

Standing before Love Chapter 672

As he was being mocked by Heather, Zayne innocently looked at her. Sure enough, those who quietly smile at others would not end up well. He cleared his throat and decided to regain his power. "If you are willing to be my assistant, it's most welcomed," he retorted since he would not lose to anyone in the realm of teasing.

Heather shifted her gaze to Leon. "I'm afraid the assistant you are looking for is someone like Leon." In an instant, he was pulled into the conversation again, even though he only wanted to be a bystander.

He immediately clarified his position. Of course I have to stand on the same line as Heather! "I'm not interested in being your assistant, Zayne."

Zayne angrily eyed Leon. He could not believe that Leon had actually betrayed their 'revolutionary friendship'.

Since that was the case, he decided it was time for them to head home. "Anyway, we have already found out what we needed. You guys can leave now." He was also exhausted at this hour and he would not allow the investigation to affect his sleep.

Upon hearing that, Heather and Leon rose from the couch one after another. Sure enough, it was no longer early, so they could not continue to stay here and delay Zayne's sleep. The both of them also had to sleep earlier to ensure that they had enough energy to attend the party radiantly the next day.

"In that case, we'll be leaving first," she told Zayne after she plastered a smile on her face, which humiliated him once again.

He even wondered whether he had a masochistic inclination. Otherwise, why would I miss this woman who likes to torture me?

After leaving Zayne's place, Leon quickly followed behind Heather. It was a rare occasion for him to remain this quiet as he felt surreal after meeting Zayne today.

The relationship between Heather and Zayne was also worth contemplating. Leon shot a glance at her from the corner of his eyes. Even though she had an impassive expression, he felt that there were some stories between her and Zayne.

If it had been in the past, he would have definitely asked her, but he remained silent today. After all, I haven't obtained her forgiveness. I don't have the right to ask about her private matters.

"Leon, I have something to ask you." Heather broke the silence by opening her mouth with a hesitant expression on her face.

"What is it, Heather?" Leon returned her smile after seeing her hesitation.

Looking at the front gate not far away from them, she replied, "Let's speak in the car." Her tentativeness made him feel even more curious about the content of her upcoming question.

They did not just casually walk in the neighborhood as they looked around their surroundings vigilantly, worried that they could have been followed. They felt that perhaps they would be able to catch the person following them with this method.

They did not find anyone suspicious along the way, but they themselves became the suspects as the security guard continued to stare at them.

After exiting the main gate, they simultaneously heaved a sigh of relief and exchanged gazes with each other. It was a peculiar feeling as their peaceful lives in the past had now disappeared.

Heather did not know when her enemies had exactly begun to plan their attack. Was it before I returned to Bradford City, or after? Why can't I discover the truth even after I have exercised so much effort? Yet, day after day has passed just like that.

The sound of the door being opened had yanked her back to reality. She quickly entered the car—this time, it was the front passenger seat. She believed that Leon knew where they were going next.

The car slowly moved as she coldly looked out of the window. The night was immensely dark, so she wanted to have a look at the moon tonight.

After noticing that she almost forgot what she wanted to say before, Leon kindly reminded her, "Heather, what was the question that you wanted to ask earlier?" He assumed that it was an important question that she found difficult to voice out.

Heather turned around to look at him. She did not know how to broach the subject to him, because the question had already appeared in her head numerous times. Her suspicions were getting wilder and she needed to talk to someone about it.

“What are you thinking, Heather?” He called her name again. He saw that her eyes were dazed and she did not have any reaction at all.

Gently biting her lower lips, she answered, “Based on your understanding of Zayne, do you believe that it would take him so long to solve this case?” They did not make any progress for quite a while now, so her suspicions were directed at Zayne.

Leon seemed to be suddenly jolted awake by her question. He had never thought about it before, but since Heather had pointed it out, he began to carefully think about it.

Seeing that he remained silent after a long time, she thought that he silently agreed to her assumption. She turned her head around again and looked at the blurry scene outside her window. She felt surreal, as though she was in a dream.

After seriously giving it a thought, Leon opened his mouth. “Heather, perhaps Zayne’s abilities did not shine completely, but I believe that he is not our enemy.”

Heather curiously looked at him, not knowing from where he had arrived at this conclusion. “This kidnapping case is a constant torture to me. Both you and Zayne should be very clear about this point. Yet, he was unwilling to use his abilities to the maximum. This selfish act of his sounds extremely irresponsible to me.”

He could hear that she was suppressing her emotions. Although she did not voice out any vicious remarks about Zayne, it was apparent that she was unhappy with him.

Leon could understand her emotions, but he knew that it was not right for her to doubt her friend just because she wanted to save Myra so much. He felt that Heather had strayed away from rationality for quite sometime now.

“Heather, doubting him for no good reason will ruin another friendship of yours. I think you should cherish your friendship with Zayne and that you

should trust him.” He logically analyzed the situation for her. He did not want her to stray away anymore and he could not accept her irrational behavior at this moment either.

“I know; I know about all these, but who can I believe now? I don’t have anyone whom I can trust right now,” she replied with a muted pain in her voice. It was difficult to build trust, yet it was incredibly easy to destroy it.

“Heather, I already know that you don’t trust me anymore and you don’t even trust your own family, but I believe in Zayne.” Leon had trusted Zayne for no reason. Leon did not believe a man with that completely black irises would be their enemy.

“Perhaps I shouldn’t have asked him to come here.” Back then, Heather thought that the case would be successfully resolved as soon as she asked for his help. She did not expect for it to come to a standstill.

She had seen Zayne’s capabilities before, so his excuse was not enough to convince her. Just because he is short of an assistant, he is not able to unleash his true potential? This is such a weak excuse!

“Even my family and close friends would lie to me, let alone Zayne. I can’t even trust Matthias now.” Heather suddenly felt pathetic that she could not even trust the man she loved and her social circle was facing a trust crisis right now.

Her trust was being slowly corroded just like a black hole in the universe that would suck in all the surrounding matter. Defense naturally appeared within her and she tried to shield herself against the entire world. Now, she was fighting everyone alone.

“Heather, we are both business people. If you are unwilling to trust your relationships, you can trust that profit is the only thing that will unite people. When people face common profits, they will be even more bonded. Trust will build up again in the face of mutual profits.” Leon did not know how to console her, so he used the common way of working together in the business field.

“You’re wrong. Mutual benefit is an unfaithful b*tch who would rely on anyone on the side with greater benefits.” She did not believe in having the same profits. Even for people who had mutual benefits, the group could also be disbanded at any time.

After seeing Heather's reaction, he had no idea how he could console her. It seemed like there were some slight changes that were slowly corroding her world and he could not do anything about it.

"Heather, in this case, do you still have anyone or anything you could trust in this world?" Leon's eyes flashed earnestly. He was worried that she could become mentally unstable and eventually destroy herself.

"I don't know. I'm not sure about it and I hate myself even more. I also hate everything that is happening right now." With a pair of hopeless eyes, Heather thought, What should I do?

He was quite positive that her mental health had further deteriorated. He already knew that she had some issues before this and it was the main reason why she chose to privately study psychology.

The huge blows that came one after another had an immense impact on her. Leon was worried that she was on the verge of having a mental breakdown. She's such an outstanding person, but she would also push herself so much that she would become insane.

"Look at me, Heather." He stretched out with his hands and grabbed her arms. When he saw her behaving like that, he was in pain as he felt sorry for her.

"I don't want to. I'm very confused right now. In my eyes, this world seems surreal and fake." Heather's behavior was becoming even more abnormal.

Leon then tightly held her arms and he shook her non-stop. "Heather, don't be controlled by your inner demons," he said worriedly. He even parked the car by the road after seeing her like this.

Now he had both of his hands free, he turned her head toward him and stared into her blank eyes fixedly.

"Heather, there's nothing that could bring you down. Don't make me look down on you." Leon remembered the year when Heather was trying to heal on her own while everyone thought of her as cruel and heartless.

At that time, her eyes would be terrifying vacant and it was him who found her. He felt immensely sorry for her and he did not expect that she had this side to her behind the scenes.

“Leon, I think I’ve lost myself.” Heather was usually confident. However, more often than not, confident people felt strongly inferior deep down.

“Don’t think about it too much, Heather. You are here right now and everything will be over soon.” Leon tried to cheer her up, not wanting her to continue being depressed.

“I can’t get over it. As soon as I make the wrong decision, I might regret it for the rest of my life.” The past few months were enough to carve away all her confidence and power.

She thought that she would finally be able to unleash her capabilities in Bradford City, but it seemed like she had overestimated herself. She felt that she did not accomplish anything and had disappointed many people instead.

“Heather, you are not related to the incident where Myra was kidnapped at all. Don’t lock yourself up with your own moral judgement.” Leon could not understand why Heather had cared about Myra so much that she would take the blame for Myra’s kidnapping.

“Not moral judgement. I was the one who let her down as I made too many mistakes. She is my best friend who accompanied me through my toughest time.” With that, she remembered how Myra was like a glimmer of light in her life that shone through her back then.

“Heather, you actually love her, don’t you?” He could not explain it anymore as he felt that Heather’s love for Myra had already surpassed the friendship zone. It seemed more like romance to him.

However, Heather shook her head. “I don’t like women.” Leon would never understand her. Back when her relationship with Myra was at its worst, Myra was maliciously kidnapped even before she could even apologize and make amends. As such, it gave rise to a huge guilt within Heather.

Her guilt was so strong that it almost ruined her. She wanted to quickly save Myra and apologize to her earnestly. However, she was worried that she was unable to save Myra every night and the despair increased as each day went by.

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As the car was being steadily driven on the highway, Heather shifted sideways, as if she wanted to increase the distance between her and Leon. At the moment, she just wanted to be left alone.

He helplessly looked at her. He knew that she was heterosexual, but he did not understand why Myra's position in her heart could not be compared to anyone else. To be precise, she had cared more for Myra than Matthias.

To Leon, his lover was the most important person, even more than his family or friends. Of course, he was referring to his lifelong romantic partner and not his past flings.

However, Heather thought otherwise. At least to her, Matthias had not reached such an important role to her. In fact, deep within her, she still did not want to admit that he was her lover.

"Drive slower. I want to take a look at the scenery outside," she said as she looked outside the window. The lights glimmered outside, but she suddenly felt lost, as if she did not know where she was at the moment.

Upon hearing her request, Leon slowed down and wondered what she had been looking at since there was nothing much to see at night. Nevertheless, he did not bear to interrupt her after seeing the way she supported her chin with her hands as she enjoyed the scenery outside.

"Take a right turn in front. Can I stay over at your place tonight?" Heather knew that he planned to send her home first, but she did not feel like returning to the Langston Family that night.

After all, there were simply too many people in the Langston Family and she just wanted a quiet place to stay. She thought about it and realized that Leon's mansion was the place that suited her needs. Of course, Zayne's place was also a decent option, but she did not want to reveal his whereabouts again.

"Of course you can. I'm feeling rather lonely alone too." Leon was someone who could not withstand loneliness, so it was quite a shock for him when he bought the secluded mansion.

"However, I need absolute silence." Heather had no plans to chat with him. What she needed was some alone time to ponder some stuff.

Since it was still rather early, she still could not fall asleep yet. She just wanted to be with herself in the silence as she zoned out. During the winter, she felt that her brain was not as sharp as before. If only we could hibernate. Then, we don't have to care about anything else and all our troubles will be gone when spring arrives.

"Okay, I know you have to restore your energy tonight. I won't disturb you then." Leon knew that she would be worried about this. Am I such a talkative person that she has to emphasize it again?

As he drove slowly, they spent twice the amount of time on the road before they returned to the mansion. As soon as he arrived at his place, he felt as though he had returned to his hometown and he had no feelings whatsoever for his European-styled house.

"Heather, we have arrived," he announced, yanking Heather's wandering senses back. I wonder what she has been quietly thinking about.

It was with Leon's words that she returned to his senses. No wonder I saw a piece of greenery through the window earlier. Leon's mansion was evergreen, but it looked slightly terrifying at night and invoked a peculiar feeling in her as the moonlight shone on the grasses and trees.

He had already opened the door for her. Looking at her blank face, he suppressed his urge to ruffle her hair. She looks so cute in this manner!

Unable to resist himself, Leon had raised his hands, but retracted it with a jolt when he heard Heather's cold snort. He was still not courageous enough to proceed with his intention. At this moment, he did not dare to provoke her any further, for fear that she would drop a bomb in his mansion if she was unhappy with him.

"Leon, I'm tired, so I'm heading upstairs first." She came alive as soon as she exited the car. She quickly walked to the second floor with the thuds from her high heels echoing behind her.

Leon looked at Heather's back wistfully and he felt miserable that she abandoned him so easily. In the past, she would have waited for him. Now that she couldn't wait to leave him, he felt hurt about it.

She quickly arrived on the second floor. As soon as she opened the door of the guest room and walked into it directly, she immediately closed the door and did not give him a chance to show his hospitality.

By the time Leon had arrived as well, he saw the tightly shut guest room that was lit from within. After receiving the message that Heather did not want him to enter, he shook his head helplessly as he went to his room.

When she switched on the lights and the air conditioner, she felt warmer. In that warm room, she felt that her entire body had relaxed. She loved the warmth and felt that she slowly shifted into a lazy mood.

Since she could not fall asleep, she leaned against the table like a snake that was about to hibernate. She weakly turned her body around. Even though she was already quite tired, her mind was still awake and she did not feel like sleeping. She thought it would be better for her to daydream instead of sleeping.

Since it was already quite late, Heather had no idea what else she could do. There were many things that had to be done the next day and today did not end well for her as well. Looking at the night lamp in front of her, she wondered whether she should turn it on.

I wonder where Leon bought this antique night lamp that suits the atmosphere of the entire room. With that thought in mind, she rose to her feet to switch off the lights and turned on the night lamp instead.

The dark room now only had a lamp illuminating it. As Heather looked at the night lamp in front of her again, she flashed a relieved smile. The night was quiet, as though the only existence left was just the lamp and her.

She suddenly felt like listening to some music, so she unlocked her phone and wore her earphones. Luckily I have my earphones with me since I don't like to play music out loud.

As Heather thought about it, she figured that it would be better for her to listen to the music in bed. While giving the night lamp on the table a glance, she finally decided that she would bring it to bed with her.

The dim yellow light that it emitted had warmed her soul. As she lay on her back in bed, her eyes darted between the night lamp and the ceiling.

As she listened to the sad songs, Heather's mood became even more depressed. However, when she took a look at her playlist, she realized that all of the songs there had a depressive melody.

It was only at this moment that she realized her mental health was more serious than she had thought. Even the songs that she now listened to were depressing. She suddenly worried that she could one day suffer from depression.

Each person had a different level of stress which they could withhold. Heather had no idea whether she had stronger or weaker tolerance for stress, but she felt like she could withstand everything and nothing at the same time.

While she was alone, she felt conflicted. As the night became darker, she felt as though she was being split into two parts. Her heart was full of emotions as she continued to listen to the songs. She wanted to calm herself down, but it seemed that she had failed once again.

Sometimes she wanted to hypnotize herself to have a good night's sleep since she was not bad at that method, but it was extremely rare for her to practice it.

Apart from that, Heather was unwilling to use hypnosis as a means to achieve something, so she would not easily use it. Not many people knew that she had this skill apart from Leon and Zayne.

Even though the effects of hypnosis were quite good, it was not an easy task. Hence, she gave up on this bold thought.

She might have already been a certified and qualified therapist, but she did not want her first patient to be herself. In short, it was quite an irony.

Heather had no idea how she managed to fall asleep during the night, but she was able to sleep until later that morning. If Leon hadn't loudly knocked on her door, she would have slept until noon.

She opened the door with a dazed expression on her face and saw him standing outside her door in a formal attire. When she saw that, she squinted at him as he was usually casually dressed. Now that he had suddenly dressed up, it was quite a shock for her to see him like this.

Guys really do look good when they are well-dressed. Heather couldn't help herself from shooting a few more glances at Leon. He was indeed better-looking than the average person to the point where she could not help but admire his good looks.

"What time is it now, Leon?" she asked in confusion.

After looking at his watch, he replied, "Fifteen past ten."

Heather shook her head. I didn't expect it would already be so late. With a sad expression on her face, she thought, Why does time fly so quickly? I can't remember how I fell asleep last night, but I felt that I had only just slept for a short while when Leon woke me up. Then, noon is already fast approaching.

"I need to tidy myself up." With that, she closed the door. She had not even brushed her teeth and the morning was now considered over for her.

By the time she changed into another outfit and walked out of the room, it was already 11:00 AM.

When Leon saw the makeup on her face, he commented, "Heather, I feel like your makeup is rather heavy today." No wonder she took such a long time. I was so anxious waiting for her outside the room.

Heather arched her eyebrows. "We are meeting your family today, so I wore a thicker makeup." She felt that she did her makeup quite well today, but he still criticized that her makeup was still too thick.

"My grandfather likes girls who are plainly dressed." He could not help but criticize her, but it was also his fault that he did not tell her about Dave's preferences beforehand.

Her face darkened in an instant. Feeling as though she had been fooled around, she glared at Leon angrily. "I don't want to redo my makeup. If he doesn't like me, so be it," she replied in annoyance. Even now, she was like a landmine that would explode any time.

Upon seeing her attitude, there was nothing Leon could say. Since she likes it this way, just let her be!

“Heather, your dress is already in the living room. I already had it prepared for you.” He smiled with the desire to make her happy since he had spent quite a lot of money to have the dress tailor made for her.

“I might not like your choice of dress, though.” Heather told him the cold, hard truth first, which sent another punch to his heart.

“Take a look at it first. I’m sure you would like it.” Leon’s smile had remained the same, but he felt rather hurt to put on a brave front.

Of course, she was not that willful. With that, she went downstairs to take a look at the said dress. She was quite confident in his taste; it was just that she wanted to tease him a bit.

After seeing the emotions on Leon’s face, Heather felt a rush of accomplishment since she loved to torment him. And just like that, it felt like they had returned to the past. There were many things that could actually be repaired, but it was just that some people were not given chances to begin with.

She walked in front with him trailing behind her. He constantly shot furtive glances at her as he was worried about her not liking the dress for real.

Leon couldn’t imagine that awkward moment since he had already exercised a lot of effort on that dress. If Heather did not like it, he did not know where to find another dress as a replacement.

She noticed him shooting furtive looks at her, but she did not show the realization on her face to ensure that he was unaware of it. With every step she took, he nervously followed behind her.

From afar, she saw a white dress before she quickened her pace. After briskly walking forward, she was now closer to the dress, but she suddenly slowed down.

Leon did not understand Heather’s stance as she slowly walked toward the dress. Even though it was just a normal white dress, she was in awe when she looked closely at it.

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Heather stretched out her hand to touch the white dress and showed a satisfied smile. She liked the simple yet vintage design of the dress and she thought that Leon knew her well, after all. When he saw the smile on her face, he finally heaved a sigh of relief.

“Do you like this dress, Heather?” he asked tentatively.

She nodded. “I like it. You have a good taste, as always.” Leon’s sense of fashion was so good that she could bring him to pick out clothes for her.

“Then change into it so we can see now,” he said excitedly. He could not wait to see her in this dress already.

However, she did not want to put it on immediately as she thought her household clothes were more comfortable, so she murmured, “Nah, I’ll wear it when we are about to head out.”

Her behavior made Leon suspect if her compliments just now were forced. After all, when girls saw a beautiful dress, they could not wait to try it on themselves.

No matter how I look at it, her reaction doesn’t seem normal. She’s clearly placating me. Looking at the white dress on the couch, Leon thought it was perfect no matter from which angle he looked at it. He had begged the master designer for a long time to make this for him and this dress was one of its kind in the world. As such, he did not expect that Heather would treat it this way.

Noticing the unhappy expression on his face, Heather realized that her reply just now had hurt him, so she quickly thought about salvaging the situation. After all, she did not want to hurt him.

“Do you want me to wear it?” she asked tentatively.

Upon hearing that, Leon nodded vehemently. Of course I want to see you wear it! I can’t wait to see you in this dress already!

“In that case, I’ll put it on for you to see even though I don’t feel like it,” she said in a helpless tone. In the end, she did not forget to complain about it. “You know, casual clothes are the most comfortable to wear at home.”

Leon looked at her in surprise. “Heather, you’ve changed. In the past, you thought that no matter where you are—with other people or alone—you always want to look presentable.” He reminded her of something she once said that was contradictory to her current statement.

“People change. It’s quite nice to have a different personality when I’m alone anyway. It seems cuter.” With that, she smiled at him playfully.

He nodded in agreement. “You’re right. It’s better to be more casual in private. We are not celebrities anyway. In the past, you cared too much about your image. When you are alone in your room, no one is looking at you anyway. Why are you so well-dressed? Who are you going to show it to?”

When she heard his rant, her eyelids twitched. Finally, Leon blurted out his thoughts all this while.

“So this is actually how you saw me in the past.” She revealed an eerie smile that shocked Leon, to which he thought to himself, I seemed to have said something wrong just now.

And so, he quickly denied and explained things to her. “I’m sorry, Heather. I think I might have conveyed my meaning wrong. I just think that in the past you had too high expectations of yourself. This is not an easy life to lead. I think your current life principles are better.”

With a cold smile on her face, she looked at Leon with murder with her eyes. “It seems like you don’t agree with my precious life principles.”

Women would always find a way to twist the original intentions of others. In this instant, Leon was suddenly at a loss for words. He had no idea how he could continue to clarify his thoughts, so he did not want to explain it to her without much tact. It seemed like he had not learned his lesson yet.

“Since this is the case, I think it’s better for me to wear it when we are about to head outside.” After finding an excuse for herself so that she would not have to wear it now, she walked upstairs immediately.

The door shut from upstairs in a few seconds. Leon regretted his actions and was quite mad at himself for speaking without thinking carefully about his choice of words. Looking at the white dress on the couch, he felt like an utter idiot.

Heather continued to lay in bed. The afternoon passed lazily just like that, but she felt very comfortable about it. I didn't know that wasting time can be such a nice feeling, she thought as she smiled furtively to herself on the bed.

The only plan for the rest of the day was the party in the evening. For now, she did not want to do anything and just wanted to lay in bed quietly. She did not even have the energy to eat something.

She did not have much appetite lately and she always forgot that she was hungry. She seldom had breakfast because after she was done with her work, it was already noon. Even though it had been a lazy day for her, she still did not have any breakfast and it was too late for breakfast at this time anyway.

It was time for lunch but Heather did not feel hungry at all. Usually, she would feel famished around 3 PM, when her stomach was completely empty.

However, Leon's mealtimes were very regular. The food was delivered punctually during lunch hour. After laying in bed shortly, Leon's knocks on the door disturbed her again.

Upon hearing that, she refused to get out of bed as she grumbled to herself, Seems like I can't have a nap after all. The weather is so good for sleeping today!

"I don't want to eat." She felt like a rebellious child who refused to eat.

"Heather, you haven't eaten anything for a long time now. Your stomach can't take this." In all honesty, Leon had remembered her schedule for her. Not only was Heather's schedule out of the norm, her mealtimes were also very irregular.

"But I don't have the appetite. Can I skip this meal?" She looked at Leon resentfully, who was standing at the door. She did not even want to leave her cozy bed.

The weather became increasingly colder, as Heather felt that she could not leave the warm bed. Just yesterday, she was thinking about hibernating. Unfortunately, she was a human, so she still had to get up to work and carry out her life activities.

“Even though you have no appetite, you have to eat a little. I ordered some soup. You can drink those, at the very least.” If Heather still refused to come out, he already planned to barge into her room directly.

Fortunately, she finally opened the door of the room with displeasure on her face as she looked at Leon. I was perfectly comfortable by myself, yet he forced me out of the room for a meal. Who would be happy about that?

“What did you order?” She still refused to get out of the room and Leon had the sudden urge to drag her out of the room immediately. However, she looked rather terrifying to him right now, so he did not dare to take any actions.

“I have some comfort food.” Thinking that he ordered quite a variety of food, there must be something that Heather liked.

“Fine,” she said in exasperation, although he had no interest in any of them whatsoever.

“Go to the living room. When you smell the aroma of the food, you will feel like eating after that.” He continued to encourage her, as if she was a picky child.

“I hope so.” Heather also did not know the reason for not having any desires for food except for mealtimes.

In fact, she was even slightly disgusted when she smelled the aroma of food in the living room. She wondered if she had anorexia but her condition seemed to be quite different from that, so she did not pay too much attention to it.

When she reached the living room again, Leon had already put the white dress away. The food smelled nice but she did not feel hungry at all. Instead, she even frowned unconsciously.

“You really don’t have any appetite at all?” Looking at the irritated expression on her face, he thought, That shouldn’t be the expression for seeing food at this time.

“Yeah, I’m not hungry at all. I’m not able to eat anything even if you ask me to.” She refused to eat with him and would much rather watch him eat instead.

Touching his chin, Leon thought that it was not that good to force her to eat, so he just nodded forcefully. "In that case, I'll start eating first. If you are hungry, remember to tell me earlier so I can order some food for you."

She looked at him suddenly. "Food delivery?" I don't want to eat that. "Is there no other food in the fridge?" She would rather cook something herself.

"No," Leon replied apologetically. He was not good at cooking so he would often order food delivery. There were many restaurants that he had yet to try.

"It's not healthy," Heather said worriedly.

However, Leon started eating without even replying to her. Facing his careless attitude, she felt exasperated.

"Nothing is healthy anyway," he finally said after a while.

"At least homemade food is healthier than outside food." Heather insisted on her thoughts.

He smiled. "Heather, you simply can't predict how healthy you will be. There are so many accidents that might happen in life, so it's better to enjoy the moment."

With that, Leon told her his life philosophy again. To him, enjoying the current moment was most important to him right now.

"If everyone adopts your philosophy, the world will be in chaos." She rolled her eyes at him. It's better for the world to have more normal people.

"Well, you can't be sure about that. Perhaps we might be able to immediately achieve world peace because of that," he retaliated enthusiastically. He loved to squabble with Heather.

"Do you think it's that easy to achieve world peace? You better eat your food quietly!" Yet, she was in no mood to squabble with him. She missed her warm bed at this moment and thought that it was better to be slightly lazy during the winter.

"Heather, you look anxious. What's on your mind?" Leon did not know her true thoughts, but he thought that she looked weird.

“I want to go back to my room,” she said coldly. She did not want to have such meaningless fights with him in the living room.

“Off you go, then. Let me have my meal in peace,” he replied nonchalantly. Seeing his carefree expression, Heather felt an urge to punch him in the face.

After the entire conversation, she finally found out that Leon did not need her company. She immediately felt like an idiot. After that, she stood up and walked upstairs as she did not want to stay here for another second longer.

When Leon saw her leaving, he smiled to himself like a fool. Heather’s behavior has been rather abnormal recently. I have no idea why she likes to stay in the room so much. In the past, she loved going outside and keeping herself busy. How did she become more of a home person now?

After opening the door of the guest room, she felt that the warm room was completely different from the living room. She felt more cozy here compared to the empty living room that was cooler.

On the other hand, she found it weird that Matthias did not message her at all. She opened Messenger a couple of times before closing it but there was no message from him at all, not even a simple ‘good morning’ or ‘good night’.

It was rare for him to stop pestering her, yet she was not used to it. She hoped that he would send some messages to her now, even if it was just small talk.

Because of her pride, Heather was unwilling to take the initiative to speak to him first. After thinking about it, she felt that he had not even courted her properly.

Even an outsider could not tell what exactly had been going with her and Matthias, let alone herself, who was in the relationship. She felt increasingly confused about this relationship. What do I like about him and what does he like about me?

Standing before Love Chapter 675

In a daze, Heather fell asleep again. A nap in the afternoon was the best. She was sleeping so soundly that she no longer felt hungry. On the other hand, Leon was playing a video game in the room, feeling rather bored.

It wasn't until 4 PM that he remembered Heather hadn't eaten until now. A moment later, he came to her door again but this time, he didn't knock on the door. Instead, he kicked it open.

Seeing that Heather was sleeping so peacefully, Leon walked over with dissatisfaction and patted her cheek with his hand.

"Wake up," Leon said while patting her cheek. It was rare to see Heather sleeping like this. Was this room that cozy to fall asleep in?

Puzzled, Heather opened her eyes in a daze. Seeing that a face was approaching her, she instinctively raised her head and was about to attack. However, Leon managed to dodge it.

"It's me, Heather! What are you doing?" Heather almost ruined his face with her punch. He knew very well how scary her fist was.

"Why did you disturb my sleep? Those who wake me up from my sleep deserve to die." Heather expressed her dissatisfaction like a problematic teenager.

Helplessly, Leon asked, "Why are you behaving like a child today?" To him, Heather was totally different from her usual self today.

"Don't disturb my sleep," she said with a darkened expression. For some reason, she felt that she was not getting enough sleep and she was always dreaming.

"It's already 4 PM, so we have to start preparing for the family dinner." Leon looked at the childish Heather, not knowing what to do.

"It's only 4 PM. Let me sleep in for a little while." Heather mumbled tiredly.

"It's already 4 PM!" Leon wondered if she only had her focus on 4 PM' and ignored the rest of his words.

Heather grunted and calmly got up from the bed. "Wait... What? It's 4 PM?" She widened her eyes out of the sudden and asked in disbelief.

"Are you hungry?" Leon was still concerned about her.

"Not really." She had so much sleep that she didn't feel hungry at all.

“I ordered some food for you. Have a bite or so. Besides, how can you sleep with your makeup on?” Even Leon was surprised when he said the last sentence.

“Right, I forgot to remove my makeup. Why should I apply makeup again, then?” Heather quickly got out of bed and looked at herself in the mirror. Fortunately, her makeup was not smudged.

“Heather, you used to be a goddess in my heart, but now you’re drifting further away from that image.” Leon was at a loss for words as he wondered if she was trying to ruin her image in front of him.

“Shut up!” She then gave Leon a death stare. Thinking about the upcoming family dinner, she could feel her head throbbing.

“Ha! Don’t worry. I won’t tell anyone about this.” Leon flashed a silly smile at Heather and received a glare in return.

“Are you ready?” She noticed that he had changed into his casual outfit. Indeed, he couldn’t stay handsome for a long time.

“I’ll be done once I change into my tuxedo. I guess you need more time to prepare yourself?” After all, Leon didn’t need to put on any makeup since he had such a fine-looking face.

Scanning him from head to toe, Heather had an idea that popped up in her mind. Since it was still early for the family dinner...

“Hey, let me put on some makeup for you.” Heather smiled slyly at him. She was well aware of Leon’s pretty face. So, if she could help him make it a little better, wouldn’t he be the most good-looking man in the world?

Instantly, Leon waved his hand. “There’s no need for that. Why do I need to put on makeup when I’m a man?” It wasn’t the first time he had rejected this suggestion.

“Leon, a family dinner is an important occasion, so you should put on some makeup to make yourself look better.” Heather continued to coax him. But of course, Leon wasn’t that easy to bluff.

“No, no. It’s better for men to be rough-faced.” Leon didn’t sound convincing at all when he said this. After all, his face was so exquisite that no one could find any flaws in it.

“Your face is so exquisite that you have blurred the boundaries between men and women. You’re just as pretty as a fairy. Let me make you more enchanting with my skillful hands.” Heather continued with the aim of convincing Leon to agree to her suggestion today.

“No way! I’m not going to a beauty pageant. It’s better to be natural.” Leon refused Heather’s request. He felt that his face was perfect enough and he didn’t need any touch-up done to it.

“Are you going to agree to it or not?” Heather started to be unreasonable. Since he wouldn’t agree to it when she talked nicely, she would have to do it the other way then.

“No way!” Leon wouldn’t give in. There was no way he would compromise so easily.

“Leon, I’m not going to the family dinner until you say yes.” At such a critical moment, there was a need for her to threaten him a little. As expected, Leon was stunned by her words.

“Heather, you promised me, so you can’t go back on your words.” Leon didn’t believe that Heather would go back on her words for this reason. That would be too childish of her!

“Well, I can go to that dinner with you, but I can’t guarantee that I’ll do what I’m supposed to do,” Heather said lightly. It wasn’t easy for her to have such an opportunity. Of course, she had to let him agree to her words obediently.

“Heather, are you reneging on your promise to me?” Annoyed, Leon stared at her. He could even feel his blood pressure rising unknowingly. How could she do this to him at this crucial moment?

“Nope, you can’t. So, are you going to say yes or not?” Heather continued to threaten him as she had to get Leon to agree to her request.

As much as Leon knew that Heather would not do something like that, he still agreed to it to make her happy. At this time, he just wanted to try his best to please her.

“Fine, you can do whatever you want.” At last, Leon still gave in. Anyway, he had had makeup on him when he was a child so now, it didn’t matter anymore. He was just going to think of it as a makeup session before his choir performance in school.

“What a good boy!” Heather flashed a bright smile, thinking it was quite a good feeling to have a little fun in her ordinary days.

Pulling Leon to the mirror, she let him sit at the dressing table. Leon, on the other hand, still felt it was a little too feminine for him to put on makeup. After all, he was a real man!

“Look at yourself in the mirror.” Heather wanted him to admire his pre-makeup face a little longer.

“Heather, I’ve seen this face for more than thousands or even millions of times, so there’s nothing much for me to see.” He rejected, feeling that it was too strange to stare himself into the mirror.

“Your face is going to change in a bit, so you’d better take this time and appreciate it before it is gone.” Without fail, Heather could always be so ostentatious while giving a reason.

“Okay, I’m looking at it now.” Leon felt that Heather was trying to fool him. He had seen her before and after makeup; there wasn’t much difference at all. So, he thought that even if he put on makeup, he wouldn’t look too different from his usual self.

“Your face is so exquisite. I wonder what you will look like with makeup.” Heather smiled slyly. Applying makeup to men was different from that of women. The difference between men’s pre and post makeup look was less significant.

In other words, Leon might not be able to tell the difference later on. Looking at his eyebrows, Heather wondered whether she should trim them, but they were in such good shape that she didn’t know where to start. She was afraid that she was going to ruin them.

So, she asked tentatively, “Leon, do you want to change your eyebrows?”

Shocked, Leon widened his eyes in horror. “I think my eyebrows look fine. Why should I change them?”

Upon hearing that, Heather quickly calmed him a smile. “What I mean is that do you need to change the shape of your eyebrows?” She rephrased her sentence.

“Let me think about it.” Leon looked at himself in the mirror carefully. No matter how he looked at it, he couldn’t see the need to retouch anything at all.

“I can get you a more delicate eyebrow shape.” Heather flashed the most beautiful smile. Without looking into the mirror, she already knew how fake she looked at this moment.

Instantly, Leon was frightened by her smile. Something was definitely not right with that smile. He shook his head in a hurry. “I prefer masculine eyebrows. I think my eyebrows look fine as they are,” he muttered, gently rejecting her offer.

“In that case, let me give you thicker eyebrows.” Heather thought that since she couldn’t trim his eyebrows, she would make them look a little thicker then.

“Won’t that be a little too weird?” Leon felt that his eyebrows were just right. If Heather were to work on them, she might accidentally ruin them instead.

“Why don’t we give it a try?” Unable to suppress her excitement, Heather was eager to try out her skills on his face. She really wanted to see what he would look like after putting on makeup.

Although Leon was an absolutely gorgeous man and there was nothing to improve on his face, it would still be nice to see some changes on his face.

In the end, he gave in to her request. “Alright, as long as you’re happy.” If that was what Heather wanted, he had no complaints at all. At least, he escaped getting his eyebrows trimmed.

Soon, Heather started her project on Leon’s face. As the eyebrow pencil worked wonder under her hand, she slightly thickened his eyebrows before looking at them with satisfaction. It didn’t seem bad at all. Although they no longer had the enchanting feeling from before, he indeed looked a little more masculine right now.

“Take a look at your masculine eyebrows,” Heather said with confidence.

With a fake smile, Leon nodded. “Not bad, but it doesn’t seem to match my face.” He was naturally born with a less masculine facial shape and such eyebrows didn’t seem to match his features.

“It’s okay. I’ll make you look masculine as a whole.” Heather believed in her skills. She was absolutely sure that Leon would definitely be satisfied with her masterpiece.

His lips were slightly pink. No matter how Heather looked at it, she felt that it wasn’t masculine enough. With lipstick in her hand, she wanted to change the color of his lips.

As soon as Leon saw her with the lipstick, he waved his hand in a hurry. There was no way he would compromise with putting on lipstick.

“I don’t want that thing on me. It feels awkward.” Leon refused with all his might as his face flushed red.

“It’s okay. I’ll help you.” Heather smiled like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, making Leon feel a chill go down his spine.

“Don’t worry. I won’t apply it directly. I will use a lip brush instead.” She said while taking out a lip brush. Fortunately, she had all her makeup tools with her.

Yet, Leon still felt awkward. The concept of putting on lipstick was unacceptable to him and it had subverted his views and values of the world too.

“Relax! This color will make you look more manly.” Heather calmed him down. On the other hand, Leon was so nervous that even his body was tense.

“How do I eat with lipstick on?” He couldn’t imagine what would happen later on. It would be too embarrassing if his lipstick was stained on the tableware.

“Of course I’ve thought about this issue, which is why I put on a smudge-proof lipstick for you. Don’t worry!” The way she comforted Leon was as if she was abducting a child.

“Are you sure?” Leon asked doubtfully.

“You can try it out.” Heather took out a napkin as she said. “Try kissing this napkin and see if it fades.” She continued with a smile.

Looking at the napkin in her hand, Leon pushed it away, “My lips are reserved to kiss beautiful girls,” He exclaimed arrogantly.

“Since you have no more questions, then we’ll continue with what we were doing. You have to trust my skills. I’ll definitely reform a brand new you.” Heather said proudly with the corners of her lips quirked up.

Seeing how happy she was from the reflection of the mirror, Leon felt better too. If she enjoyed the process of putting on makeup for him, then all his sacrifices were worth it!

Standing before Love Chapter 676

After taking a long time to dress themselves up, Leon and Heather finally left the villa. As they walked, Heather noticed Leon’s resistance; he didn’t look comfortable at all.

“You’re not going to war. Why are you so worried?” She teased him. Looking at his expression, Heather felt that he was exceptionally cute at this moment.

Hearing her words, Leon replied with a faint smile. He didn’t know how to explain his complicated mood to Heather at this time. Most people wouldn’t understand his family’s situation, anyway.

If there was a choice, he wouldn’t want to be born into such a family at all. Unfortunately, he had the family blood flowing within him and he had no way to deny his identity.

“Don’t worry. I’m here.” Heather squeezed out a smile for him. She could feel his inner anxiety and she wanted to comfort him with a smile.

“Heather, I still can’t change my way of addressing you.” Leon smiled at her faintly, pretending to be relaxed. There was no way he would show his fragile side in front of Heather.

“From now on, don’t call me Heather again.” She reminded him. It would be strange for lovers to address each other without a pet name.

“But Heather, I rarely address you as Emily. If I can, I would rather address you by your name.” Leon said awkwardly. He had long gotten used to addressing Heather by her name.

“Just address me however you feel comfortable,” Heather said helplessly. Never did she expect that Leon would change his mind out of a sudden.

“Can I call you Hat then?” Leon smiled at her. He had always wanted to address her with this name. Therefore, this time he wanted to fulfill his dream.

“You can address me however you like.” Heather didn’t bother to argue with him over this trivial matter.

“Hat!” Leon called out to her with a grin, as if he had forgotten the pain of the upcoming family dinner.

Even until they got into the car, Leon was still calling out to her from time to time, “Hat!” It was as if he was addicted to her name and couldn’t stop himself from calling her.

“Stop calling me,” Heather warned with a look of disgust next to him.

At her words, Leon refuted righteously, “I’m just afraid that I’ll call you by the wrong name later on.” His reason was convincing and absolutely understandable.

With no choice, Heather could only give up paying attention to him calling her out. She knew what was on his mind. After all this time, he still had feelings for her.

“How long does it take for us to reach there?” Initially, she didn’t intend to ask this but as soon as she opened her mouth, she found that her words formed by themselves.

“An hour.” Leon glanced at the time from his phone screen. The family dinner was about to start in an hour and a half, and he indeed did a great job in keeping track of time.

“Aren’t you afraid that we’ll be late?” It was normal to be late if there was congestion ahead on the road.

“That won’t happen,” Leon assured her. “We won’t be late, so just sit back and relax!”

Seeing that he was so full of confidence, Heather kept quiet. It was just a family dinner. It shouldn’t be a big deal for them to be late. Of course, there might be serious consequences that they had to bear too.

Based on her understanding of Leon’s family, she always felt his family was a little terrifying. No one knew what kind of abnormal rules they had within themselves.

“Leon, will your grandpa make things difficult for me?” Heather was a little worried as she couldn’t possibly please everyone at once.

Her instinct told her that Leon’s grandpa might dislike her. After all, his family was strange. Would he take someone like her seriously?

“It’s hard to tell,” Leon answered honestly instead of comforting her.

It was just that Heather’s expression was still dark as she said with dissatisfaction, “You guaranteed that he wouldn’t make things difficult for me and that you’ve already reported to him before this.” She remembered those words clearly.

Reluctantly, Leon smiled at her, “Let’s put this aside first, alright? I believe everything will be fine when you are around.”

Suddenly, Heather remembered those comforting words that she had said to him. There was no way she could take back her words at this time. Otherwise, she would be renegeing on her promise to him.

“Leon, sometimes you’re actually quite cute.” Her tone was definitely not praising him.

Hearing that, Leon smiled happily. “I think I’m cute too!” Sure enough, this narcissistic man had to seize his opportunity to praise himself again.

The car drove smoothly on the road as there was no congestion at this time. Looking at the road condition, Heather was amused. It seemed that Leon was a lucky guy.

Along the way, the two chatted about all kinds of topics in the car. When Heather talked about what happened in the school, Leon followed and expressed his own opinion. It wasn't until she stepped into the society that she realized this place was not as fun as school and she was utterly exhausted.

"Hat, if you weren't born in an entrepreneur family, what kind of person would you want to be?" Leon asked curiously.

Matthias once asked a similar question. Looking at Leon thoughtfully, Heather seemed to have forgotten how she answered Matthias before this.

"I don't want to answer a question that has zero possibility." She didn't want to answer it again. It was enough for her to share it with Matthias only.

Seeing that Heather was not answering him, Leon continued, "If I wasn't born in that kind of family, I would've become an engineer." He had always liked the job of an engineer. It was just that the family didn't allow him to pursue his dream.

"Engineer? What kind of project do you want to do? What kind of blueprint do you want to come up with?" Heather asked. It turned out this was the thing that Leon wanted to do the most.

"Skyscrapers," Leon replied, looking ahead. "It's more challenging."

"Do you want to build the tallest building in the world?" Heather asked tentatively, thinking that Leon's dream was interesting.

"Not to that extent. A skyscraper that's higher than a hundred floors will do. I have no interest in competing for height at all. All I want is the feeling of designing." Leon smiled with the side of his lips curled up. In fact, he loved talking about skyscrapers. Yet, it was a pity that he didn't become an engineer, so he couldn't see his dream through.

"Have you ever thought about pursuing your dream?" Noticing the unwillingness in Leon's eyes, Heather asked, feeling a little sorry for him.

At the same time, she was envious of him. At least, Leon had his own dream. Unlike her, she only had the thought of doing business.

It was fine to do other things occasionally or for the sake of fun. But, Heather couldn't do anything else for a long time, just like writing a book. She had no

motivation to write right now and she had a feeling that she was different from others.

It wasn't that she had no patience but it was just that she didn't even know what she wanted in life.

"Have you ever thought about it?" Leon asked in return.

"Nope, being in the business is good enough. I don't have other dreams." She flashed a pale smile. Somehow, she felt as if there was a piece missing from her.

"Yeah, you're really suited for it. In the future, you'll definitely have a business empire built by yourself." Leon trusted her with all his heart. He believed that with Heather's skills, she would definitely have her own company sooner or later.

"To be honest, I don't think I was born to be a businessperson." There was one thing that she had realized throughout all this time—she was not qualified to be in the business.

"Really?" Leon asked curiously. There was no one else that was more suitable to be a businessman other than Heather, and he couldn't accept her statement for a while.

"We're getting out of the topic. Let's talk about your relatives." Heather wanted to do a last-minute revision for fear that she would get those people confused at the dinner.

"Have you read about the information that I've given you?" Leon had given her some simple profiles of those relatives back then.

"Yeah, but there wasn't anything much." The information was so simple that Heather saw no value in reading it.

"Okay, who do you want to know the most? Perhaps you can try asking me any questions about them?" Leon gave it a thought. Since it was boring while driving, it wouldn't hurt for him to do something else at the same time.

"Your grandpa, of course!" Heather felt that Leon's grandfather would be the most challenging obstacle for her at dinner. As long as she managed to deal with him, everyone else wouldn't be a problem to her.

“If it’s Grandpa, what do you want to know about him?” Leon recalled the time that he spent with his grandfather. It seemed that they didn’t have too many happy memories together.

“What kind of person is he?” First of all, Heather wanted to know his temper.

“A strange and stubborn man,” Leon answered in a simple manner. All in all, he didn’t have too many pleasant memories of his grandfather.

“That’s all? Be more specific. Otherwise, it’s still not too useful for me.” With her eyebrows furrowed, Heather asked again. For some reason, he felt that Leon had deliberately missed out on the main point.

“To put it simply, he doesn’t like anyone that is rebellious. Yet, he doesn’t like those who listen to him as well. In other words, he’s a complicated and contradicting old man.” As long as Leon mentioned his grandfather, his mood instantly turned bad, thinking about the distance between the two of them.

“Does that mean I have no way to deal with him?” Heather felt that his words were a little vague. What could be considered rebellious and what could not? How was she going to identify the boundary between these two?

“Even I haven’t figured out his temper until now, and he wouldn’t be nice to me whenever he sees me. He’s always angry at me.” In Leon’s mind, there were only unpleasant memories of his grandfather.

“Will he be angry at me too then?” Heather was worried that the old man would scare her off as soon as they met and that would be too troublesome. She was never a person who would take in grievances and stay quiet.

“Of course not. After all, you’re still a guest. He’s not as inhumane as you think he is.” Gently, Leon comforted her, feeling that she was thinking too much.

“How should I greet him then?” She didn’t know how to leave a good first impression on his grandpa.

Puzzled, Leon turned and glanced in Heather’s direction. “Hat, you’ve even forgotten how to do simple greetings?” He was confused, but Heather really seemed nervous at this moment.

“Of course not! It’s just that I want to leave a pleasant first impression on him. How can you not provide even the slightest bit of useful information to me?” Heather nagged at him angrily, feeling disappointed with his efficiency at work.

“Hat, I have no choice. I really don’t have much of an impression of them and I don’t know how they’re going to treat you later.” Leon couldn’t imagine it at all. After all, it was his first time bringing someone home.

“I’m starting to regret my decision to attend this dinner with you.” Without the full details of his relatives, Heather had no confidence at all. It was all Leon’s fault! He was such a great disappointment!

“Hat, my instinct tells me that they’ll definitely like you.” There he went again, saying lies without blinking his eyes.

“My instinct tells me that they’re going to give me trouble,” Heather answered with a fake smile tugging at the corners of her lips.

Standing before Love Chapter 677

Suddenly, the car accelerated as Leon smiled slyly at Heather, “Hat, I think there aren’t many people who would hate you at first sight.”

To him, Heather was different and no one could be compared to her. He strongly believed that no one would hate her with that charm of hers.

“There are people everywhere that hate me at first sight.” Heather opposed Leon’s words. Due to her stunning appearance, other women would always hate her for her beauty.

Leon continued to accelerate the car, going well over the speed limit. Yet, he wasn’t bothered by it at all. Although there were not many cars on the road, it was still dangerous for him to drive in such a manner.

“Why are you suddenly speeding up? Are you rushing somewhere” Heather asked with a hint of mockery in her tone.

Smiling, Leon didn’t answer her question. Instead, he continued accelerating his car. With her eyes slightly narrowed, she wondered if he was taking part in a car race.

Looking at his determined profile, Heather didn't know what was happening to him. For some reason, this family dinner made her feel even more uneasy right now.

She couldn't imagine how people like Leon were treated in the family. It must have been difficult for him to come as far as where he was today. Perhaps his smiling face was just an act to cover up his true feelings.

"Are you planning to get into an accident at this speed?" Heather said in a sarcastic tone. If he wanted to die, he could go ahead by himself. She still wanted to live a little longer.

"Don't worry. It's going to be okay." Leon assured confidently as his lips curled into a smile. Yet, there was a hint of sadness in it. Never did she pay attention to Leon's car skills before this, and it was only until now that she realized his skills had reached the level of a racer. It turned out that he had lots of things hidden and tucked away from sight.

"Leon, do you have something in mind? If you don't want to attend the dinner, we can turn around right now." Heather comforted Leon. He was putting his life on the line and she couldn't imagine what would happen if this continued.

"Hat, what's the purpose of us living?" Leon said with a smile that she had never seen before. That smile was so cold that it sent chills down her spine.

Even Heather didn't know the answer to this question, so how could she answer him? Seeing her reaction, Leon suddenly came to a realization, "Hat, I know you're at a loss too." His smile gradually turned bitter.

"Leon, be more mature. This is a philosophical question and it's not a question that we should consider." Since there was no answer to this question, Heather felt that they should leave it as it was. Not every question in the world would come with a perfect solution.

Leon looked at her bitterly. Words were stuck in his throat and he couldn't bring himself to utter them at all. What is the purpose of this family dinner? Leon couldn't tell her.

In the end, both of them stayed silent. Heather didn't know how to persuade him and Leon didn't know what to say to her.

Throughout the whole journey, the carriage was silent until they reached their destination. Leon got out of the car first and walked over to Heather's side to open the door for her. Looking at the emotions in his eyes, Heather could feel her heart ache for him.

"Come on, Hat!" Suddenly, his voice became incredibly gentle, causing Heather's heart to melt a little.

"Leon, the look in your eyes is unpredictable. It's just a family dinner. It wouldn't eat you up," Heather said jokingly. She didn't like the emotion in Leon's eyes at this moment; it was making her distressed.

"But they might eat you up." Leon smirked as his eyes flickered slightly.

Looking each other in the eyes, they smiled as if nothing had happened and everything had become natural. Elegantly, Heather stretched out her hand and held Leon by the arm. It was as if she had entrusted herself to him for the time being.

"Leon, I have to say that your face is too perfect," Heather said in a relaxed tone. His face was so perfect that it made both men and women jealous of him.

"Perfect?" Leon laughed at himself. "It does seem that I'm indeed the best-looking one in the family." He touched his face and said mockingly, "Perhaps it's because of my face that the old man wants me to get married as soon as possible."

Hearing that, Heather rolled her eyes at him. "Look at how narcissistic you are!" But he was indeed good-looking, even better than those celebrities on the screen. Sure enough, he had the right to be narcissistic.

"Come on, my goddess." Leon carefully helped her out of the car. At this moment, he really took care of her like a princess.

There was an antique house in front of them and it took Heather by surprise. It turned out that Dave's choice of residence was similar to that of Leon.

However, this house was more similar to a courtyard house and slightly different from Leon's villa. That being said, it didn't matter. Walking side by side with Leon, Heather took his arm and curled her lips into a polite smile.

It was the first time she attended a dinner so seriously. If it was just an ordinary dinner, she would have a cold expression that could stop others from coming forward to strike a conversation with her.

She was smiling so brightly today that it surprised Leon. But seeing the effort she put in, Leon was grateful.

“Hat, thank you for trying your best.” He whispered in her ear and took the opportunity to kiss her on the cheek.

On the other hand, Heather was feeling helpless by his actions. However, she couldn’t express it explicitly. After all, there were two men in black at both sides of the entrance. Heather still had to take his image and reputation into consideration before she reacted.

“Welcome, Young Master.” As soon as they approached, they could hear the tall man in black speaking fluent English.

Carefully, Heather glanced at the man in black and she was sure that he was Asian. With a curious expression, she looked at Leon and realized that he was smiling ambiguously.

After a while, Leon leaned close to her ear again and whispered, “The old man likes western culture and these two are his personal bodyguards. Hence, they learned some English with him.”

As soon as Leon finished speaking, the two of them walked in slowly and the moment the door was opened, it was as if they had arrived in another country. The courtyard seemed antique on the outside, yet it was well decorated like a medieval palace on the inside. Heather didn’t understand the purpose of such a combination.

Noticing the expression on her face, Leon knew what she was thinking. He was sure that she would definitely complain about the design of the house. It was just not the time for her to be a critic.

“Hat, stay alert. They’re here.” Leon reminded Heather in a low voice.

Withdrawing her gaze that was spacing out, she looked at Leon tenderly. She kept her gaze fixed on him so that others would regard them as a loving couple. But, it was a pity that there was no affection in Heather’s eyes.

Among the crowd, Heather could recognize the famous Dave just by a glance. Seeking confirmation, she turned her head and looked at Leon. The next second, he nodded at her.

“Should we go to him and say hello?” Heather asked him in a low voice. It was the first time she behaved so sneakily that she didn’t even dare to speak loudly.

Influenced by Leon’s emotions, Heather was feeling uncomfortable all over. It had been a long time since she was in such an unconfident state, and it was indeed embarrassing.

“It’s okay. Those people will come over by themselves.” Leon didn’t want to join in the fun at all. He even hoped that no one would notice him.

Quietly, he led Heather to a corner. Yet, something strange happened. Unexpectedly, no one came over to greet him at all. They were just as stubborn as Leon.

Although Heather had her doubts, it would be too impolite of her to ask about this kind of thing now. Suppressing her curiosity, she followed Leon closely by the side.

Never did she expect that Leon would take her to the dining area to get some food. Smiling flatteringly at her, Leon said, “I’m too hungry. I need to get some food to replenish my strength.”

“Are you sure you’re not going to greet your grandpa? He’s been looking in our direction so many times.” Heather was getting uncomfortable from Dave’s constant glances, yet Leon seemed totally fine with it.

“He’ll come to me,” Leon said nonchalantly. If it weren’t because his grandfather forced him to come back for the family dinner, he would never step into this house ever again.

After all, he had never been on good terms with his grandfather, let alone those people. He hated everyone at the dinner and he would never forgive them for insulting his mother and him.

“I thought you were afraid of him, but now it seems that you’re totally out of his control,” Heather said in a low voice. Truthfully speaking, this dinner was different from what she had imagined.

Initially, she thought that his position in the family would be miserable but now that she looked at it, others didn't dare to provoke him at all.

Even the center of attention—Dave—was looking at Leon from a distance, his eyes filled with the love of an elder.

With a faint smile on his face, Leon threw a snack into his mouth. "I'm not afraid of him, I'm just—" However, he couldn't seem to continue his sentence.

As the saying went, even a vicious tiger would not eat its cub. In this family, however, there was no family affection at all. Instead, the relatives were constantly fighting to the extent that Leon was sick of this family. He didn't want to be involved in any disputes anymore.

Quietly, he continued to dig into the food as if he wasn't part of the family. It seemed that he planned to ignore everyone and stay transparent.

Looking at Leon behaving like this, Heather didn't have much to say. He even fed her a slice of watermelon just now.

"I don't feel like eating." She said with a fit of slight anger after eating the fruit. She had no appetite at all but she still had to pretend to be a loving couple with him.

At her words, Leon smiled so brightly that his eyes narrowed. "We have to eat and replenish our strength so that we can deal with them," he said meaningfully.

"I'm not eating. Did you bring me over to this family dinner for the cold meal?" Heather didn't want to sit still. She simply had to do something.

"Hat, be patient. The show is yet to start." Leon knew what was on Heather's mind but there was no need for them to rush. In fact, he was waiting for the other party to make his move first.

"I'm not in a hurry. It's just that this family dinner is different from what you told me, and my mind couldn't take it on such short notice." Heather pretended to be indifferent as she said that, but the truth was that she was feeling extremely upset in her heart.

“That is because the show hasn’t started yet. Don’t worry. It’ll definitely be a good one.” He raised his eyebrows at Heather. Staring at her bright red lips, Leon had the urge to kiss her on the spot.

“Hat, you look so beautiful today.” Leon looked at her obsessively as his heart began to pound crazily again.

“Behave yourself.” Heather gritted her teeth. How could he still be thinking about this kind of thing at this time?

“Hat, can I kiss you?” Leon leered at her.

That stare had Heather’s body feeling all numb and her expression immediately changed. With a fake smile, she replied, “No.”

However, what she didn’t know was that Leon was ready to make his move. This time, he would do as he liked, regardless of her reply.

Standing before Love Chapter 678

As one stepped forward, the other kept retreating. The spark of fire in Leon’s eyes was burning, but Heather naturally wouldn’t agree to something she disliked.

However, he was pressing close to her at this moment, and just like that, the two of them maintained an ambiguous distance. It was Heather’s first time seeing Leon so anxious, and the atmosphere around them instantly became awkward.

At such an odd family banquet, Heather felt helpless and alone. It was as if she and Leon were on an isolated island—no matter what they did, the others would pretend not to see.

Unfortunately, she no longer had any space to back up and, at the same time that she was desperately trying to conceal the truth from the others, she was still trying to think about how to avoid Leon’s impulses. Using her forearms, she pressed up against his chest to block his approach. From what she could tell, he was not the least bit conscious of his actions at the moment, and twin embers of flame—ones of rage—leaped up in her eyes as well.

There had to be all sorts of reasons her usually obedient Leon suddenly seemed to switch personalities, and as she searched her brain for possible reasons, she exerted all of her strength to hold him away from her.

By now, she was already exerting what seemed to be a supernatural amount of strength, but he was completely undeterred. In disbelief, she stared at him—she never knew he had so many secrets hiding in him.

Whether or not he was intentionally being deceitful, she was not happy about the fact that he had concealed the truth from her. At this rate, she was even beginning to suspect that they weren't actually even close friends. All of his sworn promises from so long ago seemed like a mirage now.

“Do you have to do this, Leon?” she questioned in a voice that only both of them could hear.

His grin made her scalp tingle, and she turned her face away so that she wouldn't have to look at his crazed, terrible smile. Right now, she felt so disappointed in him. It seemed they would genuinely no longer be able to return to what they were before the dinner. In the past, she always felt like she was hiding things from him; now, she knew that he hid from her more than she ever did from him. In fact, she felt like she had to get reacquainted with him.

“I have suffered through my love for you, Heather.” The sudden confession shocked her into stillness and made her wonder if everyone else was looking over.

“Come back to your senses, Leon. Do you remember why you asked me here?” she begged, keeping her forearms where they were to prevent him from approaching.

From others' perspectives, they looked like intimate lovers whispering together. Without taking a closer look, they might even think that she was leaning against his chest.

“I only feel like kissing you at this moment.” He was determined to achieve his goal no matter how long they had to remain in this stalemate.

“I don't love you, Leon. We will never be together,” she told him plainly, not caring if her words would hurt him.

“I love you and want to have you to myself.” No longer did he wish to conceal his true feelings. After all, how could he be so magnanimous as to share her with others?

This was her first time coming into contact with his true thoughts so directly. Conflicted, she chewed on her bottom lip. She had to think of a way to make him give up on her but, if he still had feelings for her after so long, how could she make him give up the idea entirely at this moment?

“If you keep acting like this, we can’t even be friends,” she lectured him to make him aware that she could very well do without him.

“Why can’t you accept me, Heather?” he asked in an unusual amount of pain. “Why?” He had no idea why he couldn’t compare to Matthias. Why couldn’t she just give him a chance?

“We’re friends, and we can only be friends,” she emphasized heavily. Perhaps, in the past, she had thought once or twice about eventually becoming lovers with him, but that was before Matthias’ appearance.

“Am I inferior to Matthias in some way? I’ve been by your side for so many years. How could you not see all that I’ve done for you?” he asked emotionally as his voice grew slightly louder.

Yet, even as they argued, everyone else acted like they couldn’t see anything. Only Dave looked over from time to time but did not reveal his thoughts.

Staring right at Leon, she informed him truthfully, “That’s just not how love works. I don’t know how to explain these things to you—I don’t even know if I actually love Matthias right now, but I am certain that I don’t love you. It has nothing to do with Matthias.”

“So, you’re not sure if you love him, but you’re willing to hitch your wagon to him and engage in a love-hate relationship with him. What about me? Have you truly never felt the slightest interest in me? If you have, why won’t you give me a chance?” The fact was that he knew all about and had noticed her budding interest in him by the sole virtue of how well he understood her—yet, she refused to be with him.

In truth, that greatly dissatisfied him. If she had just been willing to give him a chance, they would be an actual couple now with no need for pretense. In the

past, he thought that he would be able to show off his love for her. It was only later that he realized it would never happen.

“Why did you have to pick such a time?” She was infuriated that he had, once again, played her and created a scene where she could neither truly get mad at him nor leave him behind and walk away.

His only reason for choosing an occasion where she couldn’t escape would be to force her to listen to everything he had kept in his heart for so long.

“I know you care about me and treat me well, Heather, and I know that I’m being despicable, but I truly don’t know how to go on without you,” he murmured in pain like a weak child.

“Don’t do this. It’s so embarrassing. Have you forgotten where we are?” Her heart ached at the look on his face, and she was afraid that he would start tearing up in the next second. She had seen him tear up before, and it made him look fragile in a way that felt even more heartbreaking than when a woman cried. Perhaps that was what it was like when beautiful men cried!

“I don’t care. It was only the two of us together in the past—there was no Matthias. That was fine because I knew you didn’t care about dating, but I can’t accept that you could fall in love with another man,” he replied petulantly, starting to fuss.

“It wasn’t just us in the past. You had so many lovers and ex-girlfriends. You know how much they all hated me. You turned my existence into a hateful one; God only knows why I maintained my friendship with you for so long.” When she recalled those days, she instantly felt anger surge up in her.

Every time he had a new partner, she would go out of her way to keep her distance. After all, he would no longer be single then, and she had no wish to become a homewrecker. Ironically, that was when he would show up and try his best to cling to her. The more it happened, the more she hated it, and eventually any interest she had in dating him was worn away by annoyance.

“I only wanted to provoke you,” he told her gloomily.

“Oh? And when you were rolling around in the hay with them, were you also trying to provoke me? Or were you simply trying to fulfill your biological needs?” she asked him in return. There was no way she could accept him,

given how complicated his dating history was. Ultimately, she preferred someone with a simpler history.

Her words made him turn red with embarrassment. No matter how thick-skinned he was, he couldn't be unembarrassed by having their past brought up like that. Right now, he deeply regretted using such childish methods to make her jealous. If he had only been a little bit more mature, perhaps they wouldn't be here now.

When she saw how dispirited he looked, she knew her words had hit their mark. There were many things they never talked about, and perhaps it was for the best that everything was being laid bare now.

"I'm sorry I was so childish. I shouldn't have used those methods to provoke you." He no longer had any reason to argue with her for he had, indeed, done wrong in a way that he regretted the more he thought about it.

"I know it's hard to give up on loving someone, Leon, but you must figure out whether you truly love me or simply feel some measure of infatuation. After all, we're not together. If we were actually to be a pair, perhaps you would realize we aren't incompatible and that you don't love me," she advised him using a different perspective. She didn't know whether it would convince him, but at least it would bring him back to his senses.

Summoning his courage, he said, "Even so, I hope I can kiss you. I don't know if you can understand where I'm coming from, but I've hoped in my heart for so long that I would get the chance to kiss you. I just feel that urge whenever I look at your lips, and maybe I'll be able to stop this madness after I've kissed you." Since he didn't dare force a kiss on her, he could only ask for a chance.

The sudden sincerity startled her, and for a moment she was at a loss for how to refuse his request. Dumbly, she stared at him, and he stared right back. In the eyes of outsiders, they were staring at each other lovingly. Thus, the occasional person would even cast them a curious look. From afar, they looked harmonious and incredibly well-matched, and it was a scene that lifted the spirits of the onlookers.

"Not now." She couldn't refuse him, but she wasn't prepared and had no wish for the kiss to take place right now, anyway.

Her answer left him simultaneously happy and crestfallen. He was disappointed that she was refusing him right now but happy that she wasn't

completely rejecting him. Perhaps there was still a chance for him to turn things around and he had to wait patiently.

“I want to hold you, Heather.” He was somewhat tired. Being in a stalemate with her for so long had sapped all of his strength, and he suddenly felt empty and in need of a warm hug.

Since it was a hug, she didn't feel like she could refuse. Hence, she took the initiative to lean against his chest and listen to his heartbeat. All of a sudden, she recalled a certain summer night while they were still at school when they stood on the balcony and held each other just like this. The best years of her life had been with him.

Dull studies became more interesting with him by her side. It turned out that all those years ago, he already slipped silently into every nook and facet of her life.

“I wouldn't change a thing about the years we spent together, Leon. I hope I can be your friend for the rest of our lives.” Suddenly, she felt exhausted as well, so she stayed in his embrace.

Just like that, they held onto each other as if they were two children seeking warmth from winter's chill. Of course, this was the moment that Dave finally lost his patience and decided to go over and make small talk with Leon.

Standing before Love Chapter 679

Having forgotten their surroundings, Leon and Heather were in their own world and were not quick to notice Dave's approach.

Thus, from their perspective, Dave's appearance was rather sudden. Warily, Leon eyed his grandfather and tightened his grip around Heather. His cautious stance made his care for her obvious to outsiders.

Holding onto a wine glass, Dave observed the pair with a neutral expression. Leon rarely cared about anything these days, and his actions only made the former more curious about Heather.

From where she was standing, Heather couldn't see Dave. Nonetheless, she could feel Leon suddenly stiffening and burying her face against his chest.

The strange action made her suspicious and she tried to struggle out of his grip. However, he soon explained his actions. “Stop moving! My grandpa is here,” he said, wanting both to hold her and prevent her coming face to face with his grandfather.

“Let go of me, then,” she whispered to him.

“Trust me,” he answered instead, pressing a kiss to the top of her head.

Now that he was closer to them, Dave sensed something wrong. From afar, he had already sensed that something was off and the nearer he got, the stronger that feeling grew.

The more he looked at them, the less he felt like they were a pair. Leon’s love for Heather seemed genuine—Dave could see his care and adoration for her in his eyes. As for how she felt about Leon, Dave had no way of knowing for now.

Knowing Leon’s temper, Dave spoke up first. “Aren’t you going to introduce me to the beautiful lady you’re hugging?”

Even from where she was pressed up against Leon’s chest, Heather could clearly hear how fluent and well-enunciated Dave’s English was. It seemed there was a reason for Leon’s good English after all, and that the patriarch of the family was responsible for ensuring that his children and grandchildren all spoke English to varying degrees.

“She’s not used to such occasions, Grandpa,” Leon told Dave now. All of a sudden, he no longer felt like having Heather put on an act with him.

“You sure know how to tell a joke, Leon. I heard she is a charming, elegant, belle of the ball. She should be used to such occasions.” Frankly, having collected whatever information he could find on her, Dave already had an understanding of her.

“Not here, though,” Leon answered, unrelentingly. By now, he wasn’t even willing to introduce them to the others.

“I fear you’ve yet to grasp the substance of today’s banquet,” Dave answered, his face growing unfriendly. Despite fearing him, his grandson continued to mouth him off. His patience for Leon wasn’t limitless, and he dearly hoped that

Leon would grow up soon. The grandson he raised wasn't one he hoped to see self-destruct.

Meanwhile, Heather was about to suffocate from the lack of air with her face buried in Leon's chest. Since she desperately wanted to leave his embrace, she squirmed and caused him to loosen his grip slightly. Seizing the opportunity, she wiggled completely out of his grasp.

Very quickly, she was standing shoulder to shoulder with him. Neither acting proud nor in a self-effacing manner, she took Dave in and decided that he looked how she imagined him. He seemed spirited and not at all like he was in poor health.

Following that, she gave him a practiced, polite smile. It was the kind of smile he liked best—distant, well-mannered, but self-respecting at the same time. Already, he was forming a good first impression of her.

“Grandpa.” It was her first time calling someone else's grandfather that and it made her feel immensely uncomfortable. Nonetheless, remembering her purpose here today, she still said that.

Even Leon was incredibly surprised. After all, she tended to be a finicky person who did not do such things easily. The fact that she was willing to address his grandfather like that meant she was giving the performance her all.

“Young lady.” In response, Dave gave her a kind and amiable smile, but it wasn't one she would easily be dazzled by.

As he watched them interact, Leon suddenly felt like he had made a big deal out of nothing. He could see how satisfied his grandfather was with her.

Still acting like his girlfriend, she continued, “Leon's too childish. Please don't blame him.” She did it so smoothly as if she had done it before.

Happily, Dave smiled. It gave him some odd sense of joy to hear that being said about Leon since it was true; Leon was childish, and it was only a pity that such a talented child could have so many flaws in his personality.

“I've long gotten used to him and don't find it strange at all. If anything, I'm sorry you have to bear the responsibility,” he quipped without hesitation.

Suddenly, Leon felt like he was a preschool child whose teacher was reporting his bad behavior to his parents before they all laughed about it together.

The inexplicable déjà vu left him feeling a little cold. It wasn't as if he thought his grandfather would hate her, but he never expected them to get along so well that they'd draw closer simply by complaining about him.

Meanwhile, she was offering a modest, tight-lipped smile. Of course she wasn't solely going to complain about Leon but compliment him as well.

"Even if he's a little childish sometimes. I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing. In my eyes, at least, he's very cute," she lied with a straight face, sending him a smirk that made his knees go weak.

Perhaps she was too into the role. At this moment, even he was faintly buying the lie that she was his girlfriend and feeling a bit of joy in his heart.

Even if she was his girlfriend for only one night, it was enough to mess with his head, and he told himself that the goddess of a woman he yearned for was now by his side.

Meanwhile, Dave smiled cordially at her. "You young people only see the good side of each other when you're dating."

Hearing that, Leon couldn't help but stand up for himself. "I am good." In front of Dave, he couldn't help occasionally displaying the petulance that the child of a family would have.

Heather could see where he was coming from and could tell that he was just the kind of person to insist on talking back when he didn't actually hate his grandfather.

Virtually everyone was aware of his pride. If anything, he even somewhat humbled himself in front of her.

When the others at the party became aware of the happily chatting trio, they couldn't help watching out of the corners of their eyes. After all, they dared not believe the scene, for Leon only ever made his grandfather angry on a normal day.

Yet, Dave was smiling at this moment and they all assumed it was the work of the woman that Leon brought back with him. Many of them had heard of her, but few had met her.

The three of them occupied the buffet area with Dave and Heather talking around Leon and, for the most part, complaining about Leon. Meanwhile, the subject of their discussion stood to one side and occasionally stepped in to protest that he hadn't done anything too objectionable.

Yet, even while they enjoyed their discussion, the others quickly became unhappy with the fact that the focus of the banquet was quickly shifting to Leon.

What they wished the least to happen was for Leon to be treated with fondness, since he had managed to offend everyone in the family. They only hoped they would live to see him disowned.

The person who hated Leon most was his cousin who was only a few years older than him. To everyone else, that cousin was second in line to inherit the family wealth.

Yet, the cousin was well-aware of how large a threat Leon posed. While, as an illegitimate child, Leon did not have the legitimacy he had, Dave was especially tolerant of Leon's antics. Thus, the fear that Leon would take his place was not unfounded.

At this moment, the trio moved out of the buffet area and closer to the dinner table. Dave was insisting that Heather sit by his side, and the honor made everyone else seethe with jealousy.

As Heather took in her surroundings, she could feel the animosity the others had toward Leon. Of course, it meant that animosity was now directed toward her. It seemed Dave and Leon were talking about very different things, and the only reason Leon could remain in his household was due to the protection of his grandfather.

Furthermore, it was clear that, in truth, Dave was very fond of Leon. Otherwise, he wouldn't have noticed Leon's vices. Nonetheless, because of how similarly stubborn they were, they were very bad at expressing how they felt about each other.

As she realized that, she wondered to herself whether there was something she could do to ease their relationship. She had Dave's attention and right now, he was even overlooking the others in favor of talking to her.

Aware of the hostile and jealous glances that the others were shooting toward him, Leon stared back at them proudly. He was proud of himself for having the woman he loved by his side.

Never did Heather ever let him down. In fact, she always did things that surpassed his expectations, such as gaining the favor of his grandfather and allowing him to properly show off in front of his family for once.

"I heard you have high blood pressure, Grandpa. Perhaps you should have less of this kind of food." Since she had heard Leon mention his grandfather's health before, she chose an appropriate moment to express concern.

Such a seemingly natural expression of care gratified Dave, so he waved a hand at the unhealthy foods in front of him and told the attendant next to him, "Take these things away."

At the same time, Leon winked at her. She was playing her part so much better than he advised her to that he felt like hugging her and giving her the biggest smooch.

In truth, she wasn't rightly aware of how to please Dave and was merely treating him the same way she usually treated Robert. If she looked at him like he was her own grandfather, her actions would naturally seem truthful and sincere.

It wasn't hard to socialize with the elderly. All they needed was a measure of sincerity, since they were much sharper than people gave them credit for and would always be able to tell who was being real and who was putting on a façade.

Since she never played any games in front of them and only ever said what was on her mind, she put them at ease and naturally earned their fondness.

A short while later, everyone took their seats, and Dave addressed the crowd. "Today, we have the fortune of receiving a visit from the beautiful Heather Langston, seated next to me. I'm confident that she will become a member of our family very soon."

At his introduction, her face grew hot. It pained her to hear the words 'become a member of our family,' for in truth, she would never become a member of their family.

Standing before Love Chapter 680

At the scene, Heather maintained her elegant smile. Even if it was a family banquet, she could not let down her guard. Fortunately, it was at least simpler than she anticipated and not as chaotic as Leon led her to believe.

The person who was most unlike how she imagined him to be was Dave. He didn't act at all like he was nobility, and she could only find it a good thing that Leon hadn't handed her a few more pages of information, for it seemed like they were chock-full of his subjective biases.

With a smile, she glanced at everyone. Under Dave's warm-hearted influence, they no longer regarded her with hostility and all put on, at the very least, some measure of kindness.

Despite seeing through them, Leon gave no indication he was aware of their pretense. Of course, Heather could see through them as well, but she was long used to such occasions and didn't take any of it to heart.

While they ate, the entire table was silent and devoid of any conversation. This also largely differed from her expectations and upon seeing her confusion, Leon pulled out his cell phone and sent her a text.

Knowing what she was thinking, he told her, 'Don't look so surprised. My Grandpa is strict about us not talking while we eat.'

'I'm not surprised,' she replied, refusing to admit to her own confusion. 'There's nothing unusual about that.' Quickly putting down her phone, she resumed eating.

In the quiet, only the sound of chewing could be heard. Perhaps because they were concerned about their image, everyone was displaying the elegance of nobility and chewing very softly.

When it came to this, she didn't fare worse than them. She, too, had good breeding, not to mention that silence at the dinner table was more of a local habit and she would never lose to a group of foreigners.

Occasionally, she and Leon would communicate silently with their eyes. Their every interaction was noted by Dave.

The meal lasted a long time. Dave was meticulous about his chewing and, seemingly not wanting to finish before the patriarch of the family, everyone else ate slowly as well.

Under the influence of such an atmosphere, Heather, too, slowed down her speed of eating. Meanwhile, Leon seemed used to such a pace and struggled with it not at all.

On occasion, Dave would cast a glance at her but he did not speak up. There seemed to be a message in his eyes but for now, it remained inscrutable to her. Even Leon seemed confused.

It was only in the silence that she picked up on the imposing atmosphere of the dinner banquet. From her perspective, Leon's family was even stranger than hers. While the Langston Family used family banquets as a way of appearing outwardly harmonious, his family did not seem like a family at all but rather a group of strangers.

If her family fought in secret, his family went to no lengths at all to hide their discord. Nonetheless, it seemed like Dave was in the know.

The wisdom in his eyes led her to believe that he was in control of the situation. It had to be difficult for an old man to ensure a family's balanced and healthy survival.

After what felt like half a century, the lengthy mealtime finally ended. As she gently wiped her mouth, she could feel the others glancing at her from time to time.

Not long after they finished eating, the dinner table livened up and people started to chat with those seated next to them. It was only then that she realized what Leon meant when he said the dinner was very ceremonial. Indeed, the time while they ate had been a grave ritual and even now that they were done, their idle chat seemed affected to some degree.

Leaning over, he whispered to her, "Not used to it, are you?" Even he wasn't used to having such a family after all these years.

“I’m alright.” She didn’t find it too strange since she rarely spoke at her own family dinners, unless Robert spoke to her first.

“Well, I’m glad you don’t mind.” Yet now, he worried that she would find it difficult to adapt, but it seemed he had underestimated her endurance.

“What would I have to mind?” she asked with a smile. Right now, they were conversing in front of Dave and she was deeply afraid that they would say something wrong.

In response, he beamed at her and resisted the urge to peck her cheek. Truly, she was his savior and all-too-worthy of his love.

“Your crow’s feet are showing,” she teased. Sometimes, his thoughts were too obvious and written all over his face.

“Come and take a walk with me later.” He was unable to take the atmosphere anymore and was dying to find an opportunity to drag her out for some fresh air.

While Leon hated this place more than any other occasion he would have to attend, Heather, on the other hand, was a little bit more understanding.

Unlike Leon, she looked at it as a duty and she didn’t feel as conflicted as he did.

Meanwhile, Dave seemed to be keeping an eye on her. Even Leon was starting to notice that he would glance at her from time to time while she conversed with Leon.

Usually fastidious about keeping a healthy lifestyle, Dave had foregone the fruit platter in favor of eyeing them. Unable to take such scrutiny, Leon took the initiative to reach out for a grape, peel it patiently and feed it intimately to her. Since they couldn’t talk carelessly and freely with Dave staring at them, they might as well eat some fruit.

At first, Heather was confused but she quickly caught on and cooperated. With her faint smile aimed at him, they looked like a loving couple.

All of a sudden, he seemed to develop a fondness for feeding her fruit and busied himself with peeling the skin off the fruit in front of her before holding it up to her. Of course, she wasn’t in the mood for fruit right now and could only

stare at him strangely. Did that mean that, in the absence of anything better to do, they could only eat fruit?

Reluctantly, she cooperated. Given the slow pace of dinner, she had already consumed more than what she usually ate and now that she was forced to have some fruit as well, she was starting to wonder if her sole purpose for attending the banquet was to eat.

When she recalled how many appetizers she ate in the buffet area, she decided her assumption was correct.

Meanwhile, Leon seemed to have lost himself completely to what he was doing and was practically trying to shove the fruit platter down her mouth. In truth, she hated grapes, so she plucked the grapes he gave her from her plate and made the decision to stuff them into his mouth.

One by one, she fed them back to him, even saying gently, "Have some more. They're full of vitamin C."

Only when he saw her slightly displeased expression did he remember that she actually disliked grapes, and it was no wonder she was trying to return all of the grapes he peeled for her.

Having no other choice, he opened his mouth and swallowed all of her 'good intentions'. Yet, the more they acted like this, the more Dave picked up on the subtleties of their actions.

After dinner, the hall was filled with elegant music. In the past, the nobles liked to dance to music and now was apparently no different. All of a sudden, Heather got the impression she had returned to medieval times.

Meanwhile, Leon was offering a gentlemanly hand and saying, "May I have this dance, Miss Langston?"

Gladly, she agreed. If the dinner they just had was overly formal, they were much more relaxed now. Out on the dance floor, everyone seemed to have put aside their petty resentments and were dancing together gracefully.

Their duet made her feel like they had returned to school. Standing so suitably close to each other as they danced, they could feel each other's body heat. It was especially easy to fall in love during these dances.

Currently, his eyes were locked on hers. He enjoyed this moment so much that he didn't feel like moving away from her for even a second. This segment of the evening was, no doubt, his favorite part of the banquet.

The intensity of his stare made her heart flutter. After all, her hormones were putting her in a trance, even if she knew the person she actually loved was Matthias.

Gradually, his face blurred and she saw Matthias all of a sudden. The fact that she was thinking of Matthias at this moment made her laugh internally at herself.

Nowadays, he was no longer the man he used to be. He did not cling to her and rarely even texted her. On occasion, she would wonder to herself what he was doing. Sometimes, she even thought about taking the initiative to text him but would decide against it in the end.

Sensing that she was lost in her thoughts, Leon pulled her even closer and whispered intimately in her ear, "It's me, Hat."

Instantly, she was pulled out of her reverie and back to reality. When she came to her senses, she found that her head was resting against his shoulder and that they were holding each other as they danced.

"I want to rest for a while, Leon." All of a sudden, Heather felt somewhat tired and only wanted to sit down.

It wasn't the physical kind of tiredness but rather a psychological one. As they stepped off the dance floor, a pair of eyes watched him closely, making Leon uneasy.

"Are you feeling ill, Hat?" He remembered that she hadn't rested well these few days and yet had slept for hours today. No doubt, her body was not used to it.

"No." She shook her head, answering softly and inexplicably gently. Wanting to be alone for a while, she told him, "Don't worry about me. Go have fun!"

"Nah, I'll keep you company." Currently, he only wished to stay by her side and had no interest in socializing with anyone else.

His response hardly surprised her. Given how cautious he was of everyone else, she had known even before making her suggestion that there was no way he would leave her.

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It was as if Leon was a lost child. Clearly, the reason he wanted her at this family banquet was so that she could give him courage.

LeoLeo

Understandingly, she pointed at the seat next to her and indicated for him to sit down. Satisfied, he took the seat.

Leo

“If you’re not feeling well, we can leave.” In truth, he was all too eager to have an excuse to leave.

LeoLeo

Seeing through him at once, she told him, “I doubt your grandfather will approve.” After all, she was aware that Dave was still observing them at this moment.

As if their previous camaraderie had been a dream, Dave was maintaining a distance from them now and was once again surrounded by others.

Just like that, Heather had no idea what he was truly thinking. However, she knew it was a bad idea to leave right now no matter what excuse they had.

Leo

“You don’t have to worry about what my grandpa thinks, Heather,” Leon told her helplessly. He was starting to regret making the situation sound so serious to her.

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At this moment, a fierce gaze was directed toward them, making Leon feel even less like staying. Since it happened every time the family gathered, he

was sensing that his cousin would very soon come and cause trouble for him. There was no way this time would be an exception.

Unfortunately, Heather failed to understand and only advised him patiently, “It doesn’t seem appropriate for us to leave so early. Why are you so eager to rush home?”

“There are some things I can’t explain to you right here,” he answered uneasily. While he didn’t care if his cousin caused trouble for him alone, he didn’t want to drag her into things.

The fact that his cousin had left him alone for so long this time was likely solely because of her presence. No doubt, the man was observing them for now so that he could attack them after he had a general understanding of her personality. Leon was loath to imagine what that man had to be thinking, for his cousin’s gaze was growing more and more unfriendly and even strayed to Heather from time to time.

“Alright,” she relented after seeing the anxious look on his face. “If you think that’s for the best, we’ll do as you say.” After all, she didn’t know his family well and had no reason to insist they stay behind.

Instantly, he let out a gratified smile. It soothed his heart to be so well-understood by her. And so, Heather pulled him to his feet and they both walked toward Dave.

Meanwhile, the cousin noticed their actions and immediately rushed off the dance floor to reach Dave’s side. With great interest, the former stared at Leon.

It was a provocation in Leon’s eyes but despite knowing that was no good news, the cousin persisted in walking forward. Many times, he wished he could hire someone to murder this troublesome man. It was only logic that stayed his hand.

Acting as if he only just noticed Leon and Heather approaching him, Dave looked toward them with an expression that suggested he knew what they were there for.

“Grandpa—” Leon started, but Dave quickly interrupted him, “Ah! Good, you’re here. Come with me to the study.”

The sentence thwarted whatever Leon's cousin had been about to do, and he remained at a loss even as they left the room. He never even got the chance to say a single word.

Dave always did whatever he wanted to and right now, no one was providing a different suggestion. Originally, the cousin was about to wait for Leon to say something stupid before he jumped in to fan the flames of the discord between Leon and their grandfather, but the present situation didn't play out that way at all.

For the whole night, he had looked for opportunities and finally found one, but it turned out to be fruitless, anyway.

Meanwhile, the study was silent, as Dave had summoned only Heather and Leon. Even the butler and servants were forbidden from entering.

Heather was immensely familiar with studies, for it was the part of the house that Robert summoned her to whenever he had something important to discuss with her. It seemed Dave and Robert behaved in largely similar ways.

However, their studies were very different. Heather found herself looking at a study so luxuriously decorated in a European style that she had to wonder if it was overly opulent.

"You don't have to stand. Sit down on the couch," Dave told them now before sitting down in his own chair.

Naturally, Heather and Leon gave each other a questioning glance before sitting down on the couch close to each other. The latter was feeling somewhat nervous but Heather, who was used to having such discussions in the study, was relaxed and at ease.

"I heard Leon has pursued you for a long time, Miss Langston," Dave said abruptly, startling her so much that she was slow to react.

Here she was thinking he had some other important matter to address, but it turned out he was curious about their relationship. As she didn't like it when her elders interfered in her love affairs, all thoughts of a more intelligent answer fled her mind as she said somewhat awkwardly and unnaturally, "Uh—he has."

Next to her, Leon contributed, "I fell in love with her the moment I saw her. She's always been a goddess to me."

Of course, that only made Heather feel even more awkward. How could he possibly seize this opportunity to speak from his heart? She had no idea what to say next.

"Are you sure of your relationship?" Dave asked, dropping another bomb on them.

Instantly, she felt guilty, but Leon helpfully stepped in and answered, "We only just got together, Grandpa." It was a lie that fooled even himself.

"Yes," Heather quickly added. "We don't have any plans to announce our relationship yet." She assumed Dave wanted to know when they intended to announce their relationship to the public.

In truth, that wasn't his intention; what he wanted to determine was whether they were actually a couple. And so, he dismissed them by saying, "There's nothing to announce. It's not necessarily a bad thing for you young people to keep your personal lives private."

"But of course, Grandpa," Leon answered smoothly. He couldn't believe he was so slow to catch on. All of a sudden, he sensed where this conversation was going.

Ironically, this was the moment Heather lost the ability to think on her feet and could only nod along dumbly with Leon.

"When are you going to get engaged?" Truly, Dave's questions were only becoming more and more pointed. They couldn't believe he was already thinking of engagements, to say the least.

"We're not in a rush to get engaged," Leon answered so naturally that it was as if he had already come up with solutions to these questions.

It's a good thing he's being so reliable right now, Heather thought, for they would be in a very embarrassing situation otherwise. Never had it occurred to her that they would have to face the topic of marriage eventually.

"If you're confident in your relationship, the responsible step would be to get engaged," Dave persisted.

At that moment, she didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Meanwhile, Leon felt similarly awkward. All of a sudden, he was remembering what Dave said to him previously, and it seemed Dave was no longer holding back.

"We haven't been together that long, Grandpa. It really wouldn't do to rush the engagement," Leon continued to explain while Heather fervently wished that she could find a corner to hide in alone.

"You've both known each other for so long. For you to be together now means it's a well-thought decision. That means engagement wouldn't be rushed but rather something that is a natural conclusion," Dave pointed out sensibly.

All of a sudden, Heather felt like the situation would end badly if she didn't make some things clear. With no other choice, she brought up whatever leverage she had. "I still have to discuss the matter of getting engaged with my family, Grandpa."

With a smile and a nod, Dave merely answered, "That's quite fair, Miss Langston. Perhaps I shall drop by the Langston Residence tomorrow."

The first sentence lightened her heart, but the second sentence made her feel infinitely tenser. Everything was spiraling out of control too quickly, and it seemed like Dave was truly the kind of person to do exactly as he wanted to.

Uncomfortably, she informed him, "I haven't explained things to my family yet. I'm afraid it won't be appropriate for you to drop by tomorrow."

Upon hearing that, Leon quickly stepped in as well, saying, "Don't rush things, Grandpa. You're going to scare my future wife away." While his tone was deliberately light, he was actually feeling incredibly nervous.

"Ha!" Dave roared with laughter before telling them directly, "It's clear to me that you aren't sure of each other's intentions yet." His knowing gaze made them feel immensely guilty.

"We just want to take things slow, Grandpa," Leon continued to lie. Yet, at this moment, the more he said, the more the truth would be revealed.

"You have been taking things slow. Haven't all these years been enough?" Dave asked in the tone of someone who had been through similar situations before.

Meanwhile, Heather kept her silence. There was no point in continuing to argue; they had played right into Dave's hand. If she kept talking, she would have no more secrets left.

"It's decided, then," Dave said without further ceremony. "Before I leave Bradford City, I want to see it done."

His announcement made them both feel a bit like jumping off a cliff to their deaths. They were in for it now. Only now did they understand that some lies couldn't be told without major repercussions, but it was already too late for them to come clean.

Impulsively, Leon asked, "When are you leaving Bradford City, Grandpa?" He couldn't give up just yet.

"It could be weeks or it could be two to three months. I wouldn't feel good about leaving without seeing you both engaged," Dave answered gleefully, sending chills down their spines.

Once more, they exchanged glances. They didn't say anything else and Dave took their silence as acquiescence. In truth, he had long taken measure of Heather and found her to be an excellent potential addition to their family. That was why, even if he knew they were acting right now, he was determined to have his grandson marry her.

There was no way he would be able to find someone better suited to Leon than her, and he could feel his body deteriorating day by day. His only wish now was to see Leon a husband and a father.

No longer could they delay things. He could tell that Leon did want Heather as a wife, and while he could also tell that Heather wasn't in love with Leon, such petty matters as feelings no longer mattered. All Dave wanted was to see them united, so he would be wilful for one more time to ensure that their marriage happened as soon as possible.

"You may leave now. I want to be alone," he informed them without giving them any more opportunities to protest. By having them leave, he could plot his next step in peace.

One after the other, the pair left the study. At this moment, Heather didn't know what to say, nor did Leon know how to explain things to her.

"I'm sorry things turned out this way, Hat," Leon took the initiative to say. Other than apologizing, he couldn't do anything else.

"It's not your fault," she comforted him. "I should have thought of this possibility when I agreed to your request." The most important thing right now was for them to figure out how to resolve the situation.

"What are we going to do now?" For however much he hoped for them to spend the rest of their lives together, he had no wish to force her to marry him.

"We'll figure it out. For now, let's go home." She felt weary and emotionally exhausted and no longer had any wish to stay there.

"Alright." Similarly, he didn't want to stay and only wished they could be home sooner.

Just like that, they passed through the hall directly and left without saying their goodbyes to anyone. While it was a little rude, Heather was no longer in the mood to care about such etiquette.

"Wait for me, Hat!" Leon exclaimed as he hurried behind her. It was evident from how quickly she walked, even in heels, that she was in a terrible mood.