

Standing before Love Chapter 602

One shouldn't speak too carelessly on a snowy day. Looking at the snow outside the window, Matthias thought, These are the kind of days that are perfect for snuggling. However, the heater in the car was getting weaker. If they were still unable to find their way out, they might really need to send an SOS message.

"The GPS isn't helping at all." Heather looked at the car's GPS and felt that it was leading them to an even more remote area.

"The petrol is running low." Matthias was worried that the car would stop halfway.

"Should we call and seek help?" Heather actually sounded like she was gloating.

"It seems like you're quite happy to run into a situation like this." Matthias had never met a woman like Heather. Ever since she arrived in Iceland, he had been taken aback by her every word and action.

Heather darted an indifferent glance at Matthias while wearing a half-smile. "Are you unhappy with me?" From her perspective, Matthias had been nitpicking at her ever since they reached Iceland.

"How dare I?" Matthias quickly denied. As if testing Heather's patience, he was growing bolder by the minute. He even thought he would be safe in front of Heather no matter what he did.

In fact, he was right. Heather's temper had gotten much better and she smiled more often now. Besides, she wouldn't simply blow up at Matthias anymore. Even if he stepped over the line, she would let it pass and wouldn't kick up a fuss like she used to anymore.

Despite his insensitivity, Matthias still noticed something was off. On the surface, it seemed like Heather was making improvements, but in reality, it showed something was wrong. For some reason, he was perturbed by the underlying issue. What's with her sudden change of behavior? This question had been bothering Matthias for a while now. Occasionally, he would wake up in the middle of the night to check on Heather, who was not far away from him, for he was worried she would suddenly disappear out of the blue.

“I wonder how things are in Bradford City.” Heather suddenly thought of Bradford City. After all, before they went abroad, she had come across a woman, and she had a hunch that she would meet the woman again soon.

Recently, Heather couldn't stop thinking about the encounter. She felt that the appearance of the woman was not a coincidence and the latter might be related to the mysterious party behind the scene. In fact, she had just informed Leon about this matter via Messenger a while ago and hoped that he could help her find out the real identity of that woman.

“If you're worried about the situation in Bradford City, we can head back earlier.” Matthias was willing to end their vacation earlier. As much as he enjoyed the time spent with Heather recently, he too had been troubled by some uncertainties, so he would rather head back to Bradford City and face reality.

“Do you want to go back to Bradford City?” Heather turned to look at Matthias. Actually, she already had this thought long ago, but she hadn't been able to make up her mind.

Matthias remained silent, so Heather regarded his non-denial as acquiescence. Naturally, she understood Matthias' thoughts, given that both of them were staring into each other's eyes and reading each other's minds.

“There's no way we can go back now. The planes won't be able to take off on a snowy day.” Heather retracted her gaze from Matthias and stared at the heavy snow through the window.

No one knew when the snow would stop. At this point in time, the decision of whether to go back or not was not up to them but the weather instead.

“We can take a train to leave here and transit to a plane in another country.” Matthias felt like Heather was still running away from the problem. There were plenty of solutions so why would she insist on getting on a plane in Iceland?

“You can't wait to go home, huh?” Heather was surprised because Matthias seemed to be rather determined this time, and she didn't know how to respond to him.

Matthias pulled up the car. “The petrol has run out.” They then decided to forgo asking for help as their plan was to save the remaining bit of petrol for the heater to run.

On the other hand, Heather immediately dialed the emergency number, but when the police asked for her exact location, she was at a loss for words. The GPS wasn't working and they were currently at an extremely remote place, so she didn't know how to inform them about her location either.

Just then, Matthias took over her phone and started communicating with the police. After his narration, the police quickly had a grasp of their location.

"I was today years old when I realized yet another skill of yours." Heather smiled while gazing at Matthias. The way he explained their location to the police was indeed interesting. Never would Heather ever thought to explain it in such a way. Looks like Matthias is pretty quick-witted, she thought.

"I've learned some survival skills before." In fact, Matthias had mentioned this before, but he decided to emphasize it again.

It was only then that Heather recalled that fact. No wonder he sounded so professional just now. It turns out that he has undergone some special training before. Now that she thought about it, the Locke Family was indeed prudent, but she couldn't understand why they would provide so much training to the person in charge of the family. She had heard from Matthias quite a number of times about the training he had undergone. He even had to excel in martial arts, which wasn't something any ordinary man would be able to endure.

"What exactly did the Locke Family go through for them to be so strict with you?" Given how strict Matthias' family was with him, Heather couldn't even imagine how he could've tolerated it throughout those years.

The training that was coerced onto Matthias by the Locke Family had already exceeded the endurance limit of any ordinary person. Moreover, Matthias was thin and weak back then; he didn't look like he would be able to endure all of it at all. Hence, Heather was really surprised to see him equipped with all these skills now.

"The Locke Family is large with many descendants. Unfortunately, every person in charge in the past didn't live long. They either passed away due to the strain of overwork or were kidnapped and killed as a result of blood feuds," Matthias said calmly as if it was a common event in normal families. Heather freaked out after hearing his explanation.

Before this, Heather had always thought that the Moriarty Family was gloomy and eerie. But now, it seemed like the Locke Family was not so different from

the Moriartys after all. As such, she thought it was no coincidence that the two families were connected.

“What about your father?” Heather recalled that Matthias’ father was the ex-CEO of Locke Group, and he had passed away at a young age too.

“He was killed by an enemy,” Matthias answered unaffectedly. He indeed had no feelings toward his father at all.

Back then when Matthias’ father was still around, he did not fulfill his responsibility as a father at all, and because of him, a lot of pressure was exerted onto Matthias after he died, so of course, the man would detest his father.

“I’m sorry,” Heather mumbled apologetically and internally cursed herself for being too straightforward.

“No worries. If it wasn’t for his death, I wouldn’t have been able to become the person in charge of the Locke Family today,” Matthias said in a revengeful tone. Even his expression had changed.

“Don’t overthink it. What has passed is past, so let’s not hold on to these anymore,” Heather consoled Matthias. His father had already passed on, so Matthias shouldn’t entrap himself because of his father.

“I’ve taken it easy a long time ago, so don’t worry about me. I’m not affected by this incident at all. After all, what has passed is past.” Although Matthias said so, in reality, he actually wasn’t able to reconcile with himself.

Just then, Heather looked straight into Matthias’ eyes, knowing that whenever he lied, his irises would change color, making them look like a clear well. While they appeared alluring, it, in fact, meant that he was troubled deep down.

“You’re lying.” Heather called him out directly. She could feel the emotional struggle that Matthias was experiencing, and she hoped to help him resolve it.

“I’m not.” Matthias smiled. If truth be told, there were a lot of things he couldn’t tell Heather.

“You don’t dare to be honest with me because you don’t trust me?” Matthias felt his heart squeezed when he saw Heather’s disappointed look. Oh, how he

wished to be completely honest with her, but he didn't want her to bear any unnecessary burden.

"I didn't expect you to care for the Locke Family this much." Matthias directed the topic in another direction.

Heather was taken aback by Matthias' comment. She was indeed interested in matters regarding the Locke Family because she wanted to make a breakthrough from there. It was hard to approach the Moriartys, so she could only target the Lockes for now.

Nevertheless, Matthias was very prudent, so Heather wasn't able to make any progress either. She was rather distressed that she couldn't find a breakthrough because whenever Matthias recollected the past, he wouldn't delve deeper into it.

"Do you think I care about the Lockes?" Heather looked at Matthias calmly. She had to remain firm at this moment lest Matthias noticed her intention.

"Then, could it be me you're caring for?" Matthias said in a self-mocking manner, for he didn't think too highly of himself.

In fact, he had long noticed that Heather was concerned about the matters regarding his family all this while. Although he had not figured out her real intention, he kept his guard up. In fact, he was rather disappointed in Heather's actions because it seemed like she was more concerned about the Locke Family's secret than him. He couldn't help wondering when she would start taking him seriously.

He had been waiting for a change in Heather, but she had remained secretive to him all this while, which made him frustrated. No matter how much effort he put in, he couldn't make Heather open up to him. While he had gradually opened up to Heather, the latter's heart remained closed, making the man feel rather hurt.

"I'm curious about your encounters these past years too." Finding out the Locke Family's secret wasn't Heather's only intention; she wanted to care for Matthias too.

"What has passed is past—that is what you said to me just now." This time, Matthias refused to give in and went against Heather.

The atmosphere became tense at once. The heater was getting weaker and the car engine was about to shut off, yet they didn't feel cold at all.

"Heather, I do not wish to recall what happened in the past. Please stop forcing me, alright?" Matthias gave in toward the end. He didn't wish to continue arguing with Heather, so he gave her an out.

"Well, sorry for caring then. I know my place now—I have no right to meddle with President Locke's private matters." Heather did not give in to Matthias' compromise. As such, the harmony that had been gradually built between them over the past few days was destroyed instantly.

"Heather." Matthias didn't know how to bring this around with Heather. Just now, he had indeed felt her care for him, so maybe he had been oversensitive. After giving it a thought, he figured his words were indeed too harsh just now.

"When will the rescue team arrive?" Heather put the matter aside and brought forward a more realistic question.

"An hour later," Matthias replied.

"The heater has already stopped working. We'll be frozen to death in the car after an hour," Heather said indifferently as if the dispute between them had not happened.

"An hour will go by very fast." Matthias felt like Heather was exaggerating the situation.

Just then, Heather opened the door and the cold wind, accompanied with snowflakes, gushed into the car. Dumbfounded by Heather's actions, Matthias quickly yelled at her from behind, "Where are you going?"

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Matthias was worried that Heather would suffer frostbite, so he had no choice but to chase after her. However, Heather walked so fast she had disappeared in the blink of an eye.

When she turned around, she saw Matthias following her from a distance. Her eyes met with Matthias', and she wore an inexplicable expression.

“Why did you follow me?” Heather just wanted to have some time alone. She didn’t expect Matthias to tag along, so she was a little frustrated.

“Why are you angry all of a sudden?” Matthias was distressed. He actually wanted to retort but he ended up biting his tongue.

“I’m not angry. I just came out to watch the snow,” Heather said indifferently.

“You’re wearing so little and it’s so cold out here. Don’t stay outside too long or you might get frostbite.” Matthias grasped Heather’s hand, wanting to bring her back to the car.

“Just let me take a walk and get some fresh air.” It was suffocating in the car, and Heather really needed some space.

“Are you still worried about what’s happening back in Solaria?” Recently, Heather had rarely brought up the matters in Solaria, but Matthias could feel that something was bothering her.

“Stop asking me about these matters.” Heather was already vexed enough, yet Matthias kept reminding her of the issues. This made her very annoyed.

“What exactly is going on in your mind?” To be frank, Matthias was troubled too because he couldn’t figure out Heather’s thoughts at all, yet Heather was keeping everything from him.

“I don’t want to argue with you in the snow. Just leave me alone, will you?” At this point, Heather suddenly regretted asking Matthias to come along to Iceland because she couldn’t be at peace at all with his presence. She would be reminded of Myra whenever she saw him. Every day was new yet stressful for Heather because too many things were weighing her down, and she felt as if she was about to break down sooner or later.

“If the matters back in Solaria really are troubling you, let’s just go back,” Matthias suggested. He, too, was worried that Heather would have an emotional breakdown.

“If we leave now, wouldn’t all our efforts go to waste? We haven’t even caught a glimpse of the Northern Lights yet.” Heather wanted to use this agenda to distract herself. The goal she had initially set for herself was to see the Northern Lights. Since she had yet to achieve her goal, naturally she wouldn’t want to leave just yet.

“We’ll only get to see the Northern Lights if we’re lucky. If we don’t get to see it during this winter, are you planning to stay here forever?” Matthias’ tone turned stern as he was very determined to bring Heather back to Solaria.

After realizing Matthias’ intention, Heather put on a gloomy and scary smile.

“So you’re asking me to obey your command then?” Originally, Heather wanted to avoid picking a fight with Matthias, but he wouldn’t stop pushing her buttons. Technically, Matthias brought this upon himself. Right now, Heather wished Matthias could just disappear.

“Stop running away. I’ll always stay by your side and face everything with you. Go back with me, alright?” Matthias tried to convince Heather so that she would muster some courage to face reality.

“Why do you want to keep influencing me?” Heather stared at Matthias. This time, she felt that he had over-interfered in her life.

“Don’t cross the line, Heather.” Despite Matthias’ good temper, he couldn’t stand Heather’s derision.

“I just need some time alone. If you miss home so much, just go.” Heather didn’t want to stay with Matthias anymore. At this moment, she just wanted to be alone. She would be less frustrated without seeing anyone else, especially Matthias.

“Sure,” Matthias replied firmly. Today, both of them were rather touchy, and for once, Matthias didn’t want to please Heather in a servile manner.

Heather was relieved after hearing Matthias’ reply as she thought this outcome was favorable too—no more quarrels.

For some reason, Matthias was dejected to see Heather’s relieved look. Looks like she really doesn’t want me around. He couldn’t help but feel like the past few days were a joke, mocking coldly at Matthias.

“So it seems like you were actually done with me long ago,” Matthias croaked heartbrokenly as he couldn’t reconcile with himself seeing Heather’s expression.

Snowflakes fell on their hair and body, but Matthias couldn’t feel a tinge of coldness at all, for he was completely dispirited. This nasty weather actually

matches my current feelings. Matthias smiled ruefully. Nevertheless, he shouldn't let himself dwell in this pathetic state of mind any longer.

Then, Matthias made a call to Nikolai. "Book a plane ticket for me." His order was short and concise, and he hung up immediately even before Nikolai could respond.

Meanwhile, Heather still wore a stubborn look. She knew she was about to drive Matthias away, but it actually made her feel better mentally.

Seeing that Heather remained silent, Matthias went back to the car on his own. He didn't want to bother with Heather anymore as he was already disheartened after being given the cold shoulder.

There had been multiple situations where Matthias wanted to ask Heather just how could she be this ruthless and cruel. Did she not care for his feelings even to the slightest bit? She just couldn't care less about my feelings. There were numerous times Matthias was filled with hope, but he was let down again and again; he felt like his heart couldn't take it anymore.

The car heater had completely gone off, making the inside of the car as cold as the outside. Matthias stared at the dead car engine and felt that his heart was in the exact same state at this moment.

Heather gradually disappeared from his sight. As she strode away further and further, Matthias felt like he could never hold on to her. He reached out his hand and dejectedly put it down again. Heather had already left, just like how their relationship was slowly drifting away. It seemed like they could never get on the same page.

Matthias decided to stop being distressed about it as he leaned against the car seat and waited for the arrival of the rescue team. He could not be concerned with Heather's whereabouts anymore.

After staying around Heather for so long, Matthias felt like he was going to lose himself soon. As a matter of fact, he had even thought of changing his life plans for the sake of Heather, but he had never had a place in the latter's heart. It was only just Matthias' wishful thinking to put Heather in his future plans. What a joke.

What's taking the rescue team so long? Matthias waited anxiously. Every second was torture to him. He had to refrain from getting out of the car to go

look for Heather. The more he couldn't see her, the stronger his impulse to go find her.

Matthias was anxious; he wished to leave this place immediately and was dying to run away from Iceland. Meanwhile, Heather walked further in the opposite direction. She didn't want to stay beside Matthias because she was worried that the closer they got, the more she would want to make him stay.

Would a person feel lonely when he or she was alone? If she hadn't experienced being together with Matthias, she wouldn't have felt so alone. At that thought, a cold smile appeared on her face—one that was as cold as the snow. Currently, she had a hunch that there would be people in front.

Heather walked for quite a while with her persistence, and sure enough, Matthias did not come after her anymore. Heather was relieved, but at the same time, her heart felt heavy for some reason. She had long anticipated that one day, Matthias would be done with her, and it seemed like the day had finally come.

This was indeed taunting. Heather couldn't feel the cold physically. Due to her being alone in Iceland now, her heart felt bleak.

The snow was very heavy, and it was the heaviest one Heather had seen ever since she was born. From time to time, some snowflakes would fall onto her collar and slide down her neck. She regretted not wearing a thicker coat. The wind coat that she was wearing currently only had an attractive appearance, and it didn't really have any other function than that.

"If it's this cold all year long..." Heather stopped halfway upon realizing that she sounded like a psychopath talking to herself when she was alone.

Heather suddenly felt lonely without Matthias being by her side. It was only then that she realized she had long been used to Matthias' existence. She even started missing that annoying mouth of his. They just parted not long ago, yet Heather was already missing him dearly. She hated herself right now, for she felt useless. Why would I become so fragile and emotional? I just parted with Matthias. This isn't a valid reason to be sad. How absurd!

Heather wanted to get rid of all the messy thoughts in her mind. She didn't want to be emotionally affected by Matthias anymore. She was not a little girl who wasn't capable of being on her own—she was a strong and independent woman in the eyes of others.

However, at this moment, Heather was as fragile as a child. She even had an impulse to cry. When the snowflakes fell on her cheeks, she would sometimes refuse to wipe them off with her hand and allowed the snowflakes to be melted by her body temperature and flow down her cheeks like tears.

The two hearts were torn apart, but neither of them was reluctant to give in. Heather wouldn't be honest with Matthias while the latter was totally disheartened this time round. Despite his urge to find Heather, he had suppressed the impulse of doing so.

There were multiple instances where even Heather couldn't understand herself. Why did they have to torture each other like this? She wasn't any happier seeing Matthias being sad. She had pushed Matthias away again and again, but deep down, she actually couldn't bear to see him leave too. Heather felt like she was being increasingly psychotic as even she couldn't understand her mentality.

She yearned to be in a bustling crowd; she wanted to be around people and not be alone. Truth be told, walking alone in the snow wasn't that romantic, after all. On the contrary, it made one seem even more lonely. This was the last situation Heather would want to be in. Once she had had a taste of the goodness of someone or something, it would be hard to leave them anymore, and it would be even more painful to lose them.

You can't lose something you've never had in the first place. Gaining something is the start of losing it. Heather had seen this quote somewhere and it had left a strong impression in her mind. Recalling it, Heather was filled with mixed emotions.

After walking for a long time, Heather felt numbness in her feet as a result of the cold. Perhaps Matthias was right—she would succumb to frostbite if she carried on like this. Heather trudged arduously through the snow. Every step she took was difficult. The snow was getting thicker and it seemed like Heather was sinking into it.

On the other hand, Matthias closed his eyes and allowed the coldness to engulf him. He could feel the vastness of the earth, yet he had lost his place to hide among this vast space. As such, he pressed the honk just to hear some noise.

A sharp and loud sound pierced Matthias' ears. It seemed that was the only thing that could keep Matthias in check. At this moment, he felt deflated, as if he had just experienced a breakup.

The car honk was blaring non-stop. Matthias was acting in an increasingly weird manner—so weird he was disgusted with himself. Since when have I become like this? Where could Heather be? Matthias had completely lost trace of Heather. He couldn't identify her in the heavy snow with his bare eyes. Even the footprints that she had left behind were almost covered by the snow. It was as if she had never been there.

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Meanwhile, back in Solaris, the news of Matthias' return soon traveled to Tony's ears. However, what surprised Tony was that Heather didn't come back with him.

Ever since Matthias returned to Solaria, he had been wearing a sulky face every day. His handling of company matters had become increasingly harsh and resolute. Initially, the working atmosphere in Locke Group was rather relaxed. However, due to the sudden change in Matthias' mood, the atmosphere of the entire company became gloomy too.

Nikolai had already expected this to happen. He was in a state of shock when Matthias had asked him to book him a flight back home. After that, he couldn't reach the latter by phone at all. He also never replied to his messages, even when Nikolai had sent them through various channels.

As such, Nikolai guessed that Matthias had a fight with Heather. Even then, he still bought two flight tickets just in case. Alas, Matthias still came back alone toward the end. From that moment, Nikolai knew things had gotten serious when he picked Matthias up from the airport.

Matthias' face was scarily stiff. At that time, Nikolai wanted to bring up some relaxing topics to ease the tension, but the latter had started a serious conversation before he could speak up.

“Any recent updates from Locke Group?” Matthias asked Nikolai in a stern manner.

“It’s very complicated. I’m afraid I can’t explain it to you right now,” Nikolai answered awkwardly. He felt pressured being asked such a question right after they met.

“Just summarize it. You don’t have to go through the details.” Matthias insisted Nikolai give him a summary. This was truly a difficult task for Nikolai as he wouldn’t be able to summarize everything within such a short time.

Matthias fixated his eyes on Nikolai, who quietly lowered his head after receiving the pressure from Matthias’ gaze. Matthias narrowed his eyes as he was annoyed seeing Nikolai’s reaction. “Nikolai, have you forgotten my command to you?” Matthias questioned him angrily.

Nikolai lowered his head even more. Indeed, he hadn’t taken Matthias’ exhortation to heart. All this while, he had obviously been relying on Matthias with the perception that the latter would have everything handled even if some issues occurred.

Although he had perceived Matthias’ intention to let him deal with things independently, Nikolai didn’t want to officially do things on his own. Matthias, however, had a totally opposite reaction toward this action of his, resulting in Nikolai being extremely flustered.

All this while, Nikolai had been obediently carrying out tasks according to Matthias’ orders, and he had lost the ability to think independently. Now that Matthias suddenly requested him to do so, there was no way he could do that.

“Lift up your head. You’re getting more irresponsible,” Matthias rebuked disappointedly. He hadn’t lectured Nikolai in a long while, so Nikolai felt like he was being thrown into hell hearing Matthias’ strict remarks.

“Where’s Lara?” Matthias was surprised to not see Lara. By right, she should be the one coming to pick him up.

“She has some matters to attend to in the company,” Nikolai answered guiltily. He didn’t even dare to lift his head to look at Matthias.

“What happened in the company?” Matthias didn’t expect to receive this kind of news right after stepping back into the country, which made him even fretful.

“Some people are stirring up trouble in the company, so Lara is resolving it.” Truth was, Nikolai couldn’t handle the situation at all, so he pushed it to Lara. Even Nikolai himself thought he was such a failure as a man.

“Why didn’t you tell me about this earlier?” Matthias was even more irritated, growing more disappointed in Nikolai’s actions.

“Lara didn’t want you to worry, so she asked me not to tell you,” Nikolai mumbled timidly. He had truly pissed Matthias off this time, and he didn’t even know how to respond to him.

“Did you think you would be able to hide such matters from me?” Matthias really wanted to crack Nikolai’s brain to take a look at what was in it.

Nikolai stuttered, for he was truly at a loss for words. Matthias’ words actually made him uncomfortable, making Nikolai reflect upon his own problems. Lately, he had indeed spent too much energy on some issues even though he was aware Locke Group was in a critical period.

“Your heart has not been about work at all recently. I have no idea what exactly happened to you, but you shouldn’t let it affect your performance at work.” Matthias realized his words were a little too harsh just now, so he adjusted his tone as he didn’t want to be too fierce with Nikolai.

To think about it, Matthias actually regretted dragging Nikolai into the business circle because the latter was an emotional and artistic person to begin with. As such, Matthias was thinking if he should have a talk with Nikolai. Back then, he thought what he did was for Nikolai’s benefit, but now it seemed like he might be wrong.

The two of them quickly arrived back at the company, and it just so happened that Matthias caught Lara looking all anxious. As such, he quickly walked over to her. He knew all the people who were causing trouble were the mid-level managers in the company. By right, they should be a rational group of staff, so why did they come to cause a scene at the director’s office?

The calm look on their faces subsided a little when they saw Matthias. On the other hand, Matthias glared coldly at them while wearing a half-smile.

“Don’t you all have tasks to complete today?” Matthias’ voice was cold. His mood was already unpleasant to begin with, yet this group of people still wanted to cause trouble at this point in time.

“Director Locke,” one of them who seemed to be the leader greeted Matthias politely.

“So, you do remember that I’m the director of Locke Group.” Matthias curled his lips in disdain.

That person lowered his head with guilt. He, too, did not have the guts to look Matthias in the eye. Today, Matthias was indeed different from how he was in his usual days, especially his eyes; it was as if his eyes were piercing through their flesh. Initially, they were all staring at Matthias, but after he walked into the office, no one dared to even make eye contact with him.

“So what’s your problem? Come in and tell me,” Matthias said while opening his office door.

Before this, Lara had been stopping them from barging into the director’s office, but now when Matthias actually invited them to come in, none of them dared to come forward. Matthias turned around and looked at them. “Don’t you all have something to complain about? Why are you still standing there? Shall I escort you in personally?”

Hearing that, the leader took a step forward, and it was only then that the others followed suit. Seeing this, Matthias roughly knew that this ruckus was planned. Seeing how obvious that there was a leader, Matthias reckoned someone must be instigating this group of employees in the dark.

Matthias sat in the chair and waited for them to come over. It would only take a few steps to walk into his office, yet the managers took around two minutes to muster the courage to walk into it. Matthias stared at them coldly as they approached him.

In the past, Matthias would invite them to take a seat. After all, he had always remained friendly on the surface despite his fierceness deep down. But today, he had directly put away his disguise. His face was so gloomy and terrifying that none dared to look at him at all.

“I didn’t ask you to take a seat,” Matthias said to one of the managers who took a seat self-consciously.

Matthias knew straight away this person was the laziest among this group of managers. He would be the first person to sit down whenever there was a chair, and he would never stand if there was an option to sit. That person

stood up immediately, which made the leader look at him in disappointment. What a bad beginning. Their energy was diminished right from the start.

“Why didn’t the last one who entered the room close the door?” Matthias asked crabily.

With that, the crowd was flustered. It seemed like Matthias was very different from usual as he had been picking on them. Sweat broke out from the forehead of the leader as he felt immensely stressed.

“Are you guys putting on airs for me?” Matthias questioned them sternly.

Everyone turned to look at the leader as they didn’t know how to respond to Matthias’ question. They could only depend on the leader now. Meanwhile, the leader was stunned by Matthias’ vehemence; he was so stunned he couldn’t even recall any of the appeals that he had prepared before this.

“No one’s talking. Did you guys plan this whole thing just to annoy me?” Matthias continued picking on them. He had completely overwhelmed the managers with his solemn aura.

“Not at all, Director Locke. You’ve mistaken us. This time, we—” The leader finally spoke up in a timid manner as he was still fearful of Matthias.

Unfortunately, Matthias didn’t even give him the chance to complete his sentence and interrupted him directly, “What is it that you guys are stirring up trouble this time for?” Matthias had directly deemed their actions as causing trouble, not intending to be nice to them at all.

“Director Locke, we’re really not looking for trouble.” The leader pulled a long face as he regretted agreeing to be part of this stupid plan. Now, he had officially offended Matthias.

“I’ll be the judge of that.” Matthias continued retorting the leader as he was extremely cheesed off.

“Just get to the point and tell me about your dissatisfaction.” Matthias deliberately softened his tone as he knew it would be meaningless to argue with this bunch of people. He would rather stay calm at this moment.

The managers stared at one another. They had lost the nerves to say a single word after they saw Matthias. In fact, that was exactly the situation Matthias

had expected, so he used his glare to scare them off. He had returned from Iceland after having a fallout with Heather, and these mid-level managers decided to find trouble with him. As such, Matthias wanted to teach them a good lesson.

“I’ll give you three minutes. If there’s nothing you’d like to say, get back to your respective work after three minutes. Since you’re my employees, I’ll entertain you no matter how big of trouble you want to stir up, provided that your tasks are not affected,” Matthias said nonchalantly. This was, in fact, a subtle threat.

Three minutes had never felt so long before. The managers were all waiting for their leader to speak up, but the leader was actually even more timid than they were. After a while, the leader still failed to speak up while the others just stared at the ground and only lifted their eyes occasionally.

“Time’s up,” Matthias humphed gloomily in a cold voice.

“Since you all have nothing to say, get back to your tasks immediately. Each of you will receive a salary deduction of half a month for making trouble out of nothing today,” Matthias rebuked coldly. Since you dared to stir up trouble, don’t blame me for giving you a heavy punishment.

Finally, the leader mustered his courage and said, “Director Locke, I’m not sure how I should say this.”

“Three minutes isn’t enough for you to sort out your thoughts? It seems like you’re really stupid. Locke Group doesn’t need a fool.” Matthias didn’t directly call him out on his last sentence, but obviously, he intended to beat the dog before the lion.

The leader had never thought Matthias would make a decision in such a short time. What was worse, he had never expected such an unfavorable outcome—to lose his job because of this incident. As such, he was put in an awkward situation.

“Director Locke, I’ll give you a reasonable explanation, but if you’re asking me to just spit it out, I’m afraid I can’t put it to you adequately.” Since Matthias had already driven him into a corner, he might as well be bolder and honest with Matthias.

Standing before Love Chapter 605

Without giving the leader a chance at all, Matthias said without raising his head, "You can leave now." It was as if he hadn't even heard what the person had just said.

Everyone looked at each other for a while before someone took the lead and left, and the rest followed suit. Eventually, only the leader was left standing before Matthias, who did not even spare him a glance. He was busy with the task at hand as if the former didn't exist at all.

Matthias had handled things too kindly in the past, and it emboldened the other as a result. But now, he wasn't going to continue to be so polite.

"Head over to the finance office and collect your pay." He spoke very firmly. The leader looked at Matthias pleadingly for him to change his mind, but it was to no avail.

Matthias did not even ask him who was behind the incident. In fact, he had already made his guess without intending to confirm it with the leader.

Since there was no longer any chance of turning things around, the leader could only accept his fate despite his resentment. Even if that person came out with the truth right now, it probably wouldn't make things any better.

At the same time, Heather was enjoying her solo vacation far away in Iceland. Since Matthias had left, she depended on herself and walked out of her misery. It even reminded her of that time in Antarctica.

Unknowingly, it had been a day since he had left. Heather tossed and turned at night, but she couldn't fall asleep. His face kept appearing in her mind from time to time, and she would be hit by a pang of guilt when she thought of the despair in his eyes.

He hadn't left any messages for Heather, and her phone was quiet as though it had been turned off; it seemed like she had lost everything overnight.

Before this, she would chat with Myra until late at night. After all, there was nothing they didn't talk about. Heather was able to relax with Myra around, but now that her relationship with the latter had turned out this way, paired with her falling out with Matthias in just a few days, Heather had no one else. She

didn't know if she could return to Bradford City before New Year's Day. Right now, she didn't want to return to that ineffable place.

It was where her home was; it was where Robert, Myra, Matthias, and even Leon were. In addition to these people that she cared about, there were also traps waiting for her. She felt like a cheetah being hunted by a cunning hunter who was just waiting for her to fall into his traps.

If Caleb wasn't the one setting her up, who else could it be? Could it be that there was a mysterious force even Heather didn't know about? She would think about this whenever she settled down.

Caleb was coming on strong. Although he fitted the image of the mastermind behind everything, her intuition was constantly whispering to her that there was a hidden force in Bradford City.

Nonetheless, she couldn't think of anyone else. Heather wondered how this person was able to hide their presence so well. If she couldn't figure this out, she wouldn't know how to handle the problem.

As the hours went by, Heather pulled out the vintage-style pocket watch she had bought for a cheap price earlier that day. She typically refrained from buying stuff at flea markets, but this morning, she bought this pocket watch without thinking much about it.

She held the object to her ear as she listened to the sound of time passing. In fact, she wanted to make herself fall asleep to the sound of the watch ticking. In the warm room, she almost forgot about the icy weather outside.

The snowfall had been going on for such a long time, and it felt like it was never going to stop. With the light of her cellphone, she carefully studied the pocket watch. After a long time, there was still no sign of sleep, and the chaos in her mind was about to force her into a breakdown.

She wondered what time it was at Bradford City, and she wondered what Matthias was doing. Out of nowhere, an unread message popped up on the screen. She opened up Messenger with a hint of anticipation, thinking it was Matthias who had texted her.

"It's Leon," she said to herself somewhat ruefully.

'Why didn't you come back with Matthias, Heather?' Leon was rather surprised when he heard about this, so he immediately sent a message to her.

'He can't be away from the Locke Group for too long.' She gave a random excuse.

Undoubtedly, Leon wasn't a person who was easy to fool. He immediately replied, 'Did you fall out with him again?' After all, they clashed with each other so often that Leon had gotten used to it.

'I don't want to talk about it.' Talking about Matthias with Leon was the last thing she wanted to do right now.

Leon somewhat regretfully looked at his phone, for it seemed like there wouldn't be any gossip. Heather knew that Leon was concerned about her, but she didn't want to talk about these things.

'Come back soon, Heather!' Leon felt bored without her in Bradford City, not knowing who else he should hang out with.

Recently, he had been so busy with his own affairs that he didn't even have time to pick up girls. By the time he finished settling all of his affairs, Heather had gone to Iceland to his surprise.

As such, Leon was unable to find someone to talk to. In fact, he was rather lonely. He thought about going to see Paige, but he abandoned the idea in the end. As he thought about what she had told him, as well as the things he himself had privately found out, Leon hesitated. He didn't know whether he should go after Paige.

After going through something like that, Leon didn't know if Paige would accept a new relationship—the most difficult women to pick up were the ones who were heartbroken, after all. On top of that, he couldn't guarantee that the relationship with Paige would work out. He didn't want her to experience despair once again.

At the moment, he was indecisive; he couldn't be devoted to just one person. Back then, he had spent all his persistence on Heather, so it would be impossible for him to be loyal to another person for a while. In other words, he was afraid he couldn't handle a relationship with Paige. Although he felt

something for her, he hesitated to pursue her. At a time like this, he really wanted to chat with Heather since she could probably give him some help.

'I'll be back before the New Year's.' Heather had just made up her mind. She intended to return in time for the company's opening, and she wasn't going to go back on her word with the Saffords.

'Did you figure anything out in Iceland?' Leon asked.

'I don't know,' she replied swiftly. She really did not know as she had never been so lost.

Leon was astonished upon reading her answer. After thinking for a long time, he then asked, 'Can we video call each other?' Leon wanted to talk to her directly since there were many things that he wanted to say but couldn't express clearly through text.

'Let's just get on a voice call.' Since she couldn't sleep, she thought that she might as well talk to Leon.

Soon, her phone rang. Heather hesitated for a moment before she answered. Meanwhile, Leon's impatient voice rang and he seemed to have a bunch of things he wanted to talk to her about.

"I miss you, Heather," he said with a slight whine in his voice.

"Are you done settling your issues?" Heather knew him. Once she heard his words, she knew that he was loafing around again.

"Yeah." He walked toward the couch with his phone in his ear, wanting to lie down and chat with her comfortably.

"Are things complicated with your family?" She had only occasionally heard him mention his family before, and she didn't know much about them. If his family hadn't come to Bradford City, she might've never thought that his family was so beyond her imagination.

"You could say that!" Apart from the slight ache he felt in his back, he was getting comfortable lying on the couch.

“Why did they search for you in such a way?” She hadn’t spoken about the explosion in detail with him, so she was taking the opportunity to divert his attention.

After a moment, he responded, “Why are you suddenly talking about this matter?” He obviously didn’t want to talk about it at all. His family was his sore spot, and he simply didn’t want it to be brought up.

“You clearly told me last time that you would give me an explanation, so why are you reluctant to talk about it now?” She insisted that they talked about this matter properly.

“Heather, you’re making this difficult for me,” he said bitterly. He didn’t expect her to insist on it, and it made him feel awkward.

“If you don’t want to talk about it, I’ll just hang up!” Heather spoke with a slight hint of threat in her tone.

Just then, his eyebrows knitted tightly. Since she had asked, then he had nowhere to run. After thinking about it, he said, “Don’t hang up. I’ll tell you, but there’s one condition. After I explain it to you, you have to help me with something.” He hurriedly took the opportunity to negotiate.

Heather agreed at once. When she heard Leon’s tone, she instantly knew that he was distressed about his relationships again—she didn’t mind helping him out on this matter. In the past, he had sought her to talk about this, and she helped him to analyze his problems from a psychological perspective.

“I don’t know much about your family. If you don’t mind, can you tell me more?” Heather wanted to know about Leon’s family, and she didn’t rule out the possibility that the mysterious force was related to them.

“Heather, are you suspecting that my family has infiltrated Bradford City and have been secretly manipulating certain things behind the scenes?” Leon knew her well too, for he saw through her at once.

Since she did not deny it, he knew that he had guessed correctly. After mulling it over, he said, “My family does have business dealings with the Moriarty Family, but we are in no way a pawn in their hands,” he said frankly.

It turned out that Heather was right all along—the power of Leon’s family was not to be underestimated. As things got more and more complicated, Heather began to suspect Leon.

“Why aren’t you talking, Heather? Are you doubting me?” Once again, he saw through her thoughts.

“No, I believe in our friendship.” Although she had only doubted him for a moment, she quickly dismissed the idea.

“Don’t worry, my family won’t get involved in your family strife.” He didn’t know what else to say to her, so he could only provide her with reassurance.

“Okay.” She trusted him. After all, he was the only person around her that she could trust.

“Okay, that’s enough of my explanation,” Leon said playfully.

When she heard this, Heather furrowed her eyebrows. She didn’t expect him to pull something like this, and it was a real pain in the neck; it seemed like he really didn’t want to talk too much about his family. Meanwhile, Heather wondered if she should ask the question that had been lingering in her mind.

“Should I take your silence as an agreement? Can we talk about me now?” Leon quickly asked, afraid that she would throw more questions at him.

Standing before Love Chapter 606

Since she failed to find any reason to refuse, Heather could only acquiesce. When Leon saw that she did not deny it, he said, “I’m still hesitant to pursue Paige.”

She didn’t expect this to be what he was worrying about. Heather assumed that Leon had started pursuing Paige a long time ago, but it turned out that he was still hesitating. It seemed like he was serious this time.

“If you like her, just do it. Isn’t that the principle you’ve always lived by? Why are you still hesitant to make a move?” she asked teasingly.

“When I think about the things that you’ve told me, I can’t make up my mind at all.” He was indecisive since it was something he couldn’t easily forget. As such, there was no way he could go after Paige.

In fact, it all started because of Heather—that was why she had to help him get over this. After all, Leon was never this cautious and indecisive when he pursued Heather back then.

It was rare for Leon to be so undecided. Meanwhile, Heather held back her laughter and said, “That means you are quite devoted to Paige.”

Right now, Leon was slightly tongue-tied as the woman teased him. In fact, it had been a long time since he last pursued a girl with such seriousness.

“Is there really no hope for me to pursue her, Heather?” Back then, he had lost in the hands of her. This time, he didn’t want to fail in his pursuit of Paige.

Chasing after something that couldn’t be reached was the worst. After experiencing this once, he didn’t want to go through it again.

When she heard this, Heather realized why he was hesitant—he was afraid of being rejected. She had destroyed his confidence before, and it seemed like he wanted to regain his confidence from Heather.

“Perhaps you’re the only one who can get Paige to open up her heart,” she said while assuring him. If his confidence suffered another blow at this moment, he might be even more afraid to make a move.

After mulling it over, Heather came to the conclusion that Paige simply didn’t want to be involved in any romantic relationships—she was probably done with love. Perhaps Leon could help her walk out of the shadows, and Heather didn’t think it was a bad thing. She was so detailed when analyzing others, but when it came to herself, she was a complete mess.

“Are you sure you’re not just comforting me, Heather?” Leon didn’t quite believe her and felt that she was just comforting him in disguise.

“I’ve always been sharp-tongued to you, so do you think I would be kind enough to comfort you?” she asked casually. Leon was suspicious by instinct, so she had to eliminate his doubts.

He thought about it for a while and realized that she had a point. Heather had always been blunt with him, and she never beat around the bush.

“What do you think I should do?” Leon asked in distress.

This was a difficult question—even Heather didn't know what he should do. She didn't know much about Paige, let alone her take on relationships.

"Aren't you good at picking up girls? Why are you asking me this?" She threw the question back to Leon. She couldn't come up with an answer, so there was no need for her to think.

"We're going in circles again," Leon said bitterly. Chatting with Heather was just troublesome since there was no conclusion at all.

Leon had long seen through her tricks; if she didn't want to answer a question, she would throw it back at him. He hoped that she could help him out, but he still had to rely on himself in the end.

"I don't know what kind of advice I should give you." Instead of beating around the bush, Heather spoke frankly.

"I don't know how to approach her. Should I go after her relentlessly, or should I play hard to get?" he asked in distress. He was racking his brains just to ask her out on a date. There was still a long way to go after that, and he didn't know what to do.

"Forget about your tricks and just be sincere to her," Heather said in a resigned manner. She wondered why he didn't think of simply pursuing someone sincerely without any tricks.

"Sincere?" The corners of his lips pulled back. This was what he lacked the most; if he was indeed sincere, perhaps he would've even won Heather over back then.

"I know that you don't know how to truly love someone," she said lightly, sounding a little defeated.

She then added quickly, "I don't know, so don't ask me." She didn't know how to be sincere to other people as well.

"You might as well just say that we're both incompetent in love," Leon spat out. After going around in a circle, Heather ended up insulting them both.

"There are too many people in this society who are incompetent in love. Because of this, we feel that true love is precious," said Heather as she

sighed. The people around her were bound to someone for a variety of reasons—only Myra and Tony were together because of love.

Occasionally, Heather envied their relationship; she envied the deep love they had for each other.

“Are you lecturing me, Heather?” Leon understood where she was coming from, but in the pursuit of true love, the journey was a rocky road. He wondered how one was supposed to know when they had met the right person to give their all.

“You should stop discussing relationships with me. I don’t have any good advice for you, and I’m a mess myself.” Inadvertently, she exposed her current situation with Matthias. Her relationship was getting worse and worse, and she was really disappointed in herself.

“Matthias has been rather accommodating to you, so why won’t you be a little more gentle with him, Heather?” Leon hit the nail on the head. In fact, no one wished for their partner to be that assertive, let alone a successful business tycoon like Matthias.

“How would you know?” Heather understood all these, but when push came to shove, she was her capricious self who kept doing things that hurt others and herself.

“As an outsider, I see things more clearly. Sometimes, I think you’re asking a little too much of Matthias. He’s not a master at relationships, so he can’t possibly do everything for you.” In fact, Leon could see that Matthias was still quite inexperienced. His inexperience both attracted and displeased Heather.

“Are you saying that all the problems between him and I are of my own doing?” she asked in dissatisfaction. She was frustrated that Leon was taking Matthias’s side and accusing her of being unreasonable.

“No, Heather—that’s not what I meant. I mean...”

However, she interrupted him and said, “I don’t want your explanation. Men are always complaining that us women aren’t gentle or tolerant enough.” She was blowing things out of proportion at this point.

Meanwhile, Leon was dumbfounded at how stubborn she was when people gave her advice. He knew this was how she was, and it would be difficult for her to change.

“You’re misinterpreting my words. When there is conflict between two people, I think that both of them must be at fault. You can’t put all the blame on him.” Not wanting her to interrupt him again, Leon spoke in one breath.

“So you’re saying that I’m always passing the buck?” Heather was now energized enough to speak properly with him.

“You’re on fire today, Heather. Why don’t you let some steam off?” Leon asked cautiously.

She had been slightly irritated in the beginning, but because of this little fiasco, her mood improved greatly.

“I don’t want to discuss relationships anymore. Let’s talk about something more serious.” Heather changed the subject since they were starting to talk unpleasantly to each other. Hence, it was probably better for them to change the topic before it was too late.

“How are the preparations for the company’s opening coming along?” Heather had delegated all the tasks to Leon beforehand, so she didn’t know how things were going.

“There are a few minor issues that still need to be discussed with Paige.” In fact, Leon had yet to get started on some of the little details.

“Since there is an open and honest reason to speak to her, why don’t you go and see her?” she said in disgust, wondering since when had Leon become so fearful.

“I don’t know how to ask her,” he said. He wanted to ask Paige out, but he felt a little embarrassed.

“In that case, I’ll ask on your behalf.” It was rare for her to be so considerate. Naturally, Leon was more than happy to agree.

“This is what I’ve been waiting for,” he said excitedly.

“You have to be scrupulous in separating public from private interests. You can’t delay business because of private matters. Paige isn’t going to bite, so what are you afraid of?” she asked half-jokingly.

“The person who is delaying business because of personal affairs seems to be you, Heather,” Leon retorted nonchalantly.

“I’ll admit to that.” She didn’t bother arguing with Leon, nor did she want to waste more time dwelling on this.

“You admit it so freely, but there isn’t a hint of sincerity at all. You don’t even have an ounce of remorse in you.” He began to condemn Heather, who had just been lecturing him moments ago. Naturally, he had to return the favor.

“Old habits die hard. Forgive me for being capricious,” she said insincerely. Upon hearing this, Leon felt frustrated. It was as if she was the open and poised one, whereas he was the petty man.

“I’m not going to continue talking with you. I’m getting ticked off,” he said in an exaggerated manner. If he continued the conversation, he would end up being the one who lost.

“You say it like I’m picking on you.” Heather grinned. Her mood had brightened considerably after talking to Leon.

“Come back soon, Heather. Your recent performance has disappointed me!” he said in a joking tone, but he indeed thought her behavior was indeed a little uncharacteristic as of late.

“I’m disappointed in myself too,” she said emotionally. Truthfully, she was quite dismayed at herself and did not know what she was doing.

While she hid in Iceland, she refused to return to Bradford City and face the turmoil that was going on. As of late, she realized that she was running away from her problems. She used to face her problems head-on, but now, she was losing her confidence.

It was getting late, yet Heather wasn’t sleepy at all. She got down from the warm bed and switched on the lights. In the spacious room, she began to understand the meaning of loneliness.

Never had she waited so eagerly to hear from Matthias. Ever since he left, it was like he had completely disappeared from her world. Without his warmth, she started to appreciate it. No matter what she did, she had no company and no one to share her experiences with.

In fact, no one would always tolerate another person's capriciousness. Heather believed this, which was why she was unwilling to give him her all. She thought he was different, but it seemed like she was wrong.

Will hope emerge from my despair?

Standing before Love Chapter 607

Since she had stayed in Iceland long enough, Heather decided to return to Bradford City at dawn. After talking to Leon, she felt a lot better.

Bradford City still looked the same and did not change at all during the few days she was gone. As she walked out of the airport unnoticed, she glanced at the tall buildings while a sense of lament washed over her.

Upon returning to the city, everything felt so unreal to her. At that moment, the corners of her lips tugged upward as an emotionless smile emerged.

In fact, she did not tell anyone that she had returned. As she sat alone in the cab, she said to the driver calmly, "To Snowbush Manor."

Leon recently bought a villa at Snowbush Manor; he had moved in before Heather returned from abroad since he didn't want to stay in a hotel anymore.

Instead of going back to the Langston Residence right away, Heather went to see Leon instead. It seemed like she didn't want the Langstons to know that she had returned to the country.

Leon was still asleep when she rang the doorbell, so she patiently rang it three more times before it woke him up. He went to answer the door groggily, and to his surprise, Heather was standing at the door.

"You're back, Heather!" he said with unusual excitement.

"Didn't you ask me to come back earlier?" Her brows were slightly raised as she wore a faint smile.

“Please come in, Heather.” He warmly welcomed her into his house.

While being led by Leon, Heather walked in as her gaze swept across the furnishings in the house. It looked like the previous owner of this villa was an artistic person.

The place had a European style to it, and she silently wondered if Leon had bought this villa from an old man since such decorations weren't common. After all, the only people who liked this aesthetic came from older generations.

“You didn't tell anyone that I've come back, right?” She wanted to keep her return a secret, and she specifically did not want Matthias to know about it.

“I am a man of my words, Heather. Do you not trust me?” He thumped his chest and reassured her. Indeed, he told not a single person and kept the secret well.

“I'll be staying here for a few days.” She made her intentions clear.

Upon hearing this, Leon smiled brightly. He lived alone in a spacious and empty villa, and he was about to die from boredom. Naturally, he was over the moon when he heard that Heather was going to be with him.

that Heather was going to be with him.

“Why did you pick this villa?” She didn't expect Leon to like this style. In fact, it was rather surprising.

“Because it's unique.” He liked things that were novel; even the women he pursued and liked were different from others.

“It's very unique indeed.” She had to agree. Despite all the unexpected things he did, Heather was never surprised at all.

“Let me take you to the second floor to have a look.” There were three floors in the villa, and the area was huge.

Heather liked simple villas, and two floors were already enough for her. In contrast, the Langston Residence was like a castle. The place was complex and luxurious, and it did not feel like a home to her at all.

“Don't you feel creeped out living in such a big house by yourself?” she jokingly asked.

However, Leon innocently turned around and looked at her confusion, not catching the joke.

“How come there isn’t even a servant in the house?” She couldn’t imagine that he’d be able to clean the entire villa all by himself.

“I don’t like having people at home that I don’t know well.” He simply didn’t like being with someone who he wasn’t familiar with. As such, he dismissed the idea of living together with them.

“In that case, how do you clean such a huge house?” Heather asked as she gestured around the large villa. He didn’t like servants in the house, yet he bought such a huge place.

“Part-time cleaners, duh! I can’t go without them, and it’s not like you don’t know me, Heather.” He simply didn’t get why she would bring up such an insignificant matter.

Meanwhile, Heather gazed at him helplessly. She just wanted to talk to him about household matters, yet she was being frowned upon by him. Was she really incapable of initiating a conversation?

“It’s better for you to act like your normal self, Heather,” he said seriously. He couldn’t figure out what she was thinking. Ever since she returned from Iceland, she had been acting more and more bizarre.

“Am I acting unusually?” She pointed at herself and asked, wondering what his look of disgust meant.

Leon stopped in front of a guest room and pushed the door open. With a loud creak, the quaintly designed wooden doors opened.

“Come and see your bedroom, Heather. Do you like it?” Leon did not answer her and changed the topic instead.

At that moment, she swept a glance at the decorations inside the room. It was open and airy, and the villa’s former owner must have loved European culture. The antique style bedroom looked as though they had either gone back several centuries in the past, or they were currently on a film set.

“I like it,” she said casually. No matter what the room looked like, she still wouldn’t be sleeping comfortably. In fact, she much preferred her own bed.

“Good. I’m really glad.” A satisfied smile appeared on his face. In fact, Leon had put much thought into preparing the room for her.

Although the previous owner had decorated the bedroom in a European style, Leon hired professionals to come over and redecorate it.

However, him messing around with the decorations was pointless, for Heather wasn’t interested in this antique style at all.

“From what I remember, you mentioned that you like antique style interiors,” he said in an ingratiating manner. Since she liked it, he decorated it according to her tastes.

“Is that so?” She had no recollection of it at all. She wondered when exactly did she mention such a thing to him.

“Forget it. Your good memory doesn’t work when it comes to me at all,” he said exasperatedly. Heather had a particularly good memory, but she couldn’t remember things like this with Leon.

No one was able to remember every single thing; naturally, she only remembered things she felt were important. As for the unimportant details, she didn’t remember them by heart.

“I’m sorry, Leon,” she said apologetically. She did feel rather embarrassed that she couldn’t remember the casual remarks she made to Leon, whereas he could remember them clearly. From time to time, he would bring up what they spoke about before. In any case, Heather seemed to be the one who had the upper hand in their relationship.

“You’re scaring me by apologizing out of nowhere.” Leon gazed at her strangely, not expecting that she would take the initiative to apologize—it was not like her at all.

“It’s just an apology. Is it that scary?” she asked in a resigned manner. Was it such a surprise that she apologized?

Since the last disagreement with Matthias, Heather began paying attention to her words and actions in order to avoid hurting or offending others.

“You’ve apologized to me only a handful of times over the years,” he said half-jokingly. He started to notice the major changes in Heather after a few days of not seeing her.

Still, Leon couldn’t figure out what had happened when Heather and Matthias were alone together. She kept her mouth shut, and it aroused his curiosity. However, he couldn’t find a good reason to ask her about it.

“People are always changing,” she said casually. Perhaps her change came a little too late, but she was now paying attention. In due time, she would be able to kick some of her bad habits.

“Your change came unannounced, and it’s a little overwhelming to me.” He wasn’t used to this; it would’ve been better if she took one step at a time.

“Don’t you like the change in me?” She didn’t want to dwell on it any longer. After all, she had been sitting on the plane for a long time and was exhausted. Right now, she just wanted to rest.

“I do,” he said quickly. Since she had the sense to change herself, there wasn’t anything he had to say.

“I’m tired. I’m going to get some rest.” She spoke frankly, lest Leon kept pestering her. If this continued, she would probably fall apart from exhaustion.

She was going to plop onto the bed once Leon left, but for the sake of hygiene, she decided to freshen up a bit. She swiftly went to the bathroom and unexpectedly saw a large wooden bathtub inside. Then, she walked toward it curiously.

It seemed like she was supposed to bathe in this. She rolled her eyes as her germophobia was acting up. She couldn’t imagine taking a bath in a wooden bathtub, for she felt that it wasn’t hygienic. Further down the line, she wondered if Leon had ever bathed in this—it seemed even more unbearable to her.

She wanted to move to another room, but she no longer had the strength to go to Leon. When she glanced down at the bathtub, she was surprised to see that she hadn’t noticed the envelope inside it. After reaching out, she proceeded to grab the item.

She immediately opened it up, found a letter, and unfolded it. She didn't expect Leon to have already expected that she would be fussy with the tub's cleanliness, and he had even written a note for her beforehand. In the letter, there was a detailed explanation for her.

After reading the note, she was relieved and could finally enjoy a good soak in this high-tech wooden bathtub.

The bathtub design looked ancient from the surface, but it was actually a high-tech bathtub with a self-cleaning function—this was extremely important to Heather.

At that moment, Heather undressed herself to take a good bath. From the corner of her eyes, she noticed some flower petals that were placed on the side.

To her surprise, Leon had even prepared flower petals for her to take a bath with. It seemed like he had put a lot of thought into this.

Since he had made such a huge effort, she wasn't going to disappoint him. After pressing the button on the outside of the tub, she scattered the petals into it.

With that, the warm water slowly injected into the tub while the petals floated on the water. Heather felt the water to check the temperature, but she quickly realized the tub could even automatically adjust the bath's temperature.

Soon, half of the bathtub was filled. After a moment, she peeled off her clothes and stepped into the tub.

The room and water temperature was just right, and she slowly relaxed her body. As the speed of the water gradually slowed, she felt the water pressure gushing down her back.

The tub even had a massage function, but she did not turn it on. Heather just wanted to have a quick soak, for she couldn't wait to get into bed and lie down.

The water in the wooden bathtub seemed to be different from regular tap water. It had a faint medicinal fragrance that was mixed with a light floral fragrance, and it was so comfortable that she was reluctant to get out. She was afraid that she would fall asleep in the tub if she stayed any longer.

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Heather was dripping wet when she got out of the tub. Then, she grabbed a towel and dried herself up. After taking a bath, she felt relaxed and walked to the bed in satisfaction.

When she saw the wooden bedframe, she wondered if it would creak when she slept on it. Soon, she shook the thought out of her mind.

Solid wood was heavy, and the bed rails looked rather aristocratic. As she lay down on the bed, a content smile appeared on her face.

It was a big and spacious bed; even if she turned around, she wouldn't have to worry about touching another person. This reminded her of the nights she slept next to Matthias in Iceland, for she was worried that she would accidentally kiss him whenever she turned around.

After her experience spending the night with another person, she couldn't get used to being alone again. She noticed she was becoming more and more melodramatic, and she wondered if she really had fallen for Matthias.

She wanted to ask herself what she liked about him many times. She could obviously avoid this, but why didn't she?

Initially, she thought she would fall asleep when she lay in bed, but she was wrong. In fact, she didn't have the tiniest sense of sleepiness. As soon as she lay down, her mind drifted to Matthias like a curse—even if she told herself not to fall for him, her chaotic mind couldn't calm down.

Heather was annoyed by this, and she grabbed her phone from the side. Since she couldn't fall asleep anyway, she decided to play mobile games to cure her insomnia.

A familiar tune rang when she opened the gaming app, but she instantly felt bored. On second thought, all mobile games were boring.

Day after day, their tasks were the same; Heather was dissatisfied that these games had no storyline at all. Despite that, she went online every single day to complete the daily tasks. It looked particularly boring, and it felt like it was a single-player game.

She didn't like completing the tasks as a team, so she played by herself. Nonetheless, it was enough for her. As long as she could pass time and eventually fall asleep, she didn't expect much from this game.

When her mind was focused on something, other things would not emerge in her head out of nowhere and disrupt her mood. At that moment, she put all her concentration on the game.

The longer it took for her to level-up as the game progressed, the time she spent on this game increased as well. She didn't think that she would be this dependent on a mobile game to pass the time one day.

In fact, she was shocked at her change. It was all because of Matthias; even though he wasn't around her, he still had a huge impact on her.

Just then, random thoughts popped up in her head—she thought about what he was doing and how he had been. Needless to say, she couldn't help but think of him and the little details of his life.

At the same time, he was thinking about her too. Not only had he returned from Iceland by himself, he didn't leave anyone there to keep an eye on Heather.

He didn't know what she was doing, and was unaware that she had returned to the country. As he continued to assume that she was still in Iceland, he wondered if the heavy snow had stopped.

She was always so capricious that he was worried about her being alone there. On second thought, his worrying was unnecessary.

Heather was perfectly capable of taking care of herself. After all, she had been abroad ever since she graduated high school, and she had taken care of herself quite well.

After seeing her gentle side in front of others, he couldn't understand why she was so strict with him—it felt as though whatever he did was wrong in her eyes.

Just then, the sound of music filled his ears. His heart was in a turmoil since he had been holding back from going to Heather these few days. In truth, there were many times he wanted to reach out to her and asked how she was doing.

“Answer it.” He glanced at Nikolai angrily as the music kept blaring, but Nikolai simply let it continue.

“You’ve been a little cranky lately, Director Locke,” Nikolai said helplessly. He didn’t want to bother Matthias, but the latter insisted on having Nikolai move all of his work there to keep him company.

Since he had no idea what was going on in Matthias’ mind, Nikolai didn’t want to work with him. After all, he was always on his toes whenever Matthias was around.

“Be serious when you’re working,” Matthias grunted in annoyance, making sure to correct Nikolai’s attitude.

As he lowered his head, Nikolai knew better than to provoke Matthias at this moment. Recently, he had quite a temper. Matthias sighed at how Nikolai was whenever he was a little more stern to him, but he couldn’t do anything about it at all.

“Director Locke, I’ve been working so seriously that I can’t even answer the phone.” With that, he declined the call. It was from the same person again, and they wouldn’t let him go even during office hours.

“Put it on mute and stop disturbing me.” Matthias really couldn’t stand Nikolai’s attitude. After all, it wasn’t good to be so casual as they worked.

At that moment, Nikolai quickly put his phone on mute. He didn’t know whether to laugh or cry that he had put himself in trouble again. Meanwhile, Matthias fiddled with his phone as he hesitated again and again whether to send Heather a message. To be frank, he wanted to call her and hear her voice—he was getting impatient.

When he snuck a glance at Matthias’ troubled expression, Nikolai seemed to understand the distress he was in. He realized he was having troubles with Heather again. Apart from work, men were always stressing about women!

He wanted to tell Matthias that he had received some news about Heather leaving Iceland. However, Nikolai wondered what would be a good time to break the news to him since he kept getting scolded by Matthias these past few days.

In fact, it wasn't long since he heard about this. As he mulled it over, he twirled the pen in his hand. Although he was a little introverted, he was cunning and mischievous on the inside.

Occasionally, the air conditioner would emit a faint noise. They had bought a silent air-conditioner, but it was impossible for a truly silent air-conditioner to exist—there'd always be a little sound coming from it.

When he was stressed, even the slightest noise was a pain in the neck to Matthias. As he pushed his phone to the side, he no longer wanted to be swayed by Heather.

They were at a critical moment right now, and he couldn't give up just yet and waste his efforts. He even hoped for Heather to return a little later; he wanted to wait until everything was settled before starting fresh with her.

However, it was just a thought; whatever happened next was certainly not unrelated to Heather. There were many things that couldn't be avoided, and a helpless smile appeared on his face just then.

As his fingers drummed on the desk, his mood was getting more and more obvious. Nikolai wanted to speak several times, but couldn't find the right timing.

"Director Locke," he finally said.

Matthias shifted his attention to him, and his cold gaze was enough to send a shiver down Nikolai's spine. He didn't know what Matthias was thinking, but it didn't seem like something bad.

"What's the matter?" He spoke with a serious face. If Nikolai didn't say anything serious, he wasn't going to hear the end of it.

"I just heard some news that I don't know if I should tell you," Nikolai said, but did not manage to arouse Matthias's curiosity.

"If you want to tell me, then go ahead." There was a hint of curiosity in his voice.

"It seems like Miss Langston has left Iceland. Someone spotted her at the airport," Nikolai said confidently. After all, he was rarely wrong about the intel he got.

At once, Matthias's expression shifted. He didn't expect that she had already left Iceland; based on his understanding of her, she wouldn't return so soon. After thinking about it for a long time, he still couldn't figure it out. Meanwhile, Nikolai didn't know what had triggered him again.

"Where is she now?" Matthias asked. Just because she had left Iceland, it didn't mean she had returned to the country. Moreover, it was possible that she had gone somewhere else.

"I'm not sure about this since it was at Bradford City's airport. For the time being, no one has seen anyone that looks like her," Nikolai said bluntly. Placing a spy at the airport was indeed a brilliant idea.

"Apart from the airport, where else do you have more eyes and ears?" Matthias pretended to ask casually, making it look like a cop meeting with an informant.

"Eyes and ears?" Nikolai seemed a little confused about his words. He assumed Matthias must have gotten too excited at the news of Heather's return, for the words he used were rather weird.

"Let's not talk about it. You should just carry on with your work." Matthias didn't want to distract Nikolai from working.

It seemed likely that Heather was already at Bradford City. As he thought about it, Matthias wanted to call her and personally ask her where she was.

After thinking about it for some time, he decided to send her a message. Finally, he found a reasonable excuse, and the corners of his lips curled into a smile.

After sneaking a glance at him, Nikolai breathed a sigh of relief when he saw his expression. Whenever Heather upset Matthias, he would torment his staff; Nikolai was one who suffered the most.

However, Matthias did not get a response from Heather. The message had been sent for a long time, and she should have already seen it by now. Despite that, she never replied.

He wondered if she was still angry at him as he rubbed his temples. This was troublesome. In fact, Heather wasn't like other women who could be coaxed easily.

On second thought, he was the one who should be angry. He glanced at his phone several times, but there was still no news from her.

It was true that the first one who was moved in a relationship was the loser; he profoundly felt that he had no self-respect at all when it came to Heather. She was perfect and he liked her a lot. Despite that, he just couldn't tell her so.

However, how could he have known that Heather was asleep at this time? There were many misfortunes in life, and Matthias' mood worsened right at that moment.

On the other hand, Heather was sleeping soundly, not knowing that she had received a text. When she finally woke up, it was already late at night.

As her eyes fluttered open, it was already dark outside. She blinked continuously, and it took a moment for her eyes to adapt to the darkness. Leon didn't even come to wake her up, and it was such a good sleep. Just then, she wondered what time it was.

Listlessly, she searched for her phone but to no avail. Once again, she lay back down and closed her eyes, trying to go back to sleep. She didn't have the energy at all, and her body felt like jelly.

Just then, the sound of bells filled the air. She silently counted and realized that it was 12.00AM. Midnight was the loneliest time of the day, and the night was as cold as ice. At that moment, Matthias' frowning face flashed across her mind out of nowhere.

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The phone's bright light was a little blinding in the dark. As Heather squinted her eyes, she saw an unread message from Matthias. These days, he was finally willing to take the initiative to talk to her. As such, she was filled with joy that emanated from within.

At that moment, she looked just like any other woman in love. She did like him a lot, and it couldn't be concealed for too long.

Even if she managed to fool everyone, she wasn't able to lie to herself. If the relationship wasn't fruitful, she would've either let it go or be a little more proactive. However, she was neither moving forward nor retreating right now, and everything was left hanging in the air.

Heather completely forgot that it was already midnight and replied to his text with a 'Yes'. Out of the many words she could have said, she only responded with one simple word.

To her surprise, she received a call from Matthias not long after she replied. Heather initially planned on hiding the fact that she had returned, but after receiving his call, she frankly admitted to it.

"Why didn't you come to me when you came back?" Matthias asked aggressively, making it seem like they hadn't fallen out at all. It was as though nothing even happened before.

"It's not appropriate for me to show my face for the time being," she said in a high-pitched voice.

In fact, Matthias had roughly guessed her little plan. Since she planned to hide it, he would not dwell on it any longer.

Through her words, he had an inkling of what she wanted to say. As long as she no longer threw temper tantrums at him, he didn't care about this since they wouldn't be able to see each other for the time being.

"I'm sorry for what happened that day." Heather took the initiative to apologize, no longer stubborn like before. Since she was at fault, then there was no excuse not to apologize.

"Why are you apologizing all of a sudden? You're being so formal that I don't know how to respond," he said jokingly. In reality, he was over the moon. The fact that Heather took the initiative to apologize meant that she agreed to make up.

"Why are you still up so late?" Once again, she changed the subject.

At that moment, Matthias revealed a doting smile. The reason he was still awake was because of her—he couldn't fall asleep without a reply from Heather.

In fact, he wanted to ask her what took her so long to reply. On second thought, he decided against it. No matter how he approached the matter, it would be rather awkward to pop that question.

“I can’t sleep because I’m thinking about you.” He admitted openly that he couldn’t sleep because of her!

“It’s getting late. Hurry up and go to bed,” she said. She hadn’t been sleeping well these days, but she just made up for it and felt much better.

Meanwhile, Heather wondered if he had been sleeping well. She wanted to ask him that, but the words were stuck in her throat.

“I’m not sleepy. What about you?” he asked with concern as he was worried that she was tired.

“I just woke up.” She smiled, feeling so much better now that she was speaking to him.

Finally, a weight had been lifted off her chest; she was no longer troubled by what happened with Matthias. While she was still worrying over it, it turned out that he had already forgotten about it.

Likewise, Matthias felt better too. It turned out that she was sleeping, which was why she did not reply to him earlier. However, it was unusual because she hardly ever slept during the day. Was she exhausted?

“Since you and I aren’t sleepy, why don’t we talk a little longer?” he suggested.

As for what happened the other day, Matthias had self-reflecting as well. After thinking about it, he wasn’t completely without fault. He felt that he still had many shortcomings that he needed to change, and he had to be more gentle and patient to her. In short, he wanted to show Heather the better side of him.

For the sake of someone he liked, he would work hard to improve himself—even the most awesome person would also become ordinary and mundane once caught in a whirlpool of feelings. In fact, he even had a cheesy thought of spending the rest of his life with her. After this, he was going to propose to her.

“What do you want to talk about?” Heather’s tone became unusually soft. At that point, the two became a little more cautious with each other, afraid of striking a nerve once again. In particular, Heather didn’t want to upset him again.

“Anything’s fine. I don’t know what to talk about either,” Matthias responded innocently like a child. He truly didn’t know what to talk about with her.

All along, he had always put in effort to make conversation with her. He desperately tried to make her like him more, but now, he couldn’t find the right words to say just like he did before.

Their mindsets had changed ever since that incident in Iceland, and it was difficult to return to the constrained balance that they had at the beginning; even their conversations became more mundane and trivial unknowingly.

There were many things Matthias wanted to tell her, and it was the same case for Heather. But in the end, neither of them knew what to say.

“Meeting you is the greatest blessing of my life,” Matthias couldn’t help but say. It was indeed a fortunate thing. If he hadn’t met Heather, he wouldn’t know he could love someone this deeply.

A gust of wind blew outside the window just then, and the antique-style bedroom felt even more cozy. Heather got off the bed while Matthias listened to the rustling noise. Surprisingly, she was silent.

“How is meeting me a blessing?” She paced around the room while carrying on the conversation.

At once, his heart that was in his throat calmed down again as he parted his lips. At that moment, he was alone in the study. As he gazed at the books on his desk, he freed one hand to flip through the pages randomly.

It was a book of poetry. He flipped to a random page and said, “I live upstream, and you downstream. From night to night, of you, I dream.”

When she heard his recital of the poem, Heather couldn’t help but continue, “Unlike the stream, you’re not in view. Though we both drink from River Blue.”

Matthias quickly continued by saying, “When the river stops flowing, my grief will stop growing. I wish your heart will be like mine, then no in vain, for you, I pine.” In one breath, he finished the remainder of the poem. In fact, he particularly liked the last few lines.

“Why are you reciting poems out of nowhere?” Heather stood before the window and pushed it open before the cold wind brushed across her face. It didn’t feel good, but she didn’t close the window.

“I can’t help it.” He had been saying this a lot. Right now, he really couldn’t help it. At that moment, he wished Heather was there with him so that he could pull her into his arms.

“You’ve been saying that a lot tonight,” she said teasingly in a relaxed tone.

Heather was unbelievably gentle, and she was as soft as the night outside. Then, she lifted her head and gazed at the sky before realizing a full moon was about to appear soon.

“I can’t help but ask you,” he said as he mustered up the courage. It would be good to both of them if he spoke up a little earlier.

“Yeah?” She wondered what he was up to.

“Will you be my girlfriend?” he asked, preparing to be rejected.

Although his confession was casual, it struck directly at Heather’s heart. As she listened to his pleasant voice, she couldn’t refuse at all.

To his surprise, she did not reject him. Did that mean he really had a chance? At once, a glimmer of hope grew in his heart that perhaps they could really be together now.

After a long pause, she finally said quietly, “Why so sudden?” She was still a little cautious, thinking that he shouldn’t have confessed at a time like this.

She couldn’t agree, but she couldn’t bear to refuse him either. Since when had she become so undemanding?

She was going to say yes to a confession through a phone call, and it was vastly different from what she envisioned. Meanwhile, Matthias did not want to make things difficult for her. He thought that perhaps she was too embarrassed to reject him, which was why she couldn’t answer him. He was totally unaware of what was going on in her mind.

“It is indeed too abrupt, nor is it formal.” He squirmed uneasily in his seat, and it seemed as though he was talking to himself. In fact, Heather found it adorable.

“Who knew you’d have such an adorable side.” She wanted to praise him, for she felt that he was being too cute today. In any case, he was getting on her good side.

“Are you complimenting me?” Not wanting to force an answer out of her, he plainly went along with what she said.

“Yes, I am. You’re different today,” said Heather as she continued to compliment him flamboyantly.

All in all, she felt that Matthias was great as she thought of his warm embrace. Back then, she couldn’t imagine the bed that she occupied would have another person on it. Now, sleeping next to someone didn’t seem that unbearable at all.

The independent and freedom-loving Heather, who rarely wanted to be tied down, didn’t know which part of Matthias that attracted her.

The air conditioner was running quietly as she wondered where it was, for she couldn’t see it around the room at all. In fact, the room was completely furnished, and it was specifically designed in such a way that it looked untouched from the modern world. However, it only appeared like that on a surface level.

“How long do I have to wait until I get to see you?” He wasn’t swayed by the compliments, and he had a clear mind instead. No matter what, he was going to decide on a date to meet her before anything else.

“In three days,” she answered in one breath. It wasn’t appropriate time for her to let the public know that she had returned to Bradford City for the time being.

Three days were too long for him, and he wished it was three hours instead. It seemed like he wouldn’t be able to see her anytime soon.

“Where will you be during these three days?” he couldn’t help but ask. He wanted to know her plans and get involved.

“I’ll explain when we meet.” She did not intend to explain to him through the phone. After all, there wouldn’t be any mystery left if she told him everything now.

“So, did you miss me at all?” Matthias asked a question that she didn’t know how to answer.

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Each question was more pointed than the previous. Matthias didn’t want to let her go, and he clearly still had some slight resentment in his heart.

“Yes.” Heather didn’t want to continue being stubborn with him. In fact, she didn’t just miss him a little bit—she missed him very much.

Matthias rejoiced in secret, for he never expected this to go so smoothly. After all, it wasn’t easy for Heather to speak so honestly.

“Do you have any more questions? Why don’t you ask them all at once?” she asked calmly.

Just then, he remained silent for a while before he simply said, “I miss you a lot, and I really want to see you.”

Heather’s heart fluttered. When it came to their relationship, Matthias had to take more initiative. There were many things she wouldn’t say, whereas he would express his own feelings strongly.

When he didn’t get a response from her, he looked at his phone and thought that she was probably feeling shy. He then comforted himself, When in a relationship, one would become cheesy indeed.

“You should get some sleep.” She didn’t know what to say to him, so she could only respond in such a way.

“Okay.” He had heard many things that she wouldn’t normally say, and he was more than satisfied. Although it wasn’t enough, he couldn’t be too greedy.

He had a lot of time, so there was no need to rush this moment. One day, they would break through the barriers and finally be together—he was sure of this.

After hanging up, both of them breathed a sigh of relief. Matthias had gotten the answer he wanted; since she didn't hate him because of that incident and had become more gentle toward him instead, it couldn't have gone any better.

Meanwhile, this phone call made Heather understand one thing—all her worries from before were unnecessary. Matthias still liked her, and he wasn't displeased because of that incident. It was good news.

At the same time, both of them were afraid that the other would hate them. This was how relationships were; nobody felt secured, and even their self-confidence would eat away little by little.

Needless to say, love was beautiful and tormenting at the same time. Since ancient times, everyone was emotionally swayed because of love. Not even the greatest man could avoid it, let alone a simple man and woman.

Since she couldn't sleep, she gazed out of the window. It was a secluded area, and it was located some distance away from the city. There weren't any lights outside, and it was filled with silence. Everyone had already gone to sleep by this hour, but she was the only one still wide awake.

Three more days, she thought to herself. In three days, she would appear in the public eye again. Moreover, she knew there were many eyes watching her. She enjoyed the feeling of being in the limelight when she was younger, but her preference for privacy had grown over the years.

She feared doing the wrong thing back then, but she had already grown out of it now. After all, humans were prone to make mistakes, and she deeply regretted her actions whenever she made one. When she was younger, she would always try to cover up her wrongdoings—just like the incident with Myra. If she hadn't been so selfish, she wondered what would have happened then.

Nonetheless, mistakes had been made. She decided that the first thing she would do when she returned to Bradford City was to go and apologize to Myra. No matter what, she had to apologize to her friend.

While she was in Iceland, she never once forgot about it. Not only did she intend on apologizing to Myra, she wanted to confess some things as well, including her complicated feelings for Matthias.

After all, Myra had the right to know about these things. Heather made up her mind that this was also a kind of recognition of Matthias. No matter what happened after that, she hoped to try once more.

She had met the perfect match for her back then, but unfortunately, she didn't make any effort and easily gave up on the relationship that never got the chance to blossom. This time, she didn't want to be so cowardly any longer.

After going through so much, she realized that she was afraid of her feelings because of her family. She didn't believe in love, nor did she believe in herself.

If this went on, she might really end up being alone for the rest of her life. Instead, she was going to pluck up the courage this time. After making such a difficult decision, she was determined and wanted to only go forward no matter what the result was with no regrets.

She couldn't sit alone until dawn while she was awake, so she thought of Leon, who was like a little brother to her. These few years, Heather had asked for more than she could give him. In the future, she was going to cherish the relationship between them more. Now, she treated him like family.

Just then, a knock on the door sounded. Leon, who was typing away on his keyboard, reluctantly walked toward the door and pulled it open. He hated being interrupted when he was working, even if the person was Heather.

"Am I bothering you?" Heather beamed. She was always smiling as of late, knowing full well that Leon couldn't resist her smile.

"Not at all," he said in a resigned manner. He was angry just a moment ago, but now, he didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Nonetheless, it must be something important since Heather had come over in the middle of the night.

"Leon, I'm surprised that you don't have any wine here." She was still smiling, and it made him feel helpless. She is so cute in such an annoying way.

"I just moved in, and I haven't got the chance to buy any wine yet," he explained.

"I want to drink," she said bluntly. She was in a good mood, and it would be even better if she could have a few drinks.

“Where are you going to get alcohol at this hour?” He looked at her with annoyance written on his face. She was giving him more problems again.

“At the 24-hour convenience store,” she suggested.

With a strange gaze, he looked at her. He knew she was picky, let alone when it came to alcohol. If it wasn't world-class alcohol, she simply wouldn't care to enjoy it.

“Are you fine with that kind of alcohol?” he asked incredulously.

“It doesn't matter!” she said playfully. This side of Heather was rare.

“Are you being possessed right now, Heather?” He stared at her inexplicably. He wasn't familiar with this side of her, and something didn't feel right to him.

“Well, are you going to have a few drinks with me or not?” She graciously offered, knowing that he wouldn't refuse.

“I'm down if you are,” Leon said boldly. It was just a few drinks, and it wasn't like he had never drunk before. Not to mention, he wasn't as picky as she was.

“In that case, let's go and buy some alcohol!” She grinned. Even if it was cheap alcohol, she just wanted to drink and have a taste of it.

Since young, Heather never had any ordinary alcohol. For one, she didn't drink casually even while socializing. Even so, her counterparts never offered ordinary wine to her either. If she brought her own alcohol to the gathering, it was undoubtedly good wine.

After doing the math, she realized she had spent a lot on alcohol these few years. She was really a real spendthrift, but it was a good thing that she was equally good at earning money.

On the way there, Heather and Leon chatted casually. He wondered aloud and asked, “Heather, have you ever had ordinary wine?” He was rather worried that she would be disgusted with the wine after buying them.

“I don't think so.” She thought carefully and realized that she hadn't tried them before. Everyone knew this, so they would never entertain her with just any wine. In fact, they all tried to give her the best wines.

“I’m afraid you won’t be able to get used to the taste later,” Leon said politely. However, he couldn’t find a place that offered good wine at this hour.

Meanwhile, Heather knew exactly where to get them, and it wouldn’t be a problem to visit the place at this hour. However, she was keeping her whereabouts a secret, and she shouldn’t be showing her face. Hence, the idea was quickly dismissed.

“Am I that petulant?” She decided to make some changes. It was a small change that was seemingly nothing to her.

“Heather, I’m surprised such words even came out of your mouth. Do you still remember that year I was going through a breakup? I went for some drinks with you, and you were complaining about how disgusting my wine was. Later on, you brought out your wine that you spent 800,000 on. We even argued and ended up drinking our own wine.” He remembered this clearly. From then on, he never offered ordinary wine to her. If he were to drink with her, he would certainly bring expensive wine.

“I don’t recall that.” She obviously did, but she was too stubborn to admit it.

“Fine. Since you’re so insistent, don’t waste a single drop of wine later,” he said in a threatening voice.

At once, she nodded; she was good to herself when it came to materialistic aspects. In fact, she was too good to herself—spoiled rotten was actually an understatement. What she ate and wore were worth a lot of money, and the only thing that can be compromised was perhaps the food she ate. She would be fine as long as it was delicious and clean above anything else.

But in terms of drinking, even if it was a simple bottle of mineral water, she had to have the best kind. Naturally, this wasn’t good if she wanted to live a normal life. If she continued to squander like this, she could forget about being an ordinary person.

“Sure,” she responded without hesitation.

“Have you been through something I don’t know about?” he asked incredulously.

“I’m too spoiled sometimes, and I think I should change that.” She told him the truth.

Leon reached out and placed his hand on her forehead. “You’re not having a fever. Why are you talking nonsense?”

She glared at him with a look of disgust. “We’re all ordinary people, so I should also pay attention to the problem of wasting money,” she said in a serious manner.

“This isn’t in line with your beliefs, though. You always say that you can spend the money you earn however you want,” he said excitedly.

After pausing for a moment, he added, “Not to mention, you’re not an ordinary person. You’re an extraordinary woman—a successful, strong woman.”

When she heard this, Heather shook her head. “No. I’m just an ordinary person, so I should live an ordinary life.” She wasn’t being pretentious. She had a feeling that she would lose all her shining glory one day, and she would become the most ordinary person in this mundane world.

“Did Matthias say something to you?” Leon still refused to accept this. Heather had become so strange, and it was making him panic.

“No, you’re overthinking it.” She didn’t know how to explain it to him. In fact, she didn’t know how to explain that she was making changes from the smallest details.

“Okay. I’ll still support you in whatever you want to do.” He decided not to pursue the matter any further and gave her a reassuring look.

Standing before Love Chapter 611

After shopping for wine in the middle of the night, Heather and Leon went home. He opened the vehicle’s trunk and took out a wooden box from it which contained several bottles of wine they had just bought.

The weight was nothing to Leon, and obviously it didn’t matter to Heather as well. However, she thought it would be more suitable for the man to carry it.

The wind blew through Leon’s hair before Heather reached out to fix it. It was quite cold outside at night, and she wanted to return quickly to the warm room while Leon followed closely behind her at that moment.

“You have to drink all of this, Heather. Otherwise, you’ll be sorry.” He pouted adorably. Sometimes, he looked like an overgrown child.

“Yeah, don’t worry.” She nodded, wondering why he was so stubborn and how much the incident back then had hurt him.

“Hurry up and get in,” said Heather to Leon as she stepped into the elevator.

As he carried the box of wine, he smiled. Many times, Heather envied him for his ‘casual’ lifestyle. She had no idea what kind of burden he carried, and he always looked positive and optimistic.

Just then, the clock sounded from the living room. She noticed the antique clock that looked like it had a long history, and she couldn’t help wondering why the previous owner kept everything here.

“Did this house always look like this?” she asked, suddenly interested in the house.

“I made a few changes here and there.” He glanced around the room, and his gaze shifted to the second floor.

“This house isn’t too bad!” He quickly took the opportunity to compliment the house he picked, which was an exquisitely decorated villa despite being a second-hand house.

“Yes, you do have good taste,” she said with a wry smile, noticing the feng shui of the room.

It seemed like the previous owner wasn’t only a fan of European style, but they also paid special attention to feng shui. Indeed, living in a house that was filled with positive energy would bring prosperity to the person.

She wondered if the previous owner had run away, and what was the reason behind it. Like a detective, she began to explore the reasons.

“You have a strange look on your face. Is there something wrong with my house?” Leon asked in confusion while looking at her mysterious face. It felt as though there was something in his house.

“Nothing. I’m just curious about the previous owner of this place,” she said plainly, wanting to know more about the previous owner.

Leon stared at her bewilderedly, not knowing what she was up to. “Don’t worry. The previous owner was just an eccentric old man with nothing special about him.”

He furrowed his brows at the thought of the old man’s strange appearance, for he had never seen such a strange person. He frowned in dissatisfaction, thinking of certain unpleasant experiences.

“An eccentric old man.” Heather tried to recall any details, but it seemed like there was no such person in her memories.

“Well, would you like a drink?” Leon reminded her. For some reason, he felt like she had no interest in drinking anymore, for her attention had already drifted elsewhere.

“Yes.” She spoke in a firm voice.

With that, he opened the bottle of wine. This was the most expensive wine they could buy at this time, and he tried to give her the most expensive one. She took a whiff and immediately noticed the difference between this and good quality wine.

When he saw her subconscious frown, Leon began to worry that she would spit it out after taking a sip. She had been pampered since young, so he didn’t know why she was making things difficult for herself.

However, what he was worried about didn’t happen. Heather took a sip and revealed a soothing smile. As she glanced at Leon’s nervous expression, she didn’t know what to say. It was just a glass of ordinary wine, not poison.

“You’re amazing, Heather.” Leon couldn’t help but applaud her. She had finally changed his perception of her.

“Don’t be a smart*ss.” She rolled her eyes at him. “Drink.”

The two then went back and forth, and Heather’s tolerance was as good as Leon’s. One glass after another, the bottle was soon emptied out.

Meanwhile, the air was filled with the smell of alcohol. Heather sat on the chair while Leon spread across the couch, uncaring of his image.

“I wonder how those girls at school, who see you as a noble man and prince, would react if they happen to see you like this,” she said teasingly.

Meanwhile, he didn't mind it at all since he wasn't an uptight person. As far as manners were concerned, it was just an act he put on in front of people and a trick he used to get girls.

“I call this my true nature.” He brought the wine to his mouth and drank it all in one gulp.

“Right. True nature.” She laughed cheerfully. It was only natural that she let go a little after a few drinks.

As they rambled on, they had never felt so relaxed like this. In fact, Leon found that she was less sharp-tongued and even more gentle. Was this the power of love?

It was incredible. He leaned closer to her unconsciously, but she instinctively furrowed her brows since she was still not used to others being so close to her.

“Heather.” The smell of alcohol brushed against her face, and Leon wanted to rest his face against her.

“You're crossing the safe distance, Leon.” In the past, she would have pushed him away. This time, she didn't do so since she wanted to be nice to him.

However, as she looked at the mischievous look on his face, Heather was itching to slap his hand off her arm. Just then, he slumped toward her. He was quite heavy.

“Have you had too much?” She grabbed a fistful of his hair; it was slightly curly and felt good to the touch.

“Nope.” He thought he was sober and perfectly fine.

“I'll take you to your room.” Heather didn't want to drink anymore, for she had no interest in drinking with a drunk person. At that moment, Leon looked like he wasn't able to hold himself up anymore.

“No.” He hadn't had enough to drink yet. With some booze in his head, he wanted to keep drinking.

“Stop messing around.” She was afraid Leon already had too much to drink, and he’d act like a child.

“No, Heather. Stop forcing me.” He looked at her sorrowfully, and it made her feel a little uneasy—it seemed as though she had done something unforgivable.

That night, he was like a nonsensical child while Heather painstakingly took care of him. She hadn’t been feeling sleepy in the beginning, and she was wide awake right now. Hence, she could only take care of Leon.

While Leon was yelling for this and that, Heather even suspected that he was deliberately pretending to be drunk to mess with her. After all, his tolerance for alcohol wasn’t this bad.

“Liking someone is so painful, Heather.” Suddenly, he spoke dramatically. Heather put a hand to her forehead, not wanting to listen to this at all.

“Yes, it is.” She agreed with him. Love was torturous and caused unrest to many.

“I don’t even have the guts to pursue someone. Am I too spineless?” Leon asked childishly.

“No, that means you’re more mature about your feelings,” she said politely. Nonetheless, she secretly wanted to knock him out with a punch. That way, she wouldn’t have to listen to him blabber about random things.

“Aren’t you going to sleep yet?” She looked around searching for sleeping pills, wondering if it would work.

After messing about throughout the night, she couldn’t stand it anymore and went back to her bedroom during the day. After freshening up, she went to lie down on the bed in satisfaction, not caring whether Leon was okay. After all, he was finally asleep. In fact, she hoped that he wouldn’t be awake anytime soon.

Not long after she left, Leon opened his eyes, and the haziness in his eyes vanished. Instead, he looked sober.

In fact, he hadn't been drunk at all—he was simply messing with Heather to see how much she would tolerate it. The result was unexpected; even after all his tricks, she was still relaxed and simply didn't take anything to heart.

Has she really changed because of love?

He wasn't sure about this, and Heather probably wasn't sure either.

Not long after lying in bed, she finally fell into a deep sleep. While she was asleep, the battle between the Locke family and Hart family ensued again in Bradford City. Now, the two families were considered rivals, and the two heads of the families couldn't see eye to eye.

By the time Heather woke up again, it was already bright outside. She glanced at the clock and realized it was 3.00PM. Now, it was the most suitable time to go to the balcony and soak in the sun.

With that, she climbed off the bed leisurely—such a relaxed and comfortable life was really nice. It was no wonder Leon wanted to buy a villa. As it turned out, living in a villa was vastly different from living in an apartment.

When she opened the door, she spotted Leon in the hallway. She walked over to him, and it seemed like he was worried about something.

“When did you get up, Leon?” It was unusual for him to be up so early.

Usually, he would stay in bed for a long time, not to mention he was a drunken mess the night before. When she thought about his childish behavior, she almost couldn't hold back her laughter.

“I woke up early. I was waiting for you to get up, and we...” He trailed off as he thought of something.

“Yes?” She didn't like the fact that he didn't finish his sentence, for it made her feel weird.

“I woke up not long ago, and I was thinking if I should wake you up.” In truth, he had gone into her room once. He ended up not waking her up after seeing how soundly she slept.

Leon's words were contradictory, and she wasn't easily bluffed. As such, she sized him up doubtfully.

“I’m starving.” She hadn’t eaten for a long time. Though she didn’t feel it before, she was starting to feel hungry right now. It wasn’t a good feeling at all.

“You drank so much wine on an empty stomach yesterday. Are you really okay?” He suddenly remembered.

“What do you think?” In fact, she felt better than ever. Drinking and socializing was nothing at all to her.

“Let’s eat out!” Upon hearing this, Leon was starting to feel hungry as well.

“I want to stay in. Don’t you have anything at home?” She didn’t want to go out, and she preferred to cook at home herself.

At once, Leon’s expression shifted as he stammered, “I just remembered that I don’t have a fridge. I’ve been wanting to buy one, though. Thank you for reminding me.”