

Mr. Scott 321

Chapter 321

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tomorrow. Are you free?"

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She said calmly, "Zander, you don't need to look out for me when it comes to work just tell me if you have any atagements, I can't always just rely on you all the time"

Melanie already had her own plans in mind. She had put almost all her focus on her

grandfather and rarely involved herself with matters in the studio ever since she moved into Xander's house. He was probably worried about her and so kept her from matters regarding

business

Melanie sighed to herself. She knew she could not continue like this, but she really did not have the resources to do anything at the moment. She could only handle the matters at hand as quickly as possible.

She said goodbye to Xander and left in her car.

Just after turning a corner, Melanie stopped the car. She picked up her cell phone

expressionlessly and dialed a number.

Dylan answered quickly and called out with the intention to flatter, "Mel?"

Melanie closed her eyes. All she could think of was Dylan's worthless appearance, but she did

not want to waste time and immediately asked, "Are you with George now?"

Dylan was stunned for a moment but then replied bitterly, "He didn't come back at all last night. He said he was afraid that the debtors would come looking for him.

"Mel, can you give me the money? You promised me before."

Although Dylan's voice was soft, it was clear she was always thinking about money.

"Did he hit you again?" Melanie asked.

Dylan was stunned and did not answer, but Melanie did not want to hear her answer either. She just asked again, "You still don't want to divorce him even though he's like this, right?"

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"I'm..." Dylan muttered.

Melanie did not press her. She just waited quietly for her to speak.

A long time passed before Dylan said, "He's actually very good to me, and he didn't make any big mistakes. Why divorce him?"

Melanie was not bothered despite her answer. This was Dylan's own choice, and she had asked her about it again and again. There was no need for Melanie to give any more advice now. Dylan was simply asking for it.

Calmly, Melanie replied, "I'll send you the money. Remember what you said before and don't appear in front of me again in the future. Don't contact me again either."

There was nothing bystanders could do to pull up those who were willing to let themselves sink. This was because they were already one and the same with the mud. If they continued to pull, they would only make themselves miserable instead.

Melanie was surprisingly calm after she ended the call.

If she had heard Dylan's words just a little earlier, she would have been furious. Now, she could just turn a blind eye to it. Perhaps she no longer had the energy to cling to things that did not belong to her.

No one could stop those who sought death.

Peachie's face crossed Melanie's mind, and she pursed her lips. She hoped Dylan would not actually be stupid enough to really let George sell her.

After sitting still in the car for some time, Melanie drove to the nearest bank. The amount promised was quite large and could only be transferred at the bank.

Melanie originally had hundreds of thousands in her account. With the money LeapCo transferred over two days ago, she was left with enough to pay for her grandfather's medical expenses for a period of time even after making the transfer to Dylan.

Melanie took care of things at the bank and went to the hospital.

Her grandfather was doing pretty well today too. Dr. Wells had found a set of sterile protective clothing for Melanie to change into so that she could go in and visit the man.

The old man had woken up. There was no one else accompanying him except a nurse who was watching over him inside.

He was still wounded from the surgery, and when Melanie saw the old man's grayish pallor, she felt sad. She sat down by the bed but did not dare to touch her grandfather. She could only call out to him softly, "Grandpa, it's me, Mel."

The old man slowly turned to look at her. As he was slowly recovering, his once-distorted facial features were slowly improving.

He opened his mouth and responded hoarsely, "Mel..."

Melanie did not dare let him speak. She could not talk too loudly either and softly relayed what had happened recently to her grandfather.

For example, the house in the North district, work, and how things were going along. She only mentioned the good things to put her grandfather at ease.

The old man had lost too much energy due to the operation, however. He fell asleep halfway through Melanie's sharing.

Melanie lowered her gaze and stared at her grandfather's old face for a long time before getting up and walking out quietly.

Fortunately, he was doing fine.

Melanie changed her clothes and then went to the office to look for Dr. Wells. She had just gotten to his office door when he heard a displeased voice say mockingly, "Who do you think you are to consider yourself Eugene's wife?"

"I think you're too stupid to even be a nanny for the family!"

Melanie paused and looked up to see Stella around the corner staring down at Viola, who was standing in front of her.

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Stella had a bad temper. No matter who it was, she would always treat them arrogantly and speak to them harshly.

Melanie was not surprised. She looked away and turned around to enter the office but was caught by Stella.

The annoyed look on her face became a touch colder as she sneered. "As expected, good things don't come in pairs but bad things all come together."

Viola noticed Melanie as well. Realizing that Melanie might have heard Stella's words earlier, the expression on her face immediately stiffened.

The only one who was calm was Melanie. She went straight into the office as if she had not heard anything.

When Dr. Wells saw her, his attitude was very gentle as he said, "The patient is in good condition now, but surgery puts a toll on the body either way. He needs to take good care of himself.

"Considering the patient's special situation, we think it's okay to let him stay in the ICU for another half month. Do you think it's okay?"

Staying in the ICU was not cheap and required the family's consent. Melanie nodded, and Dr. Wells gave her a few more bills to pay.

Melanie left the office with the bills but was immediately stopped.

Viola was no longer as youthful as she was when she first joined the company. She was now dressed in a professional suit, and her hair was permed. The curls were scattered across her shoulders. She looked like an elite urban beauty.

On the other hand, Melanie had no time to tidy herself up because she had been busy running to and from the hospital these days. She was just wearing an ordinary shirt and trousers, with her long hair tied into a ponytail.

Viola withdrew her gaze from Melanie and smirked proudly. "Melanie, it's really you. I saw you but didn't dare think it was you."

In a shocked tone, she continued, "I didn't think you'd change so much after leaving LeapCo."

How could Melanie not hear the sarcasm in Viola's words?

She was also actually taller than Viola, but since the woman was wearing heels while she was wearing flats for convenience, Viola was half a head taller than her. She deliberately lowered her gaze to look at Melanie when talking to her, giving her an image of aloofness.

Melanie looked her up and down expressionlessly. She replied, "You haven't changed much."

Viola's face stiffened slightly. What did Melanie mean by that?

She quickly regained her composure.

What was she afraid of?

Melanie had been reduced to this situation now and would no longer step foot in LeapCo

again, so there was nothing for her to be proud of.

The smile on Viola's face widened a bit. She pretended to say casually, "I heard before that you had a family member in the hospital. It's such a coincidence. Eugene asked me to accompany his mother for an examination."

Melanie looked up. "What's the coincidence?"

Viola paused for a moment. Melanie looked at her with a cold snort before she turned around and left.

Was Viola not just here to show off? She mentioned her relationship with Eugene and Stella, both openly and implicitly,

Melanie was not interested in partaking in her act. Just as she was about to take her leave, however, Viola's voice rang out again. "Melanie, it's my birthday next week, and Eugene is throwing a birthday party for me. Will you come?"

Melanie did not say anything since Viola was not actually inviting her.

Eugene, however...

Melanie's gaze darkened a little, but she still had to go to Eugene to clear things up.

After paying the bill in the lobby, Melanie called him, but it went unanswered.

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Melanie frowned after a moment's hesitation before driving directly to LeapCo.

She contacted Yana on the way and asked if Eugene was in the company.

[Mr. Scott is at the company, but we have some company representatives coming to discuss partnerships today, so he should be quite busy.]

Melanie originally intended to wait downstairs, but Yana sent a message saying that the representatives from the foreign companies had just left. She could go up now.

Knowing how busy Eugene was, she decided she would just say one thing. She did not want to delay any longer.

She made her way to the president's office, and only Lee was there.

Melanie looked to the side. When she used to work here, Lee was mostly sent abroad. Now, he seemed to be spending more time with Eugene.

Lee was not surprised to see her. He said hello to her before bringing some documents to Eugene for his signature. Melanie followed him in.

Eugene was going through some documents when he heard Melanie come in. Looking up, she noticed a deep coldness in his dark eyes. "Who allowed you to come in?"

Seeing that he was not signing the documents, she answered softly, "I have something to ask you."

"Do you have an appointment?"

Melanie paused. "I'll only take up five minutes of your time."

"Why should I waste five minutes because of you?" Eugene sneered coldly. He handed the signed documents to Lee, who took the documents and left the office.

Eugene then casually threw the pen in his hand on the table. Clicking his tongue, he looked at Melanie calmly and continued, "Melanie, where did you get the gall to be so confident?"

Melanie squeezed her palms and looked at Eugene. "Apologies, Mr. Scott. That's indeed my mistake, but I just want to ask you one question. Did you pay the fees for my grandpa's nursing home?"

Eugene's long eyelashes drooped. His fingertips were on the table, and his voice was calm as he said, "He used to be nice to me."

Melanie nodded. "Dr. Lawrence and I have applied for a refund. When the time comes, the money will be transferred back to LeapCo's account. You can get the finance department to check it."

Eugene's fingertips that were on the table stopped moving. His dark eyes were locked on Melanie as he replied in an indiscernible tone, "Good to see you have a spine when it comes to your principles. You don't just accept any offer given."

He paused before saying something else that was completely different, "It's a pity that it's useless and stupid."

Melanie stood there and just took in Eugene's unceremonious words.

Her grandfather's operation was successful, and Eugene did help out a lot with that. Closing her eyes,

she said slowly, "You don't have to concern yourself over my matters anymore. I'll take care of my family affairs."

Eugene sneered inexplicably. Melanie did not know what he meant with that response. Not a moment later, she heard Eugene mock coldly, "Melanie, it's been years, yet you're still hopelessly stupid."

Melanie lowered her gaze. Her own voice rang in her ears as she replied, "I won't stand in your way again."

Eugene stared at her. There was a surge in the initially cold and solemn emotions in his eyes before they gradually settled into calmness. It formed an expression of displeasure.

Gaze fixed on Melanie, the man asked, "Did you contact Theodore?"

At the mention of Theodore, Melanie's expression turned grim. She suddenly recalled Theodore mentioning the night before that Eugene had also instructed him to keep an eye on George.

Why would he do that?

Before she could air her thoughts, however, she heard Eugene's cold and stern tone say, "You said you'd handle your own family's matters, yet one of them came to the company, asking me for money. I see you got the hang of things.

"And now you're asking Theodore about George. Are you planning to introduce George to LeapCo?

"You've planned this quite well, Melanie," Eugene ended faintly.

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nox MURAMON CRES, Haking her fave twee slightly as she tried to keep upright

taxes! estat to best things property before," Melante replied, referring to the incident wede halose to the company asking for money. She lowered her gaze, avoiding eye CONNY With AVYN

As for the matter in theeth City" Melanie paused. The last time she contacted Theodore at the Bank, she alos sensest that something was ambos. She and Theodore were not close. ther on exchanged contacts because of Dylan's medical expenses.

Yet, Pixxdore was able to provide swift updates on George, which indicated that he had been keeping an eye on him. Who else but kagene could make someone like Theodore do so?

Suppressing her thoughts, she continued, "The Hearth City matter isn't as you think I'll figure out a way to handle George. You can rest assured."

Eugene's gaze on her was far from friendly. He raised a brow slightly as he assessed her

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"I wonder what this solution is? Nander?" He chuckled, his expression ambiguous and his tone shiftery.

"Melanie, your judgment of people is not very accurate. Your dream of crawling into the Solomon family by relying on him is futile"

"I'm not trying to rely on him." Melanie frowned, restraining herself. "Eugene, can you stop bringing up Nander every time?"

Melanie had uttered these words countless times, but Eugene had never paid attention to them. His brows were raised slightly, and his eyes were devoid of any emotion as he stared at Melanie. "Are you so afraid of me mentioning him?"

"Can't you stop being unreasonable?" Melanie was genuinely tired. She did not want to argue with Eugene about this every time. It was pointless.

Perhaps her words irritated Eugene, the man shot up to his feet from where he was sitting behind the desk. He lowered his gaze to Melanie, his presence dominating.

Yet, he said nothing as he looked at Melanie. After a moment, a cold smirk appeared on his lips "Very well, ignorant fool"

When Melanie left LeapCo, her expression was far from pleasant. She absentmindedly unlocked her phone and checked her notifications. To her disappointment, there was no message from Dr. Lawrence, and Eugene had not gotten back the money.

Unable to help it, Melanie had to go back to the hospital.

Not long after Melanie left, Eugene's phone on the desk started ringing. He glanced at the screen with a cold expression and saw that it was a call from Theodore.

Eugene's dark eyes narrowed slightly as he answered the call. However, whatever Theodore said on the other end seemed to darken Eugene's expression once again.

A few minutes later, the phone call ended, and Lee entered with a set of documents. "Mr.

Scott, materials from the Oskon City Stock Exchange have been sent over."

Eugene's expression became more serious as he took the contract. "How did the tack I assigned you go?"

Lee replied, "Everything has been handled according to your instructions. There are now people keeping an eye on that side."

Eugene nodded without saying anything more.

However, Lee did not leave immediately and reported softly, "Mr. Scott, I've arranged a dinner appointment with the person in charge of Blue Inc for tonight. I've also scheduled a meeting with a representative of Dreamcatchers in two days."

"Dreamcatchers?" Eugene furrowed his brows slightly.

The collaboration between LeapCo and Dreamcatchers was not a major focus, and the arrangement had not been made by him but by the lower-level management.

People in the company had previously assumed that Eugene intended to seize opportunities in the art field due to Blue Inc. That was why when Dreamcatchers approached, LeapCo was agreeable to their proposal.

LeapCo did not require Eugene to personally handle every project. It was enough for him to just review the contract and documents for relatively minor collaborations like the one with Dreamcatchers after everything was finalized.

“Dreamcatchers said they want representatives from several collaborating companies to attend the meeting for future convenience,” Lee said.

However, everyone understood that their intention was likely to showcase their network of connections within the department by leveraging LeapCo’s prestige.

In other words, they were using LeapCo’s reputation.

Melanie continued her routine visits to the hospital to check on her grandfather. His condition was improving noticeably. Even though he remained in the ICU, Melanie felt more reassured than before.

After spending half an hour with her grandfather, she had to leave. Before departing, her grandfather held her hand and said slowly, “Take good care of yourself. Don’t worry about me.”

Melanie had not been doing that great recently. She pursed her lips and offered her grandfather a reassuring smile. “I’ve been busy organizing the house recently. The house in the North district is almost ready. Once you’re discharged, we can move back.”

Her grandfather’s eyes had lost some of their clarity, but after a moment, he nodded gently. He held Melanie’s hand. “That’s good. Moving back to the old house is a good idea.”

It was already past two in the afternoon when Melanie left the hospital. She went to a nearby restaurant to have a simple lunch.

Her recent schedule was quite irregular, and she would eat whenever she found time. Just as she was about to drive back to the villa, Xander’s call came in.

It was the first time Melanie involved Xander when she went to see Eugene this morning. Now, she felt a bit sorry for dragging him into the situation.

“Are you at the hospital?” Xander asked directly.

Melanie replied, “I’m just about to head back to the villa.”

“Reny wants to come and see your grandfather. Is that okay?” he asked.

Reny’s crisp voice rang out immediately after. “We just finished our meeting and are in the area. We thought of visiting your grandfather. Is that alright?”

Melanie hesitated. “He’s still in the ICU. The doctors don’t encourage visitors.”

Reny replied thoughtfully, “Oh, I see. That’s fine, then. We’ll wait until he’s discharged.”

She chuckled before adding, “It’s a shame, though. I was thinking of impressing the man a bit

Melanie did not catch the rest of her words. Instead, Xander’s deep voice sounded as he asked,

“We’re nearby. Should we wait for you to go back together?”

Her heart trembled suddenly when she heard his voice. Her eyes flickered as she whispered her answer, “Sure, it’s good timing. There’s something I want to talk to you about.”

Xander and his group were in the commercial district near the hospital. It did not take Melanie long to get there herself. When she got there, however, Reny and the rest were not around. Only Xander was waiting for her.

Melanie’s steps faltered for a moment. “Why are you alone? Where’s Reny?”

Xander’s expression remained unchanged as he replied, “They had something to attend to.”

Melanie paused, a frown slowly forming on her face. She bit her lip and said, "I thought they were all staying. I was planning to invite you all to dinner."

"What's up?" Xander inquired.

Melanie looked up at him and calmly replied, "Nothing much. I just want to express my gratitude for all your care and understanding during this time. Also, I'm planning to move back to the North district."

Xander hesitated, a subtle emotion flickering across his face. He quickly concealed it. There was a furrow between his handsome brows as he steadied his voice for a reply. "Why the sudden decision?"

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"It's not that sudden," Melanie said. "We agreed before that I'll move back once the house in the North district is ready"

Melanie's words were delivered lightly, but her feelings were indescribably complicated. She had initially dismissed the jokes Yvonne and Reny made about her and Xander

However, with Eugene repeatedly bringing him up, she could not help but start considering it. She did not need to drag Xander into her matters.

Xander's gaze lingered on Melanie, full of scrutiny and gravity that had not been there before. Yet, in just a moment, he withdrew his gaze and nodded slightly. "I'll help you."

Melanie had wanted to decline, but before she could say anything, Xander had already walked away. She had already made the decision to move back, and it was still early. Melanie started packing her things as soon as she returned to the villa

Surprised by Melanie's decision to move back, Reny asked, "Melanie, did we somehow disturb you? Why are you suddenly moving back?"

Carrying a suitcase down the stairs, Melanie just shook her head and replied, "No, it's just that my house in the North district has been repaired and renovated. I don't want to trouble you all

anymore.

"Besides, Xander and I had agreed that once everything was done with the house, I'd move back there."

Reny tried to persuade her, "Can't you wait a bit longer? It'd be great if we could stay together. It's also convenient for work and everything."

"I'll come here every day. Taking the bypass around the city won't take much time," Melanie replied.

Her decision was firm, so the others did not press further.

Only Xander remained expressionless. He took the suitcase from Melanie's hands and calmly said, "Your hand was injured. Let me take this."

He was referring to the time when Melanie accidentally hit a guardrail while driving. It was a minor sprain that had mostly healed, though occasional pain lingered.

Melanie had not told anyone about it, so she wondered how Xander found out.

Without saying a word, Xander lifted Melanie's luggage into the car. Since she only had minimal belongings, the two cars were just enough to transport them.

When they arrived at the residential area in the North district, Xander helped Melanie carry her luggage into the apartment. Melanie then said, "I'll take care of the rest. Thank you for today."

Xander glanced deeply at her before turning away.

Even though the old house had been cleaned, it exuded a sense of emptiness and solitude that spoke of long neglect.

After closing the door, Melanie looked at the boxes piled up in the living room, feeling a wave

of exhaustion wash over her. Despite being on the first floor, the greenery outside had been mostly cut. Light spilled in nicely when she opened the windows.

Melanie decided to sit cross-legged in the living room as she slowly began unpacking one of the boxes. Inside were various small items, a mishmash of everything.

There were the two ceramic figurines that Stephen had given her, books borrowed from

Xander, and random dolls she had bought on a whim.

Each item she picked up brought back memories of the time it was acquired.

Yet, all that excitement and joy seemed to vanish without a trace as the items were placed on the ground. Melanie realized it had been a long time since she felt jubilant happiness.

Emotions that had been worn down by her busy life suddenly surged back during this quiet evening like a tide. Despite this, the emotions left no ripples.

Sitting on the floor, Melanie stared at the items in her hands blankly until the sound of knocking on the door brought her thoughts back.

She got up to open the door and there stood Xander again, this time holding a cake and a few takeout boxes. He lifted the items, his expression still calm. "Congratulations on the move. It's worth celebrating."

Melanie blinked before replying slowly, "This doesn't quite count as a move worth celebrating."

“Then let’s celebrate you coming home,” Xander responded unusually quickly with a hint of cleverness in his tone.

The heavy emotions that had clouded Melanie’s mind gradually dispersed. She stepped aside, but when her gaze fell on the things that were still untouched on the floor, she felt an embarrassment bubble within her.

Xander’s eyes swept across the house, and when he saw the two ceramic dolls on the floor, he raised an eyebrow. He asked, “Were those two ugly things a gift from Stephen?”

Melanie hesitated before realizing he was talking about the ceramic dolls. “They’re not ugly, are they?”

Xander chuckled. “Stephen gave me something similar before. When he gives me things, he fails about nine times out of ten.”

Melanie had no idea about the story behind these ceramic dolls. After putting out the things Xander brought, she said in a low voice, “I thought you’d left.”

Xander did not answer immediately. Instead, he helped Melanie set the table. It was dinner time, and she did not have anything at home. If Xander had not bought the takeaway, Melanie would have gone out to eat.

It was already late in the evening when they were done with dinner. Xander was about to take his leave, and Melanie decided to see him off. However, he refused. “The corridor light isn’t working. Remember to call the property manager during the day and get them to fix it.”

Stephen had informed him about Melanie’s mild night blindness.

Melanie was momentarily surprised but nodded. “Got it.”

Despite the dim light, Melanie still opened the door and watched as Xander walked into the corridor. Darkness had already set in by then, and she could only make out a faint silhouette.

Just as she was about to turn back, she saw him suddenly stop in his tracks.

“Melanie.”

A deep and somewhat hoarse voice resonated in the dimness. Melanie looked over but was only able to discern a vague figure.

She was about to go back inside when she heard him say, “You have the right to be unhappy, to feel sad and wronged. You don’t have to endure it.”

Closing the door of her apartment behind her, Melanie could still hear Xander’s words echoing in her ears. She looked at the scattered boxes in the room and attempted a smile, but it quickly

faded.

Although there were no issues with the infrastructure of this old house, the furnishings were still a bit lacking. Melanie, continued unpacking until midnight. Later, she sat on the sofa.

The next morning, Melanie had the cake that Xander brought over yesterday for breakfast. Xander seemed to have anticipated this decision of hers as she found a carton of milk next to

the cake.

After tidying up the house, Melanie headed to the hospital. Today, she had to visit the hospital first and then look for Xander. She did not want to further delay her work. Keeping herself busy with tasks would be beneficial.

It so happened that she had plans to have dinner with Xander and Stephen in the evening. After spending the whole day at the hospital, she went directly to the agreed-upon restaurant. “Mario just opened a new restaurant. He called me so many times, insisting that I try it,’ Simon said, tossing his car keys while talking to Eugene as they made their way to the

restaurant.

Eugene nodded. "The Curo family has great insights into the catering industry."

Simon raised a brow at the statement before replying, "He mentioned to me a couple of days ago that he wants me to help him establish a connection with your family.

"I don't think it's a bad idea. Besides, aren't you planning to throw Viola a birthday party? It wouldn't be a loss to consider hiring him for it."

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"The Curo family has been gaining momentum lately, it's good to connect with them," Simon said simply

Despite being an obvious scion who did not seem to be making much of himself, Simon still had a large group of friends within his circle. This was mainly because his family was involved in the industry, so many people were eager to connect with them.

As a result,

Simon had a wide network of contacts, and he attracted various types of friends.

Eugene nodded. The complexities of social interactions within their circle were not lost on him. Although the Curo family was in the catering industry, there could still be benefits in getting to know them.

Simon noticed Eugene's receptiveness and teased, "I didn't expect you to be so attentive this time that you're even preparing for Viola's birthday,"

Viola's birthday party had been subtly mentioned in the group a few days ago, creating an air of anticipation,

Eugene did not argue, but his eyes carried a coldness. "LeapCo has been negotiating business with the Oskon City branch recently. The consul over there is playing some unconventional

cards."

"You mean Helios Group?" Simon raised an eyebrow.

"I heard that the Oalsa family has been having some troubles lately, probably internal strife, They got a new figurehead. That person is just trying to maintain appearances, but I bet he's actually a useless burden. I reckon he's not much different from me."

Eugene glanced at him. "You seem to have a clear understanding of yourself."

Simon did not mind the jab and casually continued, "So, are you planning to take advantage of this opportunity to deal with them... Heh."

Simon stopped abruptly as he noted Stephen approaching His eyebrows twitched slightly, and he changed the topic smoothly. "Long time no see,"

Stephen and Simon's relationship was still fine. When Stephen heard Simon's greeting, Stephen nodded politely. "What a coincidence."

It was clear that this statement was directed at Simon. When Stephen looked at Eugene, there was a subtle hint of coldness in his gaze,

Simon smiled and suggested, "How about having a meal together someday?"

Stephen casually agreed, but his phone kept ringing, indicating that he might be expecting something urgent. Simon did not delay him and led Eugene inside to greet Mario before taking their designated seats.

Stephen had just answered the call, and the displeasure on his face from the encounter with Eugene seemingly dissipated. "I'm waiting for you at the entrance," he said warmly.

Melanie and Xander approached them.

"Why didn't you come together?" Stephen asked.

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"We had something to attend to today," Melanie replied briefly, Stephen did not press further

at the answer.

Their dinner today was meant for the three of them to just chat casually among themselves." This is a newly opened restaurant of a friend of mine. The flavors of the food here are relatively light."

Melanie was silent while Xander muttered impatiently, "It seems you've been pretending to be an old lady in Niere City for too long. Why do you talk so much?"

Stephen's expression stiffened slightly, and he warned Xander with a glance. Melanie did not notice them exchanging looks as she was engrossed in something on her phone. It was some information Reny had sent to the group.

The meeting today revolved around negotiations between the two parties. While

Dreamcatchers offered many benefits, Xander's side possessed strong creativity. Both sides. had their own advantages, leading to a tug-of-war.

"Mel, is having dinner with me so boring that you keep staring at your phone?" Stephen tapped the table with his fingers.

Melanie snapped out of her stupor and put away her phone. "I've been so busy with family matters lately that I've neglected work a bit. I was trying to catch up a little since I have some time now."

Stephen glanced at Xander with a playful look in his eyes. He was about to say something when he heard Melanie say again, "I had to trouble Xander to take care of things during this period. Dinner is on me today."

Xander was about to pick up his glass when his movement paused for a moment. He looked at Melanie thoughtfully but quickly averted his gaze.

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Stephen knew Melanie well and did not intervene. Instead, he shared quite a bit about Niere City. The three of them enjoyed their meal over the conversation.

When they were almost done with their meal, Melanie got up to use the restroom. The restaurant was decorated in a style that featured significant greenery and wooden designs.

With her bag in her hand, Melanie turned a corner. She avoided the hanging pots of green vines, only to unexpectedly collide with someone.

Simon had stepped out to take a call, and his expression was visibly upset as he listened to his father scolding him over the phone. Irritated, he dismissed the call and turned around, only to see Melanie standing calmly not far away.

The corridor was narrow, with various plants on both sides. It left little space to pass through.

Melanie calmly said, "You're blocking the way."

A hint of hostility flashed in Simon's eyes as he looked at Melanie with displeasure. "Why are you everywhere?"

"Is this place yours?"

“Heh.” Simon stared at her, his tongue pushed up against the soft flesh of his right cheek.

Full of hostility, he scathingly looked at Melanie. “Still putting on a cold face for someone to see eh, Melanie? Do you think you’re still the chief secretary of LeapCo with your high and mighty display?”

He was trying to pick a fight. Stephen and the others were still waiting, and Melanie did not want to argue with him. A mad dog would bite anyone, and people would fear getting bitten by something unclean.

She glanced at Simon blankly and turned to leave. Simon did not expect to see her act this way. He decisively reached out to grab Melanie’s wrist. “Did I say you could leave?”

The moment he grabbed Melanie’s arm, he was slapped across the face!

Melanie had given almost everything in her in that slap. She looked at Simon’s hand that was gripping her arm with disdain. She said in a cold and stern tone, “Let go.”

Despite having been slapped so hard, Simon’s grip did not loosen. Instead, he tightened it even more. After a moment, he turned his head to stare at Melanie. His head was tilted

slightly, his eyes revealing a touch of red and a chill in its depths.

“You fucking dare to hit me?” he enunciated in a roar.

“What are you doing?” A low, cold voice suddenly came from the side. Eugene appeared at the entrance of the nearby private room. His gaze was fixed on Simon’s hand that was gripping Melanie’s arm. His gaze was deep and searching.

Melanie quickly noticed him. Feeling the pain from Simon’s grip, she maintained her cold facade and said, “Your friend might’ve had too much to drink and is acting out.”

Eugene looked at her, his eyes probing for a moment.

“Atelanie!” Simon’s tone was fierce. “You damn well wait for me.”

He turned to Eugene, his eyes still tinged with crimson. He spat the words out through gritted teeth, “Even my old man has never hit me my entire life.”

There was indeed a very clear palm print on his face, indicating the force Melanie had used.

Eugene’s brows furrowed slowly as he looked at Melanie. A chill was evident in his eyes and on the corners of his mouth. “What trouble are you trying to cause this time?”

Simon abruptly released his grip on Melanie’s arm at those words. He then pushed her, causing her to stumble backward.

Eugene’s eyes darkened as he watched her expressionlessly. “Besides stirring up trouble, what else are you capable of?”