

President 161

Chapter 161

"He and Summer went over there. They must have stayed there last night." Jazz was upset and irritated when talking about this.

Yvette hit the spoon on the table with a loud clunk." She shows no respect for me at all!"

"Mom, why do you say that?" Jazz was not too happy. He frowned and retorted, "It was only natural for

her to visit her family a day after New Year. Since Mark did not come home yesterday, they must have

discussed and agreed to do so. Can you just leave them alone?"

They visited Summer's parents yesterday and had not returned since then. They must have stayed at the house of Summer's parents last night.

Only then did it hit Raine, whose hands holding the bowl of soup tightened. She found that her understanding of Mark was getting foggier.

And Mark seemed to stray off his original course.

Her heart ached, the feelings of pins and needles spreading all over her body. She even had slight difficulty breathing.

She put down the bowl and got up, the muscles of her cheeks stiffening. "Please excuse me."

And she left the table.

Jazz's words got on Yvette's nerves as if adding fuel to the fire. "Who are you talking about right now,

Jazz?"

"I am not referring to any person. I am just telling things as they are." Jazz leaned back in the chair."

Don't you think you are micromanaging?"

"What do you mean by micromanaging? What is wrong with a mother-in-law who is concerned for her

daughter-in-law, and a mother who is concerned for her son?"

It was painful talking to her. Jazz felt that she was distorting what he meant. "There is nothing wrong

with having concerns. But I am not talking about that. Don't you think you are too strict with Summer?"

Yvette looked Jazz in the eyes, disgruntled. "What do you mean by I am too strict with her?"

Obviously, she just would not get it. The more he talked, the deeper he was digging himself into a hole.

Yvette would only become more agitated and fall into extremity.

Besides, their relationship would also deteriorate. So there was no need to prolong the quarrel.

Jazz stopped and tried to divert her attention before the situation went too far enough. "Don't you like

fish fillet, Mom? Today's fish fillet is umami."

"You haven't answered my question: what do you mean by I am too strict with Summer? Before outsiders even say anything, my son has started to despise me. I have got to find out why."

Yvette's expression changed. She would not stop until her son gave her an explanation. She could not

accept that her son described her in that way.

"I am just kidding. Come on, try the fish fillet, Mom." Jazz smiled, his charming eyes squinting into slits

as he tried to avoid further conflict and pushed a plate of fish fillet in front of her.

"Jazz, why are you speaking in favor of Summer? I remember when you called me at night some time

back, wanting me to ask your brother to bail out your class teacher from the police station. Was that class teacher Summer?" Yvette suddenly recalled that previous incident.

"It has been so long. Why do you still want to talk about it?" Jazz said.

"The police will not arrest and send someone to jail for no reason. She was locked up for a reason, which is enough to show that she has questionable personality and character."

Jazz was not too happy to hear that. So he retorted, "I told you she had a good reason."

With a sarcastic expression, Yvette earnestly urged, "Do you think she will show her true self in front of

you, Jazz?"

"I know her very well." Jazz's face sank.

"How can you be so sure? I think she must be a scheming woman. Otherwise, she would not have thought of using pregnancy as a trap to force your brother to marry her."

Having reached his limit, Jazz flung his cutlery on the dining table and left without even looking at Yvette.

He did not like to hear any of those words, nor did he want to hear them. He knew Summer well enough.

Yvette furrowed her brows, wondering why he lost his cool.

She thought it must be Summer who had influenced him. Otherwise, he would not have sided with Summer.

She hated Summer even more when she thought of this.

Raine just emerged from the washroom when Jazz stormed out of the living room. "What is going on

with Jazz, Yvette?" she asked.

Yvette suppressed her emotions and said calmly, "I reprimanded him about his studies and he did not

like it. He has a hot temper."

"Jazz is an independent kid. You don't have to worry about him, Yvette." Raine suspected nothing.

"Yeah, I don't think I can change anything about him, no matter how worried I am. He would probably

listen once after you speak to him for the hundredth time. By the way, it is January 4 tomorrow. I

almost forgot," Yvette said.

"What happens on January 4?" Raine looked at Yvette in puzzlement.

"It is Mark's birthday. I have been busy these few days and almost forgot about it."

It suddenly dawned on Raine. "I almost forgot if you didn't tell me. How did Mark spend his birthday

previously?"

"As you know, Mark likes it quiet. So our family usually gets together and has a meal in a hotel restaurant."

"What about this year?"

"Wait for Mark to decide. We will discuss it when he comes home."

Raine returned to her room after a while. She picked up the calendar on the bedside table and drew a

heart shape on January 4 using a pen.

She drew it so lightly that no one was going to notice it without looking closely.

This was because she did not want Yvette to see it. She had never forgotten the day, which she had forever ingrained in her mind.

January 4 was his birthday, which was tomorrow.

She had been suppressing her feelings, which screamed and wrestled about in her body.

Inside the room

Two people crammed and hugged each other to sleep in a single-sized bed.

The bed was so small that if they slept by lying on their backs, it was not going to fit. So the only way

was to sleep on their sides, face-to-face.

Mark was apparently too tall for the bed. He could not stretch but had to bend his legs while he slept.

The sun had come out, shining in through the green window screens, and on their bodies.

The sunlight was a little dazzling. Summer blinked. Only after her eyes had adapted to the light did she

slowly open her eyes.

The good-looking, sunshine-filled face was just inches from her. Her heart fluttered as she stared at

him from this distance in silence.

After a long while, she carefully removed his hand that was wrapped around her waist, and then got up

and walked out of the room.

Solomon was reading the newspaper when he heard footsteps and looked up. "Good morning. Where

is Mark?"

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"He is still sleeping," Summer said.

As she walked into the bathroom, she heard voices speaking from the living room.

"Mark is still asleep. Let's wait for him to have breakfast together," Solomon said.

"Alright. Keep your voice down. Don't wake him up." Daisy's voice was not any softer, though.

Listening on, Summer shook her head in an I-can't-even fashion while her mouth was filled with

toothpaste foam. 1

When she came out of the bathroom, Amara was lying on the settee, whining about her hungry

stomach.

"Mom, let's have breakfast. Just keep a small portion for Mark," Summer said.

"That's not very gracious. Just wait a little longer. We will have breakfast when Mark is here," Daisy

said.

While they were talking, Mark just woke up and walked out of the room, his eyes barely open. He was

buttoning his shirt as he emerged, his bare chest exposed, revealing his sexy and charming wall of muscles.

Amara looked on, wide-eyed as she was treated to

such rare eye candy in the morning.

Mark came to his senses when he sensed the stare. Without looking up, he quickened his motion to finish buttoning his shirt.

He then raised his head with a smile at the corners of his mouth. "Good morning, Dad, Mom."

"Good morning. Did you sleep well last night?" Daisy asked with a smile.

"Fantastic, and I even had a good dream," Mark smiled and said gently.

"That is good. Go wash up. We will have breakfast in a while." Daisy was very satisfied with her son-in-

law.

Meanwhile, Summer was making breakfast: traditional Esthainian and French breakfast.

Summer was not a big fan of bread. So she brought out a bowl of oatmeal and some croissants.

In her eyes, French cuisine belonged to the bourgeoisie. For ordinary people like her, she preferred a

simple diet and homely fare, which were affordable and delicious.

That said, the occasional French breakfast was a refreshing change.

Mark, who was sitting next to her, was also getting oatmeal and a fried egg.

The gathering of the five of them at the dining table created a warm and happy scene.

As Mark and Summer had to leave after breakfast, Daisy exhorted, "Feel free to come home whenever

you two want to."

"Thanks, Mom. Summer and I will come home more often."

Mark smiled as he put his hand around Summer's waist. Summer jolted, her face slightly reddening.

There was an affectionate look in Mark's eyes when he thought of last night. He reached to draw the

wispy ends of her hair to the back of her ears and then looked at Daisy. "She is a little bashful."

Summer gritted her teeth and glared at him. Thinking of last night, she felt blood rushing up her ears.

"Not everyone is as thick-skinned as you are."

It gratified Daisy to see Mark and Summer flirting with each other. "Don't mention it, Mark. We are

family. Drive safe."

He nodded in acknowledgement, and then started the engine of his black Land Rover as Summer gave

Daisy her goodbyes. She then got into the car and they left.

Summer figured that Yvette must have discovered that they did not return home last night. She let out a

soft sigh of helplessness, expecting to get an earful when they arrived at the Valentine mansion.

Yvette would surely not give a damn if she was the only one staying overnight there.

But Mark was with her and did not return home. This would not please Yvette, she thought.

Mark gave a sideways glance at her when he heard her sighing. "Seems that you really don't feel like

going back to the Valentine mansion, Mrs. Valentine."

"No, I am just thinking about something else—"

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Before her voice trailed off, her phone vibrated. She picked it up and saw that it was Grace.

"Where are you now?" Grace asked.

"On the way back to the Valentine mansion. What is wrong?"

"Nothing. I am just bored to death. I will see you at the Valentine mansion." The line went dead.

Mark cocked an eyebrow with his eyes squinted. "Who was that?"

"Grace. She said she will come to see me in the Valentine mansion," Summer said upon hanging up the phone.

"Still in contact with Officer Singleton?" He turned the steering to the right as he casually asked in a deep voice.

"Uh-huh." She nodded.

He looked over at her with concern. "Doesn't he know you are married?"

"That has nothing to do with befriending him." Summer paused for a second before she continued. "H e

is a good person; sincere, kind, and honorable. He is a rare friend."

She was telling the truth. Few people were like Dean i n society today.

She did not want to lose a friend like him.

Mark raised his eyebrows, his lips pressed together into a straight line, and his face darkened.

She must be thinking he did not exist. She spoke so highly and even praised another man in front of her husband.

"You have such a good impression of Officer Singleton. What about me?" he asked slowly.

She cocked an eyebrow after thinking for a moment." Scheming businessman. Didn't you describe yourself like that before? To be honest, I think this summarizes you well."

His gloomy face looked pale, but he kept a lazy yet dangerous smile. "Thank you for the compliment,

Mrs. Valentine."

Sensing that dangerous vibe, Summer looked away, cleared her throat and said, "You are welcome."

Mark hissed, reaching to lift her chin to give her a punishing bite on the lips.

Summer gasped in pain. With her hands on his chest, she tried to push him away. "Concentrate when

driving!" she mumbled.

"Kiss me, and I will let you go. Otherwise..." He grinned.

She glared at him.

He did not seem to see it, but kept holding her chin with his hand.

He was not embarrassed of himself, but she was.

She blushed. With her eyes closed, she drew close and gently planted her lips on his.

Mark's eyes were on her cheeks, which looked silky white with a tinge of pink and shyness. Her long

and curly eyelashes flickered as if they were flirting with him.

Summer had guessed it right; Yvette was sitting on the settee with a sullen face the moment she stepped into the living room.

Yvette's facial expression gave her the heebie-jeebies.

"Why did you come back so late?" Yvette was looking at Mark but she apparently took aim at Summer.

Mark kneaded his brows with his hand and replied, "It was getting late last night. Besides, I couldn't

refuse their hospitality, and so I stayed over there for the night."

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What Mark said was reasonable. Yvette could not find fault with him. "Really?"

"Yeah," Mark replied and went upstairs to get changed. Now there were only Yvette and Summer in the

living room.

Just when Yvette was about to speak, a series of footsteps was heard before Grace and Charlie came through the door.

"Happy New Year, Ms. Yvette. It has been so long yet you still look as pretty as ever." Charlie's charming eyes narrowed into slits as he smiled.

No one disliked compliments. Yvette was no exception. She broke into a bright smile. "You sweettalker."

While speaking, Yvette cast her eyes on Grace, looking at her up and down. "This is..."

Grace was wearing fur and a short skirt with heavy makeup, her black wavy hair cascading down her

shoulders.

"Nice to meet you. I am a friend of Summer's. I have always wanted to meet you because I have heard

from Summer that you are young and beautiful," Grace said politely.

Grace was good with people. She knew what to say and when to say it, depending on the people and circumstances.

But Yvette disliked women with heavy makeup. It got worse when she heard Grace was a friend of Summer's. She secretly despised Grace, but it did not show on her face. "Maria, two cups of coffee, please."

Grace was smart enough to see that Yvette was giving her the cold shoulder. But she pretended not to

see it.

By this time, Mark had gotten changed and came downstairs. He raised his eyebrows when he saw

Charlie and Grace. "I didn't know that you two would come together."

Charlie gave him a sideways look. "Why wouldn't we come together, Mark?"

Grace quietly swept her eyes over Charlie, who had a hickey on the neck. She deliberately left that

hickey on his neck last night. It now looked black and blue.

Mark glanced at the two with his eyes narrowed. But he did not expose the two.

"How about we play poker since we are all free?" Charlie suggested.

Grace spread out her hands, meaning that she had no objection.

Neither did Mark and Summer, and they readily agreed.

Right at this time, Raine came downstairs. She first glanced at Mark, then at the others with a smile.

"Hi, Charlie."

"I didn't know you were home too, Raine." Charlie had a charming smile on his face. He strode up to

her and gave her a big, warm hug.

Grace secretly stared at them. Mark's good-looking face still had that impassive expression that gave

out nothing.

"We are planning to play poker. Do you want to join us?" Charlie asked as he pulled away from Raine.

Raine glanced at the four of them. "I am not so good at that."

"It doesn't matter. You will be given a handicap." Charlie looked at Mark and Summer.

"Count me out. I will just watch you guys playing," Mark said.

They did not go to the room but stayed in the living hall. Four of them sat at the table while Mark stayed

out and watched from the sidelines.

Three women and a man, Charlie.

"Now, I am not going to pull punches just because you all are women. So you all had better prepare yourselves. Let's start with a higher ante: three thousand. How about that?"

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Summer quickly waved her hand. "Why don't you guys just play with me."

Grace tugged at her best friend's sleeve. "What are you afraid of? Isn't your husband sitting behind you? He has the money. Am I right, Mark?"

Mark put his hands on Summer's shoulders to sit her back down. "Of course."

"Look, your husband throws his support behind you. What more are you worried about?"

Summer's face was smitten upon hearing what Grace said. She had never called Mark as her husband.

Her heart pounded uncontrollably when she heard that intimate address, even if it was someone else who said it.

On the contrary, Raine's hands on her sides pinched her thighs as she reflexively looked at Mark.

There was a gentle smile on Mark's good-looking face. But he was looking at Summer and teaching

her how to play poker. 1

Yvette was sitting on the settee, throwing glances at the poker table occasionally.

Charlie bragged and blustered to demolish the other

three right from the beginning.

Mark shot a cold glance at him. "Don't worry, mate. I will leave you a pair of underwear."

It turned out later that Charlie had a streak of bad luck; he lost in every game and did not get his money

back.

Grace glanced at him. "You deserve it."

Raine let out a faint smile, her book more or less balanced. Charlie lost the most, while Summer was

the ultimate winner.

Summer had been getting good cards, not to mention she had an advisor behind her. She won so much that money was stacking up on her side.

Mark sat behind Summer, extending a long arm as he reached for the card. It looked as if he was embracing her in his arms, as he tilted his head a little to whisper into her ears.

It gladdened Grace to see the intimate interaction between the two of them. It looked like they were

getting along well.

But it was another story with Raine. She could not help stealing glances at Mark while trying not to be

noticed. She was so jealous that her body trembled involuntarily.

If she stayed on this way, she knew she would go crazy. She could not bear to see the lovey-dovey couple any longer.

She thought maybe she should make a decision instead of letting things go on like this.

They stopped the game after a while. Charlie, who lost all his money, followed Mark upstairs to discuss

some business.

Raine, whose facial expression was not exactly revealing, went upstairs, too.

Grace and Summer were still sitting in the living room, chatting away. They talked about Sherman, and

Summer asked with concern. "How is Sherman doing now?"

"She is still the same. That jerk Billy had better not repeat the same mistake. If he gets caught again, I

will surely castrate him!" Grace could not hold back her anger and cursed when talking about it.

Yvette overheard what Grace said and took it all in.

Birds of a feather flock together. She raised her eyebrows and despised them even more.

"I am not talking about this. I was asking if she is still sad."

"How can she not be sad? She caught him with his pants down. It must have hurt her dearly."

Summer knew what Grace said was true. If she were to be in Sherman's shoes, she would probably

never forget. "How is the relationship between them now?"

Grace fiddled with her hands. "It has been tense ever since. Billy is apologetic, groveling at Sherman's

feet, while Sherman cannot get over it and is sullen all day."

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"I don't know how long this atmosphere between them will last, sadly." Summer sighed helplessly.

Grace also shrugged helplessly upon hearing that. "Who knows? It will probably take a long time. It

hurts her deeply, and there is nothing we can do except to comfort her."

The two sat there chatting for a long time. When Charlie came downstairs, Grace left with him.

Summer saw them out. It was not until their car disappeared from her sight that she came back into the

Valentine mansion.

As she reached the landing of the stairs, Yvette suddenly called out to her.

She stopped and spun around with a smile. "What is it, Mom?"

"What does your friend do for a living?" Yvette asked with her legs crossed.

"She is a public relations manager," Summer said, hiding nothing from her.

"Since she is a public relations manager, she should know proper behavior and etiquette. So why did

she speak so rudely?" Yvette's delicate willow brow turned upward. "As the saying goes, a person is judged by the

company she keeps. You are now married to Mark. Stay away from people like her."

"That is because you don't know her. She is just a bit forthright, inevitably uttering some unpleasant words when her temper flares. But she did not mean it. I have known her for five years, and so I know

what kind of person she is." Summer deliberately spoke slowly and clearly, with a faint smile on her face so that Yvette could hear every word she said.

She did not mind if Yvette said something like that to her, but she could not accept Yvette to talk about

her closest friend like this.

She spoke softly and appropriately, but not harshly. It completely rendered Yvette speechless.

Finally, Yvette spoke. "You had better know what to do. By the way, tomorrow is Mark's birthday. Have

you discussed with him how to celebrate?"

'It is his birthday tomorrow?'

Summer was struck dumb. But she quickly recovered and shook her head. "Not yet."

"Discuss it with Mark tonight, and once decided, let me know. How can you be so mindless of things

about your husband?" 1

There was a strong sense of dissatisfaction and grievance in Yvette's voice. She got up and returned to

her room without sparing a glance at Summer.

When Summer returned to her room, Mark was looking at what might look like the contract documents

that Charlie had brought and waited for his signature.

Not wanting to disturb him, Summer poured two glasses of water, one placed next to him on the table,

one for herself. She held the other glass and sipped on the water slowly.

Probably he was thirsty. He picked up the glass and took a sip, then frowned. "Don't we have coffee,

Mrs.

Valentine?"

"Drinking water is healthier than drinking coffee. Try to drink some. There is no harm."

When she thought of what Yvette said just now, she tried to sound him out. "Do you have time tomorrow evening?"

"Why?" He raised his eyes slightly and squinted at her, then took a sip of water. It did not taste so bad

after all.

"There is no why. Why don't you answer me first: do you have time tomorrow evening?"

His lips curled up. He was a little curious, the pen in his hand stopping as he stared at her with a meaningful look. "May I know what is going on, Mrs. Valentine?"

"You will know when the time comes tomorrow."

He stopped asking, but just glanced at his itinerary. "I have contracts to sign in the morning and noon. I

will be free after seven in the evening."

"Then we will meet after seven tomorrow evening."

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The next day

It was 8:00 am when Summer woke up. The quilt beside her was cold, which meant Mark had been away for quite a while.

She got out of bed and came into the living room, where Yvette and Raine were busy with something.

There were many birthday presents delivered to the Valentine mansion, and they kept coming. There

was no telling what was inside those boxes. But by the looks of the beautiful packaging, these presents

were all expensive.

Summer quickly walked over to offer to help. Yvette asked, "Have you discussed with Mark last night

on how to celebrate his birthday?"

Raine's hands suddenly paused as she listened in to their conversation.

"I did not discuss it with him because I was thinking of giving him a surprise. After all, it is his birthday.

He said he will be available after seven in the evening. So I want to discuss with you and Aunt about

the plan," Summer said.

At first, she was thinking of creating an element of surprise. But judging by the number of presents received, it was difficult to create one.

With so many presents sent to the Valentine mansion, some people must have also delivered presents

to his office.

Yvette turned around to look at Raine. "What do you have in mind?"

"I have no idea right now. I will leave it to you." Raine still had that demure and discreet look on her

face.

"Since this is the case, I will decide, then. At first, I thought about hosting a banquet in a hotel, but

Grudin North has just experienced an earthquake, and your brother is the governor there. Organizing

an extravagant party right now will only hurt his reputation. Besides, Mark likes it quiet and low profile.

So I will book a table of his favorite dishes in the restaurant of a hotel. What do you think?"

Since there was no objection from the two of them, it was decided so.

After helping to clean up everything, Summer first went to the most famous astrologer in town and got

Mark a good-luck charm made of peach wood, to be worn on the wrist.

After that, she went shopping again, hunting for Mark's birthday present, of course.

Suits, shirts, belts, watches, wallets, perfumes, and ties are the most common things that men use.

But she had given him shirts before this. So it was out of consideration. After thinking about it long and

hard, she thought a wallet was an excellent option.

So, she went to the most famous designer store in Santabaca. She could find everything she could

think of here.

She found a black wallet with a dark pattern, resembling some flowery branches, which looked nice.

After knowing the price, she frowned. This wallet cost a few thousand dollars.

Again, she looked around at the other stores. She saw many styles of wallets and their prices were reasonable, but she did not feel the urge to buy any of them.

So she returned to the original store and bought the wallet with a credit card. She then left.

But just after she left, Baine walked into this same store.

The salesgirl came up to greet her. "May I help you, M s.?"

"I am looking for a birthday present." Baine nodded at the salesgirl with a gentle smile.

"Is it for your boyfriend or an ordinary male friend?"

"Is there any difference between the two?" Baine frowned.

"Of course there are some differences. In fact, things like shirts, ties, and suits, which are more intimate, are better suited for boyfriends. If you are giving it to a n ordinary male friend, I suggest a watch, wallet, or perfume," the salesgirl explained.

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Since Yvette was not there with her, she could choose whatever she liked. Besides, her favorite had

always been shirts.

When you see the man who you love wearing the shirt that you hand-picked for him, the sense of satisfaction and possession is beyond words.

But she could not choose that way if Yvette was here.

"Actually, in these recent times, wallets have been the best-selling item. It is simple yet presentable. It

is definitely an excellent choice." The salesgirl was enthusiastic as she walked around the counter, took

out a wallet, and showed it to Baine. "You may consider this model, young lady."

The luster of the leather was just right. It was not too over-the-top, nor did it look dull. The flower-branch pattern added a noble and elegant touch to the wallet, which was highly presentable.

Baine ran her fingers across the wallet. The leather felt soft and looked good.

"You won't go wrong with this wallet. Before you came, a lady bought one of these wallets, too."

"Beally?" Baine let out a smile.

"Yeah, she has just left, and we have a copy of the

receipt." The salesgirl smiled at her.

She really liked this wallet. So she handed her credit card to the salesgirl without hesitation.

Both Summer and Baine did not know that they had bought the same model of wallet.

Yvette had made a reservation at the restaurant in Paragon Hotel. It was a revolving restaurant on the

32nd floor at the top of the hotel.

Sitting at the table in this restaurant will give you a 180-degree view of the night skyline of Santabaca

as the restaurant slowly rotates.

Not wanting to be disturbed, Yvette had talked to the manager in advance, and the hotel would not allow any outsiders, including reporters, to enter.

Yvette still had her own influence in Santabaca. So the hotel manager readily obliged. He even sent over a bouquet as greetings.

In the conference room

Mark and Charlie sat facing each other, while the company's top executives and managers sat on both

sides.

They both had viewed the contract documents and verified that everything was in order. What was left

to be done was to sign on the dotted lines.

Both parties exchanged their contract documents, where each of them signed in the corresponding

column, and then stood up and shook hands to

congratulate each other.

Immediately afterwards, all the top executives and managers left, leaving only Mark and Charlie in the

conference room.

Charlie leaned back and smiled, his charming eyes narrowed into slits. "You have anywhere to go later,

Mark?"

"No." Mark's eyebrows quirked up.

"Come on, it is your birthday today. Are you going to let it pass just like this?"

A dim light flashed in his eyes and his lips curled up as he recalled her slightly shy and mysterious delicate face. He glanced at Charlie and closed the file in his hand, then looked down at his watch.

"I am not available after seven. It is now six forty. You had better say it now if you have anything to say.

If not, I am going to leave. Don't waste my time here."

"You have a date? Just cancel it and stay with me.

Look at you-you look like you cannot wait to go home already."

Mark shot a cold glance at him. "What fun is it to be with you? Besides, I am not interested in you at

all."

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Charlie wailed as he placed his hands upon his chest in an exaggerated fashion. "Am I an

embarrassment to you now? I can give all the fun that women can provide you with. Do you want to try,

Mark?"

Mark looked in disgust at Charlie, who winked at him flirtatiously, his eyebrows twitching. "You are

disgusting."

"I am disgusting? How am I disgusting to you? I might not have what women have, but I have everything that women do not. Don't you want to try?"

What were those embarrassed and disgusted looks on his face about?

Charlie did that deliberately. The more Mark found him disgusting, the more excited he would be and

tried to push his luck. He lay on the conference table with his legs crossed in a charming and sultry posture. "Look at my body and face. Aren't they great? Don't you want me?"

"I think you may find yourself a second job as a hustler. By the way, are you sure you don't need me to

call Grace to come over?"

Charlie gave a nervous cough upon hearing that, and then fished out a key from his suit pocket and

threw it

to Mark.

Mark raised an eyebrow and looked at him in puzzlement.

"Here is your birthday present: a newly built villa in Pine Hills, Santabaca; surrounded by mountains

and rivers with fresh air. I think it is perfect for you and your wife to do whatever you two want there."

While speaking, he got down from the conference table, brushed down his suit, and left the conference

room.

"Where are you going now?" Mark looked at him from behind.

"I have decided to listen to your advice: tame her vicious claws with my tenderness."

Mark glanced at the scratches on Charlie's neck and smirked. 'Her claws are vicious indeed,' he

thought to himself.

The Paragon Hotel

Yvette, Summer, Paine, and Jazz had all arrived.

Summer had wanted to decorate the restaurant to create an element of surprise. But after thinking it through, she figured that a man like Mark would not be fond of these kinds of things. Besides, the three of them did not seem to be so enthusiastic. So she thought better of it.

"Hasn't Mark arrived yet?" Yvette frowned.

Summer glanced at the time. "It is six fifty, so it is not time yet. He should be here after seven."

Yvette nodded and looked at Jazz. "Did your dad call you?"

"Why should he call me? It is Mark's birthday. He should call Mark instead," Jazz said.

"I don't get why he is busy all year long. Out of the three hundred and sixty-five days, he has never spent more than two days at home. That is not all; he has never called." 1

Yvette was fit to be tied whenever she talked about Ronald.

It was as if he did not belong to the Valentines.

Whenever she called him, he either did not answer, or it was his secretary who answered the phone. It

was hard to call and talk to him even once.

Jazz frowned upon hearing that. "Mom, it is Mark's birthday today. Can you please not say anything unpleasant like a grumbling woman?"

There was a slight change in Raine's expression, but it was not obvious.

"Jazz, why do you keep antagonizing me these few days?" Yvette started to feel like a bear with a sore

head.

Jazz said nothing further. He started to feel that his

mom had approached her phase of menopause seemed to have endless things to complain about

constantly found fault with others.

She and