

## Standing before Love Chapter 512

After walking out of the study, Robert asked Heather to do something that she enjoyed. She thought about the date with Matthias and wanted to seek an answer from Robert's eyes, but she could only see exhaustion, so she left him alone.

She had no idea what came to her in the morning until she canceled her date with Matthias. If she could turn back time, she should have merely postponed it. Feeling troubled, she opened her Messenger and clicked on his chat bubble even though she had no idea how to explain it to him.

'Do you have time to meet me now?'

She quickly finished typing a simple reply, but she did not send it out.

After thinking about it, Heather deleted the message, thinking that it was perhaps not that appropriate to be so direct with him. Looking at the message she sent in the morning, she did not feel too happy about it.

'It's the Lantern Festival today and I have some family business to attend to. Why don't we meet another day?'

She slightly regretted her decision to send the message. Why did I ask him to reschedule to another day? I can make it for the date, but everything is in a mess now.

Apart from that, Heather still had not received a reply from him up until now. It made her feel even more uncomfortable because she had been so worried about Caleb's arrival that she forgot to take note of that.

Judging from his character, Matthias would not ignore her message. Since he still had not replied to her message, she was afraid that he could be furious with her.

However, she had no idea that he immediately drove to the Langston Residence because of his disappointment. Yet, he was shamelessly turned down. When he returned to his place and saw the message again, he felt even more furious and deleted his previous chat history with Heather to avoid being troubled by it.

While Heather was still hesitating, Matthias felt resentful as he thought about the possibility of continuing to like her. Evan kept reassuring him, but Matthias did not cheer up whatsoever as if what he experienced was a great blow.

“Why don’t you try sending her a message? Perhaps it’s a misunderstanding.” Upon hearing what Matthias experienced at the Langston Residence, Evan advised as such. After all, he had no idea why Matthias was so resentful about it.

“It can’t be a misunderstanding. It’s just like what you told me earlier—women are unpredictable. She was just trying to calm me down yesterday, but she has no intention to meet me in person,” Matthias confidently predicted. This time around, he looked like he was about to throw in the towel.

“You just have to keep trying. You can’t give up at this point.” Upon seeing Matthias’ fury, Evan gave some words of encouragement for the fear that Matthias would do something rash.

“Perhaps it was a mistake to court Heather.” As he soaked his entire body in the spa, he held a wine glass in his hands and gulped its entire contents.

“You must believe in your own judgement. It’s a difficult thing to court a girl and such problems are to be expected.” Evan started to give positive advice again. To him, it was not a big deal, but the incident had started to hurt Matthias’ pride.

“She directly knocked her car into mine yesterday, so her hatred toward me must have reached the peak. I don’t think it’s possible for us to continue anymore.” Matthias insisted on his thoughts. Once he recalled that incident, he felt the pain stabbing in his heart. Just how much does she hate me, seeing her attempt to kill both of us together?

At that, Evan had no idea how to continue to motivate him anymore. Indeed, even Evan did not expect that Heather would do such a thing.

He had not met such a ‘passionate’ woman who would risk her own life to reject her admirers. However, there could be a problem with the way Matthias had conveyed his feelings.

“What exactly happened last night? No matter how much she dislikes you, I don’t think it would reach the extent of running her car into yours. She’s going to risk her life to reject you?” Evan asked rather gleefully. As soon as he

imagined that situation, he could not hold back from laughing out loud. After all, it was quite a vivid imagination and the situation was rather comical as well.

Matthias clenched the wine glass in his hands with a savage expression on his face. Evan had indeed triggered him this time around.

Hence, Evan quickly stopped smiling and changed his tone to a more serious one. "I think your perception might be too rigid. Before you could even confess your feelings to her, she has already knocked into your car, so it can't be considered as her rejecting you." This explanation seemed pretty logical and he thought his deduction made sense.

However, Matthias shot Evan a glare. The more Evan spoke, the more it seemed peculiar. "What you mean to say is that she already wants to knock me down before I can even confess my feelings to her. If I really confess to her, will she run me over with a tanker instead?"

Matthias' sudden question immediately made Evan break into fits of laughter. Is this one of his cold jokes? As Matthias' words had painted a vivid imagery, Evan could not help but laugh out loud as he imagined Heather running him over in a tanker.

Matthias was so angry that he threw his wine glass at Evan. "What's so funny about it?" Accompanying his words was the sound of glass breaking into pieces.

Even though it did not hurt Evan, his laughter immediately froze. If I continue to laugh, Matthias might go berserk and even slice me apart with his knife.

"Calm down. I promise I will be serious this time," he said defeatedly as he was worried that Matthias would throw the wine bottle at him next.

"Miss Langston said that she is going to postpone the date to another time. That shows that you still have a chance. Perhaps something cropped up at the Langston Family today. Didn't you think about this?" In Evan's opinion, Matthias had already lost his cool. Not only was he irritable and violent, his thoughts were quite illogical as well.

"Something cropped up?" Matthias had indeed not considered this possibility. "What could have happened to them?" he asked in confusion, but he was already thinking about it.

“Are you asking me to wait for her update?” He ignored his question about the Langston Family because all that mattered to him was Heather herself.

“It’s better if you take the initiative. Why don’t you ask her about the date she wants to postpone it to? Surely, there must be a fixed time!” Evan continued to convince Matthias after he found out that Matthias was an idiot when it came to courting girls.

“Impossible. I will not talk to her anymore,” Matthias spoke angrily. He had already personally looked for her, but he was coldly rejected. That had hurt his pride and he felt that it was impossible for him to take the initiative again. I haven’t stooped this low.

“My dear director, it’s not the time to throw tantrums. You have to be more thick-skinned and patient when you are courting girls.” Evan started to slowly convince him again.

“It’s impossible this time around. Since she has already said that she wants to postpone it, she has to come to me herself to inform me what day she wants to postpone it to. Why should I take the initiative to ask her?” When Matthias became stubborn, he would not listen to any advice from anyone else.

“If you want to continue with your stubborn thinking, I have no other suggestions for you. Just don’t regret your decision in the future,” Evan spoke in a slightly threatening tone.

“I’ve already invested different feelings and effort for her on top of being immensely patient and thick-skinned. If this is still not enough, I guess we are just not a good match for each other. No one is to blame if we can’t get together in the end.” Even though Matthias seemed reasonable, it was possible that what he said was just all words. After all, it was highly unlikely that he was not disappointed and could easily accept the fact that he could not be with Heather.

“Yes, that’s a great way of putting it. I’m glad that you can think of it this way. After all, it’s not a big deal if you can’t be with Miss Langston. There are many girls who fancy you.” Evan smiled as he tried to motivate Matthias again.

Matthias merely raised an eyebrow. After the conversation with Evan, he felt better and his anger was almost abated.

However, in the end, he refused to message her first. This time around, he waited for her to come to him. If she really did not want to meet him, it showed that they were not meant for each other.

Sometimes, one would need the reply from the other party in a relationship—just like Matthias and his stubbornness at this moment. However, Heather was also quite conflicted. After she walked out of the Langston Residence, she had no idea where else she could head to.

After she walked around, she decided to visit Leon. Even though she had informed Matthias that they would rain check their date to another time, it didn't mean that they needed to meet today.

Now that she was having mixed feelings, she guessed that she would end up having a fight with Matthias if they met now. Hence, it was better for her to speak to Leo at this moment. At the very least, he would try to cheer her up instead of giving her more troubles like Matthias.

More importantly, she wanted Leon to investigate the background of a specific person for her as she was quite worried. It was better to understand the opponent in order to win the battle.

After she arrived at his apartment, she saw him lying on the couch without caring about his image as he was having fun on a mobile game.

"It's impolite for you to barge into my place without even knocking," Leon complained. Whenever he was free, he would play a game that he had just downloaded.

Heather had the spare key to his apartment, so that she could easily visit him. However, it was indeed too abrupt. She ought to have at least knocked so that he was mentally prepared for a visitor.

"I will definitely remember to knock the next time around." She sat down opposite him. Upon seeing his lazy demeanour, she was slightly envious of him. He looks so comfortable living his carefree life.

"You wouldn't have come if you didn't have a favor to ask. Shoot away. What do you want?" Leon knew that Heather had a favor to ask of him after he glanced at her.

“The data that you gave me was extremely useful, so I’m here to thank you. See, I’ve even brought you a present to show my appreciation.” Heather pointed at a bag of fresh vegetables on a table not far away from them.

“Wow, you really are cooking a meal for me!” he said with excitement as he jumped up from the couch and paused the game.

“Look at how excited you are. It’s just a meal. I can even make a few more meals for you.” Upon seeing her wide smile, Leon was immediately vigilant.

“Sure enough, you have something to ask from me. I was just wondering why you would quickly carry out your promise.” He was already familiar with her tactics.

Heather continued her wide beam. After all, it was always better to ask for help with a smile on her face. However, her smile had made Leon slightly fearful. After a while, he waved his hands and spoke seriously, “If you have something to tell me, shoot away. Don’t keep smiling like this. You are only scaring me.”

Upon hearing Leon’s words, Heather immediately retracted her smile and spoke to him with a straight face. “I just wanted to ask you to look a person up for me.” He felt quite amused after seeing how quickly she had changed her attitude.

“You want me to do another background check for you?” Leon did not like to be a hacker, so he looked at her with a frown on his face.

“Please? Can you please help me out?” Heather looked at him with her wide eyes and broke all her rules by acting cute. He could only obediently listen to her instructions after being at the receiving end of such a powerful ‘attack’ from her.

“So, where is the guy from this time around?” Leon asked in exasperation. Sooner or later, I would probably land into heaps of troubles because of her!

Heather pushed open the windows and turned around to smile at Leon as she inhaled the fragrant scent of the flowers in the air. “ Leon, have you heard of Caleb Moriarty?” Perhaps Leon knows something about him, she thought to herself.

However, Leon stared at her with a confused expression. In all honesty, he couldn't quite recall this person at all, so he asked rather perplexedly, "Is he from Bradford City?"

Heather shook her head in reply. "Could you help me look into this man? He's a general from Leisfeld."

Surprised, Leon wondered, How did she get involved with someone from Leisfeld? He furrowed his brows and placed his cell phone aside.

"Why are you asking me to investigate this person out of the blue?" he asked, needing a plausible reason from her.

Heather, on the other hand, said resignedly, "Today, he paid us a visit and mentioned our arranged marriage..." She couldn't quite bring herself to mention the rest of it. Obviously, no one would be able to accept this sudden appearance of a so-called fiancé!

"Arranged marriage? Between you and him?" Leon stared at her with an incredulous expression. What the heck? They don't even know each other!

Generally, an arranged marriage was all due to benefits, but he couldn't comprehend the reason for this arranged marriage between Heather and Caleb. After all, he couldn't see what benefits their marriage would bring to the Langstons.

"I'm equally confused too! Otherwise, I wouldn't have asked you to investigate this person," Heather muttered with a glum face. There's no way I'll agree to this arranged marriage with Caleb!

I'd rather choose Matthias over Caleb! Truth was, she herself was quite surprised by her sudden notion. Leon noted the indignation on her face and wondered, Did Caleb do something to offend her? Why does it seem like she hates him so much?

"Do you dislike Caleb?" he asked carefully.

"It's more than just dislike. Frankly speaking, I loathe him. I presume you are aware of the current situation in Leisfeld? For him to achieve his position, surely there would be a lot of innocent lives who suffered from his actions." Heather could not bring it upon herself to have good feelings toward one who

disregarded human lives. She intensely disliked Caleb's pair of eyes that resembled a deep, lifeless pool of water that lacked glimmer.

"I know what you mean, but we can't quite judge whether people like him are good or bad. You, however, have biasedly decided that he's a bad guy."

"Come with me into the bedroom." Leon considered the situation before mentioning that. Heather's words had managed to pique his curiosity.

His set of tools were stored in his bedroom. As soon as Heather walked in, she furrowed her brows. How did his bedroom get to this state?

She was met with the sight of an extremely messy room; there was even an opened bag of potato chips on his bedside table. How can Leon live in such a mess?

"I'll send the cleaners over tomorrow." Heather couldn't stand this mess but she was quite anxious to get the important things sorted today, so it wasn't the best time for any cleaning right now.

Meanwhile, Leon stared at her questioningly. He reckoned that his room was quite tidy, and he had even sprayed some air freshener too. Why is she giving me such a disgusted look?

"I can clean my own room and I don't need a cleaner," he protested vehemently. I can do this quite nicely, so there's no need to hire a cleaner!

However, Heather didn't want to pursue this topic regarding hiring a cleaner further and she thought to herself, I don't care what he says but I'm definitely sending the cleaners here tomorrow! Out loud, she said, "Let's put that aside for the moment. Find me the information on Caleb first."

Leon nodded to indicate his response before he headed straight to his work desk, which was chosen for him by Heather. The minimalist, European-designed desk looked simple yet elegant.

Then, he switched on his computer. Truth was, he had spent a lot of his pocket money on this machine; it wasn't like any ordinary computer and it was actually his personal computer, which belonged to him exclusively.

Leon didn't take much time to investigate Caleb this time around. This was all due to the ample and detailed information provided by Heather.



He flicked through the information and it confirmed her deduction. Caleb is indeed a military general! Staring at the picture of Caleb in his military uniform, Leon concluded that Heather was quite right in her description. This guy does tend to instill a sense of fear.

“How did someone like him seek an arranged marriage with you?” Leon asked this with a look of disbelief on his face. He’s young and talented with a bright future ahead of him. Shouldn’t he be going after someone with a political background to further cement his position? Why did he go after one with a corporate background all of a sudden?

“According to him, our families were close to each other during Grandpa’s generation,” Heather murmured, but she was skeptical about this because Robert clearly didn’t look enthusiastic upon seeing Caleb. The former was at most in awe of the latter.

That’s not how close family friends would be around each other. Besides, Caleb didn’t even show Grandpa much respect, so I don’t believe that they’re our family friends!

“But how is that possible? Leisfeld and Bradford City are miles apart from each other. I don’t quite understand your definition of close family friend,” Leo remarked snidely, feeling perplexed by the situation.

Just then, Heather pointed to a string of words on the computer screen. “Look—Caleb’s of Asian descent and the Moriartys actually originated from Bradford City, not Leisfeld.” She shot him an annoyed look. He seems to be enjoying himself making snide remarks about the situation.

“Sorry; I didn’t notice that. I have to say, he’s quite a legend to have achieved the position of a general in Leisfeld despite being of Asian descent, and at less than forty years old at that!” Leon couldn’t help but admire the other man. After all, it was quite natural for men to have their goals and to yearn for power too.

Heather, on the other hand, looked at him quite solemnly. In fact, she was quite unhappy to hear these words.

“Are you trying to say that I’m not good enough for him?” she questioned with a sarcastic tone. Frankly, she had no interest in Caleb.

“Heather, you sure have a great imagination!” Leon muttered and he had the sense that he couldn’t seem to communicate with women well, as each of them seemed to be on their own planet somehow.

“Can you get me a more detailed report? I can’t find anything on the Moriartys relationship with us, and this is the most crucial part!” Heather tugged on Leon’s elbow and persuaded him; right now, she could only depend on his skills.

“It’s not that simple. Leisfeld keeps a tight lid on the information of their military staff, especially with him being a general,” he said with a troubled look. Although he was an experienced hacker, there were some things that were difficult to achieve as well.

“So, do you need to hack into Leisfeld’s Department of Intelligence to get the true information on Caleb?” Heather made a quick guess.

“That’s about right. The details of their important military personnel are stored safely in the database of the Department of Intelligence,” Leon said this with a resigned look, and there was nothing else he could do about it.

“Forget about it then. I’m worried that you’ll eventually get kidnapped by some Leisfeld secret agent because of this someday,” she playfully remarked. I guess this is all the information I can get.

“It looks like you lack confidence in my skills.” Leon winked at her with a playful look on his face. “Although I don’t dare to hack into the Department of Intelligence, I’m actually quite good at gaining speculation and news from my informants. I can’t guarantee the authenticity of the information, but at least we can cross-check all the information and compare everything. We should be able to get the big picture by doing so.” In fact, Leon was quite confident in himself; his previous actions were merely a joke and he quite enjoyed pulling her leg.

“Hurry up then!” Heather rushed him urgently. She had no time to entertain his antics as she was quite anxious to obtain detailed information on Caleb.

“Be patient. Data analysis isn’t that simple and there’s quite a complicated process involved. You should join me.” Analyzing all that data was not only a boring job, it also required great judgment. Just then, Leon felt quite energized at the thought of having Heather working with him.

“How long will it take?” She glanced at the time. If it takes too long then I might not make it for dinner.

“If we’re quick enough, then one or two hours would be sufficient; otherwise, it could take us half a day if we’re not that productive.” For now, Leon couldn’t quite give a specific timeframe as he hadn’t started on it yet.

“I need to start preparing dinner in two hours’ time,” Heather said this with a solemn voice. Cooking dinner was a serious event for her as she had never cooked for anyone else before. This was her first attempt today and it was all for Leon.

“That’s not a problem. Let’s do this first. I must say that I’m so lucky to have you cooking for me!” Leon exclaimed excitedly. He was so happy that he nearly wanted to burrow himself into Heather’s arms.

“Hurry up and do your work!” She pushed his head, which was moving closer and closer to her, aside without hesitation. This boy is so hyperactive and I don’t want to be his mother figure.

In the end, Leon quickly dug up information on Caleb and recorded everything he found—regardless of its authenticity—into a Word file. Meanwhile, Heather looked at him working so skillfully and lamented in her heart, This is my first time seeing him do this.

After some time, Leon finally finished his data collection and he had compiled a fair amount. That was all obtained from multiple different sources, and he had hacked into every other website except for the government agencies.

Heather opened the Word file and she immediately had a headache upon seeing all the words bunched up together. As for Leon, he had done this for the whole afternoon yesterday as well, and repeating this today was a pain for him too.

However, he had his own specific method to remove any similar information and just retain one of it. In no time at all, half of the information was deleted from the Word file.

“Look—everything is starting to fall into place.” He signaled to Heather with a comical expression and he beamed widely at her as he looked at the end result, feeling a huge sense of accomplishment.

Meanwhile, Heather glanced at her watch and saw that one and a half hours had passed without them realizing it. “How can you determine the authenticity of all of these results?” she questioned curiously.

Leon smiled without answering her question and he asked, “Isn’t it time for you to start on dinner?”

“I’ve got another half an hour to go, so I’d like to briefly go through this information first.” In all honesty, she couldn’t wait to look at this half-finished work.

However, he rejected her outright as he smiled cunningly. “Heather, why don’t you go and start on dinner earlier? I’ve got one last step to finish and I should be able to finish my work once you’re done preparing dinner.”

It seemed that Leon intentionally wanted to string her along. Heather looked at him indignantly, but all she could see was him clicking on the close button for the Word file. From his actions, it was quite evident that he wasn’t prepared to let her join in on the last part of the analysis.

“Okay, then.” She curbed her curiosity and left. After all, it would only take at most one to two hours for her to access the information. There was no need to be anxious about things right now.

And so, she walked out of his bedroom and shut the door lightly after her. Leon then shifted his gaze back to his computer screen and rubbed both of his eyes. I’ll eventually overwork my eyes if I keep this up. He yawned and prepared to continue his work once again.

Very soon, the answer would be revealed and he had his own method to authenticate the information. It was quite a complicated process and it required a lot of brainpower, so he reckoned he would be overworking his brain soon.

Meanwhile in the kitchen, Heather was preoccupied by thoughts of Caleb. A while ago, she had noticed something amiss in the pile of information she had seen. Although she wasn’t sure of the authenticity of the information right now, it kept popping up in her mind.

The Moriartys originally owned a corporation in Bradford City and had close ties with the Langstons. Furthermore, the Harts were also closely linked with the two families as well. Never in a million years did she expect the Hart family

to be implicated too. As far as she knew, since young, the Harts and their family steered clear of each other.

However, she was quite surprised to note the link between the three families and wondered what happened back then. It seemed that something major must have occurred then and been kept a secret, and she couldn't help but link this to the incident where Myra and Tony were trailed by someone when they were abroad. Perhaps the incidents are linked?

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"That's not a problem. Let's do this first. I must say that I'm so lucky to have you cooking for me!" Leon exclaimed excitedly. He was so happy that he nearly wanted to burrow himself into Heather's arms.

"Hurry up and do your work!" She pushed his head, which was moving closer and closer to her, aside without hesitation. This boy is so hyperactive and I don't want to be his mother figure.

In the end, Leon quickly dug up information on Caleb and recorded everything he found—regardless of its authenticity—into a Word file. Meanwhile, Heather looked at him working so skillfully and lamented in her heart, This is my first time seeing him do this.

After some time, Leon finally finished his data collection and he had compiled a fair amount. That was all obtained from multiple different sources, and he had hacked into every other website except for the government agencies.

Heather opened the Word file and she immediately had a headache upon seeing all the words bunched up together. As for Leon, he had done this for the whole afternoon yesterday as well, and repeating this today was a pain for him too.

However, he had his own specific method to remove any similar information and just retain one of it. In no time at all, half of the information was deleted from the Word file.

“Look—everything is starting to fall into place.” He signaled to Heather with a comical expression and he beamed widely at her as he looked at the end result, feeling a huge sense of accomplishment.

Meanwhile, Heather glanced at her watch and saw that one and a half hours had passed without them realizing it. “How can you determine the authenticity of all of these results?” she questioned curiously.

Leon smiled without answering her question and he asked, “Isn’t it time for you to start on dinner?”

“I’ve got another half an hour to go, so I’d like to briefly go through this information first.” In all honesty, she couldn’t wait to look at this half-finished work.

However, he rejected her outright as he smiled cunningly. “Heather, why don’t you go and start on dinner earlier? I’ve got one last step to finish and I should be able to finish my work once you’re done preparing dinner.”

It seemed that Leon intentionally wanted to string her along. Heather looked at him indignantly, but all she could see was him clicking on the close button for the Word file. From his actions, it was quite evident that he wasn’t prepared to let her join in on the last part of the analysis.

“Okay, then.” She curbed her curiosity and left. After all, it would only take at most one to two hours for her to access the information. There was no need to be anxious about things right now.

And so, she walked out of his bedroom and shut the door lightly after her. Leon then shifted his gaze back to his computer screen and rubbed both of his eyes. I'll eventually overwork my eyes if I keep this up. He yawned and prepared to continue his work once again.

Very soon, the answer would be revealed and he had his own method to authenticate the information. It was quite a complicated process and it required a lot of brainpower, so he reckoned he would be overworking his brain soon.

Meanwhile in the kitchen, Heather was preoccupied by thoughts of Caleb. A while ago, she had noticed something amiss in the pile of information she had seen. Although she wasn't sure of the authenticity of the information right now, it kept popping up in her mind.

The Moriartys originally owned a corporation in Bradford City and had close ties with the Langstons. Furthermore, the Harts were also closely linked with the two families as well. Never in a million years did she expect the Hart family to be implicated too. As far as she knew, since young, the Harts and their family steered clear of each other.

However, she was quite surprised to note the link between the three families and wondered what happened back then. It seemed that something major must have occurred then and been kept a secret, and she couldn't help but link this to the incident where Myra and Tony were trailed by someone when they were abroad. Perhaps the incidents are linked?

## Standing before Love Chapter 514

A wonderful fragrance came from the cooking in the kitchen, and Leon sniffed the air curiously. All of a sudden, he lost all of his motivation for work and his stomach rumbled in protest. However, he pulled a face as he stared at his computer screen filled with words and codes; his work was unfinished so for now, he couldn't enjoy the fragrant meal.

And so, he continued to tap away furiously on his keyboard. He felt like he was a machine doing everything mechanically. In fact, the job of a hacker was glorified by everyone but in all honesty, the work required a huge amount of patience.

Meanwhile, Heather prepared a whole meal in just a short time and she eyed her accomplishments with a pleased look. All in all, she had finished preparing

everything earlier than expected. However, Leon hadn't completed his work yet. As such, she quietly made her way to stand behind him.

She saw herself tip-toeing over to him and found her antics quite comical. As for Leon, his focused look during work was exceptionally attractive to her. Currently, his brows were knitted together and his eyes were dark and brooding, which looked quite captivating. His chiseled nose bridge resembled the groves of a valley and she was quite tempted to reach out and touch it.

All this while, Leon was engrossed in his work so he didn't realize that Heather was standing behind him. It was only when he stopped what he was doing that he finally noticed her presence.

"Heather, don't stand behind me without saying a word! It's rather frightening, alright?" Leon was quite perplexed by her strange behavior of entering the room without even greeting him.

"I didn't want to interrupt your work." She came up with an excuse almost instantaneously. In order to shut him up, she immediately continued by saying, "Are you done with work? Dinner's ready so let's have the meal."

Soon after that, Leon gulped his saliva and revealed a hungry expression. He was quite used to behaving without any regard for his image in front of her, and she couldn't help but smile at his antics.

"I'm not quite done yet. Please don't forget to keep the dishes warm because it won't taste as good when it's cold," Leo said with a look of concern. This is her first time cooking for me so I want to taste piping hot dishes!

"Sure; I'll wait for you," she murmured and revealed a mysterious smile. Meanwhile, Leon faced his computer screen with a miserable look on his face.

The time passed by and Heather didn't realize how long she had been standing there for, but she started to feel bored. Suddenly, Leon lazily stretched his back while yawning and said, "Everything is finally done!" Truth be told, he felt quite tired just then. My stamina has dropped so much after being away from the gym for quite some time.

As soon as Heather heard that, she immediately rushed forward; right in front of her on the computer screen, she saw a simple Word file. Come to think of it, Leon seems to be a big fan of the Word application. That's quite rare in the hacker world.

She looked at the information and frowned—it was as if she had gone back to the past. There was indeed a close link between the Langstons and the Moriartys back then. It also looked like the severance of ties between them, and the Harts back then were not so simple after all. It was quite likely related to the Moriartys.

Leon had a worried expression on his face upon seeing Heather frowning so hard. It looked like they had uncovered a dark past and the information on Caleb was actually quite alarming. Just then, he stood up from his chair, feeling quite tired from being in a sitting-down position the whole afternoon.

“Relax, Heather. You should relax and breathe a little.” Leon showed concern as he looked at her somewhat serious expression.

“I can’t believe I knew nothing of this!” Heather said this with a resentful expression. Robert had never revealed all this to her and she really couldn’t comprehend his reason for hiding this.

Just then, Leon patted her on the shoulder. To him, this wasn’t a big deal so he didn’t understand why she was so upset. The older generation usually had their own secrets and he already had first-hand experience of that. Moreover, this was much more evident in large families like the Langstons so surely, she must be quite open to all this.

“Claris Langston—that’s my grand-aunt who passed away. Her name is quite similar...” Heather rubbed her tired eyes. She was quite perceptive to this and Claris’ name was something that irked her.

“It’s purely coincidental,” Leo hurriedly replied. He had noticed this too and it seemed quite odd to him.

“No; I don’t think it is a coincidence,” Heather mentioned quite insistently. Right now, she wanted to rush back home to talk things through with Robert. However, she suddenly recalled his face, pale and lacking pallor, and she immediately changed her mind.

“I want to know more about her.” Heather was determined to work out the whole situation, and something in her mind nagged at her to keep probing.

This time, she had a strong hunch that she was supposed to figure out everything that happened in the past. However, Leon’s expression turned immediately as soon as he heard her words. He was quite fearful of her now

as he no longer had the energy to run another investigation on a different person in detail.

It suddenly dawned upon Heather and she awkwardly mentioned, "Let's have dinner first. This isn't urgent." She realized that she was jumping ahead of herself without paying regard to Leon's feelings.

"Heather, I think we should obtain information about the past from the actual party involved," Leon suggested. "You won't be able to gain the truth you're after from a lifeless computer," He said it while staring at his beloved computer.

She merely flicked a look at him without responding. He's quite right about this. A computer isn't going to be able to restore the truth of the past. I need to ask Grandpa about it. Grandpa died in such suspicious circumstances after all, so it's quite likely that the Moriartys had something to do with it. Everything seems connected to the Moriartys, so it is very likely that they hold crucial information about the past. Caleb must be quite a dangerous guy.

...

During dinner, Leon suddenly brought up an important point and it caused Heather's heart to skip a beat.

"Heather, what if Caleb insists on entering into an arranged marriage with your family? How do you plan on handling this?" An arranged marriage with the Langstons means he's after her hand in marriage! I'd rather she marry Matthias than Caleb. I can't imagine someone as headstrong as her to submit to a vicious politician.

"No way!" Heather rejected this notion insistently. I would never agree to this arranged marriage! Sometimes, there were just some people which you knew things could never work out with.

Caleb was definitely not the other half that Heather sought. The future she envisioned with her beloved was them working together to develop their own corporation. Furthermore, she had no intentions of getting involved in a political storm.

"Actually, you shouldn't feel too pessimistic about this situation with this arranged marriage. Besides, he didn't specify that he wanted to marry you,

and you're not the only woman in your family." Leon maintained a positive outlook as usual, and he tended to emphasize on the good side of things.

"I'm the only one who's close to his age." Heather suddenly recalled Everly, who had just turned twenty not long ago and was still quite childish in her ways. If Everly stood next to Caleb right now, they would look like such a mismatch due to their large age gap.

"You have to stop thinking of it this way. Don't assume that Caleb's fixated upon you. Perhaps that's just overthinking on your part?" Leon tried to comfort Heather by providing her with quite a far-fetched excuse.

Meanwhile, she shot him an annoyed look. He's trying to show concern but those words don't make a difference at all!

"It doesn't matter who Caleb eventually decides on. No matter what happens, no one from the Langstons will marry into the Moriarty family!" she announced firmly. She could sense that the Moriartys harbored a grudge against their family, so there was a high chance that whoever married Caleb would lead a miserable life.

She recalled the moment of her dining together with Caleb and she could clearly sense his intense dislike toward her family. Although he sounded sincere in his words regarding the Langstons as family friends, clearly he did not mean it. In fact, his behavior was terrifyingly dark and sinister.

"Heather, you need an official boyfriend right away," Leon came up with this suggestion after considering the situation for quite some time. He had already gone through Matthias' background carefully and obviously knew about the speculations on their relationship.

Right now, Heather was in quite a tough situation. If Matthias took on the role as her protector, then perhaps Caleb would change his mind about setting his eyes on her.

She glared at Leon furiously upon hearing his words. Why is he bringing up Matthias all of a sudden? He must be trying to create more trouble!

Upon seeing her expression, he hastily appeased her with a smile. "Heather, this meal you prepared is really great! It's so tasty! I reckon it's almost comparable with my mom's cooking." Truth be told, Leon was quite skillful at changing the topic.

After hearing that, Heather's expression finally softened. However, she was feeling rather dejected and she didn't have the appetite to eat, so she picked at her food. What an irony—I can't even finish the meal I prepared!

“Should I meet up with Caleb privately?” she then asked with a torn expression. I think I should go and talk to him in person.

“No way! You'll be playing with fire,” Leo immediately discouraged her from proceeding with such a dangerous plan.

In the end, she consoled herself by muttering, “I guess you are right. I might not be the one he has decided to marry.”

“Then there's completely no reason for you to meet with him!” Leon stared at her with an incredulous look. Why is she somehow turning dumber with each passing moment? I really wish I could crack her brain open to figure out what's going on in there!

“There are some things that I think he might be willing to tell me.” Heather countered and she was keen to find out the truth from Caleb. Her sixth sense told her that he would be quite willing to reveal to her the secrets from the past.

However, Leon hurriedly shook his head. “Heather, why don't you reconsider my suggestion? The rumors about you and Matthias spread like wildfire previously and everyone seems to be under the assumption that you two are a couple. Why don't you make use of this relationship to fend against Caleb?” Leon decided to be frank about his opinion. At least Matthias and her look like a good match when they stand next to each other. At this moment, Leon was, in fact, quite supportive of Matthias and Heather to get together with each other.

“Make use of Matthias to fend against Caleb?” Heather couldn't bring herself to do this. Matthias had done the exact same thing and made use of me previously. Do I have to resort to the same tactics too?

“Do you have a better solution?” Leon retorted while he ate as he was famished.

Meanwhile, he looked at the spread of food in front of him and reckoned he could finish three helpings of it. He felt quite warm and fuzzy as soon as he realized that all of this was specially prepared by Heather. Moreover, her



presence as they enjoyed this meal made him feel like they were family to each other.

“You should be aware of how hostile my relationship with Matthias is, so it’s practically impossible for him to agree to work together with me for this.” She thought of the tense relationship between her and Matthias and came to the conclusion that seeking help right now was evidently an impossible task.

“Heather, are you really that dense or...” However, he couldn’t quite bring himself to finish his sentence. Her EQ isn’t that low, but why can’t she see his true feelings?

“Why are you mumbling about? What do you want to say?” Heather had no patience for his hemming and hawing; she would rather he mentioned what was on his mind directly.

“Why don’t we place a bet?” Leon offered playfully. “I reckon Matthias will definitely help you fend against Caleb willingly,” he said with a confident smile.

“You don’t understand him at all.” Heather shook her head. Why does Leon keep bringing Matthias into our conversation?

“Well, Heather, perhaps you are the one who doesn’t understand males.” Leon was anxious beyond himself on behalf of Matthias. Is Heather really that dense?

She, on the other hand, was quite lost right now. “I don’t want to continue this topic,” she muttered, feeling a headache coming on as soon as someone mentioned Matthias.

Upon hearing that, Leon smiled cunningly and he said, “Ask him out after dinner!” I must be the coolest guy ever, he thought to himself. I mean, I’m pushing my crush into another guy’s arms!

## Standing before Love Chapter 515

As Heather walked out of the apartment, the cold breeze hit her face and it brought upon a wave of coldness. However, she couldn’t stop thinking of Leon’s words; he actually made a lot of sense. Perhaps making use of Matthias is the most logical decision right now. However, the thought of having to become entangled with Matthias once again deterred her from

making this move. As far as things were right now, Caleb hadn't made his move just yet.

She didn't go to her car immediately after walking out of the housing compound; instead, she decided to take a walk around the area. Normally, she felt better after taking a walk when she was in a bad mood and presently, she enjoyed being out on this bitterly cold night.

There was a drop in temperature on this cool, fall night and it slowly seeped into her. The cold air flowed through her jacket so she quickly wrapped herself up tightly. Today, she was dressed quite thinly and the bone-chilling cold air on such a night reawakened her senses, making her feel quite refreshed by it. This was indeed a bitterly cold, fall night.

Recently, it rained quite frequently and each time it did, the temperature outdoors would drop further. As such, the coldness seemed to hit earlier this year compared to the previous years. It felt like they had jumped straight from a hot summer's day to a blustery cold, fall night. Meanwhile, Heather stared at the fallen leaves on the ground and took a deep breath of cold air.

This breath of cold air cooled her down immediately and she curled up her lips into a smile, somehow enjoying this perverse feeling. The breath she exhaled was quite warm and she tried to warm her hands by blowing a stream of hot air on them. Although the warmth hit her hands, it didn't manage to warm her heart, which was slowly turning colder and colder.

Her current location was quite deserted so there weren't that many passersby on the street. The quiet night brought upon a terrifying vibe in the surroundings. Heather kept walking further along, all the while feeling lonely. Suddenly, a car stopped right in front of her.

She stared silently at the person in the car who rolled the window down. The face of the person who stared back at her looked quite honest. However, she didn't recall meeting this guy before so she looked at him warily. Despite his honest look, she knew it was quite important to keep her guard up among strangers.

"Hi there! Do you need a ride?" The slightly plump, middle-aged man had a rich, baritone voice.

"No thanks," she rejected him with a darkened expression. There must be something wrong with this guy!

The middle-aged man heard her rejection and subsequently opened his car door to get out of his car. Meanwhile, she furrowed her brows slightly and her body went into alert mode. I definitely won't let him off lightly if he dares to do anything to me!

"Are you Miss Langston?" He asked with an honest, straightforward voice. He had a down-to-earth look which somehow managed to make one lower their guard.

Suddenly, Heather came to her senses and displayed a combative stance. "Yes, I am." She maintained an impassive look on her face, but her cool and aloof expression naturally exuded a rejecting vibe.

"A gentleman sent me here to fetch you," he carefully explained himself. Currently, Heather gave out a dangerous vibe and he was fairly terrified of her.

The person who had hired him had warned him in advance that she wasn't an ordinary woman; in fact, she was usually quite wary of strangers and she might be combative too. However, he had brushed off the person's words back then. The photo he had seen of her seemed to indicate that she was quite pure and innocent but unexpectedly, she possessed a commandeering aura when he was faced with her.

"Gentleman? What does he look like?" She questioned him quite forcefully. It felt like she was targeted by someone.

Immediately, Heather looked around at her surroundings. Although she didn't catch sight of anyone, she could sense that there was a pair of eyes fixated upon her. This feeling was quite uncomfortable and she was keen to find out who was behind all this.

"Miss Langston, I'm not too sure what's going on too. He contacted me by phone and transferred the money into my bank account directly, so I had no choice but to accept this job," The middle-aged man sounded quite resigned; it seemed that the person behind all this was quite domineering.

"I don't need a ride, so stop bothering me." She looked at him coldly. He had disrupted her mood to stroll around the neighborhood and she was quite annoyed by that.

“Miss Langston, I have to escort you back home safely. It’s my assigned task today,” He pleaded with her to the point where there were beads of perspiration that formed on his forehead.

“That’s not necessary, and I really don’t want to keep repeating myself.” Heather turned her back on him with an annoyed look on her face. She no longer wanted to continue arguing with him.

“I’m sorry but could you please help me out with this task here? I’ll be punished if I don’t complete it,” he said with a dejected look on his face. His current expression paired with his honest look could obviously gain one’s sympathy.

“This is a pointless task, so who cares whether you complete it or not? Besides, whether you get punished or not has got nothing to do with me at all,” Heather commented quite nonchalantly. This had nothing to do with her after all, so there was really no point in emotionally blackmailing her.

The man did not expect her callousness at all and he planned to pull at her heartstrings in the hopes that he could complete his task successfully. Surprisingly though, she left him with those words.

“Please don’t make my life difficult.” He looked at her fretfully. Meanwhile, he had run out of ideas on how to get her to hop into his car.

“You’d better stop bothering me or else I’ll call the cops on you!” She retorted with a cold voice. It looks like this guy doesn’t have any dangerous weapons on him so he won’t be a match for me if we come to blows.

All of a sudden, he became quite frightened by the dark vibes this woman gave off. She never regarded herself as a nice person. On the contrary, she had a dark side to her that was usually hidden from the public. Right now, she had no qualms in revealing her worst side to this stranger, who was continuously pestering her. In the past, she had come out unscathed in her fight with five strapping guys and presently, her expression was exactly the same as back then.

“Miss Langston, could you please help me out here?” he pleaded. However, the thing that Heather hated the most was to be forced into doing something she was unwilling to do. Besides, she couldn’t stand the pleas of this strapping bloke in front of her.

“You can inform the person who employed you that I don’t need a ride from you. Get him to come over here personally to send me home,” Heather muttered her words slowly. However, her rejection was clearly evident.

In the end, the man gave up as soon as he realized that she was about to lose her patience with him; he could clearly sense the danger in this situation. Suddenly, he recalled the reminder he was given and couldn’t help but worry that she might attack him. In the end, he hurriedly re-entered his car.

With each step that Heather took, the car trailed behind her steadfastly. She was quite aware that this man had no ill intentions but this behavior evoked her displeasure. Meanwhile, she tried hard to suppress her anger and treated the car behind her as if it was invisible.

Just then, she neared her breaking point and decided to head back to her car. Since I can’t take a stroll by myself, then I might as well go home early! Heather mulled this over quickly and tried to come up with a way to find out the identity of the person who had sent such an annoying guy. Initially, Matthias’ face flashed across her mind but then she immediately corrected herself because she knew that he wouldn’t resort to such pointless moves.

“Who’s the one behaving so pointlessly here?” she gritted out through clenched teeth.

And so, she kept walking for quite a distance until she saw her car. Without hesitation, she headed to her car and yanked open the car door. Meanwhile, the middle-aged man trailed behind her closely.

She shut the door and drove back home. From her rearview mirror, she could clearly see the middle-aged man trailing after her in his flashy, red Ferrari. It looks like he is fairly wealthy too, so I wonder who could threaten him into doing this.

Meanwhile, Heather increased her speed but the man did so as well and followed closely behind her. It was only then that she wondered whether she had encountered a lunatic here. Oh gosh! He’s still following me at the speed I’m going! Does he have a death wish? As for Heather, she had conveniently forgotten that she was also risking her own life with her reckless actions.

Suddenly, she received a text from an unknown number. “Don’t speed. You’re a woman and you should take care of yourself.” Heather stared at the text with

a bewildered expression. Just then, her sense of being targeted heightened drastically.

Right after that, she slowed down her car. Looks like the guy has great driving skills too. she thought to herself as she tried hard to calm down. Meanwhile, she was quite close to the Langston Residence and she was also curious as to what the guy would do.

Soon after that, she arrived home and parked her car at the entrance. However, she didn't bother to park her car in the garage but stopped at the entrance. Just then, the red Ferrari stopped behind her too, and the middle-aged man stared at her from afar as she turned around to glare at him.

She saw him smile at her with a friendly look while saying, "I've completed my task. I'm sorry for bothering you so much. Have a good night's sleep."

As soon as he finished his baffling sentence, he then drove off right away. Heather stood there with her eyes narrowed into thin slits as she wondered, What is the motive of the person behind all this?

Suddenly, the door to the Langston Residence swung open from the inside. She slowly made her way in while the butler stood by the entrance, looking at her with a respectful look on his face.

Normally, he would be asleep by now and it was usually the security guard on night duty who opened the door for her. She didn't expect to see him tonight, so she looked at him with an incredulous expression and noted his struggling look.

All in all, today was quite a baffling day for Heather and she had encountered one weird situation after the other. Just then, she initiated the conversation and said, "Could you please park my car into the garage?"

He took the car keys from her hands and politely agreed, "Sure, Miss Heather."

Heather stared at his familiar smiling face but felt that something was amiss. As such she asked nonchalantly, "Why are you still up so late at night?"

"I woke up all of a sudden and came out for a stroll. Coincidentally, you got home at the same time." His expression revealed his anxiety and Heather caught sight of that quite perceptively. She didn't understand why he lied to

her but she softened her expression anyway. She realized that her expression was quite terrifying, perhaps due to her earlier frustrations.

“Thanks. I’ll go back to my room now.” She forced out a smile, which only served to cause further anxiety to the butler. Right now, each and every single expression she gave out was honestly quite intimidating.

Meanwhile, Heather’s thoughts were all jumbled up and she couldn’t seem to make much sense of it. Can everything possibly be linked? She felt like she was currently lost in a maze and had to make her way out but then she kept running into dead ends. However, she felt like she was actually very close to finding her way out, despite all the blockages. That being said, this current feeling frustrated her very much.

The first thing she did upon entering her bedroom was to open up all the windows because she couldn’t stand the smell of incense inside her room. Besides, this was the only way she could get some fresh air from outdoors. She took a deep breath and inhaled in the cold air to awaken her senses.

Regardless of everything, she was determined to figure out what was going on right now. She then took out her phone and immediately sent a text to the unknown number.

‘Who are you? Why did you stalk me?’ Heather was quite worried that the other party would ignore her text and she clearly knew that there was no way of tracing that number. Surely, he was quite powerful to be able to keep track of her without revealing himself. All of his actions indicated that too, but she hoped that he would reveal himself to her willingly.

Although she was quite confident that he would eventually have to reveal himself, she hated this feeling of being kept in the dark. Ever since Caleb appeared in my life, I’ve been having all these strange encounters, she couldn’t help but grumble to herself.

## Standing before Love Chapter 516

All of a sudden, a person popped up in Heather’s mind—Caleb Moriarty. Is it possible that this has something to do with him? But there’s no reason for him to do such a thing since it will only degrade his status. Besides, why would he want to do that?

She dismissed the thought quickly but her phone chose that moment to ring. Not harboring any hope, she quickly opened the text.

‘Please don’t misunderstand. I’m here to protect you.’

Looking at the text, she furrowed her brows and for some inexplicable reason, she had the urge to kill this man because of his tone.

As she held back the rage inside her heart, she sent a text over. ‘I think that I’m already safe, so I don’t need anyone’s protection. If you continue to stalk me, I will call the police.’ This is the first time I’ve heard someone saying that he is stalking me in such a delightful manner. He is obviously spying on me, so how dare he say that it is for my protection?

‘If you think that calling the police will work, feel free to do so.’ The other party’s disdainful tone was obvious through the text message.

Heather looked at the text coldly and she replied after giving it some thought. ‘Since you are so confident with yourself, why don’t you tell me who you are?’

She only wanted to know who the person was. Through their conversation over text, she felt that the person was probably bluffing because the tone felt immature.

However, she didn’t receive any replies afterward, so she stared at her phone for a long while without moving. Instead, she noticed a notification from her Messenger. It turned out that Leon had sent a text to her a long time ago but she hadn’t noticed it thus far.

He now sent another text to her, so she opened her Messenger. When she opened the app to read his messages, she realized that he had sent a bunch of cute emojis to her except for one line of words. ‘Have you reached home yet?’

I almost forgot! When I said goodbye to him, I promised to text him the moment I got home, but I didn’t let him know till now.

‘I just got home’. She replied to him straight after.

On the other end, Leon looked at his phone, his expression confused. Did she walk back home? Why did she get back home so late?



Therefore, he thought that she had listened to his suggestion and went to find Matthias. 'Did you go and find Matthias?'

'Please use your brain.' Heather immediately rolled her eyes as she grumbled to herself, He really has a rich imagination.

'Then why did you get back home so late? Did you come across a pervert?' He teased her.

Looking at the word 'pervert' in his text, she replied, 'You're right.'

The person who sent me the text is definitely the same person who followed me. After reading the person's text, Heather was certain that he was a pervert.

However, Leon wasn't worried at all as he had witnessed her explosive power before. 'Did you beat him up?'

I've seen her fighting five strong men on her own. She is simply not an ordinary girl.

Even though Leon looked muscular, it was actually Heather who was protecting him. After that time, he completely fell in love with her. How could there be such an awesome girl in this world?

'I didn't see the person.' Heather texted gloomily. If I find out who the person is, I'll definitely give him a good beating. Somehow, I feel that I'm being fooled by someone.

After a series of strange events, she didn't have a clue as to who the person was. She had mentally gone through all the possible suspects and in the end, she came up with a theory of her own.

'Is there really such a pervert?' Initially, Leon was a little sleepy but after listening to her, he suddenly became awake and he sent a video call request to her straight away.

Looking at the request, she considered whether to accept it or not. Leon has a talent for finding people. Maybe it will help if I talk to him.

After accepting his video call, Leon's entire face immediately showed up on her screen. It's such a Leon move to put his phone so close to his face.

“Heather, you can just tell me everything.” At the moment, he was only wearing a red muscle shirt, which made him look very inviting indeed.

Heather could tell that he was about to sleep by the looks of his outfit and occasional glimpses of his pants. When did he like to gossip this much? Doesn't he usually sleep very early? Looks like he is all fired up as soon as he hears the pervert.

“Nothing much. Are you feeling bored lately?” Suddenly, she felt sorry for him. Leon has been in a mess lately while following me, and it stopped him from studying the various local business forces.

“Heather, you were the one who picked this place for me to stay,” he complained. There's nothing at all in this remote place. There isn't even a girl for me to flirt with.

“If you don't like it, you can always move.” The reason she chose that place back then was because of its environment. Even though it was situated in a remote area, it was quite a peaceful community.

After considering it for a while, Leon shook his head. “There's no need for that. Even though this place is really remote, it isn't all that bad.”

Just like that, Heather discreetly changed the subject of their conversation and started chatting with him about the community there. When the both of them were beginning to feel sleepy, he finally remembered as to why he video called her in the first place.

However, she rubbed her eyes and said with a sleepy expression, “I'm tired. I'll hang up now.” After that, his screen became black because Heather had ended the call.

Immediately, Leon knew that he fell into her trap again, so he stared at his phone gloomily. Why do I always make stupid mistakes in front of her?

However, it was late now and he could no longer stay awake. His sleep schedule was longer than most people's, so it wasn't common for him to stay up late. After letting out a yawn, he closed his eyes with satisfaction and quickly fell asleep.

On the other hand, Heather found it difficult to sleep. Earlier on, she was just pretending to be sleepy in front of Leon but now, she was wide awake. She

placed her phone aside but after a moment of thought, she angrily dialed the stranger's number.

However, what surprised her was the weak voice of a man coming from the other end of the phone. Therefore, she quickly replied, "Are you the one stalking me?" She tried very hard to remember the voice but she couldn't recall such a weak male voice, and she had never met such a person in real life.

"Who are you?" the man with a weak voice asked confusedly.

"Who are you? Why are you stalking me?" she asked him back. Why is he asking me who I am? Is he crazy?

"If you don't tell me who you are, I'll hang up." And so, the man immediately hung up the phone. What a lunatic, he thought to himself.

Looking at her phone, Heather suddenly felt displeased so she called the person again, and he actually picked up the call once more.

"Are you calling the wrong number?" the man asked kindly as he was surprised that this fierce woman would insist on calling him again.

"No. You even replied to my text an hour ago," Heather answered firmly while looking at the messages on her phone.

"That's impossible. You must have gotten it wrong, so please stop calling to me," the man growled. However, he was already quite polite toward her given that he was woken up in the middle of the night.

Again, the call ended and Heather's anger grew. She called the person again but in the end, she only received the voice of a woman with standard punctuation.

Did he just block me? Unwilling to give up, she called him again but she kept on receiving the same reply. Looks like he really has blocked me.

She was blocked before she even got the chance to ask anything so obviously, she wasn't too pleased about it. Afterward, she video called Leon, waking him up straight from his sleep.

If there's someone picking up the phone on the other end, it means that we can trace the number to find the owner of the phone. Therefore, she immediately thought of him.

At the moment, Leon was irritated after being woken up, so he stared at Heather with a displeased look through the video. However, she put on a commanding tone as she ordered him without even a trace of a smile on her face. "Leon, I want you to trace this number."

Upon hearing that, Leon was infuriated. For the past few days, she had asked him to look into many things. Even though he didn't like to be a hacker, he still did it reluctantly because it was for her. Now, however, his emotions were at an all time low after being woken up so suddenly.

"Heather, do you see me as your partner or your servant? I don't like you ordering me to do things." He did not bother to hide his displeasure.

Heather, on the other hand, didn't consider his feelings at all as she only wanted to find the answers quickly, and this made Leon upset. As she felt a little sorry looking at him, she suddenly realized that he hated being woken up all of a sudden, so the atmosphere became awkward for a moment.

"Of course we are partners. I apologize for my tone but I really need your help. Can you please help me trace a person? He is the pervert who stalked me today." She quickly changed her attitude. At times like this, I should lower my ego. I can't go head-to-head with him!

Upon hearing that, he calmed down a little while rubbing his head and asking in frustration, "Who is this pervert?"

After she sent the number to him, he found the owner of the number straight away as he squinted his eyes at the person's dashing ID photo.

"These days, perverts come in all shapes and sizes," he said while sending the person's photo and information to her. However, after Heather took a look at the information, she realized that she might be heading in the wrong direction. She fell silent for a long while so he curiously asked, "What is it? Is it not this person?"

"No. It's just that I think a college student wouldn't be this capable. Also, I don't know him at all, so there's no reason for him to stalk me." Heather was rather reasonable, so she wouldn't simply accuse someone.

“How did you get this number?” As Leon looked at the number, he realized that it had been used for five to six years, which meant that it probably belonged to this boy. Therefore, she told him the entire strange encounter. After listening to her, he curled up his lips. “Looks like we have an expert on our hands. What a great move,” he praised. However, she couldn’t understand a word he was saying, so he came back to his senses and explained to her with a smile, “Someone used his phone number to send messages to you. However, he didn’t know about it because the person only used his number for an hour or two.”

“Does that mean we have nowhere to look?” she asked in a defeated tone.

At first, Leon nodded but then, he quickly shook his head. “It’s a bit tricky, but I can find the ID of the computer that was used to do this.”

“Can you help me then?” Heather did not hesitate to lower her pride as she really needed him for this.

Upon hearing that, Leon complained, “Please let me sleep first. I’m really tired.” I can’t do anything efficiently when I’m this exhausted!

“Alright. You can go to sleep now. I’m not in a rush.” Although Heather said that she was not in a rush, she was definitely anxious deep down.

After ending his video call with her, he fell asleep right away. However, on the other side, Heather still couldn’t move her eyes away from the boy in the photo. Even though Leon had explained everything to her, she couldn’t completely remove her suspicion of this boy.

On the surface, it seemed strange that an unfamiliar college boy would stalk her and order an uncle who was driving a Ferrari.

In the end, she gathered her thoughts. This really is a thrilling day with one strange event happening after another. Why do I have a feeling that my life is turning into a detective show?

## Standing before Love Chapter 517

The next morning, Heather woke up on the couch. She tried to open her sleepy eyes but her entire body was aching. I can’t believe I fell asleep on the couch! After getting up, she loosened up her neck uncomfortably before quickly taking a bath.

She came out of the bathroom feeling refreshed, and her eyes were bright as she dried her wet hair. Then, a knock was heard on the door, so she quickly opened it and saw the butler standing outside.

“What’s the matter?” Usually, the butler would follow Robert around to serve him, so the former would rarely see to others in the Langston Residence.

“We have a guest outside. He is your friend, Miss Heather.”

At the moment, Heather was still wearing her pajamas and her hair was wet. She tried to guess who it was and she wondered, Who would visit us this early in the morning?

Looking at the butler’s mysterious expression, she slowly muttered, “I’ll change my clothes and be right there.” After that, she closed the door straight away but at the very last second, she took a glance at the butler’s smiling face.

Even the butler has started acting strange lately. Quickly, she began dressing herself up since she couldn’t go downstairs in such a mess. As she dressed herself up as fast as possible, she regretted not asking the butler who the guest was.

After she was done with everything, she slowly came down the stairs and saw a man standing in the living room. The man had a suit on and his back was to her, so she couldn’t see his face clearly. It was as if he didn’t want to look at her on purpose.

When she came to the living room, she finally saw who the man was—it was none other than Matthias. Immediately, she went on the alert because she somehow felt that he had other intentions in coming here at this moment in time.

Matthias seemed to be especially friendly toward her and he had a perfunctory smile on his face. In the meantime, Robert was sitting across from him and because of that, Heather reluctantly smiled back at the young man.

“Miss Langston, we meet again,” Matthias said politely.

However, she felt that something was wrong because Robert’s attitude toward him was a bit different today and her grandfather was much more enthusiastic than usual. Therefore, she looked at the older man confusedly since she was

trying to find clues from his expression. He even took out his favorite high-end tea to welcome Matthias.

“Director Locke, you seem very free lately.” Her voice was full of sarcasm since it was impossible for her to establish a goodwill with him in this instance.

On the other hand, Robert was delighted to see the banter going on between her and Matthias.

Upon seeing that, Heather thought to herself, Why is grandpa so friendly toward him today? Back then, he would tell me to avoid Matthias for the sake of our interest, so what is the reason behind his friendliness toward him right now?

“I came here to propose a collaboration.” Matthias smiled brightly, but Heather had already heard him say the same thing many times before.

Grandpa will never agree to a collaboration between the Langston Group and the Locke Group. Let’s see how he is going to reject Matthias.

However, she didn’t get to see the outcome that she expected. Instead, Robert replied, “I asked Director Locke to come here to talk about the collaboration. There are many aspects that the Langston Group and the Locke Group can join forces on.”

Heather was so shocked that her jaw almost fell to the floor when she heard that. Is grandpa actually asking him for a collaboration? Wasn’t he the one who rejected Matthias’ proposal to collaborate many times in the past?

“Old Master Langston, thank you for your trust in me. Not only that, it also shows your trust in the Locke Group. We will certainly live up to it,” Matthias quickly reassured politely.

Looking at the friendly scene between Matthias and Robert, Heather felt as though she was still dreaming, albeit a rather realistic one at that.

“Don’t just stand there. Come and sit with us,” Robert murmured to her.

However, she asked innocently, “What time is it?” It’s a little weird not seeing Blake at this time. Also, where is everybody? Why can’t I see anyone in the house?

“Miss Langston, it is currently 10.16 AM,” Matthias answered seriously while she quickly looked outside the window.

The sun was shining brightly outdoors. I can't believe it's already 10 AM. Time flies so fast! No wonder I couldn't see Blake and the others. But it's a holiday, so why is there no one at home?

At the moment, she wanted to pinch herself to see whether she was still in a dream but she felt that it was too childish, so she decided to see how the situation would progress.

“Grandpa, where is Blake and the others?” She wasn't used to Matthias' proud looks since she couldn't understand his quick ascend in the Langstons. Yesterday, he was driven away by the Langston Family's servants but today, he became the family's VIP guest. It must have felt like a rollercoaster to him.

“They went out for a walk.” Robert gave a lazy excuse.

Upon hearing that, Heather stared at him in disbelief. I don't believe him at all! The whole family was probably asked to leave!

However, she didn't intend to let Robert get away easily with such a simple answer. “Grandpa, why didn't you ask me to go with them?”

In the meantime, Matthias was watching Heather while she kept shooting herself in the foot. As expected, she is completely fearless in the Langston Family to a point where she isn't scared of defying Old Master Langston's orders. She obviously knows that he is finding a way to change the subject, but she won't allow him to do so.

“I wanted you to stay at home and give me company.” Robert smiled warmly, but his eyes were filled with dangerous intent and Heather noticed it.

Therefore, she didn't dare to argue with him any longer. Even though she wasn't happy with Matthias being their guest, it wouldn't be wise for her to keep on embarrassing him in front of an outsider.

“Of course I will. No matter where you are, I will be there,” she answered with a smile.

Looking at the agreement between her and Robert, Matthias smiled with satisfaction. Everything is going as planned.



However, Heather found an excuse a while later. "You two can keep on discussing your business. I'm feeling a little hungry so I'm going to the kitchen to see what we have." She then quickly excused herself and left the place because she couldn't stand Matthias' stare any longer. I wonder why he is looking at me that way.

As she left, Matthias stared at her back for a long while and at the same time, Robert was looking at him profoundly as he thought to himself, Maybe Matthias is a worthy man for me to entrust her to. However, he wasn't certain about it yet because he still had many worries in his mind, especially the compatibility of Matthias and Heather.

Even so, time was running out, and there was no one better for Robert to choose at the moment because Caleb was already lurking in the background, not giving him a moment to breathe.

As for Heather, she still couldn't feel the impending danger. When Robert finally mustered up the courage to tell her that long forgotten past yesterday, she surprisingly took a step back, so he had no choice but to find Matthias. Maybe the Locke Family's secret powers can help us.

However, the Locke Family was nowhere near the Moriartys when compared. Luckily for them, they weren't in Leisfield, so not everything was under their control.

Even so, Robert was afraid that the Moriarty Family had been planning something right under his nose. Over the past few years, the Moriartys had secretly infiltrated Bradford City and they even had their own enterprise in Atrigall City.

The thing that Robert worried the most had finally happened. In the past, he kept on avoiding the Moriartys, but he never expected them to grow in force under his nose. I can't believe I didn't notice their movements at all, even though Atrigall City is not that far away from here.

If Caleb didn't reveal their movements to Robert, the latter would probably still be kept in the dark since he had been lacking foresight lately.

Sadly, he still couldn't figure out the Moriartys motive and why they chose this time to infiltrate Bradford City. He had a hunch that they probably weren't satisfied with the results in Atrigall City, so they decided to have a share of Bradford City.

At the moment, Bradford City was a mess. Just as Robert was about to regain the former power of the Langston Family, the Moriartys unexpectedly joined the fight. At first, Robert wanted to sit and watch while the Locke Group and the Hart Group fought each other so that he could reap the benefits.

However, now that the Moriartys had joined the battle, he had no choice but to consider the interests of the Langston Family. This is the best time to join forces with the Locke and Hart Group.

The Moriartys loved to backstab and this was rather difficult to defend, so Robert was afraid that they would use these tricks on them. They must have done a lot of research. If they decide to strike, it's hard to say whether or not the Langston and Hart Group would receive a massive blow. After all, the Moriartys always like to give a fatal blow.

Presently, Heather was feeling peckish so she was in the kitchen, looking for something to eat. However, the kitchen was spotless and there weren't any leftovers to be seen. After looking at the clean and tidy kitchen with dissatisfaction, she left rather disappointedly as the chef prepared lunch.

When she returned to the living room, she saw Matthias and Robert having a delightful conversation. She, on the other hand, was feeling down in the dumps. Grandpa is a shrewd man so he definitely sees something in Matthias, but I just can't seem to see it. If that's the case, I have to think about what separates him from most ordinary people. I'm afraid that the most enviable thing that he has is the Locke Group. Rumor has it that the Locke Group has a secret power but I think it is all just that—rumors. After interacting with him for so long, I don't think that the Locke Group has any secret powers at all; otherwise, he doesn't have to be so frustrated with his business in Bradford City. I can tell that Matthias is gloomy about failing to achieve the thing he desires. As far as I've seen, the Locke Group is no match against the Hart Group in Bradford City, but he dreams of overthrowing the Hart Group and being top of the food chain.

There were some differences between Heather and Robert's perception of the Locke Group, but Matthias himself couldn't represent the entire company, which meant that it was possible the Locke Group hadn't truly made a move yet.

Meanwhile, Robert noticed the confusion in Heather's eyes. He smiled profoundly at her, so she sat down next to him.

Matthias' gaze landed on her instantly and Robert was quick enough to witness it. I can see that he likes her but their relationship is so confusing. Heather once showed affection toward him but today, she seems to be very hostile. Her words and actions are full of hatred for Matthias, and even her eyes look vigilant. If I want their relationship to progress, I must resolve the misunderstanding between them. Since the two of them had feelings for each other, it's probably a misunderstanding that brought them to this state.

## Standing before Love Chapter 518

Robert always wanted to find a chance for Heather and Matthias to be alone together, but her hostility toward the latter didn't seem to be easing. Even though Robert was already showing dissatisfaction toward her attitude, she showed no signs of stopping.

"Grandpa, I'm really hungry. When are we having lunch?" she asked none too gently.

Robert looked at the time. "Wait for another 40 minutes." Our family usually has our meals very punctually and she should know what time we are having lunch, so why did she ask me this question?

"Looks like it's about time for lunch. Director Locke, should you be heading back now?" By the looks of it, Heather wanted to drive Matthias away from the house, but he didn't seem to mind it and he still had a warm smile on his face.

Seeing the young man rendered speechless after Heather's awkward response, Robert quickly provided a platform for him to step down. "Director Locke, why don't you stay and have lunch with us?"

Matthias immediately looked at him with gratitude while nodding his head. "Thank you, Old Master Langston. I heard that the chefs of the Langston Family make very delicious food, and I'm honored to be able to taste it myself today."

As for Heather, she was staring at Robert with displeasure, but he ignored her gaze and continued conversing with Matthias happily. I can't believe Grandpa asked him to have lunch with us. This is unacceptable! It's so obvious that he wants to please Matthias.

Suddenly, she was not excited for lunch at all. Initially, her stomach was rumbling hungrily but now, she did not have the appetite to eat. However, it

wouldn't be wise of her to refute Robert's invitation. I'll just have to do what he says. It's not like I never had lunch with Matthias before.

"Then you should eat more later on," she muttered gloomily. He is obviously going against me. The more I refuse to see him, the more times he tries to show up in front of me.

On the other hand, Matthias still kept the polite smile on his face as he didn't mind Heather's dark looks. "I will." However, the more polite he was to her, the more she felt that he had something up his sleeve.

Looking at the banter going on between the two of them, Robert reminisced about his youthful past and the girl he liked at that time, who was also as energetic as these two. The two of them are probably able to argue with each other in spite of the people around because there is some affection for each other. They are more like a quarrelsome couple.

...

Looking at the delicious meal on the table, Heather found her stomach growling but with Matthias here, she was in no mood to eat at all. However, Matthias pretended to not know about it as he glanced at her from time to time with a smile on his face, as if he was positively ecstatic.

Therefore, she immediately lowered her head because she felt that it was better for her to eat than look at him. She also chose to ignore the conversation going on between him and her grandfather. They are definitely discussing the collaboration between the Langston and Locke Group.

However, Robert wanted to know more about Matthias, so he started chatting with the latter about his hobbies. This made Heather prick up her ears curiously. There's something wrong with Grandpa today. It seems like he cares a lot about Matthias!

The fragrance of the dishes lingered in the air and at the moment, she felt that the scent of the food was simply heavenly. After all, one would instantly gobble down anything when they were hungry.

Nonetheless, everytime Heather's eyes landed on Matthias, the food on her plate would somehow lose its taste, so she specifically avoided his eyes. Today, Matthias subconsciously looked at her from time to time, but she only saw his gentle eyes as a sugar-coated axe. She felt that his gaze was rather

penetrating so whenever he stared at her, she would glare at him viciously. However, he thought that her looks were adorable, and he even wanted to tousle her wavy hair that she had blow-dried not too long ago.

Looking at their interactions, Robert suddenly felt that he shouldn't be here. Looks like I need to create more chances for the two of them to be together alone. And so, he came up with a plan on how to do so. Since the atmosphere at the dining table was still pleasant, he simply found an excuse. "There is an exhibition at the National Art Gallery this evening and the curator gave me two tickets, asking me to attend." At this point, he paused on purpose.

Heather immediately narrowed her eyes as she could sense that he was up to something. Grandpa definitely mentioned this on purpose.

As for Matthias, he was looking at Robert with a smile while waiting for him to continue because he didn't think too much about his words.

"Grandpa, are you asking me to attend the exhibition with you?" Heather followed up on his words. It doesn't seem like he is planning to continue speaking, so he is probably waiting for me to speak first.

Sure enough, the moment she opened her mouth, Robert instantly smiled joyously.

"My body isn't in the best condition lately but I don't want to disappoint the curator," he explained slowly. "Heather, the curator is Mr. Henriksen and he often visited us when you were a kid. Do you still remember?" Robert began to involve other people in the conversation as he did all he could to create opportunities for the two of them to be alone together.

"I do," she answered coldly. I think I can probably guess what he is doing, but why is he so desperate to put me together with Matthias?

"I can't very well disappoint him, can I?" And so, Robert began to put on an act by pretending to be aggrieved.

"Your health is more important and I'm sure that Mr. Henriksen will understand," Heather replied to him indifferently, ignoring his act.

"That won't do. Heather, can you please attend the exhibition on my behalf? I'm sure Mr. Henriksen will be happy to see you." It was only then that he

finally revealed his true intentions, and it made her rather resigned. I knew that it couldn't be that simple.

"I'm not interested in the art exhibition at all," she announced firmly. Since I know it's a trap, I won't be stupid enough to jump right into it.

Meanwhile, Matthias was watching everything silently since it wouldn't be wise of him to say anything. However, he didn't expect that Robert was doing all this just to get him and Heather to go on a date.

"You must go! A while ago, Mr. Henriksen kept on asking after you, so I initially planned to bring you along and call upon him," Robert explained to her righteously, as if it would be wrong for her not to go.

However, Heather continued to reject him ruthlessly. "I can visit Mr. Henriksen but I don't want to attend the exhibition!"

Even though Robert didn't expect her to be this stubborn, he was much more stubborn than her and he was confident in his ability to convince her to visit the art gallery. And so, he ordered the butler next to him, "Give me the tickets."

Upon hearing that, Heather stared at the plate in front of her with disgust. This time, she had completely lost her appetite and to make matters worse, her grandfather wasn't done with her. Not long after, the butler came over with the two tickets. The moment she saw the two tickets, her smile instantly turned cold. I knew it!

While receiving the tickets, Robert gave Matthias a warm smile and suddenly, Heather knew that she was in trouble. Everything is going the way I fear.

"Matthias, do you like art galleries?" This time, Robert called him 'Matthias' instead of 'Director Locke'. Even though Matthias felt uncomfortable about it, Heather was the one who cringed the most.

Matthias glanced at her and he noticed her vicious look. It was almost as if she couldn't wait to tear him apart. Then, he nodded his head awkwardly while smiling brightly.

"Since you like it, why don't you accompany Heather to the art gallery this evening?" Finally, Robert revealed his true intentions, causing Heather to almost blow a gasket.

She always tried to avoid Matthias but now, her own grandfather was actually creating chances for them to be alone together.

“Do I really have the honor?” Matthias seemed pleased about it.

“No.” Immediately, she cut off his words, showing her dissatisfaction with him.

However, as an elder of the family, Robert ordered her, “Nonsense! Let Matthias accompany you to the art gallery.”

After giving Matthias a glare, Heather turned to stare Robert with dissatisfaction. In the end, she chose to not say a word. At this point, everything I say is wrong, so what’s the point of even talking?

At first, she wanted to delay things but surprisingly, Robert was quick enough to ask them to leave. The exhibition starts at 3 PM but it’s now only 1.30 PM. Isn’t it a bit too early?

She also wanted to drive herself to the art gallery, but even that was taken away from her by Robert as he ordered her to sit right next to Matthias on the passenger seat.

While sitting in the passenger seat, she put on a cold expression, as if Matthias owed her millions. He, on the other hand, tried to ease the atmosphere between them.

“Why didn’t you come yesterday?” However, the moment he opened his mouth, the atmosphere became even more tense.

Meanwhile, Heather was looking out the window as she ignored everything he said. I’ve already explained to him yesterday, so I don’t need to explain it all over again for him today.

“Are you going to keep avoiding me?” he asked again but this time, he was enraged by her attitude. Somehow, she can always infuriate me easily. I sometimes wonder why I even like her! Is it because I like to be infuriated and abused by her?

“You can treat today as a date. If you have anything to say, just say it,” she reluctantly replied to him. I was wrong to miss our date yesterday. Since there’s no turning back now, I’ll just repay him with this date today.

“But will you even listen?” He looked into her eyes, wanting to know what she was actually thinking about as his desire was tearing him apart.

“You can say anything you want. Just ignore me,” she answered impatiently.

“What I want to say is related to you, so I don’t want you to just be a listener. I want your response.” At this point, Matthias could no longer conceal the emotion and pain in his eyes.

“I can’t give any response.” Heather had a faint feeling that she knew what he wanted to say, but she didn’t dare to hear it from him. Therefore, she could only be a reluctant listener without giving him any answers.

“Heather, please stop pretending to be foolish. Don’t you know why I’m doing this?” he murmured, an obvious pain in his voice. Why do I always fail to get the person I love? Everything that he ever wanted in life was out of his reach, so he really hoped that Heather would understand his feelings. However, she cruelly refused to give him any response.

“How would I know, Matthias? Is it because you hate me? Or is it because you want to exact your revenge? Do you see me as your enemy or what?” Heather kept on telling herself that he was just doing everything he could to torture her. Therefore, she couldn’t bring herself to believe in his sudden sign of weakness.

## Standing before Love Chapter 519

There was only silence all the way to the art gallery and Matthias didn’t answer Heather’s question. Am I doing this because I hate her? Or is it because I’m exacting my revenge? At first, this was actually the reason why he did it but at some point, he began to look at her differently.

After the car stopped, she got out of the car straight away without even waiting for him to open the door for her. Looking at her retreating figure, Matthias had many emotions surging within him but he didn’t know what to say.

There were many times he wanted to tell her outright that he had fallen in love with her, but the moment the words reached the tip of his tongue, he couldn’t spit them out.



After all this time, he had never confessed his love to anyone since his confession toward Myra had totally failed back then. He had always been waiting for a chance to say the words that he was preparing for a long time. Should I be more fancy like on television or more straightforward and simple?

“Heather!” Looking at her leaving hurriedly, Matthias couldn’t help but call out to her.

The woman in question froze for a moment before she continued walking forward. Seeing that she was unmoved by his call, he had no choice but to catch up with her.

The tickets were with her so he quickly followed behind her. Before entering the art gallery, the two of them maintained the same distance between them at all times.

After Heather handed the tickets in her hand to an attendant, Matthias took a step forward and closed the distance between them. She could feel him approaching her and she even got a whiff of his cologne. He really is a detailed person.

He immediately stepped forward and grabbed her hand, and her eyes widened in response. “You should relax a little,” he whispered into her ear.

Heather tried to free herself but he was grabbing her hand tightly, refusing to let go.

“Let me go,” she growled.

They had already entered the art gallery and the people around them were very quiet, so it wouldn’t be appropriate for her to shout loudly. Looking at the smirk on his face, she realized that she really hated this look of his.

“If you prefer me to hold you by the waist, I can let go of your hand,” he announced dominantly. I can’t be too gentle with her; otherwise, I won’t even get the chance to speak.

Glaring at him angrily, Heather realized that he wasn’t joking since she could feel the aggressiveness exuding from his body. For a moment, she didn’t dare move a muscle.

“Looks like you still prefer me holding your hand.” He revealed a victorious smile. At least we have come to an agreement.

However, she didn't like the feeling of a warm palm and she could even feel the sweat coming from Matthias' hand, but never in a million years did she think that it was because he was nervous. He had never held someone's hand this openly before and he lacked experience when it came to dating, so he was actually a little embarrassed deep down.

As for Heather, she didn't want the curator, Mr. Henriksen, to see them coming in as a 'couple', so she avoided him while looking at her hand, which was held by Matthias tightly.

“Matthias, what are you trying to achieve here? Stop playing games with me,” she muttered since she could not stand his silence any longer.

“I just want you to accompany me at this exhibition. You promised me a date.” Matthias tilted his head and revealed a boyish and bright smile.

I've never seen this side of him before. Heather pouted her lips as she had nothing to say once he mentioned the date. Fine. I'm killing two birds with one stone anyway. Not only am I not defying Grandpa's orders, I'm also repaying Matthias for the date I missed yesterday, so I'm actually honoring my promise.

“I don't like art galleries.” She looked at the painting on the wall with boredom since she wasn't interested in it at all.

“I don't like it either.” He looked around and he wasn't interested in these paintings too, but he still had a mysterious smile on his face. “But I like looking at these paintings with you.”

Suddenly, Heather felt her heart skip a beat. He is obviously flirting with me. What's wrong with him today? Everything he says seems weird.

“But I don't like coming to art galleries with you. It is a gruesome chore,” she muttered ruthlessly as she vowed to herself, I won't be easily swindled by his words.

“Then please bear with me,” he uttered bluntly. It was true that the two of them had many problems with each other in the past.

Therefore, he tried to approach her peacefully at first before taking on a more forceful approach. Since I can't please her by lowering my status, it won't hurt for me to be more aggressive with my approach.

"Matthias, you are still shameless as always." Initially, she was confused by his recent actions and she thought that his personality had really taken a turn but by the looks of it, he was still the same old Matthias.

"Thank you for your praise, Miss Langston." However, he still enjoyed the constant bickering between them. It was probably because the two of them never got along well, so he didn't care about the way they interacted and only cared about liking her.

Sometimes, one would be struck by love in the most unexpected of ways. Until today, Matthias still hadn't figured out why he fell in love with her. Whenever he wasn't by her side, he would miss his various interactions with her, so the affection toward her would come up to him all of a sudden.

"Just tell me what you want. There's no need for games." At the moment, she didn't want to play any more games with him. There's no point bickering with each other.

"My goal is simple." He revealed a satisfied smile, reminding her of his speech back in Italy where he had a triumphant smile that was particularly attractive.

"Spit it out. I don't want to beat around the bush with you any longer." The two of them stood side by side in front of a famous painting with their hands tightly intertwined, as if they were a cute couple.

Matthias purposely closed the distance and he was about to whisper in her ear, but she moved her head away as she still wasn't used to this kind of intimacy.

"You are my goal," he enunciated every word clearly. At a very close distance, he could even smell her natural scent and the fresh perfume she wore.

She had an elegant swan-like neck, which tempted him to no end. However, he tried to suppress the urge to kiss her since it wouldn't be appropriate for them to show intimacy in such a public space.

For a moment, Heather's thoughts ran wild as his words were too ambiguous. As he breathed into her ear, she could feel his warm breath caressing the behind of her ear, making her want to move away from him.

Since she couldn't figure out his intentions, she planned to deal with it coldly, so she used her only free hand to push him away. Immediately, the suppressing and ambiguous atmosphere faded away between the two of them. Even though Heather really wanted to punch him, the occasion wouldn't allow her to do so.

After calming herself for a while, she tried to maintain her façade. The people who are attending the exhibition today are all elites so I can't cause any trouble.

"Let's go!" she announced imperiously as she couldn't take it anymore. I can't do anything in the art gallery.

Matthias shook his head. "Our date has just started. Why are you in such a hurry?" He finally got the chance to come out with her alone, so he was delighted even though they were doing nothing.

Heather looked at her hand, which was held tightly in his, and she suddenly felt that she had lost her freedom. "Can we go somewhere else?" We can at least find a place where I'm not restrained. Now, I'm completely under his control.

However, Matthias was unwilling to leave. "The environment here is great and the paintings look gorgeous. Why don't we calm down and enjoy it?" Knowing her, she is definitely plotting something but I won't fall into her trap this easily.

"Since you like it so much, why don't you stay here? I'm leaving." Heather refused to give in to him. Even if a world class painting was displayed in front of her, she wasn't in the mood to enjoy it at all.

And so, he had no chance but to take a step back. "Where are you going?" Since she had already made her words clear, it wouldn't be wise for him to continue dragging her around the art gallery.

He finally got the chance to enjoy a peaceful time but he didn't expect her to hate it so much. As he looked back at the painting resignedly, she dragged her to the entrance straight away. Looks like she really doesn't like these paintings.

Soon, they arrived at the entrance but when Heather saw how reluctant Matthias was to leave, she asked tentatively, “Do you really like the exhibition?”

He nodded his head slightly as he didn’t hold back his praise. “The paintings in the exhibition really are magnificent. Even an amateur like me can see that they are gorgeous.”

It seems like he really wants to stay here for a while to enjoy these paintings.

“Since you like it so much, we must leave here as soon as possible.” She tried to annoy him by revealing a smirk and she couldn’t help but go against him. Upon hearing that, Matthias paused for a moment and he held onto her tightly. Suddenly, she couldn’t move an inch, so she asked confusedly, “What are you doing? Are we not leaving?” Is he now throwing a tantrum?

“Do you really hate this exhibition or do you hate the things I like?” He was displeased with her cynical tone. Initially, she wanted to infuriate him and now, she almost succeeded in doing so.

“I hate the things you like,” she answered directly without any consideration for his feelings.

“Really?” he asked reluctantly. Truth was, her answer was very obvious but he didn’t know why he was deceiving himself.

“Mr. Locke, do I have the right to choose the next location for our date?” she asked in an aggressive tone.

Finally, he let go of her hand and muttered, “Yes, you do.” It’s no use reasoning with her.

“Come play tennis with me,” she suggested. Matthias, on the other hand, didn’t know why she wanted to play tennis with him all of a sudden.

Since he didn’t know how to play tennis, a hint of hesitation flashed across his face, and the alert Heather picked it up. I can’t let go of this chance to embarrass him.

“If you don’t know how to play, I can always teach you.” She curled up her lips in a sarcastic manner as she tried to make him hate her.

However, he had his own ego to protect. “There’s no need for that.” It’s just tennis. How hard can it be?

“Then let’s have some fun later on,” she countered with a bright smile. Finally, I’ve won this round.

## Standing before Love Chapter 520

At the tennis court, Heather had changed into her tennis outfit and it brought out an adorable, preppy charm to her appearance. It was as if she had a Midas touch that allowed her to turn even the plainest of clothes into chic attire.

The tennis outfit flattered her silhouette and accentuated her curves. Matthias, on the other hand, had had to change into his tennis outfit as well, and his day-to-day appearance might mislead one to overlook his lean, muscular build.

He had spent a better part of the last few years training to fill up his frame, so it went without saying that he boasted a well-built physique, with a body fat ratio that was rigorously maintained at 10 percent. His towering height gave the impression that he was neither strong nor athletic, but the truth was such that he packed a punch stronger than that of a world boxing champion.

Presently, he saw that Heather was poised to serve the ball. He tightened his grip on his tennis racket, trying to feel and familiarize himself with its weight. This was his first time playing tennis and though he had absorbed as much as he could from his lessons, there were still a couple of techniques he had yet to master.

Not wanting to appear weak before his opponent, he frowned and tried to imitate Heather’s posture. She was standing with her feet slightly apart and her knees were bent as she came to a low squat, her soles firmly planted on the ground.

She looked like she was ready to serve and Matthias stared at the ball in her hand intently, knowing that there was little else he could do other than to wing it.

He was confident in his own athletic abilities and he was sure that he could return her serve despite not having grasped the proper stance or posture. On the other side of the net, Heather was appraising him with a taunting gleam in

her eyes as a smirk tugged on her lips. The service was just as important to her as it was to him and she couldn't wait to see him defeated.

The very next moment, her racket slammed against the ball and she sent it hurtling toward him at incredible velocity. Matthias, on the other hand, was calm as he flicked his racket, looking handsome and dashing as he aimed to return the serve. His stance was unaffected by his lack of knowledge in tennis.

However, his racket made contact with thin air as the ball flew past it. He stared in disbelief as the ball bounced and rolled to a stop on the far side of the court. I missed it, he thought in bewilderment.

Frustrated, he couldn't believe that he was humiliated at the start of the game. Meanwhile, Heather was smiling pleasantly, somewhat relieved that he missed the return.

She could tell from his stiff and clumsy posture that he was completely unfamiliar with tennis and fortunately for her, she had chosen such a battlefield to finally demolish his triumph. She was beginning to get sick from having him lord his superiority over her whenever they were together.

Now, she could finally dominate him on the tennis court. At the sight of the smug look on her face, Matthias was no longer embarrassed of his early defeat and he felt his heart swell at how happy he had made her.

"Director Locke, it looks like you need to work on your techniques," she sang challengingly, her voice carrying over the court. She looked young and vibrant as she swung her racket back and forth.

"I'm afraid you'll have to keep training with me then, Miss Langston," he answered courteously, shedding the assertive demeanor he had put on back at the art gallery.

Heather marveled at the way he could be gentlemanly for a minute and domineering the next, and his mood swings could give anyone a whiplash. He's more fickle than women are, she thought with amusement. However, she felt her heart leap when she fixed her gaze on his fine looks. Matthias was beginning to grow on her and the more she looked at him, the more handsome he seemed.

A devious smile lit up her face as she said, "Then you ought to watch your back." She had gone easy on him when she served the ball earlier, but that did not mean she would hold back for the rest of the game.

"I'll be sure to give it my all," he quipped, flashing her a kind smile that made her heart thump.

There were a lot of times when she had inadvertently revealed her true self before him, and it was precisely because he could see through all her acts that she felt it was pointless to keep up any pretense with him.

She loved it when she could take off her mask and be in her own skin whenever she was with him. Being together with Matthias had its perks, one of which was that she no longer had to hide away her real emotions.

Fuelled by this strange surge of endearment that she had for him, Heather slammed her racket into the ball once more in a ruthless stroke. The ball flew toward him at high speed and she prayed that it would brush past his shoulder so that she might secure a second triumph.

Matthias was taken aback by how ruthless she was as the ball whooshed past his collar, a breath away from hitting his neck.

The thud of the ball hitting the ground seemed to echo around them. He could still feel the breeze from when the ball flew past his neck and his skin prickled at the very close call. He berated himself for letting down his guard in the first place—he should not have underestimated her thirst for vengeance.

He was itching to ask her if she was a Scorpio, because it would account for her tendencies to seek revenge. Heather, on the other hand, was standing on the other side of the court, smiling as she tilted her head to assess him. The pink tennis outfit she was wearing suited her well and coupled with her fresh-faced appearance today, she looked younger and more unassuming than her usual haughty self.

"You'd better be careful, Director Locke," she chimed, grinning like the cat who ate the canary. She was more than happy to see him struggling.

"Of course you would find joy in my suffering," he accused exasperatedly.



She winked at him and offered no reply. At some point during the course of their acquaintance, she found that torturing him was what gave her satisfaction.

Maybe I'm just petty and despicable, she thought with a wicked and triumphant smile on her face. Seeing how frustrated he was only made her want to squeal in delight.

"Looks like somebody missed again," she sang and she stuck her tongue out playfully. It was almost as if the tennis outfit she wore brought out the mischievous and childish side of her.

"I won't miss the next one," Matthias declared confidently and determinedly.

Heather only shook her head in response. From what she had seen thus far, it would take him a couple more misses before he could even return one of her strokes, but she knew better than to underestimate him. She was particularly careful the third time as she got into her serving position. Her eyes met his over the net and it was as though they were communicating telepathically.

She was suddenly anxious as she knew that Matthias was a fast learner and absorbed new information like a sponge. While she didn't know how much he had picked up since the beginning of the game, she wanted to make sure that he would miss this ball just like he did the last two, so that she could rub her triumph in his face. However, she thought about the determined edge in his voice earlier when he said he would not miss.

"Watch out," she announced after what felt like a long moment. She began to tip her racket forward, and Matthias could feel the adrenaline and anxiety sprouting within him.

He was laser-focused as his eyes focused intently on the ball. I will not miss this one and I'm going to return it. He watched as the ball flew toward him like a flash of lightning, and he waited calmly until the ball was close to hitting the ground in front of his feet before he swung his racket.

This time, his racket managed to make contact with the ball and he returned it with surprising precision. Heather grew sullen at this, but she did not dwell on it as her eyes followed the movement of the ball and she returned it with an agile stroke of her own.

And so, the both of them sent the ball flying back and forth. Before long, they came to a tie after three rounds, which served as a testament to Matthias' sponge-like ability to retain whatever he had learned. He appeared to have mastered tennis within the short span of one hour, and it was hard to tell from the way he rallied against Heather that he had never stepped foot inside a tennis court before this.

Meanwhile, Heather was a fan of intellectuals but there were times when she hated them, such as now. She couldn't help but wish Matthias was a little slower now that he was quickly adapting to the ferocity of the game, and it wasn't long before she found herself in the midst of an actual tennis battle. The game no longer brought her the same satisfaction that came from her earlier triumphs.

"Looks like I'm a fast learner after all, Miss Langston!" Matthias was gloating as he swung his racket, pleased with his progress following their hour-long match.

"I so envy your ability to pick up new things so easily, Director Locke," she said sarcastically. He's so full of himself and he's dangling his triumph in front of me on purpose.

She was already drained from the match, and she knew that she would spend the next day in bed if they were to go on with the game. The gym was becoming a foreign place ever since her return to Bradford City and now that she was confined within the walls of her office on a daily basis, her stamina was not the same as it had once been.

"You happen to be an excellent coach," he mused, politely giving her the credit.

Heather was humbled by this but she did not say anything to him in response. Nonetheless, Matthias had a keen eye and he could tell from her body language that she appreciated the credit.

After a pause, she decided that she should end the game here. Her limbs were already aching from the exercise as she called out to him, "Let's take a break."

Matthias' stamina was far better than hers. He was a man, after all, and he had had professional training for a while now. His strength came up to par—if not completely surpassing—that of a militant in the special forces. There had

been a time when he thought he might make a living for himself as a personal bodyguard should being the director of Locke Group not work out for him.

Heather found herself a chair and sat down, making herself comfortable. As for Matthias, he stood next to her, looking like an actual personal bodyguard.

“Aren’t you tired?” Now that she was seated, Heather had to crane her neck in order to get a good look at him and even then, all she could see was the delicate curve of his jawline. She marveled at his incredible stamina.

“Not at all,” he answered as he gazed down at her. Apparently, his features were so perfectly chiseled that he looked good from any angle.

“Stop standing there and sit down. I’ll sprain my neck if I have to keep looking up at you while we talk,” she snapped and tore her eyes away. It was hard to suppress the sudden attraction she felt for him at that moment, seeing how she was a sucker for handsome faces.

Upon hearing this, he sat down, taking up most of the space on the bench. She instantly regretted asking him to sit and she scooted slightly to the side. However, he inched closer to her, causing her to turn and glare at the good-looking man next to her.

His alabaster skin was glistening with a fine layer of perspiration, and testosterone was practically dripping off him as he nudged closer to her. Unlike other men, Matthias did not stink of sweat or body odor. In fact, he even smelled a little citrusy despite the vigorous match just now.

“I remember how you used to look like a zombie back in the day, and now it’s like you’re a completely different person,” she remarked thoughtfully. She was curious as to how he had managed to give himself such a makeover—from frail and sickly to strong and athletic.

“There’s infinite potential in everybody, and I just so happen to have cracked God’s password,” he joked, his answer as vague and mystifying as the smile on his face.

“If it’s true that the Locke Family is bursting with talent, how are you so clueless about tennis?” she asked, riding her wave of curiosity.

Matthias did not give her an answer this time and he only offered her a rueful smile. He didn't want to tell her the truth—that his lack of experience in tennis had something to do with her.

“Okay, fine; don't tell me.” Heather rose from her seat and made a beeline for a different resting spot, but she was infuriated when he followed her like the thick-skinned rascal that he was.

“It's because you've loved tennis since you were little,” he finally confessed, flushing slightly.

“Oh—so your hatred for me translates to your hatred for tennis? That certainly makes sense,” she mocked. There was never a quiet moment between the both of them and their relationship proved to be fertile ground for constant bickering.

“The past is in the past. Must you hold on to it so stubbornly?” he countered somberly. He had been determined to let go of the past, even if it meant his love for Myra would wither away in the dark.

When Heather heard this, she scoffed coldly and retorted, “I don't think I'm the one who's having a hard time letting go.” How dare he accuse me? This is a classic example of the guilty party filing the suit first!

“I've let go but the question is, can you?” Matthias bit out every word, his gaze darkening with the emotions that threatened to overwhelm.

She gave him an odd look. This was the man who had been clinging onto the past with steel-like will, yet he stood before her telling her otherwise.

Should I believe him? There was a somewhat crestfallen look in her eyes as she pondered on his words. Indeed, there was nothing in the past for her to cling on to and she wasn't the one who had had her heart broken, so why did the past fill her with so much guilt?

## Standing before Love Chapter 521

Given how fickle and stubborn women could be, men would never voluntarily play against them without the preface of courtship. Gone was the mischievous and lively Heather who had been on the tennis court earlier as she gazed at him pointedly. It was clear that this would be the end of their tennis-filled escapade.

Matthias, on the other hand, had only just started to see the fun of tennis when she flippantly declared that she no longer wanted to play another set. Seeing as she had the final say for their date today, he had no choice but to assent to her decision to carry on their date elsewhere.

As they went to retrieve the car, he asked in concern, “Are you hungry? Shall we grab a bite?”

Her gaze flickered over to him and she teased, “I think you’re the one who’s hungry!”

He chuckled at this. Truth was, she was right to say that he was hungry. He hadn’t eaten much during lunch with the Langstons, seeing as their food disagreed with his palate.

Following their tennis match, Matthias felt as if he had been hollowed out. He wasn’t proud of this, hence his subtle invitation for a meal in the first place. He certainly did not expect her to call his bluff.

“But I’m not hungry now, so why don’t we go play a round of golf?” Heather suggested excitedly, her lips curving up into a devious smile. She had to admit that these little digs were oddly satisfying.

“Alright, then.” He looked at her with endearment, finding it adorable that she could look so pleased with her little evil schemes.

They began to drive over to the golf course that she had deliberately chosen, and it happened to be the best one in Bradford City. However, she did not want to step foot on the premises at all.

She grew grim as she thought about how the manager of the golf course had always leered at her and as one thought led to another, her expression only soured when the image of Caleb’s menacing face flashed in her mind. As far as she was concerned, he was the epitome of evil and she bristled whenever she caught sight of his insidious looks.

Meanwhile, Matthias was looking at Heather oddly as he took in the changes in her expression. He wondered what she was thinking of and why she looked so conflicted. They were only going golfing, after all. It was only when the car rolled to a stop at the traffic light that she noticed he was staring at her and she shot him an affronted look.

He was observing her so intently that it was a surprise he hadn't pressed his face against hers. Heather frowned and eyed him with disgust, then feigned nonchalance as she touched her face, hoping that there wasn't any dirt on it. That would have been embarrassing.

"Stop staring at me and keep your eyes on the road," she warned him irritably. His behavior today had been erratic and secretive, as if he had embodied every bit the despicable villain.

"A penny for your thoughts, my lady?" He was just as affable as he had been since the beginning of their date, having kept his temper under lock and key. He was hoping that his warm compassion would eventually cajole Heather into changing her mind about him.

"I have no thoughts worthy of a penny," she answered uneasily, fidgeting slightly in her seat. She was merely thinking about Caleb and what he might do next.

"Are you thirsty?" Matthias took the bottled water from the cupholder and passed it over to her with his free hand.

She turned down the water, waving her hand dismissively as she said, "I don't want it." Heather didn't like drinking bottled water. Besides, she felt fine and wasn't feeling thirsty at all.

"Then could you please help me open the cap?" he asked, pretending to be really focused on driving with one hand.

"You know how evolution has given us this?" She pointed to her mouth, indicating for him to use his to twist the bottle cap open.

Once again, she turned him down. Still holding onto the water bottle, Matthias thought better of it and decided to put it back into the cupholder. He should be used to rejection by now but that didn't mean he would stop trying to talk to her. This was one of Evan's suggestions—chemistry came from conversation.

Heather, on the other hand, felt her heart twist at Matthias' awkwardness as he tried to make small talk with her. He had never been that skilled in making a good impression and when it came to romantic pursuits, he could use a manual or two. As a matter of fact, he looked like he was having a hard time trying to ease the tension between them, and she might even go so far as to say he was helpless.

As the car continued forward, she stared calmly out the windscreen while his gaze occasionally flickered over to her. At some point during the drive, she began to find his curious looks irritating. She had grown so used to seeing his wicked side that his sudden transition into a lovesick schoolboy was making her uncomfortable. It was as if their dynamics had taken an abrupt and strange turn.

“Maybe we should talk about why you’re trying so hard to put up an act and the purpose behind it,” Heather said blatantly, seeing as there were still a bit of ways to go before they reached the golf course.

The golf course she had chosen was known for its expansive acres, but its geographical location was, unfortunately, not ideal. It was set in the outskirts to accommodate its sprawling landscape, which means it would take a long drive to get there. The journey would be insufferable if Matthias were to continue giving her those unreadable and meaningful looks, and she wasn’t sure what he was trying to imply through his gaze.

“How are you so sure that I’m putting on an act? What if this is my true self?” His lips tipped up into a mocking smile, though she wasn’t sure if he was being self-deprecating or sarcastic toward her.

“Am I supposed to believe that you’re showing me your kind and compassionate nature?” She burst into a small laugh, thoroughly amused. “Come on, Director Locke. You’re in charge of the Locke Group, are you not? You can’t rule over the company with kindness and compassion.”

It wasn’t as if Heather was completely oblivious to the internal conflicts that were rife within the large Locke family. She had done enough research to know that it was no easy feat for anyone to hold power in his family—they did not favor brawn over brains, after all.

“I’m just trying to be myself in front of the person I like,” Matthias replied honestly. However, Heather froze when she heard this.

“The person you like,” she repeated stiffly. She did not like this term and she disliked it even more when Matthias used it to describe her. There was no way she could ever reciprocate his feelings despite the many occasions on which he had made them known, and she knew that feigning ignorance was no longer a viable option at this point.

Not wanting to beat around the bush, she asked, “Are you saying that you’ve fallen for me?”

“Yes; I have,” he confessed plainly. Denial was but futile effort at this point.

“Well, don’t. Don’t fall for me. I’ve told you as much from the very beginning,” Heather countered imperiously. They had been young when she warned him not to fall for her, and she remembered having done so during their first meeting.

“Yes; I know you’ve told me that a long time ago,” he agreed. The memory was still imprinted in his mind and he recalled how she had looked as beautiful as an angel and been as wicked as the devil.

“But you know how unpredictable these things are, and it’s not as if I could stop myself from falling for you. I can’t even stop thinking about you,” he added, feeling emboldened by his earlier confession. He wanted to tell her how much he liked her but he couldn’t bring himself to look her in the eye.

“Why would you ever fall for me? You, out of all people, know exactly how wicked I am. After all, I basically ruined your chances of having a love life.” The barest hint of a smile played on Heather’s lips. She couldn’t quite figure out men and their feelings; how could he fall for her while still holding a grudge against her?

“Then give me back those chances at love, even if things might turn out differently,” he said softly, his voice thick with implication. At that moment, it felt as if the air in the car was getting warmer.

His words shot through her erratically-beating heart like an arrow. If he kept going on with his bold and heartfelt confessions, the walls around her could very well come crashing down and leave her vulnerable.

“No way,” she bit out with absolute resolve. The dark and sentimental gaze with which he regarded her was truly meant for Myra, and it would do her well to remember that.

Pride was what stood between them. Try as she might, she could not forget the way he had been head over heels for Myra, and Heather did not want to become her replacement.



“I ruined your chances at love and I took Myra away from you. Those aren’t things I could ever give back to you,” she explained slowly and tiredly. Matthias might have lost his mind and been spewing nonsense for all she cared, but she could not allow herself to stray from reason.

“You keep bringing Myra up. It seems as if you’re dwelling on the fact that the person I used to like was her instead of you,” he pointed out forthrightly. He eyed her steadily, making her wish she could hide from his piercing gaze.

“The person you’re in love with has always been Myra. Think about it, Matthias—why would you ever fall for me in the first place? It’s practically impossible.” Heather felt like she was drowning and was desperately trying to hold onto the driftwood in front of her, worried that if she let go, she might be pulled into the depths of the icy waters.

“I have once told myself with the same fierce certainty that I would never fall for you even if you were the last person on Earth, but fate has a twisted sense of humor and before I knew it, I found myself having feelings for you, falling for you.” Matthias wished he could escape this terrifying loop wherein his thoughts revolved around Heather, and there had been a time when he decided against making his feelings known to her. However, at the end of the day, he still wanted her to know the truth.

This was especially so when other men started sprouting around her, and only then did he realize how bracing and bitter jealousy could be. He would much rather make the first move than watch her walk away with someone else. He couldn’t bear the thought of it.

He might regret it if he never tried to pursue Heather romantically. It was exactly how he had missed his shot with Myra, and he didn’t want a repeat of that now that he finally came to terms with how he felt about Heather.

“Have you really fallen for me, Matthias?” she questioned once more, wanting to make sure that she was still firmly rooted in reality instead of some fever dream.

He nodded at her firmly. “How many times do I have to say it in order to make you believe me?”

“Turn the car around and drive me home this instant!” she shouted. She no longer wanted to go golfing and she had lost interest in doing anything else—all she wanted was to go home and be with her own thoughts.

“But we’re not done with our date yet,” he reminded her gently. It had taken him a lot of effort to finally get a date with her, so it was only natural that he didn’t want it to come to such an abrupt end.

“I need to calm down and process all this.” Heather blinked her doe-like eyes as she felt the desperate need to anchor the emotions swelling within her. Her chest tightened with the urge to cry, though she doubted if the tears would come at all.

“Is it so hard for you to choose to love me back?” he asked disappointedly.

Incredulous, she retorted, “Could you ever love your enemy?” Then, she realized that her words had come out wrong because judging from the looks of it, Matthias really had fallen in love with his enemy.

Upon hearing her retort, Matthias was at a loss for words. Well, this is awkward, he thought ruefully. While he was torn over having feelings for somebody he ought to hate, she was determined to never fall for him. Moreover, she had continuously doubted him and suspected he had ulterior motives. I must have been blind to fall for her in the first place.

“Did you put a spell on me or something?” he blurted out without much thought.

Heather glanced at him in bewilderment. If I put a spell on him, why on earth would I make him fall for me when I could make him get away from me instead?

“Look, I can’t think clearly now so it would really help if you could give me some form of encouragement or assurance, just to let me have the strength to pine after you shamelessly with all that I have,” he pleaded with her with such earnestness that Heather felt her heart twist.

“Don’t fall for me. It will never work out between us,” she replied with finality, putting an end to this conversation. This relationship was cursed from the beginning and she had to cut off its roots before it grew into something worse.