

Mr. Scott 81

Chapter 81

Evelyn made Melanie drive to a shopping mall.

She said, "There's a restaurant there that I've always wanted to try, but no one would accompany me. How about going there with me, Eugene?"

Eugene looked at his phone. He replied, "It's up to you."

"Miss Smith." Evelyn was in a good mood after hearing Eugene's reply. She turned to Melanie and gave her a big smile. "Can you wait outside for us until we're done with lunch? That restaurant is a dining place for couples. It's not appropriate for you to eat there with us."

Eugene's fingers paused while fiddling with his phone. Frowning, he looked at Evelyn. "It's a restaurant for couples?"

"Why? Can't you eat there?" Evelyn asked.

Eugene turned off his phone and glanced at Melanie. Nodding, he said, "Sure I can."

Melanie could sense the cold glance in Eugene's eyes. She pressed her lips. Eugene must be warning her not to tell Viola about this.

However, she was not close to Viola at all.

There was no way Melanie would share such stories with her.

Eugene and Evelyn entered the restaurant while Melanie found a random place to have lunch.

Melanie did not have enough rest the night before and had suffered from Eugene's wrath today. She was feeling quite exhausted.

She ordered something random and took a few bites of her lunch. All she wanted was to find somewhere to have some rest.

After a short moment of peace, a message suddenly popped up on her phone.

Xander, who had vanished last night, had sent her the message. He informed her that Stephen had reached out to him and he wanted to know if Melanie would like to meet him since he was

free.

Melanie thought about this. She felt that Eugene and Evelyn would probably be spending more time together, so she agreed to meet Xander.

Xander happened to be nearby, and he told Melanie to wait for him at the restaurant.

Melanie agreed and sent a thank you message to Stephen.

Stephen replied very quickly. He left her a voice message. "Xander is very talented in this field. It's not a bad thing for you to engage him and get to know more about this industry."

He had a warm voice, and it was clear that he was thinking on her behalf. Melanie was about to thank him again when she heard him say, "If you really want to thank me, buy me a meal when you return."

Melanie put her phone away after replying to Stephen's voice message. That was when she saw a young man walk into the restaurant.

The man was very tall, and he was wearing a white shirt and pants. His legs were long and slender, and he looked just like a model.

He attracted lots of attention the moment he entered. Melanie quickly looked away after glancing at him. After all, it was rude to stare at someone.

The man looked around the restaurant, and surprisingly, he went straight toward Melanie before stopping right in front of her.

“Xander Soloman.” The man’s voice was magnetic. He reached out to knock the table in front of Melanie as he looked down at her. His expression was calm as he asked, “Melanie Smith?”

Melanie was taken aback.

She could not look at his face clearly when Xander was standing at a distance just now. She only sensed that there was something different about this man and he was very good-looking.

Now that he was right in front of her, she noticed that Xander had a pair of very pretty almond-shaped eyes. He had a red mole right below the end of his right eye.

It made him look distant.

Melanie breathed in sharply as she looked at Xander. Her intuition told her that this man was not someone to be trifled with.

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Xander raised an eyebrow when she did not give him a reply. He asked Melanie another question, “Do you know Stephen York?”

Melanie snapped out of her thoughts and wiped away the expression on her face. She said slowly, “He’s my friend.”

After that, she reached her hand out to Xander. “How do you do? I’m Melanie Smith.”

Xander shook her hand and sat opposite her. He cut to the chase. "Stephen told me you're thinking about organizing an art exhibition?"

"Yes, I do have interest in it." Melanie was not shy about it. "I'd like to give it a try."

Xander's fingers were long and slender. They looked refined. He snapped his fingers at a waiter and asked for some pen and paper. After that, he began scribbling some numbers on them.

He pushed the paper to Melanie and said nonchalantly, "There are a few interesting exhibitions being held recently. You should go check them out."

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His writing was just like his personality. They were cursive, and sharp, yet looked tidy and pretty.

Melanie looked at the long string of numbers' below and asked, "Is that your phone number?"

"Yup. I don't really use social media." Xander stood up after that. He looked at the time and frowned. After that, he asked Melanie another question impassively, "How long will you be staying at Prime City?"

Melanie answered, "I have no idea."

"Contact me after you've seen the exhibitions." His words indicated that was busy with something else. Melanie stood up as well,

However, she was careless about it and knocked into the corner of the table. Losing her footing, she fell forward.

Someone grabbed her arm. The scent of the man was clean and fresh. It was mixed with the smell of paint. Melanie stabilized herself.

She tried to be nonchalant when she looked at Xander, but her voice sounded a little embarrassed. "Thank you."

"The furniture here has strong cultural features. It's easy to bump into them." Xander's expression was flat. His hand quickly pulled back from Melanie's shoulder.

Melanie paused. She wanted to say something when her phone rang.

Eugene was calling her. He spoke the moment Melanie picked up, "Grab your things. We're meeting a client now."

He hung up after that and did not give Melanie a chance to reply.

Xander was still around. She could only say apologetically, "I'll buy you a meal the next time we meet. Thank you for making the trip."

He nodded and strode out. He had decided to meet Melanie at the last minute because he wanted to avoid a difficult client.

After Xander left, Melanie followed behind.

Eugene and Evelyn were still waiting at the restaurant meant for couples. When Melanie arrived, Evelyn was chatting with Eugene with a coquettish smile on her face.

When Eugene spotted Melanie, he raised an eyebrow and asked, "Where did you go?" "I was having my lunch at the restaurant next door," Melanie replied.

Melanie saw a new handbag in Evelyn's hands. Eugene must have bought it for her before Melanie arrived.

Even though Melanie was not a fan of handbags, she had seen her fair share of them. It took one glance for Melanie to recognize that it was this season's latest design from a luxury brand. It was worth five figures.

Evelyn noticed Melanie looking at it and laughed. She purposely lifted the handbag and asked Melanie, "Do you think this handbag looks good too, Miss Smith? Eugene was really generous. He bought it for me without batting an eye when I said I liked it."

Melanie lowered her eyes. That really was generous of him. They had no idea if they would be able to continue working with Peyton, and he was already spending so much money on her daughter.

However, Melanie could not really voice this out loud. She gave a nonchalant reply and went off to drive the car over.

There were two main people the branch office worked with. One was Peyton Turner, and the other was Tobias Carter.

He was about 35 or 36 and wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses. He looked gentlemanly and refined.

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he first time Melanie met Tobias, she knew at first glance that this man was not as easy to deal with as he looked.

Evelyn insisted on following them because she claimed that she wanted to learn from Eugene how to communicate with clients. As they were not business competitors, Eugene agreed.

She sat right next to Eugene, and the only empty space left at the table was the one beside

Tobias.

There was a look in Melanie's eye as she moved a few steps to the side. She did not plan on taking that seat.

Evelyn leaned in close to Eugene and said out loud on purpose, "I don't think it's very nice of you to be standing there like this, Miss Smith."

Melanie glanced nonchalantly at Evelyn with documents in her hands. Evelyn continued, "People might think that you have a problem with Mr. Carter because you refuse to sit next to him."

She raised an eyebrow and replied, "I'm only a secretary who works for Mr. Scott. It's not appropriate for me to be sitting next to Mr. Carter."

Evelyn's expression froze. She was here under the guise of Eugene's secretary. No secretary would act so intimately with their boss out in public.

There was a knowing look in Tobias' eyes when he looked at Evelyn. He immediately said to Eugene in an understanding tone, "You're a young man indeed, Mr. Scott."

Eugene remained stoic and said nothing.

He looked up at Melanie sharply and said in a direct manner, "Get out if you don't want to be here. Stop being contentious."

Eugene was being curt with her just like he did in the meeting room this morning when he berated her in public. He was not considerate of Melanie's feelings at all. She wondered who had angered him this time.

He had vented at Melanie twice today, and no matter how much she could tolerate this, she eventually felt a little mad about it. Melanie looked at Eugene, and her fingers clutched the documents tightly.

Just as she was about to say something, Tobias, who had seen enough, began to smooth things out. "Mr. Scott, you sure are an energetic young man full of fire. I see you're still able to flare up when facing such a pretty secretary."

He smiled at Melanie. "It's not dangerous to sit next to me. Please feel free to sit, Miss Secretary."

Tobias' smile was phony. Melanie's fingers had turned white from gripping too hard on the documents.

For some reason, she suddenly felt like she wanted to throw up. Melanie placed the documents in front of Eugene and turned to leave the café. 213

She could hear Evelyn saying behind her, "How nice it is to be your secretary, Eugene. She can leave anytime she wants."

When Melanie walked out of the café, she suddenly had no idea what to do.

It was the first time she was protesting against Eugene after working for him for so many years.

Melanie turned back to glance at the café. She had no idea where to go.

She frowned and felt frustrated, but she was not willing to return to the café to see Eugene and Evelyn.

As she was hesitating, she suddenly remembered the paper Xander had given to her.

Half the afternoon was now gone. Melanie searched on her phone and found an exhibition still ongoing. It was fifth on the list Xander had shared with her.

Melanie bought the tickets online and took a taxi there.

It was not far from where she was, and the journey took only ten minutes.

The exhibition looked ordinary, and the pieces displayed were paintings. Melanie looked at the artist's name and saw that they were painted by the same person.

It must be an artist she did not know.

What was worth mentioning was that the exhibition hall was decorated quite interestingly. The concept was well thought out and impressive. It was good enough to elevate the ordinary paintings into something much better than they were.

Melanie stopped at the last painting that was hung mid-air. It was a huge portrait. That was when she heard a cold and distant voice say, "Excuse me, we're about to close the exhibition."

She turned toward the voice and saw Xander, whom she had just met earlier, walking toward

her.

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Xander did not expect the last visitor to be Melanie. He raised an eyebrow and walked over to her. "Are you really that interested in your art exhibition?"

Melanie smiled. "What a coincidence."

"This isn't a coincidence. I'm in charge of this exhibition." Xander's tone was lukewarm. He pointed at the painting hung up behind Melanie. "This is the first day of the exhibition and you're the first visitor, but I need to make adjustments to this painting, which is why I have to close the exhibition."

Melanie looked at where he was pointing. She could not see any problem with it. She asked, "What adjustments does the painting need?"

Xander glanced at her. "It's the lighting. Different lighting provides a different mood to the

object."

“Objects have moods too?” Melanie repeated this. She thought this description to be interesting, but she did not want to interrupt Xander’s work.

She was about to leave when Xander called out to her. “You can continue visiting the

exhibition. This is the only painting I’ll be adjusting.”

Melanie looked around the exhibition one more time. By then, Xander was already done with the adjustments. Melanie looked up at it once more and realized that there really was something different about it.

What a fascinating feeling.

It was already past seven when they left the exhibition hall. It was late, and the sky was now dark.

Melanie looked at her phone. Eugene had not contacted her. He probably did not care where she went off to.

Her lowered eyelashes quivered slightly as she put her phone back into her bag moodily. “Where are you going? I’ll give you a lift.” While she was lost in her thoughts, Xander suddenly voiced out his offer.

Melanie did not want to trouble him. “It’s fine. I’ll just grab a taxi.”

“It’s hard to get a taxi here.”

Xander insisted on seeing her back to the hotel. Melanie suddenly remembered that she had promised to buy him a meal, but Xander informed her that he had something to handle later.

Melanie was slightly disappointed. “Next time, then.”

She opened the car door to get off. The moment she got out of the car, she saw Evelyn getting out of another car. Eugene was right behind her.

Evelyn did not expect to see Melanie. She said coolly, "You're a brazen employee, Miss Smith. You skipped work right in front of your boss."

past her and looked away as he strode off.

Melanie stood next to the car for a long time until Xander called out to her. She jumped and quickly apologized to him.

Xander's hands were on the steering wheel. He looked at her for quite a while before pinching between his eyes. "Call me if you need anything. Stephen asked me to look out for you while you're here."

Melanie was taken aback. No wonder Xander was being so nice to her. It was because of Stephen.

She shook her head and returned to the hotel.

The elevator stopped on the eighth floor. She stepped out and immediately saw Eugene waiting outside her room door.

Melanie paused in her footsteps. Eugene looked up at her when he heard her footsteps. He ordered her with a stoic expression, "Open the door."

She opened the door silently. Eugene entered the room before her but kept silent until Melanie asked, "Is there anything you need from me?"

Eugene looked up at her when he heard the question. "I must have been too lenient with you, Melanie."

Melanie held her breath. Eugene actually thought he was being lenient with her?

There was a sharp look in Eugene's eyes. He looked at Melanie frostily. There were no emotions in his eyes, and his stare sent a chill through Melanie.

“You’re thinking about resigning?” Eugene grunted softly after a while. There was fury hidden deep inside his dark eyes. He said slowly, “Melanie Smith, are you able to afford the penalty for breach of contract?”

Melanie paused before replying hoarsely, “No, I can’t.”

“Stop putting up a pretense if you can’t afford it.” Eugene’s words struck her mind like lightning. It sobered her up.

It was true that she could not afford the penalty. She had to be a good girl and stay by Eugene’s side.

Was she really just putting up a pretense?

Melanie wanted to say something but chose to stay silent in the end.

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She decided to let it be.

If Eugene felt like she was putting up a pretense, then so be it.

The room turned silent after they were done talking. Melanie thought Eugene would leave.

However, Eugene unbuttoned the top of his shirt and did not look like he wanted to leave.

Melanie could not kick him out if he wanted to stay. After all, they had just been talking about the penalty for breach of contract.

She sat at the side of the bed for a while before silently taking her pajamas into the bathroom.

Melanie was waiting for Eugene to leave of his own accord, but he was still around after she . was done with her bath.

She was wearing the bathrobe from the hotel, and she made sure her collar was covered up tight.

Melanie had just washed her hair, and it fell messily all over her shoulders.

Eugene looked quite relaxed. He stared at Melanie and asked casually, "Did you sleep with other men during this time?"

Melanie was taken aback. She thought she had heard wrong. "What did you just say?"

Eugene looked up at her. "Stephen York, Joshua Hewitt, and that man who drove you back today."

He mentioned those names nonchalantly and asked Melanie, "Which of them did you sleep with?"

Melanie felt the blood inside her body froze. She looked at Eugene in disbelief. However, he looked back at her with a flat expression. "Answer me."

Silent, Melanie found herself having difficulty breathing. Her nails dug into her palms, but she felt no pain.

It took her quite a while before she managed to find her voice. Her voice quivered as she asked Eugene, "Is that what you think of me?"

Eugene did not seem to sense her emotions. He stared at her for quite a while and contemplated something before asking again, "Didn't you sleep with them?"

Melanie pressed her lips tight. She had no idea what to answer.

Eugene stood up and came close to Melanie. He reached out to grab Melanie's chin. His voice was so cold it chilled Melanie. "It's best that you didn't. You know how much I hate when my things get dirty."

The grip on Melanie's chin was strong, forcing her to look straight into Eugene's eyes. She could see the disdain that flashed in his eye..

Melanie's heart felt heavy. She could hardly breathe.

Eugene was a womanizer who never rejected any woman who threw themselves at him.

He had Viola waiting for him in Jepton, and there was also Evelyn upstairs.

Melanie could feel his grip on her chin getting harder, but she did not even attempt to struggle. All she did was press her lips and stare back at him.

She did not realize that her eyes were now red and she looked quite upset.

Eugene could see that look on her face very clearly.

However, there was only coldness in his eyes. He almost crushed Melanie's chin as he clenched his teeth to say, "Who do you think is clean? Stephen York? Or some other random men?"

The stronger his grip was, the more pain Melanie felt, and her face turned even whiter. However, she still chose to retort, "What about you? Are you one of the random men having an affair with me?"

She sounded like she was crying.

Melanie had been with Eugene for eight years. Everyone had thought she was his legitimate girlfriend back then, but she was now just his booty call that was not worth a thing.

Her confidence back then was like a slap to her face now.

Melanie bit her lip and closed her eyes. She did not want to continue looking at Eugene.

That was about right.

She had been overconfident before because she thought she was special to Eugene.

It was only now that she finally understood that she was no different from any other woman. She was nothing but a plaything to him.

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Melanie felt a slight pain on her lips and tongue, and she later tasted blood. The corner of her lips was bitten hard.

Eugene's grip relaxed, and Melanie turned slightly away from him.

Her sudden movement caused her pajamas to fall loosely around her, revealing her collarbone and exposing a huge patch of her fair skin.

Eugene lowered his eyes to look at her. A sarcastic smile appeared on his lips, and his tone became nonchalant once more. He sniggered. "What's wrong? Angry that I didn't acknowledge you as my girlfriend?"

Before Melanie could reply, he let her go. Eugene returned to sit on the sofa and asked her with a flat expression, "When have I ever said that you were my girlfriend?"

"You overestimate yourself, Melanie Smith." Eugene's last sentence was a reminder to Melanie. He was telling her that she had been full of herself before, which was why she was paying the price now.

A robotic ring was heard, and Eugene looked down at his phone before picking it up.

Melanie was standing not far away from him. She could vaguely hear Viola's coquettish voice from the other end of the call.

Eugene's eyes were lowered as he replied to each question Viola was asking.

Melanie watched this. Eugene was replying to Viola in a gentle manner. It was completely different from when he was speaking coldly to her just moments before.

Realization finally dawned on Melanie.

It did not matter if it was Viola Shaw or Evelyn Shue, Eugene had always been gentle and considerate to them.

Melanie was the only one who did not receive such treatment.

She stood stunned where she was. It was only when Eugene called 'Melanie' in a deep voice that she finally looked at him.

Eugene was looking at her too, and he frowned slightly. He was still on the phone. "She isn't here. I have no idea."

Melanie realized that he was still chatting on the phone with Viola.

She did not want to disturb Eugene, so she went to the other side of the room and opened the door to the balcony.

There was a huge disparity in temperature at Prime City. Melanie felt cold the moment she stepped onto the balcony.

She suddenly received a call from the director of the nursing home.

Melanie was taken aback. She picked up the call and heard the director saying seriously to her, "Please make a trip to the nursing home tomorrow if you have the time, Miss Smith."

This scared Melanie She frowned. "Did something happen to my grandfather?"

"There's something wrong with Mr. Lancaster recently. According to the nurse's aide, he has been frequenting the bank."

The director continued, "We suspect that Mr. Lancaster might be getting conned. When would you be free to come over and have a look at the situation, Miss Smith?"

Melanie hung up. She stayed on the balcony as her mind drifted off. It took a while before she remembered she had to call her grandfather. However, she did not make the call because her grandfather must have already gone to bed at this hour.

She gave this some thought and decided to call Dylan Lancaster.

Melanie rarely contacted Dylan of her own accord. She was always the one who had reached out to Melanie back then.

Dylan had waited for Melanie on the road that she usually took to go to the office. Dylan would prepare different varieties of breakfast every morning for Melanie back then.

That was also when Dylan had told Melanie that she regretted abandoning her.

Melanie had believed that Dylan still loved her.

The call was soon picked up, but it was not Dylan. A man's rough and coarse voice was heard through the phone.

He roared into the phone crudely, "Who are you looking for?"

Melanie found this very strange. She asked, "Where's Dylan Lancaster?"

"Why are you looking for that bitch?" The man sounded even more rude when he heard Dylan's name.

Next, she heard the man knock into something before he began cursing.

"That bitch gave birth to a useless daughter and she still has the gall to ask me for money!"

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The man cursed for a long time before suddenly hanging up.

Melanie held the phone in her hand. She was not able to recover from the call as she stood for a long time on the balcony.

It was only when a gale of cold wind blew at her and she shivered that Melanie slowly looked up. She peeked into her room and saw that Eugene had gone. He must have returned to his

room.

The next day, Melanie called her grandfather the moment she woke up. He picked up the call very quickly.

Melanie could tell from his voice that he was exhausted. There was nothing she could do.

There was no way her grandfather would stop giving Dylan money. She was his daughter, and Peachie was his granddaughter.

Her grandfather was not in good health. If he found out that the money he earned for Peachie's illness had been gambled away by that man...

When Melanie kept silent, Albert spoke up, "What's wrong, Mel?"

Melanie pinched between her eyes. Her mind was in a mess. She paused to clear her mind before saying, "I've been too busy recently. I just miss you."

Albert laughed. Melanie chatted with him about unrelated minor issues before finally asking, "Did you transfer money to Peachie recently?"

He hesitated, but in the end, he chose to say nothing. Melanie waited for him to answer.

After a while, he finally said, "It hasn't been easy for them. I should help out any way I can."

Melanie replied with an 'Alright' and said nothing else.

She had to attend a meeting at the branch office later. She bumped into Eugene and Evelyn when she headed toward the elevator downstairs.

Melanie hesitated before finally entering the elevator.

She stood at the side. Melanie was still feeling troubled over her grandfather and Dylan's problem.

Unfortunately, Evelyn was still trying to upset her.

"I see Miss Smith is working today. I thought you had resigned."

Melanie frowned. She looked up to see Eugene standing beside Evelyn. She clenched her fists and said slowly, "It was wrong of me yesterday. I've already apologized to Mr. Scott."

Evelyn grunted sarcastically. Eugene was impassive and did not even glance at her.

Melanie lowered her head. Her long and thick eyelashes hid the emotion in her eyes.

Her mind was filled with her grandfather and Dylan's problems. She did not have the capacity to worry about anything else.

Melanie was distracted the entire journey. She even almost fell down the stairs while on their

way out of the hotel, and she accidentally knocked into Eugene.

Eugene lowered his eyes to look at her with a cold expression. "If you can't get yourself together, go back to the hotel."

Evelyn was enjoying this. Melanie bit her lip and apologized to Eugene. "I'm sorry, Mr. Scott. I'll be focused."

Eugene said nothing else as he strode toward the parking lot.

Melanie followed behind them. Her head ached, and she massaged her temple before going to the parking lot as well.

Evelyn seemed to be looking for trouble today. They had just arrived at the branch office when she ordered Melanie to buy her coffee from a particular café.

Melanie frowned. "This place is too far. It would take an hour to return to the office even if I drove."

Evelyn looked at Eugene and said unhappily, "I only want coffee from this café."

Eugene was impassive. He glanced at Melanie. "Buy it."

Melanie stood there for a while before finally driving off to get the coffee.

It was the morning rush hour, and by the time she returned, an hour and a half had passed. Eugene and Evelyn were no longer at the office.

Melanie checked with the front desk and found out that they had left to do market research with Walden.

She held the cup of cold coffee in her hand and sat down in the lounge. She calmly sent Eugene a message. [Do you need me to go over?]

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Ten minutes passed, and there was no reply from Eugene.

Melanie got up to inform the front desk that she would be leaving.

Before she walked away, she saw Walden running toward her in a hurry. He was taken aback to see Melanie. "What are you still doing here, Miss Smith?"

Walden had come back to the office because he had forgotten something. It did not seem like Melanie could leave now. She asked, "Where is Mr. Scott and the others?"

"They're at Sundale." He thought Melanie had stayed back at the branch office for work. He asked, "I'm heading over right now. Are you coming with me, Miss Smith?"

It was even more difficult for her to sit out of this now that Walden had invited her along. Melanie nodded and left with Walden to Sundale.

Sundale was not far from where they were. It took only 20 minutes to get there. Walden cautiously chatted about matters at the branch office with her along the way. It looked like he was trying to sound her out on what Eugene was planning.

Melanie remained impassive. "Mr. Scott will take care of the branch office personally now that he's at Prime City. You don't need to worry about anything, Walden."

She had always been a cold person, and her stoic expression made her seem even more distant. Walden wanted to chat further but decided not to in the end.

When they arrived, the person in charge of welcoming them said respectfully to Walden, "Ms. Turner just arrived. Mr. Scott is with her now."

Ms. Turner was Peyton Turner. Melanie had no idea she would show up today and frowned.

Walden cleared his throat. He wanted to show off his capability to Melanie, so he said, "Ms. Turner and I are considered old friends."/

He had just said this when the lounge doors opened. Evelyn walked out while holding onto Peyton's arm. Eugene followed behind them with an impassive look on his face.

Walden rubbed his hands and went over to them. Peyton glanced at him and greeted him politely.

Melanie was standing behind Walden when Peyton's gaze fell on her.

Peyton looked slightly taken aback. She turned and looked at Evelyn to remind her with slight exasperation, "I'll be at Brocade City for a few days. Don't trouble Eugene too much."

After that, Peyton turned to Eugene and smiled. "This is an emergency, and I'm sorry to be troubling you for a while. I'll give you an immediate reply on the contract once I return."

Eugene nodded. He replied in a low voice, "I'll be at Prime City for a while."

"I'll talk to Stella about this when I get back. You should stay by Eugene's side for the next few days, Evie. Don't play around when you're working."

Evelyn agreed, and after seeing Peyton off, she turned to Eugene. "My mom wants me to learn from you. How should I do that?"

Her tone was clearly flirtatious, and Melanie looked down as she took a step farther from them.

It was only then that Evelyn seemed to notice Melanie. She looked Melanie up and down, and her face slowly crinkled. Evelyn's tone was brusque as she questioned Melanie, "Where's my coffee?"

The café was quite a distance from the branch office. It had turned cold by the time Melanie returned with it. Now that another half an hour had passed, it had completely cooled down.

Melanie passed the paper bag containing the coffee over to Evelyn. She could guess what Evelyn was about to say to her.

Just as she expected, Evelyn's face fell the moment she took the coffee from Melanie. "I wanted a hot Americano. Why did you get me an iced Americano?"

Melanie clenched her fingers. "This café is quite a distance away, and I had no idea you had come here."

"You're full of excuses, Miss Smith." Evelyn sneered. She looked at Melanie with disdain. "Also, I know I asked you to get me coffee, but did you really only get one cup?"

Melanie saw that Evelyn was looking at Eugene when she said this. Melanie replied slowly, "Mr. Scott doesn't take coffee."

She found herself saying this weakly.

It was not that Eugene did not take coffee. It was just that his workload was really heavy in his earlier days and he did not sleep well then, which was why Melanie had curbed his caffeine intake.

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As time passed, Eugene stopped drinking coffee.

Melanie went into a daze at this memory.

Her relationship with Eugene back then was not as cold as it was now.

There was a time when she had treated him wholeheartedly and Eugene was also good to her.

Evelyn froze when she heard Melanie's reply. She felt that Melanie was humiliating her on purpose.

She looked unhappy, but a bright smile appeared on her face once more when she turned to look at Eugene. Her voice was sweet as she got straight to the point. "How about letting me work as your secretary for the next few days, Eugene? That's the best way I can learn from 'you.'"

Evelyn sounded reasonable. Eugene glanced at her and said impassively, "My secretary?"

"Can't I?" Evelyn looked up at him with a pitiful look on her face. She said suggestively, "Didn't my mom ask you to take care of me? You can do anything you want with me."

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Eugene looked at her coldly and replied nonchalantly, "No one brings two secretaries along with them."

"You can just fire Miss Smith." Evelyn was tugging on Eugene's sleeve. She was trying to make him agree to this.

Melanie stood there watching all of this. Evelyn was talking about her, but all Melanie could do was watch as she numbly waited for Eugene to answer.

Eugene frowned subtly. He glanced at Melanie from the corner of his eye and turned his gaze away quietly.

Melanie noticed this, and her mind went blank.

Eugene might really fire her because of Evelyn.

If Eugene fired her now...

Melanie held her breath. The thought of her grandfather and Dylan made her palms feel numb.

However, it took only a few seconds for Eugene to coldly speak up, "Stop fooling around."

He was saying this to Evelyn. He paused before continuing, "Miss Shue, you're not in charge of LeapCo."

Evelyn's expression froze. She looked at Eugene with slight resentment but said nothing.

Even though she was not happy with Eugene's answer, she knew that he would never change his mind about something he had already decided on.

Evelyn was reminded of what her mother said before leaving, so she continued to put up an obedient look. She brushed this off by being coquettish with Eugene.

Eugene replied to her with only a sentence each time they spoke.

Melanie followed behind quietly like an invisible person.

When they got downstairs and were about to leave, Melanie stood at the side as she was not sure if she should get into the car.

While she was hesitating, a familiar male voice suddenly called out to her. "Melanie Smith?"

Melanie turned and saw Xander walking toward her with a stoic expression.

She was surprised, "What are you doing here?"

Xander had told her yesterday that he was still working at the exhibition.

"I'm here to look for inspiration." His shirt sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, and there was Night blue paint on his wrist. It looked like he had been busy.

Melanie was about to ask if Xander needed something. After all, Xander did not seem like a person who would approach her for no reason.

A shadow fell over her as Melanie caught a cool whiff of cedar. Eugene's voice said coldly, "If you really want to get fired, you can be straight about it."

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He sounded calm, but Melanie had worked for him for years, and she could sense from his tone that he was unhappy.

Melanie had no idea why Eugene would be in a bad mood. She pressed her lips and did not reply.

Her reaction only made Eugene respond more sarcastically to her. His eyes narrowed, and his tone was cold. "Miss Smith, you're at work right now. It's not appropriate for you to be flirting with men during working hours.

Melanie looked up at him and saw Eugene's eyes. She saw the annoyed look on his face very clearly.

She cleared her throat and explained with difficulty. "It's a friend."

Eugene ridiculed her. "I see you have quite a lot of friends. Which one is this?"

The 'friend' he was talking about was different from the kind of friend Melanie meant.

Melanie looked upset. She could tolerate Eugene's insults, but she could not allow Xander to be implicated without reason.

She calmed herself down and berated Eugene with slight anger, "Please stop thinking such inappropriate thoughts. Aren't I allowed to have my own friends?"

Eugene's face fell as he stared at Melanie.

He had always been an intimidating figure despite his age. Now that he looked upset, he was even more frightening.

Melanie could not help trembling when he stared at her. She was about to say something when Evelyn came over to them with documents in her hand.

Blinking, she asked Eugene, "Aren't we going back to the branch office for a meeting, Mr. Scott? Why are you still waiting here?"

Melanie was taken aback as she looked up at Eugene.

He had already turned away from her and was walking away.

Evelyn followed behind me while hugging the documents. She had hardly walked a few steps before she stopped and turned around. She looked Melanie up and down. "If you don't want to come along with Eugene, you can stop coming along in the future."

Melanie felt that Evelyn meant something else, but she left after saying this to Melanie.

It was only after both of them were finally gone that Melanie finally let the exhaustion wash over her.

She suddenly realized that Eugene must have been waiting for Evelyn to get to the meeting. Melanie frowned. She looked in the direction Eugene had left.

“Was that your boss?” Xander spoke again. Melanie was reminded of how Eugene had insulted Xander for no reason.

She pinched between her eyes. “I’m sorry that you got implicated just now.” Eugene’s words were horrible, and it was only normal for Xander to get angry about it.

However, Xander gave her a thoughtful look and said, “I must have caused you trouble by suddenly coming to see you.”

“It has nothing to do with you.” Melanie shook her head. She knew very well that Eugene would still find fault with her even if Xander was not around.

She was not in the mood to discuss Eugene with Xander, so she asked, “Is there anything you need from me?”

Xander pointed at a warehouse behind her. “I’m testing out some work samples there. I need an extra eye to look at them.”

“Don’t you have your employees?” Melanie was a little curious. “Stephen said you had a team working for you.”

Xander replied, “They’re at the exhibition you went to yesterday.”

After chatting for a little longer, Melanie followed Xander to the warehouse. The lighting was very dim at the door.

There were dozens of wooden boxes of different sizes placed in sequence on the mottled wall. They looked like they were placed there randomly, but at a closer look, there was a system to it. It was a messy but calculated setting.

Melanie looked at them and asked Xander, "Is this one of your exhibition projects?"

Xander nodded. "The client is looking for a unique idea to create a deep impression."

Melanie has seen her fair share of exhibitions in the past, but most played it quite safe. She had never seen anything like what Xander had done.

Xander looked at the doubtful look on her face as he jotted some notes inside his notebook. He said, "Displays aren't just about putting out the stuff. You need to consider the location, lighting, electronic equipment, and the work involved."