

Mr. Scott 41

Chapter 41

The team–building event was set on the weekend. Everyone gathered at the company before boarding the bus together.

Just as Melanie headed out, she bumped into Eugene.

Eugene glanced at her, but he did not offer to give her a lift.

Melanie arrived minutes later than Eugene. The man had good driving skills, so he could drive fast and steadily.

Meanwhile, Melanie was stuck in the traffic for a while.

The company had booked five buses, and Melanie was on the same bus as Yana.

Yana didn't like taking the bus. She looked at Viola outside the bus enviously as she

commented, "When can I take a ride in a Maybach?"

Viola had casually said she did not want to take the bus because she would suffer from motion sickness. Just like that, Eugene came in his luxurious and expensive Maybach.

Melanie retracted her gaze and looked at her phone instead. The video of the Ragdoll cat Stephen had sent her was on the screen. It was a cat he was raising.

She missed Eugene's gaze as soon as she looked at her phone.

All Eugene could see was her side profile. His gaze on her was calm, and no one could guess what he was thinking.

“Eugene? Are you listening?” Viola tugged his arm as she spoke in an aggrieved tone.

Eugene stopped looking at Melanie as he slowly fixed his gaze on Viola. With a puzzled look, he asked, “What did you say?”

“I asked you about my attire. Do I look good in it?” Viola tugged the skirt she wore as she looked at Eugene anxiously.

“You look pretty,” answered Eugene without hesitation.

Only then was Viola satisfied. She hugged Eugene’s arm as they walked past the bus.

Melanie stopped looking at the video and lifted her head, only to see Eugene and Viola walking away.

She could see Eugene holding Viola’s hand with care.

The spa resort was halfway up the mountain. It was already noon when they arrived.

Melanie and Yana returned to their room to take a nap after lunch.

Just as they fell asleep, someone knocked on their door, asking them if they were interested in going for a hike up the mountain. Melanie had a sprained ankle, so she rejected their invitation.

Everyone in the hotel had already left when she woke up from her nap.

Only after she asked the hotel staff did she know that they had gone hiking.

Grabbing a book, she headed to the gazebo outside to get some fresh air.

However, she stumbled into Eugene while making a turn in the corridor.

He had just hung up a call when he happened to see Melanie. Frowning, he asked, "Why didn't you go hiking with them?"

"I didn't feel like going," said Melanie. Eugene might have forgotten that her ankle had just recovered.

Eugene wanted to say something when his phone rang again. He went aside to answer it.

Hearing his serious tone, Melanie guessed that the call had to do with work.

Maybe because her mind had strayed from thinking about Eugene, she missed a step on the stairs when walking down.

Losing her balance, she almost fell.

Suddenly, she caught a whiff of a minty fragrance from behind, and it assailed her nostrils. A strong arm grabbed her waist, stopping her from falling off the stairs. Eugene held his phone with one and supported her with another.

His forehead creased as he reprimanded her, "Why are you so troublesome?"

The minty scent surrounded her, yet it faded away as soon as she stood still.

Eugene looked at her from above. His gaze on her was cold and distant. "Don't you know how to walk? Or did you do this on purpose?"

Melanie remained silent for a while before asking, "What do you mean by on purpose?"

Eugene had a faint smirk on his face. "Are you asking this on purpose too, Melanie?"

"No..." Before Melanie could explain herself, Viola leaped toward them. Even the other colleagues who had gone hiking had all returned.

Melanie was about to distance herself from Eugene when she heard him say in a deep voice, "It's disgusting looking at you putting on such an act."

Chapter 42

Melanie was still stunned when Viola approached them.

"What are you guys talking about? I saw you two standing together just now." Viola appeared before them and seemed to be acting coquettishly. However, she was actually probing what they were up to.

Eugene was calm. "Nothing."

He then diverted the topic. "Was it fun up the mountain?"

Viola knew Eugene was trying to avoid the topic. She had always been good at observing people. She simply answered his question.

When she walked past Melanie, she stopped and said something out of her will, "Melanie, it's a pity you didn't go.

The view there was magnificent."

That night, Viola arranged a Truth or Dare game session. Everyone was divided into a few groups.

Melanie avoided being in the same group as Viola and Eugene. She chose to be with a group of colleagues she was not familiar with.

The game went on as normal in the beginning, and everyone tactfully avoided asking awkward questions. However, as they continued playing, everyone got more excited.

When it was Melanie's turn to answer, her colleague seemingly asked her a question out of nowhere, "Melanie, when did you have your first night, and who did you sleep with?"

Melanie was at a loss for words upon hearing that question.

Viola, who happened to be serving them a fruit bowl, heard that question. She was also startled.

Plastering a smile on her face, she asked, "How could you ask a woman such a private question?"

"With Eugene when I was 20 years old," Melanie answered as soon as Viola spoke.

Her voice was not loud, but many people had been waiting for her answer, and it was quiet. Most of them heard it.

Viola's face turned pale. She quickly put down the fruit bowl and left with tears shimmering in her eyes.

The atmosphere was awkward, yet Melanie was calm. Spinning the bottle, she asked, "Shall we continue?"

All the employees were smart. They chuckled and acted as if nothing had happened. Melanie played a few more rounds before losing interest in the game.

Thus, she headed to her room. Just as she turned into the corridor, someone approached her from behind and stopped her.

It was Eugene with a frown on his face. "Can we talk?"

Melanie lifted her eyebrow. "What do you want to talk about?"

Eugene stared at her for a while, and his furrowed brows loosened. "Forget it."

"Are you here to blame me for saying that during the game?" asked Melanie.

Eugene stared into her eyes. "Who are you trying to tell that? Me or Viola?"

After he spoke, he sneered as if he did not care. "I had already forgotten about that. Why are you still recalling it?"

That answer was out of Melanie's expectation. "I was just answering their question."

"Don't tell others about this. I won't be able to explain it to her." Eugene looked frustrated.

Melanie wanted to retort him by saying there was nothing to explain. Everyone in the company knew what had happened between Eugene and her.

However, her mind was in a mess, and she did not speak out her thoughts.

Melanie did not join any other activities held throughout the team-building event. Viola also did not force herself to speak to Melanie.

Viola's attitude toward Melanie was even more off when they were back at work.

Even Yana sensed something was off. She had told Melanie countless times that the higher-ups seemed to be making things difficult for Melanie.

Melanie did not say anything about it as she tidied up her desk. She had a dinner date with Stephen.

To be precise, Stephen had asked her out quite a few times, yet she never had the time.

Stephen had booked a table at a famous restaurant. When Melanie arrived, he said with some embarrassment, "I'm sorry, that I asked you to come to such a restaurant with me, Mel."

"This place looks fine."

Stephen smiled. "How are things going with you?"

Melanie knew he was asking about her situation with Eugene. "It's just the same as before."

"Eugene..." Stephen looked worried. He felt sorry for Melanie. She had dated Eugene for years, and almost everyone in the business circle knew about their relationship.

Chapter 43

Eugene had Viola now, and it seemed everything had changed.

Melanie froze upon hearing Eugene's name but quickly hid her flustered emotions.

She wasn't sure she was telling Stephen or comforting herself, but she said, "I don't own him. We're adults who just benefited from each other."

"Mel." Stephen frowned.

"Instead of worrying about me, why don't you find me a new boyfriend?" said Melanie monotonously.

It was a difficult request as Melanie had been with Eugene for so long. Those people from decent families would not want a girlfriend like her.

It was no different from dating a divorced woman.

Sighing, Stephen decided to end this topic. He asked Melanie, “Has your leg recovered?”

“Almost.”

“Can you attend a banquet with me this weekend?”

Stephen seemed to be in a dilemma. “It’s my aunt’s birthday, and she wants me to bring along a female partner.

Melanie knew Stephen’s aunt, who was a famous dancer in Jepton.

That night, she got dressed and waited for Stephen to pick her up.

However, at 6:00 pm, Stephen called her and told her he would not be able to pick her up. She might have to take a taxi to the venue herself.

Melanie did not mind and went downstairs to hail a taxi.

However, it was a weekend night, and the traffic was heavy. When Melanie arrived, the

banquet had already started.

Melanie tried calling Stephen, but she could not reach him. She texted him, telling him that she would be waiting for him outside.

“Eugene, I heard your company organized a team–building event at a spa resort.” Melanie was scrolling through her phone when she heard Simon’s voice from afar.

Melanie froze for a moment before lifting her head. As expected, she saw Simon and Eugene.

When Simon saw her at the door, he lifted his eyebrow. "Hey, are you working as a bellboy here?"

Melanie ignored his ridicule and continued to wait for Stephen.

"Do you need me to take you in? Hmm?" asked Eugene in his cold and distant voice.

Melanie looked at her phone. Stephen had not replied to her message. She could only put away her phone and look at Eugene. "Thank you."

Eugene did not respond. He merely handed over the invitation and walked into the banquet hall.

Just as they stepped in, they saw Stephen rushing toward the entrance.

Melanie greeted him. He walked over helplessly while pointing at the few kids in the corner. They were asking me to play with them. I'm sorry for keeping you waiting, Mel."

Simon raised his eyebrow meaningfully. "Stephen, so you were the one who invited Miss Smith."

Eugene's gaze had been on Melanie for quite a while. She had dressed up tonight and was wearing a beige dress with her hair tied up. This style enhanced her temperament, making her look elegant.

Melanie did not notice Eugene's gaze. She went to greet Eugene's aunt with him.

Simon whistled. "Melanie sure is something. Even Stephen has fallen for her."

Just as he commented, Joshua approached them with a glass of wine.

The Hewitt family was not renowned enough in Jepton, so Joshua had always been considered an outcast among Simon's friends.

After he greeted Simon and Eugene, he stood there with his wine glass, looking as if he had something he wanted to say.

Simon was annoyed to see him like this and asked casually, "Do you have something you want to say?"

"Y-Yes." Joshua seemed nervous. He glanced at Melanie and then back at Eugene.

After a while, he stuttered as he asked, "E-Eugene, are you already done with Melanie?"

Eugene looked at him coldly. "Mm."

Joshua looked excited upon hearing that. "Do you think I stand a chance, then?"

Chapter 44

Eugene's hand froze in midair. His gaze swept past Joshua before he took the glass of wine the waiter was serving. Then, he said in his clear voice, "I don't know."

"Oh..." Joshua looked disappointed.

Simon stood by and watched. He elbowed Joshua as he quipped, "I didn't think you could be so

'bold."

"My family is urging me to date someone soon.

Melanie was too far from them to hear the conversation. She was with Stephen, meeting his aunt.

Stephen's aunt, Amber Lambert, was in her 40s, but she had been taking care of her appearance because she was a dancer.

Casually, she observed Melanie from head to toe. Then, she smiled and asked Stephen, "Aren't you going to introduce her to me?"

Stephen cleared his throat. "Her name is Melanie Smith."

Expressionless, she said, "I know Miss Smith. Isn't she in a relationship with Mr. Scott, the president of LeapCo?"

Then, she looked at Melanie again. It was a casual question, but her intention of probing was obvious. "Miss Smith, did you come with Mr. Scott?"

"No," answered Melanie.

She handed her gift to Amber. "I came as Stephen's friend. This is a birthday gift from me to you."

Amber was born with a silver spoon, and her arrogance ran down to her bone. The few photos of Frank and Melanie had been spreading widely in their circle. Naturally, Amber had seen them as well.

Those wealthy ladies had all been gossiping about how Melanie was lucky enough to date Eugene. Amber despised Melanie's status to begin with, and her impression of Melanie became even worse.

She did not even glance at the gift Melanie handed her. Lifting her chin, she answered lazily, "Just put it there."

Stephen noticed Amber's change in attitude. He frowned. "Aunt Amber, Melanie came to give you her best wishes on your birthday."

Amber looked at him, her warning gaze obvious. "Stephen, your parents will be here soon."

It seemed that she did not want Stephen to have anything to do with Melanie.

Melanie pursed her lips and placed aside the gift she brought. Looking at Stephen, she said, "I'll excuse myself first, then."

"Mel!" Stephen subconsciously grabbed her wrist. He looked at her apologetically. "I'll give you a lift later."

Eugene and Simon walked over to toast Amber. Although they were from different industries, Amber was still an elder to them.

They saw Stephen holding Melanie's wrist, telling her he would drive her back. Simon smiled meaningfully. "Looks like Melanie has changed her target to Stephen after you dumped her."

Eugene continued walking. When he walked past Melanie, he glanced at Stephen's grip on Melanie's wrist.

It was Amber's birthday, and everyone close to the Lambert family was in attendance. Eugene and Simon had to toast the elders as they were the juniors.

Melanie sat on the sofa in the corner as she looked at Eugene, who was socializing with ease. Before this, she had been by his side, drinking wine on his behalf.

However, he rarely told her he was attending any banquet recently. Maybe it was because he had Viola to accompany him now.

Melanie wondered why he did not bring Viola to this banquet.

She sat at the corner, and almost no one spoke to her. Only Stephen and Joshua approached her.

She had a good impression of Joshua, so she gave her number out of courtesy when he asked for it.

When she walked to the hotel entrance, she saw Eugene sitting on the sofa in the lounge with a frown. He looked displeased.

Melanie understood he had to drink since no one was there to drink for him.

Stephen called her name in a gentle voice, "Mel, wait for me here. I'll go and get the car." "Alright." Melanie drooped her eyes as she draped the coat around her body.

Chapter 45

The doors to the hotel opened, and the wind from outside blew in. It was indeed cold.

Stephen had walked out, and Melanie wanted to wait for him at a corner of the corridor, but she saw Eugene opening his eyes.

He was a little drunk, so the corner of his eyes was red, and his pupils were still dark.

Eugene's gaze fell on Melanie. Her brows furrowed subconsciously when she heard him say, "Melanie, drive me home."

Startled, she did not move.

She looked around. Simon or any other friends of Eugene were nowhere to be seen.

Not getting a response from her annoyed Eugene. His expression turned gloomy as his fixed on Melanie.

She lowered her eyelids and spoke in a voice that was loud enough for Eugene to hear, "I didn't drive here. Ask Simon to drive you home."

eyes

Eugene stared at her as he smirked meaningfully. He mocked, "Are you really dating Stephen now?"

Melanie looked at her feet, saying, "It's none of your concern. Stephen and I are just friends."

She wasn't sure if Eugene believed her, but he closed his eyes once more.

Melanie moved her lips but eventually swallowed the words she was about to say.

She could not give Eugene a lift.

Eugene was drunk now, so it would actually be fine. However, once he sobered up, he would misunderstand and think she did it on purpose.

Stephen happened to drive over in his car. Melanie glanced at Eugene one last time before heading toward the car.

Stephen said, "I saw Eugene in the lobby just now."

"He might be waiting for someone," Melanie responded calmly.

Stephen stopped asking and drove Melanie home. Before he left her house, he handed her a small box inside the car. "I did this for fun. Take it as a gift of appreciation for tonight."

In the box was a clay figurine that looked real and beautiful.

Melanie did not expect Stephen to have such a talent. Back home, she appreciated the figurine for a while before keeping it on the table on top of the box.

She had worn thick makeup that night and took longer to shower.

When she walked out of the shower, she saw Eugene on the sofa in the living room.

Melanie's footsteps froze. The lock of her house was a password lock, and Eugene knew the password.

Her action of combing her hair stopped as she stood still.

Eugene reeked of alcohol. Lifting his eyelids, he said with parted lips, "Come over here, Melanie."

Eugene's voice sounded different from usual. Freezing, Melanie asked, "Do you want me to call Viola over?"

However, Eugene only responded to her with a stare, and he said nothing.

After a while, he unbuttoned the collar of his shirt as he said, "What does Stephen see in you?"

Melanie was at a loss for words. "You're drunk."

"You haven't answered me yet. What does Stephen see in you?" Eugene squinted his eyes as he observed Melanie like he was evaluating an item.

Melanie took a deep breath. She did not want to talk much with him.

She wanted to pull Eugene up from the sofa. "I'll send you back."

However, her wrist was grabbed just as her fingers touched Eugene's arm.

He lowered his head and buried his face on Melanie's shoulder as he called out her name in his deep voice, "Melanie."

Chapter 46

His warm breath gushed onto Melanie's neck when he spoke. She subconsciously tilted her head to dodge it.

However, Eugene's grip clenched her wrist, making her unable to break free from it.

Suddenly, she felt a cold sensation on her neck. Startled, Melanie realized Eugene was kissing every inch of her slender neck and heading straight to her ear.

Her body instantly felt like jelly.

Eugene's gaze turned passionate. He grabbed Melanie's waist and pulled her to the sofa.

They had been in a relationship for eight years. Eugene recognized every inch of Melanie's body.

The window in the living room was not closed. The wind blew in with the drizzle, causing the curtain to flutter.

Melanie snapped out of it when the cold wind blew on her exposed skin.

Clenching her teeth, she tried to push Eugene away with all her might.

They were on the sofa, and Eugene was pushed to the other end of the couch.

His hair was messy, and the movement revealed most of his chest and abdomen muscles.

Even Melanie's nightgown was pulled down by him. It hung loose on her shoulder.

Melanie tugged the strap of her nightgown. After easing her breathing, she said, "Look at me, Eugene! I'm not Viola!"

Eugene looked displeased. Just as he was about to speak, he heard his phone's ringtone coming from beside him.

It was a call from Viola.

He froze for a second before answering it.

Viola's voice sounded aggrieved from the other end of the call. "Eugene, didn't you say you'd be accompanying me tonight? Why haven't you arrived yet?"

Eugene rubbed his forehead. "Wait."

He hung up the call. Melanie was still on the sofa. He had ripped off her nightgown, which revealed her back.

Melanie was thin, and her scapula was prominent. She was fair, which made her look weak and vulnerable.

Eugene stood up after speaking to Viola.

Right after he took a step, he turned around and looked at Melanie as if something had struck him. He said emotionlessly, "Of course, you aren't Viola."

After Eugene left, Melanie sat on the sofa for a while before returning to her room.

Her wrist hurt from being pulled by Eugene, and it was a little red.

However, Eugene had not noticed this.

All he had wanted was to force himself on her with the excuse of being drunk.

The following day, Melanie went to meet a client before heading to work. When she entered the office, Yana told her in a mysterious tone, "It's quite lively upstairs."

"What happened?"

"I heard Mr. Scott's mother is here, and she's making things difficult for Viola. Well, I can understand why. Not many women from the slums can marry someone rich like Mr. Scott."

Melanie did not pay attention to the rest of the things she said.

She was wondering why Stella had visited the company. She did not like interfering in the company's affairs.

However, before she could ponder further, she received a call from upstairs, asking for her presence.

When Melanie was upstairs, she saw Stella in the lounge. Viola stood before her with tears shimmering in her eyes. She seemed to have cried.

Eugene was nowhere to be seen.

Melanie stood at the door and pondered for a while, but Stella had already spotted her.

Stella had always been rude toward Melanie. She asked, "Where's Eugene?"

Melanie answered, "I don't know."

Chapter 47

1/2

"Aren't you his secretary?"

"I'm not working in the president's office anymore," Melanie sounded calm. She looked at the coffee in front of Stella and frowned as she approached it. "I'll get you a cup of black tea."

Stella did not like drinking coffee.

She snorted as she said, "As expected from a poor girl who can't even present herself well."

No one knew who she was referring to, Melanie or Viola. However, Melanie was used to it and expressionlessly served her a cup of black tea.

Viola's eyes grew redder, and tears rolled in them. She bit her lower lip, making her look pitiful.

Stella was apparently in a bad mood that day. She sipped the black tea before placing the cup back on the coffee table. Then, she said sarcastically, "Eugene's taste is as bad as it has always been."

Melanie did not stay there for long. After all, it was not her job to deal with Stella anymore.

However, just as she headed downstairs, she heard someone gossiping. "Looks like marrying into a rich family isn't easy. Look at how Viola is being reprimanded and despised by Mr. Scott's mother!"

Stella was indeed picky. Even Melanie had failed to win her heart after so many years.

It made her wonder how much Eugene would dote on Viola.

When Eugene returned, Stella had already left. When she returned to her office, the employee who had gone upstairs to send some documents was gossiping.

She told them Viola started complaining about her misery as soon as she saw Eugene.

Melanie did not listen to their gossip or join in the conversation.

Yana was curious and asked, "How did Mr. Scott react?"

"What else could Mr. Scott do? He could only coax her."

Eugene had feelings for her, after all.

Melanie did not expect Stephen to pick her up from work.

He was already waiting at the door when she got off work. He waved at her.

"Why are you looking for me?" Melanie walked over to him.

Stephen said, "Do I need a reason to look for you?"

He chuckled after saying that. Then, he took out a small box. "I forgot to give you this. This and the one I gave you the last time is a pair. Please take it. This figurine looked lonely when I saw it at home. So, I brought it here to give it to you.

"It's better for a couple to be together."

This time, the heart in the figurine's hands was blue. The one Stephen gave her before this

had a pink heart in her hands. They were indeed a pair.

Melanie took it curiously. "Do you like making clay art?"

"My grandfather likes it. I learned the craft from him when I was a kid. There's a clay art exhibition tonight. We can go if you are interested," said Stephen.

2/2

Melanie had nothing on that night. Just as she was about to agree, she saw Eugene and Viola walking out of the building.

Viola's eyes were still red as she held Eugene's arm. She looked like an aggrieved kitten.

Melanie immediately looked away from them. She had thought that her colleagues were exaggerating when she heard them gossip that afternoon, yet she realized it was not the case at all.

Stephen had to greet Eugene, and Eugene's gaze looked calm when he glanced over at them. Melanie did not feel much being seen by him.

Only Viola's grip on Eugene's arm tightened a little. She urged Eugene, "Come on, Eugene. We will be late."

Eugene nodded and headed toward his car.

Looking away, Melanie asked Stephen, "Didn't you suggest going to the exhibition? We'll be late if we don't leave now."

Stephen was startled and opened the door for her. Smiling, he said, "I thought you wouldn't be interested."

“Why wouldn’t I? The clay art you made is pretty, and I like it,” said Melanie after a pause.

Chapter 48

Her voice wasn’t loud, but Eugene and Viola were not far away from them and heard it. Eugene immediately stopped walking.

This went unnoticed by Melanie, who got into Stephen’s car. In her hand was the figurine Stephen gave her.

“I thought you wouldn’t be interested as many think it’s boring,” said Stephen with a chuckle. He had a gentle and charming appearance, and his voice always sounded polite. It soon snapped Melanie out of her thoughts.

She looked at the figurine in her hands. “Well, I might not know much about clay art.”

“I can tell you everything I know,” said Stephen.

The exhibition was in a museum in the north of the city. When they arrived, it was nearing the end of the opening hours, so only a few people were inside.

Melanie knew little about clay art. She followed Stephen as she listened to his introduction to the stories behind the clay art pieces.

When they stopped before an elegant vase, Stephen looked at it with a nostalgic look. “This is my grandfather’s favorite masterpiece!”

Melanie was stunned. She remembered Stephen had mentioned his grandfather was dead.

She didn’t know what to say, so she silently admired the vase with Stephen for a while before saying, “It’s pretty.”

Stephen smiled, but it was different from the faint smile before. This time, it looked more sincere.

“I can show you more of his masterpieces if you like this.”

After leaving the exhibition, it was almost dinner time. Stephen had just offered to treat Melanie to a meal, but he happened to receive a call from a friend.

His friend said something on the other end of the call, and Stephen looked at Melanie with some embarrassment. “It’s my friend’s birthday today. They’re in the bar nearby. Do you want to go there with me?”

Melanie did not know Stephen’s friend and wanted to reject it. “I can go back in a taxi.”

“It’s okay. We can pop in for a while and leave. If I go alone, they might make me drink.” Stephen shrugged helplessly.

Stephen and Eugene had different personalities, so their friends were mostly from different circles. That was why Melanie had not expected to meet Eugene at the bar again.

When they arrived, Melanie stopped outside the private room and told Stephen she was going to the restroom.

Just as she walked out of the restroom, she bumped into Eugene.

Startled, Melanie did not know how to greet him. However, Eugene broke the silence and asked, “Did you come with Stephen?”

“It’s his friend’s birthday,” said Melanie as she looked at him. She asked, “What about you? Did you come with Viola?”

She was good at disguising herself, and her expression was as calm as if she was just casually talking with Eugene.

Eugene stared at her for a while before retracting his gaze. He snorted in response and walked away.

Melanie walked into the private room after Eugene entered. She was not surprised at all. After sitting beside Stephen, she whispered to him, “I can drive you back if you want to have a drink.”

The private room was noisy, and her whisper could not be heard. All everyone could see was Melanie leaning close to Stephen.

Melanie had just finished whispering when she felt someone staring at her.

Lifting her head, she happened to see Eugene sitting opposite her.

He looked calm with a wine glass in hand, which seemed strange in a noisy and loud environment like this.

It looked as if he were bored and disliked this place.

Eugene happened to look at her when she was looking at him.

When their eyes met, Melanie looked away immediately. When she looked at him again, he had already looked away.

It was as if his gaze earlier was just an illusion.

Eugene seemed to be a close friend of the birthday guy, so he had to toast his friend. He

couldn't avoid drinking as it might be disrespectful.

Chapter 49

Stephen looked at Melanie helplessly and explained, "I need to drive her home later."

Others kept quipping and asking him to drink, so Melanie said, "It's okay. You can drink. I can call someone to send you home."

Stephen shook his head and insisted, "I promised to give you a lift."

Melanie knew she could not convince him. She was not familiar with everyone there, so no one pressed her to have a drink.

It was boring to just drink. After a while, Simon suggested playing a game.

Everyone gathered around the table. Melanie was talking to Stephen when she felt someone sitting next to her. When she turned, she saw Eugene and Viola.

Melanie had just noticed Viola. Viola did not greet her and hid behind Eugene.

Simon brought a stack of poker cards over and placed it on the table. "A card game of dares. Everyone knows the rules, right?"

It was indeed a simple game. The one who got a Joker card could give out a punishment for all the others. Melanie drew a few rounds of cards and escaped a few rounds of 'punishments'.

She glanced at her card and drank the fruit juice in her glass, thinking she might only have to sit aside and do nothing again this time.

“King of spades...” Simon got the Joker card this time. He was bold in the game and purposely dragged his voice. Melanie’s grip on her glass tightened. Her card was king of spades.

“Choose either three of diamonds or eight of hearts and kiss that person!”

That was the boldest punishment so far. Everyone was curious about who the three were.

Melanie put down her glass and her card on the table. Her voice was cold. “King of spades.”

No one expected it to be her. Everyone was excited. Before they could cheer, Melanie heard Stephen say, “Mel, you’re lucky.”

He flipped his card and continued, “I’m three of diamonds.”

Simon whistled before everyone could cheer. “Stephen, I didn’t give you that card on purpose. Start kissing. I’ll be watching.”

Melanie said calmly, “Isn’t there eight of hearts too?”

“Eight of hearts is me.” A cold male voice sounded. Melanie froze as she looked at Eugene.

He had an eight of hearts card in between his fingers.

Eugene threw the card on the table as he glanced at everyone coldly before leaning back on the sofa.

Everyone in the private room said nothing as they stared at Melanie.

Viola’s face was pale as she tugged on Eugene’s sleeve and called out his name, “Eugene...”

Eugene looked at her. "What's wrong?"

Viola looked at Melanie and lowered her eyelids as she shook her head. "I don't want to spoil the game."

She sounded aggrieved, and her words hinted at Eugene not to play. Everyone knew what she meant.

Just as Melanie was about to speak, Eugene cuddled Viola and flipped the card on the table as he said lazily, "Don't choose me. My girlfriend will be jealous, and I'll have to coax her."

Everyone started teasing him, and Simon said, "Eugene, you're now a hen-pecked man. You weren't like this before."

Eugene said, "I had no one I cared about before this."

Melanie was a little speechless. She took the wine glass and looked at Simon, saying, "I'll drink three glasses of wine as a punishment and skip this round of the game."

Simon could give way to Eugene, but it didn't mean he would be nice to Melanie. He said in displeasure, "Melanie, you're so boring. Can't you play the game without Eugene?"

Chapter 50

Just as Simon finished his words, everyone looked at Melanie.

His words had indeed put Melanie in an awkward situation. It sounded as if Melanie wanted to kiss Eugene badly.

Simon did not care and continued asking, "Stephen is around. Why aren't you kissing him?"

Melanie squeezed the glass. Just as she was about to speak, Stephen spoke up for her, "Simon, stop making things difficult for Mel. She just got off work, and she can't drink. I'll drink on her behalf."

"That's right. It's just a game. Drinking is fun too." Even Joshua, who had always been meek, spoke up for Melanie.

He poured himself a glass of wine and toasted Stephen. "Stephen, I'll drink with you."

Stephen and Joshua had already spoken up for Melanie, so Simon stopped forcing her to play. After Stephen drank, they started a new round of games.

Melanie looked at Stephen's flushed neck and felt terrible. "I'm sorry."

These people were bold, and the wine they ordered was strong. After Stephen drank three glasses of wine, others seemed to take the chance to toast him.

He closed his eyes and leaned on the backrest of the sofa. Then, he turned around and said to Melanie, "I might have to trouble you to send me home."

The party ended late. However, because Stephen was drunk, Melanie left with him before the party ended.

Melanie supported him, afraid he might fall. When they walked past Eugene and Viola,

Melanie saw Viola leaning against Eugene's chest and speaking in a voice only the two could hear.

After she helped Stephen get into the car, she realized she left her phone in the private room.

Stephen rubbed his temples. He was still a gentleman even when he was drunk. He said, "I'll rest for a while in the car. You can go and get your phone."

When Melanie returned to the private room, it was livelier than before.

She opened the door and walked into the room. No one noticed her as someone was singing

and the room was dark.

Melanie's vision was slightly poor in the dark. She held onto the wall and walked to her seat. Suddenly, she heard Simon asking Eugene, "Were you reluctant to kiss Melanie, or did you reject it because you cared about Viola's feelings?"

Viola must have left the private room, which was why Simon dared to ask such a thing.

Melanie was looking for her phone in the dark when she heard Eugene's answer. "I don't care. I just didn't want to kiss her. I've had enough of her."

Melanie froze. The next moment, she took her phone and walked out the same way she entered.

However, she bumped into someone, and that person staggered a few steps back after exclaiming. Melanie could recognize that voice. It was Joshua.

Joshua gasped as he asked, "Melanie, why are you here? Didn't you leave already?"

"I left my phone here. Can you please make way for me? I can't see clearly," said Melanie.

Hearing her, he probed, "Do you have poor night vision?"

“I have mild nyctalopia.”

“I’ll help you out. It’s dark in here,” said Joshua as he helped Melanie walk out.

After Melanie left the private room, she stood at the bar entrance for a while before going to the car.

Stephen was startled to see her face and asked, “Are you feeling unwell? You look pale.”

Melanie shook her head. “Maybe I’m having a little migraine from all the noise.”

She sounded frustrated, but Stephen looked at her side profile and said nothing. He handed her a bottle of water out of concern. “Rest for a while.”