

## Standing before Love Chapter 322

Elsie was probably overwhelmed by what had just happened; it was either that or she was now encountering some trouble, causing her not to hear clearly what transpired at the other end of the phone, so she continued to talk to Myra. “When she was working for the Chase Group, she did a lot of things to discredit the company and even stole classified company secrets. In the end, she was kicked out of the company. Mr. Hart... You...” After Elsie calmed down slightly, she realized that there were rumors saying that Myra actually stole the Chase Group’s Hillville project for the Hart Group. Instantly, she was rendered speechless, but her heart was still full of hatred and dissatisfaction. “Mr. Hart, I will never lie to you. Myra is a very calculative woman. The child inside her is probably not yours! Don’t—”

“Miss Foster, why don’t you tell me who the father of the child inside me is if it isn’t Tony’s?”

While listening to Elsie’s words, Myra didn’t know how to describe the emotions inside her heart at that moment. I don’t know where she got hold of Tony’s phone number, but isn’t this a bit too shameless?

“Y-You’re Myra!” On the other end, Elsie was clearly shocked as she bit her lips and sharpened her tone. “Is it you who did it?! You are the one who framed me! You told him that I’m behind all this, right? You instigated Mr. Hart to go against me, right?!”

Today, a group of people came to her house and forced her to pack her things before leaving Bradford City. She wasn’t the naive little girl who had left school back then, so she could see that they weren’t friendly people. However, they mentioned that it was Tony who wanted her to immediately leave the city.

The first thing that came up in Elsie’s mind was that he found out what she did toward Myra. Instantly, she was afraid and flurried inside, but when she realized that she didn’t actually harm Myra directly since she only gave the document to those people without knowing what they were going to do with it, Elsie immediately called him. It wasn’t easy for her to obtain his phone number, but before she had the chance to call him, Tony had rejected her in the underground parking lot at that time, so the number was practically useless.

Surprisingly, when she called him again, it was Myra who answered the phone.

“Give the phone to Mr. Hart right now. I have something to say to him!” A panicked Elsie tightly grabbed her phone as her eyes looked toward the people sitting in her living room.

As Myra furrowed her brows, Tony happened to walk out of the washroom. Seeing her furrowing her brows with his phone in her hand, he raised his brows while his eyes were filled with playfulness. “Myra, why are you looking at my phone like that? Did you find another woman inside?”

She knew that he was purposely teasing her, so she cheerfully threw the phone back to him. “Elsie called you. She is now laying out all my wrongdoings so that you can quickly abandon me and find some other woman.”

While listening to her, Tony’s previously joyful eyes slightly darkened. After receiving his phone, he hung up the call straight away without even looking at it before grabbing Myra’s waist. Although he could slightly move his hands, it was still difficult for him to grab her waist since it tore his wound a little.

Myra initially wanted to avoid him, but when she heard his slight hiss, she paused in her movement and he took the chance to grab her.

While kissing the right side of her forehead, Tony lowered his head to look into her eyes. “Are you mad? If you know who is calling me, you can just hang up the phone immediately. Why would you want to listen to her nonsense and make yourself angry?”

“I’m not angry.” Myra rolled her eyes at him as she was only rendered speechless. No matter whether it was Elsie, Gemma, or even Kris, they would always emphasize on Myra’s ‘bad deeds’. However, whether or not they were bad deeds, the three of them knew it clearly inside their hearts. Even so, all of them would still take the matter to Tony, which she found quite annoying.

Seeing that she was truly unhappy, Tony dragged her to the washroom.

“What is it?” she asked vigilantly.

However, Tony pretended to be innocent while looking at her. “It has been a few days. I think it’s time for me to take a bath, right?” For the past two days,

he wasn't allowed to move around, but now, he could finally get off the bed. To him, it was torture not being able to even touch water for days.

Upon seeing his frustration, Myra thought about the doctor's words telling him not to come into contact with water for the time being, but Tony seemed to understand what she was thinking at the moment, so he quickly interrupted, "I promise that I won't touch the water. You'll be the one doing that. Can you at least wipe me?"

However, she was still hesitant. "Why don't I ask the doctor first?"

There were a lot of wounds on his body, so she was afraid that they would worsen once they were wet.

Tony raised his brows. "Don't you trust yourself not to get my wounds wet?"

Myra stared at him. "I'm just saying what if they become wet. Just wait for a few more days and it'll be fine. Why do you have to take a bath now?"

"Aren't you disgusted everytime you sleep with me at night?" He squinted his eyes at her.

"I didn't say I'm disgusted," she mumbled before saying to him resignedly. "Actually, it's normal for a person to skip baths for a few days after an injury. I don't even think that you are smelly."

This conversation simply can't go on any longer. The moment her words came out, Myra felt even more resigned when she saw the gloom in Tony's eyes. Isn't he now forcing me to wash him?

After seeing his stubbornness that he would wash himself on his own if she didn't help, Myra gave up and decided to help him. It's better if I help him. He'll definitely get his wounds wet if he does it himself.

She walked toward the washroom in aggrievement, but behind her, he revealed a smirk while his eyes brightened.

Due to Tony's injured hand, Myra would be the one who removed his clothes.

The upper part of the patient gown was quite easy to take off, but the lower part... She nervously squatted and helped the man to pull down his pants.

When she reached his knees, she lifted her head slightly and immediately saw the obvious joy in his eyes.

Seeing his smug smile, Myra seemed to understand something, so she said angrily, "Please lift your foot."

As soon as she realized Tony's intentions, he let out a soft cough before quickly reverting to his cold face and removing his pants as instructed.

After that, she twisted the towel and was about to help him to wipe his body. However, the moment she turned, Tony grabbed her hand and pointed at his black underwear before asking seriously, "Aren't you going to take this off?"

All of a sudden, Myra's face turned completely red as she shyly glared at him. "Take it off yourself!"

She didn't actually mean her words, but the man used his injured hand to remove the last piece of clothing on his body.

Immediately, she was left speechless.

"Tony, you did this on purpose, right?!" She glared at him again while biting her lips. The next second, the man pulled her straight into his arms. Although his hand was injured and it was difficult for him to move, he still held onto her hands tightly as if he was fine.

## Standing before Love Chapter 323

The man already lowered his head as he accurately sealed Myra's lips with his thin lips.

"Um... Tony..." She struggled for a moment, but each time she moved, the man would let out a soft hiss. She didn't know whether she had touched his wounds, so she didn't dare to move a muscle.

However, her obedience only fueled the flame inside the man.

The ward's washroom wasn't gigantic, so soon after, the air inside started to boil as waves of heat impacted Myra.

Tony could see that her eyes had now turned completely red compared to her serious look earlier.

“Myra, can you sit here?” he murmured with a deep voice while kissing her.

His voice was charmingly husky, causing her body to tremble slightly. As she opened her eyes and saw the gentle yet undefiable eyes of the man in front of her, she couldn't help but listen to him and sit on the washstand.

When she wanted to open her mouth and say something, the man approached her with his thin lips again so that she wouldn't have the chance to speak.

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As time passed, Myra suddenly realized that Tony's disgusted looks and persistence to take a bath was all for this purpose! It has only been three days, but he can't help it anymore. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Her gaze was suddenly attracted by some of the wounds on his body.

The atmosphere was too intense earlier and her mind was in a daze, so she couldn't see Tony's condition clearly. At that moment, the wounds on his body were torn apart and it clearly showed up in front of her.

“How did this happen?!” Myra screamed. Meanwhile, the wounds that were starting to scab were now torn apart, causing his blood to spill. Other than that, she also saw his hand, which could slightly move around, but the white bandage on his arm was now soaked in blood.

“I'll go and call the doctor.” She got off the washstand and was about to walk out of the room, but the man pulled her hand before tidying up her clothes resignedly.

Then, he furrowed his brows as he looked at the wounds on his body. “I'm fine. It's just a small wound. It won't matter.”

“What do you mean it's just a small wound?” Myra raised her voice while looking at the man in front of her with disapproval. After a moment of hesitation, she made up her mind and said to him, “If your body is easily aroused by me, why don't we find a nurse to look after you?”

Tony's expression immediately darkened. “Never!”

“Then, you must take good care of your wounds!” Myra warned. “Tony, before your wound has healed, I forbid you to touch me!” Seeing his face grow darker and darker, she quickly tidied herself before walking outside. “I’ll call the doctor to come and change your bandage and medicine.”

Soon, the doctor arrived at the ward.

When he saw the open wounds on his body and arms, he was left speechless. While furrowing his brows, he asked the two of them, “What did the two of you do that tore his wounds apart so severely? Even though the patient’s wounds aren’t that serious, he still needs to rest more so that he can recover as soon as possible. If you continue to tear the wounds open, it won’t be nice when it starts to become inflamed.”

A guilty Myra kept nodding her head. “It won’t happen again. I’ll advise him to take a rest and not move around.”

“Miss Stark... Cough... In times like this, there are some urges that we need to resist.” The doctor seemed to understand something as he advised her implicitly.

Her face constantly flushed even more and she didn’t know what to say at that moment, so she could only vigorously nod her head.

After sending the doctor away, Myra glared at Tony in embarrassment while biting her lips. “Tonight, Shawn will be here to take care of you because I’m meeting with Estelle.”

Upon listening to her, he was startled as he didn’t know whether to laugh or cry in his heart. Just as he was about to feign discomfort so that she would stay, she turned immediately and began to pack up her stuff. “I want you to stay here and reflect on what you just did. Don’t tell me now that your wounds are really painful. Where was the pain when you did that to me just now?!”

Instantly, Tony choked on his words. While waiting for Shawn to arrive, his eyes never left Myra while she packed her stuff, but sadly, she wasn’t moved at all.

When Shawn came to take over from her, she let out a sigh of relief the moment she walked out of Tony’s ward. Tony didn’t know how strong of an effect he had on her and she knew clearly that she couldn’t reject him, so without any choice, she asked Shawn to come and take care of him instead. If

the same thing happens again this evening, I probably won't be able to push him away.

Looking at the gloomy face of his little brother after entering the ward, Shawn couldn't help but raise his brows. Why does it seem like he doesn't welcome me here? Doesn't he know that we are still brothers?

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In the evening, a nurse came to change Tony's medicine.

"Mr. Hart, your previous nurse has taken maternity leave, so I'll help you with your wounds from now on." In her own words, the new nurse was still an intern, but she really was skillful as she was able to treat his wounds in quick succession. After changing his medicine and bandage, she said, "Mr. Hart, you may not remember me, but we met before at Bradford University."

However, Tony didn't respond to her words at all. After treating his wound, the nurse left the ward.

The moment she exited the ward, she raised her head, revealing her face that was completely red. She seemed to still be able to feel his delicate muscles when she caressed the man's chest with her hands earlier, which caused her heart to accelerate as if it was about to jump out of her mouth.

She couldn't help but remember the scene at Bradford University's gingko tree path that day where the man walked up toward her. Not only was he tall with handsome facial features, he was also calm and reserved with a pair of emotionless eyes. The aura around him was strong like he didn't care about anything else; yet, he was still charming.

At that time, she was definitely charmed by him, so a few of her roommates pushed her out toward him.

Hayley Boulanger was the top beauty of Bradford University's School of Nursing and she could even be deemed as the campus belle of the entire university.

## Standing before Love Chapter 324

There was never a shortage of suitors around Hayley, which was what boosted her standard to an extraordinarily high level. In school that day, the

moment she first saw Tony, her heart instinctively started to race. Even though she didn't know him, she knew at first glance that he was a successful man with a charming and elegant aura. At that time, other students in school didn't have the same aura because it was something gained after years of experience.

At that moment, she rushed toward him, wanting to confess her love while also asking for his contacts. Of course, she would have loved it if the two of them exchanged contact numbers, but sadly, he seemed to be thinking about something else at that time, so he didn't notice her at all.

After that, the man never left her mind. Instead, the memory of the scene became much clearer to her as she found out about his name, status, family and career.

Sure enough, he was as successful and extraordinary as she thought he was, but sadly, he already had a fiancée who was rumored to be a divorced woman.

Everytime Hayley thought about it, her brows would frown slightly. A woman like her doesn't deserve such a talented man like him. However, she never had the chance to meet Tony, so her disdain toward his fiancée wasn't that strong yet.

She was finally able to meet him because he was involved in a car accident that sent him straight to the hospital where she was placed.

In the beginning, Hayley's heart was beating frantically as she felt that the world loved her.

"Hayley, can you please take care of the patient in ward 931?" Next to her, another nurse patted her shoulder when walking past her.

Hayley quickly agreed to do so and when she walked past the other nurse, she turned her head and gave her a friendly smile. "Marianne, thank you for giving me many opportunities to do clinical care."

For a moment, Marianne was startled, but she immediately gave a friendly nod before leaving.

As Hayley glanced at the closed door of Tony's ward again, her eyes seemed to brighten.



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Estelle didn't ask Myra out for something important as it was nothing more than shopping, going to the beauty parlor, and gossiping. At that moment, Tony's wounds were slowly recovering, so Myra didn't have to be worried about him all the time. Since Estelle was now looking much different than before, Myra smiled and raised her brows. "What happened to you lately? When did you become so smug? Do you know how picky you were today when buying clothes? Also, look at how many cosmetics you have bought! Aren't you always proud of yourself that you can handle any style of fashion while being naturally beautiful without the need for cosmetics whenever you aren't shooting a movie?! Be honest with me."

Actually, Estelle didn't need to explain much to Myra because the latter already knew a lot from Tony.

Shawn had previously brought Estelle to the Hart Family to meet the two elders and her brother, Charles, also had a meal with them too. Myra thought, Judging from what Tony has told me, the two of them are already engaged. Even though the wedding date isn't confirmed yet, it's obvious that it has massively changed someone. I'm sure of it after looking at what she is doing now.

Therefore, Myra patted Estelle's shoulder and said, "Be honest with me. Weren't you unwilling to be together with Shawn previously? How did he conquer your heart in just a few days?"

She understood Estelle's temperament clearly. It's impossible to win this wild cat's heart without using any other means.

However, Estelle rolled her eyes. "What do you mean that he conquered my heart? Wasn't I the one who pursued him from start to finish? Seeing him obsessed with marrying me, I gave him a chance to satisfy him for the moment."

"Oh... Looks like you are the one giving him a chance to marry you. He really is a lucky guy. Not many men could get such a chance from the great Miss Langley." Myra tried to hold back her laughter.

Estelle grunted at her. "Just laugh it out. I don't have any problems with it. Besides, I've seen everything clearly. Shawn has already raised my standard on men to its highest peak. Rather than finding a man better than him in the

future, it's better for me to use him for now. When I finally get to see a better man one day, I'll just dump him and pursue a new one."

As Estelle smiled proudly, Myra suddenly agreed with her. "You're right. Shawn is probably thinking the same thing too. Didn't you also raise his standard on women to its highest peak? When the two of you have finally found your new targets one day, both of you can just break up without any fuss. It sounds like a great idea. No wonder those women in City Hall still haven't given up on him. I'm sure that they are doing all they can to surpass you one day."

Then, Myra pretended to sigh while Estelle stomped her feet. "Myra! Why are you now speaking for the Hart Family? You haven't even married Tony yet!"

"It's precisely because I'm marrying into the Hart Family, so it's important for me to have a good relationship with my brother-in-law." Myra let out a smirk.

"He won't even dare to look at those women! If he dares to do so, I'll just castrate him so that no one will cast their eyes on him!"

"Pfft!" Myra could no longer hide her laughter. At the same time, the car arrived outside the beauty parlor, so Myra dragged Estelle out of the car and into the shop. "Look at how hypocritical you are. It's obvious that you love Shawn very much inside your heart, but you just won't say it out loud. Let me give you some advice—if you can obey him a little, he won't even bat an eye at a naked international beauty contestant, let alone those women in City Hall."

"Myra, your mouth is now becoming more unrestrained. It's no surprise since you are now with one of the monsters from the Hart Family." Estelle felt a little gloomy when she realized that Myra was speaking in a similar tone to Tony. As she rolled her eyes, she swayed her hand backward before dragging Myra into the beauty parlor. "Let's see if you'll still be this arrogant later on!"

When they entered the parlor, an attendant came up to guide them, but Estelle waved her hand and rejected his help. Since they were regular customers, they didn't need anyone else to show them around.

She immediately dragged Myra to a room in the corner of a garden.

Inside the room, there were already two beauticians who looked honest waiting for them. As they were about to speak upon seeing Estelle and Myra

entering, Estelle placed her index finger on her lips and quietly shushed them. "Please be quiet later on and don't open the door."

Even though the two beauticians were confused, they nodded their heads in agreement.

Myra was obviously confused, but Estelle shoved a clean towel and bathrobe into Myra's hands before dragging her into the bathroom. "Don't ask me yet. You'll know about it later on."

Therefore, Myra could only follow her. Since I'm here, I should try and relax for the moment.

After taking a shower and steaming in the sauna, the two of them returned to the room.

At that moment, the beauticians were giving two people an oil spa. Myra instantly understood Estelle's intentions. The room is completely separated from everything else in the garden, which means that it's not as soundproof as the other connected rooms. There were roughly three or four women in the room and every word of their conversation had perfectly reached their ears...

"Have you heard that Gemma from the Walton Family quarreled with Mr. Hart a few days ago, so she rammed him with a car in the end? Now, Mr. Hart is still in the hospital. At first, the Hart Family wanted to sue Gemma, but Old Master Walton agreed to send Gemma away from Bradford City, so the situation has cooled down."

## Standing before Love Chapter 325

"I've also heard about it. I wonder what kind of hatred drove Miss Walton to do such a thing. However, from what I've seen, she was probably troubled by love. It's possible that they were a couple once, but now that Mr. Hart has fallen in love with another woman, she felt so wronged that she rammed him with a car."

"I wonder what method Myra used to charm Mr. Hart to a point where he won't even consider any other women. By the looks of it, Gemma is quite a pitiful girl. Because of this, she is now forced to leave Bradford City. I even heard the reason why she will be sent away is because she required medical treatment abroad. She probably got hurt really bad this time."

“However, we can’t say that she isn’t an idiot. I can’t believe she didn’t even think about the consequences when ramming the car at Mr. Hart. Luckily, she was only asked to leave Bradford City this time. If the same thing happens again, the Walton Family will probably be doomed.”

“You’re right, but who wouldn’t want a man like Mr. Hart all to herself? I heard that the Young Lady of the Barker Group spends almost all her time at the golf club because she knows that Mr. Hart likes to play golf, so she waits for him there every day.”

“Of course she knows. There’s also Belle from the Bridgers Family. Ever since her blind date with Mr. Hart, she just can’t give up on him. That’s why she always tries to find opportunities to approach him, but what use is that?! Besides, I don’t think there will be a woman who can successfully surpass Myra. I think it’s better if I just love myself so that I don’t need to think too much.”

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Every word of their conversation had reached the ears of the other two people in the room... And the other two outside the room.

Seeing the playfulness in Estelle’s eyes, Myra didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. Looks like she just wants to listen to some gossip, so why did she act like there was something interesting for me to see?

When Estelle noticed that Myra was unmoved by what she had just heard, she opened her mouth and quietly repeated the conversation that they heard earlier.

“I heard that the Young Lady of the Barker Group spends almost all her time at the golf club because she knows that Mr. Hart likes to play golf, so she waits for him there every day. There’s also Belle from the Bridgers Family. Ever since her blind date with Mr. Hart, she just can’t give up on him. That’s why she always tries to find opportunities to approach him.”

However, Myra remained indifferent as she followed Estelle and whispered, “So what?”

“Can’t you see that there are a bunch of women lingering around your man? Myra, let me tell you this—a man can suppress his urges for a year or two, but

how many of them can resist the seduction of beautiful women on the outside for the rest of their lives?"

Myra looked resolute. "Tony isn't that kind of a person."

Estelle blinked a few times, but in the end, she threw in the towel. "What am I doing? I was the one who matched the two of you at the start, so why am I telling you this now? Besides, I know that you trust Tony, but I don't trust Shawn. However, I get what you all mean. I know that Shawn isn't a bad man, so I decided to be together with him for the moment. We'll deal with it if the thing I fear the most actually happens in the future."

Although Estelle looked nonchalant, Myra was able to see the real problem. Overall, after many excuses, the true reason was that Estelle couldn't trust any men. Therefore, she couldn't help but think about Estelle's parents. Even my own father did the same thing...

After taking a deep breath, she wanted to say something, but then, she secretly sighed. If I continue on this matter, it'll only make her more resistant, so it's better for me not to say anything at all. Besides, I believe that Shawn will never let that happen to her.

When they exited the parlor, Estelle grabbed Myra's sleeves and said, "I have to tell you this. Even though Gemma is stupid, she is still ruthless. After hearing what you told me earlier about her condition, I don't think she'll want to leave Bradford City." How can a woman like her listen to anyone?! I'm afraid that it'll only drive her insane, causing her to do something crazy. "Overall, you need to be extra careful now, especially with the child inside you. Don't give her any chance to hurt you."

Myra nodded. "I was thinking the same thing too."

After the two of them entered the car, the engine started and it accelerated as it took a turn. Suddenly, a woman rushed to the front of the car. At that moment, it was Estelle driving the vehicle since Myra was pregnant.

Estelle immediately slammed on the brake while her face turned pale. Meanwhile, the woman outside was already crying loudly, "Murder! Someone just rammed me with a car. Help!"

It was a busy street outside the beauty parlor, so the surrounding pedestrians started to gather in a short time.

However, the expressions of the two people sitting in the car suddenly changed. She is a faker!

When the two of them alighted from the car and saw the woman crying outside, Myra was immediately enraged in her heart. It's Elsie!

Therefore, she felt that it wasn't an accident as Elsie had obviously planned the encounter.

Upon seeing Myra's gloomy face, Estelle asked, "Do you know her?"

"Yes." Myra nodded. "We used to be colleagues in the Chase Group. She had an affair with Sean before, but then, she miscarried the baby inside her. I don't know how she recently got into contact with Tony, but she keeps asking him to break up with me. Now, I don't know what the hell she is doing."

"I see." Estelle's worried face was immediately filled with disdain and her expression changed as she walked toward Elsie. "Let's see what tricks she has up her sleeves!"

Even though she was wearing a hat and sunglasses, she was still a public figure and many people could still recognize her, so Myra pulled Estelle aside. "Don't worry, I'll handle her myself."

Seeing the determination in Myra's eyes, Estelle went back into the car.

Outside, as soon as Myra walked toward Elsie, she raised her voice and shouted at the onlookers while pointing at Myra. "Look. This is the woman who purposely rammed the car into me just now! Myra, you are also one of the elite families in Bradford City, right? But, do you really need to use different means to drive me away just because you don't like me?! Now that you can't drive me away, you even thought of a despicable way to ram me with a car!"

"Miss Foster, what did you do to me that made me want to drive you away and ram you with a car?" Myra remained indifferent.

"Do you really think I didn't know that you did those shameful things?! It's you! It's all because of you! Before you divorced Sean, you seduced Mr. Hart. Did you really think no one would find out about this after you kicked me out of the Chase Group?! Today, I will expose you in front of everyone!"

“Great. Miss Foster, can you try to be more specific so that I can record all your words? It’ll be more convenient for me to sue you when I make a police report. Miss Foster, if you don’t want to be in prison, you can try to say as much nonsense as you like!” Myra didn’t pay attention to the whispers of the onlookers as Elsie had expected. Instead, she prepared to record Elsie’s words with her phone.

“Nonsense? M-Me?! I’m not talking nonsense. All I’ve said is the truth. S-Stop recording!” Elsie started to panic.

Today, she finally had a chance to escape from those people and find out which hospital Tony was at. In the end, she waited for Myra to show up so that she could threaten Myra to tell Tony not to send her away from Bradford City! Not only did Elsie just lose her child, she wanted to exact revenge on Lyla and snatch Sean from her, so she wasn’t willing to leave yet!

“Myra, I won’t hold you accountable for what just happened, but you can’t force me out of Bradford City!” Elsie pretended to be calm as she stared at Myra firmly.

“It doesn’t matter whether you want to hold me accountable or not. My friend in the car has already called the police. They’ll give a reasonable conclusion by then.”

## Standing before Love 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 Bradfort 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 Bradfort 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?”

## Standing before Love Chapter 327

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 cowered 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.”

## Standing before Love Chapter 328

“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.

...

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.

## Standing before Love Chapter 329

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.

...

Meanwhile, Myra had waited until the nurses left the wards 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.

## Standing before Love Chapter 330

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.

## Standing before Love Chapter 331

There had not been much to glean from what Elsie had said, but she knew that the entire incident had something to do with Kris and probably Gemma as well.

She felt uneasy as she returned to Tony's suite and upon entering, she saw that he was eating his meal with one hand.

Although he was injured and seated on the bedside while spooning mouthfuls of food with one hand, he looked graceful nonetheless.

Myra felt the knot in her stomach untangle at the sight of him doing so. She sauntered over and took the spoon and the bowl from him before she brought a mouthful of porridge to his thin lips.

Tony raised his brow at her action. "I thought I was supposed to eat it on my own."

She rolled her eyes at him. "At the speed you're eating, the porridge would be cold by the time you manage to finish it."

He flashed the barest hint of a smile as he mused, "You never mean what you say, Myra. I know you care about me. You don't have to come up with an excuse just so you can run back here and feed me, you know."

A blushing Myra unceremoniously shoved a spoonful of porridge into his mouth and snapped, "Shut up and eat your porridge."

A low chuckle escaped Tony and a glint of amusement flashed in his obsidian eyes.

After they were done with the meal, they decided to take a late evening stroll. It was inevitable that they had to pass Gemma's suite in order to get to the elevators and as they took in the burly bodyguards stationed outside her room, they could also hear her manic screams from behind the door. It sounded as though she was on the phone as she demanded to be released from the room, but it was clear that her request had been met with harsh rejection.

Seeing that Myra's expression had grown grim, Tony reached out to clasp her hand and gave it a gentle squeeze.

They entered one of the elevators and pressed the button for the first floor. The elevator made several stops along the way and as people came and went, she took care to shield him, afraid that someone could jostle against or bump into the cast on his arm.

He only smiled at her defensive stance and tightened his grip on her hand.

For all the time they had spent together, it seemed as though they had never once taken a stroll with their hands intertwined. They made their way to the hospital gardens and treated the evening walk as light exercise. She clearly enjoyed herself, judging from the smile on her face that remained in place throughout the entire stroll.

Occasionally, a few passers-by would notice them and observe their obvious chemistry with admiration and envy. Myra had never thought that her relationship with Tony would come so naturally and there was a synergy between them that was akin to that of an old married couple, although they had only been dating for less than half a year.

When she abruptly came to a stop, she rose on her tiptoes. Under the man's quizzical gaze, she reached up to pull him down by the nape and placed a kiss on his cheek. Then, she blushed as she looked away from him.

Tony's eyes brightened at her gesture as he teased, "Did you do that on purpose?"

He had no qualms about saying such things in public.

Upon hearing that, Myra felt her heart begin to race and she began to chide herself for acting like a lovesick idiot. It was no wonder that she found herself subjected to his merciless teasing all the time.

She was about to march forward when Tony intentionally tripped her. He caught her by the waist just as she stumbled before he bent down to press his lips against her pink ones.

Myra's eyes widened momentarily as she met the endless ocean that was his dark gaze. She could see the warmth and the fierce love he had for her in his eyes.

Before long, her eyes fluttered close as she melted into the kiss, which felt unbelievably perfect in all its tenderness and passion.

When they finally parted from one another, Myra was left breathless and Tony was panting slightly as well. He pressed his forehead to hers, his chest rising and falling as he tried to catch his breath. His gaze darkened with sentiments as he stared into her eyes and he could no longer repress his urge. As he dipped his head to kiss her once more, he nibbled on her lips before he released her.

"Tony," she murmured in protest after she finally remembered where they were and what they had done. Her blush crept all the way down to her neck as she stomped her foot. She wanted to push him away, but her legs went limp from the kiss and she had to lean onto him for support.

A chuckle sounded in the back of Tony's throat and Myra could feel his warm breath stirring the top of her head. An unexpected warmth seized her as she nuzzled into his chest and pretended as though no one else could see her.

As they stood embracing in the garden, it was like they were in their own pink little bubble.

...

While this was happening, two women were staring at the happy couple with disgruntled and hostile looks in their eyes.

Hayley was leaning against the window in the nurse station, which was tucked away on the fourth floor of the hospital. She had been scribbling notes on the medical record in her left hand, but her eyes were no longer focused on the

charts and details on the record. Instead, she was staring at the scene in the gardens and her clear gaze darkened with jealousy.

She had seen Tony and Myra's outward display of affection. She never thought that a man as cold and curt as him could be so gentle. To be cared for and loved by him would surely be a woman's dream come true, wouldn't it?

Then, her eyes fell on the woman in his arms. Upon seeing that it was Myra, she seethed.

No matter how Hayley looked at it, there was nothing about Myra that was attractive enough to warrant the affection of a fine specimen like Tony.

The girl was pleasant-looking, but certainly not as pretty as Hayley was and there were plenty of women out there whose figures were more attractive than hers. Furthermore, there was nothing formidable about Myra's family background or her capabilities as well. With all those in mind, Hayley couldn't help but wonder what it was about Myra that made her so alluring to men.

As she dwelled grimly in these thoughts, her pretty face twisted into a grimace and the light faded from her eyes.

Meanwhile, the other woman who had spotted Tony and Myra's garden rendezvous was Gemma.

She had received a video clip in her inbox shortly after Kris had left her room. Clicking on it, she saw that it was footage taken from the day she had lost control and crashed into Tony. It was a recording of their exchange in the basement parking lot, but it was cut off right before the scene where she was shown entering her car.

While there was no audio, the clip had obviously been edited to focus on Tony as he strangled her. The fear and helplessness were clearly reflected in her eyes as he choked the air out of her.

Having seen the video, Gemma wanted to rush out of her room, but no one in her family had allowed her to leave despite all her demanding phone calls. They had asked her to calm down, promising her that she could return to Bradford City to tie up whatever loose ends she had after her surgery abroad. But, I don't want to leave the city! Why should I be the one to be banished?

She knew that the dust would settle as soon as she was out of the city. Myra would have married Tony and they would have a baby together. There was little point for her to return to Bradford City by then, let alone come up with ways for her to sideline that wretched woman.

After throwing yet another manic tantrum in the ward, she realized that all her efforts were futile. With her spirits sanded down to nothing, she made her way to the window and looked down at the hospital gardens, only to see Tony and Myra losing themselves in a passionate kiss.

They looked so entranced that even Gemma could feel the lingering warmth and love between them and she wasn't even anywhere close to the gardens.

Feeling as though an axe had sliced her heart into half, she pressed her hand against her chest and for a moment, she thought she would die from the heartache.