

Standing before Love Chapter 652

The Langston Residence was still the same as ever. It had been refurbished a few times over the years in order to keep up with the latest trends, but all that still seemed tacky to Heather.

At this very moment, a sense of familiarity welled up inside her—nothing could compare to this feeling that she felt now when she finally returned home. The security guard at the door noticed her and smiled at her, and Heather, who had always been indifferent, returned the smile this time.

He gaped at her from behind, shocked by her amiable attitude that she seldom revealed in front of others. The next instant, he blushed—nobody could resist her smile.

She walked to the living room and when she was passing by the garden, she gently touched the blooming flowers with her hand. At that moment, she immersed herself in the beauty of the scenery, for she knew that the Langstons would be destroyed in the near future.

In the living room, Robert was talking to the butler when Heather tiptoed to his side. She then shook her head at the butler to gesture to him not to inform Robert about her arrival.

With his eyes slightly squinted, Robert seemed to be resting or contemplating something. Suddenly, he opened his eyes and muttered, “Heather, you’re back.”

To her surprise, Robert was able to notice her arrival although she was so quiet. She wrapped her arms around him from behind and said to him in a sweet voice, “Grandpa, I’ve missed you.” She had merely left for a day, but it felt a lot longer than that.

“What have you done recently?” After holding himself back for some time, he was determined to get to the bottom of it this time.

She whispered in his ear, “Grandpa, can you believe it? Our biggest fear has arrived.”

Upon hearing that, Robert was shook to the core and he instantly understood what she implied. The butler had no idea what they were talking about but from their expressions, he was able to tell that it wasn’t something pleasant.

“Come with me to the study,” Robert uttered in a low voice.

Heather continued to wear a bright smile on her face, giving away nothing as she helped Robert upstairs.

The butler stayed behind as he knew that they had something confidential to talk about and at the same time, he had to continue with his unfinished task.

Staying beside Robert all these years had allowed him to learn how to read the old man’s mind based on his body language. Therefore, the butler could tell that Robert wanted him to complete organizing the living room as soon as possible.

The door to the study upstairs was opened and Heather helped her grandfather in. Robert’s health had deteriorated lately but because Heather’s attention had completely focused on Myra’s kidnapping case, she had failed to notice that his health was getting worse by day.

Presently, she asked worriedly, “Grandpa, how are you?”

However, Robert waved at her. “I’m fine. Tell me—what exactly happened?” he asked, feeling rather helpless. He did not expect that someone would create trouble right under his nose.

“Grandpa, I can’t hide this from you any longer because I need you to deal with it together with me.” After a thorough consideration, Heather decided that she had to inform Robert about this, else she had no influence over the Langston Family’s action.

“What exactly happened?” Upon seeing how cautious she was, Robert suddenly had a sense of foreboding.

“A mysterious force that we don’t know of has entered Bradford City. We don’t know what their motive is. However, they now have kidnapped Myra and are using her to threaten me and Tony. They wanted the Hart and the Langstons to join forces to go against the Moriarty Family.” She briefly summed it up with a calm tone, yet the message she conveyed was shocking.

Robert’s expression instantly changed. Looking at Heather, he was able to guess her thoughts and he was disappointed.

“Heather, are you going to put the Langstons at risk for the sake of Myra?” In all honesty, he never thought that she would choose to risk the entire Langston Family.

“Grandpa, don’t you understand? We have no other choice. Do you really think that he only has Myra in his hands?” She looked unblinkingly into his eyes, determined to tell him how serious this matter was.

“Are you implying that he has a member of the Langston Family in his hands as well?” Robert glared at her in anger; he never expected that she would prioritize those relationships over their family’s safety.

“Grandpa, the mysterious force has the capability to easily capture anyone and destroy anything and everything that we care about. They leave us no choice,” she enunciated slowly. The reason why she made this decision was not because of some sentimental issues, but because they had come to the point where there was no turning back.

“I don’t believe that this power is so influential in Bradford City.” Robert found it unconvincing when the mysterious man had only captured Myra, who wasn’t anyone important to him.

“Grandpa, I’ve seen what he is capable of, so I believed that he wasn’t pulling our leg. Now, he is using Myra to blackmail us and wants us to play his game and follow his rules. However, this is also a chance that we could use to turn the tables around.” Heather was not pessimistic about the current situation. Since we are going to play a game, let’s see who can play better.

“Nonsense! The Moriarty Family has been targeting us for a long time, so how could we go and provoke them instead?” Robert was actually afraid of the Moriartys and he had no intention to get into conflict with them, so he had been avoiding them all this while.

“Grandpa, since you know that the Moriartys have been targeting both the Hart and Langston Family, why don’t we join forces and deal with the Moriartys together?” In contrast, Heather found this an opportunity as she believed that they would be able to take down the Moriarty Family if the Langston and Hart Family joined forces.

“Enough with this nonsense! Heather, you’ve let me down,” Robert snapped, his eyes full of disappointment. He never thought that Heather would actually have such a daring thought.

“Grandpa, do you think that I’m selfish?” She stubbornly went down on her knees in front of him. “I don’t want anyone to lose their lives because of this,” she said this with utmost sincerity.

“What about the Langston Group? Have you considered the century-old foundation of that group?” he questioned her, having no intentions to help her up.

“Grandpa, which do you think is more important—human lives or the century-old foundation? You may not be aware that Myra is merely the beginning. This is not something that can be resolved by sacrificing her life. In fact, the other party could even destroy our family.” Heather deliberately stressed on her last sentence as she firmly believed that the mysterious man had such capabilities.

Her words triggered Robert, causing him to glare at her, enraged. The next moment, he walked up to her, raising his hand and giving her a tight slap on her face.

A handprint instantly appeared on her fair face. If this were to happen at some other time, Heather would feel aggrieved but this time, she merely smiled, unfazed by his treatment toward her.

“Grandpa, in the end, I still lost to the Langston Group. In your eyes, I’m always second to the Langston Group.” The sorrow in her eyes broke his heart.

Robert did not know how to respond to her. He had indeed gone overboard today and his palm actually stung now. I must have been out of my mind! Have I actually hit Heather?

“Grandpa, the Langston Group is always your top priority and our lives are insignificant compared to that!” Heather continued to trigger him. She had to convince Robert to accept her idea because there was no room for failure as this matter involved the lives of many.

Robert’s body trembled. It was unexpected to him that Heather, who had always been meek and sensible, would say such words to trigger him. Looking at her with his deep gaze, he did not know how to respond to her.

“Heather, I’m sorry.” He bent down to her level to meet her eyes, squatting down in the process as she was on her knees.

“Grandpa, I don’t need your apology. I know your concerns and I understand them. But, is the Langston Group really more important than the lives of the Langston Family?” Tears brimmed in her eyes as she really felt heartbroken this time.

Robert, who had never seen her like this, instantly gave in. “Heather, I’m sorry. I was wrong and I should have trusted you.” he mumbled, apologizing to her non-stop. Guilt welled up inside him and he felt that he was a failure who did not deserve to be Heather’s grandfather.

“Grandpa, I don’t blame you for it. I just want you to see this clearly. The Langston Group is the blood, sweat, and tears of the Langstons, but the people are still our most important assets. Without the Langston Group, the Langstons can still rebuild its glory but without the people, we have nothing.” Her words came from the bottom of her heart as she was determined to change his mindset.

Robert looked at Heather in distress. He was conflicted, wondering if he should go all out for the chance to save their family. Since Heather had put it this way, it seemed like the Langston Group was now in a dire situation. Which option should I choose?

“Heather, I understand where you are coming from, but I can’t let the century-old Langston Group be destroyed in my hands,” he snarled. The efforts of their ancestors would go down the drain if the Langston Group were to fall.

In the end, Heather had no choice but to bring up the person who had scarred his heart in an effort to change his mind because she knew that this was something that Robert could never let go. And so, she countered, “Grandpa, do you still remember your younger sister whom you used to favor the most, Claris? I’m sure that you don’t want to see tragedy repeating itself!”

Upon hearing the name ‘Claris’, Robert seemed to fall into a daze, as if she was standing right before his very eyes. Sorrow filled his eyes and hidden beneath them was a deep sense of guilt.

“Heather, don’t force me.” At that point, he started to beg for her to stop as he really couldn’t bear to listen to her anymore.

Heather’s back was straight as she knelt on the floor. She refused to allow Robert to continue evading this problem and she had to make him face up to it.

And so, she continued to stress her point and she muttered, “Grandpa, stop evading reality. We should let bygones be bygones, but we cannot allow tragedy to repeat itself.” Although Heather felt distressed for her grandfather, she knew that if she allowed him to ‘escape’ this time, she would never have the courage to help him to get over this hurdle again.

Robert’s face blanched. Knowing that he was not in good health, Heather had to finish this quickly for fear that he would pass out.

She had to make sure that he resolved his emotional entanglement when she managed to gather the courage to point things out. She couldn’t back down, nor could she allow him to do so.

However, Robert tried to switch the topic without a trace. “Heather, get up,” he murmured.

Upon hearing that, she shook her head. “Grandpa, if you don’t agree to my request, I won’t get up.” She remained on her knees, acting very rebelliously in front of him for the first time.

“Heather, please don’t torment me.” Robert had no strength to continue to talk to her. He felt as if he was dying and it was as if he was on his deathbed.

“We should let go of the past. Now, all I hope is for you to not repeat the past mistakes. I, Heather Langston, swear to God that I will rebuild the Langston Group even if it is destroyed,” she vowed with full confidence that she had such determination and ability.

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The grandfather and granddaughter stared at each other for a long time. It gave Heather the confidence that Robert’s heart had started to sway, so she persisted in trying to convince him. Without his help, she would never succeed in this matter.

Unlike Tony, she didn’t have control of the Langston Group. For her to play this game, she would need to have Robert’s support.

“I know you must be thinking that I owe you so much, Heather. Alright, then. I’ll support you whole-heartedly this time,” he finally promised, just as Heather expected.

“Thank you, Grandpa.” Only then did she stand up. This was her first time kneeling for someone and it would be her last.

“Remember that the Langston Group must live on, Heather, so think twice before you do anything,” he exhorted. While Robert was willing to give her the power, he still hoped she would be careful.

“Don’t worry, Grandpa. I will do my best to protect the Langston Group.” After all, Heather cared about the group as well, and would never risk it if she had any other choice.

“I believe you. You’re a good child. From now on, the Langston Group is yours.” At Robert’s age, it was time to relinquish his power to someone much younger than him.

“I’m sorry, Grandpa.” In truth, she felt ashamed for forcing him to step down and hand over control of the Langston Group to her.

Patting her shoulder, he reassured, “Don’t overthink it. I’m getting on in my years, anyway, and I should be giving up my power.”

While Blake was the one in power at the Langston Group all these years, the truth was that Robert was actually the one in charge with Heather manipulating things behind the scenes.

For him to pass the torch on to her now proved how much trust he had in her. Even if he was always fond of her, he hadn’t previously been willing to relinquish all of his power. Now, however, he was truly taking a backseat.

“Don’t put yourself under too much pressure, okay? I trust you can turn the situation around,” he said, no longer treating her as cruelly as before. After thinking about it, he had come to the conclusion that what she said made sense.

Just because he highly valued the Langston Group, it didn’t mean he didn’t care about the lives of his family members. Heather was right—if those people could kidnap Myra, there was no saying whether they would harm a Langston as well.

That was something Robert couldn’t condone. No matter how important the Langston Group was, it couldn’t compare to the lives of his family members. It

was his failure to understand that all those years ago that caused the death of Claris. Thus, he made the decision to hand over the reins now.

“I hope so too, Grandpa,” Heather answered from beside him with an inscrutable look. He didn’t know what she was thinking about, but he could feel the weight of her burdens.

As he watched her leave, he let out a long and tired sigh. The road ahead would be treacherous and his only hope was that she would be able to survive it.

Never could he have foreseen that all of the Langston Family’s heavy burdens would ultimately rest on his granddaughter’s frail shoulders. At this moment, he hated himself for being powerless and even more for not having fostered good successors.

After everything Heather did for the Langston Family, all she had to show for it was their lack of understanding. Robert didn’t know when he would be able to rectify the situation, but all he hoped was that they would show more understanding for the hardships she endured.

Meanwhile, as Heather walked into the study, she kept her back straight and her head held high. There wasn’t any emotion in her eyes. She was long prepared for the difficult period that would ensue, but her family was not.

Time passed quickly and day soon turned to night. Under the lamplight, Heather read through her computer with a sneer on her lips. It seemed that unbeknownst to her, perhaps because she had been in Bradford City for too short a time, dark forces had infiltrated the place a long time ago.

These dark powers had been in the city for a long time and could now be found everywhere. They had shocking might and while she couldn’t be certain how scary they truly were, she dared not make a move for now.

The situation was getting trickier and trickier, and her gaze grew hateful and even icier as her grip tightened on the computer mouse. She had to think of a way to flip the situation on its head. Currently, it was looking increasingly worse for the Langston Family, and she couldn’t imagine what would happen in the future.

“Should I trust you, Matty?” Heather asked herself.

How confused I must be to be thinking about Matthias at this time! However, she couldn't say yet if he was a friend or a foe. While she truly believed he cared about her, she wouldn't dare wager on his goals in business.

There had to be a reason the Locke Group suddenly moved to Bradford City. While she tried to get the answer from him many times, he always succeeded in changing the topic.

She was dying to know the intention of the Locke Family. After everything she heard about their head, she wished badly to be able to visit him at the Locke Residence. Truth was, she found it a pity that she never got the chance.

Because Heather firmly believed that Matthias had to have some skeletons in his closet, she was determined to find an excuse to visit him.

Unfortunately, such an excuse was hard to come by, not to mention that she couldn't leave Bradford City at this time. Feeling conflicted, she decided to take the initiative and seek out Matthias.

As she opened her Messenger app and looked down at his familiar profile picture, she let out a small smile. It felt like she hadn't seen him in a while and now that she was looking at his picture, she felt wistful.

'What are you doing, Matty?' She asked inanely in the text since she didn't know how to express her longing.

On the other end, a notification appeared on Matthias' phone and seeing that it was a message from Heather, he quickly opened the text. These few years, he had missed her a lot, yet had been unable to take the initiative in seeking her out.

'Missing you,' he quickly replied.

It always took him only seconds to reply to her messages, and the thought that he was always waiting to hear from her made Heather smile.

'I missed you as well.' It had taken her a long time to learn how to express herself so affectionately.

In the past, she would never have said it out loud even if she was thinking about him. Now, she was different and would boldly admit it if she missed him.

'Are you in Bradford City?' he asked since he knew that she had traveled, but not if she had returned.

'Yes,' she quickly responded.

At this point, he couldn't help smiling and asking tentatively, 'Can I visit you?' She has to be at the Langston Residence right now and I can't wait to see her! he mused to himself.

As for Heather, she wanted to see him too although it was the middle of the night. 'Yes,' she replied.

'Wait for me, then. I'll be there soon.' Immediately, Matthias put on his coat, wishing he had wings so that he could fly to her.

With a wicked smile, she texted, 'I don't want to wait for you.'

'Wait for me,' he repeated in exasperation.

'I want to go to you.' It was just a few simple words but Matthias hardly dared to believe his eyes. In fact, he was starting to question whether it was actually her at the other end of the conversation.

'No, I'll go to you,' he emphasized, tamping down his excitement. Of course he wouldn't have her drive to him at this hour of the night. He simply had to go to her.

'You're always the one coming to me, so can't I make my way to you this time?' she asked, her question heavy with meaning.

Nonetheless, even if Matthias was touched, he wasn't willing to let her travel to him. 'I don't think it's safe for a woman to be out and about at this time of the night.'

It was better for men to do it. Ultimately, he was still chivalrous, especially when it came to her.

'Let's meet in the middle, then,' Heather insisted. She would feel guilty if they met at the Langston Residence.

Immediately guessing her thoughts, he asked, 'Is it because you don't want me to go to the Langston Residence in the middle of the night?'

Even though they both knew that was the truth, she neither confirmed nor denied it. 'Does it matter? I just want to drive my car out.'

'It's best not to go out in the middle of the night,' Matthias continued to advise, worrying about her as if she were a child.

'You always go out in the middle of the night. Pray tell—what's so bad about going out so late at night?' she mocked him.

'It's best for a lady not to go out in the middle of the night,' he amended. 'There are too many baddies out and about.'

With a chuckle, she asked patiently, 'Are you assuming that I'll run into a baddie or that I won't be able to handle them? It's not as if there aren't any gun laws here. As long as they're not carrying a gun, they wouldn't be able to do anything to me.'

That was the only scenario Heather feared. However good she was at martial arts, she would not be able to outfight a gun. Nonetheless, she had yet to run into a gun-toting criminal.

'Fine, I'll take your word for it. Let's meet in the garden,' he told her, arranging for them to meet in the small garden next to the pedestrian zone that he estimated was equidistant from both of them.

'Okay,' she gladly agreed, since the pedestrian zone was likely to still be lively at this hour.

Before going out, Heather simply donned a coat. Her make-up was still intact and needed no touch-up at this moment. From the garage, she chose a white car that was not only a two-seater, but would also be more visible at night.

By now, Matthias was already well on his way to the meeting point. Nevertheless, she did not hurry as she started up the car. When she thought of the fact that she would see him soon, her mood lightened immensely.

The security guard at the gate was astonished to see Heather leaving at this hour but, having no right to question the Langstons' comings and goings, he simply opened the gates for her.

As the car exited the villa, she rolled down her car windows and allowed the night air to caress her cheeks and clear her mind. She was coming to like the

night, for it permitted her to cast aside the troubles of the day and vent her messy emotions into the darkness.

It would take about half an hour to reach the garden and she enjoyed the cold night breeze the entire way. It woke her up but at the same time, her heart was starting to race from nerves.

Just then, a call from Matthias broke the silence of the night. After connecting her phone to her earpiece, Heather answered the call.

“Hello?” she asked neither too softly nor too loudly. Upon hearing her voice, Matthias suddenly missed her with a passion.

“Where are you right now?” he asked as he sped up, unable to conceal his excitement. He only hoped to be able to see her as soon as possible.

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Listening to Matthias’ voice, Heather closed her eyes in enjoyment. Throughout the journey, there weren’t many cars along the way. A moment later, she opened her eyes again and his voice was still sounding from the other end of the line.

“Can you stay on the line?” Heather murmured, suddenly reluctant to hang up as she wanted to keep talking to him.

Matthias was surprised at her request and he was taken aback for a moment before responding, “Of course.”

The topics of their conversation were random as they immersed themselves in each other’s voices. At this moment, Matthias had slowed down his driving speed because he had to divide his attention into chatting with Heather.

“Was Singapore that fun?” he asked curiously as he listened to Heather’s story about the country. Truth was, it sounded pretty interesting.

“Yes. You’ll definitely like that place,” Heather said with a smile, as if Matthias was right in front of her.

“Let’s visit Singapore together when we have the chance, then.” Although Matthias had been to Singapore many times, it was always because of business affairs. Hearing her words, he really wanted to travel with her.

“Sure. Let’s go to the casino together and win some big bucks!” Heather’s mood got even better. Talking to Matthias could help her forget about those worries for the time being.

And so, the two of them kept the conversation going until their phones were about to run out of battery. Fortunately for them, they would be meeting each other in ten minutes.

After parking his car, Matthias got down from it. Heather, too, would be arriving anytime soon. Right now, he was like a young and impulsive boy who had a foolish smile tugging at the corners of his mouth as he waited excitedly to meet his beloved girlfriend.

Soon, Heather also got out of her car. The two of them were still talking on the phone and she asked, “Are you in the mini garden already?”

“Yes, I’m waiting for you at the heart of the mini garden.” How much he wished he could teleport to her side at this moment. He couldn’t wait to hold her in his arms and look at her pretty face right.

Heather looked around her with a smile, seeing that the streets were still full of people at this time. It was no wonder that many outsiders that came to Bradford City would always drop by the pedestrian zone at night just to feel its liveliness.

As she walked along the way, many people casted their gaze at her. She was always so stunning. Although there might be many pretty faces in the world, it was rare to come across a person as gorgeous as her.

Standing in the crowd, Matthias was exceptionally outstanding with his tall figure. Even from a far distance, Heather could see him walking back and forth in place. Watching his movements, she flashed a bright smile.

Heather planned to walk up to his side quietly, so she carefully hid among the crowd for fear that Matthias would notice her. As she silently walked up and stopped behind him, she smiled triumphantly for her success.

However, the very next second, he turned around and murmured, “Hat, you’re getting more naughty by the day.” In reality, Matthias had noticed her a long time ago, yet he didn’t call out to her. Watching her mischievous behavior, he found it very interesting.

“Hmph! You’re no fun at all.” Heather expressed her dissatisfaction at him being too alert of his surroundings.

“There’s nothing much I can do about that. It’s my instinct.” Matthias was trained to be like this long ago. It was too difficult for him not to notice even the most trivial moments.

Refusing to continue this topic, Heather asked, “Matty, how can you be so fast? It should take around forty to fifty minutes for you to arrive here from your villa. How is it that you’re even faster than me?”

Heather thought that this didn’t make sense at all. Matthias had always been one step ahead of her and it was making her frustrated. It was as if she was always coming late on purpose.

“Because I don’t dawdle like you,” he teased her. He seemed to have become bolder now, for he even dared to make fun of her at this time.

Heather looked at him, dissatisfied. How dare he make fun of me? Turning around, she faced him with her back. He is always going against my words and getting on her nerves!

“Are you angry?” Matthias leaned over and looked at her puffed cheeks, thinking that Heather was the cutest person in the world.

“I’m not that petty.” She glanced at him contemptuously. Of course, she wouldn’t get angry just because of this.

Reaching out, Matthias gently ruffled her hair. He missed the feeling of it, but Heather didn’t like this action of his at all.

“Don’t touch my hair,” she said in an angry tone. Matthias is really trying to ruffle my feathers, huh?

“Then what about this?” He got closer to her and planted a kiss on her forehead.

Instantly, Heather pushed him away, “There are so many people around. Do you want to see us in the headlines tomorrow?” A flush immediately crept up her face as she grumbled to herself, Matthias is indeed too daring!

“We’re officially in a relationship, so there’s no big deal with us being in the headlines at all. Could it be that you’re secretly seeing other men behind my back?” Matthias asked nonchalantly, not embarrassed in the least.

“Who’s in a relationship with you? Please mind your words!” Heather muttered, thinking that Matthias was pushing his luck as she had not yet agreed to be his girlfriend. It seems that he is really trying to get on my nerves!

“Of course I’m talking about you! Aren’t we a couple? Didn’t we even talk about our marriage already?” Matthias answered confidently. The more they talked, the more nonsense he was spewing.

“When did we even talk about marriage?” Heather gazed at him speechlessly, probably because she had never seen such a shameless man other than Matthias.

Upon hearing that, he smiled and poked her dimple with his finger as he said, “Why are you getting nervous? Should I visit your parents tomorrow and ask for your hand?” he murmured, continuing to tease her.

“No! You’d better behave yourself!” Heather warned him. Matthias’ nonsense was getting out of hand and if he continued talking, he might even come to the topic of their future child.

“Alright, alright. But before I behave myself, give me a hug.” Matthias then took her into his arms and hugged her tightly. With her in his embrace, he was the happiest man in the world at this moment.

Heather was not used to being affectionate in public so she ordered, “Let go!” What if the others look in our direction? That would be so embarrassing!

On the contrary, not only did Matthias not let go, he even tightened his hug as he murmured, “No.”

“Why are you behaving more and more like a rascal these days?” Heather glanced at him contemptuously. He was the president of the Locke Group but he had now degenerated into a gangster.

“I’m only a rascal when I’m with you.” Matthias smiled contentedly. To him, being able to hold Heather in his arms was the happiest thing in the world.

Therefore, he was reluctant to let go, for he wanted to continue enjoying her tenderness.

“This is the pedestrian zone,” Heather reminded him, as she really didn’t want to see herself in the news tomorrow. The paparazzi had yet to give up chasing after them.

In the end, Matthias reluctantly loosened his hold and murmured, “Heather, I miss you so much. It’s been too torturing for me to resist the urge to look for you.” Truth was, he had lost count of the times where he wanted to call Heather.

“Stop it. We’re not acting in a drama right now.” Heather laughed mockingly to herself. Love was a common thing, yet it could turn even the most prestigious person into a commoner.

Casually, Matthias held her hand in his as he said, “Let’s go shopping.” At this time, the night market had started operating on the streets. He had never visited a night market before and he guessed it should be the same for Heather as well, so he wanted to go on a shopping spree with her. In his opinion, girls tended to like the word ‘shopping’.

“Shopping?” Heather thought her ears were playing tricks on her. For a man like Matthias to invite her to go shopping had certainly caught her off guard. “Only the night market is operating at this hour, though. Are you sure you want to go there?”

Evan once told Matthias that girls liked shopping, so the latter planned to make use of what he had learned. He strongly believed that Heather would be impressed with his plan.

“The night market is also a great choice.” Matthias had no idea what a night market was, as he naturally wouldn’t understand the life of the commoners.

The night market was lively and it was even more crowded than the pedestrian zone during the day. There were rows of stalls along both sides of the night market that sold all kinds of things.

“Alright then. Let’s go to the night market.” Heather, however, was different from Matthias. She knew what a night market was like.

It was a place where they sold a large amount of counterfeit items. Those well-known brands could be seen everywhere in a night market. It was just that they were fake and the prices were so low that it was beyond her imagination.

Seeing that Heather accepted his invitation, Matthias smiled triumphantly. Now that his first step had succeeded, he had to work even harder to please her from now on. Evan told him that all Matthias had to remember was to buy everything that she took a fancy to when they were shopping.

In the end, there was nothing he could buy for her in the night market. After all, how could he buy those cheap things for her?

As they walked down the market, Matthias was looking at those stalls with widened eyes. Be it the clothes, shoes, or even the accessories... They were all too cheap.

Admiring the expression on his face, Heather smiled secretly as she thought to herself, He's too cute! Gradually, she, too, immersed herself into the night market. Some of the accessories were really cute, despite the rough workmanship.

Looking at the phone lanyard in her hand, Heather thought that the grinning little monster on it was too adorable. The next second, the owner of the stall offered it at a price of 20. It was so cheap that it didn't seem premium at all.

Matthias, who was standing off to one side, was hesitant to pay for Heather. Twenty was too little. If it were two thousand, he would pay for it without any hesitation.

Meanwhile, Heather was thinking about whether to make the purchase or not, and she was still thinking if she should bargain with the seller. After all, the people next to her seemed happy while bargaining for a lower price. Therefore, she wanted to experience this kind of simple happiness too.

Puzzled, the seller looked at the dazzling couple in front of him. They were dressed in luxurious brands and one could tell that they were not ordinary people. To the seller, it was beyond incredible that they would actually stop by his booth to buy some accessories.

“Sir, is this little thing worth twenty? Did you jack up the price?” At last, Heather decided to put aside her image and bargain with the seller. She really wanted to feel the joy of bargaining.

Usually, everything that she bought was from luxurious brands and there was no room for bargaining at all. Today, she had finally come across the opportunity, so she had to experience it herself. It seemed that one would feel a sense of accomplishment if they made a successful bargain.

Upon hearing her words, the seller and Matthias were stunned. Never did the former expect that such a wealthy person would bargain with him.

On the other hand, Matthias was even more shocked that his jaw dropped. Heather was a person who would casually spend two hundred thousand in the blink of an eye, but she was now bargaining for an item that was worth a mere twenty. Suddenly, he couldn't help but have the urge to record this historic moment.

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A moment later, the seller came back to his senses and quickly explained, “My accessories are all handmade. Twenty is the best price I can give.”

Looking at the pendant in her hand, Heather tilted her head and asked with a smile, “Is it really handmade?” Her piercing eyes had the seller going speechless.

The key point of bargaining was to catch the other party's weak point. Seeing that the seller was hesitating, she hurriedly seized the opportunity and countered, “What about ten?”

Hearing that, Matthias got even more surprised and he was starting to think that she had gone off the deep end. Something is not right! As their bargain continued, Heather became even more excited, as if she really wanted the pendant.

It had been a long time since someone came bargaining by cutting half of the price. After all, it was a small item and it wouldn't be profitable for the seller to sell it at a measly ten. Hesitantly, the seller looked at Heather and muttered, “I... won't be able to earn from it.”

After giving it a thought, Heather suggested, “What about fifteen?” Up till now, she was still bargaining proficiently. The seller was indeed deceived by her appearance.

Running out of words, he finally nodded helplessly. “Alright, since you’re a pretty lady, fifteen will do.” Confused, the seller wondered if what was happening now was true. The clothes that the couple is wearing doesn’t seem like fakes at all, though!

Could it be that the rich now are all thrifty so they would even bargain when they bought such a small item? I think that must be the case—the rich are adapting to the commoners’ lifestyle. Unconsciously, the seller thought about those thrifty millionaires that he had once read from the news.

Matthias, on the other hand, remained silent as he stood by the side. At this time, he had nothing to say. Heather’s behavior had taken him by surprise. After all, twenty was peanuts to them.

As soon as Heather purchased the pendant with fifteen, she beamed with joy. Instantly, Matthias also shared a portion of her simple happiness. Looking at her, he flashed a bright smile. Sometimes, happiness was just as simple as that.

“Heather, you look good when you smile.” Of course, a heartfelt smile would be beautiful. Secretly, Matthias suppressed the urge to take her into his arms. After all, it would be better for them to keep a low profile at this crowded place.

“Bargaining is fun!” Heather said with a smile. There wasn’t even the slightest hint of her usual unfriendliness.

“As long as you like it.” It was then that Matthias finally came to a realization. It turned out that Heather was experiencing the fun of bargaining. How surprising is it that she can even find simple happiness in doing such a thing?

“Well, why don’t we buy some other things then?” After experiencing the fun of it, Heather wanted to continue bargaining. As long as she managed to cut some price, she would always be on the earning end.

Hearing that, Matthias nodded. He loved how unrestricted she looked right now. In all honesty, he liked her no matter what she was doing, as long as she was happy.

“Sure! Let’s go and take down other stalls,” he murmured as he looked at her dotingly. He would even accompany her to climb the mountains and sail the sea, let alone bargaining in the market.

“Matthias, you look so cute right now. Let me take a picture of you.” Suddenly, Heather held up her phone and took a photo of him. For a moment, she felt that his expression was so cute.

Puzzled, Matthias looked at the camera blankly, completely caught off guard. Heather laughed out loud as she looked at his adorable face in the camera as she mused, How did I not realize that he is so cute before this?

“Let’s take another one.” Matthias was in a daze just now, so he thought he would definitely look stupid in the picture.

“No way! A candid picture is the best.” There was no way Heather was going to delete such a funny photo of him. It was rare to see such a cute expression on his face.

“Let me have a look at it.” Matthias couldn’t imagine how he looked in the picture. Therefore, he simply had to have a look at it.

Dropping her phone in her handbag, Heather murmured, “No way!” She then smiled slyly, just like a fox.

Looking at her, Matthias raised his eyebrows slightly. Heather really knew how to play with his feelings. Helplessly, he shook his head. Well, since she was the boss, there was nothing he could do.

“Ha! I love how helpless you look right now,” Heather continued as she smiled like a love-struck teenage girl. She liked how relaxed and easy-going she felt as she lived as an ordinary person tonight.

It was as if they were not the leaders of the Langston and Locke families tonight, and they were no longer influential figures of Bradford City. At this moment, they were just ordinary young people that could live as freely as they wanted.

“Hurry up!” Heather then held Matthias’ hand and walked forward. There was still a long way to go till they reached the end.

It turned out that there were so many dazzling things in the night market. Heather and Matthias were both in a good mood and as the two talked and laughed along the way, time passed fast. Without them realizing it, it was already before dawn.

Heather bought a bunch of knick-knacks and she was enjoying the fun of bargaining. Yet, she would never buy things like clothes, shoes, bags, and lipsticks from a night market.

However, the most surprising thing was that there were even stalls selling luxurious perfumes and their samples at an extremely low price.

Just by a sniff, Heather knew right away that it was a fake. That being said, some young ladies would still buy them although they were miles apart from the luxury brands.

The fragrance of cheap perfume filled the night market and there was also the smell of incense in between. Suddenly, Heather fell in love with this tacky smell. Taking the initiative to hold Matthias' arm, they walked down the market, attracting many people's attention.

"Matthias, now that I think about it, we're not thirty yet." Heather muttered out of the blue.

"Yeah, we're still young." Not knowing what she was trying to say, Matthias casually responded.

"It turns out that we are still in our early twenties. Sometimes, it's too lonely being at the top. It's still better to stay low, for there is warmth and humanity around." Heather wondered what she would be like if she was an ordinary girl.

"If you enjoy the life of an ordinary person, it wouldn't hurt for you to experience it occasionally." As always, Matthias stood by her side without any hesitation. He would unconditionally support what Heather wanted to do.

"The most important thing is that I have you with me." Heather smiled playfully. Many things would be more interesting if one did it with their other half.

Just like right now—it was only with Matthias that she would feel so comfortable and complete. How would she experience so much fun if she were to come here alone?

This was the reason people didn't like being single and longed to have a partner. Instantly, Heather had come to understand the true meaning of couple.

"So it seems that I'm very important to you," Matthias answered proudly. Listening to Heather's words, he could feel warmth welling up in his heart.

"Of course! Without you, there would be no simple happiness." As Heather became more honest with her words, Matthias could almost feel his face turning red.

With a warm smile, he had his gaze fixed on Heather. If it weren't for the crowd, he would definitely kiss her on the spot. That red lips of hers had his heart throbbing and it was getting a little too difficult for him to control himself. The urge to kiss her was getting stronger as he stared at her.

"Something's not right with your gaze." Heather pointed to his eyes and said. His intense gaze was as if it was trying to convey something to her.

"I want to kiss you and every inch of your skin." Matthias felt that his words were getting so vulgar that even he himself couldn't bear it. However, there was nothing he could do. All he wanted was to convey his love to her.

"No way." Heather looked away. How can he be thinking about things like this at this moment?

The next second, Matthias turned her to face him. Gently, he had his arms around her as he smelled her fragrance, thereafter flashing a contented smile.

One should never hold back one's feelings. At this moment, Matthias felt that everything was so peaceful. With tenderness lingering around their hug, they looked just like a young couple who was crazily in love.

However, Heather pushed him away as soon as she saw a flash in the crowd. In a slightly annoyed tone, she said, "Paparazzi."

Instantly, the warm and harmonious atmosphere was gone. Matthias hated those who secretly took pictures of them. Carefully, Heather tried to look for the culprit in the crowd, yet she saw no one suspicious.

When her gaze fell upon Matthias again, she saw that he was gritting his teeth in anger. Unable to hold it in, she covered her mouth and laughed.

“What’s wrong?” Heather asked knowingly.

With an irritated expression, Matthias replied, “The paparazzi are really annoying, especially those who are secretly taking pictures of us.”

If it weren’t for the height difference between Matthias and her, Heather would pat him on his head. He looked just like a grumpy cat right now and Heather found that she liked this side of him very much.

“Be happy. No matter what, we’re still going to get photographed.” Heather thought about it and told Matthias and herself.

“Yeah, let them be then. We’re a couple anyway.” He deliberately added the last sentence.

Seeing that Heather didn’t deny it, Matthias was delighted, thinking she had agreed to their relationship.

“Look! Someone is selling necklaces over there.” Heather exclaimed, pointing to the front right.

Looking in the direction that she pointed, he was also a little surprised. The stall owner was wearing a pastor costume and standing in front of his stall.

“Let’s go over and take a look!” Heather suddenly got interested, walking toward the direction as she tugged Matthias along.

Immediately, Matthias followed behind her. He didn’t know if the stall owner was a real pastor or a fake. But pastors always liked to keep a low profile and it seemed impossible for them to be appearing in such a busy city.

At the same time, Heather also thought that the stall owner deliberately dressed as a pastor for the sake of gimmicks. That being said, it was still rare to see such a scene in the night market. She would like to see how much the necklace would cost!

“Excuse me, how much is the necklace?” Heather had taken a fancy to an ancient cross necklace. It looked a little old, yet she liked the texture of it.

Hearing her voice, the stall owner looked at her, then shifted his gaze to Matthias and said slowly, “People who come here for the cross necklace are

usually those who are facing difficulty in life. It seems that you're currently in a predicament." The stall owner was chattery, yet he didn't answer her question.

Since Heather didn't believe in this at all, she didn't take the stall owner's words to heart. Patiently, she repeated, "How much is this?"

Helplessly, the stall owner looked at her, "You're indeed a person that doesn't believe in the supernatural. Since we are destined to meet, I can give this necklace to you."

Upon hearing her words, Heather was slightly surprised. The price of a cross necklace should not be low. How could the stall owner give it away for free? He was indeed a weird person.

At the same time, Matthis also thought that it was weird. Staring at the stall owner, he wondered if he was a scammer. After all, Matthias and Heather had the aura of the nobl, so it was normal for the charlatan to have the intention of cheating their money.

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After the two exchanged glances, Heather said to the stall owner, "I don't like free gifts."

The stall owner seemed to have expected that she would respond in this way and he countered, "Oh dear! I know I look like a con man when I give away the cross necklace like that."

Never did they expect that the stall owner would be so straightforward as he started muttering to himself. Surprised, Heather and Matthias looked at each other, thinking that this stall owner was interesting.

"Actually, this necklace is related to you. It's not an ordinary cross necklace. It has a long history behind it." The stall owner was really talkative and he had been talking nonstop even though Heather and Matthias did not respond to him.

Feeling bored, Heather replied, "How long is the history?" She glanced at the cross necklace. How could she know when she was not an expert in this field?

"That's a good question. Look at this cross necklace." The owner picked up the necklace as he spoke before he handed it to Heather.

“Okay,” Heather reluctantly responded, not knowing what he meant.

“The darker the wood is, the older it is. The darkening of the wood is due to its reaction with the air,” he explained to her.

Standing off to the side, Matthias listened to their conversation quietly. He believed that ordinary people couldn’t deceive him and Heather, but since she was interested in staying and listening to the stall owner’s nonsense, he might as well keep her company and see what the stall owner had up his sleeve.

“So how many years has it been?” Heather felt that he wasn’t answering her question at all. If it wasn’t for her good mood today, she would have already left by now.

“It’s been more than 30 years. I made this myself when I was young. Although its workmanship is a little rough, it’s really a precious item,” he said in a nostalgic tone as he touched the necklace.

Somehow, Heather had a feeling that the stall owner was someone with an interesting life experience. Thinking about it for a moment, she asked, “You made all these by yourself?”

Nodding, he flashed a prideful smile. “I used to treat them like treasures back then.”

“If they are your treasures, why are you selling them now?” Not to mention that he is giving it to me for free. Of course, Heather didn’t say this last part out loud.

Hearing her words, the stall owner smiled, looking like a mischievous child. “I’m old and my children don’t like these things. I might as well set up a stall and see if these treasures of mine will meet its destined new owner.”

With her eyes widened, Heather looked at him in disbelief. “Sorry, but you look like you’re still in your forties.” At most, the stall owner should be in his fifties; he didn’t seem to be at the age of retirement yet.

Upon hearing that, the man laughed. “Your words make me happy! Actually, I’m already in my sixties.”

Heather shook her head as she murmured, “Interesting. There’s a saying that goes, ‘seeing is believing.’ It seems that eyes do lie too.” The old man looked

way too energetic and lively for sixty years old. In fact, he actually looked young.

“Miss, you’re indeed interesting! Looks like I have to give this necklace to you.” The stall owner took down the necklace and insisted on giving it to her.

Although Heather liked this necklace a lot, she would not accept gifts from strangers. Instantly, Matthias seemed to notice her hesitation so the very next second, he took out all the cash he had.

He rarely carried cash around when he went out, so he had only two or three thousand with him right now.

“Sir, your cross necklace looks great but my girlfriend will not easily accept free gifts from others. It ‘ll only be appropriate for me to buy it from you and give it to her.”

At this time, Heather was still thinking about the cross necklace, so she didn’t pay much attention to Matthias’ words. Seeing that Heather did not deny it, Matthias was delighted as if he was on cloud nine.

Looking at the other man, the stall owner finally accepted the cash as he said, “It’s rare to come across people like you all these days. Indeed, I made the right choice.”

Matthias could tell from his eyes that the stall owner was not a greedy person. It seemed that they had really met an interesting person.

“Thank you for your understanding.” Matthias politely said to the stall owner.

This way, Heather could get what she wanted without accepting it as a free gift from the owner. Satisfied, she smiled brightly at Matthias.

Suddenly, she had the urge to praise him for his wit and they looked into each others’ eyes affectionately.

Meanwhile, the stall owner continued talking, “It’s great to be young. Should we be friends on Messenger?” He took out his mobile phone as he spoke.

There were only a few people on Heather’s Messenger list. She didn’t even have her business partners’ contacts, so how could she add a stranger that she had just met a moment ago?

Noticing her hesitation, Matthias took out his cell phone and asked, "Can I add you, sir?" Once again, he had resolved the awkwardness. After all, the other party was a man in his sixties, so Matthias should at least show some of his respect.

Hearing Matthias' words, the stall owner shook his head. "No. I'm only making friends with the new owner of my cross necklace." Never did Matthias expect that he would be so stubborn.

With her eyes slightly narrowed, Heather didn't know what the old man was thinking. Somehow, she felt that something was not right.

"Why do you want to add me on Messenger?" Holding the cross necklace in her arms, Heather looked like an ancient heroine.

Smiling, the stall owner answered, "You may not believe it. Most of the people that took a fancy to my cross necklace are in a difficult situation. I also had such a period of time back then, so I guess I could be of great help to you with my experience."

Looking at his sincere expression, Heather hesitated again. She probably didn't expect that she would actually take out her mobile phone without her knowing it.

After adding the owner on Messenger, Heather walked away with Matthias. Confused, the latter asked, "Why did you agree to his request?"

In all honesty, Heather herself had the same question. "I don't know. It was as if I was possessed."

Initially, Matthias didn't believe in the theory of the supernatural either. But what happened today was really absurd. Heather seemed as if she was possessed and he couldn't find a scientific way to explain it.

"Could it be that we were scammed?" Matthias asked tentatively. After all, he and Heather had met countless people at work and had experienced all kinds of situations. There was no way they would get deceived by such a trick.

"That's impossible. We're both in the business so we wouldn't be wrong in evaluating others. Furthermore, I believe he was telling the truth." Heather said as she played with the cross necklace in her hand.

It was just that she still felt a little uncomfortable with the man's approach and there was an inexplicable feeling within her. However, since they had added each other on Messenger, it was not too polite of her to delete his contact. Therefore, she could only leave things as it was for the time being.

"We've gained a lot at the night market today." Matthias carried dozens of shopping bags in his hands. A woman's desire to shop was really too terrifying, but he was satisfied with the process and outcome of it.

"Matty, I bought a lot of useless things." Heather looked at the bags that Matthias was holding. It seemed that those things wouldn't be of any use to her.

"Buy it if you like it. The main purpose of these things is to make you happy." His honey-coated words were getting so proficient that Heather couldn't even look him in the eyes. Yet, it still felt great listening to those words.

At this time, she was already exhausted so she didn't want to continue shopping. In fact, what the stall owner said just now had messed up her heart a little.

Looking back on her recent situation, she felt that she had indeed never encountered such a dilemma before. Can it be that it was really something supernatural?

The next second, Heather stared at the cross necklace in her hand. Indeed, the workmanship of it was less satisfactory. She was always a person that liked things with exquisite workmanship, so why did she end up buying such a roughly made cross necklace?

Moreover, the color of the wooden cross necklace was too dark and Heather didn't like this shade of brown at all. In other words, she had no idea what caused her to buy it. What happened just now was like a dream. When she was on her way back, she deliberately passed by the place again, but the stall was no longer there.

The cross necklace was not there and neither was the old man. Everything seemed just like a dream.

Tugging at Matthias' sleeve, Heather asked curiously, "Where did the man go?"

Matthias didn't know the reason behind it either. After thinking about it for a moment, he asked a middle-aged woman who was setting up her stall, "Excuse me, do you know where the man that sells cross necklaces went?" He had a feeling that this person should know his whereabouts.

"He went home. He has a rule for himself. As long as he gives away a cross necklace, he'll wrap up and head home." Initially, the middle-aged woman didn't want to answer. However, after seeing Matthias' fine-looking face, she responded diligently.

Everything became even more strange now. Never did Heather expect that she would meet such a person. That man's eyes were as if they could see through her and that had Heather feeling rather uncomfortable.

Recalling that time she looked into the man's eyes, she felt as if he had seen through all her secrets. It was as if she was standing naked in front of that person with no privacy at all.

Hearing the woman's reply, the two did not ask further questions and left the night market hand in hand. Instantly, Matthias was keenly aware of the changes in Heather's emotions. Unlike her relaxed mood at the beginning, she looked a little depressed at this moment.

"What's wrong? Are you still thinking about what he said just now?" Matthias leaned close to her ear and asked.

"No, I'm just getting a little sleepy." Heather casually replied.

"Well then, I'll send you home." It was indeed getting late, so Matthias gave up dragging her to stroll around.

"No. Let's go to the parking lot and get our own cars. Then, we head home separately." Heather didn't want him to send her as that would take too much of his time.

"Don't reject my kindness," Matthias murmured and he insisted on sending her. How can I let her go home alone at night?

Heather, on the other hand, continued to decline his offer. "I have my own car. It's not a good idea for two cars to go side by side on the road!" However, Matthias was acting like a child at this time.

“Then, leave your car in the parking lot overnight and I’ll take you home in my car.” Matthias refused to give up and still insisted on sending her home.

“Matthias, do you have to be more stubborn than me?” Heather asked helplessly. He was so stubborn that sometimes she didn’t even know how to refuse him.

“I have to be a gentleman. A gentleman won’t let women go home alone.” Matthias answered with a seemingly convincing excuse, leaving Heather feeling dumbfounded.

In the end, Heather compromised and muttered, “Fine, we’ll do as you wish then!” She wanted to leave a pleasant memory for him tonight, so she had no choice but to obey his words.

Gently, Matthias pecked her lips. “Good girl. I’ll reward you with a kiss.” Meanwhile, Heather grumbled to herself, What a shameless man!

That being said, she wasn’t angry with Matthias either. Anyway, he had been a rascal for a long time. She knew that he was trying his best to make her happy and she didn’t want to disappoint him too. It was just that once her mood was affected, it was difficult for her to recover.

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On the way back to the Langston Residence’, Heather did not utter a word. Looking at her, Matthias guessed that she might still be thinking about the cross necklace. There were times where he wanted to talk to her, but he eventually gave up.

Even until she exited the car, he had no intention of talking to her as he was in a dilemma. Recalling how she had been acting abnormally for the past few days, he finally had something figured out. As much as many things could be left aside for the time being, but once they were brought up, everything would completely change.

“Heather,” Matthias reluctantly called out to her.

Upon hearing his voice, she turned around and with a faint smile on her face, she replied, “I’m heading back. Don’t miss me too much.” Just by a glance at Matthias’ face, Heather knew what was on his mind.

After thinking about it for a moment, he stepped forward and stared at her unblinkingly. Knowing him well enough, she had already guessed his next move.

She immediately stretched out with her hand and stopped him. “No, don’t do that.” It was better for them to stay low profile in front of her house.

At the same time, Matthias had expected that she would react in this way, so he did not push his luck any further. “Have a good night then,” he responded awkwardly.

While nodding at him, Heather answered, “You too.”

The atmosphere between them suddenly became weird as both of them were at a loss for words. After looking at each other for a long time, they turned around without saying another word.

Then, as Heather walked toward her house step by step, Matthias entered his car and looked at her back for a long time. Instantly, he felt that she was so far away from him and it left his heart feeling empty.

By the time she turned around, he had already left. With her lips slightly curled, she felt that many things would change after they went their separate ways today.

“Matthias, no matter what happens after this, don’t blame me,” Heather muttered under her breath as she had already thought some things through.

After she returned to her bedroom, she sent a message to Leon, ‘I accept your proposal.’

As soon as he read her message, he was beyond excited. Although he had already expected that she would say yes, he still couldn’t suppress the overwhelming joy within him when he saw her reply.

‘Don’t let anyone know about this,’ Leon replied to Heather; it was mainly because he didn’t want Matthias to know the inside story.

‘Okay.’ Heather didn’t know whether she had made the right decision. Since she had already accepted Leon’s proposal, she was ready to embrace what was about to come.

She couldn't imagine how Matthias would react when he learned about this. It was like she was playing with fire. The moment news of her relationship with Leon appeared in tomorrow's papers, many people would definitely sneer at her.

The next day, she woke up early in the morning and saw Robert at the dining table with a newspaper. It seemed that she was in the newspaper again. As she was extremely familiar with his behavior, she laughed at herself while glancing in his direction.

A second later, she took the initiative to speak, "Grandpa, what's so nice about those titbits?"

Upon hearing her words, Robert put down his newspaper as his eyes were filled with coldness. Heather knew that she had once again forgotten about his previous warning. Indeed, she shouldn't have been so close to Matthias after everything that had happened.

"I hope you know your place." Robert made sure his every word was loud and clear enough for her to hear him.

At the same time, the other people at the table looked at them in confusion as they lost track of what was being said. She casually flashed a faint smile at them.

"I'm hungry. Let's eat." After seeing that no one was digging in, Heather took the initiative to do so.

Not wanting to refute her in front of everyone, Robert handed the newspaper to the housekeeper, "Take it away." He knew that everyone else was curious about the contents of the newspaper.

Without the need to read the newspaper, she already knew how the report was being written. She was intimate with Matthias last night, so there was no doubt that she would be on the headlines today.

After breakfast, she immediately left the Langston Residence, not allowing Robert to call her to the study room for a talk. She had heard enough of his great principles. She didn't want to argue with him, nor did she want to waste her time talking to him in the study room because, after all, she had no intention of changing her decision at all.

The reason why Heather left the house early in the morning was to meet Leon. She still had a lot to discuss with him, yet there wasn't much time left for them.

After an hour's worth of driving, she finally arrived at his villa. Before she had the chance to knock on the door, he had already opened it from inside.

Upon seeing her puzzled expression, he smiled as he asked, "Are you surprised? My reaction is so fast that even I am taken aback."

Not in the mood to listen to Leon's gag, Heather pushed him aside and went straight into the villa. Walking behind her, he looked at her back with dissatisfaction as he wondered when she would be a gentle lady.

"Heather, you're gradually losing your comical side," Leon noted as he chased after her.

"I'm in a terrible mood right now. How do you expect me to have fun?" An annoyed Heather snapped.

Upon hearing her words, Leon gave her a bitter look because it was rare to see her being this honest. He asked tentatively, "Heather, did something happen to you?"

Yet, she didn't bother to listen to his nonsense as she replied coldly, "Let's cut to the chase."

He initially wanted to have another few words with her. It was just that he didn't expect her to be so impatient. Therefore, with no choice, he was forced to delve into the main topic of their meeting

"Heather, do you know that my family dinner will be the night after tomorrow? So, we don't have much time left. We must get ourselves tangled up with some topics today," he said with a solemn expression.

On the other hand, Heather looked for a seat and sat down before she asked, "Which banquet?" It was an important question.

"The one in Bradford City. I don't know what is in that old man's mind. He suddenly came over to the city," Leon responded with a troubled voice. He had always been hiding from his grandfather, yet he didn't expect Dave to make the trip to the city.

Her expression immediately changed as she felt that there must be a complicated reason behind this. "Is your grandfather coming to Bradford City in person?" She remembered that he had once mentioned that his grandfather was not in good health, so for him to travel so far to the city was indeed a strange decision.

"Yeah, I even have a feeling that he isn't coming for me this time." Somehow, everything was extremely strange this time. Even though Dave was here in the city, he didn't send anyone over to capture Leon and instead allowed the latter his freedom.

Although the old man had made a weird request, it was still an acceptable one. He even gave Leon a long time to finish his work and that in itself was merciful enough.

"Maybe you're indeed not the reason why he came." Heather suddenly thought of the mysterious power in Bradford City. Well, fantastic! Now that the international forces were involved, she didn't know what to feel about it.

Leon glanced at her with a strange feeling because it seemed that she knew something about it. With squinted eyes, he had a feeling that she did not tell him the truth. "Heather, we're on the same boat right now. We have to be honest with each other," he hinted.

"Don't you think that there have been too many forces coming to Bradford City recently? And surprisingly, everything is still as peaceful as it is? Don't you feel that it's somehow similar to the calm before the storm?" Heather exaggerated the atmosphere as she replied.

With his hand grabbing his chin, he gave it a thought. "Now that you mentioned it, it really does have that feeling." How could he not have thought about it before this? Now, he was afraid just by the thought of it.

"What are we going to do now? What you mean to say is that even my family is involved in this?" Thinking about the possibility of the storm happening, Leon could feel chills being sent down his spine. What was the reason behind this? What conspiracy were they planning by squeezing a bunch of forces into the city?

"Just sit back and don't do anything," Heather answered helplessly. Since they didn't even know the inside story, what else could they do?

“Heather, what’s your plan now?” he asked dejectedly. All he wanted was to live a happy life, but why did he feel so restricted at this time?

Rising from the couch, she looked at him and responded condescendingly, “The first thing you need to do now is to change your way of addressing me.”

After listening to her words, Leon was confused. To him, calling her by the name “Heather” was good enough. So, he shook his head and answered, “No way, I’m used to addressing you like that. There’s no way I can change that!”

An annoyed Heather glared at him with anger. “Would you call your girlfriend by her name?”

As soon as he heard the term “girlfriend,” he flashed a strange smile. “This... That...” He was getting so excited that he didn’t know how to respond to her at all.

“Let me tell you beforehand. I don’t like people calling me Hat. Other than that name, you can call me anything.” Even Matthias had not called her ‘Hat’, so she didn’t want Leon to have such privilege.

“Baby Hatt?” Leon asked tentatively.

Heather’s death glare had him changing his answer again a second later, “Haty?”

“Hmm?” Her voice was filled with threat.

“I can’t call you Heather either, right?” he responded in distress since he still felt that his initial nickname for her was the best!

Glancing at him coldly, Heather wondered why his thinking was so restrained at this time!

“Then, how should I address you?” he said with dissatisfaction. She had been rejecting all his ideas while giving him a look of disgust.

“My English name. Have you forgotten about that?” Heather reminded him. In fact, she had almost forgotten about her English name as well. Ever since she returned to the country, she had never used it.

Upon hearing that, Leon smiled as he had almost forgotten about it. With a smile tugging at his face, he shouted, “Emily!” It seemed that it had been a

long time since someone called her by this name, which made her feel extremely nostalgic.

“Leon,” she replied.

“Now, let’s learn to be a couple.” As she said those words, she held him by the arm. Since they were attending the family dinner together, of course, she had to act as gently as she could.

However, he was completely stiff while he stood on the spot. Pushing Leon in disgust with her elbow, Heather asked, “Why is your body so stiff? Can you cooperate with me?”

An awkward Leon replied, “Heather, no, I’m not used to it.” Then, he pushed her aside. This was clearly what he initially longed for, but now that his wish was realized, he didn’t know what to do.

“Leon, we don’t have much time to waste. Please be more serious.” She didn’t notice his abnormality at all and she thought that he was pulling her leg.

While shrugging his shoulders, he looked just like a pervert. “Heather, I can’t stand being intimate with you. I feel so guilty like I’m a bad guy forcing you to do something inappropriate.” He shook his head and his arms were flying around as he talked to her.

Heather immediately rolled her eyes at Leon because she didn’t know what he was talking about. A bad guy forcing me to do something inappropriate? That was funny!

“Clear those evil thoughts in your mind. Remember this: we’re now a couple.” She grabbed his shoulders and forced him to look at her. “Look into my eyes. We’re deeply in love, okay?” This time, she was not only saying it to Leon, but she was also trying to hypnotize herself.

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After resisting for a while, Leon could not help but laugh out loud. Then, he waved to Heather. “It’s too difficult.” He could not even continue to stare at her and burst out laughing continuously, as if his laughing point had been triggered.

Annoyed by his actions, Heather pointed at him as she asked, "Can you be more serious?" I'm so mad at him that I can't wait to tear him apart.

He tried to stop himself from laughing, but he was actually quite fearful. All of his laughter was to mask the uneasiness within him. In the past, he always imagined how it would be like if he and Heather were together as a couple. Although his wish was now granted, he felt uneasy.

Even Leon himself thought that he was quite annoying, but he did not have the courage to look into Heather's eyes as he was feeling guilty. Even though he did not force her, he could not get past his own mental barrier.

"What the hell do you want?" she emphasized helplessly. Leon did not even reply to her, which made her quite troubled.

He took a step back and sat on the couch. "I think it's too difficult to pretend to be a couple with you."

Heather pinched her chin and looked at him in confusion. "You were the one who initiated this, yet you are backing away now. Do you think it's appropriate?"

As she questioned him, he felt slightly embarrassed and awkwardly looked at her. He did not know what to reply to her, and he also felt that he was a failure. However, he felt that he could not maintain the pretense anymore.

"Heather, we don't have to be serious when we are just pretending." Leon tried to run away from the problem. Before this, he even thought of slightly taking advantage of her, but this thought had completely disappeared in his mind.

Looking at his cowardice, Heather dramatically sighed. "Who do you think your grandfather is? Do you think he's someone whom we could easily fool?"

On a coincidental occasion, she looked into his family background. His grandfather, Dave, was a legend who called the shots in Europe. She could not fathom how a legendary character like him had raised a playful and easy-going grandson like Leon.

Heather knew that Leon's family was exceptionally strict on him. I wonder how he grew up in that environment. He's considered lucky that his grandfather did not tear him to shreds by now.

Leon merely gave an awkward smile. As soon as he remembered his own grandfather, he immediately lost all confidence and glanced at her with a troubled look. "I guess no matter how good we are at acting, we still can't hide it from him."

She rolled her eyes at him and tried to console him. "Don't be so discouraged. I already told you to treat me as though I'm your actual girlfriend." After all, they were quite close to begin with, so she believed that they could overcome this difficulty.

Leon merely shook his head in exasperation. "I know who my grandfather is. I'm afraid we aren't going to pull our tricks off in front of him." At this point, it was he who could not take it anymore. In fact, he regretted his previous suggestion.

Heather hated people who gave up even before trying. Hence, she responded seriously, "Don't make me look down on you." She could only say such words to motivate him at that stage.

Leon pouted with mixed feelings. As the situation became increasingly complicated, he could not continue to be that useless.

Suppressing the uneasiness within him, he said, "Alright. Let's do it again."

He was not a decent person to begin with. Since he had pretended that Heather was his current girlfriend, he merely acted in the way that he usually would. After jumping down from the couch, he pulled her into his arms, "Heather, this is my grandfather, Dave."

As Heather and Leon exchanged glances with each other, she felt that his introduction seemed slightly off to her. Then, she told him about it. "Don't you think that your introduction is too informal?"

Upon hearing that, Leon scratched the back of his head as he smiled awkwardly. "I seldom talk to him, so..." He truly had no idea how to have a proper conversation with his grandfather at all.

"Is the relationship between you both this bad?" Heather had once tried to ask him about his family, but he passed it off with jokes.

Now, he felt even more awkward. He knew that she was almost being isolated at the Langston Family and his situation was not any better than hers. His

grandfather did not even dote on him like how Robert had treated her, so Leon would occasionally envy her.

“In my years growing up, I can count the number of times we spoke with both my hands.” If Dave had not tracked Leon’s location all the way to Bradford City, Leon planned to continue avoiding him and acted as if he did not have such a grandfather.

Leon really hated his own family and he would sometimes direct his hatred toward Dave. However, after thinking about it from a rational point of view, he realized that Dave had been treating him quite well, so he slowly let go of his hatred toward Dave.

Since young, he had grown up with hatred toward his own family and he had spent a long time convincing himself to overcome it. He even once thought about destroying his own family, but he gave up on the idea in the end. It was mainly because Leon did not have the power to do so and he did not want to work with the enemies of his family. Apart from that, he actually did not hate Dave that much.

“In that case, I bet it’s not because of you that he’s coming all the way to Bradford City this time around.” Heather confirmed her hypothesis even more firmly, which was another bad news for them.

“I’ve already thought of that. It’s just an excuse for him to visit me this time.” Leon smiled exasperatedly because Dave did not even care about him. After all, he was an illegitimate child, so no one in the family had respected him.

She scooted closer to Leon and looked at him with a soothing expression. She did not imagine that his family was worse than hers. Even though she acted as though she did not mind how her family treated her, she, in fact, cared about it a great deal. Fortunately, she had a grandfather who doted on her a lot. After the comparison, it was obvious that Heather’s situation was better than his since he was a trivial person in his family. When she thought about this, she felt even sorrier for him.

“Don’t look at me like this, Heather. I’m not as pitiful as you think,” Leon said nonchalantly as he did not want to expose his family matters to outsiders. So what if my life was tough? It’s all over now.

Heather apologetically glanced at him. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't—" She felt that she should not look at him with pity as it would make him feel even more miserable.

"Why are you apologizing to me? Actually, sometimes I kind of fancy you. Maybe it's because you remind me of myself." He laughed self-mockingly. Nevertheless, it was a fact that she was quite similar to him; even their family backgrounds were quite alike.

"How narcissistic could you be to fancy another person like you?" Heather asked in disgust. At this stage, she merely wanted to lighten up the atmosphere so that Leon would not continue to wallow in the past that hurt him.

He laughed out loud. "Don't you start laughing at me. You are the same after all, you narcissistic woman." He had always wanted to tell her this statement. Now that he had said it aloud, he felt much better.

"Haha, let's not criticize each other any further. We are the same type of people." At this moment, Heather could not help but think about Matthias, whose family background was also extremely similar to Leon's.

Leon noticed the change of expression in her eyes and asked mischievously, "Are you thinking of someone else?" Actually, he was not very happy about it, so he forced himself to smile when he saw her falling deeper into the relationship.

His question was spot on. Her thoughts were visible on her face, but she did not like the feeling of being seen through by others. "Actually, I've been thinking about something." At this moment, she felt that she had a lot of doubts to share with him. If she continued to hide it further, her mental health could take a beating.

Upon hearing that, Leon curiously scooted closer to Heather. He loved to hear her secrets and he guessed that this time around, it had to be related to Matthias.

"You can tell me anything. I'll keep your secrets for you." Leon was quite dependable on this as he had always guarded her secrets and never told anyone about them.

Of course, Heather well understood that he would not simply blurt her secrets out. Apart from that, his circle was very different from hers, so he was a good option for being her confidant. She did not want to hold herself back anymore, especially when she needed a good listener at this moment.

“Leon, let me ask you seriously—am I a peculiar woman?” She felt that her thoughts were divergent from that of an average woman. It must be tiring to be with someone like me!

He nodded. “Quite weird, but also very unique.”

It was rare that she had received such honest feedback, but upon hearing his reply, she was not angry and nonetheless smiled.

However, Leon was shocked by her smile and thought that she was irritated, so he changed his comment. “I mean—you are a very unique woman who is different from others.”

Looking at his nervous expression, Heather could not help smiling. I wonder what he is worried about. “Don’t think of me as such a fierce person. I’m not angry at you. I just agree with what you said.”

He looked at her in disbelief. I don’t believe her at all. Which woman would want to be commented as ‘weird’?

“Since you know about this, what are you thinking?” Leon had no idea why Heather had asked him such a question, but he had an ominous feeling about it.

“Is it difficult to be in a relationship with me?” she asked in repentance. Matthias was a good person, but I’ve always bullied him. Now that I think about it, I truly regretted my actions.

However, he vehemently shook his head. “Nonsense. It’s not difficult at all. Instead, it makes people envious.” He was the one being envious about it and he wanted to be in a real relationship with her.

Heather mocked in reply, “There’s nothing to be envious about being with me. You know that I have a bad temper with many responsibilities on my shoulders. It’s exhausting to be with me.” With a tone of repentance, she felt slightly unfair for Matthias.

Leon merely nudged her forehead. "Heather, please be your normal self. Why are you thinking about this suddenly?" After patting her forehead, his hand froze in midair as he thought that it was unnecessary.

However, Heather never noticed his movement and she pushed the bangs on her forehead aside as she smiled bitterly. "Why don't you teach me how to have a normal relationship?" Seeing how experienced he was in relationships, she thought she ought to learn something from him in this aspect.

He looked at her in amusement, thinking that they were straying further away from the main point. Did she get the wrong point here? We are just pretending to be a couple, but things seem to be more serious. Does she plan to actually be in a real relationship with me?

"Heather, why are you suddenly thinking about this?" To Leon, it was not a good thing because he lacked the courage to be her real boyfriend. After all, she had already fallen for another man and it was making him uncomfortable to even think about it.

Upon seeing his reaction, Heather fell silent. Her words had indeed seemed suggestive earlier, so he might have the wrong idea. She wanted to slap her head. What have I been doing? "Just treat it as if I said nothing," she replied awkwardly.

In sync with her, he agreed. "Alright." We can't continue with this. After all, we haven't even carried out the real plan.

Hence, Leon took the initiative to remind her. "Heather, the most important thing right now is the party on the day after tomorrow." He was not confident that he was able to hoodwink his grandfather, but he did not want to embarrass himself at the party either.

As soon as he recalled Dave's usual character, he felt worried for himself. I don't want to be punished by him during the party. If that happens, it would be so embarrassing!

"Why don't we think about how to create a huge news today?" The party was not happening immediately, but they had to somehow make their relationship official so that everyone would be aware about it.

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The moment Leon reminded Heather about it, he also felt that it was necessary for them to create a piece of big news. Once they had made their fake relationship official, it was much easier for the rest of their plans to continue.

“Heather, would it seem too deliberate?” he asked worriedly. If he announced their relationship two days before their family party, it seemed rather obvious that he simply found a woman to ward Dave off.

“Maybe we should double confirm one thing: does he mind if you lie to him? Heather still had not fully understood Leon’s current situation. She only knew that he needed to find a fake girlfriend for the moment to appease his grandfather.

“Of course. He hates it when people lie to him.” When he was younger, he had seen what happened to a man who lied to his grandfather. He still felt fear every time he remembered that.

She slapped Leon’s head. “Why didn’t you tell me earlier? Since he doesn’t want you to lie to him, you should tell him the truth!” She was quite pissed off by him.

“No, I can’t do that. The reason why he allowed me to come to Bradford City is because I told him that I have a girl I like here and I want to date her.” His expression fell. If I knew this would happen, I wouldn’t have used this excuse in the beginning. Serves me right!

“What?” Heather looked at him incredulously. Everything that is happening now is a result of his own doing?

Leon helplessly looked at her. “Heather, this is why you are the only person who can help me now.”

He had mentioned her to Dave in the beginning. Since Dave was quite satisfied with Heather as a person, he finally allowed Leon to come here.

“What do we do now?” She thought that they had to pretend to be a couple for only a few days. Now, it seemed like they would have to maintain the pretense for quite a long time, possibly to the point where they needed to experience the entire process as a couple.

Leon had a blank look as he had no idea what to do next. “I can only take one step at a time and see how everything goes. I don’t want to go home—they are going to screw me up.” He had no faith in his own family.

“Let’s take a seat now. You should tell me the entire story.” At this point, Heather felt that she should know the entire story and its details.

He hesitated for a while before he reluctantly agreed. “Let’s speak about it upstairs.” As the living room was devoid of decor, he preferred the cozy vibes of the room.

As soon as both of them went to the second floor one after another, Leon went to the master bedroom immediately with Heather trailing behind him. This time around, there were some changes to the room. She immediately saw the carpet on the floor that looked cozy.

“You complained that my house was not cozy enough last time, so I made some changes to it,” he proudly explained since he was already used to doing something that she would approve of. It was like an instinct that he could not even control.

“Looks good,” she praised casually.

Leon looked pleased with himself. After all, he loved to receive her praises. Sometimes, he would want her approval as a substitute for his family. Perhaps this was also why he liked to meet her often.

In no time, both of them sat on the carpet with a coffee table between them. Since they were chatting together, it would be better for the atmosphere to be casual. As such, they had some tea, which would make it quite relaxing to chat.

Heather poured herself a cup of tea while Leon raised his own cup, hoping that she would fill his beaker as well. Looking at his childish expression, she had no other choice but to pour another portion of tea for him.

Now that she thought about it, she found it weird that he was increasingly clingy toward her, as if he was a little girl. She regarded him from head to toe as she commented, “You seem strange recently.”

While drinking his tea, he lifted his head to look at her when he heard her comment. He did not think that there was anything wrong with him, so he had no idea what she was referring to.

“Why are you behaving in a more feminine manner recently? Your pinky even curls up when you hold the teacup,” Heather noted in disgust because Leon’s femininity did not match his sinewy figure.

“Hehe.” He revealed a meaningful smile that looked slightly lecherous amidst his shyness.

“Perhaps your grandfather was wrong from the beginning. He shouldn’t have asked you to bring a girlfriend to the family party. Maybe what you need is a boyfriend instead,” she teased, which immediately dissolved the tension between them. It was only in front of him that she had the courage to tease so much.

“Heather, you usually treat me as your sister. I can’t believe that you actually thought about it this way,” he replied in amusement. It was difficult for him to display his masculinity in front of her.

After all, Leon could not even defeat Heather in a fight and she was better than him in many ways. If he seriously thought about it, he felt slightly ashamed of his behavior as a man. As her male best friend, he felt that he was becoming increasingly feminine. On top of that, he had recently been courted by a real man, which made him speechless.

Heather smiled unabashedly. “Actually, it’s pretty good that you’re like that. I don’t like men who are extremely masculine. It’s better that you are more feminine.” Now that they were on this topic, she admitted that she really had no interest in the typical masculine men. Even Matthias, whom she had fallen for, was quite soft and feminine. Not only that, he was handsome and gentle too.

“Let’s start discussing the main topic of the day.” As Heather had been chatting about such trivial things without even touching on the main topic, Leon did not want the entire day to be wasted just like that.

Heather nodded in agreement. “If you don’t mind, can you tell me more about your family in detail?” She had no knowledge about his family at all, so she was worried that she could embarrass herself at the family party.

Leon did not want to touch much on his family, but now that they had already arrived at this stage, there was no use for him to continue hiding.

“I was born in an ancient family. My ancestors were aristocrats from the middle ages. Even up until now, the family members still use the same standards for themselves. I, however, am just an accident. I’m the illegitimate son of my grandfather’s favorite third son. The biggest stain of his dear son’s life is probably me.” Toward the end, his tone became increasingly sarcastic. It was quite apparent that his relationship with his family was indeed terrible.

He paused for a while and took a sip of his tea before he continued speaking, “I was raised by my mother since young, but they found us later and asked me to return to the family. Just like that, I was forced to stay with them in their mansion. However, I was not happy at all. I had enough of their competition both in the dark and in the open. Apart from that, my so-called father also hates me and vice versa. By forcing us to be together, it only resulted in us hating each other even more.” When he finished his sentence, his voice was thick with hatred. It was without a doubt that he hoped for his father to be dead.

Heather remained silent. She could tell that Leon became more irritated at the mention of his family. She tried to use a gentle expression to soothe him as she felt sorry for his background.

“After finally escaping from the family, I will not return there anymore. I don’t want to meet that man at all. Do you know what I hate most about him? He looks almost exactly the same as me to the point that I find myself disgusting whenever I look at myself in the mirror.” As he spoke more, he vented his emotions more strongly.

She continued to use a gentle tone to comfort, “Now that you are out from the family, you are not restricted by anyone now, so don’t think about the past anymore.”

He laughed at himself. “Not restricted by anyone? No. Even though they are far away from me, they would also want to control me remotely. I hate this feeling a lot. I owe them nothing and they have never raised me. Why should I even serve their interests? Do they think that they can move me with just some money?” he spoke in annoyance as he hated the arrogance of his family members to the core.

Heather stretched out her hand to caress his forehead. "Don't overthink it. You will get your freedom. I will help you." In the past, he had always been giving his all to help her out. This time around, she wanted to help him accomplish his goal for once.

"I'm afraid not." Leon smiled bitterly. "Unless you agree to marry me. Otherwise, my grandfather will not let me regain my true freedom."

She looked at him with peculiarity. "Your family is so weird." What even is this weird idea? Now, he makes me want to meet Dave in person to see that weird man.

"You have to bear children for me too," he added. If she had not seen his serious expression at this moment, she would have already punched him.

He's teasing me! "What the hell?" Heather felt defeated. What the hell is this?

"The old man said that it's fine to sever ties with the family as long as I give them an offspring. Actually, he has already given up on me and reserved his energy to groom my son." It was precisely because of this reason that Leon was even firmer in his resolution that he did not want any children. He did not want the next generation to suffer the same pain as him.

If he were to talk about this in a crude way, he was just waiting for Dave to reach the end of his life. As soon as Dave was gone, there was no one else who could control him. Before that, he would never settle down and have children. This was also the reason for Dave demanding such an outrageous request from him.

Heather immediately understood everything and asked tentatively, "The reason for them to ask you to marry someone is because your grandfather wants you to have a son soon." She gave Leon a sympathetic look. Unexpectedly, Leon's only remaining value is to bear children for the family.

"Yes. That's right, but I won't let them have their way. I'm fine with marriage, but I will never have children," he spoke firmly.

"You're fine with marriage? I don't think you have any suitable marriage partner," she teased quietly beside him.

“You!” Leon smiled wickedly. “Heather, as long as you agree to marry me, the old man will never turn a blind eye to the things that have been going on at the Langston Family.”

Heather narrowed her eyes as she could finally see through his intentions. So, this is his plan, but it actually makes sense—it’s only until we become a family that Dave would finally help out the Langston Family. “Do you think I will agree?” she asked with half a smile on her face.

“You will.” When he replied, he seemed to have changed into a different person.

She looked at Leon, who had finally revealed himself. In that instant, she suddenly understood quite a number of things. It seems that Leon is more familiar with the current situation in Bradford City.

“Do you know something that I don’t?” Heather asked. At this point, she was sure that Leon had been quietly hiding something from her.

“Yes,” he replied calmly, which made her blood freeze. She did not expect that he would involve her in his calculations as well.

Looking at her suddenly darkened face, Leon thought about it before apologizing, “I’m sorry, Heather. To me, freedom is more important than love. I wasn’t deliberately planning to hide it from you. I just hope that you can help me.”

Heather looked at him in disappointment. “Why didn’t you believe in our close friendship? Why did you use this method to force me to follow your plans?” She was immensely disappointed that he chose to use tactics instead of believing in their friendship.

“In the past, I knew you would agree. However, now that you have Matthias, I won’t dare to take the risk. Both you and I are business people, so you should know that only profits are eternal. Now that our profits are tied together, we will eventually work together.” Leon was not remorseful at all. In fact, he did not believe that he had done something wrong. This made Heather even more disappointed. I can’t believe that humans can be so complicated.

Even Leon, whom I have always regarded as my best friend, will change into a completely different person in front of something that would benefit him. Who can I still trust now?

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Upon seeing the current situation, Heather felt that she had nothing else to talk to Leon about anymore. Looking at him in disappointment, she said, "I think I need to calm down."

The plans that she formulated in her mind were completely disrupted. She had lost all interest in them and she only wanted to leave this place as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, he had no idea how he had antagonized her. She suddenly became rather frightening, making him fearful to continue speaking for the fear that she might suddenly slap him.

"Heather, did I say something wrong just now?" he asked remorsefully, thinking that he must have annoyed her because of what he had said earlier.

"I think I'm going to reconsider our collaboration plan." Heather did not seem like she was joking at all. Looking at how serious she was in her eyes, Leon became even more worried. Even up until now, he could not figure out what had gone wrong here.

When she rose to leave, he pulled her. "Heather, did I anger you? Where are you going?" At such a crucial juncture, she can't leave!

"Leo, it's only now that I found out that I've never really known you at all," she answered angrily. She was so disappointed in him at this moment. After so many years, I haven't understood him at all. I don't even know who he really is.

Leon innocently looked at her. Did I go overboard with my words earlier? He tried to remember what had exactly happened. Did I do something wrong? In that instant, he felt wronged.

"Heather, did you misunderstand something? I don't have any intentions to trick you, I just..." Toward the end of his sentence, he looked quite troubled as he thought that no matter what he said at this moment, it would just be excuses to her ears.

"Leon, let me calm down first." Heather did not want to listen to any explanations from him at this moment. The more he tried to explain, the

angrier she became. She suddenly understood how it would feel to be betrayed by her best friend.

She remembered Myra, who was still in the ringleader's hands at this moment. Back then, Myra was also mad at her. Thinking about it now, she would not give the other person a good time if she had also suffered the same treatment.

Heather was annoyed by her own behavior, so this time around, she hoped that during their mission to save Myra, Myra would not be hurt at all. If possible, she would much rather be the one who got kidnapped.

"Heather, we don't have much time left. You must help me this time around." Leon was frowning so hard that his eyebrows had almost connected with each other. He was worried that she might suddenly leave him alone. If that happened, his life would be ruined.

"Leon, do you know how selfish you are? Throughout my entire life, I hate it the most when people exploit my feelings to lay traps on me. You have reached my bottom line. How can I even forgive you?" Heather yelled. After all, she was unable to pretend as if nothing had happened.

He regretted that he told her the truth this early as he accidentally blurted his true thoughts out. How can I forget that Heather is one who would be convinced by gentleness? She doesn't like being forced. "I'm really sorry, Heather. Something must have happened to me. I shouldn't disbelieve our relationship," he apologized with a tone that sounded like he blamed himself for using her feelings to trap her in this situation. Now, it has become worse than before.

She looked at him with a cold smile. Even though Leon knows that he's wrong, he is not remorseful at all! Through his eyes, she could tell what he had been thinking. In the past, she would never doubt him. It was only until now that she understood how trust could simply disintegrate in a second.

"Since you chose not to trust me from the beginning, you don't have to do that right now." Heather's cold tone made Leon rather uncomfortable. This time around, he knew he was in hot soup.

"I can't even stand staying with you for another second. Don't stop me now. You will only make me hate you even more." Now that she made herself clear,

he did not dare to stop her anymore. Instead, he merely smiled at her helplessly.

As he saw Heather leaving the room, the usually playful Leon finally understood something—there are some things in life that ought to be taken seriously. Now that he chose another method, he only understood that he encountered a life crisis in that instant.

Heather has left. Perhaps she won't even appear at the family party the day after tomorrow. Leon had learned how to lie since young and he had done so numerous times once he was a grown up to the point that he could have almost fooled himself.

A huge price would be needed to be paid for telling lies. In the past, he did not know about that, but he finally understood the impact now. He had no idea what he should do next, so he only gave a bitter smile.

After leaving his mansion, Heather felt that she was a failure. What a terrible life! I felt as though I've sunken into an even deeper mud as time goes by.

Life is such a weird circle. I betrayed my closest friend and now Leon has lied to me. At this moment, it was the first time she felt so helpless.

However, she could not tell Matthias about this because there were many plans she had that would hurt him. Yesterday night was her final time depending on him. She knew that she had no right to care about her own romance at this moment. All she could do was to protect the Langston Family, yet she forgot to protect herself.

As the car sped away on the highway, Heather seemed as though she was having a race with herself. With the wind blowing next to her ears, her mind seemed to buzz. She did not want to return to the Langston Family, but she did not want to go anywhere else at all.

However, in the midst of her panic, the ringleader called again, which caused her spirit to sink to its lowest point. As the ringleader voice rang from the phone dominantly, the wind outside the car lowered her listening skills. She merely listened to him in a daze.

"I will do as you say," she replied in a docile manner as she suppressed the urge within her, even though she did not clearly hear him.

She vaguely understood that he had requested her to look for Tony at the Hart Group today. For the past few days, as the ringleader had not revealed himself, she initially thought that the matter could be delayed for a few more days, so she had to grit her teeth and face it.

With no direction to head to at the moment, the ringleader gave her a clear instruction on where to go. This is good. What's meant to come will eventually come. I can't avoid it anyway.

Since it was not her first time at the Hart Group, Heather quickly found the director's office. The secretary sitting outside seemed to have changed. The new secretary looked rather b*tchy, which made Heather slightly uncomfortable. However, she forgot that she resembled the b*tchest person as she still had her makeup on her face.

After the secretary exchanged glances with her, Heather seemed to realize that something was off. Leo is not just Tony's secretary. He is Tony's right hand man. It's impossible for him to fire Leo, so where is he? How could this woman qualify to replace him?

She gave Heather a polite smile. "Please wait a moment. The director is meeting some guests now. You need to wait for another 20 minutes before he's free again."

Even though nothing seemed wrong from the surface, Heather was unhappy with her to the point that she felt an intense dislike toward her for no apparent reason. As both women exchanged gazes, there was too much information hidden in their eyes. Meanwhile, Heather tried to remember where she had seen this woman before.

However, Heather could not recall where exactly they had met. She had always taken pride in her strong memory, but she had no idea what was going on at this moment and Heather seemed like the vague woman she met last time.

Remembering the maid that she had met at the Hart Residence last time, Heather guessed whether that person was the same as the secretary now in front of her. The connection had troubled her as she was worried that her assumption could be true.

After being stared at for a long time, the secretary finally could not take it anymore and took the initiative to ask, "Miss Langston, is there something on

my face?" When Heather heard her slightly sarcastic tone, she liked the woman even less.

"No, you are beautiful," Heather replied rather hypocritically.

The secretary merely gave a sweet smile. "Thanks for the compliment, Miss Langston. It's my honor to be praised by you." She looked genuine at this moment, making Heather doubt herself. Am I overthinking this?

Not wanting to be so skeptical of everything, she decided to search for a spot to sit and stopped looking at the secretary so that her thoughts would not be even messier than they already were.

Heather had not thought about what to tell Tony up until now. She did not know whether the ringleader had called Tony and she did not feel anything off at the Hart Group either. It seemed like he had hidden everything well.

Hence, she merely sat on the couch as she waited for him. 20 minutes became excruciatingly long to her, as if it was a long time. Her gaze would occasionally flicker to the secretary as she waited. Perhaps I should take the initiative to have a chat with her. Since I have some doubts, I should try to clear them instead of running away from them.

After thinking about it, Heather decided to break the ice by mentioning Leo, so she pretended to ask nonchalantly, "Is Leo inside?" I sound so stiff! She secretly despised herself in her heart.

The secretary gave her a blank look. "Leo?" It looks as though she doesn't know him. Heather tried to search for some signs of her lying, but it was so natural that it did not seem like the woman was lying.

"Leo Clark," Heather elaborated.

The secretary shook her head. "I'm sorry. I just started my job, so I'm not very clear with many things."

Heather tried to gather some clues from the secretary's face, but she did not get any. This woman is either telling the truth, or she is a damn good actress. "Alright," she replied softly. She found it rather weird that she could not bring herself to be polite to the secretary.

The more she knew about the secretary, the more problematic things seemed. After all, the secretary was replacing Leo's former position. She doesn't even know a thing about the previous secretary? It sounds fishy to me.

Heather gave an understanding smile. Since they had already talked about Leo, she tried to look for other topics to chat with the secretary. "I wonder how I should address you." She remembered that she still had not known the secretary's name even after chatting with the secretary for quite a while.

The secretary apologized, "I'm sorry, Miss Langston. I almost forgot to introduce myself." She looked like she liked Heather a lot, but Heather knew that it was just a pretense.

In no time, she continued speaking, "I'm Zephyr. Zephyr Ashe." It was a simple and straightforward introduction, but it was quite a strange name to have.

In fact, it sounded more like a codename instead of an actual name. Heather quietly memorized it so that she could dig into this woman's background the moment she returned to her place.

However, it was also highly likely that they would not be able to locate anything. She recalled the maid she met at the Hart Residence and speculated that even if they were not the same person, they had belonged to the same group.

Heather had never imagined there would be a day where she would speak to a stranger for such a long time. 20 minutes seemed like 2 hours to her and she was never talkative before this. "How long have you been working at the Hart Group?" She did not even notice that she sounded as though she was interrogating Zephyr.

Fortunately, Heather was a woman. If she were a man, Zephyr might have reported a case of workplace harassment by now.

She looked at Heather with a slightly awkward expression as she also did not expect that Heather was so bubbly and talkative. She is very different from what the rumors have said.

"It's my third day at work today," Zephyr replied with a smile. At this point, she had no idea how to continue the conversation with Heather any longer and she wished for Tony to be quickly done with his current meeting.

Heather's lips could not help but twitch to form a wicked smile. As she calculated the time in her mind, she found the secretary increasingly suspicious.

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As the door of the director's office opened from within, Heather's gaze fell on Tony. After a few days of not seeing him, he looked rather haggard and he seemed to have lost a lot of weight.

Wondering what kind of hardship he had endured for the past few days, she suddenly felt sorry for him. After all, she could tell that Myra was extremely important to him.

He was not surprised when he saw her. Heather guessed that he had already received a call from the kidnappers, who had probably given them similar instructions. When she nodded to greet him, she saw a man standing next to Tony and thought that she had met the man somewhere.

She narrowed her eyes as she thought, It's a weird day today. I keep having a feeling that I've seen them somewhere.

The man noticed her gaze and flashed a polite smile. However, she merely twitched her lips slightly as a reply.

Heather would rarely reveal her smile to strangers. She was also usually indifferent and coldly treated people. Even if she had to face her customers, she would just reveal her strengths while avoiding unnecessary pretentious talks.

The man left a short while later. After that, Heather took the initiative to walk to Tony first and they exchanged glances without saying a word. As soon as she wanted to speak to him, she heard him say, "Let's discuss when we are in the room."

As soon as she saw the vigilance in his eyes, she also became more guarded. He must be taking precautions against someone and the only person left is the new secretary.

She understood many things through his gaze. After they walked into his office one after another, she closed the door behind her. Throughout the

entire process, she looked at him attentively, but he quickly walked to his seat and started vigorously writing on a piece of paper without even looking at her.

Heather curiously approached him. She would usually leave him alone, but today, she acted out of the ordinary and walked over to take a look. She saw a lot of words on the paper that did not look like English at all.

It was apparent that he had written it for her to read. After she carefully distinguished them, she finally realized he was writing Latin in a rather sloppy manner.

After translating the words that Tony had written, what he meant was, 'I'm being watched. Be careful of what you say here'. The simple sentence had shocked her.

All the evidence points to the secretary. Heather finally believed in her judgement. I initially thought we could have some private conversation alone after we closed the door.

It seems impossible now, though. I bet there are surveillance cameras in this office. Sitting in front of him, Heather had a look of slight disappointment.

After she was seated, Tony finally dragged his words. "I wonder what made you come to see me personally."

She bit her lower lips before she replied, "He called me and asked me to discuss our strategies together." They were now using 'he' to refer to the ringleader.

"Strategy?" Tony snorted coldly. "What kind of strategy does he want us to come up with to be satisfied?" There was hatred in his voice. Heather did not know what exactly he was thinking, so she did not immediately reply to him.

The main communication between them was through their eyes, as if they could understand what the other was saying visually. The quiet atmosphere made both of them feel rather awkward.

So, what do you have in mind? She felt that she had to give him a reply, but after a round of questions, the main question still circled back to Tony.

He had no idea what to reply to her. After thinking for a long time, he finally spoke darkly, "Why does he like to beat around the bush? If he wants us to do something, why didn't he clearly say it?"

When Heather heard his complaint, she also agreed with him. Why did I forget to ask the ringleader this question?

She asked tentatively, So, are we going to stay on the defensive? Looking at Tony's level of confidence, she felt that things were not as bad as she assumed.

Nope. At this juncture, we have to start our offense. Our final goal is to attack the Moriarty Family. He gave her a slight smile, but she still looked confused.

It's not enough to just state that we are going to start our attack on the Moriarty Family. We need a detailed plan. Both of us know that their power is unimaginably immense. Regardless of whether Tony was telling the truth or not, Heather had to show that she was willing to discuss it with him.

He nodded and responded with a half-smile. We can slowly discuss the plan, but there are some small actions that we can already take.

Small actions? Caleb is even more cunning than we imagine him to be. He will see through our actions. Heather wanted to win with a calm and steady plan, so she did not agree with Tony's offensive and risky plan.

He took a blue file from a pile of documents. You can take a look at this. With that, he threw it in front of her.

Heather picked up the file and flipped through the pages. And just like that, many secrets that nobody knew of were exposed in front of her.

It looks like you have already investigated the Moriarty Family beforehand. Heather could not help but be impressed by Tony after she looked at the information that could not be found elsewhere. I wonder where he got all this.

"About the secret forces that have suddenly entered Bradford City, I might know even more about it than you." He had already silently investigated the ability of those forces way before she did. "These forces had already started to take actions back before you even returned to Bradford City." It was an important clue that he had given her.

She never expected the forces to be powerful and she also didn't know that they had been hiding in Bradford City for such a long time. Hence, this piece of information had greatly shocked her.

"Is there hidden treasure in Bradford City? Or, is there something else hidden here? Is it worth it for them to take such huge actions?" she exclaimed in shock as she looked through the document.

In the file were many recorded events. As it turned out, part of the reason why Bradford City was increasingly becoming unsafe was because of this. What kind of secret plans do these dark forces have? As Heather read more of the document, she felt that things became even more unusual.

"Maybe it's a coincidence that they chose the same place," Tony replied without any hint of jokes. It seemed like he really thought that this was the reason. This conclusion is too flippant!

"So, all of these events are tightly linked to the profits that the few big families in Bradford City have earned? And the Langston and Hart Families would be the first scapegoats?" Heather asked angrily. If this really was the reason, the Langston and the Hart Families were innocent victims.

Judging from her furious expression, Tony knew that she was in a bad mood. It was not suitable to reveal everything to her at this moment since he was merely speculating.

"Of course, the Langston and the Hart Families will not be their scapegoats." He tried to soothe her emotions with his calm voice. "They are unable to shake the power that the Langston and the Hart Families hold in Bradford City."

After returning to her senses, she realized that she was too agitated earlier. Now, I can really lose my patience over such little things. It looks like I have been overreacting.

"Sorry, I lost control of my emotions earlier." Heather was still thinking about what had previously happened and her mind was in a state of chaos right now. It was rather difficult for her to calmly speak to Tony.

"Is there something on your mind?" With just a glance, he could tell that she was acting strangely, but he wondered whether it was a bad idea to reveal so much information at such times.

“No,” Heather denied. There are some things I can’t tell him clearly.

“I already have a set of plans. This is the proposal.” With that, Tony passed another white file to Heather, who set aside the blue one in her hands.

When she picked up the white file that contained the proposal, she opened it with unease. Piles of paper immediately came into view.

Heather quickly flipped through the document. It seemed like the proposal that he mentioned earlier is not completely ready. It’s basically just some information from before. “Looks like you are well-prepared.” She flashed a bright smile to hide her thoughts.

Tony merely gave a cool reply, “The proposal is not completed yet.” He had only written half of it with the remaining half to be easily understood without him having to verbalize it.

Heather quickly flipped to the back of the file and noticed a few pages with Tony’s neat handwriting on it. As she solemnly read through it, she generally understood what he had in mind after piecing together the information that she had read earlier.

The part for the Hart Group had been clearly written whereas the remaining blank pages for the Langston Family were waiting for her to complete.

He sure is fast. After closing the file, Heather asked, “Can I bring these back with me?”

“Of course.” Tony had prepared these for her to begin with, so he hoped that she could bring it away with her.

“Sure, I’ll bring these home first and I’ll send you a copy of the completed proposal tomorrow.” She initially thought that like her, he did not prepare anything. It seemed that she was wrong as he was well-prepared.

When Heather left, Tony revealed a meaningful smile behind her back as he pinched his chin. Things have been going in the direction as I have predicted. Hopefully there are no other accidents.

When Heather opened the door, she shot a glance at the new secretary, but she did not find anything peculiar. Zephyr immediately gave a polite smile

when Heather walked out of the office. From the surface, she could not see any problems with Zephyr at once.

She deliberately walked to Zephyr and appraised her again, making the latter quite uncomfortable.

“Your hair clip is beautiful,” Heather commented as she pointed at the hair accessory on Zephyr’s hair.

Zephyr merely gave an awkward smile. “Thanks.”

Then, Heather gave a warm smile. “Work well here. Thanks for everything today.” Her sudden courtesy was not her usual style at all.

After Heather disappeared into the distance, Zephyr was still staring at her back with an unfathomable expression. Tears swam in her eyes, which made her look rather pitiful.

Heather pressed on the external controls on the elevator as she wanted to head downstairs. She had received quite a lot of information from Tony today, making her temporarily forget Leon’s deceit. She felt that things were heading in a good direction today.

Before this, she had underestimated Tony’s capabilities. It seems like he is not a simple character either. I’m slightly hopeful to see our families overcoming this situation together.

As she walked to her car in the underground basement step by step, a pair of eyes were fixated on her, making her subconsciously survey her surroundings. Thinking that something was wrong, she frowned as a peculiar feeling overcame her.

Heather rubbed her temples and suspected that she was mentally fatigued. After mumbling under her breath, she entered her car and drove out of the basement parking lot.

The pair of eyes was still focused on her and it sent chills down her spine. She looked into the rearview mirror and kept adjusting it, but she did not see anything behind her.

The backseat behind her was completely empty. She shook her head and felt as though she had been hypnotized.

“Who is following me?” Heather mumbled again. It was only when she completely left the basement parking lot that she felt better.