

Standing before Love Chapter 492

Speaking was sometimes an art; this was especially the case at this moment, for Leon's question spoiled Heather's mood just as it finally improved. Heather sometimes hated Leon for being so blunt. Even if he has seen through it, he shouldn't disclose it. How should I answer this kind of question?

Seeing how Heather didn't answer him, Leon looked somewhat sheepish, and he started to forcibly change the subject again. "I'm feeling rather hungry."

"It's not good to eat so much at night." Heather went on with the subject. Since Leon had given her a way out, why shouldn't she take this opportunity to get herself out of this?

She thought to herself, It seems that it's inappropriate to talk to anyone about Matthias. Even when I try to talk to Leon about Matthias, the conversation still ends on a sour note even though he's an outsider. Any conversation automatically turns grave once it involves Matthias, and it seems like talking about this in a relaxed atmosphere is merely wishful thinking.

"Can you cook?" Leon looked at Heather with utmost sincerity as he was really hungry. He had good digestion, and he always felt hungry not long after a meal. As such, having four or five meals in a day wasn't a problem for him. He felt even hungrier after drinking some cognac, but he knew that he could kill someone with his cooking skills.

"No," Heather replied stoically. She refused to make food for Leon, for the grease and smoke produced in the kitchen would make her dirty. It never occurred to her that she would cook for someone one day, for she would rather do so to fill herself with food.

Leon looked at Heather helplessly. In his opinion, Heather was capable of everything, but it was apparent that she would never make a few stir-fries for him. The last glimmer of hope was gone.

When she saw that Leon's mind was preoccupied with getting something to eat, Heather decided to go back to her room with the remaining half bottle of cognac in her arms to drink to her heart's content alone.

Meanwhile, Leon looked at Heather helplessly from behind. Heather has abandoned me again by leaving me alone on the sofa. She's too cruel!

After drinking almost the whole bottle of cognac, Heather lay on her back in bed with a look of despair. Her cheeks were warm, and all she could smell was alcohol; even her body reeked of it. She soon felt that the world was spinning around her, so she closed her eyes and quietly appreciated the peaceful silence at this moment.

The day would dawn in a while, and she opened her eyes to look at the curtains thoughtfully. Her head was dizzy, and it was probably because she had almost stayed up through the entire night—staying up late would make someone weak, after all. I wasted an entire night because of Matthias again, thought Heather as she scolded herself inwardly for being useless. Why should she let him control her?

Just then, the poisonous look Matthias had given her before he turned around crossed her mind. Judging by the hatred which filled Matthias's eyes, he would probably never forgive her for the rest of his life. Perhaps he would get over his obsession with her one day, or perhaps he would no longer hate her bitterly one day.

...

Meanwhile, Matthias's entire face looked somewhat unreal behind the shroud of mist as he was soaked in a hot spring bath. Evan dutifully kept watch nearby, for he could never have a good night's sleep whenever Matthias was in a bad mood.

"Extreme anger will hurt the liver, so please pay more attention to your health," Evan comforted Matthias as his eyes almost flashed fire. He felt that what Matthias needed right now wasn't a hot spring bath; instead, Matthias needed a cold bath to cool and calm him down!

"I want to tackle the Langston Group," Matthias said impassively. It was clear from the look in his eyes that he was suppressing something.

Evan looked at Matthias calmly without a flicker in his eyes; he seemed to have figured out long ago that Matthias would have such a plan. "Are you aware of the consequences?" Matthias would sometimes discuss work-related matters with Evan since the latter had a bit of business acumen. After all, Evan majored in economics and was born into a family of businessmen.

“Why would I grant Old Master Langston’s wish when he wants to reap the spoils without lifting a finger?” Picking up the cigar from the side, Matthias took a big puff from it and blew a smoke ring.

Evan couldn’t express his opinion, though. After all, he wasn’t very interested in what was going on in the business circle. Matthias talked to him about this not to discuss the issue with him, but only to speak his mind. “I’m afraid that the Locke Group isn’t powerful enough to deal with the Hart Group and the Langston Group simultaneously for now,” he advised Matthias dutifully nevertheless, for he couldn’t imagine the Locke Group dealing with the Langston Group and the Hart Group at the same time. Wouldn’t the Locke Group be unable to defend itself if the Langston Group and the Hart Group joined hands?

“We can’t deal with the Langston Group head-on. Instead, we must disintegrate the Langston Group from the inside.” Matthias’s mouth curved into a sly smile. Right now, only a heavy workload could stop his imagination from running wild.

“Blake hasn’t risen to the bait yet, so I’m afraid it won’t be easy to disintegrate the Langston Group from the inside,” Evan analyzed calmly. They had previously thought that they could easily make Blake take the bait, but they had underestimated him.

“We can only start with Blake. Then, we’ll either wait for an opportunity or create one.” Matthias was making plans inwardly, for he must bring Blake down no matter what. Otherwise, how was the Langston Group going to collapse from the inside?

“What about Miss Langston, then?” Evan thought to himself, How is Matthias going to date Heather in the future if he’s about to launch a ruthless attack? Won’t they become enemies instead?

“She is the vital pawn.” Heather’s indifferent face, which one would love and hate simultaneously, crossed Matthias’s mind. Now that things had come to this point, Matthias thought he didn’t have to show anyone mercy. Business rivalries were an extremely common thing. Since Myra had forgotten him completely, he would better do something to make her remember him even if it meant that she would end up remembering his unsavory reputation!

“Are you really going to—” Evan asked, but Matthias cut him short directly before he could finish his sentence. “I want the Locke Group to become the

most outstanding enterprise in Bradford City. I want to prove myself to the Locke Family, and I don't care about anything else!" It was evident from the harshness of his voice that Matthias had made up his mind.

"Isn't it too fast, though? We recently took root in Bradford City, after all." Evan felt that Matthias was a bit too eager to achieve instant success and gain quick profits. Ever since coming to Bradford City, Matthias behaved like he had been fired up—he even brought his plans forward.

"What?" Matthias looked up at Evan, for he didn't like being questioned by someone else.

Since he felt that Matthias was becoming more and more autocratic, Evan couldn't say anything else. He had said everything he should, so to what extent Matthias would listen to his words was the man's own business.

"I know your worries. Indeed, the Locke Group isn't powerful enough to do such a rash thing," Matthias replied unconcernedly as he didn't go so far as to lose his basic judgment. When he received no reply from Evan, he continued, "It might be a good way to take them by surprise." After all, he had a plan in mind. If everyone thought that the Locke Group couldn't possibly do such a thing, he might get good results by launching an attack when everyone had their guards down.

"Clamping down on them might be useful for the time being, but this method must be disputed if we want to have the number one position to ourselves all the time," Evan retorted perfectly. In short, he disapproved of Matthias doing such a rash thing. After all, it wasn't too late to lay a solid foundation in Bradford City and take their time with this later.

Matthias wanted to take a huge gamble, though. "I can't wait that long. Since it's a competition, it'll be a trade war without bloodshed. I'll deprive the Hart Group and the Langston Group of the chance to rise again!"

Evan looked at him worriedly, for he felt that Matthias was behaving like a possessed person. Now that nothing could probably stop Matthias, it seemed like he could only wait until Matthias learned the hard way. Matthias isn't going to stop until he bangs his head against the wall! he thought to himself. "You're gambling." The last thing Evan liked was such a leap of faith that was a gamble in nature, for that was how his family had gone bankrupt back then.

Matthias had never been radical, but he became increasingly difficult to understand right now. Evan originally thought that he understood Matthias, but he could no longer tell if that was the case since Matthias had changed a lot. What on earth affected Matthias? Does this irrational behavior have something to do with his relationships?

Business-related matters couldn't be confused with private affairs. Matthias was in a dangerous state right now, but Evan had no idea where to start. He thought that Heather might be able to put a stop to Matthias's madness, but Matthias now considered her one of his enemies; it seemed like he wanted to deal with her.

"I'm confident of doing that," Matthias replied confidently. So what if it was a gamble with high stakes? He could afford any price.

Evan buttoned his lips. Now that Matthias had said this, Evan could no longer give any suggestions. Right now, he could only observe what would be the consequences of Matthias's obstinacy. At times, Evan even felt that Matthias didn't like the Locke Group at all and might destroy the Locke Group someday. Instead of saying any negative remarks once more, he encouraged Matthias and said, "In that case, I wish you good luck in advance. May you reach the summit in one fell swoop."

Since he was satisfied with Evan's words, Matthias took a glance at him and immersed himself in the hot spring. Evan, who was taken by surprise, nervously looked at the position where Matthias had submerged himself underwater. He thought that Matthias was a bit too capricious.

Matthias didn't emerge from the hot spring until two minutes later. After looking at Evan impassively with his emotionless eyes, he directly got up from the hot spring. Evan hurriedly unfolded the bathrobe and put it on Matthias, who directly put on his oversized nightgown despite his damp body. At last, he gave a faint smile. "Trust me on this; nothing serious happened to the Locke Group while it was in my hands, so it won't suffer an unexpected setback in Bradford City. On the contrary, it will surely make a name for itself." Matthias knew that Evan was advising him for his own good, but he was more determined to forge ahead since he was bolder than ordinary people.

Evan nodded at Matthias, but he still had misgivings deep down inside as he didn't know how to answer the latter. After going back to the villa, Matthias went to the master bedroom on the second floor right away, whereas Evan stopped keeping him company.

As he looked at Matthias's straightened back from behind, Evan had a meaningful look in his eyes; naturally, he wouldn't easily show it in front of Matthias. Then, he pulled open a nearby door and walked inside without hesitation. No one knew what exactly was on Evan's mind. Sometimes, Matthias even had a feeling that a potential threat might come from Evan, and this concern was probably not groundless.

As he leaned his back against the door, Matthias reached out his hand, felt his heartbeat, and gave a sorrowful smile. Now that he had no way of turning back, he could only brace himself and walk down this path. He planned on taking a hot shower, so he stepped toward the bathroom. It was already late, and he would have to go to work a few hours later.

It was a new day, and the sun was about to rise. Matthias took a meaningful look at the drawn curtains as another day had gone to waste. I mustn't let a woman interrupt my train of thoughts, he thought to himself silently.

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Matthias came to the office early in the morning to have a discussion with Nikolai regarding their next move against the Hart Group; it seemed that Tony was totally unbothered by Matthias' act of provocation toward him.

"Is Tony not planning to return to the Hart Group and call the shots?" In Matthias' hand was a bunch of photos of Tony and Myra—they were currently on vacation overseas.

Tony was bearing a grin in most of the photos. From the looks of it, he wasn't worried about what was going on in his home country at all. Following that, Matthias's gaze shifted toward Myra. The two of them looked like a match made in heaven; even Myra's smile was exceptionally radiant. At that moment, it made Matthias recall the first time that she'd smiled at him many years ago.

It was precisely her healing smile that had penetrated his heart like a beam of sunlight. Many moons later, her smile was still as tender and irresistible as before.

Matthias let out a wistful sigh at the thought of that. He had seen Myra a few times in Bradford City, but she was always on her guard in front of him; it seemed like she could only be her true self whenever she was around Tony.

If Matthias really took Myra away from Tony, he was sure that she would never be happy with him—some things were just as clear as day without the need to explain. However, part of Matthias was still stubborn and unwilling to let go; he tried to control his persistent inner callings many times, stopping himself from doing anything that might hurt Myra.

All these years, Matthias hadn't once given her contentment in life—that point alone caused him a lot of unbearable pain. Thus, he didn't want to be the one to shatter her very source of happiness either, so the only thing he could do was to control himself.

“There's no way he'd rush back in the middle of his honeymoon. After all, he's such a proud and strong-willed person.” Nikolai's reasoning was logical; if he were in Tony's shoes, he wouldn't have chosen to return either.

Without a doubt, it was Tony's once-in-a-lifetime marriage with the one and only person he loved dearly. Besides, the honeymoon period was a special and irreplaceable experience in itself—nobody would want it to be interrupted.

“Perhaps Tony has underestimated our abilities,” said Matthias with a deep, meaningful smile.

Tony had always been a successful businessman; he was also gifted in managing and directing a business. He probably had a rational reason behind his decision, for he'd never abandon the Hart Group entirely due to his personal commitments.

Nikolai cast a doubtful look at Matthias. Indeed, he hadn't considered that possibility since he was mainly looking at things from an emotional point of view. Nikolai was quite a sentimental person to begin with; even though Matthias greatly admired that quality of his, more often than not, he hoped that Nikolai would mature from it and have a more professional mindset. After all, emotions were a businessman's greatest weakness.

“Tony cares a lot about the Hart Group; there's always time to have another honeymoon, but the Hart Group is irreplaceable.” Matthias placed the photos face-down on the table. He didn't want to look at them anymore, for it would only add to his sadness.

“Sir, are you saying that Tony is wholeheartedly enjoying his honeymoon overseas because he thinks that the Locke Group isn't able to threaten the

Hart Group?” Nikolai finally caught on. After giving it some thought, he felt that Matthias’ explanation was more reasonable than his.

“Yes.” Matthias nodded. Nikolai was able to think on his feet and he understood things quickly. Other than that, he was pretty intelligent as well—Matthias thought that he was a promising young lad to train.

“We’ve been looked down on,” Nikolai muttered sarcastically. After Matthias’ kind reminder, Nikolai immediately figured that the Hart Group was incredibly powerful and well-prepared in all aspects possible. More accurately speaking, there was a huge gap between the Locke Group and the Hart Group in terms of their capabilities, especially since they were in Bradford City.

“Exactly.” The look on Nikolai’s face was precisely what Matthias wanted to see. Right now, Matthias’ eyes were clouded with secrets of his own; it was impossible to tell what he was thinking.

Nonetheless, Nikolai didn’t really understand Matthias’ plan. Even though the latter had made it clear that he wanted to make a move against the Hart Group, he only gave a vague idea of what he wanted to do. Aside from the man himself, no one knew what he had in mind.

“We’ll take it one step at a time; the Hart Group isn’t an easy opponent, so this might not be our best chance.” Matthias gave Nikolai an ambiguous statement, for he didn’t feel the need to thoroughly explain certain things. Moreover, it wasn’t a bad idea to keep it mysterious for now.

Since Matthias was cryptic with his words, Nikolai had no idea what he was keeping under wraps—after all, Matthias was giving away very few hints. Therefore, Nikolai stared into Matthias’ eyes for a few moments in search of an answer. He couldn’t ask his boss directly, and Matthias wouldn’t tell him the truth even if he asked either.

“You already have plans, right?” In the end, Nikolai could only afford to inquire this much, though he couldn’t be sure of what Matthias was actually planning.

“Just follow my instructions,” Matthias replied in a playful manner, keeping his turbulent thoughts of planning to himself.

Nikolai nodded. He had a hundred percent trust in Matthias, so he was already used to carrying out his orders dutifully. Nikolai had always believed in

Matthias' judgement; throughout his time under Matthias, the man had never made any huge errors in terms of decision-making.

When Nikolai was heading out, a question escaped his lips without a second thought. "Matthias, are you and Miss Langston..."

Before he could finish, Matthias cut him off. "Let's not discuss private matters at work." Back then, Heather had said the same sentence to him countless times; now, it was time for him to shut others up using the same exact words.

Nikolai stared at Matthias helplessly; since his cousin had put it like that, it wasn't a good time to continue pressing on. Even so, he noticed that Matthias had been acting strange ever since he returned from Myra and Tony's wedding. Nikolai knew a thing or two about his cousin's past with Myra, but he didn't expect her to have such a huge influence on his well being.

Nikolai even considered the possibility that Matthias would go easy on the Hart Group just because of Myra. After all, Matthias didn't come to Bradford City primarily to go against the Hart Group; he was only doing so because they were coincidentally in the way of the Locke Group. Matthias never liked being pushed around by others, so it was no surprise that he would want to surpass the Hart Group.

The chances of the Locke Group getting along with the Hart Group were slim, so they could only be rivals in business. With that in mind, Matthias massaged his temples worriedly. Myra was stuck in the conflict between the two companies, and Matthias felt that his plans wouldn't do Myra any good—it seemed that whatever he wanted to do would somehow cause harm to the woman.

Matthias was at his wits' ends; back then, he only wanted to help Myra by intervening with the Stark Group's business. In the end, he'd somehow managed to help her, albeit indirectly.

Despite all of that, things were different now—he was planning to face the Hart Group and shatter their leading reputation in Bradford City. Truth be told, Matthias felt a little guilty inside; the corporate world was a merciless battlefield, whereas Myra was so in love with Tony.

From the couple's wedding day, Matthias could tell that the Hart Family occupied an important place in her heart. In other words, she probably valued the Hart Group a great deal as well.

Since Matthias wanted to challenge the Hart Group, the company could very well go bankrupt in the midst of their ruthless corporate war—things might not end well for them.

If he were to really force the Hart Group into bankruptcy, he couldn't imagine how much Myra would hate him. Just then, Matthias quickly shook away the strange thoughts in his head; it was simply too much to think that he could force the Hart Group into bankruptcy.

Right now, the Locke Group had all of its eggs in one basket. If they were to offend the Harts... At that moment, Matthias recalled the Deputy Mayor of Bradford City being one of the Harts, as well as the fact that the family had quite an influence in the army as well.

Matthias wasn't sure if his decision was the right one or not. From the looks of it, it was more probable that the Locke Group might meet its doom instead. At the same time, Matthias couldn't wait to surpass the Hart Group with his own strategy.

As a stubborn and headstrong person, Matthias was willing to give his all even if he was bound to fail; he'd only stop if he decided against it on his own will. Moreover, the Locke Group's outstanding potential could easily make them one of the Hart Group's best rivals, so it was quite difficult to tell which party had the upper hand.

On his desk, Matthias had a pile of documents waiting for him to look through every day. Even though Tony wasn't personally present at the Hart Group, the company was operating just as usual. Tony was quite adept when it came to preparing for any sort of situation beforehand, so he more or less had a prediction of Matthias' next move.

Initially, Matthias planned on taking the opportunity to attack the Hart Group while Tony was away on vacation, for he had expected the company to be in chaos without its leader. To his surprise, the Hart Group was unexpectedly strong while defending themselves; it seemed like they didn't have anything to fear even without their director around. Matthias couldn't tell if it was thanks to Tony's prior instruction before he left, or if the Hart Group was actually filled with highly capable employees.

Regardless of the truth, things weren't going in Matthias' way; he'd already heard about Tony's achievements back in Tasnia City. Nevertheless, Matthias never believed that Tony had the power to predict the future. It wasn't until he

arrived at Bradford City did he experience Tony's exceptional way of handling things in the shadows first-hand. As a result, even Matthias couldn't fully recognize Tony's abilities.

Right now, Matthias was taking every step with caution—he knew that his opponent had the skills to win every battle. Even though Tony was unclear about Matthias or the Locke Group's true capabilities, it was the same for Matthias regarding Tony as well.

More importantly, Matthias was uncertain whether the Hart Group's strengths and abilities on the table was all there was to them. After all, there wasn't anyone who wouldn't hide their trump card under their sleeves, and he believed that Tony was no exception as well. In other words, it was more accurate to say that Matthias had a feeling Tony wasn't as clean as he seemed.

Matthias was getting more enthusiastic the more he thought about it. He especially liked a tough challenge and loved the exhilarating feeling of winning an uphill battle. Not only was Matthias hungry for success, he even had a knack for taking risks; he was extremely excited to be able to come face to face with Tony.

On the other hand, Tony never once stopped worrying about the Hart Group just because he was overseas. In fact, his concerns heightened due to the Locke Group's constant taunting; they were intervening in almost every project that the Hart Group was involved in.

Needless to say, the Locke Group didn't miss any opportunity to catch the Hart Group off guard, be it publicly or in the dark. Perhaps it was Matthias' plan all along to light a fire in the cracks in hopes of fanning it into a scorching blaze.

Tony didn't expect Matthias to take advantage of his leave. To be fair, he didn't take the Locke Group's advances to heart in the first place; not even Tony had anticipated the fact that the Locke Group's true target was the Hart Group.

It seemed that Tony had to run a thorough investigation on the Locke Group once he returned from his trip; he decided that he must get to the bottom of the Locke Group's true intentions. However, he couldn't afford to make rash decisions at the moment since he hadn't found out much about them just yet.

Tony didn't think much of it when Locke Group came to Bradford City, so he hadn't had any official dealings with the company. To think that they would target the Hart Group all of a sudden without any warning was pretty absurd.

Meanwhile, Myra stared at Tony who was currently enjoying the night breeze by the balcony. She walked over to him with quiet steps as she held a coat in her hand. Then, she went up to him and draped it over his shoulders.

"It's late, Tony. Aren't you going to sleep yet?" His behavior wouldn't be unusual in the day, but it was quite odd for him to be lounging outside in the middle of the night. Immediately, Myra thought of the Hart Group's current predicament.

"The scenery is beautiful at night; I can't help but want to enjoy it a while longer." Tony's deep-set eyes were fixed upon the bright lights outside the window as he spoke, for he didn't want Myra to see through his worries.

Just then, a gentle breeze passed by and ruffled her hair; Tony quickly closed the windows and smoothed out her messy hair.

"Are you having trouble sleeping without me hugging you to sleep?" Tony wrapped his arms around Myra, and she melted into his arms instantly like a gentle cat. He wanted nothing more than to shoulder all of her worries so that she could live a happy and carefree life.

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None of them mentioned anything about Bradford City. In fact, there were a few occasions where Myra almost did, but she quickly swallowed her words. After all, Tony had previously told her that the problems were never-ending; even if he solved them all, something similar would probably arise again in the future.

"Now that we're far away from Bradford, you seem to be in a much better mood than I am." Myra and Tony were having an idle talk about their everyday life. Indeed, Tony had been smiling a lot more often recently.

"Of course—it feels good to finally relax after working day and night," said Tony in satisfaction. More importantly, he was blessed to have Myra by his side every day.

To Tony, any day spent together with Myra was a happy one. When he thought about this, he swept her off her feet suddenly, earning a surprised shriek from her.

“Be a good girl and go to sleep.” Tony headed to the bed with Myra in his arms.

Then, he carefully put her down and leaned in closer to her, nuzzling the tip of her nose affectionately with his.

“You usually sleep in until noon; why did you wake up in the middle of the night today?” As he spoke, his voice was soft and pampering.

Myra wrinkled her nose, for she was feeling quite ticklish from Tony’s gentle scratches. “You make it sound like I sleep a lot.” She was nothing like that—Tony was exaggerating and Myra was a little unsatisfied with that.

“Since you’re awake, why don’t we do something fun?” Tony said in a suggestive tone as he snuggled up to Myra even more. Right now, he was acting like a big baby in front of her, demanding her attention like a little boy.

“Stop it—I can’t breathe,” Myra complained. Tony was pressing his face against hers, and she had a strong urge to push him away with a slap.

“Fine, I’ll let you go.” Tony pulled away and propped himself up on the bed. He stared at Myra condescendingly as she lay beneath him.

Myra immediately turned away and faced her back toward Tony while pulling up the comforter; she didn’t want to hear any of Tony’s sweet talk. From the sound of it, it was obvious that he didn’t mean anything well—Myra had been tricked by him far too many times.

“I’m sleepy. I’m going to sleep.” Myra hugged the comforter close to her chest. She had to stand firm by her decision, and she couldn’t fall into his trap again.

In response to her denial, Tony stroked her back gently, his fingers caressing her body smoothly. Myra wriggled momentarily under his touch and tried to shrug away his hand, but it didn’t seem like Tony had any plans to stop harassing her.

“I’m so tired, and I want to sleep.” Myra turned to face him again. Then, she put on a pitiful expression as she stared at him innocently in hopes of changing his mind.

Alas, she let out a silent cry of help as soon as she noticed the devilish smile on his face. In fact, Tony was waiting for her to turn around. With a peck on her cheek, Tony closed in on her once again, but Myra still didn’t seem interested at all—not tonight, at least.

Tony’s mouth twitched in slight disappointment as he shut his eyes. By the time he opened them again, Myra was staring wide-eyed at him.

The astonished look on her face tugged on his heartstrings, sending him a strong urge to make a move. Nonetheless, he understood and respected her wish. Myra wasn’t in the mood to proceed from here tonight, so Tony controlled himself and simply kissed her sleepy eyes.

“Go to sleep, then!” Tony whispered in her ear.

After that, he wrapped his arms around her tightly as Myra’s head rested snugly under his chin. He sniffed the top of her head and took in the fresh scent of her hair. Right now, the room that was shared by the two of them was their world, and they were the only ones in it.

“Wake me up earlier tomorrow, Tony,” Myra reminded Tony before she slept. Indeed, Myra had been getting up later in the mornings with each passing day, and she was worried that it would cause a delay in their schedule.

“I’ll let you wake up naturally.” Tony pinched her cheek and closed his eyes immediately after that—he was getting tired as well after fooling around until past midnight.

The next day, Myra woke up under the piercing rays of the sunlight—Tony had pulled open the curtains, so the light penetrated freely into their room. The sun was pleasantly warm and Myra stirred from her sleep leisurely. However, Tony wasn’t lying next to her when she woke up.

Her hand moved to the empty spot next to her by habit as she muttered to herself, “He’s gone again.” After some time, she finally opened her eyes and noticed that Tony was standing by the balcony, basking in the sun.

As the gentle rays of the sun enveloped him whole, he emitted a heavenly radiance similar to that of a celestial being. Myra could never get sick of watching Tony, for his face was stunning indeed. Her heart throbbed every time she saw him, and it made her feel like a teenage girl who was admiring her crush. In addition to that, Tony's alluring eyes were staring unblinkingly at her right now.

Myra got down from the bed under Tony's gaze as she dropped the comforter back down. Meanwhile, she was only wearing a pair of thin pajamas. The silky material of her clothes were slightly see-through, and Tony admired her figure which was vaguely visible under the thin fabric. Meanwhile, Myra took off her clothes in front of the man without a hint of reservation.

Tony couldn't take his eyes off the smooth skin of her back as she changed into a fresh set of clothes before him. This was nothing unusual in the life of a married couple; although Myra used to be shy of changing in front of him in the past, she was at ease with it now.

By the time Myra finished changing, Tony was standing in front of her. She flashed him a comfortable smile in return.

"Where are we going today?" They had only come up with a rough schedule of their trip, so the specifics of their daily activities weren't planned ahead—they wanted to go with the flow.

Tony felt that their trip would be more spontaneous and fresh this way—they could have something to look forward to every night before going to bed. Under Tony's persistence, Myra didn't say much and agreed to his idea.

They hadn't encountered many rainy days throughout their time here, and it seemed like the sky was being rather cooperative with them. Today, the weather was clear and the breeze was cool—it was the perfect weather to be tourists. After a while, Myra and Tony were prepared to head out.

The two of them left the hotel while exchanging happy conversations. Tony wasn't dressed in formal attire like he usually would for work; today, he wore a set of sporty clothes and was even in matching outfits with Myra.

As they walked down the streets, they turned heads of passersby and even earned looks of admiration; Tony's well-built figure was bound to attract positive attention.

Tony held Myra's hand in his tightly, for he was afraid to lose her in the crowd. Even when his hand became clammy with sweat, the couple wouldn't let go of each other.

"Do you miss Bradford City at all after spending time in a foreign country?" Myra asked him curiously.

Tony shook his head and replied, "We're just traveling; it's not like we're never returning to Bradford." Tony pinched her nose as he spoke. He could never resist those tiny gestures to mess with her whenever he looked at Myra.

Meanwhile, a pair of ill-willed eyes followed the couple wherever they went. However, Tony—who was sharp and perceptive by nature—didn't notice a thing.

In fact, it wasn't the first day that Myra and Tony were being spied on, but since they were traveling quite a distance today, Tony had arranged for someone to watch them and keep them safe in the dark.

However, the bodyguard didn't seem to notice the sneaky observer who had been tailing Myra and Tony for days as he waited for a chance to strike. Tony probably put too much trust in his bodyguard or was too eager to bring Myra around and have a good time, so much that he wasn't aware of the approaching danger.

In the meantime, office hours came to an end in Bradford City. Matthias was about to toss away the stack of photos on his desk, but he couldn't help taking another look at them before he did so.

This time, Matthias noticed something odd; he realized that the same passerby had appeared in two of the candid shots, and it was a highly unusual occurrence.

Clearly, the photos had been taken in two different locations—how could the same person appear twice? Matthias instantly had a bad feeling about this.

"Don't tell me that Myra is being targeted..." Matthias muttered to himself under his breath before he took another look at the photos and compared them side by side. Even though the man wore a different outfit along with a cap and sunglasses, Matthias could instinctively tell that they were the same person.

If this was true, it would be a huge problem. Matthias immediately summoned Nikolai to his office; he couldn't sit still as he thought of the possibility that Myra might be the target of this mysterious man.

"Do you have any negative films?" Matthias asked as he pointed at the photos on his desk.

Nikolai scratched his head and replied, "The films are all with that person." He thought that there wouldn't be a need to keep the negative films, so he hadn't asked the photographer for them.

"Quick, get them from him right away," Matthias said in a rushed tone, for he was worried that the films were already destroyed.

"About that..." Nikolai trailed off helplessly. "He's definitely destroyed them... because I told him to." He felt extremely stressed out under Matthias' unbending gaze.

"Ask him again—I really need the films." Matthias was trying his best to calm down. Right now, he had to make sure that the two people weren't one and the same before he stirred up any unnecessary trouble and made a fool of himself.

In response, Nikolai immediately dialed the photographer's number as Matthias stared fixedly at him. At that moment, the films were of utmost importance to him; it would be better to display those films on the computer screen and zoom in on the man for a more accurate judgement.

He knew that this wasn't something that could be settled through intuition alone. Although Matthias' heart was telling him that the two figures were indeed the same person, he wanted to find more pieces to the puzzle to make sure. After all, the person's face hadn't been clearly depicted in the photos, and Matthias wanted to know what he looked like as much as possible.

After hanging up the call, Nikolai turned toward Matthias and shook his head in dismay. Hence, the latter helplessly asked his assistant to take a look at the two photos he'd picked out.

"Come and see if they're the same person." Matthias pointed at the suspicious figure in the photos as he spoke.

Nikolai couldn't be sure even after studying the photos for a long time. He only said after a while, "They look alike, but I can't be sure." If Matthias didn't point it out, nobody would have wondered whether they were the same person in the first place.

"Zoom in on these photos for me. I need to make sure," Matthias instructed Nikolai. It was the least he could do right now; the photos might be blurry after the enlargement, but at least he could study them in detail.

Nikolai immediately got to work after being abruptly ordered. He zoomed in on various parts of the photos and printed them out in different dimensions before heading back to Matthias' office while carrying a stack of papers.

Matthias compared the photos thoroughly and asked for Nikolai's opinion as well. Much consideration later, he decided that there was a need to take note of this matter.

So far, he concluded that Myra might be in danger, but how was he going to send the message? He couldn't possibly warn Myra personally; with the Locke Group's current relationship with the Hart Group, Tony wouldn't listen to a word he'd say.

Besides, it wasn't practical for Matthias to fly all the way overseas to meet them—he didn't know which country they were heading to next! It wasn't an easy task to find a couple who were on a honeymoon trip around the world.

Not only that, something like this was quite difficult to convey through a phone call; the two of them would definitely be wary of Matthias' words too. Right now, he had no choice but to ask for help.

Hence, Matthias briefly explained the problem at hand to Nikolai, and the latter became quite concerned after hearing his words. Nikolai gave it some thought, and after some time, his eyes gleamed with an idea.

"You can ask Miss Langston for help, Matthias." Nikolai couldn't think of anyone else—Heather was the only suitable candidate to help him out.

However, Matthias frowned and went silent for a long while before he replied, "No, there's no way I'm asking her for help."

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Since Matthias couldn't be convinced, Nikolai didn't continue persuading him. The latter didn't want to meddle in his cousin's way of solving the problem either. Matthias' stubborn personality was no secret to anyone who knew him—Nikolai knew that all too well, but he was sure that Matthias would eventually come up with a perfect solution.

It was getting late and Matthias was still in his office; Nikolai wanted to keep his cousin company but his offer was rejected. The man was brainstorming for a way to resolve the issue, and he had to let Myra know about this as soon as possible. His forehead furrowed deeply as he came to a conclusion at last—Heather was indeed the best candidate to help him out.

Considering how badly things had gotten between them, Matthias wasn't sure how he could face Heather. Moreover, deep inside, he hadn't forgiven her as well.

He rose from his seat and drew the curtains as he looked outside. Is she still spending time with that man right now?

Just then, a sarcastic smile crept up his face. At that moment, he felt like a worthless criminal; he despised himself even more than ever.

“Heather and Myra aren't the only women in this world—there are plenty more fish in the sea, so why am I still holding on to the past?” Matthias muttered to himself. At times, he really couldn't bring himself to think positively of his own worth. Why am I like this?

Eventually, he let go of the curtains—the flashing bright lights outside had nothing to do with him. He rarely enjoyed his life; instead, he'd spent most of his time in self-deprecation.

As he reminisced about his past, he recalled that he had never once stopped forcing himself to hone his skills so that he could become a successful person one day. In the end, what he earned from those years were simply dirty tricks and betrayals.

At the thought of that, Matthias clenched his fists. He must make a decision, for midnight was approaching soon. The air was cool and breezy tonight, signifying the start of the fall season. All of a sudden, a sense of loneliness filled Matthias' heart. Indeed, was there ever a place that he could call home?

He had never truly been a part of the Locke Family; at the same time, he never considered them his family either. Ever since his mother passed away, he lost his one true home.

It was precisely this lack of familial love that made Matthias so hungry for the affection a romantic relationship could offer. However, his hopes were all in vain.

At that moment, the harsh reality snapped him out of his thoughts. He hastily dialed a number on his phone and the call got through at once. A kind and gentle voice came from the other end of the line; Nikolai was preparing to go to bed, but he immediately picked up his phone as soon as he saw that Matthias was calling him.

“Find someone to personally send Heather the photos.” Matthias couldn’t bring himself to meet Heather in the end. More than that, he didn’t want to witness Heather being together with another man.

After debating his choices, Matthias decided that this was the best solution. Nikolai responded to his request quickly—he was told to get it done as soon as possible, but where was he going to find a messenger at this hour? Nevertheless, Nikolai ended the call bitterly and immediately got to work.

In truth, Nikolai wanted to personally pass the photos to Heather. He wanted to see her face, for her every expression and gesture never failed to put a silly smile on his face.

Sadly, he couldn’t carry out the job on his own since Matthias wasn’t willing to expose his identity as the sender. Therefore, it must be done discreetly without a trace.

Right now, Nikolai was pressed for time. He had to settle the issue quickly and find a messenger as soon as possible—preferably a stranger on the streets. He decided on that idea and prepared to entrust the errand to a random passerby. As he gave it another thought, he found that this method was full of flaws.

These days, a person’s trust was as fickle as a candlelight, so Nikolai decided to find someone who was more reliable. Just then, he thought of someone and immediately contacted the person; after all, they could be asleep if he were a second later. If that happened, it wouldn’t be easy to find another helper.

After briefly going through the instructions with that person, Nikolai let out a pent-up exclamation on his bed—finally, he was halfway done with the job. It was then that he realized something extremely important—the photos were still with Matthias, not him.

Before he could reach for his phone again, Matthias was already calling him.

“I’m right outside your lobby; come downstairs.” Matthias was simple with his words. Meanwhile, Nikolai peered out his window and noticed that Matthias’ car was parked outside.

As a result, he hurried downstairs immediately. Matthias was leaning against his car with his arms crossed over his chest as he waited for Nikolai, and he didn’t seem like he was in a rush.

“The photos,” he said as he passed Nikolai the photos.

“Have you found our messenger?” Due to his taller stature, Matthias emitted a condescending air as he looked down at Nikolai.

“Don’t worry, he’ll be here very soon.” Nikolai was relieved that he had found someone in advance; he was often caught off guard by Matthias’ sudden requests.

The two of them had a brief conversation before Nikolai headed back inside without noticing that Matthias was walking with him as well. He was surprised to find Matthias right behind him as he turned around again, so he stared at the man with an odd look in his eyes and asked him why he’d followed.

“Do you have wine at home?” Matthias wanted someone to drink with; the last time he had drunk to his heart’s content was with Heather. In hindsight, Heather was a great drinking buddy.

With her, he could drink without any worries and they could talk about anything and everything—Heather was knowledgeable about all sorts of things. One could tell that there wasn’t a dull moment in her life just from hearing her speak, and Matthias wanted to share a conversation with her once more over some drinks.

If they were to overlook their disputes, the time they spent together was pretty intriguing. If only there wasn’t that irreparable disparity between them, then perhaps...

Matthias quickly shrugged away these ridiculous thoughts in his mind. For the past few days, he would inadvertently think about Heather, so much that he was confused by his own mind.

He remembered the time when he'd met Myra all those years ago; he used to think about her day and night, fantasizing about getting together with her. These days, Matthias came to enjoy spending time with Heather instead.

Whenever he was alone with Heather, he would stare at her from time to time—the fondness he had for her was similar to his feelings for Myra back then. Their relationship which originated from an intense rivalry had somehow become something else; for some reason, his hate for her had gradually turned into admiration and even attachment.

“Matthias,” Nikolai called out to him as a reminder. He wasn't sure what made him so lost in thought that he wasn't walking out of the elevator.

“Huh?” Matthias looked up and stared at Nikolai.

He finally realized that the elevator doors were open—Nikolai was holding onto the button, yet Matthias remained standing inside, seemingly unaware of it.

As a result, Matthias hurried outside as a sense of awkwardness filled his face. Nikolai glanced at him briefly—he rarely saw his cousin act this way. He speculated that Matthias was still concerned about Myra. Either that, he was thinking about Heather.

Other than women, Nikolai couldn't think of any other reason for Matthias' disorientated state of mind. Matthias wasn't fond of bringing business affairs out of the office; he usually wouldn't get off work if he had unfinished tasks, so there was no way he could be thinking about work.

After unlocking the front door, Nikolai headed straight into his house. Their relationship was much more casual in private, for they were no longer superior and subordinate after office hours.

They were cousins at the end of the day, and their relationship was no different than a pair of brothers' in private. After returning home, Nikolai plopped onto the sofa—the firmness of the fabric cushion was just right for him.

Meanwhile, Matthias swiftly pulled over a stool and sat down in front of Nikolai. It seemed that he was planning to have a long drink tonight.

“You might not like what I have here,” Nikolai said a little stiffly. Matthias was awfully picky with his alcohol; Nikolai’s collection consisted of gifts he’d received from others, so he wasn’t even sure of how they tasted.

“What do you have?” Matthias didn’t feel like being alone tonight, and he didn’t want to go home to his villa either. He just needed someone to keep him company.

Nikolai stared at Matthias helplessly before his gaze shifted to a bookcase nearby; several bottles of wine were displayed there.

Matthias followed his cousin’s gaze before he got up and walked over to the bookcase. As he looked through the bottles, he found that there indeed wasn’t anything that suited his taste.

Nevertheless, he wasn’t too fussy about it tonight since he was already in the mood to drink. Thus, he casually picked up a bottle of dry red. Nikolai’s alcohol tolerance wasn’t the best—Matthias knew that, so he chose this variety of red wine which had a relatively lower alcohol content.

Nikolai got up from the sofa. He preferred to use the dining table if they really ought to drink; after all, he wasn’t fond of drinking on the sofa.

Meanwhile, Matthias carried the bottle of wine to the table as well—they seemed to be on the same page. At the table, Nikolai said with a smile, “It’s no fun drinking wine on its own, Matthias. Hold on, I’ll get us some snacks.”

Matthias narrowed his eyes slightly; he wondered how Nikolai was going to bring them drinking snacks out of nowhere. Unexpectedly, his cousin came out of the kitchen with a bowl of roasted peanuts in no time.

Matthias raised a brow at him; sure enough, nothing was lacking in Nikolai’s home. The latter stared back at Matthias with a triumphant look on his face.

“Why do you have freshly roasted peanuts in your kitchen?” Matthias asked in confusion.

Nikolai let out a mysterious chuckle and said, “My kitchen has everything—I have other snacks as well. Just tell me if you want anything else.”

Matthias waved a dismissive hand at him. He only wanted to have a quiet drinking session, and he wasn't interested in eating snacks. The two of them sat facing each other at the table as Nikolai propped his head up with his hands. He had been feeling sleepy since earlier, but he couldn't go to bed with Matthias' prolonged disruption.

"You really need to work on your alcohol tolerance," said Matthias as he popped open the bottle of dry red.

Nikolai wasn't really interested in alcohol, and he hadn't thought about increasing his tolerance for it. He had always been following behind Matthias during meetings and such, so there wasn't an instance where he needed to attend a gathering alone. With Matthias around, Nikolai only needed to engage in some light drinking.

"You know I don't like to drink." Nikolai stared at the red liquid in the half-filled wine glass—it looked like a glass of fresh blood. The color itself was so disturbing that Nikolai became quite uncomfortable at the sight of it.

"How can you survive the corporate world without a certain tolerance for alcohol?" Matthias argued. To a businessman, it wasn't a matter of likeness or not when it came to drinking alcohol.

"I don't need to drink much with you around, Matthias—just some light drinking will do." Nikolai had always been very dependent on Matthias, so it gradually became a habit that he couldn't shake off.

"What if I'm not around anymore?" Matthias swirled the wine in his glass as he observed the smooth movements of the liquid against the glassy surface; for some reason, he felt a sense of satisfaction from watching such things.

Nikolai's expression darkened at his words. "What are you talking about? Didn't we make a promise? I've told you that I'll always follow you around." He recited those words with such determination and righteousness that Matthias couldn't help but laugh.

"You'll have to face the world on your own someday; no one wants to be a follower all their life." Then, he took a sip of wine as his eyes remained fixed upon Nikolai. The latter became uneasy under his cousin's piercing gaze.

“Let’s talk about something else.” Nikolai didn’t want to linger on the subject any longer. Matthias was acting a little strange today—the things he said were oddly intimidating, and Nikolai had a bad feeling about it.

“Then...” Before Matthias could finish, a knock sounded on the door. Nikolai jolted in response upon hearing that, so he jumped to his feet and went to open the door.

Matthias stared thoughtfully at Nikolai’s back as he rushed over to receive his visitor. His cousin was probably the only one who treated him with such sincerity; perhaps all those years of looking after Nikolai were not in vain.

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Nikolai settled the matter in the blink of an eye without even letting him inside—he simply shoved the envelope of photos into the man’s hands. In truth, Nikolai already possessed the ability to face problems on his own even though he was still overly dependent on Matthias. Oftentimes, Matthias gladly let Nikolai handle things for him with no worries.

Meanwhile, Matthias didn’t seem anxious at all; he was calm and composed as he gently swirled the glass of wine in his hand. Nikolai could never be sure of what was going on in Matthias’ head.

It seemed that Matthias wasn’t holding back tonight—he drank glass after glass without waiting even for Nikolai to return. The latter frowned as he noticed what was happening; he was only away for a moment and Matthias had already finished half the bottle.

“Slow down, Matthias. I bet you haven’t even had dinner!” Nikolai said out of concern.

However, Matthias turned a deaf ear toward him and continued drinking on his own. As a result, Nikolai was unhappy; he went up to Matthias and grabbed the wine glass from his hand.

“Are you really here to drink with me? Or am I only supposed to watch?” Nikolai complained in exasperation, for Matthias was gulping down wine like it was plain water.

“Do you like Heather?” Just then, Matthias looked up at Nikolai with his tired eyes which were bloodshot-red. Since when had he become this frail and haggard?

This sudden query stunned Nikolai momentarily and he couldn't react in time. Even though he did have feelings for Heather, he couldn't possibly admit it in front of Matthias.

“Go after her if you want.” Matthias' rationality was crumbling under the influence of alcohol, for there was no way he would urge Nikolai to pursue Heather in a sober state.

In Matthias' eyes, Heather was a dangerous threat—he would never let Nikolai take the risk. If too many things were gathered in one place, Matthias might just go crazy.

“I think you're the one who likes Heather!” Nikolai exclaimed as his face fell instantly. Matthias' increasingly odd behavior these days was evidence that he had feelings for Heather.

At this moment, Nikolai could see that Matthias' suppressed feelings weren't directed at Myra but Heather; it seemed that his cousin's feelings for Heather were much stronger. Evidently, Matthias liked Heather a lot—she was someone incredibly special to him.

“Me?” Matthias pointed at himself. It was as though someone had seen through his disguise right then. He could firmly admit that the woman he liked was Myra, but when it came to Heather, he didn't have the courage to come to terms with how he felt about her.

“You told me that you like Myra, but you have no chance with her anymore. In other words, you already gave up on her since the beginning.” Nikolai didn't wish to see Matthias in such a confused state anymore; even though he was interested in Heather as well, his rationality was telling him that Matthias was a better match for her.

“Wake up—Heather is the one you like. You're just holding onto the version of Myra in your memory. Can't you see it? After so many years, you, Myra, and even Heather have all changed. You guys are no longer who you were all those years ago, so why would you let the past control your present? Just go after Heather openly if you like her.”

Matthias turned his face away and looked elsewhere. Before he knew it, Nikolai had grown up from the little boy he once was to a full-fledged man. He was already an adult who could analyze things from a logical point of view.

“Perhaps the woman who touched your heart has always been Heather, but you’re just unwilling to admit it.” Nikolai had never spoken to Matthias in such a way, yet it was as if he was possessed tonight—he had to give Matthias a wake-up call no matter what.

Just then, Matthias’ heart dropped to his stomach; no one had ever told him that before, and he never thought of things that way either. Perhaps Nikolai was right.

“You’re a lot smarter than I am, Nikolai.” Matthias was so used to taking care of Nikolai and pointing him in the right direction that he’d just realized his younger cousin was a lot more perceptive of the situation than he was.

“You told me that I remind you of your younger self. If that’s the case, maybe you once had feelings for Heather since I’ve also taken interest in her as well.” Nikolai hadn’t experienced what Matthias went through; he was making wild guesses at this point. However, he couldn’t keep it in anymore—he didn’t want Matthias to miss the opportunity to realize his own emotions.

The feeling of falling for someone would always remain in one’s deepest memory even with the passing of time. Back then, Matthias was too young to understand the nervous thumping of his heart whenever he saw Heather. Was fear really the only reason behind it? Perhaps... he was feeling something else as well?

Was impressing Myra with a more successful version of himself the only goal behind his endless grinding all these years, or was he desperate for Heather to stop looking down on him? Out of all people, why did he care so much about her opinion of him? He obviously hated her...

Nikolai took away the bottle of wine on the table and said slowly, “Don’t let hate cloud your feelings; it’s time to let go of the past. If you like her, you should appreciate it and take your chance.”

Matthias suddenly felt even smaller than Nikolai. He let out a self-deprecating cackle—just how much time had he wasted all these years? He’d been living in his own lies, afraid to even come to terms with his feelings for someone

else. After all this time, Nikolai finally exposed his secret that he'd been hiding for years.

"You're encouraging me to go after Heather? She's the woman you like, though," Matthias pointed out knowingly. It seemed that Nikolai was running away from reality.

"I do admit that I'm interested in her, but I know I'm not the guy she wants. Besides, the way she looks at you is different." Just then, Nikolai recalled that one time in Matthias' home when Heather and Matthias were chatting merrily over some drinks. The two of them were birds of a feather, and they were the rightful couple.

Matthias stood up and went up to Nikolai. He took a moment and stared at his cousin who was awkwardly holding a wine bottle in one hand and a glass in another before he extended an arm and ruffled his hair casually.

"Don't be so sure of everything. Just speak up if you like her, and we can have an even battle." Matthias grinned cheerfully as he spoke. He'd been competing with himself all his life, and it was finally time to do something he actually liked.

He used to think he wanted nothing more than to become a man who was worthy to be with Myra, but now, he decided to just follow his heart.

Letting go of his grudges of the past meant starting all over again. He decided that he wouldn't suppress his longing for Heather anymore; if he liked her, he should pursue her with all his heart. At the very least, he wouldn't have any regrets even if she rejected him in the end.

"My mother won't like it if I date an older woman." Nikolai put on a gentle smile; he was happy that Matthias finally took his advice. Perhaps he would be able to see the two as a couple very soon.

Nikolai mocked himself in silence for blatantly encouraging his romantic rival to go after the woman he liked. Objectively speaking, though Nikolai had feelings for Heather, he didn't have a strong desire to get together with her.

Sometimes, the romantic interest in someone could remain as mere feelings; as he watched and admired the woman from afar, he came to realize that they might not be a good match after all.

Just then, Matthias grabbed the bottle of wine from Nikolai's hand and drank straight from it. Soon, he emptied it all in one long gulp. Due to his clean and lean appearance in addition to his overly scholarly demeanor, a bold and impulsive gesture like that was indeed quite rare from him.

Matthias patted on Nikolai's shoulder and said, "Thank you." He'd already understood Nikolai's intention even during his blind date back then; he just wasn't willing to take the leap.

After that, Evan had also advised him on the matter, and he even tried to persuade himself as well. Now, Nikolai was supportive of him as well. With that in mind, Matthias finally decided to let his feelings take over. After all, it wasn't such a big deal to be interested in Heather—how embarrassing could it be?

"I'll head over to see her right now," said Matthias confidently. He'd rather take advantage of the mood and tell her everything tonight.

"Good luck." Nikolai stared at the empty bottle in Matthias' hand. This fella is quite the drinker.

"But before that, let me help you with some things you don't need." As he said that, Matthias started walking toward the bookcase. When Nikolai finally realized what was happening, his cousin had already opened a bottle of brandy.

Nikolai quickly said out of concern, "Hey, this is straight liquor—you can't drink it on its own."

Is he not afraid of the burning sensation in his throat? Nikolai rolled his eyes; Matthias would get drunk very soon if he carried on like this. Has he lost his mind after getting tipsy?

The next second, Matthias was already gulping down the bottle of brandy. Nikolai immediately picked up all the other alcohol bottles he had on display—he couldn't let Matthias get his hands on them.

"How are you going to talk to Heather if you become drunk?" Nikolai said angrily. There seemed to be no end to his cousin's drinking spree. At that moment, Nikolai planned to toss his entire collection of alcohol into the trash after Matthias left.

Previously, he thought that it'd be rude to throw away these gifts from others. Moreover, the elegant and fancy bottles looked pretty exquisite on his bookshelf as a form of decoration.

After going through this ordeal, however, Nikolai regretted it to the core; if Matthias were to down all that alcohol, he'd probably be so intoxicated that it would warrant a trip to the hospital.

Right now, Matthias reeked of alcohol as an ominous smile hung on his lips. While he stared at Nikolai's upset and annoyed expression, he was somehow amused by it.

At last, he decided to stop teasing Nikolai. Matthias was fully aware of his cousin's personality; if he continued to fool around, that little cousin of his would rat him out for sure by telling his aunt.

Nikolai's mother, who was also Matthias' aunt, was the younger sister of Matthias' mother. The woman would often check up on Matthias through the phone, albeit in the form of lectures; she was one of Matthias' few elders who truly cared about him.

As he was heading out from Nikolai's home, Matthias knocked on his head all of a sudden. He just realized something in the midst of his dazed state of mind—it wasn't the right time to visit Heather at this hour. Thus, he decided to spam her with phone calls instead.

It was the middle of the night, and Heather had long since fallen asleep. After all, she finally went to bed after staying up all night yesterday. When her phone suddenly started buzzing endlessly with Matthias' incoming calls, she could only crawl up from her bed to take the call. Since Heather was half-awake, she sounded awfully tired and groggy on the phone.

"Who is it?" Her irritated voice rang through Matthias' speaker as soon as she picked up. On the other end, Heather was determined to teach them a good lesson if they weren't calling because of something important.

She didn't check the caller's identity as she answered the phone hastily. Obviously, she wouldn't have answered if she knew that Matthias was the one who was calling.

"It's me." Matthias' reply was short and simple.

“Who are you?” Heather was about to explode at the response; she was instantly wide awake and took a look at her screen.

To her surprise, it was Matthias. The impulse to kill someone rushed up to her chest, for she couldn’t understand why Matthias wouldn’t leave her alone. After ending the call in exasperation, she immediately blocked his number on her phone—she was utterly vexed.

When Matthias tried to call her again, he finally realized that his number had been blocked. As a result, he almost smashed his phone on the ground in anger. Nevertheless, he kept his calm rationally and texted her via Messenger.

“Come outside. I’m outside the Langston Residence.”

Heather could no longer fall asleep after this brief interruption. When the text message reached her phone, she tossed it away without a second thought, and her phone crashed violently onto the floorboards. Right now, her phone was the devil—even though she’d completely shattered its screen, she couldn’t care less.

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Matthias waited all night long. Under the influence of alcohol, he pulled through and waited stubbornly in place. Meanwhile, Heather was finding it hard to fall asleep in her room; she didn’t take his words seriously and gradually dozed off as she blamed him for his absurd attitude in the middle of the night.

The next day, Heather departed to work early in the morning with dark circles under her eyes—last night was simply the unluckiest night of her life. When she received some strange photos out of the blue, she contacted Myra immediately; only a fool wouldn’t understand what the photos actually meant.

Because of that, Heather and Myra were on video call for a long time. Myra and Tony kept their guard up at once and decided to take note of the matter. After all, it was terrifying to be followed around by a stalker while they were on a trip overseas.

After worrying about it for some time, Heather finally fell asleep out of drowsiness, only to be woken up by Matthias’ phone call. After that, she spent

a long time before dozing off again, but she woke up naturally at the crack of dawn. In the end, she couldn't get a good night's sleep at all.

Heather hadn't slept well ever since she'd returned from overseas. That morning, the Langstons avoided talking to Heather as soon as they noticed that she was in a bad mood.

She left the house without even having breakfast. In the meantime, Matthias was still stubbornly waiting for her in his car. When the front gates opened up, Heather immediately noticed his car outside—how could she forget the very car that she'd crashed into?

Heather fished out her phone. Its screen was horribly cracked, but it was still functional. Then, she tapped into Messenger and saw that Matthias had sent her loads of text messages after his first one. She skimmed through each and every one of them; his unusual behavior made her forget that she was supposed to check up on Myra first thing in the morning.

A round of hesitation later, Heather got down from her car and went up to Matthias' vehicle before knocking on his window.

Matthias wasn't sleeping deeply, so he woke up in an instant. Heather was staring at him while she bore a weary and lifeless complexion as soon as he wound down the window—the dark circles under her eyes were distinctly visible.

The woman who was usually elegant with her presentation seemed a little different today. Matthias didn't know what she had gone through to end up looking like that; in fact, he was oblivious that he was none other than the culprit of her sleepless night.

“What on earth do you want from me? You're even all the way here in the Langston Residence.” Heather didn't know what to do to make Matthias leave her alone. She was exhausted and no longer had the strength to keep on competing with him.

“I have something important to tell you.” Matthias remembered the reason he came. Even though it was the next day, at least he was finally able to see her.

At the very least, Heather had taken the initiative to come up to his car and knock on his window—this could be a good sign. However, he was unaware that the reason behind her gesture was only because she didn't want the

Langstons to notice that Matthias's car was parked outside their home. She only came over to shoo him away.

"I'm busy today." Heather rejected him instantly. Just then, she thought of Myra—she had set an alarm as a reminder to call her friend. If it weren't for Matthias' interruption last night, she wouldn't have gotten confused over the matter.

"I'll pick you up at the Langston Group tonight," Matthias replied nonchalantly and completely disregarded her rejection.

"I'm busy tonight, and I'll be busy tomorrow. Actually, I'll be busy for the entire week," Heather snapped. She didn't want to argue with Matthias a second longer, for it'd be bad if Blake spotted them together.

"I just need a bit of your time," Matthias responded to her patiently, and he was trying his best to keep his temper under control.

"Please leave my home; I'm going to work." Heather didn't want to continue this conversation. After all, she had more important things to do.

With those words, she left without another look at him. Her brain was currently bombarded with too many things, and she didn't have the mental capacity to ponder on Matthias' sudden change in attitude.

Meanwhile, Matthias started driving as he followed behind Heather's car. Right now, Matthias wasn't feeling any better himself—he hadn't slept all night, so he was extremely tired as well.

Heather noticed his car from her rearview mirror, and she knew all too well that he was a stubborn man who wouldn't give up before reaching his goal.

From the looks of it, the only way to escape was to hide. She stepped on the gas in effort to lose him as she video called Myra with her faulty phone.

It was currently at night where Myra was, and she was in the hotel with Tony. They'd already started taking precautions immediately after hearing about their stalker from Heather earlier in the day.

Fortunately, Tony had always been a careful person; he had hired a bodyguard to protect them from the dark even though they were on a honeymoon trip. It was possible that the stalker was aware of this bodyguard,

so he hadn't made his move just yet. Tony speculated that the observer knew quite a lot about their current situation, but they had no clue as to who he was—they couldn't even make out his appearance.

Tony had contacted their bodyguard that day; he told him to pay attention to their surroundings and find out if they were actually being followed.

That afternoon, Myra and Tony intentionally took a walk on an open street that was relatively easier to expose the stalker's identity—it was the bodyguard's idea, for it would help him in his mission to capture a photo of the stalker's face.

Tony was still upset at their bodyguard for not being able to spot the stalker beforehand; how could he overlook something so potentially dangerous that was lurking right around the corner? Not only that, he only knew about it after it was pointed out by some stranger back home.

At the thought of that, Tony wanted to fire the expensive bodyguard right away, but considering the fact that they were in dire need of protection, he swallowed his anger. Hence, he could only look forward to how the guy would perform from now on.

Luckily, Tony wasn't disappointed this time—the bodyguard successfully completed the mission and took a photo of the stalker's appearance. Later on, Myra and Tony studied the photos sent over by the bodyguard. The two of them racked their brains to identify the mysterious follower, but they didn't make any breakthroughs.

Hence, Tony told the bodyguard to find out the stalker's identity as soon as possible; the stalker was likely receiving orders as well since he was a stranger to both Myra and Tony.

That night, the couple had trouble falling asleep, so they started discussing this matter. Just then, Myra received a video call request from Heather and immediately accepted it.

Before long, Heather's tired face came into view, and Myra stared at her screen with a surprised look on her face. It was still night time over there during their previous call, so Myra hadn't noticed her friend's haggard demeanor. Now that it was daytime, she could see it clearly.

“Why do you look so tired?” Myra asked worriedly.

Heather was driving as she responded, “I didn’t sleep well last night.” At that moment, Matthias’ face popped up in her mind again. He was indeed a bad luck charm to her—her life was never smooth-sailing whenever he was involved!

“Less talk about me—how’s it going over there?” Heather was confident in Tony’s abilities, and she believed that he could definitely settle it without a hitch.

Despite that, she couldn’t help but feel concerned for their safety. Moreover, with Myra being pregnant, there was no room for risks. Last night, Heather suggested that they return home as soon as possible under their bodyguard’s watch. At the very least, it was safer in Bradford City since things weren’t as convenient in a foreign country.

“It’s all in control and everything’s going according to plan. Also, my guess was right,” Tony replied calmly as he squeezed into the camera’s view.

“You’re saying that the stalker has been hired by someone else, right? Are you able to find out who’s plotting against you, then?” It wasn’t good news—the issue wouldn’t be as difficult to handle if the stalker was someone they knew.

If they knew the stalker, it’d be easier to deduce his intentions. However, the problem right now was that he was a stranger—it definitely made things a lot harder. Nobody could say for sure if his target was Myra, Tony, or even the both of them.

More importantly, they didn’t understand why they were being followed in the first place. They’d been followed for quite some time now; since the stalker hadn’t taken any action up until now, his goal seemed to be even more complicated than a simple assault.

It was unknown when he would make a move or what dangerous stunts he had planned. Nothing could be deduced at the moment, and this was quite a troubling matter indeed.

“I’m still investigating; it’s highly probable that this could be the work of a family enemy.” Tony had a bad feeling about this. After all, ‘enemy’ was quite a broad word in his case.

After many years of mingling around in the corporate world, the Hart Family had gained quite a few enemies—it was the same for Tony. However, as he gave it some thought, he found that those disputes weren't deep enough to send a stalker on their tail.

Investigating the identity of the enemy wasn't an easy task, and right now, Tony's hands were tied. On the other hand, Myra also considered her own family—it could be one of the Stark Family's enemies as well.

“Could it be Cameron?” Heather made a wild guess. Cameron had mysteriously disappeared after failing to acquire the Stark Group, and she thought that someone like him wouldn't give up so easily.

“I can't say for sure,” said Myra as she voiced her opinion. She had the same suspicions too, for she couldn't think of anyone else besides Cameron.

She wouldn't be surprised to see him pulling any absurd tricks, but deep down, she hoped that this had nothing to do with him.

Was Cameron planning to willingly ruin Myra's life before letting it go? Sorrow welled up within her chest as she thought about her own father doing something like that to her.

Tony caught the disappointment and pain on her face as she recalled the things Cameron had done which were more barbaric one after another. He quickly said, “It's probably not him—it's most likely one of the Hart Family's enemies.” Aside from offering Myra comfort, Tony sincerely hoped that it wasn't Cameron, though the latter's disappearance was rather strange.

“Have you guys captured a photo of the stalker's face?” Heather immediately changed the subject. Cameron was Myra's father after all, and Heather felt that she shouldn't have brought up his name.

“Yeah.” Myra nodded and Tony raised his phone to display it in front of the screen.

Heather studied the man's face and gave it a thought before she said to them, “Send me the photo; I'll help you out with the investigation.”

Heather was the only one who knew of the situation so far—Tony didn't want to spread the news, so he hadn't told his brothers. Things were still under his control, and he had confidence that he would be able to settle it on his own.

It didn't take long for Heather to receive the photo from Myra after their call ended. Her eyes narrowed at her screen; unfortunately, she couldn't see the photo clearly as she had shattered her screen last night. As a result, she had to get a new phone right away.

With that in mind, Heather decided to make a stop at the store since it was still too early for work. However, she wasn't sure if the store was open yet at this time.

Right now, Matthias was still following Heather behind her car. She took an annoying look at his car from her rearview mirror, wondering why he was being so persistent. He kept repeating that he had something important to tell her, but every time he'd told her those words in the past, it turned out to be an exaggeration compared to what he actually had to say.

Heather made a turn into an alley which was still empty at this hour while Matthias followed behind. She eyed the rearview mirror before making a sharp turn all of a sudden—she was so quick that Matthias didn't have time to react at all.

With that, the two cars collided into one another and their airbags inflated immediately. Heather had already considered the possibility of an injury before she decided on that stunt, and she didn't do it on impulse. She simply wanted to give Matthias a piece of her mind.

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He hadn't expected Heather to make such a move at all, and Matthias bumped into her vehicle head-on since it was too late for him to dodge her car. As he muttered an expletive under his breath, he immediately flung his arms over his head while his car shook violently.

Perhaps no woman could be crazier than Heather. She staggered out of her car after the crash, and Matthias also got out of his car soon after that.

Then, Heather stopped moving and fixed her unexpressive eyes that showed no sadness or joy on Matthias. Meanwhile, Matthias suppressed his anger and approached Heather step by step. He didn't expect that Heather would actually do such a dangerous thing as to crash her car into his. "Are you insane, Heather?" he scolded loudly. Heather was simply courting death, for even Matthias didn't have the nerve to do such a thing.

However, Heather merely stared at Matthias without any response until he got close to her. Matthias could no longer conceal the anger on his face as he grabbed her, but she didn't even look at him, and her tone of voice was extremely chilly. "Don't touch me. I'll pay you for the car." She had no warmth about her.

Matthias let go of Heather, but he had to constantly remind himself of the purpose for coming to her. "You don't have to pay me; if you want to pay me for the car, just give yourself up to me as compensation." As he spoke, he kept a slight distance away from her. He mustn't risk big losses for the sake of small gains. At any rate, neither of them suffered any injuries in this time's car crash.

Unfortunately, Matthias's car was completely wrecked in the crash. The car was his favorite, yet this was already the second time Heather had bumped her car against it. The last car crash only resulted in a scrape, whereas the damage done to his car this time seemed quite serious.

"I'm begging you—please don't follow me around anymore. I have many matters to attend to right now, so I don't have any time to waste on you." Heather was really tired of getting along with Matthias in such a way. Nothing good would happen whenever she was with him, for he brought her lots of trouble.

"What do you want to do? I'll keep you company." Matthias tightened the screws on Heather. He decided to put on a brazen front this time, for he had to persuade her no matter what.

I want you to stay away from me, Heather thought to herself. Could this be Matthias's retaliation? She grew increasingly wary at the sight of his 'malicious-looking' face.

"Please give me a chance." Matthias was pondering in his mind, thinking about how he should profess his love to her. The thought of professing his love made him blush, for he no longer had the motivation he once had when he was younger.

A nameless atmosphere filled the air between them as Heather didn't know what Matthias meant by the word 'chance.' Just then, they heard the wailing of police sirens. Since they did not know who had 'kindheartedly' called the police for them, they looked at each other in dismay. Now, they were in trouble by attracting the police.

As she looked at the scene before her eyes, Heather wondered how to explain this situation to the police. Just as she was looking around for any surveillance cameras, Matthias leaned over and said to her, "There aren't any surveillance cameras."

"I don't have time to go to the police station right now." Heather looked at Matthias frostily. She didn't know whether she was teaching Matthias a lesson or giving herself a hard time, for even the police had been alerted this time.

"It's not a problem." Surprisingly, Matthias was unusually good-tempered that day. Heather thought he was going to blow his top, so it surprised her that he didn't seem angry at all. When the police car pulled over, Matthias stepped up and explained as if he was an outsider, "I'm sorry, but a car accident just happened."

The police officer glanced at the two cars. Both cars were luxury vehicles, so the two people before him seemed to be rich. Furthermore, there were no signs of distress on their faces. He wondered who these two people were, though he surmised that they must be remarkably wealthy. "Which one of them is yours?" he asked Matthias as a matter of routine. It was a car accident, after all.

Matthias pointed to his car and answered, "That's my car. I'm the one responsible for the accident, and I'm willing to take full responsibility for that." Since Heather didn't want to waste any time, he would settle this matter as soon as possible.

The police officer was baffled by this as he looked at Matthias with a frown. Is there anyone responsible for an accident who will take the blame so readily? Furthermore, the atmosphere was very weird since Heather was merely standing off to the side silently.

The police officer didn't come to his senses for a long while. Just then, he heard Heather rebut, "I'm the one responsible for the accident, and I'm willing to take full responsibility for that." She didn't want Matthias to cover for her since she was willing to admit her own wrongdoings.

The police officer's face seemed to have several question marks popping up on it. This accident was becoming increasingly weird; it was so strange that these two people were scrambling to take the blame for the car accident and talked so big as to offer to take full responsibility. "This is a surveillance blind spot. Which of you is responsible for the accident?" The police officer felt that

he was being fooled. Do these two rich people have too much free time on their hands?!

“It’s me,” Heather and Matthias chorused.

Heather felt that Matthias was deliberately messing with her. She was the one who purposely rammed her car into his, yet he scrambled to claim responsibility for the car accident. Clearly, he was wasting her time in a different way.

“Please come with me to the police station, both of you,” ordered the police officer as he was put on the spot. It seemed that the matter wasn’t going to be solved for a while, so he’d better take them to the police station to have their statements recorded!

“I don’t have time to go to the police station. I have something urgent to attend to.” Heather had contacted Leon and asked him to drive over to pick her up. She had provided him with all the necessary equipment, so he would probably arrive in a minute.

Matthias thought for a moment before he agreed, “That’s right. I don’t have time to go to the police station either; I also have something urgent to attend to.”

The police officer was bummed out at once. What do these two people mean? Both of them are putting on airs as if they’re some big guns, he thought to himself. Just then, Matthias added on purpose, “We’ll settle the claims for the cars ourselves, so we don’t have to go to the police station.”

However, this upset the police officer even more. Do they think they’re in the right? They simply have no regard for the law! Thus, he said angrily, “This is not only about your cars. You two have damaged public property!”

Matthias glanced at the damage done to the public property before he frowned slightly. “How much money should I pay as compensation? I’ll pay the money right now,” he asked while taking out his wallet. Matthias pretended to be in a rush and continued, “I really have something urgent to attend to. I’ll lose 100 million if I’m held up any longer.”

His tone of voice annoyed the police officer, but Heather wasn’t easy to deal with either. She echoed, “I also have an emergency to deal with. If you want to take my statement, you may go to the Langston Group and ask for me.” She

mentioned the Langston Group directly while glancing at her watch in a seemingly anxious manner. After all, almost everyone in Bradford City knew the Langston Group.

After the long dilly-dallying, the police officer finally had to let Heather and Matthias off due to the double pressure from them. On the other hand, Leon—who had arrived long ago—kept looking on without saying a word; it wasn't until the police car drove away that he opened the car door.

Since he noticed Leon's car a while ago, Matthias had been wondering why someone would drive to the scene of a car accident. When he saw Leon getting out of his car, he instantly got angry. He was immensely displeased since he didn't expect Heather to call Leon over directly.

Meanwhile, Leon leaned against the car while he urged Heather, "Hurry up and come over." As he spoke, he threw Matthias a provocative look. He had known Matthias for a long time, for Matthias was the one who previously tied Heather up in knots. Leon had such a person checked out a long time ago, so he knew Matthias to a certain extent.

As Heather hurried up to Leon, Matthias looked at his hand in disappointment; he could never hold Heather's hand in his. Seeing how compatible Heather and Leon looked as they stood side by side, he felt an inexplicable sense of loss. He wanted to speak, but his words were stuck in his throat. In the end, he could only watch as Heather got into Leon's car and left behind a heap of mess before him. He had an indescribable feeling inside him, for he had never been so upset.

Meanwhile, Leon made faces at Heather in the car and was greeted with a slap from her. Why must he make his face look so funny? she thought to herself.

"The way I see it, President Locke is very much enamored by you," Leon remarked without fear of death.

Heather's face froze visibly. "What nonsense are you talking about?" she muttered in an annoyed tone. After all, she didn't want to get involved with Matthias in any way.

However, Leon didn't stop asking for trouble. "Since you both love each other, why should you two keep tormenting each other pointlessly?"

Heather furrowed her brows as she had an urge to kick Leon out of the car directly. “You really are a blabbermouth.” She didn’t want to listen to his nonsense anymore, so she took out her earphones.

“Where would you like to go, my president?” Leon was still speaking in a bantering tone, but how could Heather know the care and thought behind his words? After watching Heather as she let one man slip after another through her fingers over the years, he was worried that Heather might actually plan to remain single for the rest of her life—he could never approve of this. Now that he saw Matthias, he thought that Heather could try dating Matthias even though he didn’t have a good opinion of the latter.

“An Apple Store,” Heather uttered icily. It seemed that Matthias was a great influence on her; he affected her mood, yet she stubbornly pretended that she didn’t care about him. Unfortunately, the various details about her response gave her feelings away.

Like a child who would never be satisfied, Leon loved Heather’s haughtiness very, very much. “I don’t know my way around here,” he said in displeasure, for Heather was obviously picking on him for having no sense of direction.

Come to think of it, Leon couldn’t be blamed for having no sense of direction. After all, he had just arrived in Bradford City recently, so how could he know the way to an Apple Store? However, Heather would never make someone else feel comfortable when she was feeling ill at ease. “Don’t ever mention Matthias in front of me again,” she said while taking Leon’s cell phone. After finding and opening the navigation app, she looked at him coldly and loftily. “Just follow the navigation instructions.”

Leon could only continue driving without any protests. He thought he’d better not mess with Heather at this moment, for her frosty expression seemed a bit scary.

On the other hand, Heather was somewhat peeved after checking the time; she had wasted more than an hour. Then, she wondered if she should go to church when she was free. She didn’t know if her birth chart was incompatible with Matthias’s, but his presence brought her so much bad luck that she simply took him for a plague that she couldn’t wait to stay away from. When the car stopped in front of the Apple Store, she instructed Leon and said, “Just wait for me outside. I’ll come out in a minute.”

Heather simply bought an iPhone 7 since it happened to come on the market. She was a marvelously quick buyer, so she told the salesperson what she wanted and picked it up directly. The phone in her hand had a black glossy finish, and it emitted a different feel compared to the previous models. Then, Heather quickly inserted her SIM card into it. The new cell phone gave her an indescribable feeling, though she couldn't tell whether she felt good or bad.

After tapping into her Facebook, she immediately opened her photo album—she had the photo of the person stalking Myra saved there. Then, Heather showed it to Leon since they had some time while waiting for the traffic light to turn green. “Please check out this person for me.” She wanted to keep this matter quiet. Since Leon was trustworthy, she thought she'd better let him help her, for he must have a good way to do this.

“You've been ordering me around instead of giving me a welcome ever since I arrived in Bradford City.” Leon began to banter facetiously again. No matter what, he had to tease Heather every single day to be happy.

“What do you want—a car or a house?” Heather had always been generous.

“What a squanderer you are! You should give presents within reasonable limits. Don't give away a few million at the drop of a hat. Your money didn't grow on trees; instead, you earned them bit by bit.” Leon's heart ached for the money Heather gave away, for he had seen with his own eyes how Heather got hospitalized after overworking herself. Sadly, Heather never cared about the money she worked hard to earn, and she was always lavish with gifts.

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This was precisely why Heather held Leon in special regard. In addition to being a highly-skilled hacker, Leon had some distinguishing qualities that were absent in other people. Such a person was a great help to Heather, so she was glad that she and Leon were friends instead of enemies. “Gifts for friends should only be the best, of course.” Heather attached great importance to gifts, so she always strove to give the best and the most suitable presents. Furthermore, she put a great deal of care and thought into the gifts she chose. She was an earnest person most of the time, though she didn't know how attractive her personality was.

“I don't need anything—just prepare a table full of delicious dishes for me tomorrow.” Leon manifested a mysterious hint of danger. He had never tasted

Heather's cooking before, for the latter was always too stingy to cook for him. Therefore, he had been coveting the food she made.

"It's a deal," Heather agreed without hesitation.

"What's the story about the person you want me to look into?" Leon couldn't possibly look into a person based on a photo alone. There could be tons of information about a person, and he didn't know what kind of information Heather wanted.

"Myra was tailed by this guy when she was abroad. I want to have a background check done on him, but it'll be even better if you can find out whose orders he was under," Heather explained while looking at the photo on her cell phone. This guy looked ferocious and sinister and was by no means a kind person.

"As expected, you're doing this for Myra. You couldn't have fallen in love with your bestie, could you?!" Leon couldn't understand the friendship between best friends, but he had a feeling that Heather was willing to do anything for Myra. At the thought of this, he was somewhat jealous deep down inside. If only Heather could treat me the same way. I wonder how Myra bought Heather off and made her so devoted to her back then, he thought to himself.

"Stop talking nonsense. Can't you grow up?" Heather asked helplessly.

"All right, all right. Matthias is the person you love, and your feelings for Myra are purely sisterly." Leon was still unwilling to let Heather off. If it wasn't illegal to commit murder, Heather would have killed him a zillion times.

"Do you still want me to cook for you?" Heather asked abruptly on a threatening note.

"Of course I do. I'll shut up, so just take what I said as bullsh*t." Leon kept his mind on driving. However, it didn't take long before he went wild again. "By the way, my mission is to find out this guy's background. As for whose orders he's under, you'll have to sleep with me for one night to know that," he said shamelessly once again.

Heather massaged her temples; she really felt defeated by Leon, for he never kept quiet even once. "Make a turn at the front, then stop after you drive past the traffic light." She just wanted to get rid of Leon, and she felt that her head would explode if she kept on listening to his nonsense.

“Hey, are you really treating me as a driver?” Leon was peeved by the way Heather brushed him off. I’m feeling very aggrieved, okay? he thought to himself.

“I’m getting off.” Heather opened the car door right away as soon as Leon pulled up.

“Be careful and take your time, you lady!” Leon shouted caringly, but Heather was already far away from him. As he looked at her from behind, he could only smile in resignation.

When Leon started his car again, the look on his face vanished and was replaced by a serious expression that resembled an ancient Greek sculpture. Blessed with ethereal handsomeness, he looked as good-looking as a legendary god. He fixed his eyes on his cell phone’s screen; the photo of the stalker was displayed on it, and he was trying hard to imprint the stalker’s looks in his mind. He had to drive back to his apartment as soon as possible, for that was where his laptop was. With his laptop in hand, he would be an almighty God.

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It was almost noon when Heather reached the Langston Group. Not surprisingly, Blake was sitting in her office. Heather frowned at the sight of him, but she suppressed the feeling of disgust and impatience within her. She had wasted an entire morning because of Matthias, and now she was going to keep on wasting the wee bit of working hours she had left because of Blake. “Good afternoon, Director Blake.” She decided it would be better to call him ‘Director Blake’ to flatter his vanity.

“You don’t have to be so formal with me, Heather,” Blake replied with a contented look. Truth be told, being called this way by Heather gave him quite a sense of fulfillment.

“It’s quite improper to keep calling you by your first name in the company. It would sound more formal to call you ‘Director Blake’ anyway.” Heather didn’t want to come into conflict with Blake again.

However, Blake always did everything possible to give her a hard time. “You left home early this morning, so why didn’t you arrive at the company until now? Were you at an appointment with your client to discuss business-related

matters?" he asked insincerely. He wouldn't fall out with Heather openly and completely, but he would make things difficult for her in every way possible.

"No, I didn't. I was involved in a car accident on my way here, so it took a bit of time," Heather replied with a forced smile.

"A car accident?" Blake immediately stood up from his chair and pretended to be concerned. "Are you hurt? Since you were involved in a car accident earlier, you shouldn't come to the company. Hurry up and go to the hospital for a check-up." However, it was evident from Blake's expression that he couldn't wait for something bad to happen to Heather.

Heather shook her head and said, "My car suffered some serious damage, but I'm fine."

"It's good as long as you're fine." There was no trace of sincerity in Blake's eyes, and Heather couldn't quite understand why a family related by blood would reach such a point. "You must have been traumatized. Should I give you some time off this afternoon?"

However, the sight of the insincere look on Blake's face turned Heather's stomach. Great, I don't even have to eat lunch at noon, she thought to herself. "Thank you for your concern, Director Blake. I still have lots of work to do, and work always comes first." She smiled politely. How could she have the nerve to rest when Blake gave her a higgledy-piggledy mountain of unimportant work to do every single day?

"I'll help with the work, so go and take a rest now," Blake urged while dialing Robert's cell phone number. Not only was Heather unable to stop him at all, he was scheming enough to deliberately push the hands-free button lest she couldn't hear the phone conversation clearly.

Then, Blake directly told Robert over the phone about the car accident. Robert was the last person Heather wanted to tell about her car accident, yet Blake relayed the situation to him on purpose. Robert was in poor health in the first place, and she didn't want to give him a scare. "Blake," she called helplessly. It's really abominable of Blake to do this, she thought to herself.

Robert's worried voice could be heard from the cell phone. "Let Heather answer the phone."

As such, Heather could only answer the phone despite having an urge to slash Blake to death in a frenzied knife attack. She thought to herself, Hasn't it ever occurred to Blake that Grandpa might be too weak to stand the shock? No wonder Grandpa doesn't have much love for Blake as an elder. How could Blake demand that Grandpa show loving care for him as an elder when he hasn't done enough to deserve it? She answered the phone and said softly, "Don't worry, Grandpa. I'm all right, so don't worry about me!" Her coquettish tone of voice disgusted even herself.

Blake was also very unaccustomed to such a tone of voice, but he had to admit that Heather was really sweet and sensible in front of Robert. What a pretentious woman she is, he thought to himself. He despised her inwardly upon recalling how she usually conducted herself in front of them. Perhaps he wouldn't have hated her that much if she had a more adorable personality, but the lofty expression she always put on made her the kind of person he hated the most. He even found the words 'The golden boy' extremely annoying. He and Heather were both born into the Langston Family, but why did he have to be overshadowed by her? She outshone him in every aspect, and the potential she showed should have been his!

Meanwhile, Robert didn't let Heather off until she reassured him and promised to go back at once for lunch with him. After putting down the phone, she gave Blake a long stare. She wanted to smooth out her relationship with Blake at times, but the final outcome always turned out this way—the tension between them could never be eased. "Blake, don't you know that Grandpa is in poor health? How could you tell him about this directly?" she asked in displeasure while trying hard to suppress her anger. She was already numbed by how angry Matthias had made her, yet Blake wouldn't leave her in peace.

Meanwhile, Blake pretended to wake up to the realization. "Just look at my poor memory—I forgot such an important thing in a moment of anxiety. It's my fault this time." However, such an act was rather affected.

Heather didn't bother giving Blake another glance, for she thought she had probably committed a sin in her previous life to meet such an enemy now. "Perhaps it's because you never cared about Grandpa that you forgot about his poor health," she said before storming off since she couldn't play nice to Blake.

As he looked at the angry and determined Heather from behind, Blake was lost in thought; the last part of her speech had stabbed him in the heart. He remembered how Robert had high hopes for him when he was a child. At that

time, Robert would even put him on his shoulders to let him 'sit on the shoulders of giants.' He began to muse about his past. His relationship with his grandfather wasn't so hostile back then, so when had their relationship become like this?

However, he could no longer remember it clearly. The more he wanted to acquit himself well in front of Robert, the more mistakes he made. As a result, he couldn't do a good job of everything, and this made him feel a profound sense of loss. "Did Heather really seize all of Grandpa's attention?" He couldn't help making a self-examination. He always believed that he never did anything wrong and that it was all Heather's fault, yet he reflected on his past on this day—it was really strange.

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Meanwhile, Robert was sitting at the center of the living room with an air of authority when Heather returned to the Langston Residence. She had no idea what this situation meant, but she had a bad feeling about it.

Just then, Robert beckoned to her and said, "Come over here, Heather."

Heather hurried up to Robert. Right now, she had to appease him carefully lest he fell ill from being upset. She wished he could enjoy a long life, for his presence brought some warmth to the Langston Family. If Robert passed away one day, she might not even be willing to go back to the Langston Residence. After all, she had no feelings for the rest of the Langstons, her parents included.

"Why didn't you tell me that you were involved in a car accident?" rebuked Robert sternly.

Heather looked as timid as a primary schooler who obediently received a talking-to. Not daring to even look up at Robert, she hung her head and pretended to be reflecting deeply upon her mistakes.

"I've already called a doctor over to give you a check-up." Robert pointed at a strange man sitting nearby.

It was only then did Heather notice this man, for his presence couldn't be felt at all. "I'm really fine, Grandpa. I don't need a check-up." She was discomfited upon learning that Robert had called a doctor home. Isn't this a bit exaggerated?! she thought to herself.

“Perhaps you suffered internal injuries that aren’t visible to the naked eye.” Robert insisted that Heather had a check-up, though. He could never be at peace if she didn’t undergo a medical examination.

At that moment, she finally realized that Robert was lying when he told her to come home for lunch. In reality, he wanted to force her into having a check-up. “Medical instruments are needed to examine internal injuries. You merely called a doctor over, so I’m afraid he won’t find out anything.” She was still finding excuses to put up a last-ditch struggle.

However, how could Robert not know what was on Heather’s mind? After giving her a fierce glare, he said something that distressed her even more. “In that case, I’ll take you to a big hospital for a proper check-up.”

At this very moment, Heather could do nothing but resign herself to her fate; she could only be as good as gold in front of Robert. Upon recalling the deliberate car accident that morning, she had to admit that she was too impulsive at the time. Even though she had calculated in her mind that nothing serious would happen, she failed to take any possible mishaps into consideration. If she were to do it again, she wouldn’t have been so impulsive. After all, more problems were bound to follow when she decided to bump her car into Matthias’ vehicle.

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“Of course I’m clear about my own condition, Grandpa. If I had been feeling unwell, I would’ve gone to the hospital,” Heather replied affectionately like a

spoiled child. She had to take her time talking to the old man, or else she might anger Robert again.

However, the longer Robert looked at Heather, the more displeased he was. “Just look at how you look right now. You keep burying yourself in your work.” He saw with his own eyes how Heather wore herself out these days. He wanted to express his care for her, but he wound up lambasting her instead.

Heather knew how drawn she looked these days, but what Robert said made her feel quite awful. Since she didn’t have to act so tough in front of Robert, she stared at him with aggrievement showing in her eyes. “I don’t want to bring you shame, Grandpa.” She held back her grievances since there were many things that she couldn’t tell Robert. Everyone believed that Robert was partial to her, so he would only be vilified behind his back however many grievances she poured out to him.

“I just want you to be fine. I regret having trained you so well.” Robert felt guilty about Heather since the latter shouldn’t have borne so much burden.

“Please don’t take all the blame on yourself, Grandpa. I chose this path myself, and I enjoy the full life I’m living right now.” Heather had zero complaints since she decided long ago what her future would be. She knew very well what kind of a person she was; only by constantly scaling the heights of power could she find meaning in her life.

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Heather didn’t want to talk to Robert about this, though. “I’m so hungry, Grandpa. Let’s have lunch, shall we?” The more she talked about this, the more unhappy she would become.

Robert knew that Heather was filial to him; he was aware that his granddaughter didn’t want him to concern himself about this, but he didn’t want her to compromise herself for his sake either. “Okay.” He didn’t want to cause her any trouble again. Had he known earlier, he wouldn’t have let her work at the Langston Group despite knowing that she had her own ideas. As he thought about this, he felt even more guilty.

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She had wanted to give it a try when Lucas appeared, but such feelings were completely spoiled thanks to Matthias. Whenever she thought of Matthias and the threats he made against her, she actually felt the desire to date somebody just to spite him. She had a rebellious feeling toward Matthias; not only did he blame her for his painful loss of the woman he loved, but he also forbade her to seek true love. The thought of this filled her with anger, but it was also thanks to this that she had an idea. “Will you let me go out on a date this afternoon, Grandpa?” She recalled Lucas’ invitation; she would have completely forgotten about it if she hadn’t suddenly thought of him.

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Standing before Love Chapter 500

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Standing before Love Chapter 501

As he suppressed his inexpressible emotions, Lucas went to the Langston Residence with lots of healthcare products in his hands, upon which the house’s servant had him wait in the living room. Meanwhile, Heather couldn’t wait to go downstairs when she heard in the study that Lucas had arrived. After all, she really had something important to discuss with Lucas.

Seeing how impatient Heather looked, Robert said to her nonchalantly, “Don’t be hasty. Just let him wait for a while.”

Heather looked at Robert puzzledly, for she couldn’t tell what he was going to do this time. Was he actually going to test Lucas out as if the latter was his future grandson-in-law? “It’s almost time for our date. It’s a bad thing to keep

someone else waiting!” She could only try to reason with Robert since it was really difficult to read an old man’s mind.

Robert wouldn’t let another man win Heather’s hand easily, though. “What’s wrong with letting a man wait for a lady?” To him, a man should at least undergo several tests to do so.

“I have work to discuss with him, Grandpa,” Heather replied in resignation. Even she couldn’t stand Robert’s waywardness.

However, Robert, whose wisdom and experience grew with his age, floored her in just one sentence. “Tell him to go back if you’ll only be discussing work with him. You’re on leave today, so you won’t be discussing any work-related matters.”

“Please give me a rest, Grandpa.” Heather was both amused and annoyed. Why was Robert so unyielding? She felt as though she probably got her stubbornness from him.

Robert looked stern at once. “Focus on your drawing. Look at what you’ve created!” Heather could only listen to his admonishment as he suddenly got back to talking about her drawing. Heather glanced at the drawing she made, and it looked very ugly indeed. Since her mind wasn’t on drawing at all, the lines she drew were crooked and misshapen. This came as a terrible blow to her, for it astounded her that there was something she couldn’t master.

Just then, Robert put down his charcoal and gave her a threatening glare. “I’ll go downstairs for a while. Keep working on your drawing, and don’t leave the study if you mess up even a single line.”

Heather looked aggrievedly at Robert from behind as the latter left the room. She was in no mood for drawing; she picked up her charcoal, but she had no idea how to start. Myra and Tony’s problem hadn’t been solved perfectly, so she needed to discuss this with Lucas, but Robert pulled such a move just when she was about to do so. Heather was thoroughly disappointed with herself—she felt that all she did on this day were stupid things. At this moment, Robert had already gone downstairs to get familiar with Lucas, so she hoped that Lucas could act according to the circumstances.

...

When Robert slowly came down the stairs, Lucas was sitting ramrod straight in the living room with an expression that one couldn't tell was either strained or serious. The instant he saw Robert, he became nervous. Moreover, Robert was wearing a stern look on his face, so Lucas was puzzled about how he had displeased Robert. "Hi, Old Master Langston," he greeted politely. Then, he pushed the healthcare products placed before him toward the old man and said, "This is my first visit, so I brought you some presents as a little token to show my respect to you." Since he had never experienced such a situation, he was inwardly a bundle of nerves.

When Robert glanced at the healthcare products' packaging, he recognized at a glance that these were high-end healthcare products. It seemed that Lucas was quite thoughtful. "You shouldn't have brought me these. You're just paying a visit." His expression softened somewhat, but it still had a distant air to it.

Lucas didn't know how to make conversation with Robert. He felt like he was meeting the parent of a lady he loved, so he wanted to make a good impression on Robert. "This is what I ought to do."

Robert noticed how nervous Lucas was, and he was satisfied with the latter at first glance. After all, a man whom Heather found to her liking mustn't be ordinary. At first glance, Lucas was likely also from a wealthy and influential family, for he was dressed in expensive clothes. However, he thought that Lucas wasn't clever enough. At the very least, he was timid and not manly enough when speaking to him. "Heather is a bit under the weather." Robert mentioned Heather on his own initiative.

"How is she?" Lucas asked, his face full of concern.

"Did Heather not tell you about that?" Robert kept on observing Lucas while a plan brewed in his mind.

Meanwhile, Heather could hardly stay a second longer in the study. As she tried hard to calm herself down, she decided to draw a quick sketch and showed it to Robert directly—with that, she would use this excuse to see Lucas. However, the more impatient she was, the worse she got at drawing, so she took a deep breath to calm her restlessness. When she completed a fairly satisfactory quick sketch at last, she immediately left the study.

Heather was still upstairs when she saw the two men conversing in the living room. As she came up to Robert quickly, she interrupted his conversation with

Lucas in a clear voice and said, “Look at my sketch, Grandpa. What do you think of it?” She smiled like a little girl while waving the quick sketch in her hand with a proud expression.

Lucas had never seen Heather behave like this before. He was momentarily stunned, and Robert noticed this as well. “Who let you come out?” Robert’s face hardened as he didn’t expect that Heather would be so headstrong. Was she trying to stop him from talking to Lucas because she was worried about something?

“Grandpa, didn’t you say that I could leave the study once I finished a drawing?” Heather couldn’t be bothered about the presence of an outsider. She acted like a spoiled child directly in front of Robert, and this completely stunned Lucas.

“Are you calling this a finished drawing? Look at your sketch—it doesn’t look like a drawing at all!” Robert rebuked. He had pretty high standards, so Heather couldn’t possibly reach them in a short time.

Just then, Lucas couldn’t help but interject from the side and said, “It looks pretty nice.” However, his remark drew a stern stare from Robert. Even though he was defending Heather, Robert didn’t like him cutting in on their conversation. As a result, Lucas lowered his head in embarrassment under Robert’s stare; he felt that he had become a helpless victim at somebody else’s mercy ever since coming to the Langston Residence.

“Draw it again,” Robert said in displeasure.

However, now that Heather had come out, she would definitely not go back into the study. “I have something else to do, Grandpa. I’ll practice drawing again when I’m free,” she pleaded while shooting glances at Lucas.

Lucas wanted to say something in support of Heather, but before he could do so, he was shot a warning glance by Robert—the old man clearly saw the interactions between them. “No,” he stated stubbornly, causing Heather to almost go insane.

Lucas looked at Heather sympathetically as he could only bow to ‘the forces of evil.’ Just when Heather and Robert were caught in a deadlock, another man came in from the outside and approached them. Heather furrowed her brows; she didn’t expect the person to be Matthias, and his presence gave her a bad feeling.

“Hi, Old Master Langston and Miss Heather,” Matthias greeted warmly in an easy and relaxed manner with no signs of fright.

“Why are you here?” Heather snapped. She didn’t expect that Matthias would come to the Langston Residence in pursuit of her. Is he here to raise a ruckus this afternoon? she thought to herself.

On the other hand, Robert watched in secret without answering Matthias. He wasn’t optimistic about the relationship between Matthias and Heather because of Matthias’s special identity, but he had discovered long ago how differently Heather treated Matthias. He was worried about this, so he hoped that she would find a more outstanding man as soon as possible. However, upon comparing Matthias with Lucas, he felt that Matthias was a much better match for Heather.

“How could you forget about the car accident in the morning so soon?” Matthias raised an eyebrow at Heather. Now that Heather had made them reach such a point of no return, how could he take this lying down?

Robert’s expression changed when he heard the words ‘car accident,’ and he gave Matthias a dirty look. If Lucas hadn’t been present, he would’ve probably lashed out at Matthias right away.

When she saw how sullen Robert looked, Heather immediately took Matthias to one side. Then, she lowered her voice and whispered to him, “Watch your mouth!” How could she have expected Matthias to visit the Langston Residence directly in search of her? Robert was already displeased with the car accident in the first place, so Heather would definitely be skinned alive if he learned the story behind it.

“Don’t avoid me.” Matthias softened his voice. Heather kept evading him, and it made him feel deeply uncomfortable. What he wanted wasn’t much, for he just wanted to take a look at her.

“What mischief are you up to again?” Heather looked at Matthias suspiciously. At this moment, she really wished she could throw him into outer space right away.

“Please give me some time. There are some things that I’d like to make clear to you, so let me do so, okay?” Matthias asked in an imploring tone, but he was obviously threatening Heather by doing so.

“Okay, but not today.” Heather hated Matthias’s guts deep down inside, but she could only compromise at this moment. Matthias was obviously driving her away from him because what he was doing right now would only make her loathe him even more and destroy the good impression she had of him back then.

Robert frowned; he thought it was rather impolite of Heather to talk to Matthias like that in front of Lucas as if no one else was present. Lucas didn’t seem to understand what was going on, but he seemed sensible enough to refrain from doing anything.

Even though the way Lucas conducted himself this day made Robert think that he wasn’t courageous and upright, in reality, Lucas was a truly courageous and upright man. He appeared unusually passive because this was the first time he had ever faced such a situation.

It wasn’t until Robert hemmed twice that Heather and Matthias split up. “Haven’t you two had enough of chatting?” Robert asked in displeasure, upon which Heather smiled with embarrassment. After pointing at Heather and Matthias, he then continued, “Can any of you explain the car accident to me?” No matter what, he wouldn’t let Heather gloss over the incident.

Meanwhile, Heather and Matthias looked at each other before she nudged him. Since Matthias was the one who caused this, he should be the one solving it.

“Well, Old Master Langston, Miss Heather had a minor car accident this morning. Since she had something urgent to do and wanted to leave, I had her car towed for repair.” Matthias’ explanation was brief and to the point, and he seemed polite all the time with a smile on his face.

Robert didn’t believe Matthias’ story at all, though. When he looked at Matthias suspiciously, Heather hurriedly joined in and said, “Yeah, that’s precisely what happened. He’s here to deliver the repair order to me,” she said with a smile so broad that a clueless person might think that she was talking about something worth celebrating.

Matthias cooperatively produced the repair order and handed it directly to Heather at once. “I had the car sent to the usual place for repair, and you can pick it up tomorrow.”

As he spoke, he specifically snuck a glance at Lucas. He remembered this man—he was the best man at Myra’s wedding, whereas Heather was the bridesmaid. Unexpectedly, he saw him here at the Langston Residence right now. Hence, it seemed that this man’s relationship with Heather wasn’t simple. The issue with the mixed-race person isn’t over yet, and now a best man pops up, Matthias thought to himself. Although he knew that Heather was well-liked by men, he didn’t expect her to be so well-liked. This put him under tremendous stress.

“You two are doing a pretty good job of echoing each other.” Robert saw through their little games, though. Even though Lucas was right beside him, he would never allow them to fool him in such a way.

Matthias immediately explained, “Old Master Langston, you have a pair of perceptive eyes that show keen insight into everything. How could we have the nerve to lie in front of you?”

Robert thought that Matthias was getting increasingly smooth-tongued. This man must be a successful businessman, but he was never telling the truth. At the thought of this, however, Robert found him a perfect match for Heather. After all, she was a cunning lady full of deceit and no better than Matthias.

Robert couldn’t imagine what it would be like if Heather and Matthias got together, but he somehow wished that the two people would become a couple. Perhaps because he didn’t get to be together with the woman he loved back then, he had been unable to rid himself of this regret. Since he loved Heather so dearly, he naturally wished that she could find someone she loved. On second thought, Matthias’ identity was so complicated that Heather might suffer endless hardships if they actually got together. Robert knew a bit about the Locke Family, and it was, in any case, a very complicated family. Moreover, Matthias was currently the Locke Group’s managing director. With such a controversial identity, Matthias was probably involved in many power struggles within his family.

On the other hand, Heather didn’t want Matthias to keep on staying here, so she immediately pretended to recall something. Then, she said to Matthias, “Don’t you have a board meeting to attend at your company? Hurry up and go back.”

They looked just like a young couple; it made Lucas feel awful, for he could tell without his intuition that Heather’s relationship with Matthias was special. Lucas felt like an outsider as he was probably the only person who felt

awkward in the face of the situation before his eyes. He couldn't cut in, but remaining silent would make him appear useless. All in all, he only felt that Heather was so far away from him.

"Yeah, I have something urgent to do at the company, so I'll be leaving after I deliver the repair order," Matthias replied while looking at Robert.

It was good for him to leave earlier since he was quite stressed out while facing Robert. At the very least, he had achieved his objective on this day, for he didn't expect that Heather would agree to talk to him so readily. As such, he looked forward to the next day. In one moment, he hoped that the next day would arrive sooner as he couldn't wait to profess his love to Heather, but in the next moment, he wished that the day would arrive more slowly since he hadn't prepared himself enough.

This day was a frightening and thrilling day, and after some strenuous effort, Heather finally managed to see Matthias off. When she came back, she saw Lucas saying goodbye to Robert. She looked at Lucas in a baffled manner, whereas the latter spoke politely. "Miss Langston, you should get more rest at home since you were just involved in a car accident. We can discuss the matter on Messenger," he said while holding up his cell phone. He showed no signs of displeasure, but his words sounded off to Heather.

In an instant, silence returned to the Langston Residence. After Lucas left, Robert took Heather back into the study, this time with an even uglier look on his face. Not knowing how she had displeased him again, Heather looked at him with an innocent expression.

"You were screwing around!" Robert rebuked angrily.

Heather looked at Robert in puzzlement. She didn't know in what way she had screwed around, so she wondered if Matthias's arrival had displeased him. "Are we going to continue drawing?" she asked with a serious look on her face. At this moment, she'd better divert Robert's attention immediately, or Robert might give her another dressing-down.

"Don't change the subject." Robert wouldn't play Heather's game, though. He felt powerless at the sight of Heather, for her relationships were in a total mess.

“I know my faults now, Grandpa. I’ll draw an excellent picture to make you satisfied.” Heather unwaveringly guided the conversation to the subject of drawing, but Robert shot her a fierce glare instead.

“What does Matthias have to do with the car accident?” Robert asked. He simply couldn’t understand why Matthias would always get involved in Heather’s affairs, nor could he understand what the two of them were fussing over. Heather and Matthias must be very close in private, but he couldn’t meddle too much in this. After all, he couldn’t force them to sever their ties with each other.

“It’s just a coincidence,” Heather replied guiltily. In fact, there were many coincidences about Matthias. However, Heather didn’t dare to let Robert know the truth behind the car incident, for she feared that he would ground her as a punishment.

“Are there so many coincidences?” Evidently, Robert was displeased with Heather’s answer; he thought she was just saying that to pacify him.

Heather nodded repeatedly and replied, “That’s just how it is.”

“I have to go out this afternoon, so stay in the study and reflect on your mistakes.” Robert glanced at the clock on the wall. It was time for him to attend his appointment since it was getting late.

Upon hearing this, Heather was overjoyed at once, for she had some stuff to take care of that afternoon. If Robert kept an eye on her all the time, she would be unable to do anything else that day. “Okay, I’ll keep practicing and wait for you to come back. By then, you can inspect my drawings,” she promised readily as she had to show her obedience at this moment.

Robert didn’t believe Heather at all, but he really had no time to waste. He was going to meet a big shot this time, so he mustn’t make any mistakes.

Once Robert left, Heather had an illusion that she regained her freedom in life, and she instantly found the study a lot more adorable. She carelessly made a few brushstrokes with a faint smile on her face, for it was only at this moment could she draw freely in a jaunty manner.

When she recalled what Lucas had said, she opened her Messenger immediately. Heather saw a clear and concise message from him as expected. It read, ‘Send me the photo.’

Perhaps Lucas is such a lofty and distant man in real life! Heather thought to herself. As she thought about Lucas' temper, the corners of her mouth turned upward—Lucas seemed much more interesting than he appeared to be.

She sent him the photo without further delay, upon which he replied, 'Thanks.'

Meanwhile, Heather felt quite helpless since she didn't know what to say to him. She had always been a conversation killer on social media, but she didn't expect that he was a better conversation killer than herself. She wondered if she should exchange courtesies with him, but she thought better of it in the end. How boring it would seem if she responded to the word 'thanks' with the phrase 'you're welcome'!

Meanwhile, Lucas also didn't know what to say to Heather as he looked at his Messenger. He seemed to have presented himself badly that day, so he pondered if he should talk to Tony about this. It was his fault for being too impulsive that things turned out this way, and he was already regretting it. How could he leave so suddenly? He wondered what Heather would think of this. He wanted to find some topics to chat about, but he had no idea what conversation he should initiate. As he held his cell phone in vexation, he suddenly found himself very useless.

Meanwhile, Matthias texted Heather on Messenger shortly after Lucas stopped doing so. Heather took a glance at the message Matthias had sent; he had been quite abnormal last night, so she was curious to know what on earth he was up to, but she wanted to stay away from him even more.

'Are you there?' His message was so simple that Heather didn't want to reply to it at all.

Since she gave no reply, he sent another message five minutes later. 'Are you there?'

Heather stared at the message in contemplation before deciding to ignore him again. After some thought, she simply deleted the message Matthias sent her. To her dismay, Matthias sent her an identical message every few minutes, forcing her to text him back against her will.

Matthias pressed in on Heather so hard that she almost had an overwhelming desire to delete him from her Messenger. However, she decided that she might as well text him back after some hesitation. She texted perfunctorily, 'I'm busy.'

Matthias was elated upon seeing Heather's message. He knew that she was only brushing him off, but it was good that she finally paid some attention to him. He asked caringly, 'Did your Grandpa give you a hard time?'

Looking at her cell phone in bafflement, Heather didn't understand what Matthias meant and why he would suddenly care about her. She always believed that every word he spoke and everything he did had a purpose, so she only assumed the worst about his actions. 'No,' she replied coldly, but she felt very uncomfortable. She wanted to figure out Matthias's purpose for approaching her, but she didn't know where to start. This made her a little anxious.

'That's good. Where are you? Are you still at home?' The tone of Matthias's message became increasingly gentle, but this reeked of conspiracy to Heather.

As the saying went that an angry fist didn't hit a smiling face, Heather couldn't be unfriendly toward Matthias, so she chatted with him one minute and was quiet the next. 'I'm in the study.'

'What are you doing in the study? Are you reading?' Matthias tried hard to strike up a conversation as he had really made up his mind this time. He kept pestering Heather in every way possible, and this took her by surprise. 'I'm drawing.' Her sullen face softened somewhat.

Matthias was good at making conversation, so he kept dragging her into the conversation until she found it rude to ignore him. She wanted to directly tell him to stop, but before she realized it, she had spent a long time chatting with him.

Surprisingly, Heather and Matthias complemented each other in this aspect. Since she kept killing the conversation, he kept looking for new topics to talk about. Heather had to admit that she was impressed, for she could actually chat with him over such a long time this way. After all, she rarely chatted with someone on social media for such a long time.

"Could you record a short video and send it to me? I'd like to see your drawing," Matthias pleaded. Right now, he found everything about Heather very interesting.

Heather glanced at the drawing tools on the table before turning her gaze back to her cell phone. She hesitated for a moment, but she eventually

consented to his request. She painted with one hand while recording the short video with the other, but she found it hard to paint in this way.

Since she was recording a video for Matthias, she had to be careful with each stroke—she couldn't let Matthias look down on her. After recording a few videos, she was finally satisfied; only then did she let go of the record button and send the video. However, there was no response from the other end, and this made her nervous. Since he was a very nit-picky person, she was afraid that Matthias would notice some flaws in her drawing.

After not seeing the words 'Matthias is typing...' for a long time, she decided to toss her cell phone aside right away. Just then, she received a message. Matthias sent her an emoji depicting a person constantly giving her the thumbs up.

'You're amazing. It's a nice picture. Can you draw a picture for me next time so that I can hang it on the wall in my office?' Matthias texted her with a smile.

Heather burst out laughing, for she didn't expect Matthias to say something so flattering. His words look so hypocritical, she thought to herself.

Matthias felt very relaxed while chatting with Heather, and he guessed that it was because he loved her.

'Your flattery is so exaggerated. I was given a dressing-down by my Grandpa for this picture just now.' As she tapped away on the keypad with a smile, Heather forgot how she was particularly sick of Matthias before. Perhaps Matthias had the ability to make her forget her distaste for him; there were many times when Heather was amused despite him doing something bad.

Then, the smile on her face slowly faded. Heather didn't like the way she was right now since this felt very strange. It was as if Matthias reflected her fickleness as a woman, for she could snap at him one moment and laugh while chatting with him on Messenger the next.

She massaged her temples while thinking about how strange this felt. To be honest, she actually enjoyed chatting with him. If there weren't so many problems between them, she would probably have lots of fun chatting with him. After all, Matthias kept making conversation. Heather liked this in particular, for it was precisely due to her lack of such ability that she loved to see such a quality in others. This was especially the case when she was chatting on social media. She always found herself passively going along with

whatever somebody else said, and this was completely different from how she behaved in real life.

She could guide the conversation and draw people into the subject she was talking about in real life, but she was abnormally passive on social media despite her eloquence.

This was likely because she didn't like communicating in text. On the contrary, she preferred talking to someone face-to-face in real life, for she could adjust to changing circumstances by watching the hardly noticeable details about the other party's behavior. On the other hand, words were inadequate for her to figure out what mood the person on the other end was in. Whenever she thought of this, she found the idea of texting someone unappealing.

Now that she could actually have a nice chat with Matthias, she was very astonished. In fact, she found it much more comfortable to chat with him in such a way instead of talking to him face-to-face. This was the first time she found that it was nice to chat with someone on social media, and she even looked forward to what Matthias was about to say next. When she saw the words 'Matthias is typing...', she felt somewhat relieved.

On the other hand, Matthias put down the documents occupying his table; his mind was full of his conversation with Heather at this moment. He also looked forward to seeing the words 'Heather is typing...'. Sensing acutely that Heather also looked forward to this, he texted her and said, 'Can't you leave the study?'

'I'm not going to tell you about this,' Heather texted back in displeasure. Matthias was really very clever, for he was able to infer what had actually happened from her message alone.

'All right. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to.' Matthias skipped the topic directly. Since Heather disliked this topic, he'd better replace it with another immediately. Right after that, he sent another message. 'Are you bored with staying in the study alone?' he asked even though he already knew the answer. Why would Heather keep responding to his messages if she didn't feel bored?

Heather wouldn't admit that she was feeling bored, though. 'It's okay, I have a lot of stuff in the study. There are also lots of books, so I can spend a pleasant afternoon reading.'

'That sounds nice. Your words make me want to be confined in the study with you.' Matthias texted a suggestive remark in a hardly noticeable way.