

# Nothing Matters, except YOU & Me Chapter 326

Myra had no idea what Elsie had meant by 'you can't make me leave Bradford City', but she was growing annoyed at the other woman's ridiculous antics.

As she turned on her heels to leave, she pointed out in a clipped tone, "In case you haven't noticed, there are cameras all around here. Regardless of how things may turn out after this, I won't try to deny any wrongdoing on my part. I just hope that you'll still have as much bravado by then, Miss Foster."

Upon hearing that, Elsie stared at Myra dumbfoundedly. As Myra slid into the car, Estelle started the engine.

Elsie snapped out of her daze when Estelle slammed the honk at her to get out of the way. Elsie knew there was no way for her to get a word in with Tony. She had called him with different phone numbers, but there was no answer on his end. It was clear that he refused to hear anything that she had to say.

Seized with desperation, she had resorted to asking Myra for help, but her strategy earlier had obviously gone awry. She had only succeeded in irritating the girl and now, the help she tried to seek was slipping out of her reaches. A panicked Elsie stood her ground and barred Estelle from driving away while she cried, "Myra, I was wrong for trying to frame you! But, you're the only person who can help me now. I know what I did to you was twisted, but you have to understand that I was way in over my head with anger! It was your sister, Kris, who asked for the contents of the drug, but I didn't think that she would use it against you! If I did, I never would have told her in the first place. I never would have deliberately been involved in her wicked schemes!"

Myra listened to the vehement rambling that was going on outside the car, but she had no idea what the other woman was saying. It was only when Kris' name was brought up that she started to connect the dots.

Anger flashed in her narrowed eyes as a sudden thought came to her mind.

Soon, one of the security guards from the beauty parlor rushed out to pull Elsie aside. Once the curious crowd that surrounded the vicinity had dispersed following the guard's intervention, Estelle quickly revved the car and sped away from the scene.

While cruising down the road, she asked, "From what I've heard, it sounds like she has tried to hurt you recently. Could it be that your protective knight in shining armor found out about it and has exiled her from Bradford City? Is that why she's desperate enough to beg for your help?"

Myra nodded. There didn't seem to be any other reasonable explanation for Elsie's erratic display. However, Myra's gaze softened as soon as she thought of Tony and she repressed the urge to grin like a lovesick fool.

Upon seeing that, Estelle rolled her eyes in mock exasperation and clicked her tongue. "Look at your situation. I ought to show you how sour and resentful you looked when you were still married to Sean."

Myra laughed. "I didn't think that life could surprise me like this." Indeed, meeting Tony had been the greatest surprise of her life.

"Yes. And apparently you're the only person who's capable of trapping a surprise like Tony," Estelle drawled teasingly. Knowing that he had intervened to put the wretched woman from before in her place, she was no longer worried for Myra's safety. Turning to glance at Myra, she asked, "Should I drop you off at the hospital?"

Myra shook her head. "You can drop me off at the Hart Residence. I'll be making dinner for Tony tonight."

She had initially planned on returning to the hospital to visit him, but she was suddenly inspired to make dinner for the man. Perhaps she was moved to know that he had stood up for her against Elsie, making her feel warm and fuzzy at the thought of him.

"It's one thing to make yourself at home at the Hart Residence, but it's entirely another to rub your love life in my face," Estelle grumbled as she turned to a different route, driving down the road that would lead them to the Hart Residence.

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Unbeknownst to Myra and Estelle, they had been so distracted by Elsie's schemes that they overlooked a slightly more crucial detail. Meanwhile, Gemma was relieved to know that she would be receiving medical treatment abroad and she babbled excitedly as she eyed her parents and grandfather curiously, "I'm sure the treatment is far better abroad. Where will I be going? Can I go to South Korea? I could even undergo plastic surgery before I return to Bradford City."

There was a hysterical edge to the way she spoke and behaved following the car crash. She was oblivious to the lawsuit that Tony would have filed against her if her family had not agreed to send her away from Bradford City. Edward had been the one to break it to her that she would have to travel out of the city for treatment. Her hysterics had unexpectedly died down after she heard that and she had been relatively calm for the past two days. She even seemed happy.

Everyone had downplayed the gravity of her facial injuries. They had told her that the wounds would heal over time and given how advanced plastic surgery treatments were nowadays, there was no reason why she would not return to peak condition.

There had been days when Gemma was absolutely manic, but she found solace in the knowledge that she would recover from her injuries as soon as she received the necessary treatment.

While the rest of the Walton Family was temporarily spared from her tantrums, they made sure that the nurses who routinely tended to her knew to remain silent about the extent of her injuries.

As such, Gemma had yet to catch a glimpse of her face, which was usually bandaged up. She had tried on numerous occasions to ask for a mirror when the nurse changed her dressing, but someone in the family would always switch the topic of conversation and brush off her request. With that being said, she was inclined to believe that her injuries were more serious than her family would let on, but she didn't want to dwell on it. Now that she knew she was going to receive treatment abroad, she was even more eager to see how her injuries were faring and no one could stop her.

Her mother had been in the hospital room to tend to her needs as usual, but Gemma sent her away to run a false errand. Then, she clambered out of bed and seized a passing nurse, claiming that she needed help in the room.

Upon hearing that, the nurse followed her into the room. She had never taken care of the patients on this floor and was blatantly unaware about the details of Gemma's condition.

Seeing as Gemma could not move her hands, she asked the nurse to remove the bandages on her face, claiming that she would like to see whether her injuries were healing well.

The nurse had no reason to doubt her as she carefully peeled the bandages off.

A mirror had been propped up in front of Gemma. She sat still in bed, waiting for the nurse to unravel the gauze.

She knew that there was a possibility that her face had been badly wounded, which explained the reason why her family was so adamant that she stayed away from mirrors altogether. As the layers of bandages fell away, she was girding herself for the final reveal. However, when the moment came for her to lay eyes on her reflection, she froze in shock.

The nurse, on the other hand, had no time to be tactful as she screamed at the gruesome sight before her. Then, she staggered back and fell on the floor—the girl’s face looked worse than the scene of a car crash.

The scream pulled Gemma out of her daze and she furiously pushed the mirror to the floor. The sound of glass shattering was mixed with her anguished cries as she yelled, “How did this happen? How??”

Gemma’s scarred face twisted into an ugly grimace. She had braced herself for injuries that could be fixed with plastic surgery, but the horrifying face in the mirror looked like it belonged to some hideous creature. Her face wasn’t just badly injured—it was disfigured! There was a grisly scar that was the length of her once-intricate nose and her nose bridge was pitted so badly that if she weren’t breathing, she would have thought her nose had been sliced in half.

Furthermore, there was a jarring scar that stretched from her left cheek to her right and it ran across the skin above her cupid’s bow.

Her gaze darkened and for a moment, she thought she was going to pass out.

“This can’t be how I look! It just can’t!” Gemma shouted as she thrashed around in bed; she was so consumed with rage that she could not even feel the pain that shot through her arm.

Meanwhile, the nurse had finally snapped out of her initial horror and she was beginning to realize that the patient had lied so that she could see her own face in the mirror. Scrambling

to rise from the floor, she rushed over to hold Gemma down, only to be pushed away by the girl before they both stumbled onto the floor in a scuffling heap.

“Don’t worry, miss. I’ll go and get the doctor immediately!” The nurse promised anxiously. Then, she ran out of the hospital room.

Gemma, on the other hand, had never felt so devastated in her entire life. Can I even return to the way I used to look? Can I? How is plastic surgery going to save this wreck of a face?

She was spiraling into the icy depths of fear and despair when a figure ran into the room.

“Gemma, are you okay? How did you end up falling on the floor?”

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Kris was at the hospital with Gideon, but she decided to head to Gemma’s room on her own with a bouquet of flowers that she brought while he parked the car.

After learning of Gemma’s incident, Kris doubted that anyone was as happy as she was.

Gemma had always been acting high and mighty around Kris to the point of snubbing her all the time. However, knowing that Gemma came from a prolific and important family, Kris could not risk offending her. She had been ecstatic to learn of the accident and the cause behind it because it meant that there really was bad blood between the Walton Family and the Hart Family. In addition to the accident, Gemma had also sustained injuries to her face—a feature that any woman would pay most attention to—and Kris was seized with wicked glee to know this despite being clueless about the extent of the girl’s injuries. Nonetheless, she maintained a concerned front when she was with the Walton Family.

Upon entering the hospital room, she saw that Gemma was throwing a maniacal fit and hurried over to help her. However, just as she approached, Gemma looked up at her. At the sight of the girl's gruesome face, Kris screamed and backed away.

To say that Gemma's face was badly injured would be downplaying the real situation because she was practically disfigured. Her face was garishly lacerated and it was as though every inch of her skin had been sliced by broken glass, making her look grotesque.

"My face... Oh, my face..." Gemma repeated under her breath. She wanted to reach out to touch her face, but her hands were far too weak to do so. Gripped with paralyzing fear and panic, she screamed when she met Kris' eyes and quickly covered in the corner of the room.

"Gemma!" After having entered the room, Gideon took in the scene before him and his face grew grim. He pushed Kris aside and ran over to his sister.

"G-Gideon, how did I end up looking like this?" Gemma howled when she saw her brother. She burrowed into his arms, feeling like she had found her savior. She lacked the courage to lift her head and she trembled as she demanded, "You told me I could be treated! But, look at me! There is no treatment that can fix this!"

"Of course there is!" he answered assuringly. He tightened his arms around her before he shot an accusatory look at Kris.

Kris caught Gideon's pointed gaze and hastily waved her hands. "I have nothing to do with this. I don't know what happened—I didn't think I would come in here and find her like this!" she insisted vehemently, afraid that she would be blamed for the chaos in the room. After all, she truly had nothing to do with any of this and had only just discovered how grievous Gemma's facial injuries were.

Bile was rising in Kris' throat as the image of the gruesome face she just saw flashed in her mind. She covered her mouth as she retched and hurriedly rose from her seat to rush out the door.

Meanwhile, Gemma was completely devastated and she was spiraling toward a breakdown as she sobbed, "What the hell is going on here? How did I end up looking like this?"

"Listen to me, Gemma. I know it looks bad now, but the doctor said it's nothing that plastic surgery can't fix and you'll get your looks back in no time. You'll look pretty again and we'll make sure of it," Gideon cajoled, looking calm as he held his sister in his arms.

"Will I really look like my old self again?" she asked feebly, her eyes watery. She looked like an abandoned kitten.

He may have been ruthless at times, but he was still kind to his own sister. After all, she was his only sibling. With a nod, he answered, "Don't worry, I promise you'll be treated by the best doctor in the field."

"B-But what if I never become pretty again?" Gemma asked, her lips trembling. Then, a sudden thought seized her. She had spent the last two days avoiding the memory, but she was beginning to recall the scene of the accident and the events leading up to it. Frantically, she reached out to tug on her brother's shirt as she demanded, "W-Where's Tony? How is he?"

Gideon stiffened at the mention of Tony's name and his gaze darkened considerably. "You don't have to concern yourself with others. All you need to do now is rest."

Upon seeing the angry look in his eyes, she panicked and a flurry of words tumbled out of her mouth as she babbled, "Gideon, you have to understand—I was so blinded with rage that I crashed my car into his. Was he hurt badly? Did I cause trouble again for the family?"

She had, in actual fact, left a huge mess for the Walton Family to clear up, but the rage in Gideon melted when he saw how vulnerable and pitiful she looked.

Conversely, the Hart Family was becoming a huge thorn on his side after this incident.

He was consumed by pent-up resentment. Back in the day, the effort he had invested to build up Hartwell Group was no less than Tony's, but despite their partnership, the latter had only given him one-tenth of the company shares and assets. Gemma, on the other hand, had devoted herself to Tony, only to be sidelined by a woman he had only met a few months ago and now, the Hart Family was keeping the Walton Family from thriving in Bradford City because of the same woman.

With these in mind, Gideon bit out icily, "What good is there for you to bring him up? Haven't you already suffered enough from all the injuries?"

Gemma choked, her sobs dying down as she stammered, "What are you saying, Gideon? Was Tony badly hurt?"

He snorted. "How badly hurt could he be? He's going to be discharged in a couple of days."

She looked at him incredulously. "You're lying to me! If he isn't gravely injured, then why hasn't he visited me? I—" She broke off as she recalled how serious her own injuries were, and at the thought of the garish scars that marked her face, she grew hysterical once more. "No, no, no! He can't visit me at all—not while I look hideous! He's only going to sneer at me and abandon me out of disgust!"

Seeing Gemma like this, Gideon felt his chest tightening with fury as he shouted, "Don't you see, Gemma? Tony doesn't like you at all! He likes Myra! The only reason why we wanted you to marry him in the first place was because it was a chance for both our families to arrive at a win-win situation, but who could have thought that he was such a tasteless b\*stard?"

As far as he was concerned, Gemma was a hundred times better than Myra, but for some twisted reason, that despicable man had fallen head-over-heels for the latter instead. A seething Gideon mentioned with an air of finality, "I've already discussed this with Mom, Dad and Grandpa. You'll be leaving Bradford City to get the treatment you need and once you've recovered, they'll introduce a new man to you."

Judging from the way things had turned out, they could no longer rely on their initial plans to marry Gemma off into the Hart Family in order to establish themselves in the city. Gideon was forced to come up with another plan and fortunately, they had another way out. At that thought, a sinister gleam shone in his eyes.

"What do you mean, Gideon? Are you asking me to give up on Tony by making me leave Bradford City for medical treatment?" She gaped at her brother in shock and when she pieced everything together, she pushed him aside and shrieked, "I won't go! I refuse to leave! Has the best doctor flown in—I demand to be treated here in Bradford City!"

"Be reasonable, Gemma!" Gideon ordered tersely, raising his voice.

"Tell me the truth. Why are you all making me leave Bradford City?" At first, she had believed that her family was worried about her condition and state of mind when they made the decision to send her abroad for treatment. But, if they're going to ask for the best doctor,



why won't they just fly him in? Why is my family sending me away instead of letting me stay with them?

"Mom will go with you so that she can take care of you. Once you leave this place, you can finally get a peace of mind and forget about Tony. That man isn't worth your heartache," he explained with forced patience.

"Is there something going on that I don't know about? Has Tony married that wretched woman?" Gemma asked and her heart clenched with panic at that thought. "No! That can't be! Gideon, you have to help me! I must marry Tony—I'm the only woman who has the right to marry him!"

"That's enough!" Gideon snapped and in one swift move, he carried her over to the bed while she thrashed maniacally. Meanwhile, the doctors whom Kris had called upon were running over to the room. Seeing as Gemma was still struggling to escape, Gideon turned to address the doctors in exhaustion, "Give her a sedative."

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"No! No! Don't lie to me, Gideon! Tell me what the hell is going on! Don't lie to me!" Gemma shouted frantically, her eyes wide as she glowered at her brother. Left unbandaged, the scars and wounds on her face looked jarring under the lights as they pulled and twisted at her skin. Even the doctors were having a hard time taking in the sight of her.

As the doctors tried to pin her down, she flailed her arms and struggled wildly, knocking away the syringe that was filled with the sedative. "Why do I have to leave Bradford City, Gideon? Why? I want to know why!" she yelled. "None of you have any problem with me being with Tony, so why are you making me leave?"

The vein near Gideon's brow throbbed as the patience drained out of him and his face darkened at his sister's hysterical fit. When she reached out to slap away the doctor's hand once more, he abruptly shouted, "That's enough!"

She jumped in shock and her cries died down as she gaped at him. He gritted his teeth as he continued, "Do you know why you have to leave? It's because Tony and the rest of the Hart Family don't want you to stay in the city and get in the way of his relationship with Myra! Did you really think they would forgive you after you crashed your car into his and had him hospitalized? Don't kid yourself! The Hart Family has made it clear that they will be pressing charges against you unless you leave Bradford City! And if they do, you won't just be charged for reckless driving—you'd be charged for attempted murder!"

"But, I wasn't trying to murder him!" Shocked by Gideon's words, Gemma began to stammer, "I-I admit that I lost control, but that's only because Tony said he was going to kill me. I couldn't stand that he was being cruel to me and I hated that he was defending that woman. I lost my mind and I tried to knock him down with my car, but I didn't mean to do it! I-I just wanted him to be nice to me—"

"What did you just say?" His eyes widened as he reached out to grab her by the wrist. "Did you just say that Tony wanted to kill you?"

"No, no!" she denied vehemently, shaking her head as she grew terrified of her brother's demanding tone. "He was only trying to get me to stop harassing him and Myra, but I was angry and upset! He got into his car and he was driving away when I saw how gentle he looked while he was on the phone. That was when I knew he was speaking to that woman and I was overcome by jealousy. I lost control and I tailed after his car..."

She trailed off at the memory of the crash. Aggravated, she began to furiously shake her head. She wanted to reach up to bury her face in her hands, but her hands were numb with pain. "I'm so angry, Gideon! I hate this! Why am I not the one standing next to Tony? Why does Myra get to have him? Why?"

Gemma was starting to sound like a broken record. Gideon clenched his jaw as a hard look passed over his face. After what seemed like a long moment, he sighed in exhaustion and answered, "Look, just do as you're told. Go abroad with Mom and lay low for a bit. We'll let you come back once this whole thing has blown over."

When he saw that she was still manic, he turned to give the doctors a meaningful look. Then, he promised bitterly, "Gemma, we will make them pay for all the pain and suffering they've put you through. I promise."

Having been signaled by Gideon, the doctors pinned the girl down on the bed and administered the sedative. It wasn't long before the hospital room quieted down once more. He watched as his sister slept peacefully and his face grew stormy.

It was evident that Gemma had not meant to crash into him since she had been provoked into doing so. However, he hated that there was no way for him to get back at the Hart Family and to make things worse, he had to tread carefully if he wanted to get through this whole mess unscathed. However, there was one thing he knew for sure—he would make them pay for the turmoil that the Walton Family had experienced all this while.

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Meanwhile, in Tony's hospital ward, Shawn was solemnly eyeing his brother wearing a cast as he asked, "Are you sure that whatever the woman sent you was real?" He had a phone in his hand and there were a couple of images that were displayed on the screen, most of which contained charts and statistics.

Tony was impassive as he answered, "I'm not."

Shawn frowned, looking pensive. He kept his phone and pulled out the chair next to Tony's bed. Then, he sat as he responded, "I'll keep looking into this, no matter what. The Walton Family seem to be up to something, so keep your guard up." Then, he added as an afterthought, "Gemma, in particular, is a time bomb. Grandpa might have banished her from the city, but knowing her, she would definitely put up a fight."

"You don't say," Tony drawled before he reached over to take a slice of pear from the platter on the bedside table.

Shawn was about to reach for a slice as well when the entire platter was taken away from him. He stared at his hand, which was frozen in mid-air, and was rendered speechless for a moment. "Did Miss Stark slice the pears for you?"

"How insightful of you," Tony said sarcastically before he bit into an apple slice. "Get your woman to slice fruits for you and stop stealing from my plate."

Shawn chuckled because he knew that Estelle would rather slice him up than give him apple slices. He glanced at his watch. Upon seeing the time, he raised a brow and announced teasingly, "Right, I won't bother you lovebirds anymore. I have to go and check on Estelle. She has to film a scene tonight."

"It's not some steamy, erotic scene, is it? What kind of scene takes place in the middle of the night?" Tony asked insouciantly.

Shawn's face darkened when he heard that and he retorted with dark amusement, "You know, I could always stay here and take care of you so Miss Stark can take a break. She must be worn out from taking care of you for the past couple of days."

"Whether or not she's worn out is none of your concern." Tony raised his brow and shot his brother a pointed look.

Shawn merely sighed in resignation as he rose from the chair, "She's pregnant now. You should take good care of her and stop being so grumpy in front of her."

"You can see yourself out," Tony quipped indifferently, his face devoid of expression.

Shawn shook his head, then turned to leave the room. It wasn't long after he left when Myra entered with a bag full of take-out containers.

Tony raised his brow at that sight. Then, he turned his gaze away from her, pretending as though he hadn't seen her at all. In fact, he looked as though he could be sulking. Myra smiled pleasantly as she sauntered over to him. She took out the containers and placed them on the bedside table, saying, "Estelle and I passed by a hotel on our way here, so I went down and grabbed you dinner."

Upon hearing that, Tony frowned in disgust and replied icily, "I'm not hungry."

"Oh, well then. I guess I'll just have to eat all these by myself." With that, she opened up the containers and spooned rice for herself before she dug into the side dishes. As though she was impressed by the dishes, she grinned happily at the meal.

He gritted his teeth at this, fuming at the woman sitting before him. He was incredulous at how she came and went as she pleased and he couldn't believe the audacity she had to return with a take-out meal. Lisa had been the one to ask the kitchen to prepare and deliver his meals for the past couple of days. But now, I'm stuck with a woman who not only refuses to prepare meals for me, but has resorted to bringing me take-out! She didn't even bother going home to ask the kitchen to make my meals!

He suddenly barked stiffly, "Come here."

Myra looked at him in confusion. "You just said you weren't hungry."

Tony knew she was feigning innocence and she was deliberately aggravating the situation. He raised his brow once more and tried to hide his amusement as he pointed out coldly, "They just put me on an IV. Shall I take it out and walk over to you myself?"

Myra sighed to herself when she heard that. He's no fun. Then, putting down her bowl and utensils, she shuffled over to him and mumbled, "What is it?"

She had only just stopped by his bedside when he abruptly wrapped his arm around her waist and before she could react, he pulled her into his embrace.

Just then, the door to the suite opened with a click and Myra's face flushed in embarrassment. She tried to straighten her posture, but the man under her refused to let go. His arm tightened around her waist, but he was careful not to hurt her as he pressed her against him. He looked up at the door and his deep voice rumbled next to her ear as he asked curtly, "What is it?"

She stiffened before she turned to look at the doorway.

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Standing in the doorway was a fresh-faced and pretty nurse whom they had never seen before. She had a medical record in one hand and the other held a pen as it rested on the doorknob.

The nurse had frozen in place after seeing the unexpected scene before her and she only snapped out of her daze when she registered what Tony had said. She stammered as she flushed, "P-Pardon me. I saw that the door was open, so I came in without knocking."

Meanwhile, Myra was blushing all the way down to her neck as she tore herself away from him despite his firm hold. As she straightened her posture, she shot him a deadly glare before turning to give the nurse a sheepish look. "I'm sorry; are you here to check up on him? I can step away for a bit while you do your work."

The nurse hummed pensively in response. Myra could be wrong, but she thought there could have been a cold gleam in the nurse's eyes as the latter acknowledged her. However, the nurse resumed her demure countenance as she glanced over at Tony and asked warily, "H-Have I perhaps arrived at the wrong time?"

He eyed her placidly and he was nonchalant as he replied, "You may proceed with the check-up."

"Oh, of course!" The nurse placed the medical record on his bed as she hastened to assess his wounds. When she was done, she scribbled notes onto the record. Then, she nodded as she declared, "Your wounds are healing just fine, but you have to be careful not to tear them again."

"Thank you, Miss," Myra interjected gratefully, having stood at one side throughout the nurse's assessment.

Upon hearing that, the nurse turned and appraised her with a frown. Myra shrugged it off, thinking that she was peeved after she had caught them fooling around earlier. After all, she did mention that he had to take care not to tear his wounds open.

Tony, on the other hand, abruptly pulled Myra toward him, but he had strained his arm in the process and his wounds tore open slightly. Seeing this, the nurse let out a small gasp and quickly held his arm.

When she saw that the other two were giving her an odd look, she regained composure and managed a disapproving look as she chided, "He'll tear his wounds if he strains himself like this. I'll have to get someone to bandage them up again."

An alarmed Myra said apologetically, "Sorry for putting you through the trouble."

With nothing more to say, the nurse rushed out the door, but she was stopped in her tracks when Tony frowned and countered stonily, "It's nothing serious. There's no need to bandage the wounds again."

Myra stared at him. "Why don't you stop messing things up?"

He settled down slightly when he caught her pointed gaze. The nurse, on the other hand, had frozen in place before she saw their exchange and now hurried out of the room with an unreadable look on her face.

It wasn't long before she returned with another nurse and the both of them had a cart between them.

After they had changed the dressing, they each let out a sigh of relief and the second nurse nudged the first one as she teased, "I've never seen you this serious when you do your rounds, Hayley. We only have to do three rounds each, but you've done at least five or six of them here. Are you perhaps angling for a better performance review this month?"

Hayley had felt a lump in her throat when she heard the first part of her colleague's words and she had almost reached out to grab the latter's arm to make her stop talking. However, upon hearing the second half of the statement, Hayley visibly relaxed.

Her gaze darted quickly to the impassive-looking man on the bed before she retorted nonchalantly, "I don't care about the performance review." She looked as though she was about to say something more, but swallowed her words after casting a sideways glance at Myra.

After having wrapped up their task in Tony's hospital room, the two nurses pushed the cart out the door. Then, the nurse playfully bumped her shoulder against Hayley, snapping the girl out of her daze as she asked, "What's going on with you? Do you have a thing for Director Hart?"

A shocked Hayley made to clamp her hand over her colleague's mouth, but the latter had dodged in time and raised a quizzical brow at her. "There's no point trying to keep it a secret from me. Director Hart's fiancée might not have noticed it, but everyone else can tell you have feelings for him—it's written all over your face."

Hayley was taken aback at first, but a slow smile started to tug on her lips as she turned to look at the other nurse. "Are you saying that everyone knows except for Miss Stark?"

"Well, of course." The nurse rolled her eyes in exasperation. "I mean, I thought it was pretty obvious. But, Hayley, seeing as both our fathers have maintained a long-standing friendship and you and I are rather close as well, I think it's my duty to tell you to stay away from that man. I've heard that he was the one who pursued Miss Stark romantically and she's the only person he'll marry. There were plenty of women who threw themselves at him a couple of years ago, but he didn't so much as spare them a glance and he couldn't even be bothered with the attention they gave him. You know that lady who stays on this floor—the one with the badly disfigured face? She ended up in this terrible state because she offended Miss Stark. One can't help but feel sorry for her."

The nurse then patted Hayley's shoulder and added, "Your father's been setting you up with a couple of dates, hasn't he? Take this chance to find a good man to settle down with—someone whose status is similar to ours. Trust me, you don't want to get yourself entangled with Director Hart."

"I don't like how you're putting it, Marianne," A displeased Hayley protested. "Isn't Director Hart and his family way out of Miss Stark's league too? Besides, we come from political families, Marianne. Who is to say that I can't be useful to the Hart Family?"

Marianne frowned. "The Hart Family would naturally have strong political connections, so they'll have no use for people like us. I'm just looking out for you. It won't end well for you if you fall too deep."

"I know," Hayley replied as she nodded while they made their way toward the nursing unit. She knew that Marianne would only continue to nag if she did not accede to her advice. "I know you mean well and I promise I won't overstep my boundaries."

However, their conversation only made her more determined to pursue the man. Why shouldn't I go after the most eligible bachelor? We're both unmarried, so I have every right to pursue him. Besides, didn't Marianne just say that everyone can tell I have feelings for him? Does that mean that he knows too?

As Hayley dwelled on that thought, she told herself that she liked him not because of his wealth, status or family background, but for who he truly was. She convinced herself that she had his best interests in heart and having done so, she felt much better.

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Meanwhile, Myra had waited until the nurses left the wars before she shot Tony several affronted looks. "I was the one who made the meal—right to the very last dish. You can either eat it or go hungry for the rest of the night!"

She was furious at how he didn't seem to care about his own body in the slightest.

When he heard that, his expression softened and he beckoned her over to the bed.

Myra pursed her lips and refused to budge. Seeing this, he raised a brow and made as if to get down from the bed.



He had only just been put on the IV and she grew worried that he could very well detach the cannula. Out of resignation, she sauntered over to him.

Tony reached out to clasp her hand in his and his voice was flat as he responded, "I'm hungry, but my hands are rather clumsy at the moment."

She nearly sputtered at this. He was a proud man, but he had as good as told her that he was hungry and he wanted her to spoon-feed him.

An amused Myra glanced at their overlapping hands and pointed out, "You have to let go of my hand if you want me to bring the dishes over."

Tony nodded and released her so that she could bring the dishes over to him. However, instead of feeding him, she placed the containers down next to the bed and added, "Here you go. You'll have to eat dinner on your own because I need to ask the nurses whether you have to be on the IV for the rest of the night once you're done with this bottle."

With that, she stepped away from him and headed out the door.

He watched as she walked away with her straight back. Then, he raised a brow as his lips curved up in a smirk.

...

In another hospital room, Gemma had regained consciousness after the sedative wore off and her previously calm demeanor was swiftly replaced with several rounds of her hysterical fits.

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Most of her fits revolved around the same thing—she didn't want to leave Bradford City and she insisted on having the doctor flown in so that she could receive her treatment here in the hospital.

There had also been several occasions when Gemma tried to sneak over to Tony's hospital ward at the end of the corridor, but she was reprimanded by the guards stationed outside her room before she could even get past the threshold.

The bodyguards had been stationed outside her door ever since she found out about the severity of her wounds. While her family had told her that the bodyguards were for her protection, they were secretly worried that she would throw a manic fit and stir up trouble once more. Gemma had avidly protested against this decision, but it was to no avail. In addition to her tantrums, the injuries on her hands had taken a turn for the worse after her refusal to sit still and recuperate. It wasn't until after Edward's stern warning that she finally settled.

"Mom, I don't want to leave Bradford City. Why am I being banished?" Gemma sobbed pathetically after he had left the room. She burrowed into Shelly's arms as she cried, "Mom, if I promise to never throw another fit, can you convince Grandpa to let me stay? My face is already ruined—I don't understand how the Hart Family could still treat me like this..."

Shelly regarded her daughter with a pained look as her eyes rimmed red. Gemma was the apple of her eye and Shelly had indulged in her every whim ever since the day she was born. It broke her heart to see the suffering that the girl endured, but Edward's words had left her with no choice. Patting her daughter's head, she cajoled, "Gemma, I'll be with you the entire time and I'm going to take great care of you while we're abroad. Gideon will bring us to the airport this evening. As soon as your face recovers, we'll catch the first flight back to Bradford City, okay?"

"No, it's not okay!" Gemma shrieked, swatting away Shelly's hands as her eyes grew bloodshot. "I'm not leaving! I'm not going anywhere! You know there's no way for me to return after I leave the city! Even if there was a way, Myra would be married to Tony by then! I can't let her marry him! Mom, you have to help me—you're the only one who can! I didn't manage to get rid of the child in her womb—" She broke off as a sudden thought seized her. Then, she turned to look at her mother steadily as she added, "Mom, why don't you go and help me to get rid of that mongrel Myra's carrying?"

Upon seeing the crazed look in the girl's eyes, Shelly felt her heart clench and she patted the former's shoulder as she offered in consolation, "Don't worry, dear. I know how much you've suffered and I promise you whatever pain Myra has put you through, I will unleash on her a thousandfold of it!"

There was a steely edge to her words. She was certain that Myra was the only reason why her daughter had spiraled into madness.

Squeezing Gemma's hand, Shelly spoke with an air of finality, "Get some rest, Gemma. We'll work out our next step after this." Feeling tired all of a sudden, she straightened her back and decided to head home to pack up her things. As she was leaving, she cast a meaningful look at the bodyguards standing outside the door, silently ordering them to keep an eye on her daughter.

It wasn't long after Shelly had left that Kris dropped by to visit Gemma.

At first, the bodyguards had denied entrance to Kris, but Gemma noticed her presence and eyed the two men stonily. "I asked Kris to drop by for a chat; it gets boring here when I'm on my own."

The guards exchanged a look and each knew what the other was thinking. It should be fine for her to meet a friend, as long as nothing happens to her. Besides, the visitor happens to be Gideon's girlfriend. What could go wrong?

After having achieved a consensus among themselves, the two burly men stepped aside and allowed Kris through.

When Gemma had closed the door, Kris turned to look at her and saw that her face was concealed under bandages once more. She shuddered as she recalled the grotesque image she had seen the other day, but feigned nonchalance as she stood in front of Gemma.

Upon seeing that Gemma was staring at her, Kris frowned and began gingerly, "About the other day—I did lace Myra's lemonade with the drug, but a secretary in her office had probably taken the drink by accident and she ended up in a terrible manner. Myra could have figured out that something's wrong because she's asked Dad for a maternity leave. I can't continue with our plans anymore, seeing as she hasn't been to work recently."

"You incompetent fool!" Gemma seethed as her gaze darkened with scorn and her grimace looked worse with all the layers of bandages. Kris swallowed and clenched her fists at the sight of this, but before she could say anything, the mutilated girl shot her an incredulous look as she snapped, "So, you're just going to give up and do nothing? Why didn't you try to get rid of the child again?"

"Look, I'm left without a choice here. Tony has likely grown suspicious of Elsie and he's forcing her out of Bradford City. I think he knows what we've been up to, but funnily enough, he hasn't come after me yet or demanded an answer out of me. All this suspense is making me jumpy," Kris remarked pensively as her brows drew together.

"The only reason why he hasn't come after you is because Elsie hasn't sold us out yet! You're going to become the next Young Mistress of the Walton Family, but you're so spineless that it makes me sick. How can someone like you be good enough for my brother?" Gemma thundered, her words cutting.

Kris could feel herself growing diminutive at the abuse, but she swallowed the bitterness instead of lashing out in defense and replied dryly, "I'll try to find another way to get things done."

"There's no need for that. Myra's been lingering around this floor recently, but she has to go out and do her own things at some point. All you have to do is get your timing right and carry out our plans. I'll take care of whatever comes after that," Gemma instructed breezily. Kris, on the other hand, could feel her heart clench in spite and fury.

While Gemma sounded as though she was ready to bear the brunt of whatever could happen next, Kris knew better than to trust her. She would not hesitate to wash her hands off as soon as things go south and she would have Kris become a scapegoat. Nonetheless, Kris lowered her gaze and responded coldly, "Got it."

Meanwhile, Gemma was beginning to grow tired of the conversation. Kris was an eyesore and she looked like Myra, if not prettier. Any woman who was young and beautiful was considered an eyesore to Gemma now and she couldn't help but think about the travesty that was her lacerated face.

After a while, Kris left the room and her eyes grew cold as soon as the door closed behind her. "An incompetent fool, huh?" Her red lips curved into a smirk as a look of disgust and scorn filled her eyes. "I'd like to see who will turn out to be the incompetent fool after this!"

She pulled up a video on her phone—one which she had gone through painstaking measures to obtain and without sparing another thought, she uploaded the clip into a mailbox and sent it out.

As she kept her phone, Kris recalled what Gemma had said earlier. If Myra was on this floor, then Kris would hate to run into her. With that in mind, she hurried toward the elevators.

However, Myra herself was making her way over from the direction of the elevator lobby.

Kris stiffened as she took in the stoic expression on Myra's face. She wasn't sure how much Myra knew about the details of the incident, but she felt uneasy all the same.

Feigning nonchalance, she brushed past Myra, but as soon as she did so, she heard Myra speak chillingly, "I hear that it takes forever to wash blood off one's hands, Kris."

While Kris bristled at the words, Myra simply sauntered down the hall and created some distance between both of them. Kris' eyes flashed with mixed emotions, but her gaze darkened after a while. It's not my fault that Myra insisted on stealing everything from me! She should have known that I'm not one to share!

...

Myra was walking down the hallway toward Tony's room when she was unable to repress the remorse in her heart. She then made a call to the secretary who had recently suffered a miscarriage.

Upon hearing her family answering the call, Myra inquired about the poor woman's condition and told them that she would drop by to visit her soon before hanging up the call.

Myra felt her heart sink as she thought about how the family had sounded grateful for her concern. She did not dare to tell them that she was the reason why the secretary had suffered a miscarriage in the first place. After all, she had no proof to support this devastating claim.