

This Time, I Will Get My Divorce, Mr Chapter 996-1000

Chapter 996 A Flashy Charles

Sonia had just taken the folder and was about to review it when someone knocked the door. "Come in," she replied while flicking through the schedule.

"President Reed." When the door was opened, an assistant stood at the door frame with one hand holding a blue file and the other hand rested on the doorknob as he announced, "President Lane has arrived to meet with you."

"Charles is here?" Sonia was taken aback.

What brings him here at this time?

"President Reed." Standing in front of her desk, Daphne started to get nervous.

She glanced at Daphne and knew why Daphne was anxious, after which she gestured at Daphne to calm down. "Don't worry or stress about it, Miss Daphne. I know what you're going to say, so rest in my private lounge first."

At that, Sonia indicated at the private lounge in the front. Then, Daphne wrung her hands as she gave a quick smile and sprinted to the said location. As she watched Daphne leaving, Sonia let out a soft sigh because Daphne and Charles had been the ideal working partners in the past. Yet, it was now a dream to watch them interact normally.

Sonia massaged her temples before turning to look at the assistant standing at the door. "Where is Charles right now?"

"President Lane is currently downstairs. He intended to come up, but President Dafoe stopped him as he passed by the area. They're currently having a conversation," the assistant replied.

Sonia frowned.

Asher stopped Charles? What is he trying to achieve by stopping Charles?

Her eyes dimmed momentarily, but she quickly regained her composure as she smiled at the assistant. "Okay, I understand. In that case, invite Charles to come up."

"Understood," the assistant answered before closing the door.

Soon after, the door reopened to reveal Charles stepping in casually. He was wearing a maroon shirt underneath his white casual suit, but he didn't complement it with a tie. As two of the buttons of his outer attire were undone, it exposed his fair chest. Matching the top half of his attire was a pair of white ankle pants that fit his beautiful, slender ankles. To top things off, he even wore pointed leather shoes in the color of white.

As a result, it made him look both showy and trashy.

Even though Sonia was accustomed to his fashion sense, Sonia still found it repulsive.

“Why are you dressed like this? Aren’t you cold?” She rubbed her temples again as she could already feel the chill from his exposed chest and ankles.

However, Charles sensually approached her with his chin slightly raised. “No, of course not. I’m not feeling anything. Don’t you think that my outfit today is perfect?”

His footsteps came to a rest in front of her desk. He then spun on his heels and completed his antics with Michael Jackson’s classic movement.

Sonia restrained her smile. “Absolutely not. I just think you’re feeling cold right now. The corners of your mouth and your ankle are turning purple.”

The corner of his mouth twitched. “Please stop being so specific. The cold is meaningless when being cool is more important.”

“Dude, I’m worried you’re going to get sick.” A helpless Sonia rubbed her temples for the third time.

Charles gave a dismissive wave of his hand to indicate his disagreement. “I am, after all, the company president. How is it possible that I would get sick?”

He then lifted his head arrogantly as though nothing could ever drag him down.

His actions caused her to laugh and she remarked, “President? Sadly, your outfit does not match the image. You look more like a playboy. I’ve never seen a president dressed as trashy as you.”

His fashion style had already been trashy during the summer, what more with his floral shirts and showy pants. She had never expected him to maintain fashion style even during the winter, but she would nonetheless become alarmed if he suddenly changed his entire image.

“Of course, you’ve never seen anything like it. Those presidents you’ve met are mostly older men. How can they possibly compare with me?” Charles mocked as he drew a chair in front of her and sat.

She rolled her eyes in return. “They are not all old. Tob—”

Sonia paused in the middle of her sentence as if she had realized something. No, I cannot mention Toby in his presence. Even if he’s claimed he’s given up on me and offered us his blessing, I shouldn’t bring up Toby so casually in front of him. It’ll hurt him.

“Sorry, Charles. I—”

“It’s all right.” Charles waved his hand again, his smile still on his face. “You don’t have to be that way. I know you want to talk about Toby, so just be yourself and say it.

I'm not bothered at all. He's your boyfriend, and you may speak openly about him. I shouldn't restrict you from talking about him for some reason, should I? That would be far too selfish of me."

Charles smiled widely at her. He was slightly upset when she brought up Toby, but he soon overcame it. He had already said that it would be selfish of him to stop Sonia from talking about her boyfriend just because he still loved her.

Being selfish was the last thing on his mind. Moreover, he had made up his mind from the start to make the one whom he loved happy.

If Toby was the one who could offer Sonia happiness, then Charles would gladly give her up. So, if she was upset because it made him sad that her boyfriend's name was being mentioned, wouldn't that break the promise he made when he decided to let her go?

Sonia moved her lips, but she said nothing in response to his nonchalant expression. Apart from his parents, she was the only one who understood her childhood companion after knowing him for almost twenty years.

Charles might look cheery at the time, but it was all an act; he was clearly upset beneath that smiling facade.

"Charles..." She looked at the man with guilt.

He sighed, knowing she blamed herself for owing him too much again. "Sonia, let's not bring it up again. Let's get back to the main point. The components are due today. It will be a major problem if it is not resolved by today. Do you have any ideas on how to address it?"

She was focused again when it related to business. She nodded, dismissing her conflicting feelings. "Yeah. I will follow your earlier recommendations."

"You're going to mortgage the company building?" His eyes widened in shock.

Sonia shook her head. "No, nope, I'm not mortgaging this building."

"Not this building?" When he heard the response, he felt relieved. Charles almost jumped up in surprise, but he sat up and patted his chest in relief. "That's a big relief."

Despite my suggestion, I didn't want it to be Paradigm Co., which your father built twenty years ago. Although the value of this old building cannot be compared to that of new office towers, the cost of its location in the city center is unquantifiable.

Using it as a mortgage for a single opportunity to get out of business trouble is not worth the risk. Furthermore, the bank may be unwilling to release the building's deed to you in the future."

Due to its strategic location, its value will never depreciate. Because of this, the bank will try everything in its power to get its hands on it.

Chapter 997 Sonia Doing It Personally

Sonia rubbed her forehead as she closed her eyes. "You have thought about it, and so have I. I'm very concerned about this, so I'm not planning to mortgage this building."

"That's good." Charles nodded, but his concerns remained. "What are you going to mortgage with if it's not Paradigm Co.'s building?"

As Sonia opened her eyes, she uttered, "The Reed Residence."

He was slightly taken aback. "Are you planning to give—"

"Yeah." She nodded. "That's right."

"But it's the house your mother left behind. Are you... sure about it?" Charles looked at her.

Sonia tucked her hair behind her ears. "To be honest, I didn't want to do it at first, but after giving it some thought, I don't think there's anything to be sad about parting with. It's the house my mother left behind. I spent my childhood there, and my memories are also tarnished by rats."

Charles noticed that she had narrowed her eyes in disdain and quickly knew what she meant. As he sighed, his heart ached. "Jessica and Sandra."

"Yeah." She gripped the pen tighter. "You are correct. It's them. That house is supposed to be a cozy home for me, my mother, and my father. Ultimately, the space was filled with their vile atmosphere, which had ruined it. Because of this, I moved out to the Bayside Residence. I no longer feel anything that makes me think of my mother. I detest the Reed Residence now that it is solely filled with memories of their worst kind."

"You have a valid point." He sipped the water in front of him. "If I were you, I would have felt the same way. Because the house is an eyesore, I would have put it up for sale a long time ago. I'm impressed that you've kept the house for years."

Sonia's lips twitched. "It's because that's the house my mother bought before she passed away. And this is where she lived and where we previously stayed. Nothing else. Now that I think about it, I think my opinion was wrong because Mom might not want to keep it. After all, it is already tainted."

"There's no doubt about it." He nodded and looked at her. "You're her daughter, and she loved you so much that she gave you the house before she left. I'm sure she wasn't expecting Jessica and Sandra to show up after that. In that same house, they bullied you and poisoned your father! So, what makes her want to keep it? Sonia, I agree with your decision. It's not the same place it used to be. That way, you can also forget about the unpleasant memories."

"Yeah," she responded gently.

"Oh, have you had the house appraised?" Charles was keen to know.

Sonia sipped her coffee before responding, "Yes, I've contacted an appraiser a couple of days ago. Although it is an old building, its location, like this one, is very strategic. When she purchased this house,

my mother used Grandpa's connections to invite the most famous master to view the property. There should not be a significant price difference compared to new homes. It should be worth at least 1 billion." She raised a finger.

He let out a chuckle. "Great. That will be more than necessary to solve the problem. Have you set up an appointment with the bank?"

"Yeah, I have. I will submit a loan application this afternoon." She placed her cup down.

"I'll accompany you. Instead of just one person going there, it would be better for two people to go." Charles checked his watch.

Sonia shrugged her shoulders. "I'm fine with it, but I heard from your mother that Lane Corporation is going through a transition. Shouldn't you be busy then? Do you have the time?"

"It is nearly completed. I could even celebrate the new year." He was beaming with a broad grin.

"Okay. Let's go together." There was no reason for Sonia to refuse. Suddenly, she thought of something as she looked at him. "Charles, my assistant, informed me that Asher has stopped you downstairs. What exactly is going on? Why did he stop you?"

When Charles heard that, he frowned and slammed his cup onto the table with a grumble. "I'm not sure what's wrong with the old git. As soon as he saw me, he pulled me into his office and told me something strange. I didn't understand him at first, but I soon realized he was trying to create tension between us."

"Creating tension between us?" Her expression changed from surprise to one of gloom in an instant.

He concurred. "Yeah, but I just walked away and ignored him."

She didn't say anything, and her frown deepened because she couldn't understand why Asher was acting this way. Charles was not employed by Paradigm Co.; he was merely in the higher management with that title and played no role in management or production. Therefore, his existence posed no threat to Asher.

But why is Asher attempting to sever our relationships? What is he planning?

"Is there something on your mind, Sonia?" Charles waved his hand in her direction.

Sonia regained her composure and smiled as she shook her head. "Nothing. I'm just curious as to why he's doing it."

He sulked. "Don't fret. This old git cannot endure our presence, likewise for us. No matter what he does, we will ultimately fight each other. Since we are rivals, there is no point in considering what he is doing. Simply confront him when the time is right."

She grinned. "You are right. Although your language is somewhat harsh, you make a good point. When the circumstances are set, there is no need to overthink the process. Instead, we should concentrate on the results. You are more positive than I am. I'd get irritated from overthinking."

"See? I am brilliant." Charles arched an eyebrow at her in amusement.

Sonia smiled and lowered her head, feeling more at ease. It looked like their relationship was back to how it was before. Today was the Charles that she remembered, so it would be for the best if everything remained this way.

On the other side, Toby came out of a dark room with an aloof face and Tom had the same expression.

"President Fuller, here's a handkerchief." Tom handed a wet handkerchief, whose footsteps came to a halt before he turned to take it. After wiping his hands, Toby continued walking.

At the same time, Tom was wiping his hands and said in disgust, "That old git is so stubborn. He didn't say anything until we had to use the pliers. We overestimated him. But, President Fuller, you could have let us pull out his teeth. Why did you do it on your own?"

Toby, who was walking in front and threw the filthy handkerchief and stomped on it, reacted bitterly, "When it comes to my lover, I'll do it myself."

Tom was speechless when he heard the word lover because he felt a knot in his throat and wanted to smack himself in the face.

Chapter 998 Toby Is in a Bad Mood

I should have known better; President Fuller behaves oddly whenever Miss Reed is involved. So, why do I seem to forget this and have to ask him about it? Now, I have to bear all of these sappy moments.

At this very moment, Tom was feeling queasy as a direct result of his boss excessive display of regard for love. It was as though he needed to ingrain it in his memory to keep from asking questions that he should not be asking in the future. If not, he would suffer emotional harm nonetheless.

I am still a single man. What if I eventually lost interest in the process of looking for a girlfriend for myself? When that day finally arrived, I would be miserable.

While pondering this, he rubbed his cheeks while simultaneously preventing a series of profanities from exiting his mouth. To preserve his professional demeanor, he smiled and asked, "President Fuller, what should we do with that old git now?"

When Toby opened the door, he was met with the sight of a large parking lot. Keeping his eyes on a nearby car, he walked toward it and said, "Keep him in for now. We will have more use for him in the future."

"Noted," Tom said calmly.

Toby hopped in as Tom walked to the driver's side to take over. "Are we going to Paradigm Co. to see Miss Reed, President Fuller?"

"No." Toby narrowed his menacing eyes. "To Connor's hotel."

Tom's hand froze as he heard that, just as he was about to start the engine. He turned his head in astonishment. "To Connor's hotel? Are you going to meet him, President Fuller?"

Toby's rage was overlooked due to his downcast gaze. "Isn't it appropriate for me to pay my guest a visit after he's been here for so long? Furthermore, he has no right to exploit Sonia after his actions."

Even though he nodded his head in agreement, Tom was annoyed. "It is inappropriate of him to steal components from the Paradigm Co. to blackmail Miss Reed into releasing Anya. Even smaller companies do not employ such petty practices. If he weren't the head of the Salzburg Family, he could easily be mistaken for a lowly underling. How could he use such horrible measures to threaten a woman? He disgusts me."

Indeed, it was repulsive. Even though business people often resort to deceit and conspiracies, it is highly uncommon for someone to sink to the lowest of the low to take advantage of some smaller companies. Despite their superior resources and might, they reject the idea of resorting to this dishonorable solution. On the other hand, Connor does not appear to be the least bit embarrassed by his actions.

Hearing his assistant's critics, Toby slightly raised his gaze. "It's not surprising for him to do that. The fact that he shares a past with my mother is enough to tell that he is a complete jerk."

Tom smiled sheepishly. "You're right, President Fuller. As I've expected, you're the best at criticizing a scumbag. I have more to learn from you."

Toby ignored his flattering words while looking down. "Regarding Little Leaf's components, have you found out where Connor moved them to?"

Tom kept his eyes on the road and shook his head. "Nope. Although I haven't looked into it thoroughly, I believe it is still in Seafield. The old git from the underground reports that Miss Reed cooperated with him to purchase twenty tons of components. With such a significant quantity, it would be impossible to transport it out of the city in three days owing to the sheer number of procedures required.

After discovering that Connor had taken Miss Reed's company components, I made a personnel inquiry with the various checkpoints. They informed me that no such components were being transferred out of the city, indicating that the parts are still within the city."

Toby's brows relaxed as he heard this. "That's good to hear."

"Don't worry, President Fuller." Tom turned the steering wheel. "Since we know what Connor did to Miss Reed, we will try to loosen his tongue until he reveals the location of the components."

Toby glared at him. "Are you telling me what to do?"

How could he sit idly by while Sonia was bullied and her belongings were stolen when she was his girlfriend? It was logical for him to act to retrieve what she had lost.

Tom grinned as he adjusted his glasses. "I just wanted to let you know, President Fuller, that I'm worried you will be upset. The bullying of Miss Reed has put you in a bad mood, and I only mean to cheer you up a little. It's been three days and she still hasn't informed you about it.

We wouldn't have discovered Connor stole the components from her company if we hadn't tracked his assistant to the two companies she cooperated with. I'm curious about what she's thinking. I thought you two had reconciled. Why hasn't she asked you for help? Is it because she can solve the problem on her own?"

Toby's thin lips pursed as he maintained his silence, making it impossible to decipher his thoughts. Despite this, it was not difficult to ascertain that he was in a foul mood due to the gloomy air around him. Yes, he is in a bad mood.

As Tom had said, they wouldn't know what was happening at Paradigm Co. if they didn't find out where Connor's assistant was going that day.

When Toby spoke with Sonia over the phone three days earlier, he became concerned when he observed a change in her tone and questioned her about it. However, she assured him nothing had transpired and that it was only a misunderstanding with Asher.

Now, he knew it wasn't Asher's fault; Connor had stolen the components, which had set off her bad mood. She used Asher as an excuse to keep him in the dark about what was happening.

Toby took her word for it because nothing significant was happening. It was only now that he realized the depth of the panic and anguish she'd been hiding behind her grin. Without a doubt, Paradigm Co. would suffer a devastating loss if she could not retrieve the components.

Having realized this, he rubbed his forehead while experiencing conflicting emotions of sadness and rage. He couldn't believe Sonia had kept it a secret from him, and he was furious about it.

Toby was well aware the entire time that she wanted to handle some issues on her own without depending on him to help her. He supported her decision by limiting his interference in her business and personal concerns. This would prevent her from becoming angered and turned off by him.

In many conversations with Sonia, he emphasized that she should not feel bad about asking for help from him, as though doing so would indicate an unbalanced dynamic between them.

After all, Toby was her man and naturally wanted to assist her. Moreover, she was still fragile and needed his support behind the scenes.

He knew, though, that she would never listen because of her stubbornness, which came from her strong desire to prove that she was capable and could do well without his help.

As it turned out, she was still too naive to see through a lot of things. That was the reason why things were not going according to plans. But when he saw her dazzling eyes light up with confidence as she said she could do it, his heart softened, and he let her do everything she wanted.

The facts made it clear to him that his actions were wrong because Connor had exploited the situation to his advantage.

Chapter 999 Someone Is Watching Me

While driving, Tom reflected on the incident and said, "President Fuller, you said it's been three days since the incident. Has Miss Reed come up with a solution?"

When he heard Tom's words, Toby frowned.

Do I have a solution? Judging from my understanding of Sonia, she might have already found a solution. After all, I haven't seen any signs of worry or anxiety in the last three days and it's definitely not because of how well she acted. It is highly likely that she already has a solution, which explains why she is able to regularly continue our conversation.

If she did not, she would definitely have been distracted and I'd have noticed it, sooner or later. So, she definitely has a plan, but will this solution resolve all her problems?"

Tom was not surprised when Toby remained silent; instead, he turned the steering wheel and continued, "I guess Miss Reed didn't come up with any solution because according to what we know about Paradigm Co., those components are crucial for them. We'll be in a serious problem if we can't recover them. The consequences are devastating and there are only two viable options right now.

The first option is to get the components back whereas the second is to use the money to compensate for the missing components. However, Miss Reed may not be able to obtain that much money, or is she prepared to reimburse it?"

After speaking, Tom glanced in the rearview mirror to check on Toby seated in the backseat. I know that President Fuller had already given his supplementary credit card to Miss Reed and told her that she could use it at any time she wanted. As a result, her hesitating to use it is not crucial, but the question remains as to whether she is willing to withdraw the money.

On the other hand, I feel that Miss Reed will be unwilling to spend President Fuller's money. How could she be willing to do so when she did not inform him about the incident?

Tom's hypothesis was verified by Toby's reply.

Toby lowered his gaze and muttered quietly, "She's not going to swipe my card."

"I knew it." Tom exclaimed, "I'm confused about why Miss Reed is so adamant, though. Even though it is clear that she has your support, she insists on taking responsibility for everything alone. However, she lacks the ability and strength to satisfactorily address many situations now; why does she even bother?"

If I were Miss Reed, I'd be ecstatic to learn that President Fuller is on my side and will provide me with resources to spend so that I won't be as helpless. Miss Reed's thoughts and actions are baffling me.

"Do you still think Miss Reed doesn't fully trust you, President Fuller?" Tom made a guess as he turned back to look at Toby.

"Shut up," Toby hissed as his eyes narrowed. What does he mean when he says Sonia doesn't trust me completely? No way. She has to have total confidence in me. Perhaps, she just didn't want to depend too much on me.

However, Tom's statements made Toby uneasy.

Tom lowered his head and kept driving in silence after he realized he had said something inappropriate.

Toby took out his phone, opened Messenger, and looked for Sonia's contact. He then clicked in, intending to send her a message but didn't type anything, despite his fingers hovering over the typing bar for a long time. After a while, Toby removed his finger from the screen and quit Messenger.

He couldn't think of anything to say and had no idea how to approach or ask her for the reason why she hadn't informed him about the incident. Nonetheless, there was no use in asking again because he already knew the answer. Let's hear her out once I return the components to her.

Also, Toby realized he needed to get the record straight with her instead of lowering his guard down in response to her confident demeanor. It was vital for him to be forthright with her about his generosity being inappropriate. Not for her, at least not right now.

Meanwhile, after completing a document processing task, Sonia was a little unsettled and disturbed. It was akin to being caught with one's hand in the cookie jar.

"What's the matter?" Charles asked with concern as he watched Sonia's expression change while seated across her and playing games on his phone.

Sonia sipped her coffee and shook her head before responding, "It's alright. I'm a little anxious, but I'm fine right now."

"Are you feeling sick? Do you want me to call the doctor?" He grew anxious upon hearing her reply. He turned off the game and kept his phone away. In an instant, he stood up and extended his arm in an attempt to touch her forehead.

Daphne, who was in the lounge across from them, could see this scene through a crack in the open door as her eyes were filled with sadness and anger. She had known that President Lane was a kind and caring man, who was deliberately arrogant and pretentious to those who were not acquainted with him. Being one of those outsiders, she would never be the one whom he cared for.

A resigned Daphne closed the door and stopped looking at them. She had made up her mind to forget about him. If I continue to look, doesn't it mean I'm just asking for trouble? What's the point? After

letting go of the door handle, she turned around and sat by the bed in the lounge where she lowered her head and said nothing.

After Sonia smacked Charles' hand away, he appeared to sense something and turned to check the closed door to the lounge across the office.

She was in the middle of fixing her hair when she was startled by Charles' reaction and stopped abruptly. It was enough to make her instantaneously worried and with concern, she said, "What's the matter, Charles? What exactly are you staring at?"

"I was staring at your lounge, and I felt like someone was looking at me earlier," Charles said as he still glanced at the lounge door.

"Uhm... Is someone staring at you?" Sonia's eyes widened in surprise. How, oh, how did he manage to find out?

"Yes, I did feel someone watching me just now." He nodded, confirming his suspicion.

At that, he turned his head and narrowed his eyes at her as he spoke.

The unexpected expression in his eyes startled Sonia and the corners of her mouth twitched. "W-what?"

"You look quite terrified right now, Sonny. Are you... hiding someone inside?" Charles' eyes narrowed again as he leaned his head over.

"No!" She was full of fear and it was immediately apparent in her tone.

Sonia's overreaction validated Charles' claim that she was hiding someone in the lounge. Moreover, that person was looking at them earlier.

Sonia regained her composure and recognized that her behavior was giving the appearance of guilt. She was betraying her innocence by consciously denying it. She was upset and annoyed. It's over!

In the lounge, Daphne sprang to her feet in a state of terror and anxiety when she heard noises outside at that very moment. What should I do? President Lane noticed I was staring at him just now! Will he barge into the room and grab me? Her face paled as she paced the lounge, unsure what to do. She was terrified that Charles would come in any time, drag her out, and find out that she was pregnant.

Then...

The fear in Daphne's eyes grew as her face paled even more. Her eyes turned red as she clasped her hand and silently prayed that Sonia would be able to stop Charles from finding her.

Standing outside, Sonia was aware of the consequences of Charles discovering Daphne. She was prepared to do whatever it took to prevent it from happening.

After confirming that there was, in fact, someone in the lounge, he went to the room to conduct an investigation.

Sonia jumped to her feet and went around the desk in a flash as she trotted to Charles with outstretched arms. "What are you doing, Charles?"

He came to a stop and replied, "What am I doing? Obviously, I'll find out who you've been hiding in the lounge."

Chapter 1000 Where Is Daphne?

"No way!" A look of disapproval crossed Sonia's face as she hastily kept refusing.

Daphne was visibly shaken as she stood anxiously behind the lounge door and firmly grasped the door handle with both hands. It was obvious that she was resisting. So, she had to quickly stop Charles from entering the room by blocking the door while thinking that Sonia should give it her all and prevent Charles from entering.

Sonia's rejection had only fueled Charles' suspicions as he eventually asked, "Sonny, are you keeping a lover inside, which is why you won't let me look?"

"What?" Sonia's lips quivered into a questioning twitch as she answered, "A lover? Am I the kind of person that does that?"

"Explain why you're blocking my entry if that's the case." He rolled his eyes.

"It makes no difference why. I said no." Sonia's arm was still outstretched to block his way.

"Could you be anxious because Toby is in the room? That's not right. If he's your man, there's no need to keep him from me. To top it all off, he is a jealous man. If I'm here now, he'll be out in an instant. So, Sonny, who are you hiding behind closed doors? Are you doing something that might upset Toby?"

"Do you believe it is possible?" She rolled her eyes and let out a long sigh.

"It's impossible," he replied as he shook his head.

"That's it," Sonia stated flatly.

"Why won't you let me in if you aren't trying to keep a lover hidden inside and haven't done anything that would cause Toby any harm? Who is it that you have hidden inside? Why are you acting so suspiciously?" Charles asked while pointing to the lounge that was located behind her.

"I won't reveal who's inside, but I can tell you she's a girl. She felt uncomfortable, so I invited her to take a break in my lounge. She was ready to come out after her nap, but she's too embarrassed to leave my office while I have a visitor. She is pretty shy," she said as she lowered her arms.

"Oh, really?" He arched his brow.

Sonia looked at him coldly and responded, "Yes, without a doubt. How could I possibly betray Toby?"

“No, of course not! I believe you, then. It would be disrespectful and inappropriate for me to have a look given that the person in question is a girl,” Charles chuckled as he spoke.

“You shouldn’t be seeing in the first place.” Sonia sneered before continuing, “It’s almost lunchtime now. Let me buy your lunch, okay?” she said this as she looked at the watch on her wrist.

Such words were said to hold Charles at bay to allow Daphne to leave the lounge room. Otherwise, he would be endlessly curious about who was in the lounge, causing her to fear being discovered at any moment. Sonia was also anxious about the potential outcome of the encounter between the two. For this reason alone, Sonia knew that both she and Charles should leave the office.

After hearing Sonia’s words, he felt compelled to lower his head and rub his tummy. “Okay, I’ll admit it: I’m starting to get hungry. Where do you suggest we eat? Should we eat at the cafeteria or go to a nearby restaurant?”

Sonia flashed a grin as she reached the shelf where her purse was kept inside. “I lack the courage to ask you to the cafeteria because you are such a distinguished guest. Of course, we should eat at the restaurant. What kind of food are you craving right now?”

“On this cold day, let’s have a spicy dish. It’ll be delicious,” Charles answered as he licked the edge of his mouth.

Sonia nodded and said, “Of course, but I suppose you favor it because you fear the cold.”

Her eyes wandered down his bare chest and ankles as she spoke and she let out a mischievous laugh.

“What? Do I, Charles Lane, seem like the kind of man afraid of the cold?” His eyes widened in surprise and he swiftly shot back, “To be completely honest, all I care about is satisfying my craving for a spicy dish. As you have inferred, I do not suffer from a fear of the cold.”

After seeing the stubborn look on his face, she found it impossible to contain her laughter. “Well then. You don’t fear the cold because you’re the best? I was wrong.”

“Hmph! You’re right!” Charles proudly raised his chin.

“Okay.” Seeing him responding in such a manner, Sonia rolled her eyes. “Please wait for me outside. I’ll be there as soon as I change.”

“Alright.” He nodded and strolled away, hands in his pockets as he hummed.

Sonia shook her head in surprise as she gazed at his back. After making sure he was gone, she ran straight to the lounge.

She knocked on the lounge door with a hand, saying, “Daphne, please open the door. It’s me.”

Daphne turned the door handle and then pushed it open. When she realized it was Sonia and not Charles, she let out a sigh of relief and greeted, “Miss Reed.”

Daphne could not resist craning her neck to look around while welcoming Sonia as if she was searching for something.

“You don’t need to look,” Sonia reassured her, knowing who she was seeking. “Don’t worry; Charles has left.”

As soon as Daphne heard Sonia’s words, she quickly averted her gaze and smiled while pursing her lips. “I am very grateful to you, Miss Reed, for keeping President Lane from entering the lounge and coming over to find me. If not, the consequences will be severe. It’s my fault; I shouldn’t have peeked through the door in the first place, or else he wouldn’t have noticed that I was staring at him. I apologize for giving him the impression that you harbored a man inside and acted inappropriately against President Fuller. My sincere apologies to you, Miss Reed.”

“It’s alright. It’s not your fault, and you shouldn’t blame yourself either. Moreover, you are on my turf, so I’ll help you. I have just sent Charles out and I will take him to lunch. You are welcome to stay here until we leave Paradigm Co., at which point you are free to leave.”

Daphne was aware that Sonia’s aim was to keep her from being discovered by Charles by leaving the lounge earlier with him. “Okay, I understand. Miss Reed, thank you so much.”

A grateful Daphne nodded.

“There’s no need to thank me.” While removing her hand from Daphne’s shoulder, Sonia said, “All right, take a little break and relax. I should be going; if I am late, Charles will be suspicious, and that will cause problems down the road.”

“Goodbye, Miss Reed.” Daphne waved her hand.

Sonia returned the gesture before turning around to pack her belongings from the desk.

However, when Charles was done with his smoking, he had an idea that made him narrow his eyes as he glanced at the assistants and secretaries working at the office next to the chairman’s room. He threw the stubs of his cigarettes and opened the assistant secretary’s door. It was still early; Sonia’s assistants and the secretary were still working hard. As soon as they heard the door open, several heads swiveled to observe who was there.

When they saw Charles, they immediately greeted him. “Greetings, President Lane.”

He nodded, but his eyes darted about the room as if trying to locate someone.

Despite this, he could not locate the person he was seeking, so he pursed his lips and asked, “Where is Daphne?”

The other secretaries in the workplace knew that Daphne had been in a relationship with Charles before she started working for Paradigm Co. as Chairman Reed’s secretary. However, they were unaware that Charles and Daphne had ended their relationship and thought those two were in a superior-subordinate relationship.

When they heard his question, the assistant secretaries said without hesitation, "President Lane, Daphne is with Miss Reed. Didn't you see her when you were looking for Miss Reed?"