand had exceeded what Lucille could accept.

Last night, Lucille had even had a nice dream. She was planning to do whatever it took to make the old couple happy. If she succeeded, then her marriage with Zack would be sealed.

Unfortunately, reality had other plans, and it prepared a nasty morning surprise for her.

At the moment, her fingers were subconsciously clenching tightly. Her body was trembling, and a vicious look flashed across her lowered head.

She approached the old couple, bowed at them, and then turned to Zack. "Your grandmother is right, Zack. I don't deserve you. Let's break up! I won't disturb your life any longer. Please let me go and let's not meet again!"

Lucille's heart was pounding when she said that. She was afraid Zack would take his grandparents' words to heart.

However, she had no other choice but to make her riskiest bet to succeed.

If she won the bet, then not only would she find out just how loyal he was to her, but it would also show the old couple that Zack wanted her and that she wasn't a lowly woman.

Even if she lost, she would still have enough leverage over Zack to make him listen to her.

As expected, just as she turned around and prepared to leave, Zack suddenly grabbed her hand and stared at the old couple with a serious expression.

"I really do love Lucille, Grandma, Grandpa. She's a kind, thoughtful, and sensible woman. Please don't blame Lucille for what happened to my and Michaela's wedding.

I'm a man. I should be the one who takes up the responsibility for a mistake. Don't vent your anger on her!" He was a man who worshiped the way of machismo.

When he saw how badly Lucille was crying as she tried to break up with him for his own good, his desire to protect her surged instantly.

Words leaped out of his mouth without going through his mind first.

Seeing how Zack had caused his lover to become so infuriated that she couldn't say a word, Nick glared at his grandchild and slapped on the couch's armrest loudly. The flames of fury in his eyes looked as though it was going to swallow the young couple whole. "I dare you to say that again, Zack!"

He was a renowned man in the business market for many years, and he had accumulated a lifetime's worth of experience. From that, he formed an impenetrable cold façade that he could use whenever necessary.

The only person he wouldn't use that facade against was his wife. All the armor he put on his heart and mind turned into cotton candy when he was around her. He had used his entire life to love and protect her.

It was a well-known fact in the family that their relationship was very strong.

What Zack said had undoubtedly touched Nick's bottom line.

The young man couldn't help but feel a shiver down his spine when he saw his grandfather's cold look. He immediately recognized the mistake he had made on impulse and tried to remedy it.

Before he could speak, Nick cut him off with his booming voice. "You b*stard! How could you still have the guts to stand in front of us after causing such a mess with the wedding? Have you ever thought about what our family will look like to outsiders if they heard about this? Or the relationship between our family and the Lingard family? What did you say earlier? You said you can take responsibility for your mistakes, right? Fine, I'll give you a chance to make up for your mistake! Mich is currently in the dining room. Go and beg her for forgiveness. If she forgives you, then you can stay with whoever you want, and we won't say a word about it!"

Michaela, who was eavesdropping on the conversation behind the dining-room door, was still amazed by how oppressive Nick could be, when she heard him mention her name.

It prompted her to retract her neck in response. Just as she was turning around, a deep, calming voice was heard next to her ear.

Jonathan's sudden appearance made her blush. She shook her head subconsciously and heard his magnetic voice again. "He's usually not like that. It's pretty clear he was pissed off by Zack. Don't worry, I'm here to protect you."

There was a coaxing tone in his voice, which pulled at her heartstring. All she felt was her burning cheeks, which then led to her ears feeling hot. I can't believe this old man is still trying to flirt in this situation. He's shameless!

Just as she was cursing him in her mind, she heard a set of heavy footsteps coming straight at her.

When Zack heard his grandfather bring up Michaela, his mind suddenly decided to channel all his anger toward her. He had subconsciously decided to push all the things that went wrong onto her.

He turned and headed to the dining room.

As he walked, he roared with anger, "I was the one who decided to divorce you, so why did you keep complaining about me again and again to my family, Michaela? You hit Lucille last time to seek revenge, so what's your latest scheme now? Lay it all onto me! You can scold me or punch me however you want, but after that, please get out of my life forever, okay? I've never seen a more vicious woman than you in all my life. You—"

Just as he entered the dining room, the first thing he saw was Jonathan's cold expression and dark eyes.

That made Zack swallow everything he wanted to say back. He gulped anxiously and greeted in a trembling voice, "U-Uncle Jonathan."

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Chapter 72 Protective Jonathan

Jonathan's glare was fierce and cold. His sharp eyes were fixed on Zack as he pursed his lips so tightly that they became a straight line.

When Zack met his uncle's eyes, his heart mysteriously thumped, and he immediately shut his mouth.

"Why did you stop?" Jonathan sounded gentle, but there was a very clear coldness in his tone.

He glared at Zack so viciously that it made him tremble in fear. "Y-You're here, Uncle Jonathan!"

Even though Jonathan was only a few years older than Zack, Zack respected his uncle a lot, whether in terms of his uncle's abilities or temperament.

To be more precise, he was afraid of Jonathan.

It was not just him. All family members who were younger than Jonathan feared him, despite their achievements. They would show him respect, either genuinely or out of fear.

That fear and admiration were carved into their bones. Having an uncle like Jonathan was their pride, and he was their role model.

Zack had caused quite a lot of trouble recently, and adding to the fact that Jonathan heard how insolently he was speaking earlier, he was basically acting like a mouse in front of the cat now that he saw his uncle.

While Jonathan saw the fear in Zack's eyes, he wasn't going to go easy on his nephew.

"Or what?" He narrowed his eyes so sharply that his look was like a blade cutting into Zack.

His voice grew louder with each word he uttered. "What do you think this place is, huh? How dare you act so brazenly here! You're getting bolder huh!"

"That's not it..." Zack refuted subconsciously.

His intention was to obtain the old couple's acknowledgment. Of course, he didn't want to escalate the conflict.

However, since all his family members were opposing his wish to be with Lucille, it caused the balance in his mind to topple, and he temporarily lost his temper.

"So what was it then?" The casual aura around Jonathan vanished and was replaced by an oppressive one.

Even the tone he was using was much harsher compared to before. "Are you not the one who talked back against the elders? Are you not the one screaming at the top of his lungs and bullying girls? Do you think I'm so old that my hearing's gone bad?"

"No, of course not!" As Zack was figuratively pushed back again and again by his uncle, he shut his mouth.

"I always thought you're the most well-behaved one among the three of you since you were a child. It turns out you're the exact opposite of what I thought of you. What kind of upbringing did Quentin and his wife give you? Tell me, Zack. Who gave you the newfound courage and confidence?"

"I was wrong, Uncle Jonathan!" Zack was scolded so badly that his cheeks were turning red, but Jonathan had no intention of stopping.

The look in Jonathan's eyes was as cold as a block of ice on a winter's night. The words he uttered became more merciless than the last. "Weren't you acting all insolently earlier? Well, I'm giving you a chance today to speak your mind! Go! Say what's on your mind!"

While Zack submitted to his uncle, he was still pretty pissed.

His anger was triggered again when he saw Michaela, who was sitting comfortably at the side. When he thought about the grievance and blame Lucille had to suffer, blood rushed into his mind, and he shouted fearlessly, "You mustn't allow Michaela's innocent and pure appearance fool you, Uncle Jonathan! Likewise for Grandma and Grandpa! She's just putting on a false facade in front of you all because she didn't like me being together with Lucille! Don't trust what she says!"

Jonathan's icy look was now frozen as he barked, "Continue!"

Upon receiving his permission to continue, Zack explained, "You all never spent time with Lucille before. How can you be so certain about who she is? She's a good person, unlike a certain someone who cooks up vile schemes behind everyone's back!"

"How did you know for sure that Mich complained to us?" Jonathan raised his eyebrow and asked faintly.

Despite his neutral expression, those who truly knew him could tell it was a sign of a raging storm brewing in his heart.

Zack didn't know, so he thought his uncle believed him and he resumed, "The truth will come to light. She almost forced Lucille to take her own life, and she even have the nerve to hit someone! Not only that, she intentionally twists the truth to show herself in a better light and tear our family's relationships apart! There's nothing she isn't willing to do! How can a vile person like her complain that I fell in love with someone—"

"B*stard!" In an instant, the coldness in Jonathan's look plummeted further.

Without waiting for Zack to finish, he kicked his nephew to the ground.

Zack couldn't react fast enough to dodge, and it completely flabbergasted him. Didn't he ask for me to continue? Why did I still get hit after he listened to what I had to say?

That kick was so powerful that it made him grit his teeth in pain. Before he could take another breath, he was lifted into the air abruptly and punched hard. "Is this how you take responsibility as a man? You make a mistake and then find a bunch of bullsh*t reasons to justify your actions? Did you feed your brain to the dogs?"

As terrible as Zack was, he was still a child of the Xander family. Jonathan watched him grow up, so he knew his nephew was a good man who was coaxed by someone to say hurtful stuff like that.

Sadly, Zack didn't pay attention to what Jonathan was trying to say at all. He just stared blankly at his uncle as he tried to find a reason for his uncle's action.

Michaela was planning to just sit by the side and watch the show. After all, it felt good for her to watch Zack getting his comeuppance in the hands of the furious and scary Jonathan.

However, she changed her mind when Jonathan suddenly hit his nephew.

Even she felt it was too extreme for an uncle to hit his nephew. Still, she had to admit Jonathan looked really handsome as he did it.

Just as she was considering stopping him, Jonathan struck again and dragged Zack out of the dining room.

She stopped hesitating and followed them into the living room. Zack was kneeling in front of the old couple with a bruised face. He looked utterly miserable.

As for Lucille, who just promised to break up with Zack, was kneeling next to him and crying her heart out. "I'm sorry, Zack... I'm so sorry... You're doing all these for me..."

"Send the lady out, Albert! There's a familial affair that needs to be taken care of right now. Outsiders shouldn't be here!"

"Roger!" Upon receiving Jonathan's order, Albert approached the crying Lucille and dragged her out of the building.

The sound of crying no longer filled the living room, and it was replaced by silence.

Nick was so angry that his head was spinning, which was why he was currently resting on the couch. Mavis sat next to him with a worried expression.

"Is Old Mr. Xander fine, Old Mrs. Xander?" Michaela asked.

Upon hearing that, Mavis' expression softened. She requested, "Can you help me take him back to our room to rest, Mich?"

"Okay!"

The couple was getting old, so it wasn't easy for them to get up to the first floor, which was where their room was located. Michaela and Mavis each held one side of Nick back to the room.

That rebellious Zack just has to push everyone to their limits. We tried our best, but if it still doesn't work, then there's nothing much we can do. Mavis stared at her partner worriedly. I really hope this doesn't worsen Nick's health. I don't care about that brat anymore. Jonathan will handle him.

After laying Nick on the bed, Michaela wanted to grab a glass of water for the old man. Just as she exited the room, she heard Jonathan's cold voice. "Do you know what you did wrong now?"

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Chapter 73 Zack Kneels

"I don't get it! All I want is to be with the woman I love! Why is everyone against that? You all like Michaela, but to me, even a single strand of Lucille's hair is worth more than her! I just can't stand how pretentious Michaela is!"

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Zack was completely humiliated by now. Not only could he not protect the woman he adored, but he had also been struck by his own uncle.

There was nothing more insulting than having to kneel here like this, and he was prepared to burn bridges if he had to.

That was why he had no qualms yelling at Jonathan, regardless of how terrifying the latter looked.

Even Albert began to worry for him.

Mr. Zack really doesn't know his place. He's already made a huge mistake by defying Old Mrs. Xander, and now, he's picking a fight with Mr. Jonathan?

He shook his head, feeling nervous for Zack.

As expected, Jonathan responded imposingly, "Go kneel outside and talk to me again after you're done reflecting!"

There was no arguing with Jonathan. No matter how indignant Zack felt, he could only force himself up and walk out of the house as though he had just lost a battle.

Jonathan narrowed his eyes at the younger man. You need to learn your lesson. You have some nerve talking about my wife like that in front of me. Who do you think you are?

Nick was absolutely furious over the stir Zack had caused.

He had previously gone to a nursing home because of his high blood pressure, and after finding out about what Zack had done, his blood pressure now began to spike once more to a dangerous level.

Thankfully, the family doctor rushed over immediately, and the older man seemed fine aside from how his blood pressure was unstable. The doctor advised Nick to rest well and avoid getting aggravated, leaving only after the latter had taken his medication and fallen asleep.

Jonathan walked the doctor to the entrance and had Albert see him off before coming back to see an anxious-looking Michaela seated on the couch with her two hands clasped together.

He had already noticed her reddened eyes while the family doctor was examining Nick, but he was too busy to approach her then.

Now that the doctor was gone, he could finally sit down beside Michaela. "What's wrong?"

"It's all my fault that Old Mr. Xander got so worked up."

Seeing how self-reproaching she looked, he caressed her head gently. "My dad's at an old age, and he's had high blood pressure for a long time. Besides, it's Zack's fault. You're the victim here, so don't blame yourself. Got it?"

"But you hit Zack. How are you going to explain this to his parents?"

Quentin and Yvonne founded the environmental protection group after graduating from university.

The couple had spent all those years building the business together—through good times and bad—until they became a name in the corporate world.

One could only imagine the struggles Yvonne would have faced when she first delved into the world of business. After years of hard work, the fact that she could now do her job with ease and even receive praise for it was a testament to her relentlessness.

However, she certainly didn't have the best character either, as shown by how she had tried to stop Quentin from teaching Zack a lesson back at Sommer Gardens despite knowing that their son was in the wrong.

Michaela had witnessed how the older woman had protected her son while disregarding his mistakes.

Although Yvonne later called to apologize, no amount of words could reverse the damage that had already been done.

At present, Michaela was worried that the Xander family would stop getting along because of what had just happened, given how Quentin wasn't Nick's own son.

Yet, her words seemed to carry a different meaning to Jonathan.

The man smiled faintly and gazed at her with his obsidian eyes. "Are you actually worried about me?"

Does he really think that? Ugh! How shameless can he be?

"Of course not!" Michaela shot him a glare before running upstairs.

But the moment she turned around, Jonathan swiftly noticed how rosy the woman's neck had become.

She's blushing.

A smile played on his lips, but his gaze quickly darkened at the thought of serious matters.

It doesn't matter if I had pissed Quentin and his family off. They're bound to be offended once I announce my relationship with Michaela anyway.

Besides, Jonathan didn't think he had gone overboard with his words and actions that day.

Meanwhile, Zack initially still felt disgruntled while kneeling outside the Xander residence.

He then grew fearful after learning that the family doctor had to come over. But since he dared not tell his parents what he had done, he could only endure the punishment he was now going through.

Ever since word about his and Lucille's private matters got out, Zack's parents had already warned him to break things off with that woman.

But had it not been for his firm assurance, he wouldn't have regained the freedom he now had.

Now that all his wishful thinking had amounted to nothing and he could no longer hide his relationship with Lucille, even Zack began to wonder how to navigate the future.

Just then, he heard a series of footsteps. “Albert! How’s Grandpa doing?” he asked upon realizing that Albert had returned from seeing the family doctor off.

“The doctor says he’ll need to get lots of rest and stop getting riled up,” the butler answered truthfully.

He noticed Zack’s eyes turning red. The latter spluttered, “How did this happen? I-I really didn’t mean to upset him. I... I just...” Zack looked visibly distressed.

“I suggest you keep your voice down, Mr. Zack. If you were to anger Mr. Jonathan by disrupting Old Mr. Xander’s sleep, you might not get away with just kneeling like this.”

Albert knew all too well that Zack was being used.

Despite not wanting to say too much at first, he regarded Zack as his own son since he had practically watched the latter grow up.

Thus, he began to advise the younger man in detail, “You were out of line today, Mr. Zack. It was also wrong of you to blame Ms. Michaela. The truth is, she’s never badmouthed you and Ms. Lucille, at least not here at the Xander residence. In fact, she even tried to calm things down when Old Mr. Xander suggested compensating her. You’re still young, Mr. Zack. That’s why you don’t understand Old Mr. Xander’s intentions. He just wants what’s best for you. It’s true that he and Old Mr. Simmons used to be good friends, but why did he decide to have you marry Ms. Michaela back then? Is it not because he holds you in high regard?”

The butler continued, “So, even if you’ve now fallen for someone else, the least you could do is to just quietly cancel the wedding, but you ended up causing such a huge stir instead. Don’t you know what you’ve done to the Xander family? All Old Mr. Xander wanted was for you to come over and apologize to Ms. Michaela so that things wouldn’t get too awkward when both families meet again. But instead, you stubbornly decided to call Ms. Lucille over too. Is this not a slap in Old Mr. Xander’s face? He’s loved you more than his own grandchildren all these years, but your actions today were simply uncalled for. Can you really bear the consequences of talking back to Old Mrs. Xander and being rude to Mr. Jonathan?”

Had it been Jonathan speaking, Zack would have surely accused him of blindly siding with Michaela.

However, now that the one speaking was their butler who had served the Xander household for so many years, he couldn’t help but reflect upon those words.

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A breeze flew by that early morning, and the once-clear sky turned dark in an instant.

Accompanied by a gust of wind, large droplets of rain began to fall, causing the already-chilly weather to turn even colder.

A black Maybach sped on the road at three in the morning before arriving at the entrance of Mansion No. 3, Square Garden.

Seeing that, a butler walked toward the vehicle immediately while holding an umbrella. "Good morning, Mrs. Xander," he greeted respectfully upon opening the door for the woman seated inside.

"How is Zack?"

Yvonne had received a phone call from the Xander residence informing her that Zack had fallen ill.

In response, she had left Quentin abroad and flown back home right away, not caring that negotiations on their current project had not gone through.

Despite having been married for many years, the couple only had one son as they were constantly busy with work.

Environmental protection was a budding industry that had gained much attention, and its future prospects seemed endless. But at the end of the day, all of Quentin and Yvonne's hard work was merely to pave the way for their son.

The couple had always felt remorseful for not spending enough time with Zack as a child because of work. Given how much Yvonne doted on him, it was no surprise that she had come rushing back after hearing about his condition.

"His fever isn't subsiding even after medication," reported Howard Zahn, the family butler. "Dr. Abbott's currently giving him a jab for the fever."

"How did he get so sick all of a sudden?"

With a furrow of her brows, Yvonne walked swiftly into the mansion, her feet not stopping even once.

Zack was born with a silver spoon, but yesterday, he had gone to the Xander residence without eating breakfast, only to be hit and left to kneel outside in the cold rain. He then fell ill right after coming home at night.

The doctor was just done administering a shot when the two walked into Zack's room.
"Good morning, Mrs. Xander."

"How is he doing, Dr. Abbott?"

Yvonne immediately teared up at the sight of her son lying in bed, his face having turned red due to the fever.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Xander. It's just a cold. He'll be fine once the fever subsides."

"I'm sorry to trouble you at this hour." In spite of her angst, Yvonne did not forget to be courteous.

"Not at all," the doctor answered while packing up his medical kit. "Be sure to only give Mr. Zack mild foods when he wakes up. He also needs to get plenty of rest."

"All right." Yvonne nodded. "Please see Dr. Abbott off, Howard."

After watching the two leave, she grabbed a wet towel from the bathroom to wipe her son's face with.

As she dimmed the lights to ensure Zack could sleep better, she finally noticed the bruises on his face, and her pupils dilated in shock.

"Get some rest, Mrs. Xander," advised Howard as he returned to the room. "You'll fall sick if you stay up after such a long journey home. Leave Mr. Zack to me—"

"What happened to his face?" Yvonne demanded before the butler had finished speaking.

Someone obviously hit him!

She had never laid a finger on her son all these years, and yet he was now here with a face full of injuries.

Howard instantly felt the air tense up as Yvonne's words fell, and he noticed her expression turning grim.

Lowering his head slightly, the butler explained, "I heard from the person who dropped Mr. Zack home from the Xander residence saying that it's Mr. Jonathan who hit him, although it wasn't mentioned why. Mr. Jonathan also..."

"He also what?"

Yvonne narrowed her eyes as Howard trailed off.

“He also made Mr. Zack kneel outside the house. That’s why he’s caught a cold, and his fever isn’t going down.”

Howard was already shaking as he described exactly what had happened. Knowing how Yvonne’s love for her son had no bounds, he knew she would be angered by Jonathan’s actions.

Coupled with the fact that Quentin was not at home, a huge fight would surely ensue if she were to demand justice for her son.

Even so, Howard could only report every information he had received, for he knew he wouldn’t be able to keep the incident a secret.

As expected, Yvonne immediately jumped to her feet in rage. “I wouldn’t have said anything if the boy’s uncle only made him kneel, but how dare he hit him? This is too much! I’m going to see Jonathan right now!”

With that, she prepared to storm out of the room. Snapping back to his senses, Howard hastily stopped her despite his worries.

“It’s still raining outside, Mrs. Xander! Besides, they’re still resting at this hour. It’d be trouble if you woke Old Mr. and Mrs. Xander up!”

“Well, wouldn’t that be ideal? I’ll make Jonathan explain himself in front of his parents for hitting my son!” Yvonne was so enraged that her body trembled.

“But Mr. Zack still needs care. He’ll need to be hospitalized if his fever worsens! What would we do if you’re not home?”

At the mention of her son, Yvonne finally came to her senses.

Disregarding her wrath, she stopped in her tracks and responded with slight fatigue, “Get some rest, Howard. I’ll take care of him.”

“Yes, Mrs. Xander.”

Howard quickly scurried out of the room.

Still, the seeds of hatred had already been planted, and there was no escaping the internal strife that would soon plague this household.

Someone else was just as frantic on this rainy morning.

Clad in a white bathrobe, a sleepless Lucille stood beside a window in Room 507 of the Yannick Hotel, gazing out at the pouring rain as she recalled yesterday’s events.

She didn't leave right away after being chased out of the Xander residence. Instead, she remained outside waiting for Zack for a long time, getting her clothes soaked in the process.

When Zack never emerged out of the house, she then took a cab back to the condominium, only to see the door grill unlocked as several large men were seen rapidly going through all the things inside the building.

"Who are you guys? What are you doing inside my place?" asked Lucille in a panic.

One of the men turned around with a taunting smile. "Is there some sort of misunderstanding, Miss? This building belongs to Stanplex Corporation. It's not your personal property. These, however, are your items. So please take them and leave."

While speaking, the man grabbed a box from his subordinate and tossed it in front of Lucille. However, just as he was about to turn and close the door, Lucille screamed at him, "This is Zack Xander's condominium! We haven't moved out yet, so what you're doing is trespassing! I can sue you if I want to!"

"Sure. Go ahead then!" the man replied with a sneer before slamming the door shut.

There was no questioning that everything Lucille had experienced was carried out at the behest of Jonathan.

Alas, not even the Lingard family had the power to retaliate, let alone her while she was on her own.

After leaving the condominium, Lucille then found a nearby hotel to crash in. Yet, she never heard from Zack, and his phone was eventually switched off after multiple attempts at calling him.

An ominous feeling rose in her chest. It seemed as though something bad was about to happen.

Is all my effort really about to go to waste?

Love Her to No End Chapter 75

Chapter 75 I Like It

Since Nick wasn't feeling well, both Jonathan and Michaela decided to stay another night to care for him.

Jonathan lived a strict routine. Years of habit had turned his body into a biological alarm clock. No matter where he was, a morning jog was necessary.

Since early morning, Jonathan had gone out for a jog.

He went straight to the kitchen when he returned, wanting to exhort the staff to take extra care of the food for Nick. Instead of entering the kitchen, he paused outside as a conversation inside caught his attention.

“Ms. Michaela, you’ve been busy all morning. You’ve done all the most important steps in making the soup. I’ll watch the fire for you.”

“Martha, I can handle this. You go and rest.”

Jonathan’s foot wavered with reluctance. With a glimpse at the clock and it wasn’t six-fifteen in the morning yet.

I saw the door to her room being shut before I left for my jog, thinking she was still asleep, but instead, she was here making soup?

Jonathan caught a busy figure moving around through the glass door that led to the kitchen, and it was Michaela.

She was wearing a light gray long knitted sweater paired with black leggings. The outfit accentuated her tall, slim frame even more.

With an apron tied to her front, she stood in front of the counter, cutting vegetables skillfully as she watched the pot of soup over the fire.

Her hair was casually pulled into a ponytail with two strands of flyaway framing her face. She looked beautiful and pure.

The soup had been boiling on the stove for a while suffusing a delicious scent all over the kitchen. She seems skilled in cooking.

At that moment, a profound feeling swirled within Jonathan’s eyes. It was gentle yet lingering. There was a strong sense of attachment and satisfaction in his gaze.

God had treated me well to bestow a scene that would only appear in my dreams to come to life. This must be a reward for the deep feelings I have for her.

I had thought about simply finding someone and putting up with her my whole life. Since it wouldn’t be the person I wanted anyway, it didn’t matter. However, imagining and actually doing it were vastly different. I couldn’t lie to myself and accept anyone else but her.

For five years, I left the country for a foreign one and isolated myself there. I kept myself in that alien place to bury my feelings for her deep in my heart.

I never thought distance could separate two people but wouldn't diminish the longing in my heart. Everyone assumed I didn't have a girlfriend because I was picky, but what I wanted was simple. I would willingly accept anything as long as Michaela was the one giving it.

Michaela was bustling in the kitchen and didn't notice Jonathan at all.

Martha, on the other hand, noticed him and was about to greet him when Jonathan gestured for her to stay silent.

With a knowing smile, Martha didn't linger around and left the kitchen with light steps.

Jonathan took Martha's place in the kitchen, but Michaela was oblivious to it. After the soup had come to a boil, she lowered it to a small-medium fire. Suddenly, she lost her focus briefly and swiped her fingers across the scalding hot side of the pot. Michaela sucked in a painful breath at the burn.

She instinctively retracted her hand, but an arm had reached past her and grabbed her wrist faster than she could react.

"What are you doing here?"

Michaela couldn't comprehend the sudden appearance of Jonathan and had temporarily forgotten about the pain in her fingers.

However, the only response she got was a pair of arms looping under hers and lifting her.

This is the Xander residence! Nick and Mavis are resting right upstairs! Michaela's face paled from the shock after falling into his embrace. "Put me down, Jonathan, hurry!"

Her struggles were pointless as Jonathan sat her on the counter, pulling her hand to the sink to rinse under the cold running water.

The cool liquid immediately soothed the burning sensation on her fingers, but Jonathan continued to grasp her hand tightly despite the relief.

The water was cool, but his palm was hot, sending warmth into her now-cool fingers.

His hand was beautiful with pronounced lines. His long and slim fingers with neatly trimmed nails made him look well-groomed.

The owner of the hand seemed to be in a bad mood with his lips pressed into a line and him not answering her.

Yet from a closer look, she noticed the concern, worry, and heartache for her in his gaze.

Having just returned from his jog, so he was still dressed in a black tracksuit that emphasized his muscle lines. They were so close that she could feel the heat coming off of his body. It was so hot that it was about to burn her.

Michaela blushed hard at his closeness and forced her gaze to focus on her hand. "It's not painful anymore," she said.

"Luckily, there aren't any blisters, or you would've been crying in pain," Jonathan said casually, with his gaze still locked on her fingers.

Michaela felt uneasy under his avid attention and was about to pull her hand from his when she heard his chilling tone. "Getting braver now, are we? You even dared to call my name now, huh?"

His eyes narrowed and gleamed with a dangerous glint. No one could've guessed what he was thinking at that moment.

It was an urgent situation, that was why I called his name.

Even though she had a reason, it still felt awkward. Her heart began to pound harder, feeling Jonathan's direct gaze on her. Trying to alleviate the awkwardness, she laughed dryly and was about to say something nice, but he beat her to it. "But I like it, and I want to keep hearing it, so call me by my name from now on."

"Huh?"

Michaela was stunned at Jonathan's sudden change.

My god! I thought I was minutes away from dying! That expression of his was him liking and being happy about it?

"We have staff preparing breakfast for us, so what are you doing here in the early morning? Luckily, this is only a burn. What if you're injured?"

Although his tone was unpleasant, she heard his concern for her.

She coveted the warmth filling her heart, but still obediently answered, "Old Mr. Xander got upset yesterday, causing his health to take a dive, so I wanted to make soup for him to get better."

“Oh, so our Mich wanted to please her future father-in-law.”

Her cheeks and even her ear blushed red at his tease. “It was my fault, so I wanted to do whatever I could,” she explained.

“I get it.”

Mirth laced his gentle voice as he answered. He released her hand with a smile, ignoring her wide eyes, and turned around to retrieve a bag of ice from the freezer to pass it to her.

“Quietly sit here and ice your hand. Leave the rest to me.”

Michaela was worried that Nick’s deteriorated health would affect his appetite, so she planned to prepare another two healthy light salads.

The ingredient preparations were all done, and the only thing missing was the condiments.

Jonathan’s hands moved agilely under Michaela’s command as he seasoned and tossed the salad. “How do you know how to cook? Mdm. Simmons is willing to let you step into the kitchen?”

“I learned it when Grandpa was sick, but I was terrible at it then. After Mom took over the foundation, her work kept her busier and busier. I didn’t get to see Dad much either. Lucille refused to eat any food the housekeeper made, so I had to step up and do it.”

Michaela explained it matter-of-factly, but Jonathan’s heart ached for her.

Without bringing Lucille into the equation, he was well aware of the effects of Old Mr. Simmons’s death on Michaela.

To this day, a memory of her sobbing that day would still flash across his mind.

Jonathan had wanted to go up to her and comfort her but dashed it off when he saw Zack standing beside her.

His chest still felt stuffy when the memory surfaced.

His movements paused as he apologized. “I’m sorry, Mich.”

Sorry that I wasn’t by your side when you were in pain, but I hoped I would be the one to give you all your happiness in the future.

Love Her to No End Chapter 76

Chapter 76 Shocking Secret

“Old Mrs. Xander!

Martha came out of the bathroom and saw Mavis walking away from the kitchen. Recalling something and Martha laughed. “Ms. Michaela woke up at five this morning, saying she wanted to make soup for Old Mr. Xander. She kicked me out of the kitchen when I tried to help.”

“Oh.”

Mavis nodded. She might look fine at first glance, but upon closer look, she was absentminded. Her gaze wasn't even focused on Martha when she replied to her. After muttering an acknowledgment, she turned on her heels to head back to the bedroom.

Martha was still rooted in place as she stared at Mavis' back, thinking something was strange, but couldn't put her finger on it.

Could it be that Ms. Michaela being in the kitchen had angered Old Mrs. Xander? Or has Old Mr. Xander's condition worsened?

Speculations filled her mind when Mavis suddenly halted and whirled around to glance at Martha. Seeing Martha was still standing there, Mavis beckoned for her to approach.

Martha didn't dare to drag her feet and immediately drew closer. “Nick's condition had the entire family in an agitated state. Go to the backyard and get some vegetables and fruits.”

The Xander residence backyard was wide, so Mavis utilized the space and planted vegetables and fruits there in her free time. She didn't use any fertilizers or pesticides, so everyone in the family could consume them without worry.

Martha instantly complied with Mavis' demand and beelined for the door.

Seeing Martha disappear through the front door, Mavis cast a glance in the kitchen direction with a sigh. Suddenly, a deep, strong voice sounded from her back. “Why are you standing here sighing in the early morning? I'm not dead yet!”

“Touch wood! What nonsense are you saying? We're old now, so stop saying all these taboo words around us. Don't you have even a bit of common sense?”

Nick's sudden appearance caught Mavis by surprise. Shooting a glare at Nick, she pushed him back to the bedroom and didn't forget to shut the door.

Noticing Mavis' hard look, Nick instantly put on a flattery smile. "Yes, I'll remember everything you say, Mavis, and won't repeat it."

Her expression softened at his promise. "What are you doing wandering around and not staying in bed?"

"Weren't you the one who woke me up for breakfast?" Nick said, feeling wronged.

Life is hard! Whether I listen to her or not, I'm in the wrong either way. She's getting older by the day and harder to please.

Mavis mulled over it briefly and recalled that she did say so earlier. It's all Jonathan's fault! I almost forget about it from that scare earlier!

It was a habit of Mavis to visit the kitchen every morning. With Nick's condition, she had to pay extra attention. Also, at her age, she couldn't help but nag.

She had wanted to make breakfast, but Nick didn't want to tire her, so he forbade her from preparing it herself. In the end, she conceded and only made rounds in the kitchen to check on everything.

As usual, she got up and went straight to the kitchen.

Yet before she entered, she caught Jonathan carrying Michaela and setting her on the counter.

He wouldn't let go of her hand, and after whispering something into her ear, Mich's pretty face blushed red. Mavis was bashful at the entire scene.

Even though she had been married for a long time, they weren't so open with affection back in the old days.

Both of her sons were married, but her daughters-in-law and sons had always been well-behaved in front of her. They never acted too intimate, so it was a first for her.

I couldn't believe I was worried about Jonathan not finding a wife. Now I could see that it wasn't that he didn't know how to date, but he didn't want to date.

Mavis realized something when she recalled the scene at breakfast the day before. So the girlfriend Jonathan was referring to was Mich?

Even though she was old, she wasn't senile. Her mind was sharper than anyone else. Combining Jonathan's behavior and actions for the past five years, she finally realized the truth.

So that brat's unwillingness to date or befriend any girls and not accepting all the blind dates no matter how perfect they were for the past five years was all because he liked Mich.

Mavis didn't know if she should be happy or sad about that.

If their relationship is exposed, it'll cause an uproar within the family, but keeping it to myself without a partner in crime is troubling.

Despite her uneasiness, Mavis continued to guard the door to the kitchen silently for their sake. That was why she sent Martha to the backyard.

At that thought, Mavis glanced at Nick and sat beside him. She hesitantly started, "It was all because of Zack that I couldn't sleep last night! Zack is a man who doesn't know how to appreciate his luck. If I had known earlier, I would've arranged for Jon to engage with Mich.

"Now that I think about it, their ages aren't that far apart. An older man is more mature and wouldn't have caused the situation into a mess like today."

Anger began bubbling in Nick's chest again at the mention of Zack. He scoffed as he recalled Zack arguing with Mavis the day before. "Quentin has pampered that child too much. Moreover, it's late to say that now.

"We'll be the laughingstock if our granddaughter-in-law becomes our daughter-in-law, and Quentin's whole family would be awkward if they meet her in the future. Since we're a family, I supposed it'll happen frequently.

"Seeing your face pale from being worried sick yesterday had me thinking things through. Our children and grandchildren have their own lives. Let's treat Mich like our own granddaughter from now on and ignore the rest."

Granddaughter? It should be daughter-in-law instead.

Yet Mavis kept the thought to herself, considering his blood pressure that had just stabilized that morning.

He's right about one thing, though. Our children and grandchildren have their own lives. As long as Jonathan is happy, everything else isn't important.

I'm happy that he has a girlfriend and I like Mich too. Even though the switch from granddaughter-in-law to daughter-in-law was a big change for me, I can still accept it.

As for the awkwardness when Quentin's family meets her, it's not like they have to meet each other. Being the laughingstock? Awkward and embarrassed? All of those aren't important compared to Jonathan's happiness.

After organizing her thoughts, Mavis stopped worrying and repeated to herself. Before Jonathan achieves complete victory, I have to keep it a secret.

Breakfast was seaweed soup, cucumber salad, celery salad, and onion rolls. All the dishes were healthy and light.

After hearing that Michaela specifically got up early to make the soup for him, Nick finished a bowl and asked for a refill.

“I searched on the internet yesterday night and found that seaweed soup could help patients with high blood pressure. They not only increase iodine intake but also increase calcium absorption. It helps in prevention and enhances the effect of the primary treatment. Old Mr. Xander, I’ll make it for you again if you like it.”

Michaela’s soft voice brightened Nick’s mood. After resting for the entire night, his pallor had improved. “I like it! Your cooking skill is splendid! You’re so attentive too.”

“This is something I should do!”

After seeing through Jonathan’s intention toward Michaela, Mavis began to observe Michaela like how a mother-in-law observed her daughter-in-law. Mavis was satisfied and glad about her observation.

Jonathan is lucky and has a good eye. His candidate for a wife is perfect. Once Michaela marries him, she can accompany me to watch opera performances or take a stroll around the park. I won’t be stuck looking at Nick’s face anymore.

If she can bless me with a grandson, that’ll be perfect! I won’t be bored then. Just thinking about it makes me happy.

Mavis got even more urgent at the thought.

It looks like I need to give Jonathan a little push. He won’t be able to catch a break if he doesn’t marry such a perfect girl quickly.

Love Her to No End Chapter 77

Chapter 77 Being Understanding

Unlike the oppressive atmosphere from the day before, breakfast was very pleasant.

After breakfast, Michaela even prepared fruit.

Usually, Nick disliked eating fruits more than anything else. No matter how much Mavis coerced him, he would take two bites with the utmost reluctance just to get it over with.

As Michaela was there to cook for them at the crack of dawn, prepare fruit, and even thoughtfully stick toothpicks into each piece, Nick could not find it in him to deny her of her wish of caring for him.

Furthermore, the girl was so persuasive that he could not even refuse.

“The doctor said that high blood pressure is no cause of alarm, Old Mr. Xander. The most important thing is to have a balanced diet. Look at how you frightened Old Mrs. Xander yesterday. Be good and have your fruits and vegetables! We’ll go for a walk later in the afternoon. You’ll be in great shape in no time!”

After the baptism of heavy rain throughout the night before, the sky that day was bright and clear.

If it were anybody else who spoke to him that way, Nick would have already told them off. However, the old man was so mollified by the girl’s words that he could not stop smiling. In between bites of his apple, he nodded vigorously in agreement.

Even Mavis looked relieved at her husband’s compliance and could not refrain from expressing her admiration. “Well done, Mich! He’s usually much more stubborn than this and would not give anybody the time of day. You can’t be unreasonable anymore with Mich around, Nick!”

Mavis glared at her husband as she spoke before turning to take Michaela’s hand with a motherly expression. “You’d promised me to come often whenever you have the time to. You’re not getting away now that you have Nick under your spell!”

When she said that, Mavis’s gaze slid subtly over Jonathan. She was prepared to work hard for her youngest son’s happiness.

I’m doing my best. If the kid doesn’t take the opportunity, it won’t be on me anymore!

“The pleasure is all mine,” Michaela responded earnestly. “I just hope that you won’t find me annoying!”

“What a cheeky girl! Of course we wouldn’t!”

Demure and witty, Michaela’s voice was a delight to the old couple’s ears. When she spoke, mischief flashed in her eyes like a naughty fox and made Mavis laugh. Even Jonathan, who was always busy, put aside his work to join them.

In an instant, the Xander residence was full of laughter.

Taking advantage of their upbeat mood, Michaela recalled what she had spent all night rehearsing and cleared her throat tentatively. "Actually, I have something to ask you both."

The old couple exchanged a glance at the solemnity and determination in her tone, consciously aware that it may have something to do with the events of the day before. Nick was the first to break the silence. "Speak your mind, Mich. I'll do what I can."

Michaela smiled with relief. "Thank you, Old Mr. Xander! I do not wish for both of you to worry about me. I know you love me and do not wish to see me upset, but seeing you fall sick over me hurts, Old Mr. Xander. I'm really sorry. Though I can't understand and forgive Zack's mistake, it remains our problem to deal with, not yours. I care more about your health than my stupid engagement. I do not wish to hurt you both again. Can we consider the matter resolved and never speak of it again?"

No matter how sweet Michaela is, she's still a young and inexperienced girl.

Furthermore, Mavis had thought that Michaela must have meant Zack and Lucille given their appearance the day before.

To her surprise, the girl had been most understanding about the whole thing.

The admiration in Mavis' eyes deepened at Michaela's words. She became even more certain that Michaela was destined to be her future daughter-in-law.

Even Nick lapsed into astonished silence for a while before grunting in agreement.

With the immense weight finally off Michaela's shoulders, the rest of the morning flew by amid carefree chatter with the Xanders.

The sun was warm by ten in the morning. Michaela walked with the old couple in the small garden. Jonathan commenced work on his laptop, sitting on the rattan chair beside them.

His eyes fell on Michaela from time to time, and felt more smitten the longer he watched her. Occasionally, the two of them would catch each other's eye. Under his scorching gaze, Michaela's heartbeat would speed up for no apparent reason.

Mavis enjoyed tending to her garden in her spare time, which was a striking symphony of color and scent.

Although Michaela did not know about flowers enough even to tell them apart, she was attracted by the cacophony of colors in full bloom before her eyes.

Mavis was delighted to have found a confidante when at the sight of Michaela's interest. "This is the osmanthus, Mich," she explained patiently. "One of the top ten traditional

flowers of our country. It symbolizes wealth and glory. And that is the chrysanthemum, another one of the top ten. It has a wide variety of subspecies and remains the most abundant plant in my garden!”

“And over there,” she continued with feverish excitement, “is the golden camellia, which is known as the magic tea of the east in other countries. It is known as the ‘Giant Panda of the Plant World’ and the ‘the Queen of Teas’. Pretty, isn’t it?”

“You are amazing, Old Mrs. Xander!” Michaela trilled. “It looks as though you have moved nature into your yard. Everything looks beautiful!”

Jonathan pouted at the sight of his girl nodding enthusiastically with a look of admiration on her face. Shouldn’t the gardener be the one who deserves the praise?

Despite their ordinary appearance, the flowers were rare specimens. They were also challenging to maintain. If the gardener did not show up every week, the beautiful scenery before them would have already turned into mulch.

Jonathan felt a little uncomfortable. Although it was embarrassing for him to compete for his mother’s affection, he felt entitled to that look of admiration reserved only for him.

At that moment, a car’s engine turned off coming from outside the door. Before he could see who it was, Albert jogged into the garden. “Mdm. Yvonne is back, Madam!”

That was quick!

Having just sent Zack back the day before, Yvonne’s arrival on the very next day could not make her intention any more explicit.

At the sound of the rapid and purposeful stride of high-heels outside, Jonathan narrowed his eyes and turned to Michaela. “Help my parents indoors, Mich.”

“All right.”

Cognizant of what was at stake, Michaela nodded in response. As she lifted Nick’s arm, Yvonne’s voice preceded her appearance. “Uncle Nick, Aunt Mavis, where are you going?”

Yvonne had arrived at the garden.

Admittedly, she was considered a successful woman compared to her peers. With a successful career, a happy family, and graceful gestures, she carried herself like an aristocrat, strong and fearful of majesty.

The only thing that looked out of place was the suppressed fierceness that gave her a permanent scowl.

Yvonne's eyes glinted when she saw Michaela standing beside the old couple. "You're here too, Mich!"

"Hello, Mrs. Xander."

Though Michaela greeted her politely, Yvonne ignored the girl in her anger and turned her attention to the old couple. "I heard that Zack said some hurtful things to you yesterday, and I'm here to apologize on his behalf."

Despite the claim, her blunt tone sounded more like an interrogation.

Noticing Michaela's embarrassment and his parents' cold expression, Jonathan's eyes grew darker than ever.

Sounds like a confrontation to me.

Jonathan shut his laptop with a soft snap and was about to get to his feet when he heard Nick's low rumble. "We'll talk about it inside!"

Love Her to No End Chapter 78

Chapter 78 Shut Yvonne Up

Due to Yvonne's appearance, the originally relaxed and happy atmosphere within the Xander residence instantly turned ice-cold.

Michaela fidgeted in her seat next to Mavis, with her hands subconsciously clasped together. As the root cause of all the conflict over the past weeks had been indirectly caused by her, it was only natural for her to feel anxious.

Jonathan walked in and sat on the single-seater directly opposite Yvonne. With a carefully blank expression, he waited for Yvonne's next move in silence.

The grim atmosphere did nothing to return Yvonne to her senses. She spoke again as soon as she sat down. "Zack has had a high fever since yesterday night. His face was covered in bruises when I saw him. I was so scared that I thought he had gotten beaten up outside. Only when I asked did I find out he was punished here. The boy is young and immature. As his mother, I will naturally take responsibility. I also beg you not to hold a grudge against Zack, Uncle Nick and Aunt Mavis. There's just one thing I don't understand. What did Zack do that was so bad to warrant such a beating after a visit to the Xander residence? Please enlighten me!"

After all that build up, she finally got to the point.

Jonathan leaned back lazily on the couch and stretched out his long legs before glancing at his sister-in-law carelessly. "Since you're clearly addressing me, Yvonne, why don't you just come right out and say it? Why beat around the bush?"

Mavis frowned. "Jonathan!"

Despite being she was highly disappointed by Yvonne's attitude, the matriarch did not want to make things difficult for Quentin's wife.

Mavis' gesture of trying to spare Yvonne the embarrassment was not appreciated by the latter. Already simmering with rage, Yvonne lost her temper at Jonathan's words.

"Have I ever wronged you over the years, Jonathan? Zack has been respectful to you as well, hasn't he? Did you reciprocate the respect? Zack is your nephew. Why did you have to be so heavy-handed with him? Kneeling in punishment is embarrassing enough, and you even resorted to physical assault. What kind of an elder are you?"

Yvonne felt distressed at the thought of how her son had suffered from a high fever the night before. Her gaze toward Jonathan turned hostile.

Jonathan's eyes narrowed in return. Emanating an aura of silent fury poured out of him, his tone became sharp. "Have you asked Zack why I did that?"

"Zack has been obedient and sensible since he was a child. You are his elder and his employer. How would he dare say anything?"

Zack's fever had subsided when Yvonne departed. He had some oatmeal before falling asleep again.

At the mention of the events that had occurred the day before, Yvonne took Jonathan's hesitance as an opportunity to push the blame on him.

Yvonne responded strongly to his rebuttal. Her eyes glimmered coldly as if she had already decided that everything was Jonathan's fault.

"Hah!" Jonathan laughed instead of taking offense, though his gaze was colder than ever. "Now I understand how Zack turned out this way," he said in a merciless whisper. "It has been an eye-opening day for me to learn about your parenting style, Yvonne."

"What do you mean by that, Jonathan? Are you questioning the Fandel family's upbringing?"

Yvonne asked loudly with a rare trace of arrogance in her voice. Her brows hardened haughtily.

Her arrogance stemmed from the position of her family in the city. Though the Fandels were not as powerful as the Xanders in Quakersville, they were still considered societal elites.

However, seated across her at that moment was Jonathan. A legendary figure who forged the business world and would have no fear of the Fandel family's influence.

Jonathan's brows twitched. His calm voice was laced with cold stiffness as he raised his eyebrows aggressively. "So what?"

The arrogance contained within merely two simple words far exceeded Yvonne's. Uttered by Jonathan, the authority in his provocation could not be ignored.

Even Yvonne seemed instantly discouraged. Though she did not speak again, she was unwilling to show weakness by refusing to lower her defiant gaze.

Jonathan merely smiled in response, which did not reach his eyes. His voice was lower and colder than ever when he spoke again. "Isn't it a duty of us elders to discipline our young, Yvonne? He spoke up against my mother and made my father faint from anger. Is that decent behavior?"

"What did you say?"

Yvonne gazed at him in disbelief. Instinctively frowning, she looked as if she was expecting a different answer.

Jonathan's expression remained stony. "After the cancellation of the wedding between the Xanders and the Lingards," he said with deliberate slowness. "My father rushed back without regard for his health as soon as he heard the news. He summoned Zack to initiate the reconciliation between both families but your son ended up bringing Lucille here and tried to get my parents' blessing. Why don't you question why Zack behaved that way and placed the Xander family in such a predicament? Since the dissolution of the engagement, your son and Lucille have been together. You're his mother. Didn't you know? Could Zack's actions have been silently condoned by you? Or have you already acknowledged Lucille to be your daughter-in-law?"

"I have not!" Yvonne denied it at once. "Quentin and I have been abroad. How could we have known about that?"

After the incident, Yvonne and Quentin traveled abroad for a partnership negotiation.

Over that period, she spoke to her son every day and did not discover anything unusual. Furthermore, Zack had agreed to her anxious reminders every time she brought them up. Yvonne could scarcely believe how he had never actually ended things with Lucille.

“That’s exactly the problem. Being so busy with work every day, have you really cared for your son, Yvonne? Despite looking obedient, Zack is actually very assertive. For example, I once found a pinhole camera in Sommer Gardens. Despite proof that the fingerprints have been identified as Lucille’s, Zack later told me that he believed her innocence. Lucille bribed the magazine to sabotage Mich. Zack came to confront Mich before clarifying matters.”

“Speaking of yesterday,” Jonathan continued, “Zack actually defended Lucille against Mom’s sharp words toward her. He contradicted his elders for a woman. Very rudely, too. Was it wrong for me to hit him? Despite Dad fainting from anger, Zack still did not repent. He even asked me what was wrong of him for wanting to be with the woman he loves. I watched Zack grow up. I disciplined him because he is my own nephew. You not only did not thank me but instead came to confront me about it? If that’s the case, I will not bother myself in the future!”

Yvonne’s finger tightened involuntarily. She looked as though she had swallowed something unpleasant.

Having been part of the Xander family for over twenty years, she had never embarrassed herself before the elders until that day. For the sake of her son, she had come to blindly seek justice without first clarifying the matter.

Not only did she anger the old couple, but she also offended her powerful cousin-in-law.

Yvonne could no longer refute Jonathan’s unshakeable logic. Finding herself at a loss for words, she felt her face turning red in the ensuing silence.

As she was still stewing in regret, Yvonne wondered how she was going to explain to her husband how she had managed to anger Nick over the matter of their son.

She finally succumbed after several seconds of uncomfortable silence. She stood up and faced the old couple. “Uncle Nick, Aunt Mavis, please forgive me for speaking out of turn earlier. I was merely anxious.”

Nick simply shook his head impassively and headed straight to his bedroom.

Mavis, on the other hand, Mavis felt obliged to return Yvonne’s courtesy no matter how unhappy she felt about the incident. “Forget it,” she said with an airy wave of her hand. “We’re family, aren’t we? At least we managed to clear the air of any misunderstanding! I’ll check on the old man. Please, sit around a little longer.”

Since Quentin’s parents passed away, the old couple regarded him as theirs. In fact, they even held him in higher regard than their own son. Yvonne’s outburst undoubtedly caused much sorrow in the old couple.

After waiting for the elderly couple to retire into their bedroom, Yvonne turned her attention to Jonathan again. "Please forgive me, Jonathan," she said with an unnatural-looking smile. "You were right to put me in my place. Your firm hand in guiding Zack assures me, you know. We are a family. Though we bicker sometimes, I would like you to continue guiding Zack. Will you?"

"And Mich," she said, turning to the girl, "it was Zack who had let you down. I'll teach him a lesson for everything he has put you through, poor girl!"

Love Her to No End Chapter 79

Chapter 79 Sweet Stolen Kiss

After apologizing to each of them in turn, Yvonne was visibly embarrassed.

Upon closer recollection of her son's uneasy and shifty appearance that morning, it just occurred to her that instead of looking like he had been victimized, it was clearly a sign of guilt.

Yvonne only had herself to blame for being unable to control her temper. Having heard the housekeeper report that her son had been beaten and punished in the Xander residence the night before, she was too overwhelmed with distress to think straight.

Now that she came to think of it, the elderly couple had spoiled Zack since he was young. They would never have allowed him to suffer a shred of indignity if he had not done something wrong.

It looks like I have angered the old couple and as a result, offended Jonathan.

Yvonne was so embarrassed that she wished the ground would swallow her whole. Faced with Jonathan's cold glare, her confrontational demeanor dissolved completely.

Just as she was about to find a reason to leave, Albert hurried in and stopped before Jonathan. "Mr. Jonathan," he said respectfully, "Mr. Quentin called and asked for Mdm. Yvonne."

Albert heard the quarrel in the living room and lamented to himself the degree to which Yvonne had spoiled her son. His previous trip to the house had caused great sorrow in the elderly couple.

"Hmm!" Jonathan grunted his assent.

Due to being in a bad mood, his face looked a little gloomy. Even so, it was difficult to conceal his air of regality.

Upon obtaining permission, Albert handed the phone over to Yvonne. "Mdm. Yvonne."

"Thank you!" Yvonne smiled like she had a toothache as she received the phone. "What is it, Quentin?" she said softly. "Yes, our son has been in contact with Lucille behind our backs. I came to discuss Zack's affairs with Jonathan. We didn't quarrel... I know... Well, don't worry... Do you want a word with Jonathan? I'll pass him the phone."

Quentin had lost both parents when he was sitting for the entrance exam. Thanks to the love of the elderly couple, he managed to become the man he was.

To Quentin, Nick and Mavis were the parents to whom he owed everything. Although the way he greeted them did not change, Yvonne did not doubt the filial respect he had for the elderly couple.

If Quentin knew that she came to seek trouble with them, he would not let the matter go easily.

Yvonne's arrogant attitude disappeared when she handed the phone to Jonathan. The silent pleas in her eyes spoke volumes.

In response, Jonathan merely glanced at her coldly before taking the phone. "Quentin."

As it turned out, Zack fell asleep after waking up just long enough to have some oatmeal. The butler was about to go upstairs to alert Yvonne that her meal was ready before suddenly hearing the roar of an engine in the yard.

Yvonne had already disappeared when the butler went outside for a look. Amidst his anxiety, Quentin called home and was informed of the entire incident by the butler.

Knowing his wife and her adoration for their son well, Quentin called the Xander residence for fear of Yvonne's propensity to make trouble.

Instead of complaining about her, Jonathan merely muttered occasionally in response to Quentin's queries. Yvonne's anxiety began to subside.

After her husband hung up, Yvonne did not dare remain much longer. She slinked out of there with a mumbled excuse of some unattended matters as fast as possible.

Mavis came out of her room at the noise of Yvonne's departure from the Xander residence. "I'm not sure how we're going to coexist as we used to after the fiasco today, Jonathan," she sighed sadly.

"She was the one who was unreasonable, Mom," Jonathan answered in a low, indifferent voice. "Despite coming here to make trouble, I gave her a dignified way out by not telling her husband everything."

Michaela glanced at Jonathan silently from her seat.

Despite not believing the longstanding rumors that Jonathan of the Xander family was ruthless and outspoken, Michaela was astonished and pleasantly surprised to be proven wrong.

As a mere observer of the confrontation, Michaela felt the palpable dominance exuding from his being when he subdued Yvonne.

Mavis shrugged helplessly. "It's done, anyway. Everything's out in the open now. Let them simmer!"

Though she had not birthed Quentin, Mavis treated him as her son from the moment he was brought into their home. Although Quentin was already at the cusp of adulthood when he was adopted, she wished for nothing more for him to be part of the family.

Mavis also knew very well that she could not blame her youngest son. She was merely berating him out of habit.

"Quentin said he's going to take Zack abroad. His tenure at my company had been an internship. It's time for him to put his skills to the test in the real world."

Mavis nodded approvingly. "That's good. Saves him from causing trouble here!"

As far as Mavis was concerned, Michaela had already secured her position as the former's daughter-in-law. Besides, Lucille and her scheming nature were not a good match for Zack.

Her relationship with Michaela aside, Lucille was best kept from marrying into the Xander family to avoid embarrassment in the future.

The weekend passed in a flash. As they had to work the following day, Walter arrived at the Xander residence to pick Michaela and Jonathan up after dinner on Sunday night.

"What did your mother say to you before you got in?"

Since getting in the car, Jonathan had been staring at her so tenderly that Michaela assumed it had something to do with Mavis' whispers.

Jonathan's smile widened at the look of curiosity on her face. His dark eyes twinkled as he asked in a low voice, "Do you really want to know?"

Michaela nodded. "Yeah!"

"As you know, Mich, I'm a businessman. There's a price for everything." Jonathan turned to look at her. "What will I get in exchange for satisfying your curiosity?"

“What?”

Michaela only intended to make small talk to ease the uncomfortable atmosphere of being in the same car.

How did it become an exchange? Is he trying to trap me?

Jonathan’s eyes twinkled from making her flustered. “How about a kiss?” he whispered.

Jonathan was already leaning over to Michaela’s face before obtaining her permission. His warm, sweet breath felt refreshing on her face.

Michaela’s ears blazed at once, looking so red that they appeared almost transparent. Even her neck was flushed pink in an adorable fashion to his delight.

Jonathan’s Adam’s apple bobbed nervously as he watched Michaela pull away from him and press herself against the door as if he was a dangerous beast.

He burst into laughter at the sight.

Jonathan recalled his mother’s words when she tugged at his arm before he got into the car. “There aren’t many good girls out there now, Jonathan. If you find somebody suitable, hurry up and lock them down, will you? Don’t regret it if somebody else snatches her up!”

It was a point that he agreed wholeheartedly with his mother.

Michaela ignored Jonathan after being teased by him. After a while, she fell asleep leaning against the door.

She had gotten up early that day to prepare breakfast again. In between that and taking walks with the elderly couple, Michaela was exhausted.

Jonathan lifted an arm and scooped the girl in his arms. He then procured a thin blanket from a side compartment and draped it over her. Walter’s eyes bulged with amazement at his employer’s considerate behavior.

“Mich?”

In response to Jonathan’s low voice, Michaela merely snorted and adjusted herself before falling deeper asleep.

She looks as cute as a kitten taking a nap.

Jonathan smiled silently before leaning over and kissing her on the lips.

How sweet she tastes, too!

Unbeknownst to him, Walter watched the entire scene unfold and felt scandalized. Mr. Xander really is becoming more shameless. He did not even flinch when he stole a kiss from the girl! Unbelievable!

Love Her to No End Chapter 80

Chapter 80 Relentless Teasing

Michaela woke up the following day feeling completely stunned.

Why am I in Jonathan's bed again?

The last thing she remembered was the shameless man teasing her again on the way back from the Xander residence the night before. She must have fallen asleep after that.

Perhaps I have been exhausted from yesterday's exertions. In addition to the sleepless night before that thanks to Jonathan's confession, I've been having less sleep than I need. I must have been so tired to have fallen asleep and not remembered anything. Could Jonathan have brought me back here? I must have slept like a log!

Though annoyed and disoriented, Michaela did not lose her composure. She held her breath and listened carefully and found herself alone in the room.

Upon ascertaining that fact, Michaela tiptoed off the bed and ran barefooted to the room across the corridor.

Only after the door clicked shut that Jonathan, who had changed into a suit in the cloakroom, walked out and glanced at the closed door across the hall with a slight smile upon his lips.

Jonathan was already seated in the living room listening to Walter's report when Michaela arrived downstairs after washing up and getting dressed.

Despite being clad in a simple white shirt and black trousers ensemble, Jonathan still looked elegant.

The top button of his shirt was undone to reveal his attractive collarbone. Coupled with his chiseled brow and his cold temperament, Michaela thought he looked delectable.

Jonathan was sipping coffee with his head bowed when he heard her descending footsteps. Glancing upward at Michaela, his eyes were as arrogant and indifferent as ever.

Michaela felt a little guilty under the scrutiny. "Good morning, Mr. Jonathan!" she chirped with a slightly sheepish smile.

"Far from it." Jonathan's tone was a little solemn. "You're getting braver by the day, Michaela. You're leaving just like that after having your fill of sleep? Do I look like someone you would do that to?"

At the time the remark was made, Wayne happened to walk out of the kitchen to alert the couple that breakfast was ready. He froze in his tracks upon hearing it.

However, upon seeing Michaela blush and freeze in her own descent down the stairs, he smiled and shook his head before heading back into the kitchen.

Did the pair of them finally sleep together? Jonathan finally got his wish! It seems like Shappiray Mansion is about to have cause for celebration soon.

Michaela, who was rooted to the spot, subconsciously pursed her lips in the face of the scorching gaze and flushed a deep crimson.

Though I did sleep on his bed, we didn't do anything he was insinuating! He's distorting the facts. Somehow, I'm getting the feeling he's doing that on purpose.

Unable to bear the indignity of being misunderstood any longer, she blurted defensively, "Why didn't you send me directly back to my room after I fell asleep in the car last night, Mr. Jonathan?"

"I was intending to," Jonathan replied coolly, "but you held on to my clothes and refused to let go. What could I have done? Would you have preferred it if I slept in your room?"

After watching how Jonathan had demolished an opponent as formidable as Yvonne, a tough woman in the world of business dominated by men, Michaela's status as a fledgling girl was naturally no match for him.

Michaela was beside herself with indignant rage at Jonathan's feigned innocence.

However, Jonathan had no plans to let her go that easily. "It was my fault for not understanding your intentions better, Mich. I'll know what to do next time!"

No!

Michaela felt the sensation of millions of insects all over her, making her skin crawl with embarrassment.

“That’s not what I meant!” Michaela flatly denied it.

However, Jonathan merely smiled indulgently. “Do you prefer my bedroom, Mich? Well, I’m sure we can accommodate your wishes next time.”

Michaela had no more words to convey her horror. Bowing her head to hide the redness in her cheeks, she gritted her teeth to steady herself. “Excuse me, Mr. Xander, you must have misunderstood. Under whose tutelage did you learn to be this shameless?”

“Did you forget that your grandfather was my teacher?”

Ouch! Way too close to home! Please, somebody stop him!

By then, Michaela was more convinced than ever of the fact that Jonathan was teasing her on purpose. Having no way of knowing when she was asleep, he took the opportunity to push the blame on her. Of course, his word was the truth as usual.

Rogue! Scoundrel!

“Don’t feel embarrassed, Mich. We’re family, after all. I’ll be more than happy to oblige you. Let’s have breakfast!”

Jonathan, who remained in control the entire time, saw that Michaela was already sufficiently embarrassed and annoyed. Deciding to stop teasing her finally, he got up and pulled her to her feet before leading her toward the dining table. Walter was left standing alone in the living room halfway through his sentence.

Oh my God, what did I just witness? Mr. Jonathan has forgone every shred of dignity he has for the girl!

Walter was worried for Michaela. Ms. Lingard is too innocent for his vicious bullying. How is she going to fend for herself once she becomes his wife?

After breakfast, Michaela rejected Jonathan’s offer and drove to work alone.

Having either been flirted with or bullied every time she was in his presence, Michaela had enough of him for a little while.

If this goes on, I’ll be left a shadow of my former self from all the teasing I’m subjected to. What can I do? I miss my mom!

After parking her car at the foundation, she saw Lorelei getting off her Maybach which was parked across from her. The latter trotted over and opened the door for Michaela with a flattering expression.

“You want something.”

Michaela raised her eyebrows and exposed Lorelei's intent.

The two have not seen each other since the morning of their hangover.

In fact, Lorelei was so taken aback upon learning of Jonathan's identity that she did not even have time to meet Michaela when they departed Shappiray Mansion.

Although the two had spoken on the phone later that day, Lorelei only mentioned that she would be back to work on time on Monday before hanging up in a hurry.

After letting the revelation set in over the weekend, Lorelei had already come to terms with the discovery. At the same time, her admiration for Michaela had only grown since then.

What's so bad about being cheated on by her fiancé? After locking down Jonathan, she would be even better off than if she had married Zack!

Even Lorelei could not help but applaud Michaela for the swing in her fortune.

After holding on to the knowledge over the past couple of days, she could not hold back her curiosity any more. Clinging to Michaela's arm affectionately, she attempted to lead the discussion toward what had been gnawing at her over the weekend. "I say, Mich, you hid it well, didn't you? If I had not accidentally stumbled upon the truth, how long would you have hidden it from me?"

"What truth? What do you mean? I don't understand."

Michaela was thoroughly confused by Lorelei's ambiguous expression.

"Come on!" Lorelei glared at her. "Mr. Jonathan has already admitted that day that the two of you are now a couple. That's not very nice to hide something this big from me!"

"He said that?"

"He did!"

Lorelei interpreted Michaela's stumble as embarrassment and was about to say something when she looked up and saw Alois walking out of the cafe on the first floor.

Though her expression froze, the steps beneath her feet did not. Tugging at Michaela's arm, she walked over in front of Alois with her eyes straight ahead.

Michaela was a little surprised by Lorelei's sudden change. It was not until they had managed to stride out of Alois' earshot that Michaela asked, "Are you really past it?"

“What do you think?” Lorelei shot her a sideways glance. “Weren’t you the one to tell me that I should live for those who care about me? By the way, my mother arranged a blind date for me at night. Come with me!”

“What would I do there?” Michaela felt a chill at the mention of “blind date”.

At the thought of two complete strangers sitting together with nothing to talk about, Michaela felt a preemptive discomfort. Showing up was even further out of the question.

“I know that every other man pales in comparison to Jonathan, but you still need to spend time with your friends, don’t you? You’re only there to keep me company, not meet somebody. We’ll leave after dinner, I promise.

“Perhaps you have a date with Jonathan? By the way, I haven’t had the chance to ask you this. At what stage are you and Jonathan currently at? Have you held hands? Have you kissed? He really is a handsome man. You should be very happy.”

Michaela glared at her friend for her heavy emphasis on the word “happy”. Feeling goosebumps all of a sudden, she relented in compromise. “All right, I’ll come with you.”