

Night of Love 321

[Chapter 321 You Are Out Of My League Part 3](#)

He saw her again on the night before New Year's Day.

After a grueling twelve-hour meeting, Alfred felt utterly drained as he made his way back to the hotel. He closed his eyes in the car to catch some rest.

There were two adorable purple rabbits on the seat beside him; it was an odd contrast to his persona.

Leslie turned and flashed a smile. "You'll finally get to meet the girl tomorrow. It's been quite some time, so she should have calmed down by now."

Alfred absentmindedly touched the rabbit's ears and replied, "She's just a child. I'm not that eager to see her."

Leslie burst into hearty laughter.

Alfred laughed, too. He was in high spirits, so he rolled down the car window to take in the city's dazzling lights. Letting out a sigh, he said, "Another year has flown by, which means I'm another year older."

"You're still in your prime!" Leslie assured.

And he wasn't wrong.

Given Alfred's age and status, he was relatively young.

Alfred playfully patted his pants and said, "Prime? What prime? Crystal is going to be a mother next year, and I'll be a great-uncle."

With no outsiders present in the car, their conversation flowed freely.

Leslie teased, "Given your capabilities, it shouldn't be too challenging for you to have a child."

Their exchange elicited laughter from the driver as well.

Alfred lit a cigarette and scolded Leslie in jest, "You brat! You're getting more brazen by the day!"

Leslie responded with more mischievous banter.

The atmosphere in the car remained cheerful. They continued driving, and while waiting at a red light near Fortune Centre, the driver remarked with a smile, Mr. Lodge, it looks like they're celebrating the New Year over there; it's quite a vibrant scene."

Alfred couldn't help but glance in that direction.

Indeed, the atmosphere was lively.

The night sky came alive with a continuous burst of fireworks, casting the city in a vibrant tapestry of colors. The scene was truly captivating.

Many a group of youngsters had gathered at the open space to celebrate the approaching New Year.

There were many luxury cars around, unmistakably belonging to the privileged young heirs.

Amidst the crowd, Alfred spotted Melora.

She was adorned in a white jacket, her head topped with a knitted hat, and in her hand, she held sparkler.

Melora's face was flushed with excitement, her beauty outshining even the brilliance of the fireworks.

Alfred watched her quietly.

It seems like she's having the time of her life while I'm yearning for her. I thought she would be grieving for some time.

Leslie, sensing Alfred's contemplation, feigned surprise. "Isn't that Miss Melora over there? It's not safe for a young lady to be out this late. Why don't we give her a ride home?"

Alfred nodded in agreement.

He patted his woolen trousers, then opened the car door and stepped out.

Alfred stood not far from Melora, hoping she would raise her gaze and see him.

Suddenly, the square echoed with a tremendous roar.

"Propose!"

"Propose!"

"Propose! Propose! Propose!"

A young man holding roses went down on one knee amidst the dazzling fireworks.

He was proposing to Melora.

Alfred saw Melora covering her mouth in surprise.

Next, he observed the sincere expression on the young man's face as he professed his love to Melora under the spectacular canopy of bursting lights.

However, he did not approach them despite having already exited the car.

Despite having planned the perfect opening, Alfred simply stood there, silently watching another man's proposal to Melora.

After some time, he rubbed his forehead and let out a soft chuckle.

You are such an arrogant man, Alfred. Back in the day, she used to call you "Mr. Alfred" all the time, but you've forgotten that she has plenty of options. She's from the Miller family, the wealthiest in the northern region. Moreover, she's a beauty with countless suitors. She can choose anyone she wants.

The Miller family only had two children.

Her sister-in-law, Crystal, wasn't difficult to deal with. Hence, as long as Melora wished, Henry could take care of her forever.

In that way, she could remain a little girl forever.

What can I offer her? A Stella Lou I queued and sweated to buy, and perhaps a love that I can't bring myself to express? How very laughable.

Alfred had never felt such self-disdain before. Just then, Melora looked up and saw him in a light-colored woolen suit that accentuated his figure.

He looked exceptionally dazzling that night.

However, the young man who confessed earlier was still kneeling in front of her.

Instinctively, Melora uttered, "Mr. Alfred!"

Alfred continued to watch her silently.

He wasn't sure how much time had passed, but he felt his eyes stinging. With a faint smile on his lips, he nodded at her and then got into the black sedan.

The four black Audis drove away slowly.

Alfred sat in the car with the two rabbits beside him.

Closing his eyes, he leaned back in his seat and instructed Leslie, "Book a private jet for tomorrow morning."

Leslie fell silent.

Finally, he mustered the courage and said, "You should personally give her the items. You waited in line for so long to purchase them."

Alfred gulped and raised his hand to shield his eyes. "Send someone to deliver it to Crystal's place. Tell her it's for Melora so that she can pass it on. Don't mention that I bought it."

After all, he was proud and didn't want anyone to know he had developed feelings for a woman so many years younger than him, only to eventually let her go.

Alfred sat silently in the car, overwhelmed by a newfound self-consciousness. He had never experienced such a feeling before, but when he witnessed Melora being confessed to, he couldn't help but feel utterly inadequate.

Comparing himself to the young man who had just poured out his heart, he felt like he had nothing to offer.

In fact, Alfred found himself unworthy of Melora.

Fireworks filled the sky, and the festivities continued all around. Yet, Alfred did not know that the woman he cared deeply for stood alone, her eyes reddened.

As the New Year's bell chimed, she whispered his name.

"Mr. Alfred..."

[Chapter 322 Calling Her Name In His Dreams](#)

On New Year's Day, she received the rabbit.

Even though Crystal didn't say it outright, Melora had a strong hunch that the rabbit was a gift from Alfred.

After all, he had recently visited Hulcaster.

Late at night, Melora lay on her bed, holding the rabbit close.

She thought of Alfred and realized that she should thank him for the gift. Besides, it was the New Year, and she wanted to wish him well.

Hence, Melora decided to send him a WhatsApp message.

Melora texted: Happy New Year, Mr. Alfred!

She waited anxiously for a response, and after what seemed like an eternity, he finally replied. Alfred texted: Happy New Year.

Those three words, however, stirred deep emotions in her. Melora couldn't help but cry quietly as she was unable to express her complicated feelings.

If it were anyone else in the world, she would boldly confess her emotions without a second thought. "I like you!"

However, she had fallen for Alfred.

He was Crystal's uncle.

Melora despised herself, yet she couldn't help but fall hopelessly in love with him. Normally, she didn't follow the news, but she began to watch the television and read the newspapers. Sometimes, when her father and brother talked about Alfred, she would secretly listen in.

Nevertheless, she knew he didn't belong to her.

It was nighttime in Coldbridge.

Dressed in a perfectly tailored suit, Alfred sat in his office, gazing at his phone while lost in thought.

Leslie entered the room.

"Mr. Lodge, are you ready? Everyone is eagerly waiting for you to speak to them."

However, Alfred remained still.

Seeing that, Leslie walked over and asked gently, "What happened, Mr. Lodge?"

Alfred pointed at his phone, a faint smile playing on his lips. "The young girl just sent me a message."

He thought about how Melora must have liked his gift,

Sadly, he couldn't personally hand it to her.

Alfred kept his phone in his pocket and rose from his chair. His expression relaxed visibly, as if he had reclaimed his former self.

Leslie let out a soft sigh as he trailed behind Alfred.

It was very lively outside. After Alfred delivered a speech, he joined his colleagues for dinner.

As the event soon came to a close, he became inebriated.

Alfred sat in the back of the car and continued staring at the message from Melora. He then lamented to Leslie, "You have no idea how much I wish I could shed these responsibilities and take a well-deserved. break for a month. How I wish I were a decade younger!"

Perhaps then he would have found the courage to stand beneath the fireworks and admire Melora's radiant smile.

Leslie's heart pounded with fear as he tried to coax Alfred to get out of the car and into the house.

Taking in his state, Lucia was worried about her son and took care of him personally.

Upon feeling the warmth of someone beside him, Alfred clasped Lucia's wrist and murmured, "Melora!"

Even though Lucia didn't quite catch what he said, she recognized it as a girl's name.

She patted her son's hand and scolded him, "How can you still be dreaming when you are so drunk? Are you calling out to one of your lady friends?"

As Alfred's intoxication slowly ebbed, he remembered who had occupied his dream. He felt a slight blush tinge his usually composed face,

Lucia complained, "What's the point of dreaming? You should marry her and have children for the Lodge family. That's when I'll be truly impressed!"

Alfred sat up and pulled out a cigarette.

He silently smoked half of it before smiling faintly. "Mom, there's nothing of that sort going on." With that, he stubbed out the cigarette and headed into the bathroom.

Lucia tried hard to recall what her son had said earlier

Was it something like "Melo?" Do youngsters these days like to use such nicknames?

In the bathroom, Alfred stood against the wall, letting the warm water flow over him from head to toe while blurring his vision. Yet, he couldn't ignore the profound feelings he had developed for Melora. Throughout the past six months of their strained relationship, his life had felt noticeably empty. However, no other woman could capture his interest.

Even though Alfred understood that they did not have a future together, he had foolishly clung to his chastity, fearing that Melora would be unhappy if she bumped into him again.

Alfred couldn't help but chuckle at his own foolishness.

For a long time after that, they did not contact each other. Even when he went to Barnwood for a business trip, they would only occasionally catch a glimpse of each other from afar.

However, the pivotal moment came after a thunderous explosion at Crystal's residence.

On that morning, Alfred received a call from Crystal when he was in a meeting. "Uncle Alfred, please save me!" she cried in despair. By the time he rushed to Barnwood, Crystal was already in the hospital. Her body was drenched in blood as she desperately struggled through labor.

Alfred would never forget the fear he experienced while standing outside the delivery room.

He had already lost his sister, and he couldn't bear to lose Crystal as well.

"Where's Henry?" Alfred asked, his eyes red-rimmed.

All three members of the Miller family were present.

Julia wept uncontrollably, while David could only shake his head helplessly. Finally, Melora softly revealed, "He's at the Kingdom of Brundela, fighting a lawsuit for Audrey."

Alfred erupted with a flurry of expletives.

When he heard Melora calling him in a trembling voice, he held back the curses that he wanted to say.

Alfred entered the delivery room to check on Crystal, and after about ten minutes, he left.

The baby was in critical condition and could be aborted. However, Crystal, who had two broken ribs, insisted on going through with the birth.

In the quiet corridor outside the delivery room, Alfred leaned against the wall with his head tilted back and his eyes moist.

The long wait was unbearable.

Crystal endured sixteen hours of labor, and it wasn't until midnight that she finally gave birth to a baby girl named Skyler.

Skyler was born prematurely, and her condition was dire. Hence, she was rushed to the ICU before anyone in the family could catch a glimpse of her.

The doctor had delivered the grim news with tact, advising them to prepare themselves mentally while also being careful of Crystal's emotional state.

The tears finally started flowing down Alfred's cheeks.

For the first time, Melora witnessed him shedding tears. In her memory, he had always been an unshakably strong figure.

Throughout the latter half of the night, Alfred didn't sleep, choosing instead to smoke outside.

As dawn broke, Alfred made his way into the hospital room. Julia had gone to the service desk, while Melora lay asleep by Crystal's bedside.

Alfred gently tapped her shoulder, rousing the young girl from her slumber.

Her eyes were puffy and red, but she managed to acknowledge his presence with a bleary, "Mr. Alfred." "So, you still remember me." Alfred's voice was raspy, and his words made no sense.

However, Melora didn't care about the specifics. Her own feelings felt trivial in the face of their current situation. She simply hoped for Crystal and Skyler to be well.

Melora stepped aside to let Alfred speak with Crystal while she went to the ICU ward. She stood at the door and peered through the glass, but she couldn't see anything inside. Next, she leaned against the glass door, silently shedding tears.

"Please stay safe, Skyler!"

Melora didn't know if Henry and Crystal's relationship would ever go back to how it used to be, but she fervently wished for Skyler to be healthy. The baby was still so small and adorable.

Meanwhile, not too far away, a silent Alfred stood rooted to the ground.

He had overheard the young girl's heartfelt words.

Leslie encouraged, "You should have something to eat. It's been a whole day since you last had food or a drink."

Alfred turned around and said softly, "Send her some breakfast."

[Chapter 323 Just A One Night Stand](#)

Even though Alfred was swamped with work, he chose to stay at Barnwood with Crystal.

Leslie managed to secure a small office through some connections.

It might have been tiny, but it had everything they needed.

Alfred usually worked there, with his bodyguards stationed outside, while Leslie moved in and out freely.

The next day, Henry rushed back from the Kingdom of Brundela, looking disheveled and ridden with guilt.

As he arrived at the ICU, Alfred confronted him and punched him. Even though Henry didn't retaliate, Alfred's knuckles were still slightly swollen from his outburst.

While Leslie applied ointment on Alfred's wounds, he threw a playful jab at his boss.

"You're getting up there in age. Shouldn't you work on that temper of yours?"

Alfred's anger, which had just been suppressed, flared up again. "I don't think I hit that b*stard hard enough. I should've pummeled more sense into him!"

As they talked, there was commotion at the door.

Leslie went to check and soon escorted Melora inside.

He knew when to step aside, so he left.

Melora cautiously approached Alfred, who casually lit a cigarette with one hand and asked, "What brings you here?"

She held up a tube of ointment. "Let me tend to your injuries."

In truth, Alfred had already applied the ointment, but he didn't mind a second round.

They sat close on a narrow couch, her hand gently tending to his wound. Alfred smoked his cigarette while gazing down at her.

Her skin was fair like porcelain, and her eyelashes were very long.

Then, Alfred asked casually, "That young man seemed nice. Why aren't you two together?"

She was taken aback for a moment before realizing what he meant.

Taking a deep breath, she replied, "I don't really like him."

With that, she finished tending to him and released his hand. In a soft voice, she announced, "I'm done!"

As she attempted to leave, he grabbed her.

Melora was forced back to his side. She couldn't be sure if it was her imagination, but it felt like they were incredibly close-close enough for her to catch a whiff of the faint tobacco scent on him.

Alfred's eyes darkened.

He caressed her lips with his fingers, causing her to tremble and call out helplessly, "Mr. Alfred..."

Alfred lowered his head, gently pressing his forehead against hers. "Why are you here? Are you trying to atone for your brother, or is it that you can't control your feelings, or do you actually like a man more than a decade older than you? Tell me, what do you want from me?"

He was too candid, and she felt a blush creeping up her cheeks.

She quivered, unable to respond, but Alfred wasn't looking for words.

He kissed her.

Just like the last time, he cradled her in his arms to reassure her, then gently teased her lips apart with his tongue and explored her mouth, savoring the taste of her.

She felt uneasy and wanted to resist.

Yet, her waist was held firmly, and before she knew it, he had her on his lap.

He kissed her with a tender yet commanding passion, leaving her mind blank. All she could do was cling to his neck, and then, unable to resist any longer, she slid her hand over his shoulder, eventually wrapping it around his back....

He kissed her until she went weak in the knees. She didn't even know how she left that room.

Most importantly, she had no idea why he treated her like this.

Afterward, she started avoiding him.

Occasionally, they crossed paths at the hospital, and she pretended not to see him. She didn't even greet him; she simply turned away and left.

Alfred watched her retreating figure with a pensive expression.

Leslie teased, "You probably bullied her!"

Alfred, hands in his pockets, remembered that kiss and the way she nestled against him like a kitten.

He knew he desired her. Even when dealing with Crystal's affairs, he couldn't help but think of her.

He wondered if it was possible for them together.

Among countless impossibilities, he wanted to see if there was one possible path.

Alfred hadn't found that path yet when Henry made the significant decision to secretly send Skyler to the lab and set Crystal free.

Upon learning about the matter, Alfred slapped him twice.

However, he couldn't bring himself to go any further. He knew how difficult this decision must have been for Henry.

On the night Skyler was sent away, Alfred drank a lot of alcohol. Even Leslie couldn't stop him. In the end, Leslie found Melora and begged her to persuade Alfred to stop. "Mr. Lodge has an important meeting tomorrow morning. If he keeps drinking like this, he'll embarrass himself!"

After he pleaded for a long time, Melora finally agreed.

Leslie opened the door for her but didn't go inside. He whispered, "I'll wait outside!"

In the tiny and dimly lit room, it took a while for Melora's vision to adjust.

Alfred was slouched on the couch with several bottles of red wine in front of him. When he heard her footsteps, he looked up before pouring himself another glass.

"Don't drink anymore," she said, stepping forward to grab his hand and prevent him from reaching for the glass.

Alfred stared at her quietly, his eyes bloodshot. After a long silence, he said, "You should go."

But Melora refused to leave.

She knelt on the carpet, gathering up the bottles of wine.

As she did this, it seemed like she was playing house. It looked rather silly and a bit naïve.

Even though Alfred had been drinking, he knew she wasn't a child anymore. She was a mature woman.

He gently pulled her closer, studying her carefully. During this difficult time, it felt like they only had each other.

Alfred's voice was hoarse as he said, "Melora, let's give it a try."

Under the influence of alcohol, he compromised. Just like any ordinary man, he couldn't resist temptation. He wanted to cherish the woman he liked. At that moment, he even thought about the consequences of them being intimate with each other. If they crossed that line, he'd have to take responsibility, no matter how difficult it might be.

Melora didn't hear his words clearly.

However, he had already kissed her.

She was pressed against the couch as he kissed her. His lips tasted like the wine he had just drunk, intoxicating her.

"Mr. Alfred..." she uttered, sounding scared while trembling violently.

In response, Alfred gently caressed her face and gazed at her.

She knew what he wanted, for his gaze held both desire and possessiveness. It was a gaze that a man gave a woman he loved.

There and then, he took her for the first time.

During that time, Alfred was tender and restrained himself.

However, all the alcohol had caused his inhibitions to be tossed out the window, and he craved more.

Afterward, he carried her to a small bed in the adjacent room. It was a creaky old spring bed that made noise with every movement.

He became unrestrained in his actions, and the steel wires of the bedframe shook like a small boat in a storm while accompanied by her involuntary moans.

She had been in a relationship before, but she wasn't skilled at sex.

Alfred was dominating in bed, and he didn't need her to be experienced.

Outside, Leslie naturally heard the commotion, so he ordered the bodyguards to stay away and stood guard at the door himself for most of the night.

In the early morning, Melora woke up in Alfred's arms.

Her body ached, but it was a pleasant ache, and she didn't want to move.

"Are you awake?" A husky male voice came from above her.

Melora didn't dare to speak.

In truth, Alfred didn't want to get up either. He rarely lost control like this. Moreover, there were many things left for him to resolve. Thus, he grabbed his watch and glanced at the time.

He had to get up in half an hour. There were some things he wanted to tell her right now.

Before he could say anything. Melora spoke first, her voice trembling. "Mr. Lodge, don't worry. Last night was just a one-night stand."

Mr. Lodge...

A one-night stand...

Alfred chuckled, pulling her ear gently and teasing, "Who was it that called me 'Mr. Alfred' all night? You had me melting then, and now it's just a one-night stand? If everyone takes advantage of me like this, I'll be so busy that I'll probably die in a woman's bed sooner or later."

As his words weren't very tactful, her eyes turned red.

Alfred didn't feel any better, either. He cared for her, but Crystal's situation made him unable to fully enjoy himself.

In the end, he hugged her and spoke some tender words. "Did you receive the rabbit? Do you like it?"

Melora, with teary eyes, replied softly, "I like it."

Alfred didn't say anything more; he simply held her.

After a while, he leaned in close to her ear and whispered, "As long as you like it

He began to dress, and as he put on his clothes, he said to her, "You should get some more sleep. I'll be back around noon."

Those flirtatious words he usually used with women didn't come so naturally this time. After all, she was different.

He got dressed neatly and sat on the edge of the bed, pinching her cheek.

"I have to go now. Otherwise, I'll be late for the meeting. Take a look at my neck. Does it have any marks from a certain little wildcat?"

Wrapped in the blanket, Melora watched him with teary eyes.

They had crossed that line.

What made it complicated was that he hadn't said anything, and she didn't dare to ask for a future with him because this wasn't the right time,

Feeling somewhat wronged, she didn't bother waiting for him to return. After that, she decided to avoid him. She deliberately didn't meet him, but at night, she often found it hard to sleep because of him.

During the following days, Alfred was very busy.

Four days later, she received a call from him. His voice was gentle but tinged with exhaustion. "I'm returning to Coldbridge tomorrow. Can we meet?"

It was only when he said this that she realized how much she longed for him.

Their respective statuses meant she couldn't ask for more, so she had to cherish what they had.

She felt incredibly lowly in their relationship...

In the end, they met at a private restaurant. Leslie welcomed her at the door before leading her to a spacious private room.

Inside, there was just Alfred.

He was in a light blue shirt and black trousers.

There was a navy blue jacket that he had casually draped over the back of a chair. At that moment, he was engrossed in reading a document.

Leslie opened the door with a smile. "Miss Melora is here!"

As usual, he thoughtfully stood guard outside.

Melora leaned against the door, nervously watching Alfred. It was always a bit complicated to be in a relationship with an older man. One never knew what he was thinking.

Alfred put down the document and looked at her. After a long silence, he smiled and said, "Why are you standing there like a guard? I already have many of them. Be a good girl and come sit beside me."

Melora caught the implication in his words and sighed internally. He still saw her as a child!

Nevertheless, she couldn't resist her longing for him, so she moved closer and took a seat beside him.

Alfred personally poured her a cup of coffee and, as he set it down, asked in a rather gentle tone, "Is it still hurting there?"

[Chapter 324 Stay In My Room 1](#)

Melora's face flushed.

It's been days since then, so why would it still hurt?

Alfred discreetly smiled.

Perhaps he had been too rough that night, for he recalled her calling out in pain several times. Young women like her had to be treated with care.

Right then, the server came in with more food.

There were only two of them, but the table was filled with dishes. She could not help but say, "It'll be a waste if we can't finish them."

With a half-smile on his face, Alfred said, "Now you know that you shouldn't be spending so much of my money?"

As he placed some food on her plate, he muttered, "You'll be considerate when you learn to let me conserve some energy."

At that, Melora's face turned redder. He's shameless!

Noticing her expression, Alfred decided to let her go on the matter.

Bringing her a bowl of chicken soup, he gently said, "This is made from free-range chickens. It's good for you."

Melora quietly drank it.

Despite everything, she found it hard to relax.

She did not know what he had in mind for her.

Alfred made sure Melora was fed well during the meal, and he seemed pleased at the end of it. Then, he took out something from his pocket.

It was a talisman for safety.

As Alfred tied the string for her and tucked it under her shirt, he said, "When I was getting one for Crystal, I got one for you too. You're not allowed to take it off this month, understand?"

Melora could not help but take it back out to touch it.

Alfred patted her head and went on, saying, "I hope both you and Crystal are safe and sound."

In a small voice, Melora said, "I want to give it to Skyler."

The one who needed to be protected the most was Skyler.

A wave of sorrow washed over Alfred when he heard her words. He knew not if that child would survive, but he knew that Henry was on the verge of insanity. Nothing was going to stop Henry from saving Skyler. At this rate, Henry would not even mind transforming Skyler into something not human.

Alfred then took out a sub-card from his wallet and placed it in Melora's hand.

Melora froze.

What... is the meaning of this?

She stammered out, "We.... We..."

Instead of answering her straightforwardly, he gently told her, "This is my sub-card. You can buy anything you like."

Melora seemed to be on the verge of tears.

It was time for Alfred to leave, but he was worried about her, so he said, "I'll come visit you in a while. Melora, please take care of Crystal for me."

Melora nodded obediently.

However, when he stood up, she could not stop herself from grabbing the hem of his shirt and uttering in a trembling voice, "Alfred."

He turned to fix his gentle gaze on her.

Melora had an anxious look on her face as she held onto the black card. She had to muster her courage to squeeze out, "What does this mean?"

Alfred smiled..

He countered, "What do you think it means?"

Her lips trembled. "I don't know. Alfred, please be clear with me."

Alfred hugged her and let her bury her head into his belly. In comparison to him, she was young, and he could not help but treat her like a child. After a long while, he finally said, "Isn't it normal for a boyfriend to buy things for his girlfriend?"

Melora's lips trembled even more.

As she hugged his waist tightly, she sobbed out, "Then can your girlfriend request for you to not go for other women? Can I please just be the only person for you?"

She dared not imagine their future, but she could sense his sincerity when he said that they were going to be together with no one else between them.

Alfred bowed his head to gaze at her, and at that moment, she lifted her head.

He took the opportunity to kiss her.

He had a flight to catch soon, so he did not have much time to spend with her. After a brief while of kissing, he muttered, "There hasn't been anyone else since we met."

Her arms were still wrapped around his waist as her face reddened again.

She suddenly recalled the other time when she became jealous.

Alfred did not laugh at her. The young woman liked him so much, so how could he laugh at her?

As he caressed her cheek, he uttered, "You're not allowed to date others too. If I see others confessing to you, I'll break your legs."

She meekly hummed in acknowledgment before looking at him, reluctant to let him leave.

Alfred kissed her and said, "I should go now."

Melora stood up and adjusted his collar before passing him his bag. At that very moment, Alfred felt the urge to shove her into his bag so that he could bring her with him.

Before leaving, he said, "I'll be bringing Crystal back to Coldbridge soon. Come with us then."

Melora was surprised.

The future remained uncertain for her brother and Crystal, so was it right for her to go to Coldbridge?

Alfred recalled how his mother had misheard her name as "Melon" and laughed. "You don't have to worry. I'll be right there with you."

After exchanging a few more sweet words with each other, Alfred finally left.

Leslie was eating in another room. When he saw Alfred exit his room, he quickly came over and teased, "Mr. Lodge, you seem like you're in a good mood."

“How can I be? There are many things to deal with.”

Despite his words, a smile played on his lips.

Melora’s my source of happiness.

In the meantime, Melora was studying the card Alfred had given to her again and again. This is a gift from a boyfriend to a girlfriend!

She even sniffed the talisman, concluding that the scent on it belonged to Alfred. He had put the talisman in his pants pocket, and it was still warm in her hands..

A beat later, her face turned red again.

She could not help but be reminded of that night.

Melora never expected him to be so proficient in that field despite how much older he was than her.

He was a little rough, but he had pleased her several times that night.

At that, she pinched her thigh..

Melora Miller! What are you thinking about? Why are you thinking such things at a time like this? No, no. You should be thinking more about what being boyfriend-girlfriend means...

Half a month later, Crystal and Henry got a divorce.

It had been a full month since Crystal gave birth to Skyler. After the procedures, Alfred came back from Coldbridge to pick up Crystal and Melora.

Trapped in her throes of misery, Crystal did not think much about that.

Back at the Lodge residence in Coldbridge, Lucia’s heart ached whenever she looked at Crystal. As she embraced her granddaughter, she cursed at Henry.

Melora felt embarrassed,

Alfred glanced at her before turning to the butler. “Crystal will be staying in her old room. Tidy up the guest room in the east for Miss Melora.”

The butler froze.

Isn’t the guest room to the east right opposite Mr. Lodge’s?

He hesitated before asking. “Would that disturb you?”

Alfred answered with a dismissive wave, “Just do as I say.”

Once the butler was gone, Lucia recollected herself from her sorrow and whispered, “So this girl’s called Melon?”

She was certain that she had heard her son call the young woman “Melo” the other time.

Melo, which she assumed was a nickname for Melon.

Alfred was stumped. He did not know if he should laugh or not, but at the same time, he was flustered. Others would not believe him and would even laugh at him if he were to tell them that he was in a relationship with a young woman like Melora.

What they needed to consider was their standing and status.

Alfred knew how to deal with his mother, however. "Mom, you've misheard her name. This is Henry's little sister, Melora, not Melo."

Lucia glanced at her son and believed his words.

Right. Henry's sister is about Crystal's age. There's no way an old boy like Alfred will go for someone her age.

She was somewhat disappointed, though.

The young woman was pretty, and she seemed like she would make a good mother.

It had been a tiring day, so after the meal, they all retreated to their rooms.

Melora was going to stay for a week.

She had not brought many clothes with her—just three to four sets of attire. At that moment, she was unpacking her clothes, about to visit Crystal once she was done with that.

Someone silently snuck in before locking the door behind them.

In the next second, a man wrapped his arms around her waist. His breath brushed the crook of her neck, and his kisses left her skin tingling. She could not stop herself from calling out, "Mr. Alfred."

Alfred touched her waist.

He kissed and touched her for a long while before carrying her onto the big bed.

Melora was afraid, for they were at the Lodge residence.

Was he going to make love to her at a place like this?

She was apprehensive. After all, it was only the start of their relationship, and technically, they had skipped the intricacies of dating straight to being intimate in the sheets. Furthermore, she was concerned about whether or not he would accidentally impregnate her.

Nevertheless, Alfred was supporting himself with one hand as he undid her buttons with the other.

Both were aroused. Furthermore, they had been holding back for half a year ever since they found out that their feelings were reciprocated.

Hence, at that moment, Alfred appeared somewhat impatient.

[Chapter 325 Stay In My Room 2](#)

By the time she woke, it was evening.

The setting sun's rays shone through the floor-to-ceiling window to gild the people on the bed with a golden sheen.

Alfred had woken up a while ago. When he saw her open her eyes, he moved over to kiss her before gently saying, "Sleep a little longer. I'll wake you when it's time for dinner."

As he spoke, he got out of bed to put on his clothes.

He still had to handle a lot of work. Leslie had been waiting for him in the study for a long time, but Alfred could not bring himself to ditch her in the bedroom, fearing that she would be upset to find him missing upon waking.

He cherished her. Though he could not stay by her side at all times, he would do everything he could.

Melora was a little flustered.

She pulled the blanket higher and watched him as she leaned against the pillows.

Once Alfred put on his clothes, he leaned over to kiss her before chuckling.

After he left, Melora did not dare to sleep anymore.

She got up to visit Crystal before chatting with Lucia. Lucia was a wise elderly woman who did not shift her anger onto Melora for being Henry's younger sister. On the contrary, since there were few women in the Lodge family, Lucia seemed to be happy to have someone to dote on.

At night, when Alfred was done with work and returned, he found Melora picking vegetables with his mother in the garden.

Lucia was muttering, "I planted these myself, and we didn't use any pesticides."

He pushed the vines above his head aside and walked over. "Mom is protective of these vegetables and normally wouldn't let anyone eat them."

Lucia scoffed.

She then turned to Melora and said, "Don't listen to his nonsense. If he would bring his 'Melo' back home, I'd give her all the vegetables I have."

"Melo?" Melora visibly paused.

After that, Lucia briefly told her about his drunken rambles.

Realizing what had happened, Melora blushed.

Alfred quietly watched her with a half-smile, making her even more uneasy. Still, she was touched. So Mr. Alfred calls my name when he's inebriated.

The sky turned dark.

Lucia decided to cook, and Melora stayed near her. Even though Alfred rarely entered the kitchen, he, too, was there.

After the meal, they went back to their rooms together.

When they reached the entrance, Alfred led her into his own room.

Alfred's room was spacious, its decor a tinge of vintage. The accompanying study was equally decorated with wooden furniture, and near the window was a spot for drinking coffee.

Melora blinked, stunned.

Alfred tapped her button nose and prompted, "Shocked?"

A little embarrassed, she muttered, "I never imagined my boyfriend's room would be like this."

She was certainly beating around a big bush.

In other words, she was saying that his tastes were antiquated.

How could Alfred not understand that? He simply chuckled and walked over to brew a cup of coffee for her.

When she took it, he nonchalantly said. "Shall we continue tonight?"

Melora stiffened.

Are you human?

She was younger than him, and she knew how to submit. Thus, she walked to his back to hug him and whined. Alfred merely held her hand and drank his coffee.

The truth was, he was busy with work. It was rare that he had time in the afternoon, so how could he possibly have time for that now?

Melora made no protests.

As he worked in the study, she kept him company

Once in a while, Alfred would lift his head to ask her to get him something, and she would eagerly run errands for him.

Work kept him preoccupied until eleven at night.

He finally had time to pin her against the bed to bully her.

Melora thought of him as a beast. He had told her he was not going to do it earlier.

Just as things were getting heated, someone knocked on the door before Lucia's voice rang out. "Alfred, you're not asleep yet, right? I've brought you supper."

The handle was already turning.

Both people on the bed stiffened.

Melora's eyes were wide, and her voice was a whisper. "What do we do now?"

Alfred hastily shoved her under the blanket and kicked her house shoes under the bed. At the same time, he sat down by the edge of the bed, making it seem like he was about to go to sleep.

Lucia entered the room. When she saw him, she remarked, "Are you getting ready to sleep?"

Alfred gave her a small smile. "Yes. I'm exhausted from working hard earlier."

Lucia sat down.

She was in the mood for a chat with her son, but that spelled misery for Melora. Being under the blanket was stuffy, and she wanted to move, but Alfred had clamped her head with his legs. He even reached under the blanket to pat her on the head as if she was a puppy.

After a while, Lucia finally left.

The second the door closed, Melora climbed out, her eyes teary.

"Mr. Alfred, I can't breathe!"

Alfred gently pulled her out and placed her in his lap. After a long while, he muttered. "Do you like it here?"

Melora Blushed.

What does he mean by that?

Alfred did not continue with the questions. He took the supper his mother brought over and shared it with her.

Half a bowl was not enough for Melora, so she started whining for more..

Alfred pinched her cheeks and said, "Shall I wake my mother and ask her to make another set of for her daughter-in-law?"

He was such a terrible man, so she started hammering her fists against him.

A long while of messing around later, she hugged his neck and told him that she was hungry. Alfred kissed her. "I've never met anyone who's more troublesome than you. I'll make supper for you. then."

"You can cook?" she queried, still hugging him.

Alfred smiled before putting on his house shoes and heading to the kitchen. To his surprise, he found Lucia there.

Lucia was equally stunned to see him.

Alfred lit a cigarette and started rummaging through the refrigerator. "Supper wasn't enough, so I'm thinking of making more."

How could Lucia let her precious son do that?

Therefore, she took the ravioli out from the refrigerator and boiled them as she chided her son, "You're not that young anymore, so cut down on the suppers. It's time for you to keep fit. How else are you going to find a wife?"

Alfred kept quiet.

Once the water in the pot was boiling, Lucia scooped the ravioli onto a smaller plate before putting a dash of cilantro on it.

She had heard that cilantro was a popular garnish among young women recently.

Alfred took the plate and left. Halfway to his room, he laughed.

He did not eat cilantro, but Lucia had garnished the dish with that. It seemed like his mother was more perceptive than he thought.

When in love, every day seemed to be wonderful.

They had yet to publicize their relationship. Alfred planned to have Melora spend the harvest festival together before sending her back to Barnwood..

They were going to take things one step at a time for their future plans.

Having been stuck in the Lodge residence for three days, Melora wanted to head out for a stroll to buy some gifts for Crystal and Lucia. Furthermore, she heard that pumpkin pies were famous in Coldbridge.

Due to Alfred's identity, Leslie was the one by Melora's side when she shopped. Meanwhile, Alfred sat in the car and read documents.

Alfred never expected to meet a familiar face on the street.

It was Molly, Alfred's coworker and also a prominent figure. Just as she was done with her meal, she spotted Alfred's car stopped by the side of the road. Knowing that Alfred had a brighter future than her, she prioritized building a good relationship with him.

Hence, she strode over to knock on his car window.

Alfred then got out of the car.

Molly smiled and greeted him. "I saw your car from afar, but I didn't think that it was really you!"

Just as Alfred was about to say something, Melora jogged over with a few bags. Her face was flushed from her exercise, and she was even calling out for him.

Molly could not help but spare a few more glances.

She's quite a pretty girl. Since Molly had a son, she cleared her throat and started, "Alfred, this is..."

Not wanting his coworker to learn about his private matters, Alfred said with a small smile, "A young family friend."

A young family friend?

For reasons unbeknownst to Melora, her heart skipped a beat when she heard that, and she felt upset. So, even here in Coldbridge, he can't introduce me as his girlfriend?

Her thoughts were written all over her face.

On their way back, Alfred tried to console her, but he was already thinking of sending her back to Barnwood. After all, with his identity, he could not tell anyone about their relationship unless it was official. Otherwise, it would affect Melora greatly if anything happened.

He had always been a man of secrets.

Still, Melora could guess what was on his mind. When it was time to sleep, she lay in his arms and whispered. "I don't want to go out anymore, so please don't send me back to Barnwood."

Alfred lowered his head to look at her silently.

She had her arms around his neck. "I like it here."

Most importantly, it was because they rarely had the opportunity to be together.

It was not as though he could always go to Barnwood. It had been more than a year since they first met each other, but they had only spent a few proper days together.

Alfred's heart melted..

He bowed his head to find her lips before kissing her.

At the same time, his slender fingers slowly pulled her bathrobe apart. The soft sensation that greeted his fingertips sent him ablaze. Melora did not know if it was her imagination or not, but he was rough that night.

When it all came to an end, she pressed close to him, letting her sweat slowly cool.

Alfred gently patted her as though he was coaxing her to sleep, but neither could bring themselves to do that,

She raised her hand to touch his face and mumbled, "Mr. Alfred, why haven't you gotten married?"

Alfred chuckled. "What do you think?"

Then, he pulled her into his arms.

Her heart was thumping loudly as her head leaned against his chest. Shamelessly, she said, "I think you're waiting for me to get older. Once I'm older, you'll have someone to marry."

Melora kept going on and on about marriage, and it seemed like it was something she wanted.

Alfred's interest was abruptly piqued. As he reached his hand into the blanket, he started teasing her as he said, "Let me see if you're all grown up now. Don't you lie to me!"

He was a wolf in sheep's clothing when he was in that kind of mood.

Lifting Melora so that she sat on him, he took his time training her. Even when she cried and wanted to come down, he would not let her. He continued to stir her up in various ways.

Skylar's status was still unknown, so their relationship was kept in the dark.

After the harvest festival was the time for Melora to return.

The night of her departure, she was teary-eyed.

Alfred patted her head. "Don't worry about that, girly."

However, he was melancholic too. How could he not want her to stay by his side?

With her around, the house seemed livelier.

Lucia always grumbled in the past, but now, she was always going to the marketplace with the housekeepers to pick vegetables that the young woman liked. Alfred knew that his mother had sensed something about their relationship, though she chose not to voice it out loud.

That night, he sat in the study for a long while.

He thought about the future and about promising the rest of his life to her.

Lucia came over with tea and sat beside him. It seemed like she wanted to ask something but ultimately did not. She was sure that the young woman that her son brought home had to be the one he chose to spend the rest of his life with.

In truth, she quite liked Melora too.

Melo's Melora, isn't it? Lucia mused. Maybe we'll be holding a wedding soon. Though their age gap is wide, it's fine as long as my son likes her.

In the end, Lucia said, "She's not bad."

Alfred mulled over those words for a long while before chuckling.

My mother's an interesting woman. Once Skyler is in a better condition, I'll ask the Miller family for her hand in marriage.

Alfred wanted to keep her by his side and have her stay with him and Lucia. That way, he would come back to a house with lights on and the sight of her spending time with his mother.

He was not young anymore. Perhaps kids would be their priority once they married.

[Chapter 326 Their House In Barnwood 1](#)

Melora returned to Barnwood.

She thought she wouldn't be able to meet Alfred for a long time, but he showed up within a week of her return.

He had called her that night, and when she picked up, he had told her, "Come outside."

Huh? Is he in Barnwood? she wondered as her heart began to beat quickly.

She held on to her handphone, unwilling to hang up just yet. Hurriedly, she changed into a dress and ran downstairs. David was still awake, and upon seeing his youngest daughter all dressed up, he said. offhandedly, "You're going out? But it's so late."

"Lynette wants to get supper together," she lied before running out.

David just shook his head at his daughter's antics.

A black Lotus was parked next to the Miller residence.

Alfred was dressed in an all-black outfit and blended in perfectly with the night sky as he smoked a cigarette against his car. At the sight of Melora running toward him, he opened his arms just in time for her to crash into his embrace. She buried her head into his shoulder and inhaled deeply, trying to capture the intoxicating scent radiating off him."

A few seconds passed before she whined playfully, "You nearly burned me with your cigarette."

He chuckled and put out the cigarette before leaning down to kiss her.

She was a little bit apprehensive since they were right outside her house.

Clearly, Alfred was cautious too, since they only shared a short kiss before he bundled her into the car.

Melora slowly put on her seatbelt. Her eyes glimmered as she asked him, "Where are we going?"

She wanted to ask if they would be going to a hotel, but she didn't want to sound so eager. If she said that, she might sound like she was desperate to sleep with him.

Alfred turned to look at her.

After a whole week of not seeing her, his longing for her was stronger than he could bear. He barely managed to eke out a few hours that day just so he could see her.

He interlocked their hands and said in a slightly raspy voice, "You'll know when we get there."

Melora hummed in response obediently.

-The car sped onto the highway and arrived in front of a high-class condominium at Broadway Alley about.

an hour later.

The condominium was well-known for being expensive but also having good security and privacy.

Apparently, most of the people who bought units there were CEOs and celebrities.

Alfred brought her upstairs.

They arrived at a unit where Alfred opened the door to reveal a room that seemed to be around one hundred and twenty square meters. It was decorated rather luxuriously, and a jazz singer's soft voice was crooning from the record player.

Melora took her jacket off and started looking around.

Alfred let her give herself a house tour while he went to the kitchen to pour her a glass of milk.

Once she was done, she hugged him from the back. Her voice was shaking a little bit nervously when she spoke. "What is this place supposed to be, Alfred?"

She didn't want to become his mistress.

He wasn't married, but since they still couldn't announce their relationship openly, she might as well have been his mistress.

Gently, Alfred said, "Drink this first."

In response, she shook her head. She almost always listened to whatever Alfred said, but she was stubborn in demanding an explanation now.

Alfred caressed her hand gently. His voice sounded as if he had something he needed to get off his chest. "Melora, I'm sorry that I can't properly marry you for now. I can't even bring you out on dates or hold hands with you on the street. We can't keep meeting in hotels because I don't want to treat you so cheaply. I know what this place must seem like to you, but I promise that I've never thought of you that way. Please treat this place like your own home. Here, I can be your husband. Here, I'll be your Mr. Alfred."

That was the best he could offer to her currently—a private and secluded place where he could spend time with her whenever he had a free window in his schedule.

Once Skyler's condition stabilized, the two of them could finally announce their relationship to the public.

Melora was blushing after his sudden confession.

Rather than disappointment, she had begun to feel a little bit embarrassed and overjoyed at the same time.

So this is the house Mr. Alfred bought for me.

Alfred knew that he had finally cheered her up again and cooed, "I even put two bunnies in the bedroom. Leslie had to get someone to queue up for hours to buy them. Do you like them?"

Leaning against him affectionately, she replied, "I like you more."

Alfred gently pulled her to face him instead and kissed her. After a while, she pulled away and began whining that she was hungry. With a gentle smack of her rear, he commented, "Your appetite is as big as ever. Where does it all go?"

Despite his joke, he still greatly admired her figure. Her waist was slender and tight, but she had curves everywhere else that mattered.

Alfred couldn't take his hands off her.

He started to cook supper for her while she roamed around him as he busied himself in the kitchen. Suddenly, she asked why Leslie wasn't there.

"Do you want him to be here?" Alfred chuckled. "Even while we're doing things in private?"

Melora frowned indignantly.

He can be so shameless sometimes. Just because he's older, he likes to tease me all the time.

After messing around for a few minutes, Alfred finally lifted her up and placed her on the counter so she could watch him make ravioli.

Even though he never had to do anything around the house, he suddenly felt happier than ever while doing such simple household work simply because Melora was there with him. It was much more fun than visiting the clubhouse or listening to Ingrid perform.

He suddenly remembered Melora asking him why he wasn't married..

It wasn't just because he was busy, nor was it because of his status.

It was simply because he hadn't met anyone he had wanted to settle down with before Melora.

He used to think that if he had to marry anyone, it would be a stunning and skilled woman. However, his true fate turned out to be with a girl who was possibly the furthest thing from that. Melora didn't know how to do many things except for sticking to him and calling him "Mr. Alfred."

All she knew how to do was be affectionate with him and throw her little tantrums when she didn't like something he did.

However, he liked her all the same. There was no rhyme or reason to it.

Alfred truly treasured her. Not only did he treat her as a wife, but he also treated her as a child sometimes, Although he liked to tease her all the time, he usually went along with whatever she wanted.

After supper, she could tell that he was tired, so she offered to wash the dishes.

He didn't want her to even go near the sink.

As he was much older than her, he felt like he needed to make it up to her in other matters. He coddled her and thought he had a responsibility to make sure she was living a better life with him than she was with the Millers. If she felt slighted in any way, he would feel useless as a husband.

Just like that, all it took was one night for Melora to treat the new condominium like her own home.

However, she eventually had to explain why she wouldn't be going home the whole night. She ended up asking Lynette to help.

After that, she went back into the bedroom.

Alfred had just finished showering and was on the bed in his bathrobe. He was leaning against the headboard, seemingly asleep.

Melora could see how exhausted he was and felt her heart wrench a little. She quietly lay down next to him, not wanting to wake him up, but he woke up the moment she lay down and gently pulled her into his embrace.

Alfred wrapped his hands around her slim waist. "Are you done with your phone call?"

"Yup," she replied.

With that, Alfred pulled her closer to him and lowered his head to be closer to her. The narrow space between them was filled with their warm breaths, igniting a heated passion within them.

His voice was raspy as he asked, "Can we do it just once?"

As he spoke, he opened the bedside drawer and took out a small box that he left next to his pillow.

The very next second, she was pinned underneath him as his lips crushed hers.

She felt a little bit sorry for him. It wasn't as if she didn't want to do it. However, she could tell that he was exhausted. Not wanting him to waste any more of his energy, she wrapped her arms around his waist and lied, "I'm on my period."

Alfred paused.

His nose slowly traveled down her body, and he gently nuzzled her before bursting out laughing.

There wasn't any smell at all.

Melora tugged at his hair lightly as she blushed. Softly, she said. "Let's just cuddle and talk. We don't have to do that every time we meet."

Alfred didn't push her further.

He hugged her and pretended to complain, "Don't tug at my hair. I won't look good if I go bald."

At the end of the day, he was still self-conscious about his age.

Melora merely chuckled gently and snuggled into his chest as she asked, "How long can you stay?"

He stroked her hair affectionately. "I have to leave tomorrow afternoon."

He had another long day of meetings to get through tomorrow.

They had one precious night to spend together, and he was... easily.

about to let it slip through his fingers so

Melora was disappointed, but she tried to be considerate of him. She could sense Alfred's love for her. He had given her everything he could offer, including all the free time he had.

Right before she fell asleep, she nuzzled her face into the crook of his neck.

Mr. Alfred, you're the best husband I could ever wish for.

Alfred woke up before the sun rose and woke Melora up so that they could have two rounds before he had to leave.

Afterward, she was so exhausted that she fell asleep again.

Alfred, on the other hand, was fully energized. After his shower, he made breakfast and lunch for her. All she needed to do was heat them up.

After both meals were done, he walked back into the bedroom and sat on the bed.

Melora was still asleep.

Alfred pinched her cheek gently as he whispered, "I'll have dinner with you before I go back to Coldbridge later tonight. Don't go home first."

She murmured a response, still half-asleep.

Alfred kissed her again gently before leaving.

Leslie purposely started to tease him when Alfred entered the car. "Why are you so happy? Do you have a thing for cooking for her and doing her laundry or something?"

Alfred patted his suit trousers down smoothly and acted nonchalant. "She was throwing a little tantrum so I cheered her up. That's all."

Leslie continued to chuckle.

He was genuinely happy for Alfred. After all, Alfred was more than forty years old, and finally meeting the girl of his dreams was definitely worth being happy about.

Leslie started hinting at wanting some of that luck to rub off on him too.

Alfred thought about it for a second before generously handing off a residence in Coldbridge to him. It was in an area that most normal civilians didn't even dare to consider buying.

As for the driver, Alfred arranged good jobs for his children.

All the her. penses he made showed how deeply his love for Melora ran and how much he wanted to protect

He had to make sure that the people around them kept their mouths shut so that she was safe.

[Chapter 327 Their House In Barnwood 2](#)

Melora woke up near noon.

As she slowly opened her eyes, she realized she was at the unit that Alfred had gifted her.

Blinking, she hugged the bunny beside the pillow and rolled around, her heart filled with affection for Alfred.

After all, he'd prepare breakfast for her in the morning and wash the fruits.

Basically, he doted on her as though she were a child. Any woman would find his actions sweet, given his status.

Melora wanted to prepare dinner for Alfred but didn't know how. After messing around for a long while, all she accomplished was overcooking the pasta, so she had no choice but to dump it.

In the end, she ordered takeout..

At four in the afternoon, Alfred returned from his meeting.

Glancing at the dining table, he removed his coat and tossed it onto the couch with a grin. "Wow, you bought a tableful of takeout for me?"

Melora stretched her finger toward him with wet eyes, showing him the wound she had sustained while cutting vegetables.

Alfred's heart softened as he quietly reprimanded, "Silly girl!"

After he treated her cut, they ate together.

Later, he smoked wordlessly on the couch. He was so handsome and elegant that the scene of him relaxing resembled an oil painting.

Thoughts were swirling in his mind.

Earlier during the day, Alfred rejected a task at the meeting.

It concerned the development of a new type of metal that could be used in aerospace and various stealth aircraft. If the research were successful, it would accelerate the technology of those crafts by thirty years.

The more people invested in the project, the more they would have on it. As such, many people wanted a piece of it.

If Alfred took the risk, he'd flourish further if and when the research was successful four years later.

However, he rejected it and recommended a junior instead.

He didn't regret it, even though he had prepared for that kind of thing during the first half of his life. Things had changed, and he wanted to provide a home for Melora more.

Melora snuggled into Alfred as he extinguished the cigarette and asked, "Will you still try to cook next

Burrowing into his embrace, Melora spoke in a small voice. "I want to learn how to cook for you"

Alfred grinned.

Though he was feeling a little melancholic, he would much rather listen to her small talk.

It had been a while since they had gotten together, and she finally felt ashamed for her lack of productivity. Pressing her cheek on his firm abdomen, she fiddled with one of his shirt buttons. "A few days ago, a magazine company invited me for a front cover photoshoot."

She gestured a number. "I'll be paid this much!"

Alfred pinched her cheek, praising, "You're so capable, Melora! Not everyone could have a chance like that."

Naturally, she was overjoyed to hear that.

Meanwhile, Alfred had reservations about her work. After all, Melora would one day be his wife, so it wouldn't be appropriate for her to keep showing herself in public. Therefore, he decided to praise her first, before dishing out a few more questions.

At that moment, Melora started backing out of the idea. "Maybe I shouldn't go after all."

She wasn't lacking in money. All she wanted was to receive compliments from Alfred. "Will you provide for me?"

Alfred kissed her head. "Of course."

Just like that, the two spent their days in the luxurious condominium like a married couple.

Alfred visited Melora almost every week.

He would prepare meals for her while she would give him massages and crawl into his embrace during the night in his shirt.

Occasionally, he would also receive a few private calls.

Whenever Eras and the others invited Alfred to hang out, Alfred would reject their offer. As for any favors he had to deal with, he would delegate them to Leslie. Rarely would he socialize with others, and when he did, he wouldn't bring Melora.

When Melora asked about it, Alfred would merely say it wasn't suitable for her to join those events.

He was very lax with her as he didn't ask about her friends.

One time, he even took her to ski and watch the aurora.

Those six months were the best time they ever had.

Nearing Christmas, Alfred started to get busy.

As such, it had been days since they last met each other. Melora was lying on the bed, chatting with him. on the phone.

Suddenly, the sound of Julia crying was heard from downstairs.

"What's going on?" Even Alfred heard it through the call.

Melora replied, "I'm going downstairs to check it out."

Upon hanging up the call, she descended the stairs. As she did, she saw Julia crying on Henry's shoulder in the middle of the living room. David was gently patting Julia's back and comforting her.

Melora was stunned.

At that moment, Julia noticed Melora. "Come over here, Melora. Look at Skyler."

Thoughts swirled in Melora's mind as she raced downstairs and stared at the picture on Henry's phone.

With her coffee-colored hair, the six-month-old Skyler was looking absolutely adorable.

Covering her mouth, Melora gazed at the picture attentively. "She resembles Crystal so much!"

Julia teared up emotionally.

While David was also crying, he cared about his image, so he spoke rigidly. "It's good that she resembles her mother. It'd be terrible if she looked like her father instead! Who'd want her when she grows up?"

In response, Julia frowned at him..

David softened his tone, reassuring, "Look, the child's fine. You don't need to cry about it every day anymore. Pull yourself together. In the future, we'll need to help raise our grandchildren! With how amazing Henry is, I bet he'll have a gaggle of children for us to care for!"

"Dad, you're making it sound like Henry's a stud," remarked Melora.

David laughed with a touch of melancholy..

While Skyler was recovering, he kept feeling as though someone was missing. I wonder how Crystal is doing right now.

Melora didn't return to her room until deep into the night.

A long while after she sent the photo to Alfred, she received his call. He didn't say much, only muttering her name softly.

She replied as softly, too.

Both knew what each other was thinking. Skyler's rebirth had given them hope that they could finally go public with their relationship.

Holding her phone, she fell asleep.

In the morning, Alfred called her, saying he'd be back in the condominium in an hour.

His voice sounded a bit hoarse, which was a clear sign he'd been working overtime. When she heard he'd be arriving early in the morning, Melora was delighted and also pitied him. "I'll drive there myself.

No need to pick me up! Besides, Henry will suspect something's off."

"All right, then. Drive safely, okay?" said Alfred tenderly.

They arrived at the condominium at almost the same time. When Melora met Leslie on the bottom floor, the latter greeted her with a smile. Then, Leslie headed upstairs with bags of fruits, vegetables, and daily necessities.

After Alfred removed his coat, Melora pounced into his embrace, pushing him against the car.

Hugging her, Alfred kissed her. Though he wasn't young anymore, he still wanted to do something a bit impulsive.

Their makeout session lasted for a long time. Then, he asked hoarsely, "Did you miss me?"

"I did!" said Melora.

It was then Leslie returned downstairs, smiling. "I've settled the things in the unit. I'll pick you up later at two in the afternoon, Mr. Lodge."

Melora felt a little embarrassed.

Holding her hand, Alfred took her upstairs.

The instant he stepped past the entrance, he eagerly removed her coat and caressed her body. Typically, they'd have sex on the bed and rarely did it anywhere else. However, he acted differently that day as he hastily carried Melora to the couch while kissing her.

A few minutes later, they were going at it.

Melora never had such a vivid experience with sex before. As she wrapped her arms around his neck, she stared at him with adoration.

With sweat dripping off his body, Alfred smooched her again.

His stamina and technique were excellent. Every time, he would easily cause her to orgasm in tears.

When Alfred was finally done, he rested momentarily before carrying her to the bathroom. Once the shower was over, he lay on the bed with Melora in his arms.

Unease crept over Melora as she recalled Alfred hadn't used any condoms earlier. It should be fine, I think. These few days are safe...

Leaning against Alfred's shoulder, she grumbled about how he wanted too much in a small voice.

In response, Alfred initiated another long makeout session with her. Then, he asked softly, "Aren't you happy?"

Blinking, Melora realized what he meant a few seconds later.

After all, Skyler had recovered, meaning they could finally announce their relationship.

However, Melora wanted Alfred to be the one to bring up the topic of marriage. Even if she couldn't wait for it, she felt too embarrassed to bring it up, which Alfred knew about.

He was in a good mood and went another round with her.

Exhausted, Melora fell asleep fast.

Alfred was delighted, though. When he woke up the next day, he prepared a meal and fruits for her. Before he left, he touched the small box in his pocket.

[Chapter 328 Tired Of Her 1](#)

At two in the afternoon, Leslie came to pick Alfred up.

After Alfred boarded the vehicle, Leslie teased, "You seem high-spirited today."

Alfred grinned. "Not at all. She was so clingy that I feel tired!"

Leslic chuckled.

Hours later, Alfred left his meeting with a scowl.

Leslie approached him, asking in a whisper, "What happened?"

“We’ll talk in the car.”

Once inside the automobile, Alfred pulled the curtains for the windows and sighed. “Do you remember the project from half a year ago?”

Leslie nodded.

Undoing one button on his shirt, Alfred continued, “I recommended Noel for the project. However, he and his wife died in a suspicious car accident.”

Leslie was stunned for a long while.

Lowering his head, Alfred lit a cigarette with trembling fingers. Several minutes passed before he took a puff. What he didn’t tell Leslie was that there were obvious bruises on Noel and his wife that looked like they were beaten up.

Ultimately, Noel had sacrificed his and his wife’s lives to protect the project data.

Someone had to take over the project.

And since Alfred was the one who designated Noel to oversee it, he had to take responsibility.

As he continued to smoke with his quivering fingers, he removed the small box from his pocket with another hand. Initially, he planned to propose to Melora today and marry her after Christmas.

However, Noel’s death made him question if he should.

The sight of Noel’s and his wife’s ghastly deaths haunted Alfred.

Though Alfred didn’t speak his mind, Leslie could guess what the former was thinking about. Unfortunately, he could only remain silent.

Suddenly, something smashed into the black Audi, launching Alfred forward.

When the car stopped, a man in black clothing riding a motorcycle in front of the automobile halted as well. He then peered through the window as though he had x-ray vision.

The driver cursed and made to exit the vehicle.

Bearing the pain, Alfred exclaimed, “Don’t step out of the car! It’s dangerous!”

When the man in black clothing saw the car didn’t move, he sped off.

Leslie crawled to the backseat to check Alfred’s injury. “How are you feeling, Mr. Lodge?”

Alfred pressed his hand on his abdomen. I must’ve broken a rib.

Despite that, he didn’t show any emotions in his countenance. “To think they’ve received the news so soon. after the meeting concluded! This foreign company is outrageous!”

As much as he wanted to avenge Noel and the latter’s wife, he had to focus more on protecting his own life.

At that moment, his phone rang.

It was from Melora. After a brief moment of hesitation, Alfred answered the call and uttered gently, "I've got an emergency at Coldbridge, so I won't be joining you later, Melora."

Of course, he was aware of how disappointed she'd feel.

However, he didn't have the nerve to return to the condominium when there were undoubtedly many people watching him.

After he comforted Melora, he hung up the phone and turned to Leslie. "Have someone keep an eye on her until she returns home safely."

Leslie nodded.

That night, Alfred was admitted into a private hospital at Coldbridge. Though he needed to rest after breaking a rib and suffering from a concussion, he couldn't sleep at all. All he did for the night was smoke by the window,

At four in the morning, Leslie visited him after handling some affairs.

When Leslie saw Alfred smoking, he immediately said, "How can you still smoke after suffering such severe injury? Lie down quickly. The doctor says you need to be on bed rest for at least a week."

Leslie helped Alfred settle down. "There's still so much work to-"

At that moment, he noticed the diamond ring in Alfred's hand.

Leaning against the headboard, Alfred smiled bitterly. "Despite my age, I fell for a young woman, Leslie! I need to stay four years on the project. What will I become by then? Though I'm always saying Melora is young, she's already twenty-eight. After four years, she'll be over thirty. There's no way she can waste four years waiting for me." I also don't want to think about the possibility that my enemy knows about her. I can't risk it!

Leslie didn't dare to speak a word, knowing Alfred was upset.

Alfred only stayed in the hospital for three days.

The day he was discharged, Melora called him. He stared at his phone for a long time before rejecting the call, which pained him greatly. I bet if she knows I don't want her anymore, she'll cry.

From then on, Alfred started distancing himself from Melora.

Of course, he could easily deal with Melora. Instead of cutting things off with her cleanly, he did it slowly. As he tortured her, he was hurt, too.

After Christmas, he returned to his previous life.

He reconnected with Eras and the others.

Once again, he became who he used to be.

By the time Christmas was over, Melora had lost a few kilograms. She often couldn't contact Alfred, and on the occasion she could, Leslie was the one who answered in an apologetic tone.

Even a fool could tell what Alfred was doing. However, she didn't have the courage to question him face- to-face. All she could do was habitually wait for him at the condominium.

Sometimes, she'd forget to eat while waiting for him.

During Valentine's Day, she received news of Alfred.

He had gone to support Ingrid at La Scala. After Ingrid finished her performance, she changed into a beautiful gown. With his arm wrapped around her waist, they appeared to be a perfect match.

The newspaper slipped from Melora's hand. He's in Barnwood, yet he hasn't asked to meet me.

Lowering her teary gaze, she still called his number, wanting an explanation.

Alfred was at the clubhouse when his phone rang.

He settled the cards in his hand down and stared at Melora's number silently.

Eras joked, "What's the matter? Has your puppy caught up to you?"

A moment later, Alfred smiled casually again. "She's just a child. How long can her attention last?"

As he resumed the card game, he said, "Please help me answer the call, Miss Hopper."

Ingrid had no idea what his relationship with Melora was, but as a woman, she could tell it was intimate since he had ignored her for some time.

However, for reasons unknown to her, he reconnected with her again recently.

However, only she knew that, despite how affectionate he acted with her when in public, he had never touched her again after their reunion.

Seeing that she refused to budge, Alfred urged, "Do it!"

As such, Ingrid had no choice but to answer the call. "Hey, Miss Miller! Mr. Alfred is having fun in the clubhouse. How about you come join us?"

Melora's breathing audibly quickened before the call ended abruptly.

Alfred paused for a moment right as he was about to play his cards.

Then, he smirked. "What did I say? A child's attention won't last long, but she keeps calling me. It's quite annoying"

An icy look was swirling in his eyes.

It wasn't until midnight that he returned to his car. Leslie asked softly. "Where to, Mr. Lodge?"

Alfred stared out the window, distracted.

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Then, he said, "The condominium."

In the middle of the night, he returned to the place that had provided him with countless joyful moments.

To his surprise, Melora was there, sleeping on the dining table.

There were tear stains on the corner of her eyes.

Standing at the entrance, Alfred teared up as well. I wonder how long she's been waiting for me. Why didn't she sleep in the room? Does she love me that much?

Just as he was about to carry her, she woke up.

Melora gazed at him, the panic in her eyes clear.

She mouthed the word "Mr. Alfred" before she cried silently. All she did was stare at him, waiting for an explanation.

Alfred's heart ached as he settled her down on the couch, gently patting her head. "Don't wait for me anymore, Melora."

A dazed look appeared on her countenance, as though she did yet didn't understand him.

Steeling himself, Alfred continued to smile. "I'm too old and unsuitable for a stable relationship. Besides that, I'm not a good man."

At that moment, she grasped his meaning completely but didn't want to believe it.

Once, she was doted on by that handsome, mature man. He even brought her to Coldbridge to meet with his mother and had sex with her in his bedroom like a married couple.

Melora's lips trembled. "I don't believe you!"

Alfred settled down beside her and smoked a cigarette,

As the smoke rose, it blurred their vision.

Alfred chuckled briefly. "It's been half a year, and I've gotten quite sick of you. You probably don't know that a relationship like this only lasts for a few months at most. Do you expect us to get married if we don't split up? Can't you see the difference between our background and social circles? Do you really think we're suited to marry each other?"

The color drained from Melora's face, and it took tremendous effort to prevent herself from fainting.

All she could do was stare at him.

At that moment, his expression was the same as when he was with Ingrid.

Does he see me as a plaything like Miss Hopper? No, I'm different from her because at least he returned to Miss Hopper, while I can't even reach him on the phone.

Melora remained still.

She was not the best at arguing with someone, and she loved Alfred too much to act like a shrew.

Furthermore, she couldn't eat three sleeping pills like she did before to make Henry dote on her.

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There was nothing she could do.

Alfred stood and arrived before the window, where he continued to smoke quietly.

Then, he said a few more things, such as how he would compensate her for keeping him company for the past half a year and how thankful he was for that.

Melora didn't respond to anything he uttered. Like a wooden doll, she sat lifelessly while tears streamed down her cheeks endlessly. She kept hoping Alfred would turn around, hug her, and tell her he was only playing a prank on her.

Yet, no matter how long she waited, he didn't hug her.

The night grew colder and colder.

Eventually, she spoke. "Don't worry, Mr. Lodge. I won't cling to you."

Alfred slowly turned back.

Under the light, they met each other's eyes.

Not long ago, she was still biting him while in his embrace, calling out his name sensually. He recalled pulling her hair, preventing her from biting a certain part of him.

As he was immersed in his thoughts, Melora left.

She couldn't be bothered to hide her sobbing, especially with how innocent she was.

She didn't demand any explanation either, as though she had accepted that Alfred didn't want her anymore.

As Alfred watched her slowly close the door, he finished smoking the cigarette between his shaky fingers. His eyes glimmered with unshed tears.

Then, he settled down at the dining table.

There was a bowl of spaghetti on it, but it didn't look that appetizing. Melora likely made it.

He picked up a fork and finished it calmly and quickly

After that, he didn't know what to do.

Without Melora, he had no idea what else he could do in the condominium.

[Chapter 329 Tired Of Her 2](#)

After Melora left, Alfred spent the night at the condominium, surrounded by the items she left behind.

Most of them he had bought for her.

Melora didn't know how to do chores, so the bedroom was a mess. Often, Alfred was the one who cleaned things up for her. Even when she had her period, he was the one who'd wash her dirty panties.

Her scent lingered on the pillow..

Unable to sleep, Alfred got up to smoke on the couch.

Holding his phone, he decided that if she called him, he'd answer it. Even if he didn't say anything, he'd be satisfied to hear her voice again.

Unfortunately for him, he didn't receive the call he was looking forward to the whole night.

The end of his relationship with Melora finally settled in his mind as he stared at the full ashtray. Why should the daughter of an affluent family cling to you?

As dawn arrived, Leslie entered the condominium unit out of concern for his employer.

Right after he stepped in, he choked on the thick cigarette smoke. "You should take care of your health, Mr. Lodge. Smoking like this is no good."

Alfred glanced at his assistant before extinguishing the cigarette and flopping down on the couch.

After a while, Alfred said, "Help me do something

He knew Melora wasn't lacking in anything, but he had enjoyed his time with her. Now that they had ended things, he thought he would probably remain single for the rest of his life. Additionally, money didn't matter much to him, so he wanted to gift her something.

Once Alfred finished relaying his request, Leslie was shocked.

Leslie was surprised by how much Alfred cared about Melora. After all, the compensation Alfred was willing to provide Melora was an amount that even some divorced couples wouldn't be willing to consider.

In other words, Alfred was willing to empty almost his entire personal wealth.

Leslie didn't offer any remark and promptly handled the matter.

The next day, he invited Melora to a fancy cafe.

Leslie was the first to arrive. As it was spring, he was wearing a dark tweed suit. Sitting quietly at the table, he played with his lighter while resting his hand on a thick stack of documents.

-After waiting for fifteen minutes, Melora arrived in front of him. "Does he have something he wants to tell me?"

Upon hearing her voice, Leslie raised his head and was shocked to see how much thinner and haggard Melora had become.

He speedily stood up, pulled the chair for Melora, and tried to speak calmly and casually. When Melora spotted the documents, she questioned, "Are those the compensation he wants to give me?"

Feeling a little awkward, Leslie nodded after a few seconds.

Melora flipped through the pages and rubbed her slender finger on the paper. "Since I was nothing but a fling of his, why does he feel the need to do this? I don't want any of these. Tell him I won't bother him again." She sounded as though it had taken all her strength to say that.

Even she was in a daze for a long while. Mr. Alfred... I called him that for so long. All that he provided and promised me led me to believe we would be together forever. I thought he'd always be there for me, but it all turned out to be a lie. In reality, what we had was just another one of his short affairs.

Leslie's attempt at persuading her to accept Alfred's compensation was fruitless.

When he returned to Alfred to report on the situation, he spotted the latter standing before the floor-to-ceiling window in the hotel room. After Alfred finished listening, he remained quiet for a period before saying, "Okay."

Leslie left while Alfred peered at the diamond ring in his hand. I should've known she wouldn't accept those things. I never knew I'd love someone as deeply as this. Things are fine when I work, but I would think about her during my free time. Whenever I entered a crowd, I would reflexively turn back to look for her. Even when I spent time with Eras and the others, I'd stare at the bronze gilded door, hoping she'd come in with teary eyes, calling me "Mr. Alfred." It'll be difficult to move on from her....

Roughly a week later, they met again by pure accident. It was during a banquet in Barnwood.

Melora attended it with Henry.

She was wearing a strapless gown and a diamond necklace, her hair resting at her waist.

Of course, she was alluring.

Alfred was accompanied by Ingrid, and when he spotted Melora, he froze.

Ingrid wasn't an idiot.

She knew that her relationship with Alfred was shallow and that neither of them treated it seriously. There were plenty of women like her around Alfred, after all. Also, ever since she met Melora backstage, he ended things with her.

By that point, even an idiot could tell what was going on.

Sometime after that, Leslie delivered her a check.

That was enough confirmation to her that Alfred wanted to cut ties with her and wouldn't attend her performances anymore.

As she expected, later on, she heard Alfred was no longer a playboy.

Ingrid successfully guessed Alfred was seeing someone and that he was hiding his lover well.

Naturally, she knew who it was, but she didn't have the nerve to spread the news because she couldn't afford to offend Alfred. Hence, when Alfred showed up at La Scala again, she was overjoyed.

She thought that meant they would be getting back together, but she was wrong.

Alfred would only watch her perform or bring her along to social events, but that was about it.

Privately, he was cleaner than a celibate priest.

While Ingrid understood that she could never marry Alfred, she was willing to settle for a friendship with him. For one, he never treated her badly, and for another, she needed his connections.

At that moment, Alfred and Melora were gazing at each other.

Ingrid was unaware of their conflict, so she smiled and whispered, "Why does Melora seem as though she's about to cry while looking at you, Mr. Lodge?"

Alfred ignored her, his focus fixed on Melora.

When Melora noticed Ingrid was holding Alfred's arm, she turned away.

Feeling aggrieved, she leaned her head on her brother's shoulder, her lips trembling.

Henry glanced at her and asked softly, "Tired?"

"Mhm." Melora proceeded to hug her brother's waist.

Alfred's eyes twitched as he witnessed how tight the sibling's relationship was. I never thought there'd come a day when I'd be jealous of Henry.

Ingrid glanced at him, feeling satisfied.

She deliberately swayed her hips as she approached and greeted the siblings charmingly. "You sure have a wonderful relationship with your sister, Mr. Miller. Anyone would be envious of you."

Henry had always been honest with his emotions when dealing with women.

Though he found Ingrid beautiful, he didn't like her vibe.

Ingrid didn't mind how aloof his attitude toward her was. Instead, she spoke even more enthusiastically while staring at Melora. "I know a few young men who'll be a good suit for you, Miss Miller. How about I invite you and them for coffee one day?"

At that moment, Alfred approached her.

Hence, she held his arm and asked fervently, "What do you think, Alfred?"

Once again, Melora and Alfred gazed at each other, though the former did so with tears in her eyes.

After a while, Alfred smirked. "A woman like Melora should choose a good man. You should ask your parents to set up a blind date for her, Henry."

Henry didn't dare to oppose his uncle-in-law because his future was still in the latter's hands.

Hence, he nodded and patted his sister's head. "She's not getting any younger. I suppose it's time for her to

settle down."

Melora was so furious that her teeth were trembling, but she stifled her anger as she was in a public venue. "I'll take your words to heart, Mr. Alfred."

Right after that, she gave an excuse and left.

Alfred watched her leave, his fingers curling into fists.

Ingrid gracefully said, "I think she's ticked off. You know, you should coax her back. Don't keep dragging me around. I feel anxious just watching you both. Anyway, if things work out for you two, don't forget to hand me a generous monetary gift, seeing as I'm rarely this magnanimous."

In response, Alfred flung her arm away and chased after Melora.

Meanwhile, Melora arrived at an unoccupied balcony. As she stared at the river in the distance, her eyes grew moist again. Why am I here? I want to go home!

Suddenly, she heard someone approaching her after locking the door.

Turning around, she saw Alfred standing there, just as she expected.

His heart wrenched as he laid his eyes on her thin, tearful figure.

Softly, he muttered her name, "Melora."

Melora pressed her back against the railing, aiming her vacant gaze at him. "Don't come any closer, Alfred!"

[Chapter 330 Tired Of Her 3](#)

Alfred still walked over.

The neon lights of the city draped them in a kaleidoscope of colors, rendering everything as surreal as a dream.

It was as if he had never left or spoken those hurtful words.

He was still her Mr. Alfred, always ready to embrace her late at night and playfully call her "Melo" in the morning before informing her of his departure.

Her lips quivered as she watched him approach her.

If only this dream could last forever, but her pride would never allow her to live in denial.

"Melora." Alfred gently caressed her face, reluctant to let go.

She evaded his touch and gave him a slap.

The slap was not forceful, yet its sound echoed like thunder, marking a clear boundary between them.

She felt somewhat dazed after giving him the slap.

Her lips trembled as she said, "Mr. Lodge, you're so generous, even arranging exit strategies for women you've slept with. But whether I'm single or taken, whether anyone desires me or not, it truly has nothing" to do with you!"

She forced herself to utter those words and then proceeded toward the door.

However, no matter how hard she pulled, the door remained shut.

She stood there stiffly, her voice carrying a nasal tone as she said, "What are you doing? Aren't you afraid that being seen like this will affect your reputation?"

Alfred walked over slowly and held her hand firmly.

He got so close that if he just tilted his head, he could kiss her soft earlobe—a spot he loved to tease during their intimate moments which would drive her to the edge.

Yet now, he could only hold her hand and speak softly. "Listen to me. Find someone to marry and live a peaceful life."

Melora fell into a daze once more. Live a peaceful life? I don't even know what a peaceful life means ever since I got into this messy relationship!

Melora was not a mean person. Even when he toyed with her feelings, she could not bring herself to speak harshly. Her only desire was to escape from him and get out of his sight.

In the end, Alfred decided to let her go.

He could only stay behind and watch as her footsteps gradually faded into the distance.

Leslie appeared silently and asked in a hushed tone, "She left?"

Alfred hummed in response before slowly lighting a cigarette. He then said, "Encounters like today will probably become increasingly rare in the future. It's normal for young people to throw tantrums, but they'll come around eventually. Leslie, do you think she'll be able to find a good man, marry him, and have children with him within the next two years? If she were to give birth to a girl, I bet the girl would look just like her."

"Please don't say that anymore!" Leslie got slightly dewy-eyed. Perhaps there's still hope!

Alfred stood there quietly, his handsome face composed and devoid of expression.

He had too many worries to deal with.

If he had met Melora a decade earlier, he would have undoubtedly married her, brought her home, and made her the happiest woman in the world.

He let out a sigh after a while, "Prepare a jet. We're heading back to Coldbridge."

Meanwhile, Melora left the banquet.

Instead of heading home, she found a store. There, she exchanged her million-dollar designer dress for a modest outfit worth a few hundred and aimlessly strolled through the streets.

As the night grew deeper, a sleek black car drove by her

It belonged to none other than Ingrid. Ingrid was not alone in the vehicle. She was accompanied by a man who had just become her boyfriend. They were preparing to enjoy a night of intimacy.

Spotting Melora from a distance, Ingrid signaled the driver to stop.

The car halted, and she gracefully emerged, her hips swaying as she approached Melora. In a rather kind tone, she asked, "Why are you wandering around so late at night? Let me give you a ride home! Otherwise, if your Mr. Alfred finds out tomorrow, he'll blame me for not doing my job properly."

Hearing those words, Melora could not help but feel a surge of irritation.

She continued walking forward.

At that moment, a young and handsome man emerged from the car and wrapped his arm around Ingrid's waist. "Who's this?"

Melora turned around and looked at him.

Ingrid snuggled in the man's arms, seemingly unconcerned about how people might judge them. She giggled even more alluringly and said to Melora, "Why do you look surprised? No wonder you're just a kid. Isn't it normal for men and women to behave like this? Do you think I'll stay abstinent for Alfred? Besides, since you came along, he's never come close to me, let alone touch me. I might as well enjoy myself on my own."

Melora's breathing was erratic. What did she just say? Mr. Alfred is not with her? Why did he lie to me?

Seeing the doubt in Melora's eyes, Ingrid decided to clarify the situation.

She took a few steps forward, casually straightened Melora's attire, and said in a relaxed manner. "Whatever Alfred and I had is all in the past now. I know how he feels about me, and I've had my share of dreams about being his wife. But when he held me this time, he didn't want to get close to me in that way. That's when I figured he wouldn't marry me. So, really, there's not much else to talk about since he wouldn't even touch me."

Ingrid was never a woman who would remain celibate for anyone. The fact that he refused to touch her meant he was not interested in her.

Melora gazed steadily into her eyes and muttered, "Why are you telling me this?"

"Because I feel sorry for you!" Ingrid grinned. "Just by looking at your silly face, I can tell he must have mistreated you. I'm willing to share this with you even though it pains me. If you want to find out more, you should ask him directly. Only he holds the key to his own thoughts."

After that, she embraced the handsome man's waist and planted a passionate kiss on his lips.

Lost in their affection, they returned to the car.

Just as the car started moving, Melora flagged it down. In the back seat, Ingrid and the handsome man were kissing. The abrupt stop startled them, and the driver, visibly uncomfortable, said, "Miss Miller stopped the car!"

As he spoke, Melora had already opened the car door and squeezed her way to where Ingrid and the handsome man were.

The atmosphere grew increasingly awkward.

Ingrid's attire was disheveled, exposing a large expanse of her fair skin.

The man, too, did not look any better.

"Drive me to the airport," Melora said stiffly.

Ingrid, unsure of what to do, paled with anger. "Why should I? I don't owe you anything."

Melora refused to relent.

The man smiled and attempted to comfort Ingrid. "Let's give her a ride!"

He was very attracted to Ingrid and wished for Melora to divert Alfred's attention so that he could be alone with Ingrid. With that hidden agenda in mind, they set off for the airport.

Melora, often a bit of a pushover, could not hold back her tears at the thought that Alfred might be going through some difficulties.

Ingrid, visibly annoyed, tidied her clothes and rolled her eyes. This crybaby is such a mood spoiler.

There were no more flights at such late hours.

Melora sat alone in the departure lounge, clutching a plane ticket for the earliest flight to Coldbridge the next day.

She could have gone home first, but she could not wait.

She just wanted to sit there and wait.

She had considered calling Alfred, but she was afraid he would not answer.

In the distance, a group of people walked by.

Seven or eight individuals surrounded an outstanding and handsome man, heading toward the VIP walkway. The man caught sight of a young girl sitting in the empty waiting area looking sad. She looks like Melora from behind. But why would she be here? She must be crying again tonight.

Alfred remained still, silently observing her for a while until Leslie reminded him, "Mr. Lodge, the flight is about to take off!"

Alfred retracted his gaze and quickly entered the VIP walkway.

Upon returning to Coldbridge, he called for an emergency meeting and spent the entire morning attending to official duties.

It was not until noon that he finally had a moment to return home.

As lunchtime drew near, the housekeepers bustled about, preparing meals. When asked about the occasion, he was informed that they would be hosting a guest from Barnwood. Lucia was so thrilled that she harvested vegetables from her garden in anticipation of the guest's visit.

Alfred wondered who the guest from Barnwood was. Could it be Anna?

After lighting a cigarette, he walked toward the kitchen, ready to greet them.

However, as he brushed aside the vines along the corridor, he froze in his tracks.

There, he saw that Melora was sitting on a stool, accompanying Lucia.

The scene instantly reminded him of the cherished memories from the past.

Alfred's eyes turned red.

He momentarily lost his voice as his gaze locked onto them. He also noticed that she was wearing the same clothes he had seen at the airport last night. It turned out Melora was the one he had seen there. So, she really spent the entire night at the airport. Silly girl.

Alfred felt utterly sad, but he maintained his composure. He walked over slowly, took a drag of his cigarette, and greeted them with a smile, "Melora, did you come to keep my mom company?"

Melora looked up and gazed into his eyes.

Alfred, too, observed her silently for a while before taking a seat.

Lucia gave him a slap on the back. "I ran into her on the street and couldn't leave her out in the cold. She was wandering around so early in the morning with nothing on her. How could I not bring her back to take care of her? I'm not as heartless as you!"

Alfred remained composed.

He looked at Melora, and after a pause, he said softly, "Let her stay in the same room as before. I'll take her there."

With that, he led Melora away.

Lucia sighed softly, her gaze following them.

The bedroom on the eastern side was off-limits to the housekeepers unless Alfred gave them his permission.

Alfred opened the bedroom door and pushed her inside.

As the door closed, he gently pressed her against it. His voice stern, he asked, "Why did you follow me? You're going back to Barnwood after dinner. I'll get Leslie to book your flight."

"I'm not going anywhere!" She stood with her back to the door, her eyes welling up with tears.

Alfred took out his phone and called Leslie. "Book an afternoon flight for Melora as soon as--"

Before he could finish his sentence, the phone was knocked out of his hand.

Alfred's gaze grew even more stern. "You must leave!"

She had never seen him like this before, and she was frightened. Despite her trembling lips, she summoned the courage and said, "I'm not leaving. Miss Hopper told me everything, and she said nothing ever happened between you two."

Alfred stared at her intently.

After a pause, he chuckled softly. "Do you believe the words of an actress?"

Her body trembled uncontrollably. She had hardly ever argued with anyone, let alone been in a confrontation, but today, she was determined to get to the bottom of things. He will not fool me.

Alfred extinguished his cigarette and then grasped her shoulder roughly. "Do you want to hear the truth?"

Melora's lips quivered. She was on the brink of tears.

Alfred's disheveled hair covered his forehead, revealing a weariness that she had never witnessed in him before. He locked his gaze onto her eyes and said gently. "The truth might be difficult for a young girl like you to accept, but listen carefully. Before you, there were other women in my life besides Ingrid. They were all innocent, inexperienced young girls like you, and they weren't after my status or wealth. They simply liked me for who I am, and that intrigued me."

He added, "By the way, you haven't forgotten the first time we had sex, have you? We were at the hospital. Think about it. At that time, Crystal was going through such a hard time, and Skyler's life was hanging in the balance. Do you know how much pressure I was under? Late at night, you offered yourself to me. Do you think I could resist it? I got tired of it after six months and didn't want to play with you anymore. Do you get it? You said I didn't touch Miss Hopper, right? Yes, I didn't touch her because I got tired of her too."

Alfred began to unbutton her clothes, his voice carrying a hint of decisiveness as he went on, "You came all the way here because you wanted me to have sex with you, right? Are you that desperate for a man's touch? I can satisfy your needs, but once we're done, put on your clothes and get the hell right back to Barnwood. I don't want to waste my time on an ignorant girl like you. Do you hear me?"

He forcefully unbuttoned her clothes, subjecting her to humiliation.

A resounding slap landed on his face.

"Alfred, you like me! Don't deny it!"

Alfred sneered as he pulled her onto the bed and began kissing her. "When a man desires a woman, he'll naturally express his affection. If I didn't say I liked you, would you have fallen for me? Would you have addressed me as Mr. Alfred so affectionately? You're too naive. We're just two adults enjoying each other's company. Only someone like you would take it seriously."

She burst into tears the moment he took her.

"I've encountered girls like you countless times. Do you really think that sleeping together a few times means I should take responsibility for you?" Tears welled up in the corners of Alfred's eyes, but he continued speaking in an aloof manner.

Melora bawled her eyes out. Stop. Please stop talking

She pushed him away, trying to stop Alfred, but he reached for something on the bedside table, showing a clear intention to continue.

Unable to endure it any further, she delivered another resounding slap across his face,

Following the slap, she buried her head in the blanket, crying in anguish.

Alfred's face was now bruised and flushed. He lay there dejectedly, using his arm to cover his eyes.