

## Standing before Love Chapter 642

Heather left Zayne's temporary residence with a fuzzy mind. In all honesty, she didn't even know how she got into the car. In the end, she started the car with a million thoughts running through her mind.

The weather was rather fine today, with the afternoon sun lazily spilling light over the land. It was an afternoon that Heather would usually love but she had lost the mood to enjoy the sunshine today. Sitting in the driver's seat, she kept rubbing her temple while biting her lips.

The lack of rest recently had made her migraine more severe. She wondered if Myra was being properly treated in the hands of the kidnappers, and Heather couldn't forgive herself when she thought of this.

At this rate, Heather might push her own body to the limits before Myra was rescued. Every day and night, she was unable to close her eyes and have a good night's sleep; sometimes, she would fall asleep but would later be awakened by nightmares.

Little did she know that Myra was actually having a good time. Although she was being confined by the kidnappers, they did not torture her. She could still see the sunlight and currently, she was basking under the sunlight while carefully reading a book.

Myra had no idea how much Tony and Heather had suffered in order to rescue her. In fact, there weren't any thoughts in particular in her head. She felt as if she had been in a dream ever since she had been kidnapped. Her mind had been blank these days and she couldn't even process the fact that she had been kidnapped.

When she was here, she met the woman who had told her a lot of inside information at the cemetery. However, Myra had forgotten her looks and she only found her face familiar.

"Madam, would you like to have some water?" As Myra was pregnant, they dared not feed her any unhealthy food or drinks, so plain water was the safest thing for her.

Myra turned around. The sunlight landed on her and her dark hair seemed transparent under the bright light. She smiled gently at the woman.

Myra felt that she seemed to be unable to control herself these few days. She had not seen Tony for some time, yet she did not find it strange at all. It was as if not meeting him was a plot that had been preplanned and she somehow was able to accept the fact easily.

“Thank you.” Anyone who saw how she was now would think that she merely had a change in her living environment instead of thinking that she had been kidnapped.

There were people taking care of her when she was here. After her memory had been tampered, she calmly accepted the current situation and did not miss Tony at all.

After the woman served her water, she quietly left Myra but accidentally bumped into a man’s firm chest.

The man whispered from above the woman’s head in a low, sexy voice, “Why are you in a hurry?”

The woman looked up to him resignedly. “Master, it was an accident. I wasn’t in a hurry.” The woman wore neither a humble nor arrogant expression, and she did not seem like an ordinary servant.

“Is she acting normal lately?” the man asked the woman.

“Master, I’m not sure how to answer your question. She is acting strange lately, but isn’t this what you want? So...” There was a shadow of a smile by her lips as she replied in an indirect manner.

“Did she mention Tony or Heather?” The man looked down at the woman from his height as he contemplated on how he should deal with her. This woman is getting out of control.

“No. She is just like a newborn baby. This part—” She pointed at her head as she spoke and revealed a wicked smile. “—is probably blank.”

The man smiled in satisfaction; it was obvious that he was glad with the answer. Although he dared not give Myra a strong dose in consideration of the baby she was carrying, it seemed like what she had been given turned out to be quite effective.

“Good. Remember to feed her the drug at this time every day.” The man instructed the woman. This was, in fact, not the first time he stressed on this.

“Master, you can trust me completely on the task.” She smiled coquettishly and the man forced a smile.

Myra turned to look in their direction and she flashed a faint smile at the man from a distance. Upon seeing that, the man nodded satisfactorily.

It was undeniable that Myra had an elegance that set her apart from ordinary flamboyant beauty. Tony was probably attracted by her calm and graceful temperament, and the man had faith in Tony’s taste.

“Master, what should we do next? Are we going to continue to take care of her?” the woman asked in puzzlement.

There was a ‘Myra’ at another end of Bradford City who was not as blessed as the real Myra in the hands of the kidnapper.

“There’s no rush. Let’s wait for another two weeks.” The man was in no hurry at all and he wanted the fun to continue on.

“Heather and Tony are turning the city upside down in search of her. Are we going to ignore them?” The woman mentioned Heather and Tony. They already had people watching the two of them, so they knew that the both of them had done a lot in secret.

“Don’t worry. With Myra in our hands, the sky won’t fall and the earth won’t shake no matter what they do,” the man announced in full confidence. Currently, he was about to gain full control of the entire situation in Bradford City.

“Master, you killed three birds with one stone this time. You surely are a genius,” she murmured to flatter him.

“We will have to thank Myra and her important role for this,” the man mocked, his gaze fixed on Myra. Truth was, he was a little envious of her.

Whenever he thought how a woman as strong as Heather would go to such an extent for her sake, he would feel a hint of jealousy. Perhaps Heather would never treat him this way in this lifetime.

Meanwhile, Myra was reading a book quietly as she intermittently raised her head to look at the bright sun above. The sun was so blinding that she couldn't open her eyes and it even forced her eyes to become watery. This feeling was so nostalgic and for some inexplicable reason, it put her in near tears, as if she had lost something important.

Her chest felt empty, her head felt empty, and her memories became even more fuzzier. Many images flashed across her mind but she couldn't hold onto anything.

"Did I lose something?" she mumbled to herself.

Myra's words were heard by the man and he exchanged glances with the woman. Both of them probably did not expect this to happen.

Myra's memories had been completely erased, yet she came out with this doubt. It looked like they should not underestimate the potential of the human brain.

The two of them looked at each other in unison and the woman said, "Seems like we will have to give her a stronger dose."

A hesitant look appeared on the man's face. "I'm worried about the child that she is carrying." The man had his concerns because the motive for this kidnapping had never been to hurt someone.

"Master, since when have you become so soft-hearted?" A sarcastic smile played by her lips.

Upon hearing that, he turned to her in rage as he roared, "You are not in the position to lecture me!"

She lowered her head respectfully. "I'm sorry, Master. I've crossed the line."

The man then left in a huff. Looking at his figure from behind, the woman sneered. "Master, if you continue with your petty kindness, you will have a hard time taking on the family's responsibilities," she uttered in a voice so soft that only she could hear.

At that moment, Myra caressed her own belly and wanted to rise from the chair. She knew that she was carrying a child, but she couldn't seem to remember who the father of the child was.

“Janelle, could you help me up?” Pregnancy had affected Myra’s flow of blood and caused her to be unable to stand up, so she massaged her numbed calves.

“Hold on for a moment. I’m coming.” Janelle then went toward her.

Janelle walked up to Myra and carried her up with her height advantage. It seemed so effortless, hinting at Janelle’s incredible strength.

“You should take some walks when you are free; you shouldn’t sit down all the time.” She advised Myra as if she was her elder, although she was merely a woman in her twenties.

“I don’t have any strength and now I feel tired,” Myra replied helplessly, her drowsiness becoming more pronounced.

“Let me help you to your bed.” A triumphant smile appeared by the corner of the woman’s lips as Myra’s drowsiness showed that the drug had started to take effect.

Myra nodded in response. “Thank you, Janelle.” In reality, she was totally clueless about the woman’s malicious intentions.

“You’re welcome. It’s my duty to take care of you. You don’t have to treat me so politely,” Janelle replied amiably, as if she had a close relationship with Myra.

“I feel bad for having to trouble you all the time.” Myra felt embarrassed despite Janelle’s ‘kind’ words. Truth was, she was not familiar with the other woman and even instinctively resisted her a little.

“It’s no trouble at all. We are just like sisters so we can skip all the formalities between us. I don’t like to listen to things like you feeling bad for troubling me.” Janelle, who had rather good acting skills, rapidly got into her role.

“Your husband has left again?” Myra asked curiously.

Janelle forced a smile as she was still not used to pretending to be her master’s wife.

“Yes, he’s just too busy. He is our family’s sole breadwinner because I can’t help out much.” She, on the other hand, had pretended to be a housewife.

“No, I think that you are amazing. I can’t cook but you can cook really well.” Myra blinked her innocent eyes and it made her look all the more like a child.

“Do you want to learn how to cook?” Janelle suggested. Staying with Myra all day long was too boring, so she wanted to find something to do.

“Can I?” Myra pointed at herself.

“Of course, but you have to listen to me; I don’t want you burning down my kitchen.” Janelle treated her like how she would a child.

“I…” Myra glanced at the other woman timidly. She wanted to try it out but at the same time, she was shy and lacked the courage to do so.

“You should be bolder,” Janelle encouraged. After Myra’s memories had been erased, she had somehow become silly and innocent, so it was actually quite fun to tease her.

However, Myra had her concerns. “I’m worried that I can’t do it well.”

Now, she seemed to have returned to when she was a child. Janelle never expected Myra to have such a pure and innocent personality when she was little before she met Heather.

“Don’t worry, you have me.” Janelle continued to encourage her. Now that Myra doesn’t annoy me as much as she used to, I don’t mind making friends with her for the time being since we have to spend another two weeks together!

“Thank you. Janelle, you’re such a nice person.” Myra blinked her dark, innocent eyes at the other woman, which made it hard for anyone to lie to her face.

Upon seeing that, Janelle let out a smile of self-mockery. “I hope that you will still find me a good person after this.” Her words contained so many emotions as it reminded her of the weak and useless self from years ago. At that time, she was as kind as a saint who tried to save the world.

She couldn’t remember when she had become who she was today—a person who was so despicable to the point that even she herself was unable to tell if there was a limit to how far she would go.

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A week soon went by. Heather had been locking herself in her house and refused to come out even when Matthias came looking for her.

On this day, Heather was sitting at the dining table and her gaze intermittently landed on Everly. It was so obvious to the point that even the latter took notice of her gaze.

Everly tried to muster her courage multiple times to ask Heather the reason for looking at her so often but in the end, her courage dissipated and no words escaped her lips.

In the past week, the kidnapper had not contacted them, but Zayne had made a breakthrough in the investigation—he managed to discover the identity of the man whom Everly had met that day.

Heather was at Zayne's temporary residence. In her hand was a photo of a man with an unfamiliar face; she couldn't recognize him at all.

"You don't know this person?" Zayne got straight to the point and asked.

"I have never met him before." Heather had never thought that it would be a man that she did not know of. She had made many speculations before this, but she couldn't figure out how Everly got in touch with a stranger.

"But that doesn't necessarily mean that Everly doesn't know him," he replied as he stood off to one side. Zayne had yet to find out Everly's relationship with this man, but he believed that he would soon make progress.

However, Heather disliked anybody badmouthing her family. "What do you mean?"

"Everly is a much more complicated person than you imagine—her social circle is quite bizarre." Zayne couldn't think of a better way to describe it other than the word 'bizarre'.

"What do you mean?" Heather had never expected Everly would turn out to be a girl like this, which was totally different from what she imagined.

He took the photo from her hand. “Stop staring at the photo—this man is behind the new mysterious force in Bradford City.” He directly revealed the truth to her to save her the effort of racking her brain to figure out his identity.

“As expected,” she muttered and scoffed.

“Looks like you are able to guess it right.” Zayne was glad because it showed that Heather’s brain was still working, at least.

“I can’t seem to figure out how Everly got herself involved with this force.” She was still clueless about it despite trying hard to understand the situation.

Zayne smiled and said nothing, which puzzled Heather even more. His attitude was so ambiguous and she found it rather irritating. In short, it made her want to punch his face.

“You are becoming more violent these days. Ever consider seeing a doctor?” Zayne muttered, able to guess her thoughts. As expected from the Great Detective—a mere glance was enough for him to tell what she was thinking.

“Shut up!” she roared. “You didn’t manage to find out Everly’s relationship with that man, did you?” There can be only two reasons for his attitude now—either he has everything in his hand or he has nothing at all.

“Ah, you figured it out,” he exaggerated.

Heather looked at him with a complex expression. After all that drama, it turned out that he knew nothing, yet he made her anxious for no reason.

“You tricked me again,” she snarled. He would probably give her a heart attack from extreme anger before the kidnappers managed to do so.

However, Zayne continued to tease her. “I almost can’t remember how cold and elegant you were before.”

“Shut up! Find out their relationship as soon as possible,” an angry Heather instructed. As she was Zayne’s client now, she felt that he had to listen to her orders.

“I believe that this matter is irrelevant, so why are you so concerned about it?” He played with the photo in his hand while looking at the handsome young man on it—he seemed quite young.



“I have a feeling that this matter has something to do with Everly.” It was merely a gut feeling, so Heather wasn’t sure if Everly really had anything to do with the case.

“It’s only a guess and you could be wrong,” he teased. After he had gotten used to how calm and composed Heather usually had been, he found the current ‘lively and vibrant’ Heather rather interesting.

“I trust my gut feeling. Anyway, follow up with this finding and I believe that you will find something about the kidnapping case.” She strongly believed in her intuition because it had helped her a great deal for many times.

“Okay, the customer is always right. Since you have given me an order, I will surely look into it,” he responded with a large grin.

“Don’t give me such a fake smile,” Heather muttered in disgust as she disliked his fake grin.

She knew that Zayne was a hypocrite and he would always wear a fake smile to mask his real thoughts. Truth be told, he was even worse than Matthias. Although he seemed harmless on the surface, he was actually full of wicked thoughts.

One shouldn’t be fooled by his identity as a renown detective and think that he wouldn’t do bad deeds. Back when he was young, he had been a man who never did anything good and all he did was evil deeds. If it wasn’t for the girl who had appeared in his life, he would have been sentenced to life in prison.

“Hattie, saying that makes me sad. Can’t you treat me more gently?” Zayne joked without any fear toward Heather.

“If you continue to speak like this, you will be dead soon.” Heather took out the dagger that she always carried with her, and it had a cold gleam to it as it reflected the sunlight that fell on it.

“Wow, Hattie, you really are violent,” he exaggerated.

“Stop calling me that,” she growled through gritted teeth, fully hating the way he addressed her. His attitude gave her a headache.

“Okay, I will stop calling you this way, Hattie.” Zayne had always been a person who never feared to test the limits of others, so he surely would not watch his mouth.

The dagger suddenly slashed through the air by his face as she glared at him with cold eyes. “You won’t lose only your beard next time.” On top of her dagger was his beard, which showed the dagger’s sharpness.

“Alright, alright. Let’s not be so violent. Put down your dagger and maybe we can talk over a cup of coffee, yes?” A helpless Zayne tried to comfort her. He never expected that Heather had become so terrifying.

He remembered that he met Heather for the first time at a ball when he went to Europe to investigate a murder case. The scenes at that night remained vivid in his memories, even until now. The moment Heather made an appearance, everyone’s gaze was locked on her—she shined brightly, much like a moon surrounded by stars.

Back then, she wore a red gown. Zayne had never seen anyone looking so gorgeous in a red gown and at that time, he thought that he saw an angel. The angel was wearing a red gown, looking as enchanting as clouds that were dyed red in the evening.

As she put her dagger away, his gaze became creepier and it gave her goosebumps.

“Don’t look at me with such a perverted gaze,” she warned him.

Heather knew that Zayne was attracted to her and liked her a little but she had given her heart to Matthias, so it would be impossible for her to like anyone else.

“Okay, are there any other instructions?” He averted his gaze. Love is a b\*tch that never goes the way I want; I don’t need that kind of thing.

“Did you manage to find out where Myra is?” Heather asked as she was anxious to know about this.

“Is this really important?” He looked at her, feeling a headache coming on. In all honesty, he had no idea how to provide an answer to this question.

Although he was a well-known detective who was an expert in cracking cases, investigating a person's whereabouts was never his strength. This time, he had come to Bradford City on his own and left his partner behind, so there were certain areas which he faced trouble.

"This is my utmost priority. I have to know where Myra is no matter what you say." Heather, on the other hand, would not be dismissed so easily with only a few words by him.

"I'm sorry. Investigating a person's whereabouts is not my strength," he replied helplessly. He had never confessed this to anyone but he did so to Heather now.

"What? Then what's your strength?" Baffled, she glanced at him, thinking that he must be joking.

He suddenly grabbed her shoulders, forcing her to look into his eyes as he enunciated, "Look into my eyes and tell me if what I'm going to say is true or not. Investigating a person's whereabouts is not my strength, so I have a partner in secret and nobody knows about his existence."

Heather looked at him in disbelief and even forgot to free herself from his grasp. Why is he only telling me this secret now?

After a while, she quietly asked, "Where's your partner, then?" Now, she had a sense of foreboding.

"He didn't come here with me. We were working on a case but you asked me to come over urgently. I had a fight with him because I chose to come to you, so I'm now on my own," Zayne explained in a nonchalant voice, as if he was talking about the weather.

"What?" Upon hearing that, she looked at him, baffled. On one hand, she couldn't process the fact that Zayne had a partner in secret but on the other hand, she never thought that he actually took her so seriously.

"Don't feel touched—it was because I couldn't resist your beauty." He let go of her as he spoke and raised her chin with his index finger, much like a thug.

However, a loud wail was soon heard when Heather bent his finger. "Don't touch me." Her eyes seemed to be burning with flames of anger.

Zayne was someone who would take a mile once he was given an inch, but Heather would not allow him to have his own way.

“Ouch! I know my mistake, alright? Now let go of me. You are going to break my finger,” he pleaded.

“Do you still dare to touch me after this?” She was determined to let him remember his lesson this time.

“Of course not, so please let go of me. If you break my finger, who will help you to investigate the case?” Zayne instantly gave in. Although he had good martial art skills, he refused to use his skills on a stunning woman like Heather.

Fortunately for him, she let go of him and coldly snorted. “Don’t ever make the same mistake again.” She had warned him before this, but he never learnt from his mistake.

“Why is my life so tough? I forsook my partner for you, but how could you treat me this way?” the drama king sobbed.

“Don’t mix things up. Although I’m grateful that you are willing to go to such lengths for me, that doesn’t mean that you can touch me as you please. You know that I hate men who don’t respect women.” Heather stated her grounds sternly. She refused to give an inch when it came to pride-related matters.

“I understand. Heather, you really are becoming more of a feminist,” he remarked helplessly as he wondered if it was a right choice to abandon so much to rush over to her.

Upon hearing that, Heather found her expression easing a little. Then, she patted his shoulder and assured, “Don’t worry; I will make it up to you.”

Upon hearing that, he instantly felt alive. Heather knew what he had in mind when she saw his reaction, so she explained herself before Zayne managed to say anything, “I meant that I will make it up to you financially. Don’t take it the other way.”

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Upon hearing that, Zayne shrugged. What a tease Heather is, not giving me any leeway to flirt with her!

Now, not only could he not take advantage of her through his actions, but he couldn't take advantage of her by his words either. And so, Zayne couldn't help but question his decision. If he hadn't come over so easily, he might have been able to negotiate something for himself.

"Don't think of doing anything funny," Heather snapped at him now as she eyed him viciously.

He could only offer her a helpless smile in response. He didn't dare to argue with her, since one could only compromise upon meeting a woman such as Heather. Not too long ago, he thought she had crossed a line but now, he was mesmerized by her. No matter how outrageous her request, he was willing to go through hell or high water for her.

Once again, he shrugged. Unfortunately for him, she greatly disliked this action and thought he seemed all too much like an unreasonable hooligan.

"You're so cruel to me, Heather!" Afraid that she would pull her dagger on him again, Zayne didn't dare address her more intimately.

"Have you helped me look into Matthias?" she asked him instead of dignifying his statement with a response, referring to the time she asked him to investigate Matthias.

At this point, he looked at her with discomfort. There were some things he found hard to say, so he stammered and stuttered, which in turn made her extremely unhappy.

"Get to the point. There's no need to beat around the bush," she told him as she stared at him keenly. Truly, she didn't understand why he behaved like that.

"Do you and Matthias have a bad relationship?" he asked cautiously. Thing was, he found out a bit of insider information but it pertained to Heather and Matthias' romantic relationship, and was therefore difficult to bring up to her.

Rolling her eyes at him, she answered plainly, "Save your gossip. I'm only curious about what secrets he's hiding behind my back."

"That's rather unkind of you," he protested righteously. "Everyone has their secrets and even people who are dating must have their own personal space."

In the end, Zayne wasn't willing to tell her Matthias' dirty little secret, firstly because he was afraid she would be disappointed in Matthias and secondly, he could understand why Matthias would keep this secret from her.

"Are you going to tell me or not?" Heather asked impatiently.

"No," he answered clearly, irritating her even more.

"Fine, don't tell me then. Your pay will be deducted by half." Heather was ruthless, for she didn't believe he could pass up the money.

Naturally, his face fell when she brought money into the equation. How could he live with himself if he blindly sacrificed his hard-earned coin for a man he didn't know?

Not to mention that the man was, technically, his rival in love. After thinking about it for a while, Zayne finally decided to tell her the truth.

"Do you really wish to know Matthias' secret?" he asked her, feeling troubled. This is such a quandary! He felt like he was betraying his fellow men.

"Yes." No matter what, Heather couldn't shake the feeling that Matthias was hiding something related to his family from her. Since she was deeply afraid of his family, she needed to know what he was hiding from her.

After dithering for a few more minutes, he told her joyfully, "It's actually not that much of a secret. I imagine you might even have guessed it already and only want confirmation from me."

With a single look, he was able to see through her. Clearly, his reasoning skills hadn't diminished throughout the years. Thus, she only smiled at him without saying anything, surmising that it was likely she already knew the answer.

"However, I regret to inform you that you're mistaken!" he crowed triumphantly. The smile at the corners of his lips was particularly glaring.

It was a unique skill he had—the ability to make her explode with anger in an instant. If it weren't for the fact that he was quite useful, Heather might have killed him just to shut him up by now. Communicating with him was simply too much trouble.

She hated how much he loved teasing her self-righteously. He was deeply sexist and chauvinistic, and she had told him many times that she did not like being teased like that. "You know this way of talking will get you killed," she informed him with a forced smile.

Yet, Zayne still dragged his feet, refusing to plainly speak Matthias' secret. She had no idea what he was so concerned about.

"At any rate, Matthias isn't as despicable as you think he is." Since Zayne didn't dare to be frank, he spoke in circles that left her confused.

"Are you saying I make him look ugly?" she asked with dissatisfaction.

"I'm not saying that," he refuted, gesturing at himself. "I'm not the one saying that you're being petty."

Fed up, Heather barked at him, "Stop beating around the bush! I don't intend on continuing to waste my time here arguing with you."

For the first time in his life, upon seeing that she was about to leave, he almost hoped she would. Nonetheless, he was still very concerned about his pay.

In the end, Zayne regarded her with a forced smile and did not say anything. Thus, she spun on her heel and headed toward the exit, taking all of her ire with her.

"Hey!" he shouted after her.

Alas, she neither responded nor stopped walking. When he realized she was about to open the door and walk out, he hurriedly asked, "You're not really going to deduct my pay, are you?"

Already vexed, Heather became even angrier upon hearing that. Hence, she wrenched open the door and, without looking back, faintly answered, "I'm thinking about taking away your pay altogether."

"Hey, I'll go on strike!" he called out before she could step outside.

In the end, she cut him off with an unceremonious slam of the door. Truth was, Heather didn't take his words to heart because she knew he wouldn't go on strike. Similarly, she wouldn't genuinely deduct his pay.

It was only because they had this understanding that they acted so carelessly around each other. Rarely could she tolerate someone being so impudent toward her.

If it weren't for the fact that Zayne could provide her with all sorts of intelligence, there was a chance she wouldn't speak to him again in her lifetime. However she looked at him, he was simply someone she didn't like and only begrudgingly managed to stay friends with.

After Heather left, the smile on Zayne's face faded as well. While he acted one way in front of her, he acted another way when he was by himself.

Even if she would keep misunderstanding him, he liked torturing himself like that. Nonetheless, he knew that it was probable that he was someone she didn't want in her life.

After making her exit, Heather cautiously looked around. Like a famous celebrity, she put on a large pair of sunglasses upon determining that there was no one nearby.

In truth, she was only being careful because she knew someone was following her. Every visit to Zayne was a tedious task. However, he had professional anti-reconnaissance knowledge and with his guidance, she would not easily be followed—not to mention that he had multiple hideouts and constantly flitted in between them to prevent others from spying on him.

Only after she was a long distance away from his current hideout did she update him with a message saying, 'I have left safely.'

Once, they made a plan. On the off-chance that their meetings were discovered by someone else, Zayne's face was not to be exposed.

Even though he had already erased all of his information, he was still afraid of being recognized by someone. To prevent that, he wore a disguise every time he met up with her and sometimes, he did not show up at all.

Now, after seeing her text message that she was safe, Zayne internally sighed with relief. Nonetheless, he was still worried that someone could spy on her, as she wasn't a professional and didn't have strong anti-tracking capabilities.

At this point, he thoughtfully rubbed the stubble on his chin. It took a lot of time, money, and energy to meet up with her. The disguises were quite



expensive and this was his first time taking on such a difficult case that he couldn't even show his real face.

It was a pity she wasn't grateful for his sacrifices. Sometimes, he truly felt that she was cruel.

In the past, he often thought that women like her were heartless. Now, he knew that it wasn't that she was heartless, but that her heart was not for him.

After about half an hour, Heather finally reached the Langston Residence. To her surprise, she discovered Everly in the living room and, to her even greater surprise, Matthias was sitting opposite Everly.

For a moment, she wondered just how long they had been talking. After all, two people that she never thought she would see together were chatting together quite happily.

"Heather!" Matthias called out, noticing her immediately. It was as if he had a radar that could detect her the moment she appeared in his vicinity.

In response, she gave him a forced smile. Right now, she didn't trust anyone—not her significant other and certainly not her cousin. In fact, it terrified her how well her cousin and her significant other were getting along, not because she was afraid Matthias would fall in love with someone else, but because she was afraid they would make a deal with each other in private.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming, Matthias?" she pretended to chide him.

Beside them, Everly also stood up. She looked a bit embarrassed, as if Heather had caught her in bed with the enemy. After all, she was hiding so many secrets from Heather that she automatically felt guilty whenever she saw the latter now.

"What are you both talking about? It seems so interesting," Heather added meaningfully before Matthias could reply.

Instantly, Everly became even more embarrassed as she couldn't help reading into Heather's question.

Matthias, on the other hand, didn't seem to notice anything was wrong. "We were talking about what you were like when you were young," he replied with a smile.

Internally, Heather chuckled coldly. She wouldn't be so easily tricked by him. Everly didn't exist when Heather was young, and the lie would have worked better if he'd told her that he and Robert had chatted about the time when she was young.

"I did a lot of stupid things when I was young, but nothing quite so amusing." Her tone was self-deprecating but the sarcasm in it was getting clearer and clearer.

Sitting nearby, Everly winced. Sometimes, a woman's intuition worked well. Realizing that the situation was rapidly going downhill, she hurriedly interrupted in a tone of adoration, "No way! I'm the one who did a lot of stupid things when I was young. You were always so radiant and admirable!"

Meanwhile, Matthias continued to smile but even he was starting to realize that Heather was behaving oddly. He couldn't understand it, though. Not too long ago, Heather had constantly praised Everly in front of him, so why was the meeting between these two cousins so tense now?

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As the two cousins stared at each other, Matthias held his breath. He could see that, due to the sharpness in Heather's gaze, distress was already starting to show on Everly's face. Even he himself could not bear it.

"I must have been very annoying when I was young," Heather sneered. Now that she had a better understanding of Everly, she was shocked and even felt a little bit hateful.

She never minded the people who were enemies of her from the beginning, like Blake Langston. At worst, they would fight to the death. However, she hated those who acted kindly toward her in the beginning and turned around to stab her in the back. In short, Everly's behavior had greatly disappointed her.

Not only had Everly hurt Heather, but she was putting all of the Langston Family in danger. Her selfish actions crossed the line, much more than Blake's idiocy did.

Meanwhile, Everly offered her own derisive sneer, feeling like Heather was hinting at something. "That's not possible, Heather. You were always the most welcomed one in the family."

At that, Heather's smile grew even more frigid. "The family is scared of me. I'm the least welcomed one."

It wasn't proper for Matthias to interrupt but Heather's pointed words genuinely made his heart ache. He stared at her profile, thinking about how she wore callousness around her heart like a shield, preventing people from getting too close.

Nevertheless, she turned to him now and looked at him imperiously. "Did you need something?" Her frustration was bleeding over and she snapped at him even though he had done nothing wrong.

Of course, this was not an impulsive decision. The truth was that Heather had long planned to allow Everly to observe everything yet not be able to confirm the truth, so that the latter could feel a sense of urgency and start leaping to her own conclusions.

At this moment, Everly's mind was, indeed, filled with doubt. She didn't know why Heather acted so venomously toward her. Her cousin's rage was coldly cutting and so fierce that it was hard to bear.

Yet, Heather did not intend to give Everly too much time to mull things over. As Matthias finished stammering the reason he was here, she immediately had him go outside with her.

After they walked out of the living room, she suddenly said, "So, you cower away from telling me the real reason you're here and only give me a bunch of overbearing excuses. Why are you becoming more and more of a coward, Matthias?"

Startled, he looked at her, having no idea what he did wrong or why he was being lectured by her.

"I missed you so I came to find you," he said as he reached out to take her hand.

“No PDA. This is my house,” Heather said with displeasure. Unfortunately, he was becoming bolder and bolder and much to her regret, her words only provoked him.

“Why don’t we go to my house, then?” He smiled suggestively. When Matthias thought of the scene that could await him at home, he felt eager.

Unfortunately, she shrugged his hand off and eyed him coldly before she said expressionlessly, “Stop throwing a fuss. I’m not in the mood.”

Upon hearing that, he looked at his abandoned hand in resignation. Once again, he was being cruelly rejected—it seemed he would still need to put quite a bit of effort into seducing her.

“Have you been alright lately?” he asked with concern, as her mood had been simply too odd and unpredictable these days.

However, she didn’t feel like elaborating or answering such an upsetting question. As she was being spied on, she could not say too much to him.

“I’m fine. I just haven’t felt like seeing you much.” Apart from using her words to hurt him, she had no idea how to chase him away. Right now, she simply had no way of facing him calmly.

Long used to her venomous tongue, Matthias did not fear it. Instead, he only laughed, wanting to cheer her up a bit.

In truth, she hated it when he behaved like that. He would never know, but the guilt she felt whenever he did it surpassed the love that surged up in her.

“Did someone make you unhappy?” he asked her carefully now, quite used to her little temper tantrums.

She gave him an exasperated look in response. Does he think I am as petty as an unreasonable child?

What she didn’t notice herself, perhaps, was how tolerant he had been of her unreasonable moments during this period.

“Don’t come looking for me during this time, Matthias,” she informed him sternly.

At this moment, Matthias couldn't help but sober up. The fact that she said that was not good news. Women were so difficult to understand, especially Heather.

"It seems I've angered you somehow," he said. After all that, he felt that the problem turned out to be him.

Upon hearing that, Heather felt like slapping her hand against her forehead. Why is it so difficult to get through to him? Sometimes, it's so tragic that it is very nearly funny. Internally, she was still thinking about how to get rid of him and no matter what motives he had, she could not get in contact with him ever again.

Since he was jumping down another rabbit hole, she had to change tactics. Why are men so difficult to teach? she grumbled to herself. Out loud, she said, "If you truly don't wish to anger me, then I beg you to please listen to me."

"Alright, I understand," he told her confidently.

In truth, Heather didn't think he did, or he wouldn't still be standing here. Even after a long time, he made no move to leave. Never did she think he could use such methods to confront the changes in his life.

Since he still wasn't moving, she was forced to ask, "Well?"

"Yes?" Matthias asked her innocently and completely shamelessly.

She never understood why he acted like he might die if he didn't see her for one day. Even though she liked him, she didn't cling to him like a limpet.

"You can go home," she said, pointing at the door. Since he was pretending like he didn't understand, she had to make things clear.

"I don't want to," he told her directly, irritating her to no end.

"You said you understood so if you really do, you must listen to me," she coaxed him, as if he was a child.

In her heart, she had already decided to chase him away if she couldn't coax him to leave. Currently, she had too much to do and investigate. She barely had time to go to work, let alone lose herself in a relationship.

“If I’ve angered you in some way, Heather, you can tell me. You don’t need to beat around the bush by telling me to leave,” he informed her with unusual sternness, leaving her at even more of a loss.

If they kept going this way, they would only be talking in circles. Thus, she came up with a new method to shake him off and she gave him a sly smile.

“Matty.”

Her sudden, intimate form of address made Matthias’ heart thump, and he instantly knew that she was up to something.

Sensing the unease and that knowing he understood her, Heather had to think carefully about what she would say next. In the end, she settled for trying to convince him to change his personality, since there was no way she was going to change hers. “Don’t be so stubborn, Matty. It’s not good for two people to have such similar personalities.

“I’m afraid you’re more stubborn than I am,” he answered honestly. He couldn’t keep being controlled by her and had to fight back where he ought to.

“Alright. I’ll admit I’m stubborn—very stubborn, apparently. In that case, won’t you do as I say?” She batted her eyelashes, trying to look beguiling so that he would feel guilty for rebutting her.

“I have been doing as you say, but haven’t I done enough?” All of a sudden, he felt wronged. Nothing he did was enough. No matter how much patience and compromise he offered her, she never felt like it was enough.

“Well, can you do as I say one more time?” she cajoled. It repulsed her to wheedle like that, especially at home where her family members could hear her and embarrass her.

Seeing that she was giving it her all, Matthias no longer felt like he could argue with her anymore. After a moment of thought, he said, “Alright, I promise.” Even though he didn’t know why she suddenly made this decision, he would do as she said given her insistence. Pulling his resolve from the depths of his soul, he said, “I promise that I won’t come to find you during this period.”

Gratified, Heather smiled widely. “I knew you were the best, Matty.” Even she knew by now that she was asking for too much, but she continued to do so despite her guilt.

As she watched him leave, she suddenly felt desolate. More and more lately, she was feeling confused—there were so many things she couldn’t understand, including her own feelings.

If there weren’t so many schemes and plots between them, perhaps things wouldn’t be as complicated as they were now and perhaps there wouldn’t be so much suspicion.

She craved a relationship where she would be able to love wholeheartedly. Sometimes, she envied Matthias for his ability to devote his entire heart and soul to the relationship.

Such a thing was never a possibility for her. Since she was always thinking about other issues, romantic relationships were barely worth a mention to her. This reality was very different from what she imagined, where she would be able to have someone in this world who belonged completely to her, and whom in turn she would completely belong to.

When it came to her relationship with Matthias, she was beginning to doubt the nature of love and whether she truly loved him. In all honesty, the sayings she heard of love weren’t like her relationship and she felt a little lost.

On this day, she had yet to receive a call from the kidnappers. Nonetheless, she wasn’t anxious, for she believed they would make the next move very soon. By her estimation, they would quickly lose their patience and expose their true motives.

As she watched Matthias get farther and farther away, Heather suddenly felt a little sad, for she didn’t know how long his feelings for her would last.

Her instincts told her that their relationship would not, ultimately, succeed. She feared that they would separate in the end and even had nightmares about such an event.

The fear was one of the reasons she didn’t dare invest fully in case she made it difficult for her to extricate herself in the end. Romance was never as simple as she imagined them to be.

Rubbing her temples, Heather turned and went back into the living room. Unexpectedly, Everly was still there. When their eyes met, the apology in Everly's eyes gave her a great sense of satisfaction.

These were the results Heather wanted. The more apologetic Everly looked, the more it proved the latter had done something wrong. With that, not only could Heather confirm Everly's betrayal, but it allowed her to disturb Everly's mood as well.

She was confident that she would be able to make Everly feel incredibly restless. A breakthrough with Everly would lead to a large reward, and Heather trusted her own judgment completely.

## Standing before Love Chapter 646

Step by step, Heather ascended the stairs to the second floor. Her gaze was as fierce as a hawk's and she was giving off a murderous aura.

These few days, Robert hadn't sought her out for a chat. It seemed he had realized that something troubled her and had decided to give her some space.

The freedom thrilled Heather, for she was most afraid of facing him during this time. If he pushed, she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to lie to him.

When she returned to her small space, she took off her coat and prepared to take a shower. Ever since Myra's kidnapping, she had found every day to be torturous yet passing too quickly.

After her shower, she came out wrapped in a towel. Her bare shoulders were alluring and her hair was still dripping water. Since there was no particular reason for her to do her hair during this period, she simply let it air dry while she sat in front of the computer, frowning deeply.

After turning on the computer and reading a few lines on it, she sighed softly. Even after so long, they had yet to find Myra's concrete location. Just how stealthy are the kidnappers being? Originally, she thought that her tracking skills were improving in leaps and bounds under Zayne's guidance.

However, even Zayne's tracking skills were more theoretical than practical. Presently, she put down everything at hand, crossing her arms as she stared at the computer before her.



It was truly strange for a group of common thugs to have the ability to disappear without a trace. The more trouble she had finding Myra, the more she noticed the oddities in the kidnapping. Heather wanted to know who was behind the scenes, for anyone who had such an ability would surely have something to do with Caleb Moriarty.

Recently, she had arranged for people to spy on Caleb but they hadn't found anything out of the ordinary. Apparently, all he did all day was work.

Doesn't his country care that he's working as a businessman? That was a question she kept thinking about. Doesn't he have to return home for official duties?

At any rate, she dearly hoped he would leave Bradford City quickly, for every day that he stayed, she felt immense pressure not knowing what he was up to.

Nonetheless, she didn't believe business was all he was doing. Even Zayne advised her to drop her tail on Caleb, but she refused and privately hired a detective to keep spying on him.

A woman's intuition was a scary thing, not to mention Heather believed so strongly in her intuition that Zayne felt depressed. He was restricted in everything while he was working under her.

Meanwhile, she refused to give up investigating Caleb. Even though she worried about his anti-reconnaissance skills, she had the feeling she might be able to find out one of his dirty little secrets if she persisted.

Presently, she turned off her computer. It was frustrating because every time they were about to find the kidnappers, the kidnappers escaped their grasp. She was just about ready to turn the city upside down in search of that elusive group.

It was almost like guerrilla warfare. If she wanted to capture the group, not only would she need to have a few teams on hand, she would need to ensure that she could rescue Myra in one fell swoop.

While it wasn't hard to find good mercenaries with quality training, it would be difficult to rescue Myra without a scratch. That was something Heather hedged her bets on. However, without an easy solution, she could only choose the stupid one. If she could pinpoint the location of Myra and her

kidnappers from the very beginning, she would have more time to carry out a rescue.

Now, she thought about getting a new computer. Her current computer was simply running too slowly and it was at this moment that she remembered the computer Leon had.

The problem was that she didn't wish to get Leon involved in this matter. Given that even the kidnapper had warned her against it, she was extra hesitant. Of course, if Leon got involved, there would definitely be a breakthrough in the case and for a moment, the impulse to get in contact with him nearly overtook her.

The next second, however, she rubbed her eyes tiredly and sank back into her chair. A while back, he had acted so strangely that she felt like things weren't as simple as he made them out to be. Now, she did not wish to give him any more trouble since, by her understanding of him, he was involved in something major.

It was already a failure on her part to be unable to help him. If she added more to his plate at this moment, she would never be able to live with herself.

Meanwhile, her phone stayed dark. The kidnappers would never contact her out of the blue, no matter how desperately she wished for it. Even Matthias did not contact her.

As she stared at her silent phone, she unexpectedly felt a little lonely. The world was so complicated and she couldn't help remembering her most innocent childhood years before she knew what it was like for her parents to hate her.

The sound of knocking interrupted her thoughts abruptly. Looking toward the door, she called out, "Who is it?" She didn't know who would look for her at this hour—perhaps the butler?

"It's me," Everly's crisp voice echoed.

It surprised Heather a little that Everly dared to disturb her at this time. Clearly, the latter's boldness had grown.

Heather was originally about to move to put on some clothes but she stopped mid-motion. After all, it was only Everly and decorum was hardly necessary. "Come in."

Pushing the door open, Everly entered and gaped at her cousin. This was her first time seeing Heather in such a careless state. All along, Heather cared a lot about her image, and her constant breaking of the pattern during this period surprised Everly to no end.

"What's so urgent?" Heather asked with a smile that belied the murderous intent she felt underneath.

For a moment, Everly stared at Heather, not knowing what to say. Thing was, she couldn't help feeling like Heather felt some kind of enmity toward her, and that wouldn't do. It had taken a lot of effort to improve their relationship and she had no wish to return to square one. "Do you dislike it when I speak to Director Locke?" she blurted, for she couldn't think of a better reason for Heather's ire than that Heather was jealous.

"Why do you say that?" Heather asked, giving nothing away with her expression. She never expected Everly to jump to the wrong conclusion that she was jealous.

"I-I..." Everly stammered. Heather's retort made her embarrassed and in an instant, she flushed red.

"If you're here solely to ask me something as silly as that, I think you should go!" Heather dismissed her unceremoniously, as Everly's hesitance was giving her a headache.

Instantly, Everly turned even redder and gave Heather a hurt look. Unfortunately for her, Heather had no intention of continuing to chat with her. Right now, she seemed to keep everyone at arm's length.

"Okay," Everly answered numbly but did not go out.

Upon seeing that, Heather shot her an exasperated look. She didn't know when Everly learned to be like Matthias, all talk and no action. All that was lacking was his cheeky shamelessness. "Well, go on out then!" she pressed, pointing at the door.

Seeing that Heather was beginning to chase her out, Everly could only leave miserably. Ironically, it was the sight of her frail silhouette exiting the door that made Heather's heart ache. After all, Everly was her cousin.

"I hope you can find your way back, Everly." At the end of the day, she still hoped Everly would be able to return home and not have to face the Langston Family's wrath on others' behalf.

Even if Heather had no safe way of finding out about Everly's dealings with the outsiders, she believed that whatever went on could not be beneficial to the family.

From her perspective, going behind the family's back to do god-knows-what was considered a betrayal and endangerment to the family. Sometimes, even Heather felt like her own thinking was too extreme, but she was just like that and she had no way of changing who she was.

After Everly left, Heather cleared her head of its jumble of thoughts. No longer did she wish to dwell on upsetting things. Instead, she made plans to do something outrageous.

She had long booked her flight ticket. Since the kidnappers were determined to play cat-and-mouse with her in Bradford City, she was going to provoke them into breaking the pattern. Given that they hung her out to dry by not contacting her, she was going to be similarly uncourteous toward them and simply leave the city. Then, she would see how antsy they got.

The next day, she woke up early and got ready to fly to Singapore. Wondering whether someone would try and stop her from going on vacation abroad, she headed to the airport in high spirits.

The airport was bustling and Heather smiled, looking like she was in a good mood. The kidnappers hadn't called her yet, but she forced down the anxiousness in her heart. She had to persist—she firmly believed the kidnappers would call her.

Time flew by quickly and soon, there were only a few minutes left before boarding. She never thought the kidnappers could hold out for so long. Internally, she counted down the time until takeoff. Even after boarding the plane, she didn't dare to believe that she would be taking to the skies soon.

The entire time, she stared at her phone. The kidnappers did not call, nor did anyone else. It was ridiculous. Clearly, she had miscalculated and there was nothing left for her to do but fly to Singapore.

The flight was smooth and like he had disappeared into thin air, Matthias did not check up on her once. Even Everly did not send her any news. It was as if the whole world had forgotten her.

The flight landed safely in Singapore. In no mood to actually tour the country, she made plans to catch a ride on the earliest flight back to Bradford City.

Very quickly, she bought a ticket but her phone rang at this time, prompting her to look down at the caller ID. In truth, she hadn't needed to check to know it was from Zayne. After all, he and Leon were the only two people who knew this particular number, and Leon was a little occupied at the moment. Thus, Zayne was the only one who would call her.

"Surprised by my international call, Hattie?" He was as frivolous as always.

"If you have something to say, say it." She didn't have time for his nonsense. Right now, she was still waiting for a call from the kidnappers.

"Stop waiting for a call from the kidnappers. You'd better give up! They're not going to call you," he continued unceremoniously, aggravating her to no end.

"How can you be so sure?" she demanded. Even if she believed in his reasoning abilities, his attitude was still annoying.

"Use your brain! Why are you so dumb lately, Heather? Did you hit your head?" he continued to provoke her. After all, she was abroad at the moment so she couldn't retaliate.

Heather tried her best to calm herself down. "I want legitimate reasons, not your nonsense."

"The kidnappers aren't in a rush to see you and they wouldn't call to check up on you even if you ran all the way to the North Pole. Myra is in their hands and the person who should be worried is you. Flipping the situation on their heads is not going to work," he informed her calmly.

Hearing that, she grew sober. If he could read her thoughts so thoroughly, so could a clever kidnapper. That meant she had, indeed, made a stupid mistake.

## Standing before Love Chapter 647

After hanging up on Zayne, Heather threw the flight ticket that she just bought into the trash. Since the kidnappers weren't shaken by her departure, she would play along with them.

And so, she decided to have a good time in Singapore. It wasn't her first time visiting the country, but it was her first time going there without any official duties on hand.

As that was the case, she decided to have a stroll around the city. It did, in fact, have its charms. Never before had she walked through its crowds in such a mood and as she wandered around, she almost lost herself to a trance.

Truth was, she felt more relaxed being so far away from Bradford City. While she was in the city, every day felt as suffocating as if she had an invisible net thrown over her—however much she wanted to do, she was powerless.

The air quality in Singapore was quite good and she couldn't help taking in a deep breath. On the other hand, the air in Bradford City was too polluted and breathing in too deeply on a smoggy day could make someone dizzy.

Moreover, it was no wonder Singapore was known as a garden city. As she strolled through it, she felt her spirits lightened by quite a bit. Rarely did she get to enjoy being alone while she was in Bradford City; even if all she did was stay at home, she could not avoid running into her family members.

Since this was such a rare opportunity, she carefully considered what she would do after her walk. She wasn't too keen on going to famous tourist attractions as there wasn't much worth seeing at such places with crowds. Thus, she decided to seek out a secluded spot instead and looked for a coffee shop amid a cluster of shophouses.

At this moment, she needed a steaming cup of coffee. This was her habit—her mood would improve a lot after having some coffee.

After finding her target, she pondered for a moment before entering the coffee shop. As there were many Solarians working in Singapore, she had no trouble communicating in her native tongue.

Upon finding a spot by the window, she sat down and looked outside. It was a cozy feeling she always enjoyed. She ordered the most common kind of latte and waited for it to arrive and for a moment, she temporarily forgot her troubles in Bradford City.

There weren't many customers in the coffee shop and Heather got to enjoy the rare moment of peace. Even the people outside looked cozy. The atmosphere here was so markedly different from that of Bradford City that she almost found it hard to tear her eyes away from the window and pick up her freshly delivered cup of coffee to take a sip. Truth was, her drink tasted all right.

At this moment, she thought of Matthias, who was far away in Bradford City, and wondered what he was doing. It was strange that she missed him only when he was so far away.

Perhaps he's missing me right now, she thought to herself. She thought she would be carefree without him, but it turned out that she found it hard to be separated from him too.

In this game, she no longer cared about winning. Since she was already in love, she resolved not to trouble herself with relationship issues anymore.

The coffee was slowly dwindling and now, she felt much more clear-headed. Curious, she scanned her surroundings. The place was relatively empty and she could occasionally hear loving couples whispering sweet nothings to each other.

All of a sudden, she felt a need to slow down her pace in life. All these years, she had rushed through life so quickly that others found it hard to catch up to her.

Instead of enjoying the little moments in life, she only felt bogged down by its troubles. While others were busy seeking love, she was obsessed with working and studying, day after day, over and over again.

In her world, there were no fairy tales. Like a fruit forced to mature early, she had grown up young and moved forward before she was truly ready.

Suddenly, she envied the people here and the comfortable expressions on their faces. Perhaps there was something to be learned from them, and she forced herself to relax the muscles of her face to look less severe.

Right now, she could hear a group of girls whispering about her at the table next to hers. Her beautiful looks always drew discussion and, long used to that fact, she let others talk about her as they pleased. She looked how she looked. The fact that some people found that a hard pill to swallow had nothing to do with her.

As the hours passed, the coffee shop slowly grew emptier. When she recalled that there was a good place for gambling in Singapore, she contemplated whiling away her evening hours there.

Because she departed in a rush, she didn't have much cash on her. It had been a long time since she participated in such exciting games, and the mere thought of it made her heart race in anticipation.

Meanwhile, far away in Bradford City, the kidnappers were flummoxed to learn that Heather had gone all the way to Singapore during such a stressful period. They couldn't help feeling like she had some kind of trick up her sleeve.

And so, one of the kidnappers asked respectfully, "What should we do, Master?" Within this empty space, the man who stood before the kidnapper gave off a spine-chilling aura. "Interesting. Very interesting, indeed," he murmured in a low voice. It was hard to tell whether he was pleased or enraged.

Baffled by his response, the kidnapper could only continue with a follow-up question. "Should we give her a warning?"

At this point, the man gave the kidnapper a sharp, cold look. Instantly, the latter bowed his head, displaying even more respect.

"She can vacation whenever she wants," the man answered carelessly. Truthfully, he wasn't bothered by her departure from the country and instead, he found it quite amusing.

"What should we do next, Master?" The main purpose of the kidnapper's visit was to ask for the next step in their plan.



After taking a few steps back and straightening his collar, the man crossed his arms over his chest and asked in a demeanor that suggested he was listening to a joke, "Do you need me to teach you that?"

Duly chastised, the kidnapper turned red. Once again, he had embarrassed himself in front of the man. It made him feel useless like he couldn't even say the right things. "I-I'm sorry, Master," he chattered through his teeth. He had a bone-deep fear of the man, for the bloody scene that heralded their first meeting was unforgettable.

After shooting a scornful look at the sniveling drudge, the man then let out a meaningful smile. This kidnapper had many murders to his name and it was a smart decision to have him kidnap Myra.

After dismissing the kidnapper, the man decided to go see Myra. During this period, he was experimenting on her like she was some kind of lab rat, and he wondered how she was doing at the moment.

Thus, he got in his car and drove to a place in the suburbs that nobody would think of. He imagined that the 'smoke bomb' in the kidnapper's hands would last for a good while.

Now, his nondescript car stopped outside an unremarkable building. Because of how well-disguised he was, the unobservant would never recognize his real identity.

He was satisfied with his disguise, but the problem was that there was one thing he miscalculated. Because he hadn't managed to keep full tabs on Heather's comings and goings, he had no idea of Zayne's existence.

In this battle of wits and bravery, no one had the opportunity to catch their breath. Even the immensely private Heather was forced under scrutiny.

Everyone longed to become the winner but Heather could not afford to lose. It was just a pity that she had only just learned to admit defeat before being dragged into this mess. Now, she was learning that being able to surrender was sometimes a blessing.

What she wasn't aware of was how Tony was being tested or what kind of games the kidnappers were playing on him.

In Tony's heart, he had already killed the woman who pranced around in front of him every day a million times. If it weren't for Myra's sake, he would not have been so tolerant of this woman.

The truth was, he was waiting for the perfect timing, but the wait was wearing him down after so many days that he felt like he was going to explode. He didn't know when things would come to an end and however calm he remained, he had no way of accepting that Myra had been missing for so many days.

Every day, the woman paraded herself in front of him as if nothing was wrong. Yet, whenever he looked into her eyes, he could tell she wasn't as uncomplicated as she appeared. There was a certain pure brightness to her gaze that clashed jarringly with her deliberate actions.

"You don't have to put on such a performance," he told her coldly now.

Unabashed, she leered at him. "You're so cruel, Director Hart. Can't you humor me for putting on such a good performance?"

Casting her an indifferent glance, he answered, "There's no need for you to act like this in front of me. I only want to save my wife as soon as possible."

Upon hearing that, the woman let out a smile that was entirely inappropriate for the severity of the situation and faked innocence as she said, "I'm only responsible for keeping you company, Director Hart. I don't know about anything else."

"Alright. I understand your meaning." With that, he ended the conversation, for saying too much wouldn't help his chances.

"Don't fault me for not reminding you that your wife is actually in a safe place, Director Hart. You don't have to worry too much. We want to build a good, collaborative relationship with you, and that naturally means we would never dare mistreat your wife." Her words sounded nice, but even a fool would realize that this wasn't the way to seek business partnerships.

Nevertheless, Tony did not offer a rebuttal. What was there to say at this point? All of a sudden, he felt like he hadn't run into a group of kidnappers but rather a group of thick-skinned, shameless hooligans.

“If you’re here to seek collaboration, why not tell me your conditions?” he enunciated clearly as he stared at her. There was nothing he wished for more than the opportunity to tear her to shreds.

While the woman knew he hated her, she didn’t care. She had long gotten used to the taste of hatred and now, she was happy to watch him slowly be consumed by his hatred.

“I don’t know the conditions of the collaboration, Director Hart, so please don’t be impatient,” she told him calmly, instantly making his rage flare up. He couldn’t help feeling like she was making fun of him.

“You say you want to collaborate but you don’t even know your conditions. Is this the way to seek collaboration?” Tony questioned, his patience quickly becoming frayed.

“I’m just a poor lackey, Director Hart. Getting angry at me won’t change things.” The woman retained her affable smile, seemingly unruffled by his attitude.

Seeing that nothing would scare her into submission, he decided not to say anything. It was no use, anyway; he might as well just shut up.

“It’s lunchtime, Director Hart. What kind of cuisine do you like?” Once again, she changed the topic as if nothing was wrong. Nonetheless, he didn’t deign to answer her.

Such was their mode of communication during this time. It made him feel like she was trying to seize total control of him, which he was not pleased about.

Deep down, he was already thinking of how to avoid her surveillance. Yet, right now, she was still standing there persistently. At this rate, he wouldn’t be surprised if she followed him into the washroom.

“I’m not hungry, so please leave.” Since this was his room and he had no wish to see her, he unceremoniously dismissed her.

“Your food intake has grossly decreased lately, Director Hart. I’m very worried about your health,” she told him, putting on such an attentive air that he felt deeply disgusted by her.

“Get out,” he repeated firmly as he glared at her.

Nonetheless, she refused to budge, repulsing him with her pompous behavior. Well, he would find a way to show her that he, Tony Hart, was not to be controlled by anyone.

## Standing before Love Chapter 648

In Singapore, the gentle breeze that brushed by in the night gave Heather a strange feeling. She was, after all, in the streets of a foreign country, so it would only be natural for her to miss Bradford City, especially the people there. All of a sudden, Matthias' face popped up in her head.

She shrugged away the messy thoughts in her head, then cast a glance at the hustle and bustle not far away. After a fleeting hesitation, she decided to head in. It was a European-styled building and from its exterior, it looked nothing like a casino at all. This was a casino in Singapore that was operated by Genting Corporation from Malaysia.

Gambling was legal here. Heather wanted to experience the exhilaration that was induced right before one won or lost a game, which she found a rather effective way to destress.

When she entered the building, the greeter at the entrance couldn't help but cast a few more glances at her—it seemed like nobody could ignore her beauty no matter where she was. Her reflection appeared on the glass and she glanced at herself. She was still as stunning as always but inwardly, she felt hollow.

A hint of depression slowly crept to her brows but she entered the building without hesitation. It was buzzing in the casino and everything in front of her was dazzling. After a brief survey of the surroundings, she chose the simplest game—Sic Bo.

Upon seeing the two sections—Big Bet and Small Bet—on the table, she unhesitatingly placed her chips at the Big Bet section. She did not mind about winning or losing as she merely wanted to relax her mind.

After making Big Bets for a few rounds, she kept losing money but she remained impassive and looked unconcerned, which puzzled the dealer. As the game went on, she continued to make Big Bets with different amounts of chips every round. Even the people around her were flustered on her behalf, yet she remained indifferent, as if nothing absurd was happening.

To Heather, winning or losing when gambling depended on whether one won or lost money in the end. In other words, the money she lost now did not matter, as she believed that she would eventually win everything back.

A lot of gamblers had faith that they could make a huge win and turn the tables if they persisted, but they often ended up losing their entire wealth. Nevertheless, Heather was different from them.

Gamblers went to the casino for money but she was there for relaxation. Although she wanted to win, she was very well aware of the possibility of losing as well. Tonight, she had exchanged a whole bunch of chips, and if she was unable to win her money back before she lost everything, she could just consider the money that she had lost were spent on entertainment since she only lost a limited sum.

To Heather, playing Sic Bo was no different from playing a claw machine. If other gamblers knew her real thoughts, they might think that she was out of her mind.

“Are you still betting on Big Bet?” the dealer asked as he couldn’t bear to watch any longer. Anyhow, it was rather strange that the dice sum happened to be small multiple times consecutively today, as if God was deliberately playing tricks on the guest before him tonight.

“Yes, all in.” Heather smiled at the dealer and calmly placed all her chips at the Big Bet section.

The people around her were instantly excited and many of them bet on Small Bet, leaving Heather the only one who bet on Big Bet. A scene like this was extremely rare, so even the dealer was nervous. He looked into Heather’s eyes, only to see her confidence in them.

This was just how Heather was—always shining as bright as a star and forever brimming with confidence. Even when everyone thought that she would lose for sure, she still stood her ground.

Everyone’s heart was in their mouth. The results were about to be revealed and only Heather remained indifferent. Everyone watched as the dice sum was revealed to be small. In the end, they all sighed with relief. Heather had lost and she was the only one who did so.

The corner of her lips curved upward into a smile—it was one that indicated that she had found her release. I actually lost this time. Even Heather was shocked herself; she had always been confident about her luck but it seemed like luck was not on her side this time.

As she had lost all her chips, she turned away unhesitatingly. Although she had only played one game, she felt much relaxed now. Sometimes, experiencing some excitement could make one feel much relieved, which explained why she was in a great mood now.

Heather might be the only person who was still happy after losing so much money. At that moment, welling inside her was some sort of confidence that she would be able to recover her wealth even if she were to spend it all. Her spirit was soaring high and it would be even better if she had someone to drink with her right now.

With such thoughts in mind, she intended to do so by going to the bar to drink a few glasses of strong alcohol. And so, she hailed a taxi outside. As soon as she boarded it, she said to the driver, “Take me to the buzziest bar.”

There were no communication barriers between them as English was quite commonly spoken in Singapore. The driver understood her and replied in a less fluent English, “Okay, it will take... 30 minutes.”

Heather opened the car window to look at the neon lights outside as the vehicle drove past the buzzy and lively area. She loved the hustle and bustle because all of that represented business opportunities, and she loved large cities because she could make the most of her abilities here. She had a good impression of Singapore so she considered investing in this country; she had even decided on what to invest in.

Her brain kept working non-stop, which was actually a feeling that she liked. If she stopped using her brain, those annoying matters would come flooding back to her mind, so she might as well find something to do. While she was considering the feasibility of the investment projects, the vehicle stopped in front of a bar so she alighted from it.

Heather looked stunning dressed in all white. That being said, her poker face was cold and aloof, effectively deterring anyone from striking a conversation with her. Her cold temperament, which seemed out of place in this lively atmosphere of the bar, made her stand out.

She went to the counter and said to the bartender, "Give me a bottle of vodka with 96% alcohol." She had ordered a base alcohol as she preferred mixing her own alcohol; she wasn't convinced by the bartender's skill.

The bartender looked at her, puzzled. Although he understood English, he was baffled when a woman suddenly ordered a bottle of vodka as soon as she arrived.

"Do you not have one?" Her gaze was cold when she looked at him. Under the dim lights in the bar, she looked even more stunning.

The bartender obediently passed a bottle of strong vodka to her and when she got the bottle, she appraised it for a moment. Vodka with 96% alcohol content was quite uncommon nowadays. Even if some bars had them, most of them were not genuine, but the one she had in her hands now seemed promising.

Heather planned to taste it. The reason she ordered vodka with a high alcohol level was because she wanted something strong tonight. She was a person who could hold her drink so most strong liquors were ineffective to her. Thing was, she wanted to get drunk tonight.

She was drinking to her heart's content in the bar and a mesmerizing smile played on her lips, attracting the attention of many men and inducing their desire to strike a conversation with her. However, Heather seemed like a difficult person to deal with, so most people dared not approach her.

The bartender, on the other hand, watched as she downed glass after glass and it stunned him. She was just too courageous and he had never met any woman who could hold her drink as well as she could.

Heather smiled at him and said, "Let me buy you a drink."

The bartender blushed, feeling disconcerted when she suddenly talked to him. In contrast, Heather found him rather interesting and thought that he might be a Solarian.

In the end, the bartender took a clean glass and murmured, "Thank you."

She poured him a drink and glanced at him before asking, "Are you a Solarian?"

The bartender put down the glass and replied, a shy smile playing by his lips, "Yes, I'm a Solarian. I'm studying in Singapore and at night, I work here part-time." He couldn't wait to tell her everything about him.

As expected, he is still a student; it's rare to find someone so pure in a bar, Heather smiled as she mused, which in turn made her look stunning.

"That's good." She then raised her glass and invited him to drink with her.

The bartender nervously raised his glass and clinked it against hers. He did not expect to encounter such a beauty at work tonight—no man could resist such a heavenly beauty like her.

When other men saw Heather taking the initiative to 'flirt' with the bartender, they thought that it was finally the right time now, so they flocked to her. The next moment, men crowded her but her expression instantly became colder when they approached her. The men looked at one another with hostility. All of them wished to be the first guy to talk to her but she directly rose from her seat, giving them no chance to chat with her.

In the end, Heather left the alcohol and walked away. Since she had had her fair share of alcohol, she intended to leave the place immediately; she had no intention to mingle with the men there.

As she had always disliked trouble, she chose to leave when the situation still permitted her to do so. As a matter of fact, she disliked noisy bars; she preferred to drink in a calm and elegant environment whenever she craved a drink.

The bartender looked at Heather's figure sadly as she left. It was unexpected that the encounter with a beauty had lasted only a short period of time; yet, he felt that he would remember the brief conversation that they had had for the rest of his life.

The men left in disappointment but one of them, who was reluctant to give up, followed Heather even after she left the bar. When she was standing by the street waiting for a cab, he gathered his courage and took the initiative to talk to her. "Hello." It was a simple and traditional way to strike a conversation.

Heather ignored the man. The effects of the strong alcohol that she had consumed started to kick in, causing her to be in a dangerous state now.



Upon seeing her ignoring him, he stepped forward in an attempt to touch her, but she avoided him smoothly. With her brows slightly furrowed, she thought, This man will be dead if he does anything more.

After consuming alcohol, Heather was more violent than usual, not to mention the fact that she had outstanding fighting skills. All these made the current Heather a dangerous beast that would break the neck of anyone who approached her with malicious intention at any time.

“Where do you stay? I have a car and I can drive you back.” The man spoke in fluent English. He guessed that she was a Solarian because he heard her speaking English when they were in the bar earlier, so he intended to please her by speaking the same language.

Heather continued to ignore him. She usually wore this attitude toward those who shamelessly tried to hit on her and treated them like air.

“Miss!” he patiently called out to her. “Pretty lady!” He watched his words as he knew that most women dislike others addressing her as ‘Madam’ or ‘Mrs’.

However, Heather didn’t even bother to cast a glance at him. To her, this sort of man was no different from a roach and he did not deserve her attention at all. However, with her current low tolerance, she would make sure that he got a taste of her fist if he continued to bother her.

When the man reached out his hand again to touch her, not only did Heather avoid his disgusting hand, she even elbowed him in his stomach.

The man bent over in pain. It was not a light strike at all and it made him nearly throw up. Oftentimes, this was just how Heather was—ever so cruel. But then again, she had never seen herself as a kind person.

## Standing before Love Chapter 649

Heather elegantly boarded the cab without even casting the poor man a glance, so he had nobody but himself to blame for messing with her tonight. She opened the window wide and the night breeze brushed her face; she even asked the driver to drive faster as she liked to listen to the sound of the breeze and feel the cold wind on her face.

Clutching her phone in her hand, she gazed out of the window, her eyes revealing the hint of coldness in her character—a coldness that resembled the night sky tonight.

The other phone in her handbag suddenly rang at this untimely moment. The sound attracted her gaze and she opened her handbag to fish out her phone. Upon seeing the strange number on the screen, Heather hesitated if she should pick up the call.

In the end, she did not do so. She dared not answer calls from people that she did not know to avoid trouble. Nonetheless, the person on the other end of the line was rather persistent. Upon seeing the call with the same strange number coming in again, she felt a headache coming on.

The constant ringing of the phone annoyed her, causing her to think if she should block this number. Therefore, after much hesitation, she finally made up her mind and blocked the number right before she exited the cab.

When she thought that the noise would end just like this, another call with a different strange number came in, ending the peace that her ears had gained for barely a few seconds and giving her the impulse to throw the phone away.

This time, Heather finally confirmed that the other person was clearly toying with her. Knowing that blocking the number again would be of no use, she picked up the call.

When the call went through, she kept quiet but the other person did the same. Yet, she didn't hang up the call because she believed that the person on the other end of the line would lose his patience first.

After the longest silence, the person finally said, "It's me." It was a familiar voice that belonged to Tony, a person whom she would never have guessed would call her.

"Tony, why is it you?" She was flabbergasted that Tony would actually call her at this hour. It was totally baffling.

However, he had no intention to waste his time and explain things slowly. "I don't have much time to explain things to you now," he muttered. "I'm calling you for something important."

Heather, too, got straight to the point. "Is this about Myra's kidnapping?"

Tony was not surprised about Heather's reply at all, since he currently had more intel than her and had long known that she had been threatened by the kidnapper.

"Do you know the kidnapper's true motive?" Tony asked about the crux of the matter, which was exactly what Heather was most concerned about. She still did not know about the kidnapper's motive yet and she wondered if he knew about it.

"You know." Although it was a statement, there was a tinge of puzzlement in her tone. Tony's abilities had exceeded her expectations.

Heather had hired the renowned detective, Zayne Lee; she did not know which professional Tony managed to find, but it was obvious that the one he had was even better.

"The kidnapper wants the Hart and Langston Family to destroy each other." He was equally shocked when he first knew about the kidnapper's motive, and the first person that came to mind was Caleb.

"Caleb Moriarty?" Unsurprisingly, Heather thought about the same person as well.

However, Tony denied it. "It isn't Caleb, but the force behind the kidnapper is immeasurable now."

"Other than Caleb, who else could have plotted this?" Heather replied in disbelief. She couldn't think of any other forces that would do this.

"We have been fooled. Caleb's emergence attracted all of our attention. The real mastermind behind this is someone we never would have thought of." As of now, Tony had yet to uncover who was behind Myra's kidnapping; he never thought that there was actually a person who had the ability to pull this off right under his nose in Bradford City.

"In other words, you don't know who is behind the kidnapper as well. How did you find out about their motive, then?" Something just doesn't add up. I wonder where Tony got the news.

"That person contacted me himself so I reckon that he will look for you soon." Tony had had a brief conversation with the mysterious man earlier and right after the call ended, he contacted Heather.

Although there was a mysterious woman shadowing him in the dark, he was able to get away from her surveillance. Unlike Heather who required the help of a detective, Tony was a detective himself.

He had another power which he had kept hidden from everyone. If it wasn't for this hidden force, he might have been completely at the mercy of the enemy.

"What do I do now?" Heather believed that Tony had a plan, so all she had to do now was to actively cooperate with him.

"We do as they say." The reason he contacted her was not only to give her some confidence, but also to ask her to listen to what the kidnapper said.

"You want me to put the Langston Family at risk?" Heather found his request a bit over the top because if she were to listen to what the kidnapper said, she would be putting the Langstons at risk.

"Trust me—I will definitely find a way to turn the tables." Knowing how much effort Heather had put into rescuing Myra, Tony hoped that the former could trust him now.

"I'm willing to sacrifice anything no matter what it is, but I dare not put the Langston Family at stake," she murmured as she hesitated. In all honesty, Heather was worried that she might destroy the century-old foundation of the Langstons.

"I know that my request is putting you on the spot, but I can't lose Myra. Please, I'm begging you." Tony had never begged anyone, but he had to do so for Myra's sake this time.

"I—" Just as Heather was debating internally whether she should do so, another call came in her other phone—it was from an unknown number.

And so, she said to Tony, who was at the other end of the line, "The kidnapper is calling me." Then, she hung up his call and picked up the other one. The call went through and the kidnapper's voice was different than before—it looked like it was the mysterious man himself this time.

"Miss Langston." The mysterious man had a frivolous tone, which was different from what she had imagined.

"Who is this?" Heather asked, pretending that she knew nothing.

“Miss Langston, my identity doesn’t concern you. All you have to know is that Mrs. Hart is in my hands.” What the mysterious man said would anger anyone who heard it, not to mention his tone that would irritate the hell out of anyone.

“What’s the purpose of kidnapping Myra?” Heather asked, slightly frustrated.

“It seems like you are not surprised by my sudden call, Miss Langston. I supposed that a little bird told you about me,” he replied calmly, but his words gave Heather a shock. She suspected that the mysterious man had found out that she had spoken to Tony, so she immediately switched the topic.

“What’s your motive? Why don’t you just tell me?” As she had no knowledge about what the mysterious man knew about, it would be better to not reply to him directly.

“Fine, Miss Langston. Since you are so eager to know my motive, I don’t mind telling you. I heard that the Langston, Hart and Moriarty Family used to be very close years ago, but the relationships among the three families fell apart and they started to fight with one another—”

Before the mysterious man was able to finish his sentence, Heather interrupted him, “Did you call me to tell stories?”

Upon hearing that, he burst out laughing. “Miss Langston, you have quite the temper. Rumor has it that you are a calm and sensible woman, but the actual situation seems different.” The mysterious man was quite talkative, but Heather was in no mood to listen to him rambling on so she muttered, “You can just go straight to the point and tell me your motive.”

“Alright, alright; be patient. Listen to me as I slowly explain it.” He persisted on with his chatty mode, and Heather would have hung up the call if this was any other ordinary circumstance.

In the end, she kept quiet, indicating her acquiescence. Truth was, she had never seen a kidnapper like this. She mentally speculated the kidnapper’s identity and found that she seemed to not know anybody so loquacious.

“Well, I don’t have any hobbies in particular, you know. However, I very much enjoy seeing siblings fighting with each other,” he said and chuckled in an arrogant manner.

“Therefore, the three families raging wars against one another and becoming enemies put you in a good mood?” she mocked.

He cackled in response. “Miss Langston, you are so cute and way more interesting than Tony.”

Upon hearing that, Heather patiently asked, “What do you want the three families to do now?” Could it be that this guy has nobody to chat with? Otherwise, why is he saying so much nonsense?

“Continue on with the fights, of course. What the Langston Family did back then was quite disgraceful—you guys used a weak lady in exchange for peace.” There was a change in the man’s tone and it now carried a hint of fury.

Heather immediately took notice of this and a bold idea popped up in her mind. Years ago, Claris had a lover and they loved each other. Is this mysterious man related to the lover that was seldom mentioned?

“I don’t quite get you,” she calmly replied.

He chuckled but he seemed to bear no hostility toward her. “Miss Langston, I don’t believe that someone as bright as you doesn’t understand what I mean—I want the three families to be ruined!” The way he stressed the last few words clearly conveyed his hatred toward them.

“Sounds interesting. You want to destroy the three families, but do you think that we will be at your mercy just because you managed to capture Myra?” Truth was, Heather found that he seemed to have overestimated himself.

“This is just the beginning. I have the ability to take down the entire family in one night, but taking action myself is no fun at all. I want to see you fighting one another.” The man became more cocky with his words and what he said made her scalp tingle.

“You want me to collaborate with the Hart Family and take down the Moriarty Family?” she guessed.

“Yes. Miss Langston, you are just as smart as I said.” The mysterious man gave her a positive reply, then paused for a moment before he added, “Tony has already agreed to it, so I believe that you won’t reject it.”

Heather recalled Tony's request but she was still hesitating, and what the mysterious man said sent chills down her spine. For some reason, she felt that he really had the ability to take down a family in one night. Therefore, she was actually feeling unsettled although she put up a strong front.

"I need some time to consider." She suspected that what the mysterious man told her was different from what he had told Tony, so she wanted to verify it with the latter.

"Okay, I'll give you an hour to consider. If you still can't think this through after an hour, Mrs. Hart will be used as a human sacrifice." The mysterious man no longer wore a carefree tone, and instead replaced it with one that was full of murderous intent.

After hanging up the call, Heather immediately called Tony, but he did not answer her call. She then called him two more times but to no avail.

Now, she couldn't find anyone to discuss this confidential matter. She wanted to discuss it with Zayne, but she felt conflicted and wondered if she should.

An hour soon passed by. Looking at her two phones, she felt helpless because there didn't seem to be another option for her.

## Standing before Love Chapter 650

In the last few minutes, Heather contacted Zayne since there was no point hiding anything from him at this moment. The reason Zayne's progress was rather slow was largely due to her reservation—she refused to reveal much about her family's conflict.

"I—" She paused the moment she said that one word. However, time was running out and she couldn't put Myra's life at risk.

"I have to make a decision," she blurted. Meanwhile, Zayne, who was on the other end of the line, had a bewildered look on his face and he wondered why she suddenly said something so strange.

Before he could make sense of the situation, Heather ended the call. Feeling speechless, he looked at his phone, puzzled by her words.

Heather soon gave the mysterious man a call. She now had no other choice as all she could do was to follow what he said.

“I agree.” Her tone was adamant.

The mysterious man looked at the timer on the coffee table, a complacent smile playing by the corner of his lips. The timer showed that there was 15 seconds left—Heather had waited till the last minute.

“Great. I’m glad that you are such a sensible person, Miss Langston.” He continued to ramble on and Heather had the sudden urge to hang up the call.

However, the next instant, there was a change in his tone as he said to her, “Miss Langston, you have to listen to my arrangement obediently after this.” Upon hearing that, Heather was utterly helpless and she did not respond to him.

She tried to contain herself from doing or saying anything out of impulse since quarrelling with the man at this moment would do her no good. Then, she suddenly recalled what Tony said. Maybe I should have faith in him this time and believe that we still have the chance to turn the tide.

“Miss Langston, you must be tired. I shouldn’t continue to disturb your rest. Have a good night; sweet dreams.” He carefreely said to her despite not getting any response from her.

Soon, a busy tone rang in the phone, indicating that the other person had hung up. Heather, on the other hand, instantly felt that the world sounded much quieter when she could stop listening to his nonsense.

She walked to the mirror and looked at herself in it; there was an unconcealable exhaustion on her face. She usually appeared before everyone with an energetic look, but she could feel exhaustion seeping through her bones now. It turns out that I can feel tired as well, she mused.

Inwardly, she made a decision to return to the country tomorrow although she did not manage to find some relaxation here. When she returned to Bradford City, she knew that she would feel even lonelier instead, for she would soon do things that would harm the Langston Family.

The thing she used to worry about all the time had finally come true, but what she didn’t expect was that she would be the one who would destroy the Langstons, people that she had been protecting from all threats all this while.



The sole purpose of that man kidnapping Myra was to demonstrate his power—he wanted them to understand that since he had been able to capture her easily, it would not be a challenge for him to capture someone else.

The mysterious man's capability was immeasurable and had far exceeded theirs. If Heather refused to follow his order, she might pay an even heavier price.

At the moment, he only wanted the Hart and Langston Family to join forces to deal with the Moriarty Family and this would, at most, result in the three illustrious families falling apart without hurting anyone's life.

Even if Heather was determined to protect the Langston Family with her life, she dared not take any risks when it came to someone else's life. In the end, she faced an utter defeat this time.

She used to think that the greatest crisis in her life had been when the Langstons was at the verge of bankruptcy. Only now did she know that there was such a group of people in this world who would sacrifice the life of others to achieve their own goals.

She had never thought that there would be a day when something that she had thought was simple would turn out to be so complicated. Dispirited by the fact that there was nothing else she could do, all she had in mind now was to hide this from everyone and shoulder this on her own.

At that moment, a person suddenly crossed her mind—it was the man with a mask whom she had met previously. Truth was, she suspected that he was the mysterious man.

If the masked man is really the mysterious man, I must figure out a way to break off Everly's relationship with him! I do not wish to see her going down the wrong path. She's surely being used by him!

The more Heather thought about it, the more eager she was to get back as soon as possible. She was in Singapore and being far away from Solaria made her feel powerless but thankfully, this day here wasn't all that bad.

At night, she tossed and turned on the bed, unable to fall asleep. In the end, she climbed out of the bed. Since she couldn't sleep, she planned to directly go to the airport to take the earliest flight. All she had in mind now was to go back as early as possible, as every second counted.

In the waiting area at the airport, Heather sat elegantly in a seat, feeling sleepy there instead. And so, she closed her eyes to take a brief rest before boarding the plane.

She was half awake since she couldn't possibly fall asleep at a public place. Soon, it was almost daybreak and there were more people and noise around her, which indicated that the passengers could soon board on the first plane of the day.

Without having to glance at her watch, she was able to mentally gauge the time and knew that she still had about 30 minutes left. After another short rest, the announcement rang.

Heather, who had not completely fallen asleep, remained in a half-awake state of mind when she was boarding the plane but even after that, her mind was still groggy.

When she settled down in the first-class cabin, she found her surroundings a lot quieter. As she gently leaned back against the seat, her neck found a temporary 'home'.

There were only a handful of people in the first-class cabin. There was a young couple with a three or four-year-old boy, who occasionally made some loud noise, but the rest of the passengers quietly shut their eyes to rest. It was rather peaceful in the cabin.

Under such a calm surrounding, she felt sleepier and finally fell asleep, which was actually her first time dozing off in a plane. When she was still half-asleep, the stewardess woke her up. Heather looked at the stewardess before her with her eyes slightly squinted and became wide awake in less than three seconds.

"Have we arrived at Bradford City?" Heather asked with a raspy voice.

"Yes, Miss. We have arrived in Bradford City," the stewardess replied amiably. She couldn't resist the urge to take a few more glances at Heather because the other woman was simply gorgeous.

"Thanks," Heather said as she rose to her feet, feeling a whole lot better after a good rest.

She was no superhero and she would feel tired and burnt out. Sometimes, she felt that she was nothing more than an ordinary woman.

She alighted from the plane and this was the first time that nobody came to pick her up. Yet, she was unfazed by this tiny detail and didn't feel dejected; all she had in mind was to go and find Leon.

When she was at Leon's villa the last time she returned to Bradford City, she heard him mentioning the mysterious force in the city, so she intended to work with him this time.

Although she had no idea what role his family played in Bradford City, she thought that this was something that she could make use of. As for the question of how to do so, it would surely be through Leon, of course.

His villa was located quite far away from the airport. When Heather was on the way there, she thought about what she should do if Leon happened to be away.

She didn't want to contact him. As he seldom contacted her nowadays, she reckoned that he was busy with his own things.

Although she was on the way to find him to talk about working with him, she was, in fact, still hesitating if she should get him involved with this matter. Sometimes, metaphysics came in handy when one was in a dilemma. The current situation made a perfect example—Heather decided to go straight to find Leon at his villa and if he was not there, she would pretend that she never came. However, if he was really there, she would bring up the idea to collaborate with him. In other words, she would let fate decide.

The cab brought her to her destination and she gracefully exited the car. Looking at the tightly closed main gate, Heather thought that there was a high chance that Leon was not here.

She thought about things for a while and stepped forward to knock on the door. She knocked on it for a long time, yet no one answered the door. A hint of disappointment flashed across her face and she thought to herself, It seems like Leon really isn't here.

The very next instant, however, she felt relieved. This may be for the best. I don't have to put him on the spot, at least. In truth, Heather had been giving him a lot of trouble, so she felt relieved for not troubling him this time.

Thus, she turned around and left. Well, this is it, then. I won't come and find Leon again as long as this matter isn't over. However, at that very moment, the large, heavy main gate behind her creaked. She looked back in shock, only to meet Leon's eyes.

He wore a frivolous smile as he said to her, "Heather, you are finally willing to come and see me."

Heather revealed a complex smile, wondering if she should feel glad for his sudden appearance. Since this was fate, she had to trouble him once again. Truth be told, she enjoyed working with Leon because she believed that he could bring her luck.

"Yes, I missed you." Heather truly missed him. They seemed to have not met for a long time and he was no longer the teenage boy from her memories.

"Come in." Leon, too, welcomed her as the corner of his lips curved upward into a smile as innocent as a child's.

It had been quite some time since Heather last met him, so she was surprised that he grew out his beard. Under the sunlight, she could see that his smile seemed to carry a hint of vicissitudes of life.

Heather walked up to him and muttered, "You should shave your beard." As she was speaking, she touched his overgrown beard curiously.

He smiled and gave no response, but he held her hand and cocked his head to the side like a mischievous little boy.

"Heather, how can I help you this time?" He was able to guess that she was here to seek his help, as he more or less knew about those terrible things that happened to her recently.

When she heard his words, guilt welled up inside her and she mumbled, "Leon, don't treat me too nicely." In the end, she still needed his help and might even bring him danger and trouble.

Leon looked at her fondly. He was used to how she had treated him all these years; sometimes, he would wonder if Heather had been using him ever since the very beginning.

Whenever interest or benefits were involved, he found it hard to convince himself otherwise. He wanted to reject her as well because there was nothing romantic between them anymore.

Matthias' appearance had completely changed their relationship and had made him realize that he would never have a romantic relationship with her for the rest of his life.

He had seen her love toward Matthias in her eyes and at that moment, Leon felt as if his heart was being clenched and it was beyond agonizing. Nevertheless, no matter how hard he tried to persuade himself to let go of his feelings for her, he still loved her and would do anything for her unconditionally.

When a standby lover started to become greedy, nobody could guess what would happen next. Leon had been suppressing himself lately, attempting to break free from his feelings for Heather.

"Leon, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have come looking for you." Looking at his eyes that were filled with his passion for her, Heather backed down as she was afraid that she couldn't afford to give him what he wanted this time.

## Standing before Love Chapter 651

There was a tacit understanding between them. Truth was, Heather had long noticed Leon's complicated thoughts beneath his carefree character that he portrayed.

She entered the villa behind him, keeping a distance of barely a step away from him. At this moment, she felt dejected somehow, as she knew that she might be giving in a lot more this time.

The large living room was spacious and empty. Leon gestured to her to take a seat at the couch, while he moved a chair very close to her before sitting on it.

He then beamed at her. As a matter of fact, he had been waiting for her arrival and he dared not leave home for fear that he would miss her.

"Heather, why are you suddenly so courteous toward me?" He cocked his head to one side, wearing an expression that was as innocent as a child's.

“I can’t rely on you for everything.” She had started to reflect on herself and found that she was becoming more and more dependent on him, which was not a good sign.

It would be understandable if Heather relied on Matthias. Instead, the person she relied on and trusted the most was Leon although there wasn’t anything special between them. They were merely friends and she was clear that the more she crossed the boundaries, the fine line that represented their friendship would become more vague.

If she continued on like this, it would be unfair to Leon. She realized that it was very selfish of her to do so as well, and she knew that she had owed him a lot.

“I like to be relied on by you,” Leon murmured as he gazed at her fervently. Even if her heart belonged to someone else, he yearned for his passionate feelings toward her to be returned.

Heather, on the other hand, avoided his gaze. I can’t continue on like this. I know that what I did was wrong, so I have to change this.

And so, she went straight to the point and refused to give him any chance to even fantasize about it. “I don’t like... I don’t like to rely on anyone.” Looks like I won’t be able to seek his help without going against my conscience.

“I understand how you feel. However, you have encountered an unprecedented threat this time, so I hope that you can think this through. I’m able to help you and I’m willing to do so.” He laid out the facts straight as he did not want to miss this chance; he had to give it a try even if his efforts might go in vain.

Heather let out a bitter smile as she mused, The way he put it doesn’t sound like he’s trying to help me; in fact, he sounds like he’s forcing me instead. Heather then looked into his eyes and saw his desire in them. It dawned on her that this was a hunt and she was his prey.

“Stop forcing me,” she replied, feeling exhausted. She did not know if she should do as he wished.

Leon rose from his seat and looked down at her from his height. “Heather, think of it as you helping me, okay?” Both of them knew each other’s thoughts and wished that the other party would give in.

“Leon, you know that it’s impossible for us to be together; we are not suitable for each other,” Heather countered, her brows tightly furrowed. Things had come to the point where she was caught in the middle.

He smiled, surprised by her firm standing. He was a little disappointed but it was nothing out of his expectations.

“What do you like about Matthias?” Leon asked reluctantly. When he first saw Matthias, he knew that this was the man that Heather liked but he had no idea why, so he hoped that she could give him an answer.

“I myself don’t even know why. Everyone thought that I would make a good match for him, and I was interested in him as well. Still, I don’t know why I fell in love with him, nor do I know what I like about him.” Heather, too, was puzzled about what made her fall for Matthias and hoped that someone could give her an answer.

Disappointment filled Leon’s eyes as he peered at her in a daze. “You can reject my feelings but not my help.” He knew that she needed him to fight alongside her at this very moment, and he wanted to be her sweet little angel forever.

Their eyes met mid-air and both of them refused to give in. In the end, they smiled at each other before averting their gazes.

“I should head back to the Langston Residence,” Heather announced as she got up from the couch. The atmosphere was so awkward that she couldn’t bear to stay here any longer.

He nodded without trying to keep her here. When Heather had gone far away, he yelled at her from behind, “Heather, let’s work together—put on a show with me. It’s to help each other.”

Heather had rejected his help, but what if he offered for them to work together? Leon wanted to help her by putting it in the form of a cooperation and the truth was, he had planned everything out in his head.

On the other hand, Heather turned around with her brows slightly furrowed. I wonder what he means by working together? And what does he mean by putting up a show?

“If you are interested in it, why don’t you stay and hear me out?” A mischievous smile played on his lips. Based on his understanding of her, he believed that she would not reject him again.

Sure enough, Heather paused in her steps; his words had attracted her attention, although she had no idea how she would be able to help him in return.

“Let’s talk upstairs.” Leon looked cautious, which made his plan seem legit, so Heather decided to trust him this time. In the end, she walked up to him and went upstairs beside him. Then, he led her to his room.

The moment he pushed open the door, it felt as if they had arrived on a different continent. Heather was so shocked that she couldn’t resist the urge to comment, “Wow, this is rather fancy.”

A cryptic smile appeared on his face. “This is how it looks after I made some minor alteration on what was left by the previous owner.” The entire villa was initially designed in a rather ostentatious way. Although Leon had tried his best to alter it, he couldn’t change how flashy it felt overall.

“The previous owner must have considered himself a king. Look at that bed—it’s obviously a bed fit for royalty.” Heather pointed at the conspicuous bed at the center of the room.

“Heather, we are here for business,” he reminded her resignedly as he wondered what she had in her mind for getting distracted so easily.

The two of them sat at the round table placed in the room, which she actually found strange. In fact, there were many things that Heather would like to comment about, but she kept it to herself as their priority now was the business and she didn’t want to stray away from it.

The talk lasted for the entire afternoon. In the end, she found his plan extremely dangerous and she knitted her brows into a deep frown.

“Leon, have you really thought this through?” she asked, her expression grim.

He looked at her and nodded firmly. “I’ve thought about this clearly. I have no other choice and will eventually need your help.”



Heather looked at him, feeling sorry for him. It was unexpected that Leon was actually troubled by this matter. I can't believe that a 7-foot tall man like him is living such a miserable life.

"Are you sure that you want me to help you? I'm afraid that I may mess things up," she added worriedly. She had never done something like this before, so she was worried that she couldn't do a good job.

"Heather, have pity on me. Please help me!" He looked at her pitifully, as he couldn't think of anyone else who could help him out with this other than Heather.

"Have you thought of getting Paige to help you?" Heather thought that perhaps the other woman would be more reliable than her. Moreover, Leon was quite interested in Paige.

Leon let out a bitter laugh as he looked at her. "You know how my family is—they see themselves as nobles. With Paige's background, the Old Master won't accept her."

Heather rubbed her pulsing temple. This is going to be such a pain. However, Leon had helped her unconditionally no matter what sort of trouble she had faced before this, so it wouldn't be nice of her to ditch him this time.

"Heather, you have to help me." Leon begged her and he nearly dropped to his knees.

Heather was put on a spot. Although they could kill two birds with one stone by doing so, she felt a little guilty toward Matthias. The latter and her were just like lovers and almost everyone treated them as a couple. If she were to agree to Leon's request this time, the person who would be given the hardest blow would definitely be none other than Matthias.

In the end, she couldn't make up her mind right away. She needed some time to calm down and digest things before she could make a decision so she murmured, "Give me some time to think about it, alright?"

Leon continued to peer at her with pitiful eyes, which made Heather feel really awkward, as if she had done something unforgivable. I feel equally bad for not being able to give you an answer right away!

“Heather, how long do you need to consider this? Time waits for no one.” He sadly tugged the corner of her clothes like an abandoned child.

However, she was no procrastinator either so she muttered, “One night. I will give you my answer tomorrow morning.” She preferred thinking about her problems at night. If she made a decision that she did not regret even after she woke up the next morning, she would most probably stick to it.

“Heather, you have to think about it carefully. This is beneficial to both of us. Don’t reject my request and end up making things difficult for the two of us,” he reminded her again, hoping that she could immediately agree to him.

“I understand. I will think about it carefully,” she awkwardly replied. She was aware that this was very urgent to him, but his request was something that she had never expected.

She left Leon’s villa in a daze and with many matters that required her thorough consideration in her head. Each and every step after this would be challenging. I didn’t expect that so many things would happen. How am I supposed to help others when I can’t even protect myself? The piles of problems in her hand now gave her a headache.

If all this were to happen in the past, she would not think twice before agreeing to it for the sake of the benefit it would bring. Now, however, things were different—she now had a man named Matthias Locke in her life.

Heather was in a dilemma because she did not want Matthias to go through that sort of pain. Nonetheless, being caught in between a rock and a hard place, she did not have much choice to begin with.

Leon sent her a message and she tapped on it to read it. ‘Heather, is it because of Matthias?’ He couldn’t bear to ask this when facing her, so he asked her via a message as soon as she had left.

She didn’t know how she should reply to him because it seemed wrong no matter what she replied, so she ignored his text.

In the cab, she propped her head on her palm as she looked outside the window. I’m now back in Bradford City, the place I’m familiar with.

The sky was gloomy, the blue sky and white clouds nowhere to be seen. This city wasn’t exactly beautiful, but it was the place where Heather was born.

She kept leaving this place but always ended up coming back. In all honesty, she had a feeling that she might never be able to leave Bradford City for her whole life.

The driver scolded and cursed when the cab was stuck in the traffic due to road repairing that occurred everywhere in the city. This was just how life was—her realistic life. She adjusted herself into a more comfortable posture as millions of thoughts ran through her mind. I still have a long, long way to go.

Leon's villa was located very far away from the city center, and the wind that blew at her along the journey had calmed her mind. Rationally speaking, she shouldn't reject Leon's request since this would be a win-win situation.