

Mr. Scott 111

Chapter 111

Melanie's body stiffened as she looked at Eugene. Enduring the discomfort, she explained, "He's a friend of mine."

Eugene looked away and said casually, "Is that so?"

He sounded as though he did not believe her.

Melanie did not like being accused, yet she did not need to argue with Eugene. She pinched her fingers to calm herself down and said patiently, "The contract has been signed, and I'll send you the documents. Can I leave early?"

Eugene glanced at her with a cold, mocking look as if he had seen through her thoughts.

It was only a glimpse, and he soon said, "No."

Frowning, Melanie thought Eugene was making things difficult for her. Her expression was also cold as she said frankly, "I haven't taken my annual leave for the year. I think it should be fine if I use it now?"

Snorting, Eugene said, "You're dumping your boss halfway through your business trip. Melanie, your professionalism is surprisingly poor."

Melanie had nothing to say.

After a moment of silence, she asked, "Are we heading back to the hotel now?"

Eugene looked at his phone before lifting his head. "Follow me to a place."

Melanie thought Eugene was taking her to an office building, yet it surprised her when they arrived at a golf course.

The caddy was polite. "Mr. Simon is waiting for you inside."

Melanie's forehead creased as she asked, "Did Simon invite you here?"

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She felt uncomfortable. Simon was a playboy and an idle man. He was famous for being a useless wealthy man.

Eugene might be here to golf with Simon.

Melanie would only be mocked if she went with Eugene.

Hesitating, she said, "I don't think it's appropriate for me to follow you to meet Simon."

Eugene turned around. "Who do you think should come, then?"

"I can call Viola."

After she spoke, Eugene answered her calmly, "She's not as sensible as you are."

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Melanie pursed her lips. Calling her sensible could be a bad description.

However, when she entered the golf course with Eugene, she understood why Eugene brought her.

Other than Simon, there were five to six others, consisting of both men and women. Each of them was in an intimate position with someone of the opposite sex.

Moreover, from their attire, Melanie could tell they were well-to-do.

Melanie knew Eugene was afraid of corrupting Viola's mind with this kind of environment.

When Simon saw Eugene, he approached with a beautiful lady in his arms. He was startled upon seeing Melanie and asked, "Why did you bring her?"

Eugene looked calm. "We just finished signing the contract and came here on the way back."

"Alright then." Simon shrugged.

He glanced at those people behind him and lowered his voice. "They're from wealthy families of Prime City. Do you want to hang out and make friends with them?"

Since they were already there, Eugene would naturally not refuse.

Someone happened to beckon them to play golf. Simon placed his arm over Eugene's shoulder and walked over to them.

Melanie did not have much interest in golf. Although she had entered golf courses countless times because of work, she seldom played.

Her primary skills were taught by Eugene long ago.

Back then, she was about to deal with an important client, and that client's hobby was playing golf. Melanie would ask Eugene to teach her golf whenever she was free just to get an appointment with the client.

She was not a sports person, and Eugene had taught her countless times, yet she barely learned how to swing the golf club properly.

She depended on luck to get the ball into the hole.

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The rich were always bold.

Everyone agreed when someone suggested a bet.

Simon smiled and asked, "We have to have something to bet on, don't we?"

Someone suggested, "Let's bet on money?"

One of them rejected it, saying, "That would be boring."

The beautiful woman Simon had his arms around smiled and said, "Why don't the loser run naked? That'd be exciting."

She was joking, but the group felt it was a good idea and agreed.

Melanie was behind Eugene, trying to remain unseen and unheard of.

However, she couldn't prevent others from speaking to her even though she tried to remain

unseen.

A woman in a pink mini skirt approached her as she whispered, "Are you new here or are you one of those women kept by them? Why haven't I seen you and this man before? Are you friends with Mr. Jein?"

Melanie's brows knitted together. She realized this woman might be a "caddy girl".

Not getting a response from Melanie annoyed that woman. She snorted. "Hey! I'm asking you questions."

Her strong perfume assailed Melanie's nostrils, and she stepped back. Just as she was about to answer, she heard waves of laughter from those people.

She looked over and saw a young man with glasses handing his name card to Eugene. "Mr. Scott, this is my name card. I'm Kellen Jein. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Eugene nodded elegantly and took the name card. Melanie took it over naturally.

Kellen was startled to see Melanie and looked at Eugene. "Mr. Scott, you're lucky."

Melanie was uncomfortable with the remark and gaze. She looked at the ground and hid behind Eugene.

Eugene asked calmly, "Aren't we playing?"

Kellen retracted his gaze from Melanie. "Of course, we're playing."

Eugene grunted. "Let's begin, then."

"Wait. Mr. Scott, I thought you didn't bring a partner, so I didn't mention it before this." Kellen lifted his eyebrow.

Melanie's heart skipped a beat upon hearing the word 'partner'. She had a bad feeling rising in her.

Kellen said, "I think playing golf alone is boring, and it won't be as fun if just the guys play. Why don't we let the women play?"

"The rule is simple. Two people will form a group, and the woman will swing the club. However, the result will have to be shared by both."

After Kellen spoke, he asked Eugene, "What do you think, Mr. Scott?"

Melanie stood behind Eugene with a straight face. "I'm sorry. I don't know how to play golf."

"You can ask Mr. Scott to teach you. I didn't say he can't help you. The rules are that you have to swing the club."

Melanie understood what was going on there. They were trying to make this a sexy game.

However, there was nothing sexual between her and Eugene.

She looked at Eugene, thinking he would reject her. However, Eugene pondered before agreeing readily, "Okay."

Melanie was taken aback. Eugene turned around, looked at her with a frown, and asked indifferently, "What are you waiting for?"

Despite her reluctance, Melanie heard Eugene scoff and whisper in a voice only they could hear, "Kellen's father is the president of Velour Group. Otherwise, why would I agree to such a boring game?"

Melanie blinked and understood Eugene was trying to get Kellen to be part of his connections.

Someone was urging them to play. Eugene's voice was calm. With raised eyebrows, he spoke in a gentler voice, "Melanie, come over here."

Melanie hesitated for a second before approaching him.

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ene had to hug her from behind if they were to play golf together.

Melanie's back was close to Eugene's chest. Only thin clothes were between them. She could feel Eugene's heartbeat clearly.

When Eugene lowered his head, his breath was on Melanie's ear, making her feel ticklish.

"Mr. Scott, are you addicted to having that woman in your embrace? Why aren't you swinging the club?" Kellen shouted, making all the others laugh.

Melanie's grip on the club was tighter. She was not good at golf.

Eugene's grip was on her wrist, and he adjusted her position. His voice was calm and firm. "Why are you nervous? Haven't I taught you before?"

Melanie's eyebrows fluttered, and her hands on the club were stiffer.

Eugene did not realize his tone was just like when he taught her back then.

Melanie's mind was a mess. Her grip on the club tightened, and she pushed the club, hitting the ball.

Eugene was behind her, and his brows lifted.

Melanie dodged Eugene's hug and stood aside. She tried to say it calmly, "I'm done."

Eugene said nothing. His expression was unreadable.

At the side, Simon whistled. "Eugene, Melanie is taking her revenge on you. Be prepared to run naked."

Melanie only noticed that she did not hit the ball into the hole when she turned around.

Lowering her eyelids, she muttered, "Sorry."

The bet was in the back of her mind.

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"Why are you apologizing now? I thought you did it on purpose." The caddy girl from just now approached and squeezed toward Eugene, winking at him. She then said to Melanie, "After all, Mr. Scott seems to have a good figure."

She spoke as she tried to lean against Eugene. These women had sharp eyes and knew Eugene's status might be higher than Kellen's upon seeing Kellen's attitude toward Eugene.

However, Melanie stopped her before she could lean against Eugene. She looked at the woman and said, "Someone is looking for you over there."

The caddy looked in the direction she pointed and saw that a man's gaze was on her.

Her expression changed as she looked at Eugene reluctantly. Then, she smiled and approached that man.

A new round began. Many people were watching them. Only Melanie and Eugene were standing by.

Melanie had no idea what to say to Eugene. Instead, Eugene looked at her expressionlessly.

After a while, he scoffed. "Did you do it on purpose?"

Melanie was startled. "I told you I'm not good at playing golf."

Eugene pondered as he looked at her. "Indeed.

"Looks like all the lessons before this have gone to waste."

Eugene and Melanie's group was ranked last in the first round.

Kellen reminded Eugene with a club in his hands. "Mr. Scott, you should note that only two rounds are left."

Melanie walked over with Eugene. When their bodies leaned against each other, Eugene whispered in her ear, "Do you really want me to take off my clothes before them?"

Melanie's voice was soft. "I didn't do it on purpose."

Eugene scoffed, and Melanie had no idea why.

His grip was on the back of her hands this time, and his thumb pressed on her hand.

Melanie did not exert any strength, leaving the game to Eugene.

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The game ended quickly. It was almost a tie, and each group missed the hole at least once.

However, none of them cared about the result. They quipped at each other, and Kellen suggested having a barbecue after the game.

Eugene attended, and Melanie naturally had to follow.

The golf course was a recreational club. They took the buggy to the barbecue place in the club.

It was by a clear lake, and it was a scenic spot.

Simon and Kellen were already drinking wine, while Eugene was nowhere to be seen.

Melanie did not want to drink, so she sat in a quiet corner.

She had not replied to Xander's message. Just as she took out her phone, the dean of the nursing home called her.

Melanie answered and heard the dean's anxious voice. "Miss Smith, when will you be back in Jepton? I think I have to let you know something about Mr. Lancaster.

"Mr. Lancaster has been going out frequently to the bank and seems like he's in a rush. When the caretaker went with him today, he heard the bank employee saying he had almost withdrawn everything in his bank."

Melanie's expression turned gloomy. She had not thought of how to tell her grandfather about Dylan's matter.

Anger burned in her as she endured it and spoke to the dean before hanging up the call.

She looked at the calendar on her phone and pondered.

Her appetite was gone, and she strode toward Eugene. She wanted to know if she could take a leave.

The seats were random, and this area was livelier. Simon and Kellen were good at entertaining everyone.

When she approached, Kellen happened to want to toast Eugene. "Mr. Scott, you're young and successful. Let's toast upon it."

Just as he spoke, a clear voice came from beside him. "Mr. Scott has work to do this evening. I'll drink on his behalf."

Melanie took three glasses and filled them with wine.

She looked at Kellen and casually said, "Mr. Jein, since you're toasting Mr. Scott, I'll have to drink three glasses if I were to drink on Mr. Scott's behalf to express my sincerity."

Kellen was displeased at first but admired Melanie when she said that.

Melanie drank up three glasses of wine in one go.

When she was done, her cheeks were flushing.

Her alcohol tolerance was not good, yet she could still look into Kellen's eyes. She poured another glass of wine for herself. "This is for you, Mr. Jein."

Kellen nodded but did not toast her.

He looked at Melanie with interest. "Miss Smith, you're Mr. Scott's secretary. Why do you have to toast me?"

Melanie was a little taken aback, but she said, "If it weren't for you, Mr. Jein, I wouldn't be able to relax in a place like this with Mr. Scott."

Kellen looked at Eugene. "Your secretary is good at speaking."

Eugene did not say anything, so Kellen changed the topic. Melanie smiled and nodded by the side.

After Kellen left, others came to toast Eugene. Melanie drank everything for him.

When the gathering ended, Melanie was dizzy and could only rest on the swing.

It was quiet around her. Melanie looked around, only to find out that everyone had left.

Firm footsteps approached Melanie.

It was a familiar scent, and Melanie looked at Eugene before her. She wanted to pull him, yet she had not much strength left and could only reach the hem of his shirt.

Melanie moved her lips and lifted her head. "Eugene, I feel dizzy."

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Melanie was indeed drunk, and her mind was a mess. Her grip on Eugene's shirt was shaky.

Eugene's gaze fell on her hands, and his voice sounded emotionless. "You're good at drinking."

Melanie's eyes were a bit red as tears shimmered in them. She had lost her usual composure.

Fluttering her eyelashes, she asked slowly, "Don't you hate this kind of event?"

Eugene had weird habits. He did not like smoking or even drinking if it was unnecessary.

Melanie had been working by his side, and she remembered his preferences well.

Eugene lifted his eyebrow, ignoring Melanie's grip on his shirt as he sneered. "When did you become so professional again?"

Melanie's throat was dry, and she felt dizzy.

She leaned against the swing. She couldn't exert much strength in her hand, so she let go of Eugene's shirt and pursed her lips. "Viola is also in Prime City."

Eugene froze. "So?"

Melanie pondered with her eyes lowered, and when she was about to speak, she saw a man beckoning them. "Mr. Scott, Mr. Jein and the others are waiting for you at the villa."

Melanie's words were interrupted. She looked at Eugene, who nodded and looked back at Melanie.

She was a little dizzy, but fortunately, she had taken a hangover pill from a waiter. She could still think clearly.

She understood Eugene's intention and followed him to the villa.

The villa entrance was planted with Begonia trees for decoration purposes. It was a dim path.

Melanie was night-blind and tipsy, so she could not walk straight.

She walked step by step with care, trying to adapt to the darkness.

However, Eugene stopped suddenly.

Melanie did not notice that and bumped into him.

Eugene's cold voice sounded. "Don't you even know how to walk now?"

Melanie held her nose and stepped back as she explained, "I didn't expect that you would stop."

Eugene sneered. He was tall, and they were standing close by. Melanie could vaguely see his tall figure.

As she could not see clearly, she felt a sense of pressure.

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Clenching her hands into fists, she said, "Simon and the others are waiting."

Just as she tried to remain calm and wanted to take another step to avoid Eugene, she missed her step.

Her heart hammered, and she closed her eyes, yet the pain she expected did not strike her.

Eugene had pulled her to her feet.

Her heart skipped a beat, and before she could react, Eugene had pulled her by the arm toward him.

Melanie was not dizzy any more. The shock had caused a chill to run down her spine.

Eugene's hand gripped her arm as he clicked his tongue, saying, "You're still so dumb."

Melanie wanted to retort, but she had just gotten a scare and her throat was feeling uncomfortable. She could not get her voice out of her throat.

Eugene glanced at her. "Did that scare you? Are you that useless?"

Melanie uttered a word, and Eugene let go of her arm. He held her wrist instead.

This physical contact startled Melanie, but she soon snapped out of disbelief. She bit her lower lip and said hoarsely, "I can walk by myself."

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Eugene remained calm and composed, holding her wrist firmly as he made his way forward with large strides. The intimate contact discomfited Melanie, who struggled against it.

"I thought you were pretending to be blind just now with how slow you were. What's with the pretense now?" Eugene sneered above her head.

Melanie's breath hitched as she whispered, "I have night blindness. I can't see clearly. I wasn't pretending."

Eugene's steps faltered for a moment before he chuckled lightly and commented, "That's a pretty good excuse."

Melanie said nothing else and let Eugene drag her to the entrance of the villa. When they finally reached a well-lit area, she breathed a sigh of relief.

Eugene lowered his gaze to adjust his sleeve. He then looked up at Melanie nonchalantly before entering.

Simon and Kellen were already sitting in the living room playing cards. When they saw Eugene and Melanie, they greeted them and said, "Eugene, come join us."

Melanie glanced over and saw the group playing cards. Kellen had a woman sitting on his lap. Her makeup was thick on her face as she held his cards for him and responded to his words with a charming smile.

The others at the table were in similar situations. It was a typical scenario of the scions enjoying their leisure.

Melanie observed it all with an expressionless face and sat down next to Eugene.

Spirited, Simon immediately urged Eugene to join their card game as soon as he sat down.

Eugene lifted an eyebrow and looked at Melanie, saying, "You play."

Melanie was taken aback. Eugene just calmly released her wrist, saying, "My hand hurts. I don't feel like playing."

Eugene's hands were slender and well-proportioned. His skin was pale, and the joints were obvious. As Melanie looked at his hands, she inexplicably felt that Eugene was hinting at how he had brought her here just now.

Her gaze flickered. She heard Simon discontentedly saying, "Eugene, are you brushing me off right now?"

"I just don't feel too well," he said indifferently.

"You didn't seem unwell just now."

Eugene did not respond, and Simon let the matter drop. Clicking his tongue, he looked at Melanie. "We're playing big. Are you ready?"

Melanie did not want to play in the first place, and now, with Simon's remark, she had the perfect excuse to decline. However, before she could even say anything, she heard Eugene reply, "Her loss is mine."

Kellen exclaimed, "Oh!" He then threw the cards from the woman's hands onto the table. "Since you said that, I won't go easy."

Melanie took her seat at the card table while Eugene leaned against the sofa, casually watching her with a relaxed expression.

Simon chatted with Eugene while they played and eventually asked, "I've been wondering, you've been out for quite a while today. Didn't Viola look for you?"

Melanie's hand that was holding the cards paused at Simon's question. She heard Eugene nonchalantly respond with a vague hum.

Simon clicked his tongue. He seemed to be implying something as he said, "No wonder."

Melanie was not having much luck with the cards this round. Her hand did not look promising. A loss seemed inevitable. Unfortunately, she also happened to be the first one to play.

The woman in Kellen's arms could not help but press her when she noticed Melanie's hesitation. Melanie then reluctantly played her first card.

She did not play this game often, but she was familiar with the rules. However, her luck was particularly bad this round, and she ended up losing in the end.

Kellen jokingly teased Eugene, "Mr. Scott, your secretary lost."

Eugene's expression remained unchanged as his gaze fell on Melanie. "How much did you lose?"

Melanie replied, "I'll let you decide."

Eugene leaned back on the sofa, showing no intention of moving. "I'll take responsibility for your losses. What's there to be afraid of?"

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Indeed, they were playing with substantial stakes. When Melanie lost a four-figure sum in this particular round, Eugene did not even blink an eye when he handed over the money.

Melanie's luck did not improve for the rest of the evening, and she continued to lose in subsequent rounds.

After ending another round, Simon threw his cards on the table and said to Eugene, "Are you losing on purpose?"

Melanie had been losing consistently, and her mood was terrible by now. "I already said I didn't want to play."

Kellen, who was enjoying the spectacle at this moment, was the biggest winner of the night. He seemed to be having a great time. He said to Simon, "Mr. Scott here is the one paying for her losses. Why are you getting worked up?"

While their dynamics were evident in the way they spoke to one another, Melanie could not shake the feeling that something was off. There seemed to be something going on.

She hesitated for a moment, thinking of getting up. However, Eugene, who was seated next to her, casually said, "Deal the cards."

The card machine set up the next round. Kellen asked, "Will you be joining the game yourself?"

"She's not very good at it," he replied.

Melanie lowered her gaze and picked up the cards silently. The scent emanating from Eugene beside her permeated the air.

Amidst the various scents that surrounded her, Melanie was able to swiftly identify Eugene's distinctly cool and clear aura. She got a bit lost in thought until Eugene reached over and grabbed the cards from her hand. He threw them onto the table.

That snapped her back to reality.

Eugene ended up leaning quite close to her because of that, and his fingertips unexpectedly brushed against Melanie's.

When Eugene noticed that Melody was in a daze, he raised a brow. Otherwise, he was as nonchalant as usual. However, his next words carried a hint of harshness. "If you lose again, I'll deduct it from your salary."

Melanie frowned but did not get lost in thought again.

It was not clear if Eugene was actually good at the game or if it was a coincidence, but ever since he arrived, Melanie had not lost a single round. Although she did not win much, things had mostly evened out.

On the other hand, Simon ended up being the biggest loser as he lost to all three of his opponents. By the end of it all, his face had darkened with frustration.

Kellen decided to call it a night and pushed the cards away before suggesting they disband. Eugene and Melanie had driven over. Simon planned to return to the hotel with them.

Melanie had been drinking tonight. On the other hand, Eugene was sober, so he took the wheel. Still a little groggy from the alcohol, Melanie hesitated before opening the back door. She immediately heard Simon's discontented remark, "You reek of alcohol."

She paused and then went to sit in the front passenger seat instead.

Eugene did not say anything. He just opened the car window and let in the cool breeze that made Melanie's temples ache. Frowning, she leaned back in her seat. Halfway through the journey, a light rain started, and they had to close the windows.

"It stinks," Simon said, expressing his disgust as soon as the windows were closed.

Melanie knew he was referring to her, but she chose to ignore it.

However, Simon kept at it. He looked at Melanie with contempt and said, "Melanie, did you feel particularly noble when you drank on behalf of Eugene?"

When Melanie did not reply, he continued, "You did the same when Kellen was the other party too. Do you think you're Eugene's wife?"

The moment he said that, Eugene's phone rang.

Simon stretched his neck to take a look and chuckled. He even reached out to poke Melanie's shoulder. "His real wife is calling."

Melanie looked at Simon coldly and then moved her shoulder, deftly avoiding his hand. Given Simon's support for Eugene and Viola, someone unfamiliar with them might think he was Eugene's mother.

Ignoring Simon, Eugene said to Melanie, "Help me answer the phone."

Since he was driving, it was inconvenient for him to pick up the call. Melanie lowered her gaze and answered the call on Eugene's phone.

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Eugene simply commanded, "Answer it."

Melanie parted her lips slightly. She was hesitant. Enjoying the spectacle, Simon urged as well, "Hurry up and answer it. Viola is looking for Eugene, not you."

With a light tap on the screen, Melanie quickly put the call on speaker and then placed the phone down. Viola's voice immediately came through. "Eugene, where are you? Why haven't you come back yet?"

Melanie pursed her lips and watched the scenery outside absentmindedly. Eugene responded, "I'm on the way."

"Eugene." There was hesitation in Viola's voice as she said softly, "I was wrong before. I shouldn't have gotten mad at you."

Eugene glanced at the phone. They had reached a traffic light intersection. He paused before saying, "Rest early."

"I want to wait for you to come back," Viola replied with slight anticipation.

Eugene did not brush her off and simply responded with an "Okay" before hanging up. Simon strained his neck, curious as he asked, "Did you have a fight with Viola?"

"No."

"Oh, please. Why would Viola apologize like that if you guys hadn't fought? Couples argue all the time. You quarrel at the beginning and make up in the end."

"She already apologized on her own initiative, so you should let it go," Simon advised while playing the role of the wise older brother.

Melanie figured he probably forgot she was still in the car. After all, back when Melanie and Eugene had their own arguments, Simon's words had been more along the lines of "She's just some woman, what's there to make a big fuss about?"

Melanie had indeed quarreled with Eugene before, or rather, she had initiated a one-sided cold war. However, Eugene had never softened or coddled her. She was the one who had to calm herself down every time and take the initiative for reconciliation.

Looking back at it now, she found it somewhat ridiculous. How could she have been so clueless about his demeanor?

When they reached the hotel, it was almost midnight. Simon suddenly received a call from home when they were at the elevator, so he went aside to answer it. Only Melanie and Eugene were left.

Melanie got rained on slightly when she entered, and her clothes stuck uncomfortably to her skin. As the surroundings quieted down, her mind became clearer. Feeling physically weak, she leaned against the nearby wall.

When the elevator doors opened, Melanie called out to Eugene softly. He stopped in his steps, a faint crease forming on his forehead. Leaning against the wall and feeling the effects of the alcohol, Melanie struggled to find her voice.

She bit her lip and said, "Viola is also in Prime City."

Eugene's gaze slightly intensified. "So?"

Melanie said, "I want to leave tomorrow. It should be more convenient for you to be with her than with me."

Eugene stared at her for a while, the corners of his lips pulling into a sarcastic sneer. "So, were you just entertaining me tonight?"

Melanie's complexion was deteriorating. She had drunk all types of alcohol tonight. She was fine at first since she had taken some sobering pills earlier, but the aftereffects were hitting her now and she was uncomfortable.

The hand she used to support herself against the wall began to slide down. Melanie had to exert considerable effort to keep herself from sitting down.

Eugene stood in front of her and looked down at her figure. "Melanie, you still have some work to put into entertaining people," he said coldly.

The lobby was empty, and Eugene's voice was so very clear. After giving Melanie a cold look, he entered the elevator.

The elevator door slowly closed, and Melanie watched as the numbers climbed steadily. Her face gradually turned even paler. The cold wind from earlier had induced shivers in her.

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Perhaps due to the effects of the alcohol, Melanie's night was restless. She struggled to wake up due to nightmares. When she finally managed to pry her heavy lids open and come to her senses, it was already daytime.

She sat up, clutching the blanket for a bit before checking her phone. It was already past ten in the morning. There seemed to be no urgent matters in Prime City that awaited her.

Melanie got up and freshened herself. She had collapsed onto the bed the night before, and the smell of alcohol still lingered on her.

After getting herself together, her phone, which she had left on the bedside table, suddenly rang just as she exited the bathroom. It was a call from Walden, the manager of the branch office.

"Miss Smith, when will you be coming over?"

Melanie was puzzled. "Is there something else?"

“Yes, there’s another document that needs to be organized. Mr. Scott left to tend to some urgent matters, so I was told to contact you, Miss Smith.”

Melanie was stunned when she heard that. Eugene had gone back?

The call ended, and she hesitated for a moment before calling Eugene. He did not answer.

She then got herself ready and went to the branch office to handle the matter Walden had mentioned to her. After everything was sorted, she asked Walden, “When did Mr. Scott leave?”

The man rubbed his chin as he replied, “This morning. When I called him, he was already at the airport.”

Walden then asked back, “He didn’t mention anything to you?”

Melanie lowered her gaze and remained silent. Eugene did not mention anything about him leaving today even though they were together last night.

After leaving the branch office, Melanie checked her phone again but still found that she had not gotten a response from Eugene. After a moment of contemplation, she opened an app and booked a plane ticket for herself.

By the time she finished packing and arrived at the airport, it was already the afternoon. Just after going through security, Xander called. Melanie then remembered that she had not informed him about her departure.

She answered the call a little awkwardly and heard Xander say, “There’s an exhibition today. If you have time, you can come and check it out. It’s quite interesting.”

Suitcase in hand, Melanie apologized, “I’m sorry, Xander. I have urgent matters to attend to and am currently at the airport.”

There was a pause on Xander's end before he slowly said, "I must have disturbed you."

Feeling guilty, Melanie replied, "Allow me to treat you to dinner when you come back to Jepton."

Stephen did mention that Xander was also from Jepton and that he often traveled with his studio.

Hearth City was an inland city, with two cities in between it and Jepton. When Melanie arrived, it was already dinner time. She flagged down a taxi and went looking for a hotel. The last time she came to Hearth City was for a conference.

Dylan had never taken Melanie to her home ever since she got married even though Melanie was just over ten years old at that time. After she grew up, Dylan would always take the high-speed train to Jepton to look for her instead.

Thus, Melanie had no idea where Dylan's home was. She called Dylan after dinner, who answered very quickly but sounded awkward, "Mel? Why are you calling again?"

Melanie tightened her grip on the phone and took a deep breath before asking, "Where are you?"

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Dylan replied, "I'm at home. Peachie just fell asleep."

Melanie could hear footsteps as the woman spoke, indicating that she had likely left the room. She lowered her gaze and looked at the empty hotel room for a moment before calmly asking, "Do you have time? I'm in Hearth City and would like to meet you."

"What?" Dylan was clearly surprised. "Why are you here in the city?"

Melanie tried to ignore the surprise and resistance in her tone. She replied indifferently, "I want to talk to you about Grandpa."

“What’s there to talk about?” Dylan tried to evade the question. She did not seem eager to meet Melanie.

However, Melanie was unusually assertive and pressed, “Grandpa doesn’t have any more money. What are you trying to achieve by asking him for so much? Is it really for Peachie’s medical expenses, or is it because of that man?”

Dylan did not expect Melanie to be so direct. Just then, she heard Peachie crying in the background. She anxiously covered the phone while replying hastily, “I’m taking Peachie to the hospital to get medicine tomorrow. Come meet me then.”

With that, she hung up the phone. Melanie heard the beeping, and a faint smile appeared on her lips. She had heard Peachie crying and sensed the tension as well as worry in Dylan’s voice.

The weather in Hearth City was not as nice as the weather in Prime City. Melanie did not close the window and allowed the heat outside to invade the room.

The hospital was a bit of a distance from the hotel Melanie was staying at. The next morning, she flagged down a taxi and went to the hospital.

It had been several years since Melanie and Dylan last met, and Melanie had not expected Dylan to look so different. She was still a charming woman when she saw her a few years ago, but now, she was tanned and thin.

Her clothes were worn and dirty, and her messy hair was casually tied up. Peachie was also dressed in ill-fitting clothes, and her small face was pale without even a hint of color.

Dylan stood in front of Melanie, looking uneasy. “What do you want to say?”

Melanie frowned as she observed the bruises on Dylan’s face. Her expression gradually turned cold, and she questioned, “Did that man hit you?”

Dylan instinctively avoided Melanie’s gaze and stammered, “I accidentally bumped into something.”

Melanie did not have much to say to that. She looked at Peachie, who was supposed to be six years old yet looked thin and small. She was curled up in Dylan's arms and scrutinizing Melanie curiously.

Melanie's gaze flickered. She grabbed a piece of chocolate from her bag and handed it to Peachie. The little girl looked at Dylan, who shook her head at her. She then pushed the chocolate back to Melanie, saying, "Peachie can't eat many things."

With that, Melanie's gaze fell on Dylan's rough hands that were covered in many bruises.

Brows furrowed, she was about to speak when Dylan beat her to it. "Your grandfather's money was all spent on Peachie's medical treatment. She's also his granddaughter."

Melanie suddenly raised a brow as she looked at Dylan with some disbelief. Dylan turned her head away, avoiding Melanie's gaze. "You have a good job and don't lack money, but Peachie is only six years old. Mel, can't you consider it as saving your sister's life?"

There was a slight choking in her voice when she said that. Hearing her talk like this, Peachie immediately shrunk back into her arms and grabbed Dylan pitifully.

Melanie's heart sank, and after a long pause, she cleared her throat. "Do you think I came here to blame you for getting Grandpa to spend money on Peachie?"

Dylan looked at Melanie. For a moment, she was stunned. Melanie clenched her hands tightly before speaking more softly, "You ask me for money, and I give it to you every time. But do you really use it for Peachie or have you been giving it to that man?"

"You know this better than anyone else."

"I..." Dylan hesitated.

"It's been so many years since you came home, and Grandpa is worried about you. And now, you mingle with outsiders and deceive him of his money?"

Melanie could not express the complex emotions she was feeling. She had always thought that Dylan would at least remember that she was also her daughter, but in reality, Dylan only thought of her as Peachie's competition for her grandfather's money.