

## Standing before Love Chapter 422

Heather had managed to put an end to this discussion for now, yet the resentment continued to build up in her. Matthias had played a flawlessly strategic game this round but she vowed that he would not be so lucky next time.

He had presented her with a memorable gift indeed and now that there was definitely bad blood between them, she was determined to return his favor by a hundredfold.

Knowing that there was more trouble to come, she began to worry about how this might affect her entrepreneurship. Surely it would be that much harder for her to start her own business after a scandal like this.

She was outraged at the thought of the newspaper following up on the ridiculous story they had published, and she was seized with the violent urge to burn that newspaper company to the ground. With this in mind, she could no longer stomach her breakfast.

“I’m heading out for a bit, Grandpa,” Heather announced as she gazed at the breakfast laid out before her. She had lost her appetite and anger twisted her features into a grimace.

Upon seeing how angry she was, Robert couldn’t help but worry for Matthias. He hardly knew anyone who could stop her from wreaking havoc whenever she lost her temper.

“Heather, you have to deal with these things calmly,” he pointed out gently, afraid that she might abandon all rationale and act on impulse instead.

“You’re the only one who believes me, Grandpa. I won’t sit by and do nothing while someone takes advantage of me this way. As far as I’m concerned, marriage isn’t even on the table for me yet,” she said woefully, clearly getting more upset as she tried to speak up for herself.

She couldn’t count the times she had rolled her eyes at the newspaper’s description of her alleged romance with Matthias. The article had claimed that it was love at first sight and that it did not take long for them to take things to the next level, essentially describing her as a person without much depth.

The entire passage had depicted her as some desperate woman who clung onto Matthias, whom the newspaper painted as prince charming. That narrative alone was enough to spur her murderous rage. She would eradicate the newspaper company entirely and before they knew it, their future in Bradford City would be over.

Robert watched as his granddaughter stormed out of the room, then withdrew his gaze. Once she was all worked up like that, it would be impractical to try and stop her. He would be much better off if he let her do as she pleased.

Having gone into the garage, Heather slid into the sleekest sports car in the family vehicle collection. After all, if she was going to destroy somebody, she should do it with style.

The sports car sped down the route toward the newspaper company. She might not be able to fight back against Matthias for now but seeing as the newspaper company had colluded with him, they would have to bear the brunt of her aggression.

She ought to teach them a lesson so that they would know she was not one to be trifled with. As the car whooshed down the street, she single-handedly slipped on a pair of shades that accentuated the delicate angles of her face, and the intimidating look on her face was enough to freeze anyone to death.

Meanwhile, the Apple Gazette was operating as usual, oblivious to the storm that was coming their way. They had no idea of the crisis that hit them from the very moment Heather walked through their doors.

Her regal demeanor turned heads in the office as she strode in with her shades on. She did not bother to greet anyone and instead barked coldly, "I want to speak with your editor-in-chief."

Heather still looked glamorous despite her rage and she spoke in a crisp, carrying voice. The employees couldn't help but deem her as the female embodiment of perfection itself.

Then, they peered at her more carefully, and finally came to the realization that she was the same woman whom they had written about on their front page news.

When no one responded to her, she strode toward the private office. She wasn't blind after all, and the editor-in-chief's office was in a rather conspicuous corner.

The employees exchanged bewildered looks and began to chatter among themselves in low voices. However, she paid no attention to them as she pushed open the door to the editor-in-chief's office. When she saw a middle-aged man with a beer gut seated behind the desk, she sneered. He was already getting on her nerves just by sitting there, which meant there was no way for him to escape her wrath now.

Everyone peered into the office curiously and they saw her standing across from Mitchell, the unfortunate editor-in-chief. She slowly took off her shades and locked eyes with him.

Then, she brusquely threw the newspaper in her hand onto his desk and demanded imperiously, "Explain this to me."

Mitchell glanced at her with fear in his eyes. Truth was, he had known that this might happen when he agreed to collude with Matthias.

Despite the years she had spent abroad, tales of Heather's ruthlessness continued to circulate in the urban landscape of Bradford City, and all of them depicted her as a cold and decisive woman who stood for nobody's nonsense.

"It's a ballsy move for you to print news like this without even consulting the Langston Family beforehand," she seethed, causing him to feel a chill run down his spine when he saw the dangerous gleam in her eyes.

"Miss Langston," he began, then swallowed convulsively as he tried to come up with a way to placate her.

"I'm sure you're aware that the Langston Family is powerful enough to wipe out a news company from the face of Bradford City," she drawled, the threat heavy in her voice. It was crucial for her to bring her family into this if she wanted to intimidate somebody.

"Don't be so rash, Miss Langston. I can explain," he answered nervously as he wiped the sweat from his forehead. Though he had foreseen this confrontation, he hadn't expected it to happen so quickly and now, he was left without a strategy.

“I have no interest in your explanation—let me see the front page for tomorrow,” she snapped. She had a feeling that this morning’s paper was not the end of the scandal. There would likely be another follow-up story tomorrow, and she had to do everything she could to stop it from being published.

“Miss Langston, we have a schedule for our operations here, and the layout for the front page hasn’t even been decided yet,” he sputtered. Mitchell was lying, of course, but it wasn’t as though he could tell Heather the truth—not if he still wanted to survive.

“Don’t give me that crap. I’ve personally dropped by today to talk things over with you but if we can’t reach a consensus, then I can get a couple of my acquaintances to meet you this afternoon. I’d like to see if they could change your mind then.” Threat underscored her words. She could not let the newspaper get away with publishing any more ridiculous articles on a non-existent scandal.

Mitchell had been in the industry for a while now, but he had never been met with such direct and aggressive confrontation before. Nevertheless, he would be wise to fear the Langstons’ authority, seeing as they were one of the giants in Bradford City’s business scene. They could not have existed as a corporation for over a century without making connections with the underworld.

“Why don’t we sit down and work things out?” he suggested, trying to buy himself time.

“No, thanks. I’m here to resolve an actual problem and I don’t have time to work things out slowly,” she said, turning him down immediately. From the very moment they decided to publish derogatory and baseless articles on her personal life, they had set themselves on a path to hell and she had no intention to spare them from her wrath.

“Then how do you propose we resolve this, Miss Langston?” Mitchell asked warily.

“It looks like you don’t get to have a say in this matter, so I’m going to have to speak to a person who does.” She stood tall and straight as she regarded him stonily, looking every bit the imposing woman that she was.

“W-Well...” He had dealt with people from all walks of life throughout his career, but it was rare for him to encounter someone as brusque as her and despite his mild temper, he couldn’t help but bridle at the way she was treating him.

Heather, on the other hand, had no qualms with conflict. She knew Matthias was the one who orchestrated all these so she asked directly, “Should I give Matthias a call now and help you get his approval?”

With that, she instantly dialed for Matthias’ number. Mitchell had never seen a woman who did things with such surety and seeing as he could not come up with ways to cajole her in time, he could only watch mutely as the call went through.

She put the call on speaker and there was a devious smirk tugging on her lips. Mitchell swallowed and he thought to himself, She’s not someone who can be taken down that easily.

“Hello, Miss Langston! Are you calling because you miss me?” Matthias’ voice echoed cheerily down the line.

“Director Locke, do you know where I am right now?” she asked stiffly.

“I’m afraid I’m not a fan of guessing games,” he replied with a chuckle.

“I’m at the Apple Gazette, which I’m sure you’re familiar with,” she said in a clipped tone.

“Oh? I have no idea where that is.” On the other end of the phone, however, Matthias was surprised that she had marched straight into the newspaper company.

“The editor-in-chief would like to have a word with you.” Having said that, she shoved the phone toward Mitchell and eyed him icily, silently forcing him to speak.

Upon hearing this, Matthias frowned on the other end of the line. He didn’t think that she would go looking for the editor-in-chief himself. As it turned out, she was exactly the same as she had been in her younger days—impulsive and impatient.

“You’re ridiculous!” Mitchell snapped angrily. He had had enough of her disrespectful ways and with the Locke Group backing him up, he didn’t see why he should be afraid of the Langstons.

Heather drew her phone back and asked the man on the other line, “Have you read the paper this morning?”

“What paper? The Apple Gazette, you mean?” Matthias asked, feigning innocence.

“Director Locke, I won’t be bargaining with you over this matter so I’ll come right out and say it—I won’t back down regardless of your plans to take revenge on me, but you’ve crossed the line here. I have no interest in being involved in a scandal with you,” she said, keeping her dark gaze on Mitchell. She refused to believe that he could keep his cool any longer.

“Please leave the office, Miss Langston,” Mitchell thundered. He had already offended her anyway, and there was no better time than the present to kiss up to Matthias and show his loyalty.

Matthias, on the other hand, interjected with an unassuming tone, “Miss Langston, perhaps there’s been some misunderstanding on your part. Why don’t we sit down and talk things out?”

“Fine. Come over to the Apple Gazette now and we’ll talk,” she answered as a menacing smile played on her lips. If it’s a talk he wants, then I’m going to make sure to talk him into his place.

Heather had seen through Mitchell’s attempt to please Matthias and if that was the case, then the three of them should have a good talk right here.

“It would be rude of us to intrude, would it not? Besides, don’t you think that a café or a restaurant would be the more appropriate place to talk over something like this?” Matthias tried to evade her demands.

“No; I like it here. If you want to talk, then you’d best be on your way right now.” She clutched her phone and sauntered over elegantly to the couch in the corner, looking impervious.

She didn’t wait for Matthias to answer before hanging up the call. Meanwhile, Mitchell took in her arrogant stance and began to dislike her more and more.

Her beauty and elegance were eclipsed by her wretched behavior, and he knew that she would not stop giving him a hard time.

“Miss Langston, please leave my office right now. This isn’t a café or a restaurant, and it’s no place for you to talk things out with Director Locke,” Mitchell demanded harshly, bristling at her audacity to act all high and mighty in his territory.

“I’ll sit here for as long as I like; what are you going to do about it? And one more thing—I’m going to sue your paper for defaming me with baseless statements,” she announced. She brought her phone up to show him the screen before she added, “Take a look for yourself—my lawyer is already on his way. I’m not just here to talk things over; I’m here so I can get a statement from you.” Heather had texted her family lawyer on her way here and asked him to meet her at Apple Gazette as quickly as possible.

Mitchell blanched as he tried to read the tiny font on her phone screen. He had never met anyone who did things with such speed and efficiency.

“Miss Langston, you—” He broke off, suddenly rendered speechless.

“Time is money, and this is especially true when it comes to business. I don’t plan on dragging this out for too long and I have a penchant for bringing swift ends to my battles.” There was a satisfied look on her face as she said this. As if I would let some random newspaper company get the upper hand. Let me show them how brutal I can be.

The tension in the air grew thick. Sure enough, the Langston Family’s lawyer arrived not long after. He was one of the top litigators in Bradford City and he had never once lost a case.

“Miss Langston,” the lawyer greeted Heather respectfully, bowing his head.

“It’s been a while, Mr. Presgraves!” She stood up from the couch and flashed a sweet smile at the man, shedding her previous icy demeanor.

Upon seeing the friendly dynamics between Heather and the lawyer, Mitchell began to panic. He had seen Mr. Presgraves a couple of times before this, but he never thought that there would come a day where he would actually have to deal with him. He was frantic and there was a lump in his throat.

Just then, somebody knocked on the door, and the three of them turned to look at the person standing outside the office.

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The person standing outside the door was none other than Matthias, who still came in the end. He was wearing a calm expression, as if he really had nothing to do with the incident.

He entered the room under the gazes of those three people before he looked at Heather with a shadow of a smile on his face.

“I didn’t expect that you would prefer having a discussion at the publisher’s office, Miss Langston,” he casually said as he stared unblinkingly at her.

The editor-in-chief of The Apple Gazette darted a tentative look at Matthias while Alexander openly appraised the editor-in-chief. The atmosphere was a little awkward and it was quite obvious that Matthias was pretending to appear relaxed.

“Alexander, give the newspaper to Director Locke,” Heather said to Alexander, who then solemnly took out two newspapers from his briefcase—they were news that made the headlines today and yesterday. After that, he passed them to Matthias with a serious expression. He made everything seem so formal that the people around him unconsciously felt nervous.

“Director Locke, please have a look at them.” Alexander handed him the newspaper with both hands.

Matthias took the newspaper and skimmed through them. Then, he folded the papers and kept them away before he raised his eyes to look at Heather. He seemed unfazed by the incident reported in the news.

“Miss Langston, you didn’t call me over just to show me the two newspapers, right?” His expression made it obvious that he was unperturbed by the incident reported in the news.

“Hmph!” she coldly snorted. “Looks like the content in the news doesn’t concern you, Director Locke.” The fact that he seemed fine with it upset her, which made her lose the intention to even put up a show.



“This kind of gossip is never real in the first place, so why should I be concerned about it? Getting worked up over it is a waste of energy.” Matthias indeed did not expect Heather to care about the gossip so much. It appeared that she cared very much about her private life.

After he said that, the editor-in-chief anxiously glanced at him. The editor-in-chief did not expect Matthias to say that the news was fake right in front of him, which made him wonder whether Matthias was actually here to help or stir up more trouble.

“This is an act of violation to my reputation. I will definitely take this publisher to court.” As she was speaking, she looked at the editor-in-chief and it was obvious that she was threatening them.

Matthias cast an indifferent glance at Heather, as if he was saying that the news had nothing to do with him. His actions completely illustrated that he did not take the matter seriously at all.

“This is my lawyer. I hope that you can testify for me in court,” she uttered in a serious manner, but her eyes revealed her aggressive attitude.

Upon hearing that, the editor-in-chief was flustered. He wanted to interrupt them, but any words from him now would only further upset Heather and the more he spoke, the more mistakes he could make. Therefore, he had no choice but to keep quiet and look at Matthias pleadingly.

Matthias politely smiled and uttered, “Miss Langston, appearing in court will bring bad luck to us businessmen.” It was obvious that he implied he disagreed with taking things to court.

As a matter of fact, Heather had thought that he would not agree to her request, so she wasn’t disappointed. On top of that, she did not have any evidence to prove that he had colluded with The Apple Gazette in secret.

The reason why she had called for this meeting today was solely to give The Apple Gazette a warning. Since The Apple Gazette had the courage to offend the Langston Family by tarnishing their reputation, she had never intended to let things slide easily.

“Director Locke, it is fine if you refuse to appear in court. Someone will seek the evidence from you. You will only need to tell the truth and you’ll be considered as doing our Miss Langston a favor,” Alexander quickly chimed in.

With a smile on his face, he cunningly described it in a way that forced Matthias to agree to his request.

“That’s for sure. I’m a decent citizen who obeys the law, so I won’t fake my testimony. I will tell the truth.” Matthias wore a stern expression as well while he said righteous statements.

After the discussion, the two parties arrived at a consensus—at least on the surface—while the editor-in-chief, who had been listening to them from one side, felt edgy. Although Matthias had darted a look to comfort him, his mouth had said otherwise. The editor-in-chief was worried that Matthias would abandon him to save himself.

It was at this moment that he regretted his action of colluding with Matthias. The Langston Family was extremely influential in Bradford City, so it was not worthwhile to offend them for Matthias’ sake.

Upon seeing Heather’s determination to get to the bottom of it, the editor-in-chief was worried that they would lose in court and he would definitely be fired then.

“Miss Langston, if there are no other matters, I will have to take my leave to attend a meeting,” Matthias responded as he glanced at his watch to feign that he was busy.

Heather wore a polite smile. “Director Locke, you sure are a busy man. Apologies for taking your time. You should get going if you have other matters to attend to.” In fact, other than to let him know that she was not an easy target, there were no further reasons for intentionally asking him to meet up with her.

After he had left, her gaze turned to the editor-in-chief, who had been ignored this whole time. Looking at his expression, she inwardly thought, This time, I will make sure to give you a good scare!

“Editor-in-chief, even Director Locke thought that what you reported wasn’t real, but he was being a gentleman by letting trivial matters like this slide. However, I’m not like him; I’m a female and women are never easy to deal with. I have all the time in the world to sort things out with you.” She even mocked herself and the sarcasm in her tone made him realize how difficult she could make things for him.

After that, she left with Alexander without even giving the editor-in-chief a glance. No matter how hard the editor-in-chief tried to explain the matter, she refused to stay any longer to listen.

Since she had already achieved her goal of coming here, continuing to stay back would not only be a waste of time, but pointless as well. The next step would be to see what actions the editor-in-chief and Matthias would take. After today's incident, they would certainly feel restless, especially when the show had just begun.

Sure enough, right after Heather had left, the editor-in-chief immediately dialed Matthias' number. When Matthias saw the incoming call, he unwillingly picked up the call with his brows knitted.

"Director Locke, you have to help me! Heather is a ruthless woman and she definitely won't let me off the hook," the editor-in-chief wailed. As soon as Matthias heard that, a look of disgust spread across his face. He is frightened by a small matter like this. Such an incompetent man!

Nonetheless, the more pressing matter now was to comfort the editor-in-chief for fear that he couldn't handle Heather's intimidation and ended up selling him out to her instead.

"Don't worry, it's not a big deal. Even if we lose the court case, we will only have to pay compensation and make a public apology," Matthias comforted the editor-in-chief. That sort of matter should be common to a publisher, so he was puzzled by the editor-in-chief's fluster.

"My boss will surely fire me," the editor-in-chief lamented miserably. He panicked when he thought that it could happen.

"No matter how much you lose, I will compensate you with double that amount," Matthias calmly replied. These days, there was nothing that money couldn't solve because all he worried about in the end was his own benefits.

When the editor-in-chief heard Matthias' promise, he felt relieved. Since Matthias had already said so, he would still gain financially since the Locke Group had the reputation of being rich and generous, which made him feel much at ease. It doesn't matter even if I'm bound to lose or get fired.

That was the power of money—it provided people with a sense of security and it put the editor-in-chief at ease almost instantly.

“Thank you, Director Locke. Thank you.” The chief editor was grateful to Matthias, but the latter was unwilling to continue speaking with him because his impression of an insatiable man like the editor-in-chief was not exactly pleasant. “I’m in a hurry to attend a meeting. I’m hanging up now and don’t ever call me again.”

Heather was extremely enraged this time, so someone had to suffer the consequences of her wrath and The Apple Gazette would naturally have to pay a price for it. Nevertheless, with Matthias’ wealth, he was able to comfort the abandoned canon fodder with money, which would allow him to have the last laugh.

Matthias was in high spirits when he hung up the call. This time, rumors about his romantic relationship with Heather had made the headlines. From now on, she would be romantically associated with him. When a feisty woman like her was rumored to be his woman, she would definitely feel frustrated.

A cold, sinister sneer played by his lips. The show has just begun. I will have to hype it up and make sure that the news spreads throughout the city like wildfire to become a trending topic on Twitter. Myra would only know about this if I resort to this method.

He thought that it was a smart move to approach Myra through Heather. It was only after the fact that he knew feelings were never predictable. When he thought that he was at an upper hand, he was, in fact, losing.

Meanwhile, Heather and Alexander were leisurely tasting new desserts in a dessert shop. Although he was an elderly man, he had a sweet tooth and a connoisseur of desserts.

“Alexander, this dessert shop is not bad, right?” Heather, who was sitting opposite Alexander, asked as she grinned. She was behaving like an innocent young lady in front of him.

“Yes, it is good indeed. You are the only one who is able to locate such a fine dessert shop in a remote place.” He and Robert were friends and both of them liked her a lot.

As they ate while they chatted, Alexander’s expression suddenly changed before he spoke in a stern manner, “Heather, it’s better not to mess with Matthias.” He had caught wind of some of Matthias’ doings, so he was worried

that Heather would be at a disadvantage when she dealt with a manipulative man like Matthias.

Heather smiled, unfazed by his warning. “I didn’t mess with him, but he messed with me instead.” Dissatisfaction spread across her face.

“Sigh!” Alexander sighed. He believed in her innocence in this incident; in fact, his faith in her was more than that of Robert. However, nobody knew how things would progress after this.

“Let’s not talk about work. I still need you to teach me about law, Alexander. Do you still remember that when I was little, I said that I wanted to become a lawyer like you? However, it turns out that I have become a businesswoman who talks about money all the time.” Her grin was so wide that her eyes formed into two lines. She knew that he was sincere toward her and she needed him as well because a professional lawyer like him, who had strong networks, would be a great resource to her future company. Therefore, she treated him well and the person she respected the most apart from her grandfather was Alexander.

“Heather, are you really planning to set up your own company?” Alexander asked worriedly. He did not wish for Heather to be deeply involved in the business world. The business world was too complex and he did not wish for her to spend too much effort in it.

“Of course! I will need your help to register the company after this!” she adamantly uttered. She had been making preparations for a long time to start her business from scratch and now, she was just waiting for the right time.

Alexander peered at Heather and shook her head in resignation. “I’m old, but I will do my best if I’m able to help you.” He made himself clear that he would certainly help if he had the ability to do so.

At the same time, the person having a pleasant conversation with Robert at the Langston Residence was anxiously waiting for Heather to return!

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The situation was like normal in the Langston Family—the kids were playing in the house as it became lively in the living room. Their cheerful noises seemed to echo everywhere.

Upon arriving home, Heather massaged her temples when she saw the mess. Well, this looks like a funfair. I had only left for a while and the Langston Residence is now reduced to this chaotic state. I am at a loss for words.

The butler couldn't cope with the situation, but everybody was smiling in happiness. As she stared at her family, she realized that what happened to her had not affected the Langstons.

Apart from their good looks, what else can they offer? Oddly enough, Heather was feeling angry. The Apple Gazette was widely popular among the public as the local historical newspaper. The Langston Family, who enjoyed good gossip, had subscribed to the newspaper too. In that case, shouldn't they be aware of what has happened to me?

Nevertheless, they seemed unfazed. The incident had involved her and the entire Langston Family, but they were not bothered at all. In fact, they were fooling around as usual.

Heather steadily walked past the living hall. I have expected this from the beginning, so there is no reason to be calculative with them. The Langstons have only been concerned about what I can offer them since I was a child. Nevertheless, they are never available whenever I need them. We do not share the bond of a family. The only person who loves me is Grandpa, but due to his health issues, he can't do much. Besides, many people have their eyes on me, so any favoritism from Grandpa would affect me negatively.

While she was approaching the place, she was planning to look for Robert. The only place to locate him in the Langston Residence was none other than the quiet study room.

The whole family turned a deaf ear to her with very few people having the courage to approach her. There were many who hated her and even treated her as if she didn't exist.

Who would have expected Heather, the queen of appearance with a forceful aura in public, to be just a nobody in the Langston Family? There was still laughter outside as she made her way inside the house. Today is not a good day—it is a family meal day, so everyone has dropped by for a reunion.

The person whom she least wished to see appeared in front of her the moment she opened the door of the study. She shook her head in disbelief because she did not expect Myra to show up.

D\*mmmit! Myra must have read the headlines. How could I possibly explain myself to her? I am not mentally prepared, but she is here now. Heather was not even bothered about what Robert would think of her as a result of the matter, but she just could not face Myra.

“Heather, are you surprised?” Myra asked with a smile, as if nothing had happened.

“Yes, I am.” Heather’s lips tugged into a forced smile.

Robert was grinning from ear to ear. He had been chatting with Myra about Lisa earlier as he was still fond of her. He had met Lisa when they were young back then, but he regretted that they hadn’t been able to be together. Nevertheless, he felt even more sorry that he couldn’t be Lisa’s best friend. In fact, they hadn’t been in contact for the past few years, but he had been constantly missing her.

“Am I interrupting you both?” Heather wanted nothing more than to escape the place. Can someone please give me an excuse to leave?

“No, you are not. Heather, please come in. Myra hasn’t been to the Langston Residence for such a long time. She must stay for lunch today.” Robert was fond of Myra to begin with, so he was even more attached to her due to her relationship with Lisa.

Heather rubbed her eyes. Have I heard wrongly?! Does Grandpa want Myra to stay for a meal? I want to get rid of Myra as soon as possible. Well, there is no way I can escape now. I don’t even have a valid reason to do that. I am a piece of dead meat. Grandpa hates the Hart Family with a vengeance. Why is he willing to ask Myra to stay for a meal? She was at a loss for words when she glanced at him.

Robert wrapped an arm around her shoulders to lightly pat her. “Heather must be delighted.” The moment she saw his bright, cheerful smile, she could not go against him.

“Yes, I am.” Heather regretted her decision to return home. I would not have returned home if I knew that there’s a family meal going on—nothing good ever comes out of it. In hindsight, I recall Mr. Presgraves advising me to attend some family reunion. Well, it is true that I must not accept the suggestions of others.

She was now regretting her decision. Life is no doubt challenging. In this instant, the only thing I want to do is to drag Matthias out and execute him by shooting.

“I need to head downstairs to handle some things. You two, young ones, should have a chat,” Robert stated while releasing her, as though trying to give some privacy to her and Myra.

Why haven't I noticed how considerate Grandpa is in the past? Heather had the urge to harm herself while staring at his back as he left. I am sure that Myra will interrogate me by torture. She felt her heart sinking the moment the study door slammed shut. Nothing good will come out of this.

Nevertheless, Myra maintained her smile when she spoke again, “It has been such a long time since I last saw Old Master Langston. He is as friendly as ever.”

Thank God Myra hasn't started directly questioning me about the issue involving Matthias and me. “Grandpa has always been that way. He has been fond of you ever since you were a child,” Heather commented before she smiled at Myra. However, Heather's expression was stiff and unnatural as she couldn't act naturally at this point.

Myra came closer to carefully regard Heather. She took a sniff before she spoke after a long pause, “I smell something.” It was as if she was mentally challenging Heather and stared at her with a cunning glint in her gaze.

“Heather, you are hiding something from me. You have an odd and stiff expression,” Myra commented pointedly. She continued to stare at Heather while pushing her in a torturous way by beating around the bush.

It was easy to expose herself if she continued to feel sheepish, but Heather swiftly recollected herself. I cannot confirm for sure that Myra has learned about this matter. It seems that the Hart Family does not take note of gossip in general. I can't even be sure of the progress of the issue now. Anyone might have read about it and chatted about it as gossip fodder. However, this incident mainly involves the Locke Group and Langston Group. Besides, Matthias and I haven't been in Bradford City for long. Well, those in the business world will no doubt analyze it deeply and carefully.



In her heart, she prayed to God that Myra did not personally come all the way to the Langston Residence just to meet her. She hoped that God would have answered her prayer.

“I have never kept any secrets from you. I have no idea what you are talking about!” We promised each other to be best friends for the rest of our lives and we even agreed not to keep secrets from each other. Upon recalling that, Heather felt guilty because she had kept a lot of secrets from Myra.

Heather had kept many things from Myra once she perceived them as being bad for the latter. Despite knowing that it was wrong, Heather had to lie to maintain the pretense. It was a never-ending vicious cycle once the lies had started. She was exhausted whenever she was reminded of her lies. Relationships require so much effort and work to maintain it.

We are no longer children now. How can there be no secrets in the adult world?” Myra lightly asked with a gentle smile. She talked about it like it was a natural thing.

The day had finally arrived; they had not blatantly talked about it all along, but Myra was voicing her thoughts directly now. We can't return to the promises we made when we were young. There have been too many lies throughout the time we were growing up, and that is the ruthless truth of society. We are no longer young girls shielded in the ivory towers of dreams.

Heather smiled helplessly and she felt as if her perfect dreams were crumbling in front of her. She felt at a loss because superficially, she thought that she had been trying her best to protect Myra, but in reality, Myra was the one protecting her.

She had been claiming that she wanted to protect Myra's innocence. In the end, Heather was a weakling under Myra's protection. They were not biological sisters, but they were like sisters.

“That's right. We are adults now,” Heather agreed helplessly. She looked crestfallen like a child who had just lost their candy.

“Heather, I do not want to find out further about the things that you have been keeping from me. However, you should be honest with me about some of them,” Myra spoke sincerely. She sounded firm toward the end of her sentence. “Don't you trust me? I might not be powerful enough right now, but I am no longer a child. You can rely on me at times too.”

Heather was rendered speechless when she stared at Myra's earnest and sincere expression. When it comes to relationships, I could never be as simple and direct as Myra. I honestly do not want to lose Myra as my close friend. Nevertheless, I just cannot face her whenever I recall the outrageous and crazy mistakes I have done in my youth.

"I took the liberty of baking some desserts for you today. I was hoping that you'd enjoy them," Myra quietly stated. "I chatted with Old Master Langston and he kept bringing up Grandma. Maybe the relationship between the Langstons and the Hart Family can be repaired. We shouldn't allow the elderlies live with regrets!"

Upon hearing that, Heather sighed in relief because she was bracing herself for something worse from Myra. That scared me witless. "Yes, the relationship between the two families should be repaired and I am happy to contribute to it," she replied happily. It looks like Myra has not read about the gossip regarding Matthias and me.

Myra nodded with a smile. "I will work hard for that too. There's nothing we can't do as long as we stick together." She reached out to hold onto Heather.

It was only at that moment when Heather noticed that Myra was holding a newspaper in her other hand. She stared in disbelief at Myra as her smile froze on her face.

Myra followed the direction of Heather's gaze and she looked at her left hand. Then, Myra raised the newspaper in her left hand while keeping her head lowered. "Heather, why did you keep this from me?" She held the newspaper in front of Heather.

The headline printed across the newspaper was eye-catching. She gawked at the newspaper in shock and felt awful, but she just couldn't make a sound.

"I am sorry—I honestly had no idea how to explain this to you. I hope you will trust me." Heather looked at Myra pleadingly, as if hoping to gain her trust.

"You haven't told me anything. Why should I trust you? I honestly hope that the pictures were edited." It was obvious that she did not trust Heather as many questions were reflected in her gaze.

Heather did not answer; numerous thoughts flashed through her mind because she was trying to find the best response to explain herself.

“I was truly shocked when I saw this newspaper when I entered the study. I couldn’t believe that you were the person in the picture,” Myra sounded as though her heart was breaking. To be fair, it is good news that Heather is dating, but everything is happening suddenly. Besides, she is currently with someone unknown and they are progressing at an alarming speed. How could I possibly accept that?

Previously, Heather told me in person that she has only met Matthias once. I just don’t understand why she has lied to me. Is it due to the fact that Matthias is on my opposing side? I do not believe that Heather has kept this a secret from me due to such superficial reasons. I need an explanation from her.

## Standing before Love Chapter 425

They were steadily staring at each other; never in their wildest dreams would they have guessed that a man could cause their friendship to be tested. It made Heather recall the time when they were young. Myra once had a fight with me over Matthias. Perhaps this is fated! Matthias must be the man God had arranged to ruin my friendship with Myra. She bit her lip while she looked especially upset.

“The news is not true. Matthias was...” Heather trailed off as she swallowed the rest of her sentence. Maybe this is what Matthias wants. I won’t fall into his trap the second time.

This time, she was extra careful while guessing Matthias’ thoughts and motives. On the other side, Myra listened to Heather and looked on in confusion and concern because Heather’s sentence sounded ambiguous.

Myra tightly hugged Heather. “Did he force himself on you? Let’s demand justice from him.” Heather’s pause had opened her words to interpretation, so it was only natural for Myra to jump to the worst conclusion.

“Cough, cough...” Heather started to cough. What on earth is Myra thinking? She tried to catch her breath. It looks like things are getting worse as I try to explain myself. “No, you are overthinking things. It was just an accident between him and me. The Apple Gazette is just trying to gain traction.” She recalled Myra’s untrusting expression earlier, so she didn’t mention the part of Matthias’ ulterior motive. Why would anyone believe me if I can’t produce any proof?

“No way. You shouldn’t just take the blame. He needs to bear the responsibility even if it is an accident.” Myra was focused on the first part of Heather’s sentence, so she was determined not to let Matthias take advantage of Heather.

The color started to drain from Heather’s face. It seems like the more I explain myself, the worse things are. Somehow, I have a feeling that we are going off topic.

“Myra, nothing happened between Matthias and me. I might have spent the night at his house after getting drunk and that is most probably when the paparazzi snapped my pictures. They were exaggerating the story. I will be suing The Apple Gazette for slander,” she explained the situation patiently to Myra. Currently, this is the best explanation. I am not planning on revisiting this matter, but when the opportunity presents itself in the future, Matthias will repay the humiliation I’ve endured a hundred fold.

Myra suspiciously regarded Heather. Heather is definitely the kind of person to keep quiet while being taken advantage of, but my instincts are telling me that things aren’t as simple as they seem. I am sure that there is something amiss. Her current expression is enough proof that there is something wrong with the situation. Usually, she would not act in such a way. If nothing happened between Matthias and herself, she would not have reacted in a suspicious manner.

“Trust me,” Heather said as she pointed at herself. Myra had no choice, but to nod in response at that moment.

She had nodded because she just couldn’t deny Heather’s sincere gaze. I should calm Heather down for now because it has been a long time since I have last seen her lose control. Well, judging by that, maybe Matthias is truly the special one. It doesn’t matter whether anything happened between Matthias and Heather that night because it seems like she treats him differently compared to other men.

“I trust you. Heather, I’ll drop this matter and I shall stop asking you about it.” Myra tried to calm Heather down since she was always a considerate person.

Heather smiled in relief and she instantly felt relaxed. To be friends with Myra for such a long time, I would say that the most important thing is that she understands me well. Therefore, she will never subject me to more troubles.

“Actually, it is a simple issue, but the newspaper went overboard.” She snatched the newspaper from Myra angrily before tossing it into the trash can.

“Yes, I will not let this slide. I must sue them for harassment.” Myra memorized the name of the newspaper. She was determined not to let the matter slide, especially since they tried to ruin Heather’s reputation.

Myra carefully read every single word on the news and she even traced the report for two consecutive days. Their actions are deplorable. Besides, the language used was horrible, especially the part where they described Heather as a lowly woman. The news made it sound as if she was the one pursuing Matthias. Anybody with a sound mind knows that she is not that kind of person. It is rare for her to agree to somebody’s pursuit, so it is almost impossible for her to pursue someone else.

“In any case, why did you go on a date with Matthias? You even went to his house. Besides, your alcohol consumption...” Myra stopped speaking because she noticed that Heather’s expression soured. There were many doubtful points in Heather’s last statement, which had Myra thinking immediately.

“I do not know where to start.” Myra was feeling conflicted. One should not underestimate a woman’s curiosity and tendency to gossip—and she was no different.

“You do not have to say anything if it’s inconvenient for you. The main issue now is that I was confused about your being a visitor at the board of directors meeting at the Locke Group. Besides, it seems like the topic for discussion among the board that day was associated with the Stark Group. Well, Heather, can you tell me exactly what that was about?” Myra was not in a rush to know details about Heather’s date, but she had the right to know about the board of directors meeting because it was related to Stark Group after all. The strangest thing is this—why did Matthias take Heather along as a visitor in the meeting? I just can’t seem to see the connection.

Heather noticed that there was another newspaper on the table with an eye-catching photo right underneath the headline. It was a picture illustrating Heather and Matthias joking at the Locke Group’s board of directors meeting.

The angle was caught at the right moment because his gaze seemed tender and loving. How did he do that? She gritted her teeth in frustration. My guess

is that Matthias deliberately kept trying to come closer to me that day in an attempt to get a shot of this intimate photo.

“The date and the meeting with the board of directors are related,” she sighed. Well, I think I have to be honest at this point.

Myra looked up at Heather and she gazed at the latter unwaveringly, as if urging her to spill the beans.

“I went looking for Matthias because I wanted to discuss issues pertaining to the collaboration between the Langston Group and Locke Group. We discussed a lot of things that day and I did not expect to feel like old friends at our first meeting. In any case, women can’t possibly hold their liquor as well as men. Hence, I drank too much without even realizing it,” Heather explained carefully and she was meticulous about the words she chose.

Myra was anticipating more, so she nodded to acknowledge that she was listening intently. In fact, she gazed at Heather in a serious manner.

“I had too much to drink, so I mentioned the Stark Group by accident.” Heather had a feeling that it would be difficult to fool Myra about her getting drunk. After all, she knows how well I hold my liquor. I hate my alcohol tolerance right now.

“When I woke up the next day, Matthias told me that they had a board of directors meeting that day itself and they would be discussing matters pertaining to the Stark Group. He asked if I might be interested in joining as a visitor. Since it was associated with the Stark Group, I figured I should attend with him. I did not think much of it, but I should have avoided the meeting.” Heather deliberately brought up the Stark Group issue as though it was by chance. I might have helped Myra in this matter, but I can’t possibly tell her directly that I went looking for Matthias for the Stark Group’s sake, can I?!

Myra lowered her head while listening to Heather’s explanation with extreme guilt. It turns out this is related to me. I am sure that Heather must have asked Matthias for help. There has been a drastic change in the Stark Group for the past two days. Dad has suddenly started to panic after losing Matthias’ support. I did not expect Heather to help us in this matter. I might not trust everything she has said so far, but I believe that she must have helped with the Stark Group’s issue.

“You didn’t have to do that,” Myra answered gloomily. “I do not want you to sacrifice yourself for me.” She was blaming herself now. It is all thanks to my incompetence. I can’t allow Heather to sacrifice for me.

“Stop imagining things and do not give me that look. Nothing happened between Matthias and me.” Heather suddenly felt that it would be useless to explain herself when she recalled her semi-naked picture where she was wearing Matthias’ shirt.

“Furthermore, I am not doing that deliberately for you. I was honestly looking for Matthias because of the Langston Family too. The Langston Group’s best working partner might be the Hart Group, but the Langstons and Hart Family are currently... In that case, the Locke Group is the next best working partner after the Hart Group. It was a meeting for the business. When have I ever sacrificed my chastity for money?” Heather had to make the last point clear because she could not endure Myra’s gaze, especially since it was related to Heather’s dignity.

“Yeah, I believe you. However, s\*x while being drunk...” Myra glanced at Heather timidly, but she could not complete her sentence.

Just when Heather was about to respond with a comeback, she heard somebody knocking on the door. Hence, she looked at Myra helplessly. “I am perfectly fine. Do not overthink,” she repeated in tearless grief.

Then, she immediately shouted at the door, “Butler, what is it?” Robert would have just barged into the room, so that left the butler as the next possible person since he would be the only one to politely knock on the door.

“It is lunch time now. Old Master Langston has asked me to invite you both down for lunch,” the butler at the door respectfully answered.

Time had unknowingly passed by swiftly; Heather went forward to take the newspaper before tossing it into the trashcan without even glancing at it. After that, she held Myra’s hand to walk out the door. The butler was waiting for them at the door and he greeted them with a kind, friendly face.

The two women walked down the stairs while holding hands, just like when they were young. At that time, they wished they could quickly grow up, but fast forward to the present, they wished they could return to the time when they were innocent and simple.



Heather automatically massaged her temples when she saw the number of people at the dining table. She was not keen to face the cold and heartless relatives. Myra tugged at Heather's arm lightly. "Lighten up. Something bad might have happened, but I will always be on your side."

After the incident, Myra was even more grateful toward Heather and she was even more determined to treat Heather sincerely. I had an argument with Heather over Stark Group previously, so I wouldn't want her to do too much for me. However, since she has done it, I can't blame her; the only thing I can do right now is to be grateful to her. This is how humans have been interacting all this while. As the saying goes, a small, kind gesture should be repaid with a pool of kindness. I hope that I will have the chance to help Heather because I do not wish to always be a burden to her.

At the dining table, Heather's eldest brother, Blake, leered at Myra, so Heather viciously glared at him. Among the Langstons, Heather hated him the most because he was a lecher. If he weren't her older brother, she would have hired someone to beat him to death, just to avenge the women he had toyed with.

In any case, he had prepared a huge present for her out of courtesy too. She had just taken her seat when he smiled brilliantly at her. "Heather, you must not say that I do not dote on you. I brought a friend home today and I am sure that you'd be delighted to see him."

Heather felt her anger rising at his mention of a friend. Blake always brings home his hooligan friends by claiming that it's an introduction for me. He just wants me to get married.

The two of them were not fond of each other for as long as they could remember. They always felt unwelcomed whenever they were at home together. Thanks to Blake, she had been forced to go on blind dates many times.

Therefore, she harbored a deep resentment toward him! She wanted nothing more than to pierce his eyes with her fork each time he mentioned about bringing a friend home.

Smack! Heather slammed her utensils on the table and she abruptly pulled Myra up from her seat. "Let's give up our seats since Blake has brought his friend home!"



## Standing before Love Chapter 426

At the dining table, both of them sat with a straight posture. Heather focused her piercing stare on Blake and decided in her mind, I won't care about his image this time!

She whispered in Myra's ears, "Let's go for a meal outside. I'll treat you to a nice meal elsewhere!" The situation at home was in a big mess and she didn't want to stay for an extra minute.

As soon as Robert heard that, he immediately chided Blake, "This is a family gathering. Why did you invite your friend over? This is unacceptable! Since you've invited your friend, then you should just go and have a meal with him outside." Evidently, he was on Heather's side.

At that moment, everyone at the scene kept their silence. They knew that it definitely wasn't a good idea to cross her path. Of course, Blake wasn't one who could be offended either. Furthermore, Robert had already raised his point and anyone who dared to utter a word right now would likely get into deep trouble.

"Grandpa, that's so unfair! You can't just dote on your darling granddaughter! Look at her! She's also brought a friend back with her. Why is her friend allowed to stay for dinner? Why isn't my friend welcome here? I guess her friend's more precious than, huh?" Blake retorted with an indignant expression. The solemn expression on his face clearly depicted the looks of a cunning businessman. In fact, this was much more acceptable than the way he joked earlier.

As soon as Robert heard that, he felt angrier than before. Camille, who was standing next to Blake, stealthily tugged on his sleeve. Although Blake was the one making all the decisions in the company, Robert was well and alive by all means and he was still the Director of Langston Group in name. He still exerted dominance with his presence.

"Blake, you're right. I'll be on my way out with my friend then! We're unworthy to be on the same dining table with you guys!" Heather replied snidely.

Soon after that, she turned to Robert with a smile. "Grandpa, don't be angry at Blake because of me. I know you dote on me the most. However, my friend's pregnant after all so I don't think she can stomach the food here today. It's just one of these things with pregnant ladies and their food restrictions! This is all

my fault! I shouldn't have insisted on inviting her over for dinner with the family. She's pregnant with my godson here! He's quite precious to me! Therefore, I'll bring her out for a meal that's suitable for a pregnant lady." Her words were obviously directed at everyone present. At the same time, she managed to uphold his image. After all, Blake had quite rudely retorted Robert's words and didn't even bother to maintain the latter's image. Ever since Blake took over the company, his behavior toward Robert had been quite rude. Moreover, the whole family chose to side with Blake and made all sorts of efforts to butter up to him.

"I can't stomach this overly lavish meal either. I'll join you two for dinner." Robert glanced at Blake coldly. Over the years, he had lost his hold over both the company and the family. Blake was starting to become ruder with his behavior at home.

Myra had not visited for quite some time, so she didn't realize that a lot had happened within the Langston Family. Previously, Robert was the absolute decision-maker of the family and there was no way anyone could have challenged him. However, judging by how everyone kept their silence now, it seemed Blake was the one currently in power.

All of a sudden, someone appeared at their doorstep and interrupted the tense situation. He apologized, "Excuse me, am I interrupting something?"

It was Matthias who'd arrived. As soon as Heather heard that familiar voice, she turned to look at his face, which bore a respectful front, before she gave a snide smile.

"I was wondering which friend he had invited. So it's you, Director. Locke!" she said with clenched teeth. Her eyes smoldered with anger while she directed her gaze on him.

Suddenly, Heather realized Myra's presence by her side and she hastily suppressed her anger. Meanwhile, Myra shot a perplexed look at Heather before looking toward Matthias.

Matthias was standing against the light and his face suddenly reminded Myra of his younger self from their youth. Myra shook her head in surprise and wondered, What did I just see? I think I saw a young man with features that resembled Matthias! She squinted her eyes and tried to recall what she saw.

“Miss Langston, what a surprise! I didn’t expect us to meet each other again so soon.” Matthias maintained his polite manner and walked toward Heather while speaking.

“Don’t come near me!” Myra suddenly held her head in her arms and said in a terrified tone. Her voice was quite distressed at this moment.

Heather looked at Myra anxiously. “Myra, what’s wrong? Are you not feeling well?” Our casual lunch date is completely ruined! Full of annoyance, Heather looked at Matthias. “Didn’t you hear her words? Stop right there!” she demanded. Right now, her focus was on Myra. She looked at Myra with a pained look on her face as she was quite worried about the latter’s condition.

“Mr. Locke, come on in. Just ignore her!” Blake dashed forward to greet Matthias. He assumed that Heather was currently throwing a tantrum.

Robert, who was seated at the end of the dining table, had a darkened expression on his face and he glared at Blake with a warning. I can’t believe it! He actually invited Matthias Locke over for lunch!

Blake’s action of inviting Matthias over to the Langston Residence at this point had crossed the line. It was not only hurtful to Heather, but also a blatant disregard for the reputation of the Langston Family.

A furious Robert banged his fist on the table and yelled in annoyance, “Everyone, stop eating! Blake, come with me to the study room!” How did he turn out to be such an ingrate? Robert, who always regarded the family reputation to be of utmost importance, was currently close to throttling Blake.

Meanwhile, Matthias looked at the unfolding scene with a stunned expression. He tried his hardest to act as if he was completely unaware of what was going on. Heather shot daggers at him with her eyes. This is all his fault!

Everyone on the dining table heeded Robert’s words and abandoned their meals. As for her, she turned to Robert and responded, “Grandpa, Myra’s feeling terrible, so I’ll bring her to the hospital right away.” Although Heather was keen to stay behind and help him to deal with the messy situation, Myra’s condition needed more urgent care.

“Sure, go ahead!” Robert glanced at Myra with a worried expression. I hope she’s fine! How am I going to explain to Lisa if anything happens to Myra during her visit?

At this moment, Matthias walked up to them and mentioned to Heather, “Do you need my help?” His current expression was full of innocence, which caused her to muse, Great, he’s probably acting dumb to take advantage of the situation!

“No.” She shoved him aside. “If it wasn’t for your presence today, we wouldn’t have this mess right now!”

She then hurriedly escorted Myra out of the house as he gazed at the back of their heads with a sigh. I’ve caught a glimpse of Myra once again. He wanted to focus his yearning gaze on Myra for a little bit longer. If only I had known that Myra would be present, then I wouldn’t turn up at all. I didn’t think she would be affected by my presence and develop a headache all of a sudden! Did I trigger something in her?

At the stairwell, Robert turned his attention to Matthias and mentioned, “Mr. Locke, if you don’t mind, could you wait for me downstairs for a short while? I have something to discuss with you, but first, let me finish my discussion with Blake.” Robert was determined not to let him off lightly this time. Since Matthias had shown up here on his own accord, then he’d better give them a good explanation for his actions.

Matthias nodded in response. “I also have something to discuss with you, sir.” In fact, his main intention here today was to seek a collaboration with the Langston Family. He just never expected Blake to choose such an awkward timing.

Evidently, in this day and age, Matthias was not the only one good at taking advantage of others. Blake was also well-versed at that and it was evident from how he exploited Matthias. He had invited Matthias over today to provoke Heather so that she would lose her composure in front of everyone.

When they were younger, Blake actually had a good relationship with her and he was always glued to her. As they grew older and developed conflicts of interest, their relationship then took a turn for the worse. At that time, Heather attracted all of Robert’s attention due to her outstanding capabilities. Blake, being the oldest grandson in the family, naturally expected to have preferential treatment but he didn’t get the attention he expected. As such, he was discontented and couldn’t control the flames of jealousy that flared up within him. Meanwhile, her attitude toward him was one of complete disregard. As a result, he chose to use other methods to attract the attention of everyone as she was being praised each time. His flirtatious personality was just his way of

expressing himself. After all, he knew that there was no way he could win in the war he waged against his sister. I'm such a joke! Can you believe it? A grown man being completely defeated by his sister?

Ever since Heather went abroad, Blake's life was much more comfortable. He actually was talented at running a business. If it weren't for him being distracted by women, he could have performed even better. It was what everyone assumed, so each time he heard someone say that, he felt better. However, he was the only one aware that his obsession with women was merely a facade. In fact, he'd given his best in everything, but he could only achieve so much and it was not even comparable to Heather at all! As such, he had no choice but to maintain the facade, pretending that he hadn't tried his best in front of everyone. Over time, he managed to convince himself that it was true; if only he had tried his best, then he would definitely be as good as or even better than her!

With Heather currently back in town, despite Blake having the power to make decisions at Langston Group and no longer fearful of Robert, everyone at home fawned over him too. Everything seemed to be heading in a good direction for Blake, but with her back home and having to see her on a daily basis was quite a tough pill for him to swallow. She had developed a huge presence abroad and was well-known there. As such, she attracted all of everyone's attention as soon as she arrived back in town, but he couldn't stand her blasé attitude—she acted as if it was all quite normal to her. He was quite affected by her behavior because she had easily ruined his efforts that he had built up all this while. There was no way he could be content; he could not tolerate the 'sunshine' next to him, especially when she had easily overshadowed him.

Slap. The sound echoed in the room as Robert slapped Blake hard across his face and it brought the latter back to the current scene in front of him. Despite that, Blake maintained a flippant smile and stared at Robert squarely in the eyes. He had all but given up on gaining Robert's attention. After all, Heather was the best in his eyes. Look at how she proudly declared that she's Grandpa's favorite grandkid without any disguise. Their close relationship gets on my nerves!

"You've crossed the line here! Tell me, does the Langston Family reputation mean anything to you at all?!" Robert angrily confronted him.

"Grandpa, Matthias is here to discuss a collaboration with us. I invited him here today for the sake of Langston Group." Blake caressed his face and

realized that he was bleeding on the lips. Looks like I've angered the old man badly this time.

"Have you considered how the press would speculate on Matthias and Heather at this point if we choose to collaborate with Locke Group?" Robert trembled in anger and jumped to his feet from his armchair.

"I'm just managing the crisis. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. Besides, taking this chance to seal the deal with Locke Group would ensure that Heather's tabloid news becomes yesterday's story." Blake raised an eyebrow. Being a businessman meant that he was excellent at twisting his words with the key being a glib talker.

"You're just creating a sensation. Not only will you harm Heather's reputation with your actions, but you're also ruining the Langstons' family name. Can you imagine the speculation we will face from the public?" A frustrated Robert banged his fist on the table while saying his words.

"Then, let's matchmake Heather and Matthias. There has to be some sacrifice on her part in order to gain this collaboration. There won't be any speculations from the public if they are actually in a relationship. All that would ensue are heartfelt blessings from the public. By then, the public interest would be beneficial to us and this would also further cement our relationship with the Locke Family at the same time. It's killing two birds with one stone, so what's wrong with this?" Blake wasn't aware of the feud between Heather and Matthias, but he could sense that they were not too fond of each other. As such, it would be quite interesting to see how the relationship progressed.

Besides, Matthias had strong tactics and it was just nice to make use of him as Heather's opponent. Moreover, Blake was quite confident that the man would agree to the proposal to seal the deal. The only person left to convince was Heather. I'm quite keen to matchmake them and watch them come to blows with each other. After all, it's quite enjoyable to see her in an unhappy state! My darling little sister needs someone to knock some senses into her.

## Standing before Love Chapter 427

Robert repeatedly scrutinized the man standing in front of him; he tried hard to glean some clues from Blake's expression. He claims to have the family's interest at heart, but it's quite obvious that he's using this opportunity to coerce Heather. There was no way on earth that he would agree to Blake's

suggestion of sacrificing Heather for the sake of the company. As he frowned, he gradually sat down while he maintained his gaze on Blake.

At this point, the duo silently stared at each other. After some time, Robert mentioned with a distant tone, "There is no need for our family to resort to such a desperate measure of sacrificing a family member's future for the sake of the company's interest." He had previously seen for himself Blake's tactics. Sadly, Blake remained steadfast in his ways of using these underhanded measures to plot against others.

Both of them refused to give in to the other. Blake insisted on progressing with his plan under the guise of maintaining the family's interest. On the other hand, it was obvious that Robert would never allow Blake to use Heather as a pawn.

Meanwhile, Heather escorted Myra to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, Myra suddenly recovered, but she insisted that Myra undergo a body check to ensure that everything was alright with her pregnancy.

As Heather scurried around the hospital, Myra looked on. She was at a loss for words at the moment, but there was a smile on her face. Life was much better with great friends like Heather, making Myra realize that it was much better to have one or two genuine friends than to have multiple casual acquaintances.

"Dr. Ryans, is it necessary for her to undergo a cranial CT scan?" Heather focused her eyes on the specialist sitting across the room from her.

"Yes, it is. Otherwise, it would be quite hard to diagnose the problem." She looked at Myra as she responded to the question.

"She's pregnant!" Heather stood protectively in front of Myra and retorted. "She can't possibly undergo a cranial CT scan!" What's wrong with this specialist? She doesn't even consider the actual circumstances before giving a suggestion!

"That's right. It's not possible to choose this option right now. It would be a better idea to run further diagnostic tests after she has given birth," Dr. Ryans responded with a wary look on her face as she looked at Heather whose current expression resembled a tiger about to pounce on her prey.



Before Heather could say anything, Myra interjected. With a polite smile, she responded, "Sure, it's fine for now then." She knew that there was no point in making things difficult for the specialist. Besides, the results from all her other tests returned normal, so it seemed that everything was fine overall.

After the consultation, both of them left the hospital and they felt quite hungry after the ordeal. Furthermore, they hadn't eaten much during lunch. Heather turned to Myra and said, "Let's go, I'll treat you to a nice meal!" It's not good to starve a pregnant lady. Besides, there's also a baby who needs nutrients there, so I shouldn't deprive him of that!

Myra glanced at her watch and noticed that it was quite late. After giving some thought, she asked, "What do you want for lunch?" Gosh, we spent so much time at the hospital because Heather insisted on me getting a full body check.

"Let's discuss this in the car." Heather opened the car door and at the same time, she tried to think of a nearby restaurant to head to.

As soon as Myra entered the car, she received a phone call from Tony. Naturally, he was quite worried because she had gone out in the morning to the Langston Residence, but she hadn't arrived home.

"Don't worry, I'll be back for dinner," she mentioned to him. I don't know what he's worried about. She smiled in contentment after ending the call. Evidently, she was elated about it despite her lament.

"I'm quite envious of seeing you two being so affectionate with each other," Heather said while staring at Myra seated next to her.

"That's how you'll feel once you meet the right person." The smile on Myra's face was indeed a source of envy.

Heather gripped tightly on the steering wheel and looked forward with a resigned smile. "It's easy to fall in love with someone, but the hard part is to maintain the relationship. Most of the time, people fall in love with someone who doesn't share the same feelings as them. There are also instances of people who get together because of their love for each other, but break up from each other due to all sorts of reasons." She had always harbored a pessimistic view on relationship matters.

"That's quite true! Life isn't always a bed of roses and there are a lot of possibilities in life to experience. We would never know for sure what would



happen until we actually experience life.” Myra was affected by Heather’s pessimism and lamented about it too. The hardest thing to achieve is an ordinary life, devoid of any ups and downs and without any accidents.

“Stop overthinking! You have to eat healthily during your pregnancy as well as maintain a positive outlook in life; otherwise...” You could become depressed, Heather thought as she trailed off. Despite it being a joke, she couldn’t bear to subject Myra to that possibility too. She sincerely hoped that Myra could gain all the happiness that she didn’t quite possess.

“Otherwise, what?” Myra laughingly questioned. How can someone stop speaking just like that?

“Otherwise, you might not deliver to a cute and chubby child. After all, babies look cuter when they are chubby.” Heather gave a cunning smile, just like how she was in her younger days.

“No way! If the baby’s too big in size, it could become a complicated birth,” Myra reminded as she scrunched up her nose. Every time she hung out with Heather, she felt like they returned in time and everything was just like before. In the past, they were merely kids, but now she was about to give birth and become a parent. Time really had flown past. She had yearned to get older as soon as possible when she was young, but now, she would rather time slowly tick as she had a lot of things yet to be done.

There would be an outcome within the next few days in regards to the issue with Stark Group. As soon as Myra realized that, she sighed in relief. Heather’s done so much for me this time! She decided that she would plan a relaxing trip with Tony once the issues with Stark Group had been settled. It’s definitely time for a break! We have been living under pressure for such a long time. Come to think of it, this has been such a difficult year full of ups and downs.

As Myra was lost in her thoughts, Heather parked the car at the entrance of a tiny restaurant and she opened the car door with a smile. She lifted her head and glanced at the restaurant before turning toward Myra, who was by her side. Then, the two of them looked at each other and exchanged a knowing smile.

“Oh! This restaurant’s still here after such a long time. That’s quite surprising!” Myra used to enjoy having her meals here with Heather, making them regular

customers. However, she had hardly visited ever since Heather left the country.

“Haha! That’s because the food here is delicious! Obviously, they don’t lack customers despite their location!”

Both of them entered the shop one after another and chose a table by the windowsill. The menu was quite similar to what they were accustomed to before. There were a couple of new dishes that were added while some of the dishes from the old menu were gone. They ordered the meal in a hurry as they were starving and couldn’t wait to enjoy a hot, piping meal. Most of their favorite dishes were still on the menu, so it didn’t take them long to decide. Besides that, they tried one of the new dishes on the menu to find out whether the restaurant had improved after all these years.

After ordering their food, they waited patiently for it. Heather spent her time occasionally glancing at Myra and looking outside the window as well. They were quite comfortable with each other despite not speaking a word since there was a comfortable rapport between them. Moreover, both of them were lost in their own thoughts.

Heather decided that she would not continue thinking about Matthias this time. She had made up her mind to cast all the rumors aside for now and enjoy herself as she reminisced about old times.

Meanwhile, Matthias was currently in Robert’s study. After teaching Blake a lesson, Robert had slightly mellowed and he was no longer as upset as before. Matthias politely and courteously took a seat opposite Robert in the room.

“Matthias Locke.” Robert looked at him and called out his name.

“Old Master Langston.” Matthias nodded and smiled. “What do you wish to discuss with me, sir?” Evidently, he was not welcomed here; he had waited for so long, yet he was not even served a single cup of tea.

“Could you tell me what’s going on between you and Heather?” Robert stared into Matthias’ attractive pair of almond-shaped eyes. Matthias was blessed with a pair of seductive-looking eyes, but no one had realized the emotions behind his cold interior.

“Gosh, sir. You must be mistaken! Frankly speaking, the speculations by the press are utter nonsense! I wouldn’t dare to hide anything from you, sir.” It was quite obvious that Matthias was trying hard to get into Robert’s good books. After all, Robert was still the head of the family.

“Oh, is that so?” Robert slightly toned down in response to Matthias’ polite attitude.

“The newspapers are usually full of speculation. My meeting with Miss Langston was mainly to discuss the collaboration between our two families. We had a great time talking to each other, so we got carried away. That resulted in the meeting going longer than expected. Moreover, we had a few drinks, so…” Matthias felt quite shy to continue his words.

“Why didn’t you send Heather back home after that, though?” Robert wasn’t one who could be easily fooled. If he can’t give me a plausible explanation, then I will just assume that he had ill intentions against Heather.

Matthias sheepishly looked at him and answered, “Miss Langston can hold her liquor quite well. However, I couldn’t and I wasn’t conscious at that point, so my driver sent us directly to my place.” His slightly abashed look was perfectly portrayed. I’ll continue acting like a shy little youngster today.

“So, did anything happen between the two of you?” Robert fixed his piercing eyes on Matthias. It looks like he’s not prepared to tell me the exact details. Oh well, I am considered one of his elders, so I guess I shouldn’t be too intrusive!

“Nothing happened that night. The next morning, perhaps Miss Langston misunderstood the situation and we had a disagreement then. Right when that happened, everything was coincidentally caught on camera by members of the press lying in wait outside my house. Sir, I’m sure you know how they move about. They are always trying to find some sensational news to publish. As such, those photos were specifically taken from well-placed angles and are merely their tactics to pull the wool over the public’s eyes,” Matthias explained patiently to Robert. In fact, he was keen to show the world that he and Heather were possibly in an intimate relationship. However, he didn’t dare to publicly announce that yet because he knew that it would offend a lot of people.

Meanwhile, Robert looked at him with a doubtful look. “Are you sure nothing happened?”

In response to Robert's interrogation, Matthias revealed a bashful smile. "Well, how should I put this? Naturally, it would be hard to contain ourselves from just hugging and kissing each other. Then again, I'm not that brazen to go any further than that. I was completely wasted and couldn't even stand upright, so what else could I do?"

All of a sudden, he felt like a rapist being interrogated by the police. He then regretted his rash decision that night; his action of landing himself under the limelight would quite likely be a problem in the future.

Upon hearing Matthias mention the words 'hug' and 'kiss', Robert lost his composure and lamented in his heart, I was right; he has the flighty personality of a player! He has to take responsibility toward Heather for his actions! He can't just brush it off by saying that they couldn't contain themselves! Even if Heather's fine with this, I'm not!

"Just hugging and kissing each other?! You seem to be taking this quite lightly! Is this how things are with you youngsters nowadays?" He shot a dirty look at Matthias.

Matthias had intended to make the situation sound more realistic, so he thought it would be a good idea to admit that they had hugged and kissed. He didn't realize the extent of Robert's protectiveness toward Heather as the latter couldn't seem to accept such behavior at all. It was at that moment when Matthias glanced at him with slight trepidation.

He felt guilty in front of Robert and he lost his imposing manner while facing the latter. He's been in the corporate world for more than thirty years after all, so it's quite normal that I'm not comparable to him. He came up with that excuse in his mind.

After a short pause, Matthias replied, "I know it's my fault for my lack of self-control. Frankly speaking, my feelings toward Miss Langston are..." He couldn't quite bring himself to admit that he liked Heather.

"Are what?" Robert asked with a stern voice. He suddenly felt that Matthias was too wishy-washy and behaved more like a sissy.

"I like Miss Langston, but it's one-sided on my part so I don't dare to harbor any hopes. This incident with the press has caused a rift between Miss Langston and me to the point where I have no idea how to express my feelings toward her. I know I'm not good enough for her, but I like her very

much and that's something I can't control," Matthias expressed with a forlorn look. He had already gotten information that Robert was always steadfastly loyal in his relationship. As such, Matthias took advantage of this knowledge and tried to portray himself as Heather's unrequited pursuer. He was quite confident that he could win Robert's favor this way.

## Standing before Love Chapter 428

On the other side, Matthias was doing all he could to calm Robert down—even if it was temporary. The person who is feared the most in the Langston Family is Robert. If the old man really wants to make a move, he'll be even harder to deal with than Heather.

Meanwhile, Heather and Myra were both done with their meals, so Heather drove Myra home with her car. By the time Heather finally returned to the Langston Residence, it was already late.

It was almost time for dinner, but she hid in her room because she didn't plan to go downstairs for dinner. Luckily, she had bought some snacks on the way back, so she lay down on the couch and munched on the snacks.

When Robert entered, she was biting the crunchy snacks with hatred, as if the snacks were Matthias and Blake.

"Grandpa, why are you here?" The moment Heather realized that Robert was here, she quickly threw aside the snacks because she found her actions embarrassing.

Looking at the snacks on the coffee table, he revealed an understanding smile. It has been a long time since I last saw her eating snacks. She only eats junk food like a crazy person when she is mad at something.

"Are you still angry?" He could see that she was exasperated, but at the same time, she looked adorable by being childish. I haven't seen her this angry for a long time and kind of miss it a bit.

"No." However, Heather was a stubborn child who refused to admit that she was angry.

"Are you really going to lie that you aren't angry?" Robert found a chair before sitting opposite her. Ever since she was an adult, she rarely expressed her true emotions as she always appeared to be well-behaved in front of him.

She was obviously a short-tempered person who always suppressed her true feelings, but he could see everything with his own eyes. She has really suffered growing up in the Langston Family. I can only blame myself for not giving her more protection. Besides, there are many things that were out of my control.

These days, his control over the Langston Family was getting weaker by the day. It wasn't easy to run an entire clan and as he slowly became older, his body couldn't keep up with the work. As a result, he was powerless on many things.

"Grandpa, it's time for dinner. Why aren't you heading downstairs to eat?" Heather asked after looking at the time. It's fine for me to skip a meal, but I don't want Grandpa to do the same.

"My anger has taken my appetite away," Robert uttered in resignation. He was enraged by Blake and he still couldn't make a decision on Matthias of his doubts toward the latter.

"Grandpa, don't be mad." Heather took the initiative to approach him. "I'm an adult now, which means that I can protect myself. You don't need to be worried about me all the time," she said lovingly. Grandpa's health is getting worse by the day. I don't want him to keep on worrying about me. As the two of them had a chat, she still insisted that Robert head down for dinner. "You've already skipped lunch, so you can't skip dinner unless you are immortal." It was with displeasure when she said those words. Sometimes, the elders weren't much different from children as they also needed someone to coax them.

"I'm not hungry, so I can't eat at the moment." Robert emphasized that he wasn't hungry. His appetite wasn't never good to begin with, so it wasn't a surprise that he couldn't eat anything after the commotion.

"Then, I'll make some porridge for you." She prepared to head to the kitchen and personally cook for him—just what she did before. In the past, she would personally cook his favorite dishes to please him.

However, he pulled Heather back to her seat. "I really can't eat anything. Please stop torturing me." Actually, he only wanted to have a chat with her, but all of her focus was on him not eating.

“Grandpa, you are old now, but why are you more difficult to take care of than a child? What if your glucose level drops to a dangerous level because you skipped your meals?” With a slightly harsh tone, she looked at Robert with displeasure.

Heather was the only one who remembered that he had hypoglycemia. Hypoglycemia is much more terrifying to an elderly than a young man. If the condition is severe, it can even lead to a shock or coma, so he needs to be more aware of his condition.

“The snacks on your table look delicious. Can I have some?” Robert revealed a kind smile while he reached out for a potato chip.

Heather’s eyes widened instantly as she quickly snatched the bag of potato chips over and scolded, “Grandpa, you can’t eat these! These are all junk food.”

She didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. He really is a naughty child.

“I can see that you don’t actually like it.” Robert reached out for the crisp noodles again as he completely defied Heather.

However, she was able to snatch it. “Grandpa, can you stop fooling around with me?” At that moment, she was on the verge of tears. What is Grandpa doing today?

“This is discrimination. Why can young people like you eat this while I can’t?” Robert was displeased because he was restricted from eating a lot of things due to his current health.

“These things aren’t beneficial to you at all. I’m begging you—please don’t even touch it.” Heather gathered all the snacks on the table together and held them tightly, as if she was protecting the food.

After he fooled around with her, her gloomy emotions had dissipated. Therefore, she knew that her grandfather was using his own way to cheer her up.

There were times when she would wonder why Lisa had chosen Sebastian instead of a considerate man like her grandfather back then because her impression of Sebastian was a stubborn old man.

“Grandpa, I know that you are trying to cheer me up, but I really can’t allow you to eat these.” Heather revealed a menacing smile. After a battle of wits with Robert, she wouldn’t fall for his trap.

“Cough! Cough! I don’t even like to eat these.” Robert glanced at the snacks with displeasure. It has been a long time since I ate these. Nowadays, everything must be checked before I can eat it.

“Grandpa, why don’t you tell me your story with the Hart Family back then?” She smiled. If I want to bring the two families back together, I must find out what happened at that time.

When he had shared the story to her before, it wasn’t that detailed and it had been a long time since then, so she couldn’t remember most of it. Therefore, she wanted to hear a more detailed version this time.

“Why are you mentioning the Hart Family all of a sudden?” Immediately, Robert’s expression changed. Up until today, he still refused to mention anything about the Hart Family and his association with them in the past.

The reason why he told Heather about it in the past was because she was just a child then and at that time, he desperately wanted to look for someone to vent his frustrations. However, it would be difficult for her to make him talk about that period of his past today. Therefore, in her heart, she tried to think of ways to cajole him into willingly speaking about it.

“Myra is about to join the Hart Family. So, of course, I’ll be curious about the Hart Family too.” She had used Myra’s name to kickstart the conversation. This is a great excuse.

“Then, you should try and get to know Tony more. He is the one whom Myra is marrying,” he answered smoothly. I will not be fooled easily.

“Tony looks like a nice guy, but if she is going to marry him, we still need to consider the elders too. I’m afraid that she won’t get along well with Old Madam Hart and Old Master Hart!” No matter what, Heather continued to talk nonsense to maintain the lie.

“About that... I’m not sure about it even if you ask me.” In the end, Robert still avoided the topic.



Looks like he isn't willing to share his past with me. "But, weren't you best friends with Old Madam Hart and Old Master Hart back then?" Heather asked without any fear, but she was probably making him unhappy again.

In the past, if someone dared to say those words to him, he would definitely teach the person a lesson. Now that a long time had passed since then, he didn't care much about it.

"Forget about it. Let's not talk about the past. I'm old and I don't remember much of it," he responded in a bleak tone. However, the only thing that he remembered clearly the most was probably his youthful past.

"Fine. If you don't want to talk about it, then forget it," she said with disappointment. Looks like I won't be getting anything out of him today. I don't want to continue forcing him anymore.

"Sigh. Little girl, sometimes you can't force people to say things that they don't want to," Robert sighed. She really is a little too straightforward sometimes. This is probably why she couldn't get along with Blake. After many years of living under her pressure, his self-esteem as her big brother has prevented him from getting along with her.

"I know." Heather nodded. Thinking about her ways of dealing with situations, she realized the things that she could improve on.

"You need to leave others with some space so that there won't be any grudges in the future," Robert lectured in a serious tone, but he himself had also regretted the things he did in the past. Back then, I was young and arrogant, so I crossed the line with Sebastian, which is why the two of us have hated each other for many years.

At that time, they were best friends, but now, their relationship was worse than strangers. They refused to meet even though they lived close to each other. Now, not only did he miss Lisa, he also missed his best friend from before because Sebastian was practically his sworn brother.

The two of them had encountered death together, but their friendship ended in such a mess. In Robert's heart, he felt regretful as he only wanted to reconcile with a friend who was hard to come by.

When Heather saw the gloominess in his eyes, she interpreted his expression as wanting to reconcile with the Hart Family, so she nodded her head.

“Grandpa, you are right! Why don’t the Hart Family and the Langston Family reconcile?”

“You...” Immediately, he pointed at her. “What nonsense are you talking about?” The moment his thoughts were interpreted by his granddaughter, it felt as though he was suddenly stripped naked, which made him uncomfortable.

“Grandpa, you lost two of your best friends. Isn’t this something that you regret the most?” She stared into his eyes. Tonight might not be the best chance, but at this point, I can only go with it till the end.

“Nonsense.” A hint of anger flashed through Robert’s face.

Obviously, Heather had angered him, but she didn’t want him to avoid talking about this matter anymore. She hoped that he could directly face the situation and deal with the years of grievance.

“Grandpa, I know that you aren’t pleased with it, but I must say it. Myra and I really hope that the two families can reconcile.” She mentioned Myra because she wanted to tell Robert that she and Myra both decided to join forces to mend the relationship of the two families.

“It has been so many years, so it’s impossible for us to reconcile. To them, we are not more than a stranger, so why should I embarrass myself?” Actually, it was mostly Robert’s fault that tore their relationship apart back then, but he couldn’t bring himself to apologize to them. Furthermore, Sebastian wasn’t completely innocent in the situation either.

“If we really are strangers, why did we abandon our century-old enterprise in Bradford City and move to the European market? In Bradford City, wherever the Hart Family goes, we won’t be there. This is obviously the best time for the two families to work together, so why does it have to be like this?” Heather continued with her line of questioning. They are clearly not strangers to each other. This is more like a family feud.

However, the anger on Robert’s face intensified. In his entire life, no one dared to speak to him this way, but she had already crossed the line.

## Standing before Love Chapter 429

Some things were far more difficult to achieve than one could imagine and Heather's plan was too naive. Upon seeing Robert's infuriated looks, she could only stop mentioning about the Hart Family.

After their conversation ended, she stared lifelessly at the snacks on the coffee table. Not only did I fail at my first try, I even angered Grandpa. I didn't choose the right time to do it. Grandpa was already angered by Blake before, so why did I mention the Hart Family to him? Am I not pouring more fuel to the flame?

The more she thought about it, the more she resented herself and the angrier she became. Therefore, she decided to finish all those snacks that night itself since overeating was a way for her to reduce her stress.

For the whole night, she couldn't fall asleep, especially after experiencing all the frustrating things earlier today, so she simply got out of bed and lay down on her couch. Even though she looked bored on the surface, her emotions were actually running wild inside her heart.

Luckily, time passed by quickly and it was already early morning. Therefore, she rubbed her eyes, but her mind was actually half-awake as it felt weighted. After scanning her surroundings, she realized that she had rested on the couch for the entire night, so she stumbled her way to the bed.

There were many things that upset her as her life recently turned into a mess. The moment she lay down on her bed, she immediately enjoyed a relaxed body and the comfortness of the bed after her body almost froze while she sat on the couch.

When she woke up again, it was already noon. As soon as the people who were having lunch saw her slowly walking down the stairs, they quickly put down their utensils and no one dared to call her over for lunch. Even Robert was still angry at her, so she had already missed the best part of lunch.

Seeing that everyone was almost finished with their food, Heather pouted her lips and said to everyone, "You all can continue eating." Why does it look like I'm the house bully who won't allow others to eat?

However, everyone continued to exchange glances with each other, except for Robert and Blake, who still remained indifferent toward her.

The moment she left, they resumed eating, but their eyes were staring at Robert. This time, he didn't say anything and she didn't greet him sweetly as usual, which meant that the two of them had a problem with each other.

Of course, the happiest person to see this scene at the table was Blake. He was delighted to see the old man ignoring Heather because in his eyes, the reason why she was so arrogant was because Robert was always pampering her.

Meanwhile, as soon as Heather left the Langston Residence, she suddenly felt more relaxed. It really is annoying when the whole family is staring at me. However, she still felt uncomfortable that Robert didn't even bat an eye on her. Looks like he really is angry at me this time.

In the past, he would never ignore her, never mind refusing to even look at her. However, when she saw the hostile look on his face as she was about to greet him, the words were suddenly stuck in her throat. I just can't get it. It's obvious that Grandpa wants to reconcile with the Hart Family, so why is he still so stubborn? He doesn't even allow me to mention them.

Therefore, she went into her car with mixed emotions, causing her to be distracted on the road and at the same time, her stomach was groaning with hunger. However, she was probably destined to repay Matthias for the rest of her life because she accidentally collided with the Maserati in front of her.

Then, she exited her car. The safety aspect of my little car is quite well-built. There isn't much damage even after colliding with a luxury car.

However, the moment Heather saw the person coming out of the Maserati, she was immediately stunned. Why does it have to be Matthias?

She stared viciously at the scumbag who messed up her life as she couldn't wait to kill him herself.

Her expression was so hostile that the onlookers thought that it was Matthias who hit her, but instead, he had a smile on his face. Is this man crazy? Why is he so happy after getting hit on the rear end?

"Miss Langston, what a coincidence!" He gave a bright smile, but Heather didn't know what he was smiling about. If I knew that it was him, I would definitely have whacked him even harder.

“How much do I need to compensate?” she asked flatly as she didn’t bother to talk to him.

“If it is you, then there’s no need to do so,” he replied in a pleasing tone.

However, Heather couldn’t stand his fake actions, so she glared at him disdainfully before quickly taking a check out of her bag.

With a pen that she carried with her, she simply wrote 200,000 on the check before throwing it at him straight after. “Is this enough?” It doesn’t seem like his car is damaged too much, so this should be enough.

After glancing at the numbers on the check, Matthias’ smile grew wider. “You really are generous, Miss Langston.” However, he then tore apart the check and obeyed the law by throwing it into a trash can.

In the eyes of the public, Matthias had always maintained a good impression, which Heather found despicable, but she somehow liked his actions in her heart. I must throw away these messy thoughts from my mind. He and I are now enemies. I can’t be moved just because he deliberately ran to the trash can to throw something.

“I can see that your car needs some repair, Miss Langston.” While his car was only scratched on the surface, hers was visually more affected.

“You don’t need to worry about me, Director Locke.” In front of the public, it wouldn’t be wise for her to say much, but she didn’t want to be here any longer. If the reporters catch us, who knows what they’ll write?

In the meantime, she opened the door and prepared to enter her car, but suddenly, Matthias came to her and responded, “Miss Langston, why don’t I take your car for the repairs? I know a great shop nearby.”

With the public watching them, Heather had no other choice, so she forced a smile. “Thank you, Director Locke.” I should pay more attention to my public image in case there is someone among the onlookers who knows me.

Therefore, she was forced to drive behind him as she resignedly arrived at the repair shop.

As soon as she got out of her car, Heather said to the manager, “Please repair both these cars.” The reason why she was willing to follow Matthias

was because she wanted to repair his car too. I don't want to keep on owing him something.

However, Matthias revealed a menacing smile as he looked at Heather. "I still need to use my car at the moment, so I can't leave it here for repair." He refused to give her a chance to repay him because he wanted her to owe him one.

"I can help to call a cab to pick you up," she replied. This is an easy situation to deal with.

He glanced at his watch and pretended to look aggrieved. "But... I'm afraid that there isn't much time left."

"Where are you heading, Director Locke?" she asked politely.

"The Barry Hotel." He only gave the name of a hotel which was quite far away from here.

Upon listening to his answer, Heather suddenly felt confident as she thought of an idea. "Don't worry. It will only take you a few minutes," she said confidently while opening an app on her phone.

At that moment, Matthias crossed his arms in front of his chest as he looked at her curiously. I wonder what great plan she has.

Within seconds, Heather's phone rang and she happily answered the call. After talking on the phone, she turned toward Matthias. "It'll be here in three minutes. Please wait for a moment."

He stared at her profoundly while his car was being repaired. She really is an interesting girl. After many years, she has changed a little.

"It's here." She pointed at a red car parked on the side of the road.

It was an ordinary car, so he looked at her in confusion. "This is..."

"It's the Car-To-Go app. It arrives as soon as you call it, so it won't take up much of your time," she explained while waving the app on her phone.

Instantly, Matthias held his forehead as he was rendered speechless. Then, he asked resignedly, "Would you care to join me?"

“Nope, I’m waiting for my car.” Heather coldly glanced at him.

However, no matter how indifferent or noble she was, her stomach still couldn’t help but groan all of a sudden. He immediately let out a chuckle without any hesitation.

Then, he enthusiastically invited, “Looks like you are hungry, Miss Langston. It just happens that I’m attending a meal. Why don’t you join me?”

“No, thanks. It’s better that we avoid each other,” she replied profoundly while rejecting him straight away.

Therefore, Matthias looked a little disappointed, but he didn’t give up in getting her approval. “If the gods let me meet you by chance, why can’t we just have a meal together?”

After looking at the car not far away, Heather uttered, “Don’t let the driver wait for you for too long; otherwise, he’ll give me a bad review!” In short, it was all kinds of rejections. The reason why I was messed around by him the last time was because I actively approached him for Myra. In the end, I still couldn’t avoid him. I won’t give him the chance to mess with me again, so I must try my best to avoid him at all cost.

He finally left in disappointment, but he couldn’t hide the smile on his face. Even though she keeps on avoiding me, luck is on my side this time. There were many cars on the road, but I was the one whom she hit. I assume that the reporters lurking around are churning out their headlines for tomorrow. Thinking about it, his smile widened.

Looking at Matthias’ back, Heather revealed an unhappy expression. Somehow, I must think of a way to fight back, but now isn’t the time. There are many rumors about us at the moment, so I must avoid any contact with him.

After he left, she asked the manager, “How long will it take?” Looking at the progress, she assumed that it wouldn’t take long.

“It’ll take about three to four hours,” the man answered politely. Since the car was brought here by Matthias, the manager definitely needed to be careful while repairing it. Heather might not know it by now, but this was actually Matthias’ repair shop that specialized in repairing luxurious cars.

“How much is the price? I can pay you now,” she asked.

“Miss Langston, Director Locke has told us that you don’t need to pay us,” the manager replied.

“Huh?” Immediately, she glared at the manager because she didn’t like what she was hearing. “How can I not pay for the repair? Nothing in this world is free. Please tell me the price.”

“I’m sorry, Miss Langston. Director Locke is actually our boss. If he has ordered us not to accept your payment, we wouldn’t dare to accept it!” The manager looked at her as if he was begging her not to pay for the repair. She looks like someone who I can’t afford to offend.

“This doesn’t make sense. I must pay for the repair today; otherwise, I refuse to accept your service,” she growled. I can’t believe Matthias tricked me again. Argh!

## Standing before Love Chapter 430

The manager looked at Heather in aggrivement as he had never dealt with such a difficult woman before. As he wiped the sweat on his forehead, Matthias’ orders were still in his phone and he wouldn’t dare to defy orders.

“I’m sorry, Miss Langston, but you can see that we have already started. It will be difficult for us to stop now.” The manager almost cried as he looked at her. A fully grown man was now on the verge of tears because of her.

Then, she looked at him with displeasure. “Then, take my money.” Quickly, she opened another check and this time, she was exceptionally generous as she waved a check worth 500,000 in front of him.

However, he didn’t even bat an eye on the check as he continued to beg her. “Miss Langston, please stop getting me in trouble. If I accept your money today, Director Locke will fire me. I have a family to raise and jobs like this don’t come easily for me. Miss Langston, can you please help me?”

Heather was immediately startled by his sudden plea. What should I do now? I can’t make him lose his job, right? Even though I’m not a saint, judging from Matthias’ personality, this is definitely something he will do.

After looking at the manager’s aggrieved face, she withdrew her check. Overall, I’m still no match against Matthias’ ruthlessness. I can only owe him this one. So what? He did this willingly. What a pervert! She didn’t appreciate



what Matthias had done because she only felt that his entire mind was really twisted. The more she thought about it, the angrier she became. However, as she thought about it, she realized that he wanted her to be angry, so instead, she thought about how fortunate she was that she didn't hit anyone else. Even after hitting his car, he still wanted to pay for the repairs, which helped to save me a few hundred thousand. On the bright side, this is great! She wasn't going to let him get to her head, so she composed herself before happily keeping the check away.

“Alright. I won't make things difficult for you. I'm going to have a meal now, so I'll come to collect my car later on.” Heather politely smiled. I won't let him get to me. I'll just see this as him wasting his money to torture himself.

Therefore, she found a nearby restaurant and ordered something to eat. When she was hungry, she was still thinking about the delicious food, but she suddenly thought of Myra. I wonder what she is doing at the moment. And what is it with that headache of hers? She seemed to have that headache only when meeting Matthias, which means that it has something to do with him. However, she and Myra didn't dare to say anything about it—even though Myra was perfectly fine before she met him.

As for Myra forgetting who Matthias was, Heather was still puzzled about it. Judging from Myra's previous relationship with him as his puppy love, she shouldn't have forgotten him. I must get to the bottom of this. Therefore, she immediately called Myra, asking her out for a meal.

In the meantime, Myra was busy with the Stark Group. This time, Cameron didn't have any chance to retaliate, so she was able to easily acquire the Stark Group within a few days.

Therefore, she was now busy dealing with the company handover and didn't have the time to accompany Heather. Upon hearing that everything was going well, Heather was happy for her.

After Heather was done with her meal, it was still too early for her to retrieve her car since it wasn't done yet. For a moment, she didn't know where to go, so she found a place to drink coffee. Again, she was alone, and it usually came with its disturbance.

Looking outside the window and her surroundings, she noticed that there were couples everywhere, which made her feel lonely for some reason. After

experiencing so much, she actually became a loner after leaving her bustling school life.

Whenever she was alone, she would suddenly have the desire for excitement inside her heart, but at the same time, she hated the vain excitement among people. Is it happier to be lonely among a group of people?

While she stared at the cup in front of her, she remembered her past when she did all she could to drive Matthias away from Myra.

It was during that rainy night when Heather drove Matthias away after he rushed all the way to care for Myra. At that time, Myra had a fever and her consciousness was in a daze, so she didn't know the despicable things that Heather had done.

Ever since that day, there wasn't any news of him at all and no one knew what he experienced during that rainy night.

As for Myra, she felt upset for a period after she finally recovered. However, with Heather beside her, she slowly turned over a new leaf. After that, they rarely mentioned Matthias, but Heather couldn't figure out how Myra managed to completely forget him.

She faintly remembered that Myra seemed to have fallen down the stairs before because of her stepmother. Is that why she has forgotten Matthias? Is it because her brain has sustained injuries after that fall? Why does it have to be Matthias who is forgotten, though? Why does it have to be her memory with Matthias?

Heather just couldn't wrap her head around the fact. If you can't understand something, you either leave it for tomorrow or completely forget it. Therefore, she put down the cup of coffee in her hand as it was about time to get her car. I can't stay here and waste my time.

Thinking about it, Heather immediately rose to her full height to open the door of the coffee shop with a bright smile on her face. The sun is perfect. Everything is perfect, so why should I worry this much? It's quite nice to be alone.

The moment she went back to the repair shop, Matthias happened to be waiting for her inside. Her good mood was instantly completely gone at his

sight. I can't believe it's him again. I think I should find some time to pray more so that this evil man can stay far away from me.

"Miss Langston, what a coincidence!" His menacing smile and charming eyes were useless toward her.

"What a coincidence!" Heather replied resignedly.

"My car is ready, so I'm here to pick it up. I assume that you are here to pick up your car too, right?" He tried to act dumb, but she didn't even want to talk to him.

Therefore, she forced a polite smile. "Yes."

After Heather entered her car, Matthias opened the door on the other side and came in straight away. Immediately, her entire face darkened as she stared at him with displeasure. He really is a scoundrel.

"I don't want to drive myself today. Miss Langston, why don't you give me a ride?" he asked shamelessly.

However, she answered coldly, "Our paths don't align." At that moment, she really wanted to throw him out of her car.

"It's fine, Miss Langston. You can take me anywhere." It was obvious that he was clinging onto Heather today. He really has thick skin, but I don't think he would dare to follow me to the Langston Residence. "I'm returning to the Langston Residence," she uttered flatly.

"That's great. I can go over to have a chat with your brother." Matthias was practically shameless at that moment. No matter what she said, he just wouldn't leave.

"My family doesn't welcome you," she immediately responded. In her mind, she had already killed him countless times.

"It's fine. As long as your brother welcomes me," he replied while mentioning Blake in an attempt to infuriate her.

"Get out of my car. I don't want to drive you there. I don't like my brother's shitty friends." Heather made it clear that she didn't like both Matthias and Blake.

“I don’t think your brother and I are friends. We are business partners.” Matthias continued to refute her while buckling his safety belt on his own accord. After that, he stared at her.

She immediately furrowed her brows. Today, I finally got to see how shameless this man is, but I can’t stay here for too long; otherwise, people may think that we are flirting with each other inside the car. Therefore, she could only drive the car away in helplessness.

The car flew on the road as Heather drove in an exceptionally fierce manner, but Matthias remained unmoved while raising his brow.

Inside the car, she asked him in displeasure, “When will you stop exacting your revenge on me?” I shouldn’t have offended him back then. What a bitter man! I’m tired now.

“Do you still remember that rainy night?” he suddenly asked.

For a moment, Heather didn’t know how to answer Matthias. When she was sitting in the coffee shop, she also thought about that fateful night and now, he probed about it.

That time, she had indeed wronged him and it was truly her fault, so she remained silent. Looking at her expression with satisfaction, he lightly continued his words. “When you drove me away that rainy night, I actually thought that Myra hated me. Why was I such an idiot?” he uttered with a hint of regret in his tone.

However, she still remained silent. At that time, the methods I used were indeed despicable. If the same thing happens now, I will never do it again. People tend to make mistakes when they are young.

“Actually, I don’t completely blame you for this. I can only blame myself for being an idiot. Why was I so easily fooled by you?” Matthias murmured profoundly, as if the scenery in front of him had turned into that rainy night back then.

“What happened afterward? Why didn’t you come back to find Myra?” Heather forced herself to ask. At that time, she thought that she would never get rid of him, but surprisingly, he was completely gone after that.

“It’s because I was in a car accident. Then, my family took me home before my body fully recovered,” he explained resignedly. At that time, he couldn’t walk with both legs, so he wanted to find Myra after it had recovered, but his father didn’t give him the chance to do.

He immediately felt a sense of bitterness in his heart as he regretted not crawling straight to her at that moment. Just like that, he missed the chance to hug her ever again.

Looking at him in shock, Heather suddenly felt guilty in her heart. I can’t believe my one mistake has cost him so much.

“At that time, I was on the hospital bed for half a year, thinking that I could finally see Myra after I recovered, but I never had the chance to,” Matthias uttered mockingly.

“I’m sorry,” she apologized with an unusually deep tone because she really felt sorry for him. I didn’t know that I’d hurt him this much. No wonder he hates me.

“You’re sorry? What a simple reply. I don’t blame you for almost crippling me. I hate you because you took Myra away from me. Do you know how much I love her? She was the savior of my life. She was my angel, but I’ll never be with her again. Now, I can only watch from afar while I silently give her my blessing,” he murmured in pain. At that moment, his heart was aching as he couldn’t bear to easily let Myra go.

“I’m sorry since it’s all my fault. I’m willing to accept that you would want your revenge on me,” Heather enunciated. No matter what he did to me before, it is all for a reason.

“Why would she forget me?” Matthias’ painful eyes pierced her heart.

His eyes were filled with so many deep emotions that she didn’t even dare to look at him. At that moment, she opened her mouth wide, but she couldn’t utter a word to answer him.

## Standing before Love Chapter 431

The car sped along the road; right now, Heather was at a loss because she wasn’t sure whether she should continue to drive toward the Langston Residence or aimlessly drive around.

Matthias, who had calmed down, turned to look sideways at her. "The Langston Residence is in the opposite direction," he deliberately reminded her.

She found a place to carefully park the car. "You should drive. Feel free to go anywhere, but I do not want to return to the Langston Residence." Her mind was in a mess because she did not expect such a horrendous mistake from the past.

"What is it? Are you regretting it?" Matthias gave a mock smile. How I wish I could see what Heather is hiding deep down in her heart. Heather is reacting in such a way when I am convinced that she is a ruthless and vicious woman. This will shake my determination to seek revenge.

"Would you like to head to the West Suburbs?" Heather did not answer his question.

Matthias cocked his brow. Well, I lost myself for a moment in front of her. Now that she is showing me this side of herself, perhaps I should play along. "Sure." He exchanged seats with her.

After starting the car engine, he looked straight ahead by keeping his eyes locked on the road. The two of them were silent throughout the entire journey! It was already getting dark by the time they arrived at the West Suburbs. Then, they exited the car one after another.

Matthias curiously followed Heather from behind. She continued to walk forward like a freed little bunny. She was always cold and detached in front of the public, so it was rare to see her letting her hair down.

Heather, who was leading the way, suddenly turned. "Matthias, there is a swamp right ahead." She innocently smiled and it dazzled Matthias for a moment.

"It's interesting that you are taking me to a swampland." Matthias frowned lightly, but he followed her anyway. The closer she walked forward, the more she was in awe of the newly discovered land.

His mood improved while he walked along the path. There were many mosquitoes and insects during nighttime, but she seemed unfazed as she made her way forward. She didn't seem fussy and frustrated about the situation.

In hindsight, women usually wouldn't come to this sort of place. Who would want to be bitten by insects and mosquitoes? Furthermore, what's there to look at in a swamp?

Large stretches of swamp lands showed up in front of them and he reached out to grab her, which caused her to forcefully smile.

"Be careful." Matthias was worried that she would slip and fall into the mud. Heather started to make her way forward in a wobbly manner and each step she took struck him in his heart.

"Look at how pretty this is! It is still breathing," she commented while smiling happily.

Although he shot her an odd look, he couldn't help but notice how pretty she was when she smiled. After that, he heard her continue to speak, "The killer of the jungle is none other than the swamp—it looks dangerous at first glance, but I especially like it."

She deeply inhaled the air that was mixed with the refreshing scent of soil. As a result, she looked intoxicated and as pretty as always even with her eyes closed.

Matthias copied Heather's actions by closing his eyes while taking a deep breath. The feeling was oddly soothing and calming for him.

"The past cannot be undone," she spoke while keeping her eyes closed.

"And the present cannot be predicted," he responded casually. He couldn't believe that he was happy for her to be by his side at this moment. The air seemed to be filled with her faint fragrance.

"I have no idea how to compensate you. I can understand that you want to take revenge on me to suffer as you did in the past," Heather started to speak slowly. I should atone for my mistakes in the past.

"I thought 'regret' doesn't exist in your dictionary." Matthias still could not completely trust her because he wasn't sure if she was scheming or being sincere.

“Similarly, I do not want to owe anyone anything.” She gave a faint smile. Currently, she and him were the only ones at the corner of the forest. The sky was getting dark and they looked like lost tourists.

It had been a long time since Heather last felt as lost as she was right now. She opened her eyes to gaze at Matthias. His eyelashes were thick and long—they appeared like a pair of butterflies when his eyelashes fluttered.

He gradually opened his eyes as she stared at him. They looked into each other’s eyes as they exchanged a silent moment there and then.

“Why don’t you try dating me if you truly wish to compensate me?” Matthias was especially serious when he suggested that and he didn’t sound like he was joking at all.

Heather stared at Matthias steadily because she wasn’t sure why he had made such a suggestion. Nevertheless, she was a very calm woman, so she wasn’t shocked by his request.

They looked at each other for the longest time. Finally, he turned to look away whereas she parted her lips. “You are not in love with me. In fact, you hate me. Why would you want to be in a relationship with me?”

“For the benefits,” Matthias answered quietly.

Heather turned to look at the swamp in front of her as her eyes reflected many complex emotions.

However, he broke the silence at this moment. “I know what you’re trying to do. You want the Langstons to work with the Hart Family and my target is the Hart Family.” He would not easily voice his true motives, but he was confident that it was a flawless reason.

“Grandpa doesn’t have any true power now, so it’s useless for you to associate yourself with me.” She had to remind Matthias that she did not have the final say in the Langston Family.

“You do not have to worry about it since I want to win over the Langston Family. Locke Group and Langston Group will be able to have an all-around collaboration,” he responded matter-of-factly.



“You want to date me because you plan to win over the Langston Family?” Heather asked suspiciously. I am sure that Matthias will not date his enemy just for that reason.

“Why don’t we have a contract? I just want the status of being your boyfriend. I am not interested in the rest.” Matthias knew that she was cautious about certain things. In any case, he was not interested in her in that regard.

“You should only be in a relationship with a person you’re in love with.” Heather rejected him indirectly because she just could not accept dating Matthias. I just can’t do it even if it’s a lie.

“There is no rush to answer me. Give me an answer after three days.” Matthias smiled at her.

She nodded while thinking, Nothing is set in stone; there is no harm in answering him after three days anyway. Well, I have ample time to give him a satisfactory answer in three days’ time.

“It is getting late. So, I’ll send you home.” He looked up at the sky. It will be pitch-black soon and it will be tricky to get out of here by then.

Heather agreed and she followed him from behind. The two of them walked in a single file while the mosquitoes feasted on their blood. She wasn’t bothered because she had visited the dangerous tropical forest in the past. At that time, she was even wounded, so she currently did not mind the hostile environment.

Matthias opened the car door for her as she entered the car. He sat at the driver’s seat like a gentleman while preparing to drive her.

“It is getting late. Why don’t you have dinner at the Langston Residence?” Heather checked the time and she figured it was about dinnertime by the time they arrived home.

“No need for that. I made everyone unhappy the last time I came by,” Matthias answered while chuckling in amusement. Well, it didn’t go according to plan the last time, especially when I bumped into Myra. Under those circumstances, I left a bad impression on Myra and I have been regretting it each time I recall that incident.

Heather did not comment further because she was just being courteous earlier. Upon careful thought on things, she realized that it wouldn't be right. What will the others think if Matthias were to show up at the dining table with me in Langston Residence? Well, everybody will just misunderstand the situation.

They remained silent throughout the car drive and finally arrived at the main entrance of Langston Residence after a long time. She got out of the car as she addressed him at the same time when he was about to alight from the vehicle. "You don't have to get out of the car. Drive my car today!" She was trying to diminish the chances of a misunderstanding. On the other hand, she wanted him to conveniently leave too. I have taken a lot of Matthias' time today. He might be starving if I continue to drag him along. I don't want it to be my fault again.

Upon arriving at the Langston Residence, Heather couldn't be bothered about the curious stares of her family members because she was lost in her thoughts about what happened with Matthias. I did not expect that he would want to be in a relationship with me. There is no way I'll agree to that. However, he was forthcoming with his intentions—he wants to work together with the Langston Group. To be honest, I am tempted. On one hand, the Hart Group has been adamant about not working with us whereas on the other side, the Locke Group is keen on collaborating with us. In comparison, it seems like working together with Locke Group is the better choice. However, I have promised Myra to try to repair the relationship between the Langstons and the Hart Family, so as to get the two families to collaborate. Will I be considered disloyal since I am tempted? She looked distressed.

After looking at it from different perspectives, I believe that Matthias is still envious of Grandpa's power. Otherwise, based on his relationship with Blake, it shouldn't be too difficult for him to get the two families to work together. Blake isn't the most reliable fellow out there, but he rarely brings anybody to the Langston Residence, much less when there's a family reunion. Since Blake has taken the initiative to invite Matthias to the Langston Residence, it means that he is willing to collaborate with Matthias. Since he has Blake wrapped around his finger, why is he still so hung up on Grandpa? Why is he adamant on having a relationship with me? Why does he insist on being with me to win over the Langston Group for a collaboration?

The more Heather thought about it, the more she found the entire situation fishy because she had a nagging feeling that Matthias wasn't being honest

with her. She couldn't help but relate this issue to Myra. Could it be possible that Matthias is pestering me due to Myra?

The thought flashed through Heather's mind, but she dismissed it almost instantly. It wouldn't make sense if Matthias hadn't given up on Myra. If he were to be in a relationship with me, he would be giving up on her by default.

After all, not many women would be comfortable being embroiled in something suspicious with their best friend's boyfriend. Well, if I were to start dating Matthias, the relationship between the four of us will be intriguing.

Matthias wants to go against the Hart Group. As for now, I am not sure whether it's just a business competition or a personal grudge. I will never get involved with him if it involves any personal grudges. If it is a fair competition in the business world, there will be no animosity in our personal lives. However, once it involves any feud between the wealthy families, there will be two opposing sides for sure. I can never be on Myra's opposing side. Even though I owe Matthias a whole lot, I will not use this to compensate him.

Robert suddenly called out for Heather, who was deep in thought. She did not even notice him standing at the corner a short distance away from her.

"Why did you return so late?" He asked unhappily. She shuddered involuntarily while looking up at him. There was an unnatural expression plastered on her face as she thought, Did he see Matthias sending me home?!