

Standing before Love Chapter 482

When they returned to Locke Residence, Matthias wasn't smiling and Regan had an unpleasant look on his face as he walked behind Matthias. Seeing their appearance, the head of the family thought they had another dispute. At that point, the two of them were the most outstanding members of the Locke Family. Unfortunately, Regan's status wasn't as legitimate as Matthias'.

Although the Locke Family was prosperous, the most prosperous ones would be the younger generation. Among the elders, the head of the family was the eldest. Matthias' father had passed away a long time ago.

Regan was the child of Matthias' aunt, and Regan's father was a live-in son-in-law of the Locke Family. In fact, Regan contributed more to the Locke Family, but because of his status, he was always pushed down by Matthias.

The head of the family knew all of this. Based on Regan's personality, he wouldn't be comfortable being pressured by Matthias. However, the head of the family supported Matthias' lineage. The family rules mustn't be broken, and so he could only allow Regan to be aggrieved.

"Did the blind date go well today?" The head of the family asked Regan although he could already guess from their expression that nothing good happened.

"Grandpa, Matthias has angered all the girls," Regan complained. After all, Matthias' words and actions were a little too much.

In fact, the head of the family wasn't Regan and Matthias's grandfather. After all, the head of the family didn't have children. Matthias and Regan were the descendents of the head of the family's elder brother. But since he was the only elderly at home, everyone respectfully addressed him as 'Grandpa', except Matthias who didn't like to greet others.

The head of the family turned to look at Matthias and saw his stubborn face. He couldn't scold him in front of others, but he said in a not-so-subtle manner, "Matthias, the family rule of independence at thirty must not be broken."

Matthias' lips curled into a bright smile. "I'm not thirty yet, so you guys don't have to worry about it." While speaking, he shot a glare at Regan.

He just couldn't stand him at all, and he despised each and every movement of his. In the past, Regan didn't know how to hide his desires at all, but now he had learnt to disguise his intentions.

Matthias would always remember the time when Regan beat him up and peed on him. In fact, he would never ever forget that kind of shame.

After making a fuss, everyone was unhappy, and the head of the family didn't want to force Matthias either. He had met countless people in his lifetime, and he could feel Matthias' desire for power. One day, he would compromise. Just as he said, he wasn't thirty yet. When that day came, he believed Matthias would give everyone a satisfactory answer.

"Matthias has booked a flight back for tomorrow afternoon." Regan didn't forget to continue backstabbing him. He was dying for Matthias to do something out of the line again so that the Locke Family would become more and more disappointed with him.

Including the head of the family, everyone was shocked. Even the head of the family didn't expect Matthias to be so reckless while Matthias had a look of nonchalance.

In fact, he had had enough of this. He used to keep a low profile in the Locke Family and would still get into trouble. Since those people wanted to oppose him at every turn, he thought there was no need for him to stay low, so he might as well show them his true temper.

"Yes. I will go back to Bradford City tomorrow. There are a lot of things to deal with at Locke Group, and I don't have time to spend on blind dates," Matthias said with emphasis on each word. What he said was true. As the executive director of Locke Group, he couldn't be away for too long.

However, Regan didn't think so and he said cynically, "I know that Matthias is a busy man who dedicates his life to Locke Group, but marriage is not child's play and is equally important. If a man doesn't have a family at the age of thirty, how is he going to further his career? Internationally, people prefer to choose someone who has a family as a business partner."

Matthias watched Regan's performance coldly with a look of disdain. He spoke so much and beat around the bush just to come back around to mock him.

At that moment, the head of the family didn't want to see them fight against each other and to treat each other like enemies, so he stepped in to mediate. The head of the family also had such a phase of mutual incompatibility with his elder brother, and later when his elder brother passed away, he regretted everything. As such, he did not want the younger generation to repeat his mistakes.

He knew how much effort Regan had made. Although on the surface the head of the family was more lenient to Matthias, in reality, it was also a test for Regan. In fact, he intended to pass the position of the Head of the Locke Family to Regan, but of course on the premise that he and Matthias could get along and treat each other like brothers.

If Regan still did not understand his intentions and still wanted to compete with Matthias, then the head of the family would consider giving the position of the family head and leader of Locke Group to Matthias.

Instead of watching them argue, it would be better to let Matthias alone take on the burden. The head of the family hoped to see their relationship improve in his last days.

Brothers working together were always more powerful than one person, and the head of the family had made a good plan for everything. He would also advise the two in private to love each other.

However, there was little effect. On the one hand, Matthias still could not let go of the humiliation inflicted on him by Regan, and on the other hand, Regan was always saying things he didn't mean. He was still unwilling to accept Matthias.

Just when the head of the family was lost in thought, Matthias' cold words echoed again. There was no way he was willing to be chastised by Regan.

"Cooperation depends on strength. Do I have to marry a woman I don't like just to please the other party?" Matthias spoke disdainfully. In his eyes, Regan was just a pathetic villain. After all, Regan's marriage was one of the biggest jokes.

The woman Regan married was like a puppet that depended on him for everything. Perhaps it was because of this nature that he was willing to marry the woman.

In fact, Matthias couldn't see any love between them. On top of that, Regan wasn't even willing to spare a second glance at the woman. It was obvious that he did not like her.

He felt sad for the woman for having to marry a husband like that. She was just a victim of political and business alliances. Matthias wasn't going to become like Regan, and he was not willing to sacrifice the happiness of an innocent woman for the sake of power. He wouldn't want to get married if it wasn't for love.

Back then, Matthias' mother loved his father very much, but so what? His father had a family. Because he did not love his wife, he cheated on her with his mother and gave birth to him, an illegitimate son.

Then, it became a war between the two women. It was the man who made a mistake, and yet in the end, the women had to pay the price. Thinking of his mother's painful life, Matthias felt that he must not take marriage lightly.

The two argued, and finally Regan compromised. In front of everyone, he didn't want to be overbearing. He wanted to make it seem like he was being bullied by Matthias so as to win the sympathy of the crowd. Since Matthias wanted this, then he was going to further tarnish Matthias' reputation.

Just then, Matthias gratefully looked toward the head of the family. No matter whether he was right or wrong, he would always side with him. Sometimes, Matthias really didn't know why he was so good to him.

Once, the head of the family had said something strange that Matthias could still remember clearly until now. "You look a lot like him." Matthias regretted not asking the head of the family who he was referring to back then.

The head of the family was also overbearing in his youth and had done a lot of outrageous things to his brother. Perhaps as his retribution, he had no successor.

It was only when his brother passed away and the burden of the entire Locke Family fell on the head of the family that he understood his brother's good intentions. His brother always gave in to him not because he was afraid of how powerful he was, but for the benefit of the Locke Family and the greater good.

Moreover, his elder brother had always treated him as a brother. It was the head of the family himself who was narrow-minded, which led to the two brothers to be in constant disagreement. Even the day before his brother passed away, they had still been arguing.

Perhaps it was intergenerational heredity. Matthias looked especially like his older brother when he was young. When he looked at him, there would be moments where he thought his older brother had come back to live.

The favoring of a junior was not without reason. Sometimes, the head of the family only treated Matthias as the reincarnation of his brother, and he would do anything in his power to protect Matthias.

Of course, when he came back to his senses, he would laugh at himself. There was no reincarnation. Although Matthias looked similar to his brother, there were still differences after all. Even their personalities were very different.

The next day, no blind dates were arranged for Matthias. It was specifically instructed by the head of the family. Although Regan was still unconvinced, he couldn't really say anything more. In the end, Matthias did not cancel his flight ticket.

The head of the family led Matthias to the garden behind the residence. Matthias would be leaving in the afternoon, and the head of the family still had a lot to say to him. As such, he wanted to take this opportunity to have a talk with him.

"Matthias, have you met a girl you like in Bradford City?" the head of the family asked in a straightforward manner.

Hearing this, Matthias was surprised for a moment. He did not expect him to mention this matter, and he did not know how to answer for a moment.

"I know you had a first love named Myra, but she is now married to another man. You need to accept that fact," the head of the family said with clarity. He knew Matthias better than Matthias thought he did.

"Grandpa, I'm already used to liking her. If you ask me to like someone else, I really can't do it." Matthias did not want to lie to the head of the family and he had been wanting to talk to someone about this, so he might as well talk to him about his feelings.

“Aren’t you close with a girl named Heather Langston?” he asked tentatively.

Matthias unconsciously frowned. Once Heather was mentioned, he was distressed. Now, he didn’t have any more thoughts on Myra, but Heather was causing him to be distraught.

“She and I are only cooperating in a way,” he said stiffly. Even he refused to admit to himself that he had feelings for Heather, so how could he admit to others that he had a special affection for her?

“Young man, do not try to deceive others and yourself. Sometimes, you have to quiet down and listen to your own heart,” the head of the family said emotionally. He had also experienced intense love. In fact, everyone had a rebellious past.

“Grandpa, can we not talk about this? Nothing will ever happen between Heather and I,” he said firmly. There was no way he would allow himself to fall in love with Heather.

By the time Heather saw Matthias, it was already three days later. Matthias, who had returned from Tasia City, was a little more depressed. He must have gone through something in Tasia City as his spirit was gone, and even his gaze on Heather was empty and listless.

“Is something the matter?” It was a stiff opening. It seemed like he wasn’t in a good mood.

Heather was a little regretful to come to him at this time. Seeing his appearance, everything she wanted to say was all stuck in her throat.

“It’s nothing.” After a long time, she managed to speak. Seeing his deadpan look, she wanted to forget about talking to him.

However, her attitude angered him. She was part of the reason he had rushed back, and yet she had dismissed him so easily.

“That’s not what you said three days ago.” His angry face leaned toward Heather, who was already uncomfortable with him staring at her, let alone at such a close range.

“Stay away from me, Matthias.” Heather wasn’t one to be messed with as well. At once, she was displeased. Matthias’ breath blew against her face, which was making her feel uncomfortable.

However, he didn’t listen to her. The corners of his mouth curled up into a wicked smile as he leaned closer to her. Deliberately stretching out his arm, he seemed like he was about to wrap his arm around her waist, causing her to dodge him like she was dodging something filthy. Her actions hurt him.

“Can’t take a joke, Miss Heather?” He still looked frivolous, deliberately concealing his displeasure.

After the commotion, she didn’t want to be polite anymore, so she opened up to him and said, “I came to see you because I wanted to terminate the contract with you.” There was no need to be polite with him because that contract shouldn’t have existed in the first place.

“Terminate?” Matthias asked even though he knew. At once, the wicked smile on his lips turned into a menacing one. It was uncertain what he was scheming.

“I’m afraid I can’t do that.” The smile on his lips widened. It had been hard to get Heather to sign the contract, so there was no way he would easily terminate it.

She knew that things would not go so smoothly, so she calmly looked at him. The speech she had prepared earlier naturally tumbled out of her mouth.

“That contract doesn’t benefit you or me in any way, and I don’t see the need to continue.” She intended to hold onto this point. Businessmen valued profit, and this argument made perfect sense.

Silently, he gazed at her. Until she finished speaking, he was still watching her with no intention to reply. As such, she began to elaborate on this issue in detail. Meanwhile, he listened carefully to every word she said with no response still.

Baffled by his attitude, she looked at him with a smirk, wondering what he meant by this.

At that moment, they stared at each other. Even Heather’s smirk was imprinted in his mind. It looked like the two were having a tug of war, and even

Evan who was watching from afar was nervous. He could sense the tension from their gazes.

“You have analyzed a lot, and while it’s good, you’re not me. From my perspective, this analysis is too biased,” he said bluntly, hitting the nail on the head.

Although she was high-sounding, he could still easily retort her arguments. He was determined not to terminate the contract. No matter what she said, it would be impossible to convince him.

“Then what do I have to do for you to terminate the contract?” She was a smart person, so she stopped beating around the bush and became more direct. Worst came to worst, she would use other conditions in exchange for the termination.

Just then, he smiled without saying anything, and the answer was already evident. She glared at him with dissatisfaction, disliking his frivolous appearance.

“It seems that there is no way to negotiate today.” She gave up the idea of continuing to convince him to terminate the contract. She initially did not hold much hope, so she wasn’t too disappointed.

“I will not agree to this matter. The contract will not be terminated. I think it’s best if you give up on this impractical idea as early as possible,” he said bluntly. He also did not want to give her any hope, so he might as well be straightforward.

Hearing this, Heather revealed a cold smile. It was the kind of smile that unnerved people. Meanwhile, Matthias gathered himself together and put on a serious look. At a glance, he looked compelling.

The two fought with their aura, and no one was willing to make concessions. If this went on, Evan was worried that a physical fight would break out at the drop of a hat.

Just then, Evan deliberately and carefully approached them. Currently, the two were very close to each other, and the eye contact was intense. Evan was imagining all kinds of scenarios in his head. Were they going to start fighting, or were they going to kiss? In short, Evan was rather gossipy and full of interest in the content of the chat between them.

“I really made a mistake coming to you today.” Heather was not willing to show weakness and said with venom in her words.

Meanwhile, Matthias carelessly swept a glance at her. What she said did not provoke him, but instead, he agreed. She shouldn't have added any more trouble for him during this time.

As they exchanged pointed words, they were completely unable to get along. When they were together, there wasn't a time they weren't arguing.

“Maybe we can have dinner together. I don't want to talk about the contract with you anymore.” He said this not only to change the subject, but he also wanted her to dine with him.

During this time, he discovered a wonderful thing. It turned out that he enjoyed dining at the same table with Heather, as dining with her actually made him somewhat... happy.

“Sorry, I don't have time. I'm still in a hurry to get back to Langston Residence.” She politely refused with the reason that was simply untenable.

“What's the rush? Speaking of the contract, I think we haven't been acting according to the contract.” He brought up the contract again. These few days, they were rarely together, which made them seem like they weren't a couple at all.

“I don't want to pretend to be a couple with you anymore. No matter if we are in public or behind closed doors, I'm very stressed out. I can't do this properly at all.” She spoke softly this time. She was ready to convince him in another way. She hadn't completely given up, which was incredible to Matthias.

“If you don't want to pretend to be a couple, then you might as well become a real couple with me.” He blurted out his response without thinking it through.

Hearing this, she was dumbfounded and she stared at him incredulously. Even Matthias paused momentarily after he spoke, probably not expecting such words to have come out from his own mouth.

“It's time for me to go home.” She pretended not to hear anything and found a random thing to say to diffuse the awkward atmosphere between the two.

Meanwhile, Matthias also tacitly acted as if nothing happened and nodded to her, no longer insisting that she stayed. After she left, he gazed in the direction that she had left for a long time until Evan's voice brought him back to reality.

"Sir, are you done staring?" Evan asked in a suggestive tone.

Matthias looked at him with slight displeasure. It seemed like there was a lot on his mind and Evan didn't know how to comfort him.

Ever since his trip to Tasia City, Matthias had become depressed. As soon as he returned, Heather had come to see him, but unfortunately, her arrival did not relieve him at all. Instead, it added to his distress.

While he was in Tasia City, when he heard that Heather was looking for him, he had been hopeful. However, it turned out that she had come to terminate the contract. In fact, it was rather lamentable.

"Evan, am I doing something wrong?" Matthias asked. Occasionally, he would reflect on what he did.

"I think you already know the answer." Evan's answer was full of philosophical implications. He rarely answered Matthias' questions, leaving more space for him to self-reflect.

Just then, the corners of Matthias's lips tugged. "Myra is married, but I still feel restless." Even he himself did not know why. Some answers might even feel absurd so he did not take it seriously, or he was simply rejecting that answer.

At this moment, Heather, who was driving, wasn't able to calm her emotions that Matthias accidentally stirred up. She recalled the look on his face when he said what he said.

She had even noticed all of his subtle expressions. She was distracted by his single unwarranted sentence.

While the car sped on the highway, Heather was unable to calm down. When she arrived at Langston Residence, she steadily stopped. As she got out of the car, she was frowning, and it was obvious that something was bothering her.

She was home rather early today and just in time for dinner. Since working overtime at Langston Group, she hardly ever came back in time for dinner with the whole family.

As she dined at the same table as Robert, she was silent the whole time and did not dare to let Robert notice anything. However, Robert was intelligent and knew exactly who she had gone to see. However, he didn't intend to call her out.

Meanwhile, she had an absent-minded look on her face. She regretted going to see Matthias at his villa today. Not only did she fail to terminate the contract, but she came back even more distraught.

After dinner, she hurriedly returned to her room while Robert watched her figure profoundly until she completely disappeared from his sight.

As soon as she was nestled in her little world, she felt better immediately as it was safe here. While lying on the couch, she was getting comfortable when what Matthias said unexpectedly replayed in her head, making her feel unsettled again.

"What are you doing now, Matthias?" Heather muttered to herself. She was conflicted.

The sentence was making ripples in his heart as well. At this moment, Matthias was tossing and turning, unable to fall asleep. After he came back from Tansia City, he had been preoccupied by many things, and now, there was another thing to worry about. He let out a self-deprecating laugh. In a nutshell, nothing was going smoothly for him.

As if to match Heather's mumbling, Matthias sneezed loudly. Rubbing his nose, he looked somewhat innocent.

"Heather, should I stop?" Matthias asked. While he was asking Heather, he was mainly asking himself.

Each of them had their own thoughts, and it was a sleepless night for them. On such a night, Matthias secretly made a decision; a decision that was related to Heather.

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In the morning, Matthias came back to life. Sweeping away yesterday’s gloom, he became cynical again. Meanwhile, Evan prepared a hearty breakfast for him. Looking at the table full of desserts, Matthias frowned slightly. He felt sick even just looking at them.

“Have some sweet food. It will improve your mood,” Evan said with conviction, causing Matthias to roll his eyes. Sometimes, he felt like Evan was androgynous, and occasionally he would act rather feminine.

“Don’t you know my preference?” he asked rather resignedly. He didn’t like strong flavors. Instead, he preferred if everything was in moderation.

Shrugging, Evan ordered a maid standing by, “Take all the desserts away.”

Matthias glared at him in response. What was he going to eat if the desserts were taken away? There was only congee left. This was clearly a form of revenge from Evan, but Evan ignored the vicious stare from him.

Then, Matthias had his breakfast and left for work. After the fuss with Evan this morning, his mood was actually much better.

Despite that, what caught him off guard was that he ran into the finance director from Tansia City just after he arrived at the office. When in Tansia City, the head of the family did not tell him about this, so he was taken aback. On top of that, what was even more unexpected was that the finance director was Regan.

When the two met, they sized each other up before Matthias reluctantly extended a hand, whereas Regan had a half-smile on his face.

After a simple handshake, Matthias tried to make his expression look natural. "Welcome to Bradford City. The position of finance director has been vacant for some time, and I believe that with your talent, you will do a good job." It was a false sentiment.

Previously, the position of finance director was Matthias's part-time job. Although the position of finance director was two levels lower than that of the executive director, it was still an important position.

Now that the post of finance director had fallen into the hands of Regan, Matthias really didn't know whether to cry or laugh. It seemed that his performance in Tansia City had caused dissatisfaction and panic among the Locke Family, which was why Regan was here.

This was certainly not the head of the family's intention. After all, Matthias saw early on that he wanted to train Regan to be the successor as the head of the family, which was why he refused to let Regan into Locke Group and had always brought him around to handle the Locke Family affairs.

It really was a botch and Matthias regretted what he did in Tansia City. If he had not caused public anger, he would not have ended up in this situation now.

On the other hand, Regan was filled with energy. Of course, Matthias knew what Regan was thinking. He didn't care at all about being head of the family. What he wanted was to be the leader of Locke Group.

Unfortunately, Matthias was already the leader of Locke Group. Although his seat was not secure, he would never let Regan snatch it from him. Before he achieved full control of Locke Group, Matthias had to keep a low profile as it was evident that the Locke Family wasn't going to tolerate him being the slightest bit capricious.

"We'll join forces as brothers and work together to make Locke Group in Bradford City flourish." Regan also pretended to be affectionate. They put on a show so that to an outsider, they would think that they were getting along really well.

Just then, Matthias revealed a polite smile. Since things had come to this, he could only take things one step at a time. He never thought he would pay such a big price for what he did.

Regan was the person he hated the most, yet he was now in front of him every single day. Even if he didn't do anything, it was still enough to push Matthias over the edge.

However, there was more bad news. As Regan smiled cunningly, he whispered in Matthias's ear, "My assistant will be here tomorrow, and the head of the family instructed me to make sure to drag you along to receive them." He was deliberately keeping him guessing.

At once, Matthias had a bad feeling. It was just Regan's assistant, yet he was asked to go and pick them up at the airport. It seemed like that person wasn't just anyone.

"Who is it?" Matthias asked warily.

"You'll know tomorrow." Regan laughed and patted Matthias' shoulder. He wondered why the Locke Family members liked to pat others' shoulders so much.

"I'm very busy and I don't have time," Matthias directly refused. Unless the head of the family personally came over, otherwise, he would not pick anyone up at the airport.

Regan then took out his phone and waved it in front of Matthias. "This is our family's Messenger group," he said, pointing to his phone.

Matthias wasn't added into the group, so he was a little baffled. Why did he bring up the family Messenger group out of nowhere? Regan then continued, "The head of the family is also in it, and he specifically instructed me to take a short video of your pickup tomorrow. So don't make it difficult for me."

Seeing his smug face, Matthias really wanted to punch his pretty teeth. It was annoying how Regan was using all kinds of means to threaten him.

"Then you have to tell me who exactly is this person." Matthias glared angrily at Regan. He couldn't not compromise at this point, and if he continued to be capricious, he was afraid that the Locke Family would put him in a difficult position using the number of shares they had.

"They are third generation officials with a distinguished identity. They're coming to us for an internship," Regan said lightly, still refusing to make it clear to Matthias.

Looking at him in disgust, Matthias wanted to punch Regan's smug face. Then, he smirked as he no longer intended to continue the conversation. Talking to him was equivalent to making himself miserable.

"Families of officials really have a lot of tricks up their sleeves," Matthias said in a low voice before walking away from Regan.

This was not the first time Matthias encountered this kind of thing. In fact, Locke Group was a large enterprise, and occasionally there would be family members of a government official who would send their children or grandchildren here to hone their skills. Though they were loud to march in, it was clear that they weren't serious about it. Rather, they were there simply being the spoiled children they were.

Looking at Matthias' reaction, Regan flashed a smug smile. Things were developing in the direction he wanted, and he believed that tomorrow would be a big 'surprise' for Matthias. Thinking of this, Regan's lips slightly curved up. He had finally joined Locke Group as he wished, and he was very pleased with the position of financial director.

Back then, he also studied economics, and his results were just as good as Matthias's. However, when he returned home, he was forced to stay in Locke Residence, handling family affairs. He felt like his potential was being wasted on such a trivial job.

In contrast to Matthias, Regan was more unsatisfied especially after watching Matthias flourish. Now that he had finally entered the business world officially, he was eager to show the world what he was capable of. He wanted to prove his strength.

He wanted to let the Locke Family know that he, Regan Locke, was more suitable than Matthias for the position of Locke Group's executive director, and that only under his management can Locke Group thrive.

Having made up his mind and having a goal, what Regan had to do now was very simple, and that was to perform and try to find out the mistakes and loopholes in Matthias' decision making. He would use all means to pull him down from the position of leader of Locke Group.

After exchanging pleasantries, Matthias and Regan each went back to their work stations. Since the finance director's role had been under Matthias' supervision, the company did not have a room for the finance director at all. When Regan came to Matthias' office, Matthias was burying his head in documents.

After listening to Regan's plea, Matthias slowly lifted his head and moved his gaze away from the documents. He looked at Regan casually, and the corners of his mouth slightly pulled into a sarcastic smile. "The matter of the room is indeed an oversight on my part, but it's not possible for me to arrange a room for you in such a short time."

He was clearly brushing him off, but Regan couldn't say anything. Despite that, he was not willing to leave like this, and he couldn't be wandering around the office.

"How am I going to work then?" Regan inquired, knowing that Matthias would not actively solve the problem for him.

"You can move to the staff area, where there are many empty seats. You can pick whatever seat you want. By the window, by the wall, or by the door." The corner of Matthias' mouth lifted into a contemptuous smile as he watched the look on Regan's face in satisfaction..

"Matthias, stop playing around." Regan saw that there were no bystanders around, so he said to Matthias with dissatisfaction.

“I’m not playing, Regan. I’m being honest. After all, there are only so many rooms, and there’s no way to spare one for you for a while.” Matthias had a smug look on his face as he appreciated Regan’s anger.

“There is no way I’m sitting with the staff,” Regan said with unusual determination.

Just then, Matthias feigned a distressed look and said to him, “There is one more room. If you don’t mind, I’ll have someone clean it out for you.” The cynical smile on Matthias’ lips made alarm bells ring in Regan’s head, thinking that he must not have good intentions.

“Which room?” he asked tentatively.

“I’ll have my assistant take you there.” Matthias pressed the red button on his right, and in a short while, Lara pushed the door open and came in.

“How may I help you, Sir?” Lara asked respectfully.

Matthias pointed at Regan and said, “Take Director Locke to B3.” The two tacitly exchanged looks and Lara instantly understood him.

Meanwhile, Regan’s eyebrows knitted. He had a feeling that Matthias would not be so kind. Then, he heard Lara’s clear voice. “Director Locke, please follow me.”

Doubtfully, he followed behind Lara while Matthias watched his figure with a sly smile, hoping that Regan would like his new room.

A moment later, Lara stopped in front of room B3. Regan looked at the room in front of him in annoyance, recalling Matthias’ smirk before he left.

The room in front of him was small and pathetic, and the desk was not even half the size of Matthias’ desk. What was more annoying was that room B3 was adjacent to the bathroom. It was truly a spot with ‘great’ feng shui.

“Director Locke, this is room B3. It has been vacant for a while, so it’s a bit dirty. I will arrange for someone to clean it for you later.” Lara’s crisp voice carried a hint of sweetness, but it didn’t make Regan feel any better.

As if he had been humiliated, Regan clenched his fists so hard that his green veins were protruding. He thought Matthias was despicable, but he had to be

patient and not clash with Matthias over such a small incident. Since Matthias did such a thing, then he might as well let everyone see how Matthias was treating him.

Holding back his anger, Regan spoke eerily. "Please tell Director Locke that I'm very satisfied with the new room, and I thank him for going through the trouble." However, the expression on his face didn't reflect his words. The murderous blaze in his eyes was terrifying.

Whenever Regan was around, Matthias wouldn't feel at ease, so he decided to head out. Recalling how he treated Heather yesterday, he felt that something was wrong, so he simply came up with a reason to go see her.

However, she didn't like how Matthias would come looking for her so frequently at the office. On the contrary, Blake was rather glad to see him visit, which was why Matthias had always been given access to Langston Group.

At this moment, Heather, who was busy working, heard someone was at the door, so she instinctively said, "Come in."

Who knew Matthias would be the one to come through the door? Of all the people it could've been, it was the person she didn't want to see the most. She was already stressed out because she had tons of documents to go through, and Matthias coming here only made her even more agitated.

"I'm working and have no time for personal matters," she said coldly, wishing he'd just leave her alone as soon as possible.

"I'm here to discuss work." It wasn't surprising that he already thought of an excuse to talk to her.

"The person you're looking for is Blake. I'm in no position to represent Langston Group." It was evident that she didn't want to talk to him at all, no matter if it was personal or work.

"I want to talk to you. Is that an issue?" He asserted. Nonetheless, she was also a persistent person when it came to rejecting someone.

"I don't want to blur the line between personal matters and work," she nonchalantly said with her head lowered as she continued to read the document she was working on.

“We’re discussing it in the office today.” Obviously, he had no plans of leaving without getting what he wanted. He immediately plopped down onto the chair opposite of her while she didn’t bother to spare a glance at him.

He must admit that being ignored wasn’t a good feeling. At this moment, he felt like he was transparent, and all he wanted was a glance from Heather.

His feelings toward her were ineffable. He knew very well that there wasn’t any chance for them to be lovers, but there were times like these where she would be so headstrong like how one could get in a relationship.

“May I know what’s the working matter that you would like to discuss with me?” Her eyes were still trained on the documents on hand as she tried to brush him off.

“Is this your attitude when you deal with work discussions?” he questioned as her attitude was beginning to irk him.

“Well then, Director Locke, how would you like me to act?” With that, she finally placed down the pen she was holding and looked right at him.

“Look at me, seriously.” As he raised a brow at her, mixed feelings brewed within himself. He was beginning to suspect that he really had feelings for her.

At once, she offered him a courteous smile as she wore a calm and composed expression. Her stare made his heart skip a beat.

He could even feel a trace of blissfulness. That was what he felt when he finally got eye contact from her. He liked that pair of sparkly, crystal clear eyes that were ever so mesmerizing.

“Does this satisfy you?” She stared at him motionlessly as if to mock him and anger him.

“I would like to discuss the collaboration of Locke Group with Langston Group.” It was the same old excuse he used before. Some time back, Robert had already rejected him, so the chances of it happening were slim.

“I can’t make the call on this matter. In fact, even Director Blake can’t do that. You should pay a visit to my Grandpa and discuss with him.” Heather had already heard from Robert that he had rejected his proposal for a collaboration.

“Is getting approval from Old Master Langston the only way that you’ll seriously discuss our collaboration with me?” he asked, chagrined. It was obvious that she had been talking to him in a perfunctory manner to his displeasure.

Ever since he came back from Tasia City, things hadn’t been smooth for him. Even Heather’s attitude toward him had a 180-degree change. Matthias thought that he had been rather unlucky lately. Staring at Heather deeply, he was perplexed by his feelings for Heather and annoyed at her perfunctory attitude.

“A collaboration between the two groups is a big matter, so we must have Grandpa’s approval to proceed.” She simply repeated what she said. Honestly, she didn’t want to pick a fight with him, and all she wanted was for him to leave her to work in peace.

“Heather, do you really hate me so much?” he asked, discontented. Having gone through Myra’s wedding, his feelings toward Heather had undergone a change in which he couldn’t control.

“I don’t discuss personal matters at work.” She didn’t want to answer that question. Moreover, he was acting really odd, as if she had stepped past his boundaries.

“Do you still want to terminate the contract?” He brought up a topic that would pique her interest.

Despite the fleeting change in her expression, she persisted. “I don’t want to repeat myself thrice. If you don’t have any other work-related matters, I would like to work in peace.”

However, it would take more than that to break her current effort to ignore him. It was easy to bring up the contract termination, but she knew that he would not easily have it dissolved as he had just given her his answer yesterday.

Hence, she had already given up on terminating the contract. As long as Matthias did not do anything else that crossed her boundary, she did not mind the current situation she was in.

The outsiders would think that they were a mundane couple, but rumors would die off after some time. As both Heather and Matthias did not announce

anything regarding the rumor, the public can only speculate. Moreover, she didn't really care what others thought.

"Okay, I'm the one bringing contempt upon myself." With that, he left dispirited. Perhaps it was due to the blind dates he had gone on, he had seriously considered marriage and thought of marrying Heather.

It seemed that it was just his wishful thinking. All Heather felt for him was hatred and nothing else. At this moment, he was beginning to regret his actions. He had been trying to make her like him more when it was clearly impossible.

After he left, she continued working, thinking about how it was getting hard to read Matthias. There were sayings about women being hard to read, but men were also the same. Nonetheless, she didn't want anything to do with him any longer.

She had been telling herself that it was impossible for them to be together. Moreover, Matthias was not her type. She even suspected whether he was trying to trick her into his trap such that she would have to go through the heart-ripping pain that she had gone through years back. It almost felt like *deja vu*.

With her guard up whenever she was dealing with him, she would regard all his acts of goodwill as a false impression. Her life was already in a messy state, no thanks to him. Even Myra had called her specifically to ask about what was going on between Matthias and her.

If this went on, she might as well imprint the name 'Matthias' on her. Most of the people were already assuming that they had an intimate relationship.

As she got lost in her train of thoughts, she subconsciously wrote Matthias' name on her document. The moment she snapped out of it, she immediately drew over it. It was a bad day for both Matthias and Heather. Before the day ended, she got a phone call from her junior, Leon.

"Hi, Heather." Leon's voice came from the other end of the call.

"Hi, Leon." Clearing her head, she thought of how it had been a while since she heard from him. Now that he was contacting her from overseas, she was guessing that she would get some good news from him.

“I can go to Bradford City anytime. Are you prepared on your side?” He had always been straightforward as he liked to be succinct.

“I’m too involved in my family business and I can’t free myself yet,” she sighed. In fact, she had been doing preparations in private, but she could not find free time which would pose a problem.

“It’s just a project and it’s been a few months. Why haven’t you finished it?” he asked in a joking manner.

“This project has not been running smoothly. I think that it’ll take a couple of months more for it to end.” She replied straightforwardly, not bothering to hide anything from him.

“Sounds like I should get to Bradford City earlier. I would like to see what project is posing a challenge for you,” Leon said excitedly. He was probably going to book his plane ticket right after ending the phone call with her.

“Stop teasing me. How are things for you and Kate?” she asked casually, curious about his private life.

With a chuckle, he said, “We broke up long ago. She’s quite a nuisance.” He pursed his lips as he recalled how her ex-girlfriend was even more of a mother than his own mother.

“When do you plan to be more serious?” She sniggered. Leon had always been a nonchalant person when it came to relationships; he was never one to settle.

“If you’ll become my girlfriend, I will definitely treat my relationship seriously,” he said in a frivolous tone. After all, he had once pursued Heather before.

“No thanks, I’m not interested in a relationship with a younger partner.” If it wasn’t Leon who was talking with him, the person would already be in her bad books. However, Leon was different to her; he was like a younger brother.

“Well then, have you found me a brother-in-law?” He continued to chat with her about random things. As they had not talked for quite some time, they had a good time chit-chatting.

“I’m too busy with work to find a partner.” It was very rare for Heather to talk to someone in such a free and easy manner, but it was relaxing to chat with Leon.

“Back in school, you said that studies were keeping you busy. Now, you’re using work as an excuse. Aren’t you interested in men at all? Or do you have a girlfriend in secret?” He continued to tease her. Seeing how she had a tough, domineering image, he wouldn’t even be surprised if Heather had indeed found a girlfriend.

“Cut it out. I don’t have a boyfriend or girlfriend. I’m unlike you who swings both ways.” She was exasperated as he was the one who was bisexual, yet here he was joking about her sexuality. She made a mental note to lecture him when they met later.

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Standing before Love Chapter 485

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Standing before Love Chapter 486

Meanwhile, Myra—who was on the other side of the globe—still would not let Heather go; she wanted to know about the relationship between Heather and Matthias. Even Tony was speechless as Myra was still so concerned about other matters while they were on a honeymoon.

“Since when did you start to like gossiping?” After Tony snatched Myra’s phone away, she looked up at him.

She was met with a naked body with a muscular chest and solid abs. He was only wearing a pair of swimming trunks, and he sure looked inviting as male hormones emanated off his body.

“There must be something going on between Heather and Matthias.” She immediately shifted her gaze away before she started to drool because of how hot he looked.

“Do you remember our promise?” he asked with a serious face. With a pair of shades covering his eyes, she could not tell whether he was mad or joking.

“Tony, are you unhappy?” At once, she knew what she did wrong before he had to point it out.

“I just hope that someone will keep their promise.” He looked at her from above.

Myra was wearing an azure-colored swimming suit which complimented her bodyline well. The tiny bump on her stomach did not affect her beauty. After

all, she did not seem like a pregnant woman, and most people would probably think that it was just body fat.

Droplets of water latched onto Myra's fair skin and swung off her when she moved. He could not seem to take his eyes off her. He had already restricted her from wearing any swimsuit that was too revealing, but even though she was wearing a swimming suit with the most basic design, she was still so attractive.

Obviously, he didn't like others looking at Myra's body as it was his to admire, not to mention those who had bad motives.

At this moment, she gave him puppy eyes, hoping to get his forgiveness, but he stayed unfazed.

"I promise I will not use my phone anymore. I'll keep my eyes on you," she said affirmatively. How could he be so petty?

"Your phone is confiscated. You can use the camera to take pictures." He smiled victoriously as he waited for her to comply.

Rolling her eyes, she admitted defeat as she could only do as he said.

"Don't you like the beach?" he asked as he noticed how she wasn't the most excited.

"I don't dare to move too much carrying a baby inside me." There was quite a crowd at the beach and some people were running around. It was fair that she was concerned about the baby in her belly.

"Come with me. I'll protect you and our baby." Pulling her up, he wanted to bring her close to the waters so they could have fun.

Laughter could be heard around the beach. From time to time, there would be couples who passed by, and there were always people who were playing beach ball on the beach.

It was extra lively here. Among the crowd, Myra was the most attractive when she smiled. At least that was what Tony thought as he looked at her with lovelorn eyes. Catching waves of the ocean, she was having a good time.

Meanwhile, he made sure to always stay close enough such that he could protect her from any potential danger. With him by her side, she felt very reassured and safe.

As night came, Myra and Tony strolled along the beach hand-in-hand as the wind blew. They had already changed out of their swimsuits and were walking barefoot, feeling the sand between their toes.

“Are you cold?” he asked as he gently rubbed her shoulder, feeling it was slightly chilled.

“I’m not. I like the wind.” She smiled eye to eye. Even though the sea breeze had a salty smell to it, she still liked it.

“When we retire, we’ll get a house by the beach so we can spend the rest of our lives there,” he suggested.

“Away from the world?” The beachside here was a little too lively for retirement plans; a quieter place would be more suitable.

“What about we buy our own island?” Raising a brow, he suggested. Since she liked the beach so much, he might as well buy her an island.

At once, she gave him a side-eye. With her head hung low, she looked at the sand beneath her feet. The remnants of sunset gave the beach a pretty shade of color. At this moment, the sun seemed to be descending into the sea at a distance away.

“Bradford City is in the Northern Hemisphere, while we’re now in the Southern Hemisphere. Technically speaking, Bradford City is right under our feet.” She smiled coyly as she leaned into his embrace.

“Yes, Bradford City is under our feet right now.” Holding onto her, he brought her to a big rock with a smooth surface before sitting on it as they admired the last light of the day.

“I heard from Leo that Hart Group has encountered a strong competitor lately, but you’re not at Hart Group now...”

Before she could finish her sentence, Tony cut her off. “Hart Group has been able to grow and improve with competition. Having a competitor is not a bad thing.” In fact, he was not bothered by Locke Group’s challenges at all.

Nonetheless, he made a mental note to warn Leo to keep some things secret after going back.

Tony remembered telling Leo not to tell anyone about this matter, so it was weird as to why he would tell that to Myra. As his curiosity was piqued, he turned toward her to see that she had a mischievous look in her eyes.

“Leo told you that?” He put on a serious look as he asked.

She was stumped for a while, but the pause made him understand immediately.

“You were trying to trick me into telling you myself.” Looking right at her, he was in disbelief that she had just tricked him.

With a smile, she replied, “I overheard a little when you were having a video call with Leo last night.” She initially did not want to bring this up, but she noticed him looking at his phone earlier. Hence, she assumed that it must be related to Hart Group.

“Don’t worry, it’s nothing too serious. It doesn’t affect our honeymoon.” He had wanted to keep it a secret from her, but she still found out in the end. It seemed like it was impossible to hide things from her.

“We can postpone our honeymoon, or next year—”

Once again, he cut her off by saying, “We’ve already planned it all out and we’ll complete it. I don’t want to abandon our plans midway. Our trip has just begun, and I don’t want to turn back now.”

Without hesitation, she looked right at him. Having been with him for so long, she knew that it wasn’t something small this time. If it was, he would have already dealt with it before the honeymoon.

Since it had not been dealt with yet, it meant that it wasn’t something insignificant. In other words, Hart Group was facing a problem, yet Tony was not at the company. Myra truly didn’t want him to be negligent of his work because of her. However, she could not change his thoughts once he had made a decision.

“Stop worrying. I don’t want to leave any regrets on our honeymoon trip. Moreover, I wish for us to just enjoy ourselves without worrying about

anything.” He hoped that she would understand his intentions. Sometimes, Myra was just so selfless that Tony just wanted her to be able to enjoy life.

“Now that we’re so far away from Bradford City, we’re far from everything going on there as well. At this moment, it’s just you and me on a spot on Earth.” He looked at her lovingly as he attempted to free her mind from worries. After all, they would not be able to truly enjoy themselves if they were to worry about problems back home, and they would be regretful about this trip in the future.

“If things at Hart Group are really urgent, I can’t just ignore it and enjoy myself.” She was also a persistent person, so the both of them stood their own ground.

“Things are under control so far. If it goes south, I will go back to Bradford City immediately. Trust me. I will be responsible to both Hart Group and you.” He understood why she was worried and he mentally cursed Locke Group for not picking a better time. Of all time, they had to pick the time that he was on a honeymoon trip. Now he was not able to thoroughly enjoy himself.

At this moment, she no longer seemed as headstrong even though she did not say a word. Hence, he continued, “Tony-Myra Chopper is on standby round the clock.” It sounded like he was trying to crack a joke despite his serious look.

That earned him a smile from Myra. It was a name that he had given his helicopter that was derived from their names.

“What is our next destination?” Standing up, she turned back to look at Tony. The last rays of light from the sunset were cast on her face, making her look picturesque.

“Brazil.” Satisfied with her reaction, he replied with a smile. After tonight, they were headed to Brazil.

“I want to go to Rio de Janeiro!” she exclaimed excitedly.

“Yeah, we can try out the local barbecue.” With a smile, he added, “We can experience the tropical weather.”

They were getting more and more excited as they discussed their plans for tomorrow and where they would be going as if the fight earlier did not take place.

She did not want to debate about it with him any longer as she knew that he was someone who knew what he was doing. Moreover, he would not change what had already been decided.

If she were to continue arguing with him, she would be defying his efforts. Hence, she thought that it was wiser to forget about it and enjoy themselves on the honeymoon trip.

“Tony, have you ever thought that you would become a businessman when you were little?” She randomly started another conversation with him. They always had something to chat about.

“When I was young, I wanted to be an astronaut.” He put on a serious face when he said that, but it earned him a laugh from Myra.

“An astronaut.” She guffawed as she didn’t have to hold back whenever she was with him.

“What about you?” Tony didn’t know why she was laughing and stared at her puzzledly. He didn’t think it was that hilarious.

“I wanted to be a doctor.” She reminisced how she once proudly announced her ambition in front of the whole class when she was young.

“Doctor?” he repeated with a smile.

“Yes. I wanted to save patients and make sure they were healthy.” She still remembered what she thought when she was little. She was so young and naive back then.

“Not bad. How thoughtful of you to want to save the world.” He commended her. They learned how to admire each other as they maintained a healthy relationship.

“Did you dream of being an astronaut to dominate the universe?” she asked as a sweet smile graced her lips.

“No. I just thought astronauts were cool.” He liked the astronaut’s uniform a lot. However, he was obviously unable to follow his dreams as he grew up in a family that ran businesses.

At the airport, Heather was waiting patiently for Leon. From time to time, people would let their gazes linger on her for an extra few seconds. She had a great figure and she easily stood out despite standing in a crowd.

When Leon strutted out from the VIP tunnel of the airport, he spotted her immediately. From afar, he waved at her energetically.

“Heather,” he called out. Meanwhile, she smiled at the sight of him.

“Come here,” she said succinctly as she waved back at him.

As he had long legs, it didn’t take him much time before he was standing right in front of her. He was smiling from eye to eye and he looked so warm and welcoming.

“Heather, you’re the most attractive person among the crowd. You totally outshine all the other women.” With that, he opened his arms wide, attempting to give her a hug.

However, she was quick to avoid it. Scrutinizing him, she immediately had him stand there without trying anything funny. It took one gaze from her to stop him from being hyperactive. Initially, he even tried to pat her head but he retreated after getting a glare from her.

Whenever Leon was with her, he had to be on his best behavior. That was why he didn’t dare to do anything that would seem intimate to her. Heather was never a fan of intimate actions, and Myra was the person that she was the most intimate with.

“Stop being so glib.” She pinched the bridge of her nose as she reprimanded him. Leon was truly a hyperactive person, and sometimes she wished that he was more mature.

Nonetheless, there was enough maturity in Heather to cover for them both, while Leon would be the friendly and active one among them two. Though they complemented each other, she would sometimes feel that he was too hyperactive.

Right now, it was one of those times. He was blabbering nonstop in her ears, and she could only look at him in displeasure as they were attracting gazes from other people nearby.

He talked about his ventures in Italy en route, and she would acknowledge him once in a while. He seemed to be very excited as if he was a horse that got off restraints. How did he become so talkative after not seeing him for some time?

When they arrived at Heather's new apartment, Leon finally stopped talking about Italy only to start talking about Bradford City.

It was almost impressive how he could just go on and on. He was also very curious about Bradford City as he thought that this city was full of cultures and stories.

Obviously, he didn't bother to mask his liking toward the city. Meanwhile, she didn't have much of a special feeling or thought about the city. Despite the fact that she had grown up here, there was a very long period of time that she hated this city.

"Leon, can you be more quiet?" she commented as she passed the apartment's keys to him.

She had the urge to just dump him by the roadside as she began to regret having brought him back. He was too excited and he could use some time to calm down.

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"Heather, do you really not feel attracted to me at all?" He continued to show her his pitiful, adorable look. She was quick to stand further away from him as she had foreseen that he would even tug on her sleeve.

"Yes," she said straightforwardly.

Leon kept his pitiful look and looked her up and down. “Heather, are you not attracted to men?” He then gave her a suggestive look as he said in a playful manner.

“Yes, I like women,” she said helplessly. Leon was truly a headache sometimes.

“I knew it! Is the person you like the person you always mention? Myra, right?” he exclaimed, thinking that he was clever.

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Upon hearing that, she sent a slap to his head. “Your brain is short-circuiting. I don’t understand you.”

Seeing her dark face, Leon no longer continued to fool around. It seemed that her best friend was off-limits for joking. The look in Heather’s eyes told him that she wanted to end him then and there, and he was beginning to get scared.

“Heather, I’m hungry.” He finally stopped joking around.

“I’ll bring you to get some good food.” She no longer seemed as tense when she said that. Leon wasn’t always like this with everyone. In fact, he only acted this way whenever he was with her—he would only stop when she was about to get mad.

“Okay. You’re the best!” He beamed at once as he began to charm his way out.

“What do you feel like eating?” She wouldn’t really get mad at him. In fact, she was already smiling at him now. She was really lenient when it came to Leon.

“Solarian cuisine! Now that I’m in Solaria, I must try authentic Solarian food.” Excitement was evident in his voice. He seemed to find a lot of things exciting, and it was a trait that Heather was jealous of.

“No problem.” With a smile, she decided to bring him to the most famous restaurant in Bradford City.

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“I’ll smile more if you’re less annoying.” She raised her brow as she said half-jokingly.

“I’m the cute kind of clingy. How is that annoying?” he retorted in discontent. He was a cutie, so how could she say that? It was really hurtful.

“Are you even a guy?” she asked helplessly. Sometimes, she even wondered if there was a princess living within Leon’s heart.

“No, because I’m a man.” He winked at her as he said that. What a waste of a good-looking face.

He had a well-defined face that even both Matthias and Tony couldn’t compare with. However, Leon lacked the natural aura that the other two had. Matthias had more of a depressing aura, while that of Tony was more domineering. As for Leon, he was beautiful.

His beauty was androgynous. His deep eyes were so mesmerizing that one would get lost in them, while his brows were just at the perfect spot. Every inch of his body was the finest works of God Himself. His sculptured beauty was comparable to that of Greek gods.

On top of that, he also worked out. Hence, his figure was also at a tip-top condition; there were muscles under his shirt yet he seemed fit when he was dressed. Though he had fair skin, he didn’t seem too girly. He was the epitome of gorgeous, and Heather would definitely let her eyes linger on him for an extra few seconds if he were quiet.

However, he did not want to be the quiet, handsome man. His goofy character was not that attractive to her, but that was also the reason why she was so close to Leon. Others might think that they were a thing, but she knew very well that it was impossible for them to be anything more than friends.

Leon wasn’t her type and she was clear about that. Hence, she was willing to befriend him and get close to him as time passed to become good friends.

Maybe he did want to get into a relationship with her in the beginning, which would explain why he was so persistent in getting close to her and weaseling his way into her heart.

Despite successfully getting close to her, it was not going in the direction that he initially intended. In the end, he understood that he could only be friends with her.

There were many instances that he wanted to confess to her. Nonetheless, he always kept them to himself as he knew that they would not be able to stay as friends once he confessed.

As he got closer to her, he knew how merciless she could get. However, he also knew that she acted cruel to hide her true emotions.

She would not easily fall for anyone, but when she did, she would give her everything. That was something Leon admired about her. Another thing he admired about her was that she always lived by her principles. He wanted to be someone with principles too, but he often broke his own rules.

As they were on the way, he finally quieted down. Looking at the side profile of him in deep thought, she could not help but admire that he was a mixed-blood as his facial features were much more defined than Solarians.

“Do I look good?” He turned to face her with a serious look as he gave her a deep gaze.

“You look good. People are definitely jealous of your face.” She put on a meaningful smile. She was really jealous of his immense beauty.

“You can have it.” The corner of his lips curled upward as he looked at her. In his eyes, Heather was the most good-looking person.

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“You have so many masks. Are you sure you’re not wearing any when you’re with me?” she asked profoundly because he was behaving oddly. She knew that whenever he acted like he was excited and happy, he had other burdens that he was keeping to himself.

“How much longer until we reach?” A trace of anxiety flashed in his eyes as he immediately changed the topic.

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Standing before Love Chapter 487

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Standing before Love Chapter 488

While Heather had been hanging out a lot with Leon lately, the reporters had been busy too. They were always around to tail them, one more skillful than the other. The Langston Family were already very furious when the newspaper and magazine wrote nonsense about her relationship with Matthias. Nonetheless, it did not stop them from prying around after that incident.

This time, Leon was the one who noticed the paparazzi. It was truly a displeasure to find that out while they were just trying to have a meal. However, it was hard to tell whether she was mad or not as she had a calm and composed expression.

“Heather?” He was asking for her opinion as to how to deal with it. After all, they were in her city, so it was only appropriate to let her decide.

She simply shook her head in response. She was smart so she must have noticed the reporters already, but she simply chose not to do anything about it so that the media would have its way.

Giving her a confused face, he did not understand why she wanted to put up with such incidents. Her scandal with Matthias had already caused a commotion. If a new male lead got into the picture, rumors would surely start again.

Taking a glance at Leon’s good-looking face, she mentally apologized to him. She did not intend to use him, but there was no better candidate.

She did consider Lucas, but she feared that he would hurt him. Despite not disliking him, she didn’t really like him either. It was true that he fitted her criteria of choosing a partner, but she simply did not have feelings for him.

Moreover, he wasn’t proactive. A future was nonexistent for two people who wouldn’t take the initiative for their partner. Even Philip had asked Heather out before.

Yet, Lucas didn’t take any action. Though she admired him, she did not like him enough to take the initiative, hence the current stagnant state.

After rejecting Philip thrice, he no longer attempted to contact her anymore.

She was still a little interested in Lucas, but Philip was completely not her cup of tea. Moreover, Philip was a friend to Tony and Myra, and he was close with Lucas. Therefore, she didn't want any form of romantic relationship with him.

When they got back to the apartment, Heather could finally explain to Leon the reason. As a curious person, Leon would definitely not let her go if she didn't tell him everything clearly.

"It must be a mercury retrograde for me." Although she sounded serious, he was confused as to why it had anything to do with horoscopes.

"This isn't my forte." He shrugged. He didn't expect that she would know a thing or two about horoscopes. She was truly a knowledgeable person.

"Things have not been smooth for me ever since I returned. It has been tense with the media," she said helplessly. She didn't want to let things get too ugly, but the media was crossing her boundaries.

"That's why they secretly took pictures of you?" As he mentioned that, he sounded mad. He thought that privacy was a very important factor.

"There was a scandal involving Director Locke and I that spread very widely in Bradford City, and it affected Langston Group. It's quite complicated." She briefly explained, but there weren't enough details for Leon to fully understand the situation.

"Director Locke?" He was curious as to who it was. After all, he had just come to this city and had yet to know who the influential figures were and how they were related to each other.

"Locke Group is a top company in Tasia City. It has recently entered Bradford City, and it is messing with the balance here. The director, Matthias, is an ambitious man." Heather could see his ambition in his eyes, and she thought he might become a businessman who was blinded by wealth and fame with time.

As she spoke, Leon made sure to observe her facial expressions. He had a hunch that Heather's relationship with Matthias wasn't simple. After all, she was not someone who would easily let the media catch her in a scandal. Even if the media threw mud at her, she would have the ability to change it.

However, she was now allowing the reporters to do as they wished, and Leon didn't believe that she would compromise just like that. Hence, he believed that it had something to do with Matthias.

"Your type?" He said in a joking tone as he waited to see her reaction.

As expected, she didn't have a big reaction, but he did manage to catch the fleeting uneasiness in her eyes.

"Yes." She didn't deny that as he was right; Matthias was indeed her type.

Obviously, she wasn't bothering to mask her self-appreciation. It could be seen just from her criteria of a partner. Most people would pick a partner who complemented themselves while she simply liked people that were similar to herself.

It was indeed their similarities that drew her to him, but people who were too similar were bound to create some friction along the way.

In fact, Leon had realized long ago that guys Heather was interested in were typically akin to her. That was also why he would never be able to move her.

Though both of them liked to mask themselves, they were different in their methodologies. Even their mental maturity differed by a lot.

"Are you and him..." Leon offered her a smile to make her feel more relaxed.

He did not get an answer from her as she herself didn't know the answer. She had lied to Myra and many others, and she did not want to lie anymore, especially when that person was Leon.

"I'll take that as a yes." He said it in a nonchalant tone to mask his true feelings. He had long expected something like this to happen—Heather would meet a guy who was her type and they would be together.

"It's not possible for me and him," she immediately said. She only talked about the possibility and didn't deny that she had feelings for him.

The answer was rather obvious and not only Leon could see it. Even Robert had seen through her some time ago. However, feelings like that were often disregarded in a family that ran huge businesses. Moreover, their situation was complicated, so how would she get caught in a mess as such?

“Impossible doesn’t mean you don’t like him.” Back when Robert heard Heather’s reply, he no longer said anything, but things were different with Leon. He hoped that she could be truthful with herself.

“You can tell me that again after learning about the messy situation in Bradford City.” She didn’t want to explain to him any further as he didn’t understand that the distance between Matthias and her could fit an entire milky way.

“Your life is too stressful.” He looked into her eyes as he daringly said. There were many times she felt the urge to choke him to death.

As Leon could see through her just like that, Heather was feeling pressured and didn’t want to continue this conversation with him. Being read like a book was not always a good thing.

Having noticed her uneasiness, he decided to cut it off before he annoyed her for real.

“Well, now that I’m well-fed, I’m getting drowsy. Do you want to sleep with me?” he asked in a joking manner. At once, she rolled her eyes.

“Go sleep by yourself.” She knew that he had purposely switched the topic for her sake. Moreover, it was indeed getting late and it was time for her to go home.

When she was leaving, Leon, who was standing behind her, offered, “I’ll walk you downstairs.”

She didn’t look back as she rejected, “It’s fine. You’re not good with directions.”

Looking at the back of her figure, he smiled helplessly. He wasn’t so bad with directions. He had just forgotten once where Heather ended up driving him to his destination.

Ever since then, he thought that it wasn’t too bad of a thing for her to see him as someone who was bad with directions. After all, it was another excuse for him to spend more time with her.

Feelings were often hidden in details, but nobody knew how far relationships like these would go. Leon was someone who would always put on a facade

that masked his sorrow while Heather was a smart woman. Hence, he had to be extra careful when he was with her.

Though he was content with his current relationship with her—beyond friends but not lovers—he would still get jealous when someone who attracted her appeared. He still couldn't fake his nonchalance such that he could give his blessing to her and another man.

When she got out of the apartment, she didn't expect that she would bump into Matthias at a rather private place like this. Heather had bought this apartment for Leon a long time ago. It was a rather quiet place, so it was truly a surprise that she would walk into him by chance at this location.

Nonetheless, her reaction was even more interesting. She acted like she didn't see him and walked past him. She didn't feel anything, and she was sure that she would not feel anything if she were to bump into him in outer space as well.

There was also something that she had been investigating. She and Matthias had suddenly become a hot topic at the wedding, so she wanted to find out who was the mastermind.

Naturally, Matthias was her prime suspect. Although it seemed impossible, she knew that this man was full of tricks, so she still listed him as the prime suspect.

After being reminded by Robert, she began to suspect Matthias' ulterior motive as he had never stopped attacking Hart Group before Myra's wedding.

After Tony went away for his honeymoon trip, the scales of his actions were getting bigger and bigger. Heather wasn't sure whether Matthias was indeed so smart and powerful or he was just arrogant.

Moreover, because the media deliberately hyped up news about Heather and Matthias, what was supposed to be Tony and Myra's big day suddenly became a backdrop for their scandal. She could not help but suspect that it was his doings.

"Heather," Matthias called out to her.

Upon hearing that, she halted her steps. She wanted to see what he was up to now. Since she bumped into him here, someone must have given Matthias the news.

Nevertheless, it was unexpected that he was even faster than the media. With a mocking smile, she recalled how she thought he was a loyal lovelorn guy. Now that she put two and two together, she was starting to see his motives.

She could only wonder how long he had been planning all these. She was even suspecting that there was a reason that he came to Bradford City a few days before she returned to the country.

“I guess this is fate.” Without much of an expression, she looked at Matthias, who seemed to have lost some weight. It had only been a few days, but he already looked like a druggie.

Those deep eyes stared right at her, as if she had done him wrong. He was the one who had been suffering for the past few days while Heather simply chit-chatted and had fun with other people. When he got the news this evening, he couldn't stop himself from coming to find her.

There were a lot of things that he pondered about, and relationships were the most inexplicable among them. Even he himself didn't know when he had started to like her!

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Having locked eyes with Heather for a while, Matthias closed the distance between them. Those tired eyes that were staring at her made her feel uncomfortable. She hadn't expected that he would appear before her in such a way. Looking in another direction, she knew she shouldn't be feeling sorry for him, yet she couldn't help it.

“You don't even dare to look at me now?” Angered, he looked at her as he continued to ask himself why he was here. Did he come to be her laughing stock?

“If there's nothing, I'm leaving.” She was oblivious as to where his anger was coming from. She could not understand his feelings, and she was failing to distinguish when he was telling the truth and when he was not.

“I’m here to ask you to abide by the contract,” he suddenly said as he pulled out a bunch of pictures from his pocket.

Taking a glance at the pictures he was showing her, she saw Leon captured in those pictures immediately. As expected, he was here because of Leon.

“He’s my friend,” she said coldly without taking the pictures.

“Don’t you want to take a look? They’ll be the photos on the front page of newspapers and magazines tomorrow.” He seemed stubborn as he said those words. Furrowing her brow, she thought to herself, Why is he putting me in a difficult spot again?

“I’m not interested. I’m just collaborating with him. Do I have to report that to you too?” She shot him a cold gaze.

The more he behaved this way, the more it angered Heather, which in turn only made her hate him more. Moreover, she didn’t have any intentions to explain to him in the first place.

In spite of the contract between them, he had been behaving like he was her true boyfriend. It was irking her a lot, and what she loathed more was his mood swings. That was why his actions were not convincing at all.

Everytime she recalled how Matthias had liked Myra for such a long time and didn’t get to be together in the end because of a series of misfortunes, Heather would remind herself that she could not fall for him.

On top of that, he was probably mentally ill! A person like him would not be her choice of partner. That was what she kept repeating to herself to persuade herself.

“It seems like the contract doesn’t really restrict you.” As he spoke, he pulled out the contract. Out of instinct, she frowned as she wondered what he was up to now.

The next moment, he was angrily tearing the contract into pieces before throwing them into the air. Some paper shreds landed on her face, yet she remained expressionless.

No matter what it was that he would do, she would not be fazed. She had been competing with him for quite some time, so she already more or less

knew his modus operandi—he wouldn't do what most people would usually do. In other words, nobody could predict what his next step was. Looking at Heather's composed expression, it fueled his anger even more. He really hated her expressionless face sometimes.

"Since the contract doesn't restrict you, it can be torn. But you... I will be sure to make you pay for what you did." He stiffly turned around as he could not bear to see her happy. It only felt right if her life was a havoc.

"Do you hate me so much?" After a few moments of silence, she finally voiced out. He must be still not letting go of what happened years ago.

It was her wrongdoings back then, and now she had to pay. It was only fair. With that thought, she smiled to herself with disdain.

"All the pain I'm going through now is caused by you," he said word by word. It included the pain of losing Myra, and the pain he was feeling right now that was caused by her.

"Yes, it's all because of me. You are not worthy of Myra. You didn't back then, and you still don't now." She was pushing all the buttons that would irritate and trigger him. Myra deserved better. Matthias had his own problems in the first place, so it was good that Myra did not end up getting married to him.

"Shut up!" Clutching onto her wrist tightly, he seemed like he was raging with fire.

"In your eyes, I'm always a class below everyone else. People like me don't deserve love. Is that it?" He glared at her as fury filled his eyes. He hated being looked down on, and he hated it more when it was Heather who looked down on him.

"No. Why would you be a class lower than everyone else? You're Director Locke who's at the top. Obviously, you're a class higher than all of us," she said in a mocking tone, disdain evident in her voice.

Without a word about the pain, she stared back at him stubbornly. He was already using half of his strength as he squeezed her wrist. Typically, even a grown man could not bear with such pain, yet there she was, not even wincing one bit.

“Do you know how much I hate your eyes? I want to gouge them out so badly.” He pointed at her eyes as he spoke. He loathed the gaze she was using to look at him. He loathed them to his bones.

“If you’re scared of being looked at by me, you can always look away,” she retorted effortlessly. She didn’t want to show him that she was struggling. What he was doing right now was really low, and she hated him for that.

“Don’t you think that you can fool me like you did back then.” He released his clutch on her wrist, and a dark shade of red could be seen on the spot he had forcefully held on.

Taking on all his anger, she bore with his hatred as it was payback from him. Henceforth, she would be at ease, and she could do whatever she wanted then.

“I’ve already paid back whatever I owed you. If you’re still not satisfied, there’s nothing else I can do,” she said in an exhausted tone. She really did not want to go against him. Must she be enemies with him?

“You couldn’t even abide by a simple contract, yet you say you’ve paid me back.” He scoffed. He shouldn’t have listened to her words.

“Change is good. I don’t want to pretend to be a couple with you anymore.” As usual, she didn’t show any expression when she said that. Back then, she signed the contract as she was persuaded and threatened into it. She didn’t want to be his pawn, and she didn’t want to be restricted by a contract anymore.

“How about you teach me how to take revenge?” Giving her a mocking smile, he didn’t expect that she would still try to negotiate with him on this matter. He must admit that he was wrong about her.

“What do you want? I can give it to you.” Staring intensely into his eyes, she was determined to fulfill his wish as long as it was something she could do. All he had to do was to name it.

“I want you. Can you give me that?” As he spoke, he took a step forward, closing the distance between them.

Hearing that, Heather felt speechless. She did not know what he meant by that.

Seeing how she stayed quiet, he simply pulled her into an embrace and said domineeringly before she could resist, “If you don’t want to be a fake couple with me, why not we become a true couple instead?”

At once, she paused her movements. He had lost it. How could he say that? It was beginning to scare her.

“Impossible,” she deadpanned. He was hugging her so tightly that it was hard for her to breathe.

“You can’t reject me.” Now that he finally said those words, he wouldn’t allow her to reject him.

“Us? Together? Do you want us to torture each other?” she said coldly while she was still held against his chest. It was impossible that she would agree to such a crazy proposal.

“Even if we would torture each other, I still want to have you.” As if he had no control, the words that left his mouth surprised himself too.

“You’re so childish.” Trying her best to calm herself down, she reminded herself that she didn’t want such a selfish confession from him, if it could even be considered a confession at all.

“Heather, you’re the one who said you would give me what I wanted, so give yourself to me.” This time, he was exceptionally persistent.

“True couples are together because of love, but is there love between us? How could we be considered a true couple without love?” Heather bombarded him with a few questions of her own as she tried to calm herself down before replying to him. She was afraid that she would agree to his proposal if she was emotional.

“You took away my relationship from me. All I want is to take it back. Don’t you think you should give it back to me?” he said with a serious face. How could he think of a relationship as a trade?

“God is the one who took away your relationship.” She thought that his current words and actions were childish. He was acting like a kid who was trying to steal another kid’s candy just because he didn’t get some.

“It’s you, and it’s unrelated to God. I don’t want to hear about fate or mistakes. If it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t have broken up with Myra. The person by her side now would be me.” He was still hung up on Myra, but in fact, even he himself could no longer tell if it was because he loved her.

“Even if Myra and you became each other’s first love, do you think you would end up marrying her? How many first relationships end up being forever? You’re just not the right person for her. Even if you did get together with her back then, there was a chance that you might have broken up.” Heather was trying to reason with him as he was beginning to be irrational. If this argument went on, she no longer had to go home as it would be time to go to work already.

“Once I’m set on someone, I will not easily change my mind,” he made a solemn vow. There were countless times where he had imagined that he would be having kids with Myra already by now if he was together with her back then.

At once, Heather mocked him. “You will not easily change your mind, huh? Then what are you doing right now? You’re asking to be in a relationship with me, but you still can’t get over Myra.” She felt that Matthias’ words were so ironic. Despite saying how he couldn’t forget about Myra, he wouldn’t let go of Heather either.

He did not pause before he said those words to Heather. No matter what his motives were, she was not going to comply with him.

“You shut up.” It rendered him speechless. That was when he finally registered what he had done—he had asked Heather to be with him. He must be possessed.

“People like you do not deserve love. I will not let you be together with anyone else as you have no right to like anyone, much less be loved by anyone,” he exclaimed as he tried to mask his humiliation with anger. Heather was the reason why he was like a walking dead today, so he would not let her end up with someone else too.

“Maybe I should try having a normal relationship with someone else,” she mumbled against his chest. He was hugging her so tightly that it was almost suffocating her. It only fueled her desire to trigger him more.

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Matthias released Heather from his embrace while trying to calm himself down. His behavior on this day was too abnormal; how could he hot-headedly come to Heather while his life was still in a mess? Still, he showed no signs of forgiveness after becoming much calmer. "Now that you've ruined my relationship, you have to pay the same price."

Matthias couldn't stay calm whenever it occurred to him that Heather would be together with another man, for he would never allow her to be happy with someone else. He was fixated on Heather the same way he was fixated on Myra. No matter what, Heather had to be bound to him; even if their relationship was an unhappy one, they would stay unhappy together.

"That's boring," Heather uttered indifferently. The more Matthias spoke in an imperative tone, the more she wanted to oppose him. No one could boss Heather around, and she would not show signs of weakness even in the face of Matthias's domineering behavior. Now that the guilt she felt toward Matthias had vanished without a trace, the only thing left was her fight against him.

According to Robert, Matthias would never become an ally of the Langston Family. Even though it wasn't necessary to make an enemy, Heather would never give way again and again if Matthias provoked her repeatedly. "Your relationship isn't ruined at the hands of me, but at the hands of yourself. Didn't you come to Bradford City for Myra?" She was confrontational. Since Matthias wanted to keep on deceiving himself and others, she wanted him to wake up to reality.

"Yes, that's right," Matthias answered without the slightest hesitation.

Meanwhile, Heather sneered at the note of certainty in Matthias's voice. The night breeze brought a chill to the air in this barely inhabited neighborhood, and she wasn't afraid of being seen under the dim streetlight. Even so, she didn't want to continue being locked in a stalemate here with Matthias anymore. "If you really came for her, you should've come a long time ago. So many years have passed, yet you put it off until Myra gave her heart to someone else and is about to marry her Mr. Right," she said sarcastically. She wanted to go back into her house right now, but she knew from the way Matthias looked unwilling to give up that she had to stand in the night wind for a while longer. When she saw that he had been swayed by her words, she followed up her success by saying, "Stop fooling yourself and others. You

came to Bradford City for the sake of your interests, and Myra is nothing but a perk.” She analyzed Matthias’s thinking in a leisurely manner. Since he was unwilling to confront his innermost thoughts, she would let him have a good look at his profit-seeking self.

“I have always wanted to come to Bradford City, but I couldn’t find a chance to come here because of the Locke Family’s strict family rules.” Matthias continued to defend himself, but he looked a lot more clear-headed and no longer sounded as aggressive and belligerent as before.

Heather didn’t allow Matthias to find any excuses, though. “That’s an excuse. No matter how hard it is, one would go to their beloved person as soon as possible.” Matthias kept saying how much he loved Heather, but that wasn’t the way he conducted himself at all. Heather wasn’t a foolish girl in love, and she was aware of many things deep down.

“I couldn’t come out; I was constantly under surveillance by the Locke Family in Tansia City, and they were watching my every move,” said Matthias, continuing to talk about his difficulties. Now that he was completely drawn into this subject by Heather, he focused on whether his feelings for Myra were just as he said.

“Would the Lockes have killed or locked you up over the fact that you stealthily ran away to Bradford City?” Heather stared hard at Matthias and saw the evasiveness in his eyes. Men always liked to make excuses for themselves. They loved themselves the most, but they kept claiming and pretending that they were deeply in love.

“I was in a really tight spot while living with the Locke Family. I couldn’t make any mistakes.” Matthias glowered at Heather, for he couldn’t understand why the conversation had changed into an interrogation against him instead.

“In the end, you’re still after the position of the Locke Group’s president.” Heather smirked contemptuously. Matthias looked absolutely pathetic, for he even wanted to deceive himself. Love was nothing in his eyes, and his love for Myra was only an obsession caused by a missed opportunity back then. Did Matthias understand what love was? To some extent, he was even more cold-blooded than Heather. His inner pursuit of profit was endless, so how could such a person, who was blinded by greed, have the right to talk about love?

Matthias blew up like a cat that had its tail stepped on. “I did nothing wrong. The position is mine in the first place!”

“On one hand, you want to please the Locke Family and successfully become the Locke Group’s president. On the other hand, you want to have a pure relationship. What a nice dream you have.” Heather stared icily at Matthias. She could no longer tell whether someone like him was detestable or pathetic.

“I want to live better and have more power. What’s wrong with that? A man can only give his woman the best of everything by standing on the apex!” It never occurred to Matthias that he was wrong. He did all of these for Myra’s sake; he was waiting for the day when he could meet her again and give her everything she wanted.

“In other words, do you mean that those men who fail to reach the apex don’t deserve love? Your idea is so ridiculously childish. Love cannot be measured with power or money; it stems from the rawest flutter of the heart,” argued Heather plausibly, but she could only talk the talk. In reality, she wasn’t any better than Matthias, which was why they were the same kind of people. Being incapable of love, they predicted the future of their relationships and weighed the pros and cons like how they made predictions about the stock market. Even if there was true love, they wouldn’t be blessed with it, for they were the ones who abandoned love first. “Why can’t you just admit that you don’t love Myra as much as you claim to? The one you love isn’t even Myra. If someone else showed up back then, you would’ve probably fallen in love with them without hesitation and regarded them as your first love.” Heather had a knack for making psychoanalysis, which was precisely why it became increasingly clear to her that she would never have a pure relationship.

“Shut up!” Matthias didn’t want to listen to Heather anymore. He kept telling himself that he loved Myra deeply, but Heather described his love for Myra in such deplorable terms.

“Did I touch your sore spot?” Heather continued to provoke Matthias without fear of death.

Matthias’s face was frighteningly as black as thunder, and he was shrouded all over in intense gloom. When she noticed that there was something wrong with him, Heather kept him at an appropriate distance.

“You’ll pay the price for what you said today.” Matthias looked at Heather frostily with an iciness in his eyes that sent a chill down her spine. Just as she thought he would make the next move, he stiffly turned around and left right away. Heather looked at Matthias from behind, and she was soon lost in thought; she didn’t know what he was up to again.

After Matthias left, Heather suddenly lost the mood to go back to the Langston Residence, so she wandered alone in the neighborhood for a long time. When she looked above her head, she saw that the light was still on in Leon's apartment. After a moment's hesitation, she decided to go to his place.

Leon hesitated for a while when he heard the doorbell ringing. Who would come to him in the middle of the night? After all, he didn't know anyone in Bradford City except Heather. "Who is it?" he asked from behind the door.

"It's me," Heather replied casually.

Leon was astounded. Why hasn't Heather gone back after such a long time? He pulled the door open at once before asking Heather outside the door, "Did you leave something important here?" He couldn't think of another reason why Heather hadn't left.

"No, I didn't." Heather squeezed herself through the door. Leon looks a little dumb sometimes; he doesn't even know how to leave a gap for me, she lamented inwardly.

"In that case, why would you..." Leon pointed a finger at Heather before shifting it somewhere else. Since he had no idea what she wanted to do, he felt extremely curious.

He looked at Heather in bewilderment. It was apparent from her expression that something was wrong, but he couldn't tell specifically what it was. In short, her behavior was so strange that he forgot to rejoice inwardly. In any case, Heather had come when he was unable to sleep.

"I'll sleep here tonight," Heather said apathetically.

Leon looked at Heather incredulously, and the corners of his mouth twitched as if she was telling some fairy tale. "It's improper for man and woman to come into direct contact, so it's not so good for a man and a woman to sleep together." He pretended to hold himself tightly in a defensive posture as if Heather was here to molest him.

"You'll sleep on the sofa." Initially, Heather had planned to sleep on the sofa by herself. After all, Leon was still recovering from jet lag—he would have even more difficulty trying to fall asleep if she let him sleep on the sofa. However, since he was being so shifty, she decided to leave him to sink or swim by himself since this guy deserved some suffering.

Leon was dissatisfied by this and promptly followed Heather, but she quickly entered the room and closed the door right away, shutting him out completely. He touched his nose and bared his teeth at the tightly shut door with a look of displeasure. "What a petty woman," he muttered in dissatisfaction. As expected, he shouldn't dream of staying in the same room with her, for he could only sleep on the sofa.

Now that it would be even harder for Leon to fall asleep, his body ached all over as he lay on the sofa. He stared at the ceiling in boredom, not knowing if Heather was asleep at this moment. He shifted his gaze to the door again, but there was no noise behind the door. Leon wondered if Heather had suffered some wrongs and was secretly crying in the room, but he quickly shook his head after imagining the scene for a moment. It's probably impossible for Heather to cry; I might not even get to see her shedding tears as long as I'm alive, he thought to himself.

It was already late at night, yet Leon was unable to sleep. There were a few times when he wanted to knock on the door or even prise the door open, for Heather seemed so abnormal that he thought he should show some care for her. Still, he hesitated for a long time, for he knew that the last thing she needed was someone else's solicitude for her. This woman was so stubborn that she wouldn't speak out even when she was wronged. What a frustrating person she is, he thought to himself.

Just as Leon was in two minds, the tightly shut door suddenly swung open from the inside. Leon was startled by this; he sat up on the sofa and looked up to see Heather's face with her makeup removed. Without any makeup on her face, she looked so tender that Leon instantly felt a desire to protect her; he was defenseless against such a side of her.

However, the expression on Heather's face was so stiff and not at all lovely even when she was wearing Leon's yellow duck pajamas. She looked like a kid wearing adults' clothes in secret, for Leon's pajamas were too large on her. After all, Leon had a tall and sturdy build.

Heather went to the fridge on her own and pulled its door open. After taking a bottle of imported cognac from inside the fridge without looking at its brand, she turned around and suggested to Leon directly, "Would you like a drink?"

Leon squinted at the bottle of imported cognac in Heather's hand before shaking his head. "This is too strong for girls like you." He thought to himself,

Heather probably has something on her mind; she looks like she wants to get drunk.

“Are you afraid that you’ll drink yourself unconscious? You can’t hold your liquor as good as me,” Heather replied disdainfully. Even the slightly upturned right corner of her mouth had a hint of sarcasm to it.

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Meanwhile, Leon was displeased with Heather’s words. She was obviously daring him to drink, for her words reminded him of the humiliation he felt back when he tried to make Heather drunk. In the end, he was the one who got drunk instead. “One should be seen in a new light after days of separation.” His command of English was extraordinarily good.

“You’ll never drink me under the table.” While holding the bottle of brandy in her hand, Heather directly sat down across from Leon with a coffee table between them. For some reason, she looked cute while sitting on the stool, but no matter how cute she looked, no amount of that cuteness could hold out against the intimidating aura she gave off.

“Get some ice,” Leon said to her.

“It’s cold enough; it’s been in the fridge the whole time.” Heather looked at Leon coldly with a provocative look in her eyes. As someone who found Heather’s intimidating appearance cute during such a moment, Leon was a typical example of a person unafraid of death.

“Are you going to drink Louis XII cognac directly like this?” Leon asked while picking up the bottle of cognac. Upon looking at the bottle, Leon was rendered speechless. This 20-year-old cognac could potentially kill someone if it’s consumed directly, he thought to himself.

“I’ll drink it myself if you don’t dare to.” Heather looked down on Leon right away and snatched the cognac from him directly. The last time she had a good time drinking was the time she had a drink with Matthias, whom she lost to when it came to drinking. Come to think of it, it was laughable that Heather, who had a competitive streak, lost to Matthias in many aspects.

Leon braced himself and looked at Heather. Seeing how thin and frail she looked, he snatched her glass in resignation. “Since you want to, let’s just

drink together.” There was nothing that Leon wasn’t afraid of doing. Furthermore, he was unwilling to be looked down upon by Heather.

Heather’s mouth curved into a meaningful smile. She knew that Leon couldn’t stand it whenever she challenged him to a dare. Moreover, drinking was a pretty good way to vent one’s emotions when they had a lot on their mind.

In reality, Leon didn’t like drinking with Heather. No one would keep drinking in silence without a word, and it was rather boring to drink for the sake of getting drunk. At this moment, Heather wore a poker face without even bothering to say a single word, and this caused Leon to be in no mood for drinking at all. He wondered who had offended her, though.

“Are you hungry?” Leon evaded the subject. Most of what they ate over dinner had been digested by now, so they would probably burn their stomachs if they kept on drinking like this. Leon looked at Heather with a helpless expression while thinking to himself, Sometimes, Heather is even manlier than a man. Can’t this woman take care of her own health?

“No, I’m not.” Heather’s answer wasn’t surprising at all.

“I’m hungry. I want to order takeout.” Leon picked up his cell phone directly to check if there were any food delivery options nearby.

“Do you think that there’d be any takeout services in this desolate place?” Heather stopped what she was doing and looked at Leon as if she was looking at a retard. She was sometimes both amused and annoyed by Leon, for he was practically incapable of living. Come to think of it, this apartment is indeed very much out of the way. Leon is such an active person; I wonder if he’ll feel depressed while staying here.

“Are you sure it’s really fine for you to settle me here, Heather? You’re even telling me that this place is desolate,” Leon asked in displeasure. Heather had stopped drinking, but the sight of her drinking cognac like she was downing water caused the corners of his eye to twitch rapidly.

“You can buy some books and read them here. This place is quiet.” Heather played with the wine glass in her hand. Since she had drunk a fair amount of alcohol, even the tips of her brows were tinged with charm.

Leon even felt his throat burning as Heather’s seductively charming face swam before his eyes. He gawked at her face; it was within his reach, but he

felt that it was as far away from him as the remotest corner on earth. As his outstretched hand froze in midair, he gave a smile of resignation. "Reading? Just give me a break." He knew without thinking what kind of books Heather would recommend him, and he had no interest in reading them at all.

"What about your takeout?" Heather raised her eyebrows at Leon. She smelled strongly of alcohol, but she also gave off an inexplicably alluring scent.

Thinking that he had gotten somewhat drunk, Leon slapped his head. He wondered why Heather looked so pretty before his eyes, for the sight of her devastatingly gorgeous face made him itch unbearably. "I'll just cook something on my own." As he tried to conceal his innermost thoughts, he shook his head while looking at Heather with a disdainful expression.

"No! We'll be victims of food poisoning," Heather objected as she recalled the pasta Leon had made for her back then. The pasta tasted so awful that she wondered how someone could be such a terrible cook. At that time, she thought that Leon was deliberately playing a prank on her. It never occurred to her how hard Leon had worked to make the plate of pasta, but the pasta tasted so awful that it almost made her cry.

"Don't drink on an empty stomach ever again. Do you want to have a perforated stomach?" Leon asked fiercely while snatching the wine glass from Heather.

Heather stood up and came to Leon's side directly. As they sat side by side at a close distance from each other, Leon grew increasingly nervous. Meanwhile, Heather noticed all the subtle changes in his expression as they were only inches away from each other.

"Sometimes, I don't even know what on earth I'm doing. Everyone seems to think that I must achieve something." Heather spoke in a childlike tone as her face took on a confused expression.

"You aren't drunk right now, are you?" Leon was somewhat worried, for he had never seen Heather behaving this way. He had never thought about how to deal with her when she was drunk.

"No, I'm not." Heather kept staring at the cognac on the coffee table without glancing at Leon, whereas all Leon saw was her. "Can I speak my mind to you?" She turned to look at Leon with an innocent look in her eyes.

“You don’t have to pretend in front of me.” Leon pretended to be composed as he couldn’t wait for Heather to have a heart-to-heart talk with him.

“I’m at a loss right now, and I don’t know what on earth I’m doing. Can you tell me if you really enjoy being a businessman?” Heather looked at Leon curiously. However, Leon was so tall that she had to put in some effort whenever she looked up at him, whereas Leon could easily see her every move.

“Of course not. I want to be a traveler who travels all over the world.” Leon liked to be on the road to any place that he was unfamiliar with. In other words, places that he had never been to attracted him greatly.

“That’s not a bad idea.” Heather tilted her head to one side in a seemingly cute manner. “I’ve never thought about what else I can do other than being a businesswoman,” she answered, distressed. She had never thought about this question, for she thought she was born to be a businesswoman.

“Heather, I’m forced to be a businessman because I have no other options, but nobody is forcing you to be a businesswoman. Every choice you make at present is of your own free will,” Leon commented penetratingly. Leon sometimes had a sharp tongue, especially when he wanted to divert his attention from Heather.

“Do you mean that I have a competitive streak?” Heather looked at Leon in displeasure as if she was unsatisfied with his reply.

“Do you not?” Leon looked at Heather fearlessly as he was unafraid of being killed by the look in her eyes.

“All right, I have only myself to blame.” Heather didn’t want to argue with Leon either since there was nothing wrong with what he said. She didn’t want to be someone like Matthias, for he deceived himself as well as others. “In that case, let me ask you a question about relationships.” She sounded calm, and it seemed as though she had nothing to do with what she would be talking about.

Leon’s heart skipped a beat. As he stared at Heather’s good-looking features, he didn’t want to worry about relationship problems, nor did he want her to be heartbroken for the sake of another man. “You know that I always keep a playful attitude toward life. I can’t give you any good answers if you ask me

questions about relationships,” he replied frivolously since he was uninterested in discussing relationship problems with Heather.

“If someone keeps saying that his first love is his only glimmer of hope over all these years and that it was precisely because of his first love that he was strong-willed enough to pull through and undergo a complete transformation into a successful person...” Heather began slowly.

Leon looked at Heather in bewilderment, for he didn't understand what she was talking about. For some reason, he felt that she sounded rather weird.

“In that case, do you believe that this man really loves his first love? Does he love her, or is he just obsessing over her?” Heather narrowed her eyes. The alcohol had gone into her head, but she was still sober. Nonetheless, there were many things that she couldn't help but want to say.

“He loves her, I guess. Don't people say that love will make someone better?” Leon furrowed his brows. He then thought to himself, Could that man be Locke Group's president? Is Heather his first love that she's talking about?

Heather looked at Leon thoughtfully, for she felt that his answer was somewhat perfunctory. “Are you sure about that? If he really loves his first love, why didn't he come to her earlier? Why would he wait for many years until his first love found her Mr. Right?”

Upon hearing Heather's words, Leon got even more confused. He thought that Heather was the first love she was talking about, but judging from her words, she couldn't possibly be the first love. If that was the case, why would Heather ask such a question? “He probably feels inferior and thinks that he isn't worthy of his first love, so he worked hard for many years to present himself before her in the best way possible. Men are too proud at times, and they always want to give the woman they love nothing but the best.”

Unbeknownst to Leon, his answer happened to coincide with Matthias's. The puzzlement in Heather's eyes grew. Could I have really misunderstood Matthias's feelings for Myra?

“He never sought his first love for so many years. Shouldn't he worry that his first love would be together with someone else? That happens to be the case, you see. His first love fell in love with somebody else, and he's destined to remain single.” The look on her face turned serious. This time, she didn't feel drunk at all; on the contrary, she couldn't believe that she was wrong.

“This is possible if a man firmly believes that his first love will stay faithful to him and keep waiting with her original desires unchanged. This can only prove that the man is rather conceited and bumptious, so he ended up with a slap in the face by reality.” Thinking that he might make the same mistake like that man, Leon rationally analyzed the situation for Heather.

“I will never understand men.” Heather smiled helplessly as she recalled the words she said to Matthias in a staunchly self-righteous manner. As it turned out, she was the wrong one. Is this the difference between men and women? She shook her head as she couldn’t find an answer to this question. Could I be wrong? Even now, she still couldn’t believe that she was wrong.

“In that case, may I ask you a question?” Leon asked while mimicking Heather.

“No.” Heather gave a sly smile. At this moment, Leon looked silly and yet cute.

Leon looked at Heather with dissatisfaction. Why does she have the audacity to cheat like this? he thought to himself. He decided to ignore her and asked, “What does the man and his first love have to do with you? What role are you playing in their story?”

He even has the nerve to ask that question, Heather thought to herself. Her expression had softened at first, but it froze again because of Leon’s sudden question.