

Mr. Scott 171

Chapter 171

Her lively personality and Simon's company made it easy for her to blend in naturally. Melanie stood by the side for a while. With nothing to do, she decided to go behind a grill and put some of the prepared skewers on it.

Melanie hardly ate barbecue and rarely cooked, so she was not accurate with the cooking times. It was not until she smelled something burning that she realized she had overcooked the skewers.

Simon happened to come over to fetch something and caught a whiff of the smell, making him frown. "What's that smell?"

Expression unchanging, Melanie scooped up the burnt food onto a plate to discard it when Simon took notice of it.

He chuckled exaggeratedly and mocked, "Melanie, are you that bad at cooking?"

Her hand that was holding the plate paused for a moment before she looked up at Simon. She did not say much to him, however.

Simon's disdain intensified. He had not been able to get back at Melanie for her retort in the afternoon, so he naturally would not let this opportunity slip by.

He glanced at the burnt food on the plate, tutted, and said, "Is this virtuous wife persona something you want to show Eugene? Or is it for Stephen?"

He sneered, seemingly enjoying the spectacle.

Simon deliberately blocked Melanie's way, and she stood there holding the plate with an unchanging expression. "Simon, has anyone ever told you that you're really annoying?"

Melanie spoke indifferently, with not even a falter in her expression. In return, Simon's expression abruptly turned cold as he raised his voice at her. "Have I been too kind to you?"

His sudden increase in volume attracted everyone's attention, and they all turned to look. Joshua, who had been discussing a collaboration project with LeapCo involving Eugene, shifted his gaze toward Simon and Melanie upon hearing the commotion.

He frowned slightly and murmured under his breath, "Why is Simon targeting Melanie?" Then, he remembered that Eugene and Simon were good friends.

He smiled dryly and was about to tell Eugene to go check on the situation when he noticed that Eugene had already started walking ahead. Joshua hesitated for a moment before catching up.

Simon had drunk and was getting a little heated at the moment. Staring at Melanie, he said, "You think I'm annoying? Take a good look at yourself, flirting with men everywhere. Who do you think you are?"

Being berated by him while cornered, Melanie was unable to suppress her temper any longer despite her patience. She closed her eyes and coldly rebuked, "Simon, you repeatedly claim that I've flirted

with men. Who have I actually flirted with?"

The mockery on Simon's face became even more apparent as he retorted, "Are you really that clueless? If not for your flirtatious ways, do you really think you deserved to be LeapCo's chief secretary?"

Simon wanted to continue, but Eugene's cold and stern voice suddenly cut in, "Simon."

Simon looked up and saw Eugene approaching them. He frowned, as if wanting to say something.

Having perceived the situation, Joshua followed Eugene and intervened by handing Simon a glass of juice. "Weren't we planning to play a couple of rounds later? Don't drink too much yet."

Simon hesitated, but when he sensed Eugene's warning gaze, he begrudgingly acknowledged their words with a nonchalant hum. He took the juice offered to him.

Joshua breathed a sigh of relief and then turned his attention to Melanie.

Melanie's face was blank, her beautiful eyes emotionless as she held the plate in her hand still.

Anyone who was scolded publicly would feel irritated. Joshua understood this too well. Awkwardly rubbing his face, he took the plate from Melanie and whispered, "Do you have anything specific you'd like to eat? I can grill it for you. I'm quite skilled."

Melanie glanced at him, hesitated for a moment, and finally said, "Thanks, but it's alright."

Chapter 172

Joshua found himself in a dilemma as he shifted his gaze from Melanie to Simon. After pondering for a while, he finally came up with an excuse and said to Melanie, "Since you don't feel like eating, how about I take you inside to see some paintings? I've mentioned them before. I think you'll like them."

Although Melanie was still somewhat uncomfortable, considering it was Joshua's birthday, she

nodded slightly and went inside with him.

As they passed by Eugene, Melanie could feel his icy gaze scanning her. However, she did not spare a single glance at him.

The paintings in Joshua's house were all the work of a contemporary artist. Melanie had seen

information about this artist from Xander before.

Joshua rubbed his hands awkwardly. "Melanie, Simon is just like that. Don't take it to heart."

Melanie did not respond. She knew Simon better than anyone else.

Joshua realized he should not apologize on Simon's behalf. Hesitating, he was just about to attempt to change the topic when he heard his phone ring. He checked his phone and noticed that it was a call from his company.

Glancing at Melanie, he hesitated before saying, "I've some business to attend to. I'll take the call outside."

Melanie nodded, engrossing herself in the paintings.

Worried that Melanie might be bored, Joshua said, "Stephen went out for a bit. I'll ask him to come and keep you company."

With that, he scurried away.

Melanie did not mind it. She had no intention of going out and running into Simon again. Instead, she focused on admiring one of the paintings.

The muffled voices outside occasionally reached her ears, but they were indistinct.

Suddenly, footsteps approached her. Melanie thought it was Stephen. She took out her phone, snapped a photo, sent it to Xander, and asked Stephen, "Did Xander confirm when he'll be returning to Jepton?"

She recalled Xander mentioning that the artist's upcoming exhibition would be coming to Jepton

when he made the introduction to her. When she did not hear Stephen reply to her after some time, Melanie turned around. However, instead of the man she was expecting, she saw Eugene.

His dark eyes were fixed on her, and his tone was casual. "You seem to be in a good mood. Is it because Xander is coming back to Jepton?"

The calm expression on Melanie's face turned a bit chilly as she countered, "And if it is? What's it to you?"

Eugene's eyes narrowed. He glanced at her casually for a moment before replying, "Doesn't matter much."

The frustration in Melanie's heart surged again. Keeping any emotion from entering her voice, she said to Eugene, "Since it doesn't matter much, kindly ask your friend to mind his own business."

That was a reference to Simon.

Eugene's brows twitched slightly. He was about to say something when a loud thunderclap rang outside, followed by Simon's displeased voice. "Damn, it's raining!"

Summers in Jepton were rainy, and sometimes, it would storm all of a sudden.

Large raindrops began to fall at the end of Simon's cursing. The people outside rushed into the house in a panic. They did not care about Melanie and Eugene, who were inside, as they were too busy seeking shelter from the rain.

Although Melanie and Eugene were not initially standing that close, the crowd moved them a few steps closer. She could now smell the cedar scent on Eugene.

As she stepped back a couple of paces, Melanie suddenly heard a loud thud from outside, followed by Viola's yelp.

Chapter 173

“Quick, come help! Viola got hit!” The chaotic voices outside filled the air, and people inside the house started rushing out,

Melanie felt the temperature around Eugene drop instantly before he stepped out without any hesitation.

She remained where she was as she watched as everyone went out. Thinking that there were so many people out there already, she figured one less person would not make much of a difference.

Besides, the sudden downpour had darkened the sky, making visibility poor. It would not be a good idea for her to go out.

The room quickly emptied, leaving only a few scattered individuals whom Melanie did not recognize. At that moment, she received a message from Xander. After sending her reply, she noticed everyone had returned.

The room was once again lively.

Melanie saw Viola. Her face was pale, and her hair, wet from the rain, clung to her face. She looked like a delicate white flower. She leaned on Eugene as several people worried over her, walking her inside cautiously.

Thinking Viola might have injured her foot, Melanie moved aside to make way for the crowd to pass.

Viola was led to the sofa. Her expression was still fearful, but she managed to force a smile and softly thanked those around her, “Thank you all for worrying about me. I’m fine.”

Joshua was the first to speak up, “Are you really okay? Maybe you should go to the hospital for a check
-up.”

Joshua was sincerely worried. After all, he had invited everyone, and if anything happened, he would not be able to bear the responsibility. Simon also spoke up, saying, "With this kind of weather, there's a risk of infection due to bacteria. It's best if Eugene takes Viola to the hospital."

Even though his tone was not much different from usual, there was genuine concern in it now.

Melanie could not help but look up.

"Do you need to go to the hospital?" Eugene's voice was low and soothing as he looked down at the wound on Viola's palm, like he was comforting her.

Viola bit her lip and shook her head. All the color had been drained from her face, and she looked somewhat disheveled from the rain. Despite that, she maintained a stubborn yet understanding

expression.

"It's just a small cut. I'll be fine. You guys have fun. Don't worry about me. I'll apply some medicine myself," she said.

Joshua had already fished out a first aid kit from somewhere the moment she said that. "Apply the medicine quickly."

With her clothes soaked by the rain, Viola was in an uncomfortable state. She bit her lip, feeling somewhat awkward. She asked, "Can I borrow your bathroom?"

One of the women present quickly realized the situation and urged Joshua to have the housekeeper find some of his sister's clothes for Viola to change into. However, it was not convenient for Viola to change her clothes with an injured hand.

She could only look to Eugene for help. Someone nearby jokingly said, "Oh, Eugene, go help Viola change. We'll wait for you guys to come down."

This immediately stoked laughter from the crowd, causing Viola to blush. She glanced at Eugene and hesitated. "Never mind, I can manage it myself."

Eugene remained unfazed. "Your hand is injured."

Blushing even more, Viola suddenly noticed Melanie in the crowd and asked, "Melanie, can you help me?"

Melanie was about to refuse when another woman in the group spoke up, "Then maybe you should get your wound treated after you change? Or it might make changing awkward later."

Viola turned to Melanie, smiling. "I'd appreciate it, Melanie."

Unable to say much against that, Melanie walked toward the guest room but did not see Viola following her after some time. She turned back, only to see Viola standing there, unmoving. Awkwardly, Viola looked at Melanie and asked, "Melanie, could you help support me a little?"

Chapter 174

Viola

Melanie lowered her gaze to look at Viola's feet. Without saying anything, she propped her up. seemed to have thrown her entire weight onto Melanie. Melanie was not particularly strong and so had to use both hands to support her.

Melanie could not help but frown and asked, "Is your leg injured too?"

Blinking, Viola whispered, "It seems like I twisted it a bit."

Melanie nodded and continued supporting her. However, since Viola was wet and muddy while leaning against Melanie, Melanie's clothes also got quite dirty.

In the guest room, the housekeeper had prepared only one set of clean clothes. Viola looked at Melanie and apologized softly, "I'm sorry, Melanie. I didn't mean to."

Seeing that there were not too many marks on her clothes, Melanie calmly said, "Change your clothes. If you need any help, just let me know."

"I'll go wipe myself down first." Viola smiled apologetically at Melanie and turned to the bathroom.

She walked steadily, showing no signs of the difficulty she had experienced moments ago. Melanie's eyes darkened when she saw this.

Viola took more than half an hour in the bathroom. She had really hurt her hand, so she moved slowly as she was afraid to touch it.

Melanie waited outside while Viola changed. Her own clothes were also dirty, and she had considered using water in the bathroom to clean up a little.

However, Viola had been in there for some time, and Melanie was not comfortable wearing someone else's clothes, so she waited patiently.

When Viola finally emerged, she had changed into clean clothes and even touched up her makeup. She looked at Melanie and cheerfully said, "I'm all set, Melanie."

Viola did not lean on Melanie like before when they made their way back out. Instead, she even walked half a step faster than Melanie.

Outside, another round of games had started, and the atmosphere was lovely. Someone noticed them and said, "Eugene and the others are playing table tennis inside."

Viola acknowledged them and said to Melanie, "I'm going to go look for Eugene."

Melanie just turned around and went to sit in a corner, idly playing with her phone.

The rain outside showed no sign of stopping, so leaving was not an option for now. As for Stephen, he was nowhere to be seen. Melanie was unsure of what to do.

She was thinking about whether to give Stephen a call when she heard a male voice saying, "Uh, the one by the window, the one in black."

Melanie panned, realizing that the person was referring to her. Looking over, however, she realized she did not recognize the guy.

The guy seemed to have a bad temper as he immediately clicked his tongue and commanded, "See that coat over there? Bring it over to me."

There was indeed a coat over to Melanie, she hesitated for a moment but ultimately brought the coat

next over to the guy.

The man was leaning against the entrance to the pool room. When Melanie reached him, it just so happened that Simon and another guy were also coming but.

Melanie handed the coat to the guy in a composed manner. "Here you go."

"Zack, did you spend so much money playing that your eyesight's gone bad?" Simon paused before

his gaze fell on Melanie. He scrutinized her from head to toe, sneering, "How dirty."

Chapter 175

Simon looked at Melanie with open mockery. He lifted his hand to pat Zack's shoulder and said in a less-than-friendly tone, "Eugene is still inside. Can't you tone it down a bit?"

Melanie might have felt the need to explain to Simon back then whenever he misunderstood her, but now, she was just a visage of indifference. She had no words to waste on him. She gave Simon a fleeting glance before shifting her gaze to Zack

“Weren’t you the one who asked me to bring the coat over?”

Zack furrowed his brows and accepted the coat. He was not very familiar with Simon and the others. He only came because he was on good terms with Joshua. However, after observing Simon’s attitude toward Melanie, he could guess that their relationship was not great.

Zack’s family was also in business, so naturally, he did not want to offend Simon. He clicked his tongue and looked at Melanie. “Just do as you’re told. I didn’t notice you had dirt all over you. You’d better not have dirtied my clothes.”

Melanie’s expression remained cold as she replied, “If you think it’s dirty, the trash bin is right there.

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Zack did not expect her to talk back. He hesitated for a moment before his expression turned unpleasant. He felt as if he had been humiliated in front of Simon.

Glaring at Melanie, he spat out, “You got some nerve walking around with your dirty clothes. Someone might mistake you for a beggar.”

The dirt on Melanie’s clothes was mostly caused by Viola brushing against her. It was not much, but because she was wearing light-colored clothes, it was more noticeable.

Melanie did not say anything back and was about to leave. However, since Zack felt that she had humiliated him, he reached out and grabbed her arm. He said coldly, “Did I say you could leave?”

Hearing this, her face turned cold. She was just about to respond when a soft cry came from inside the pool room. When she looked over, she heard someone say, “Eugene, it hurts.”

Simon noticed her and sneered, "Why not go in and take a look if you're so curious?"

Melanie spared no one at this point and retorted, "If I didn't know Eugene was into women, I might have thought you two had something going on in private."

"You-" Simon's face instantly turned ugly. Eyes narrowed, he was about to confront Melanie when Eugene came out.

His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, and he had a box of band-aids in his hand. His expression was blank, and his gaze briefly swept over Melanie's face before he looked at Simon. "Where are the things I asked you to get?"

Simon clicked his tongue. "The iodine in the first aid kit has expired. Where else am I supposed to

look for some? Joshua has already gotten someone to bring it over. Just ask Viola to wait a moment."

Nodding, Eugene was about to go back inside when his gaze caught Melanie's hand that was still in Zack's grip.

He raised a brow as he let out a cold snort. There was an indiscernible expression on his face.

Melanie snapped back to reality and shook off Zack's hand before walking toward her corner.

Someone brought iodine over soon after. Stephen had just returned after heading out and was now a little damp from the rain. When he saw Melanie in the corner, he walked over to her.

"I had to go get something nearby for my mom. I'm sorry for keeping you waiting," Stephen said, aware of the strained relationship between Melanie and Simon. He felt a little embarrassed about leaving Melanie alone.

Melanie looked at the pouring rain outside and asked, "Do you think the rain will stop tonight? It looks heavy."

She was a bit worried that she might have to stay the night at Joshua's house due to the heavy rain. She was not very keen on that.

"The weather forecast says it'll stop in about two hours," Stephen replied. He then noticed the marks on Melanie's clothes and frowned, "How did your clothes get dirty?"

Melanie paid his question no heed. "Viola hurt her leg, and I helped prop her up when walking. It was probably that."

The moment she said that, Stephen stood up and took off his own jacket before handing it to her. "Make do with this."

Chapter 176

Melanie subconsciously said, "No need, I'll change at home."

Stephen insisted on having her change. "It's not comfortable wearing dirty clothes." He looked solemn as he continued, "And you'll get sick wearing wet clothes. You don't want to worry your grandfather, do you?"

At the mention of her grandfather, Melanie did not try refuting anymore and took the coat. She thanked Stephen and put it on.

It was indeed a bit cold. The air conditioning in the room was on full blast, and her clothes were a bit damp, making her uncomfortable. Melanie sat in the corner because she was trying to avoid the air conditioning.

Seeing that she had put on his coat, the seriousness on Stephen's face disappeared. He went to pour a cup of hot water for Melanie.

Melanie held the hot water in her hand and chatted with him aimlessly. Meanwhile, in the pool room, a burst of laughter suddenly erupted, followed by the dissatisfied voice of Simon. He said, "Do you all look down on me just because I didn't arrange a date with a young model today?"

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Simon's playboy reputation was well-known. People in the circle knew about his relationships with young models and internet celebrities. Melanie was not interested in that, and she sipped her hot

water slowly.

Joshua came out. Seeing that Stephen was back, he quickly said, "Stephen, come inside and join us. They're betting, and we need one more person."

Stephen looked at Melanie, who replied calmly, "You go and play. I'll sit here for a while."

Joshua suggested, "Melanie, come join us. They're playing something interesting."

Melanie was not interested in getting involved in their game and shook her head, refusing.

Joshua did not push her and led Stephen inside.

Before going in, Stephen whispered to Melanie, "If anything happens, come find me." Then, he entered the pool room with Joshua.

Most of the people in the living room had gone to the pool room, leaving those who did not know each other playing on their phones.

The living room suddenly became quiet, with only the sound of rain pattering outside and occasional laughter from the pool room.

Simon grabbed a pool cue and looked at everyone, "Who wants to play with me?"

Eugene was the first to refuse. "You're bad at it. It's not fun."

Simon was not satisfied and looked at Stephen. "Stephen, will you play with me?"

Stephen was a man with a good temperament and nodded willingly. "Sure."

He took off his jacket, leaving only a white shirt. He looked even more gentle and refined.

Zack came back in with some water and glanced at Stephen. He then asked Joshua beside him quietly, "Is the woman outside Stephen's girlfriend?"

Joshua took a moment to realize he was referring to Melanie. His expression turned somewhat strange as he asked Zack, "Why are you asking that?"

"That woman, isn't she wearing Stephen's coat? Tsk, what's her name? Melanie, right?"

Zack thought he was speaking quietly, but everyone around him heard his every word.

Viola pulled on Eugene's sleeve, curiosity reflecting on her face as she asked, "Could Melanie and Mr. Stephen really be together?"

Eugene's fingertips froze, his dark eyes showing no emotion. After a moment, he lowered his gaze and spoke in a cold voice, "I don't know."

Chapter 177

Viola pursed her lips and smiled. Leaning her head on Eugene's shoulder, she said gently, "If it's true, then Melanie and Mr. Stephen would be a perfect match."

Eugene's brows had the barest furrow as he made a non-committal sound. Viola's lips curled up a slightly bigger smile.

Meanwhile, Melanie sat in the corner, not doing much. She had Xander send her some materials and took this time to slowly organize them. The rain seemed to be letting up a bit. As she was wrapped in Stephen's coat, she did not feel as cold.

When she heard footsteps approaching, Melanie subconsciously looked over, only to see Eugene walking toward her. He was expressionless and had his phone in hand.

He was answering a call, his tone cold and brows slightly furrowed. He threw out a sentence, "I want to see all the materials at Monday's meeting."

The person on the other end of the call said some things, and Eugene's expression grew even colder.

Sitting not far away, Melanie had already lowered her head and gone back to organizing the materials Xander had given her. It was only when Eugene ended the call that she looked up again to glance at

him.

Eugene had been looking down at his phone, but in the instant her gaze swept over him, he sensed it and looked up. His eyes immediately caught the coat she was wearing. His gaze was deep, and it was

unclear to Melanie what he was thinking.

Melanie pursed her lips. She could tell Eugene was not in a particularly great mood at the moment. Thus, she tactfully averted her gaze, continuing to be her own invisible self.

Eugene did not stay outside for long and quickly returned to the pool room, leaving Melanie alone in the living room.

It was not until the early morning that the game finally ended. The rain outside had reduced to a drizzle. Stephen came out of the pool room and asked Melanie, "Feeling sleepy?"

"If you're tired, I can drive," Melanie said.

Just as she said that, she saw Joshua coming over. He looked somewhat embarrassed as he asked Stephen, "Stephen, could you help us? There looks to be a problem with Zack's car. Can you give them a ride back?"

Stephen had the best temperament among this group. It was why Joshua dared to come and ask him for help. Stephen hesitated, saying, "But I need to take Melanie back."

"The main issue is Lavender. She had a bit too much to drink, and it's not very safe for her to take a taxi. Since both your routes are the same, could you help out?" Being the host, Joshua was busy making arrangements.

"It's okay, it's better for you to take them home, especially since Lavender is a woman," Melanie said.

"Okay." Stephen also felt it would not be right to let a drunk woman go home alone and nodded. "I'll drop them off first, then take you home."

Melanie had no objections. However, when it was time to leave, she realized that in addition to Zack and Lavender, there were two more people who needed a ride with Stephen. Both of them had been drinking as well.

Stephen looked at Melanie in a dilemma. Glancing at the unconscious woman, Melanie said softly, "I can take a taxi home. You go ahead and take care of them."

Since he had already agreed, Stephen could only leave with the others. After he left, the remaining people left in twos and threes.

In the end, only Viola, Simon, Eugene, and Melanie were left.

As the birthday person tonight, Joshua had drunk quite a bit. Simon was not one to miss out on such festivities either. Therefore, he was definitely going to take Eugene's car home.

Melanie checked the time and figured she could still catch a taxi outside. She asked Joshua, "Can I borrow an umbrella from you?"

Joshua was stunned. "Are you planning to take a taxi?"

"You and Eugene live in the same neighborhood, right? You should be able to hitch a ride with him."

Joshua scratched his head and called out to Eugene. "Eugene, it's late. It's not safe for Melanie to take a taxi alone. Can you drop her off on your way?"

Chapter 178

Eugene's expression remained cold as he looked at Melanie, not saying a word. Viola whispered beside him, "Eugene, it's late, and it's raining. There's no reason for Melanie to take a taxi, right?"

She smiled mischievously before adding, "It's okay, we can just send her home. I won't be jealous."

"Why can't she take a taxi?"

As soon as Viola said that, Simon, who had been looking at his phone, lifted his head and said to Melanie, "You're not a child. You can find your way home by taking a taxi."

He continued, "I've had a bit too much to drink, and I want to lie down in the back seat for a while. You should be able to find your way home, right?"

The last sentence was directed at Melanie. She raised her phone and said calmly, "No need to trouble yourself. I've booked a ride."

Simon said, "At least you know your own limits."

Melanie could not be bothered to respond to him. She took the umbrella from Joshua and walked straight out. However, when she passed by Eugene, she heard a cold and mocking chuckle from him.

She had no idea what that was about and tightened her grip on the umbrella handle as she made her way outside. The Hewitt family's residence was also in the villa area, and to get out, it would take at least 20 minutes on foot.

Fortunately, the street lamps were bright enough, so there were no issues.

The taxi she ordered arrived quickly. The driver waited at the entrance for a while before eventually calling Melanie. Just as Melanie hung up the phone, she heard honking behind her. Standing right under a streetlamp, she could clearly see that it was Eugene's car.

There were puddles on the road, so Melanie moved to the side to avoid getting splashed by water. However, due to the rain and the speed of the car, Melanie could not entirely escape being splashed.

Her clothes got wet with muddy water, making her feel uncomfortable. Melanie furrowed her brows.

However, the car suddenly came to a halt beside her. The front window rolled down, and Eugene's slightly cold voice said, "Get in."

Melanie gripped the umbrella. "I've already called a ride. The car is here."

Eugene's voice took on a bit of impatience. "I don't want to see headlines about a LeapCo employee getting into trouble in the middle of the night."

Lowering her gaze, she was about to retort when she heard Eugene's increasingly cold tone say again, "Do I need to get out and open the door for you?"

Melanie did not refuse this time. She closed the umbrella, opened the back door, and saw Simon sitting inside lazily.

He looked at Melanie and said in an unfriendly manner, “Do I need to kneel to you before you’ll get in the car?”

Melanie brought the umbrella into the car with her. Then, Viola, who was in the front passenger seat, turned her head to look disapprovingly at Melanie.

“Melanie, you really are something. It’s so late. Why insist on taking a taxi by yourself? Did you even consider your safety? If something were to happen, who would take responsibility?”

Melanie looked up to glance at Viola. Her expression was innocent, as if she really thought Melanie did not understand things and was being willful.

Simon sneered. “Maybe she knew Eugene wouldn’t let her go, so she decided to act like that.”

He raised a brow at Melanie right after saying that and added, “Putting on a weak front, I see you’re quite versed with such tactics.”

Melanie pursed her lips and merely remained silent. What else could she say? All the words had already come out of their mouths.

Chapter 179

Melanie chose not to respond to Simon’s words. The car was quite dim, and she found some comfort in looking out the window.

Simon also fell silent and leaned back in his seat, playing with his phone. He was typing very fast, and

occasionally, Melanie could hear him chuckle carelessly.

He suddenly looked up and casually said to Eugene, "Eugene, you can drop me off at Times Square? I have something to do."

Eugene glanced at him through the rearview mirror. "Am I your chauffeur?"

"No, I just happen to have a date with someone," Simon spoke while opening the voice message from the internet-famous celebrity he had just arranged to meet.

A sweet voice immediately came from his phone, "Simon, when are you coming?"

It was well-known that Simon loved to play around. Eugene stopped the car at the next intersection and calmly reminded him, "Don't cause unnecessary trouble, like what happened with Skylar."

"I'm not that careless," Simon replied before opening the door and getting out.

The cold wind blew the drizzle onto Melanie's face as soon as the door opened.

She knew who Skylar was. He was another playboy in the circle who loved to date young models. Recently, one of the internet-famous women he was with got pregnant and caused a big fuss when she insisted on marrying him.

Skylar was unwilling to marry her, and she ended up jumping off a building. The incident caused a huge uproar, so Skylar's family had to force him into marriage.

Melanie looked up. Even in the dim light, Eugene's profile appeared somewhat indifferent. However, she quickly averted her gaze.

Melanie heard Viola call out to her and looked at her. She could not actually see her expression clearly and could only vaguely make out a silhouette. Viola paused before continuing, "Melanie, I have a question, but I don't know if I should ask."

She sounded genuinely troubled and also a little innocent. After a moment's silence, Melanie replied, "What is it?"

"Are you in a romantic relationship with Mr. Xander or Mr. Stephen? I'm a bit curious." Viola turned her face to look at Melanie.

She added, "I don't mean anything by it. If you're not comfortable sharing, just pretend I didn't ask, okay?"

How could Melanie not answer when she already put it that way? If she did not answer, it would look like she was navigating her unclear relationships between Xander and Stephen.

Viola's question had indeed been worded quite sophisticatedly. Melanie's eyelashes fluttered, and she replied calmly, "What's so uncomfortable about it? It just seems unnecessary for me to report to the company about whether I'm in any romantic relationships. It's a private matter, after all."

Her attitude was somewhat firm. Viola forced a smile. "I thought we were friends..."

"Setting aside our work relationship, I don't believe we have any other connections."

With that, the smile on Viola's face froze as she whispered, "Sorry, Melanie."

Melanie remained silent, gazing out the window. The light rain continued, and there were not many vehicles on the road. Melanie initially thought that Eugene would drive back to her residential area.

With the rain pouring down on them, she assumed he would prioritize taking her home considering Viola was his legitimate girlfriend now.

However, to her surprise, Eugene took a detour and dropped Viola off at her apartment in the northern part of the city.

Viola did not react to this either. She just fluttered her eyelashes before saying to Eugene softly, "It's still raining. Be careful on your way home."

Eugene acknowledged her with a hum. He then took out an umbrella from the storage compartment and handed it to Viola. "Take your time going back. Uncle will worry if you're too fast."

Hearing his words, any hesitation on Viola's face immediately dissipated. She had initially been a bit displeased that Eugene directly took her home.

Chapter 180

Eugene could have taken Viola back home. However, it turned out that Eugene remembered that her father was still alone at home.

Viola's father had been staying with her due to his surgery, while her mother had returned to their hometown temporarily for some family matters. Viola could not help but feel moved. After all, she had only casually mentioned it to Eugene, yet he had remembered.

A smile appeared on Viola's face. She quickly leaned over, giving Eugene a kiss on the cheek. "Eugene, why are you so good to me?"

Eugene responded in a deep voice, "Go home and rest well. You got hurt today."

Melanie sat in the back seat, listening to their sweet and tender conversation while her mood remained unaffected. She checked the time and realized it was almost one in the morning. After a few more brief but affectionate moments, Viola reluctantly got out of the car.

The atmosphere inside the car immediately turned cold the moment she got out. There was not much for Melanie and Eugene to talk about. The distance from the northern part of the city back to the southern part was considerable.

Melanie simply closed her eyes and rested. With the windows closed tightly, the sound of the rain

outside was muffled.

In the silence, Melanie could clearly hear Eugene's cold chuckle.

She looked up and noticed that they had just reached a traffic light intersection where all the vehicles had stopped before the pedestrian crossing.

Melanie lowered her gaze in contemplation before speaking up, "If you feel too tired, I can drive."

She had not drunk tonight, and Eugene had taken a longer route from the Hewitts' residence to the northern part of the city before heading back south. The journey was indeed tiring.

"Melanie." Eugene opened a small gap in the window with one hand, allowing the wind to blow in. He looked up at the rearview mirror and said almost without emotion, "Simon said you're playing hard to get."

He had one hand resting on the steering wheel just as the traffic light turned green. Eugene stepped on the gas and drove forward steadily.

Melanie's hair was slightly disheveled by the wind that was blowing in through the window. The night rain had brought down the temperature of the car, and she could not help but tighten the coat she had on her. It was Stephen's coat.

Eugene noticed this in the rearview mirror, and his brows furrowed imperceptibly. His dark eyes became even colder.

There was a pause before Melanie replied, "You believe everything Simon says?"

Eugene sneered. "He's right. The way you've been following Stephen around so eagerly is really something I can't bear to look at."

Melanie did not understand why Eugene had to be so sarcastic when he was talking to her now. She pinched her palm, suppressing the discomfort in her heart.

She saw no need to argue with Eugene now, as any argument would be meaningless. The two remained silent until they reached the apartment.

Melanie stepped out of the elevator before Eugene, Talking to him felt exhausting now.

Upon arriving home, Melanie went straight to the bathroom and changed out of her damp clothes. She placed Stephen's coat separately from hers, intending to return it to him after cleaning it. When she got out of the shower, she noticed she had left the living room windows open, and the area near

the balcony was in disarray.

The bedroom was also in a similar state. Late into the night, Melanie was suddenly interrupted by a

knock on her door.

A property management staff member explained apologetically, "The water pipe in the upstairs unit burst. We need to check if there are any issues in your home."

Melanie frowned and declined, saying, "There's nothing wrong with my place."

Despite her refusal, the property management staff persisted and tried to enter. Melanie was about to say something when the door across the hall opened. Eugene stood at the doorway expressionlessly, asking, "What are you doing?"