

## Standing before Love Chapter 171

Kris was bewildered, and a hint of surprise surfaced in her heart. She looked at the unsmiling but extremely captivating man in front of her. The thought of him coming alone to find her struck her mind. Now, he was agreeing to her invitation. Could it be that he's... actually into me?

Without waiting for her, Tony had already stepped forward with his pair of long legs and was walking out.

Kris hurried to catch up. When passing by Myra, she didn't forget to slam hard into her shoulder while saying delightedly, "Tsk. Don't waste your time. I'm telling you; this man is mine! Myra, I know you're also interested in him, but you should take a look at your current identity. I advise you not to waste your effort anymore!"

After speaking, she caught up with the man in front, and the two of them walked toward the elevator together.

Myra slowly turned around. At the elevator, the two of them seemed to be talking about something, and their expressions became more easy-going. Myra could see that the taut lines of Tony's cheeks had softened.

She felt a sting in her eyes. Just now, she called Tony another two times, but he didn't answer any of the calls. Her expression turned hard.

When Myra came out of the pantry, Tilly was back from her physical check-up. As soon as she returned, she ran to Myra's office excitedly and happily asked, "I heard that Director Hart came in the morning. Surely you're going to have lunch together, right?"

Myra paused, then said dully, "He already has an appointment."

"He has an appointment?" Tilly wasn't surprised, as Tony was indeed a busy man. But... She leaned toward Myra. "Miss Stark, are you upset?"

After thinking for a while, she continued, "Who upset you? Miss Stark, tell me and I'll report to Dreamboat Tony immediately. I'll get him to deal with them!"

Myra took a deep breath, then suddenly said, "Tilly, I need to ask you something... Imagine you have a boyfriend, and your boyfriend has an ex-

girlfriend. Although he has broken all ties with his ex-girlfriend, he still may occasionally dream about her. If you knew about it, would you be angry?"

Being the clever person that she was, Tilly instantly realized what Myra had encountered.

She pondered for a while before asking cautiously, "Myra, you dreamed about your ex, and Dreamboat Tony found out about it... So, now you're at odds with each other?"

"I guess so..." Myra nodded reluctantly. "I know I don't love Sean anymore, but I don't know why I would dream about him. I must've said something while I was dreaming, so today, he..."

"I was just thinking that the people outside were spouting nonsense about Dreamboat Tony talking with the woman on the other side for the whole morning! They even said that the two of them went to have lunch together. I didn't believe it at first, but it seems like it's true!"

Tilly rolled her eyes and said helplessly, "Myra, I don't know about anyone else, but if it was me, even if I don't show it, I'd still be a little hurt. Although I believe you from the perspective of a bystander, Director Hart's way of thinking is too complicated. I can't predict it. He probably just feels awkward. Myra, just coax him well and try to explain it to him! I believe he's not an unreasonable man! Moreover, Director Hart has been pursuing you for so long, so how could he have the heart to really be angry with you?"

At Tilly's reassurance, Myra felt a little relieved, but she was still skeptical. "You really think so?"

"Trust me. No matter how powerful a man is, he needs a woman to coax him." Tilly leaned toward Myra's ear and whispered, "And I promise, Director Hart is just waiting for you to give in."

Sometimes, the larger a man's ego, the harder he was to subdue.

Myra packed up her things and nodded at her. "I won't eat with you at noon then."

"I understand, Myra!" Tilly gave her an ambiguous smile. "Coax Director Hart well!"

At noon, Myra drove to Only One.

The manager quickly came to welcome her. “Miss Stark, regarding the diamond you left here some time ago, we’ve cut it carefully according to your instructions, and it has been perfectly set. It’s ready now, waiting for you to collect it.”

Myra gave him a nod. Not long after, she caught sight of the diamond that she had sent here last time. It had been cut and placed into two rings, and the dark blue crystals shone with a mysterious and elegant sparkle.

Slowly, she put one of the rings on her left middle finger. It fit just right.

Thinking of what she was going to do later, a faint blush appeared on Myra’s face.

Nodding to the manager, she said, “Please help me wrap it up.”

After leaving the jewelry store, Myra drove to the Ritz Carlton.

As soon as she got out of the car, Aaron ran to her and whispered, “I saw him enter the VVIP room with Kris. Originally, I didn’t want to let them use that room, but Mr. Engelhard allowed it, so I didn’t have a choice.”

Hearing Aaron defend himself, Myra’s heart softened and she said gently to him, “It’s okay. They’re just here to talk about business.”

“Hah! I sure hope so! Kris seemed more than eager to get entangled with that Hart kid! Myra, you have to keep an eye on your man.”

Myra thought of the item that was currently in the bag, then told Aaron, “I want the private room next to them.”

The manager finally smiled. “Mr. Engelhard has already prepared it. I was still wondering if you were coming... Myra, are you serious about that Hart kid?”

“Yes.” Myra nodded solemnly.

She was a little uncertain at the beginning, but now, she was absolutely sure that she wanted to be with him, and she was willing to dedicate herself to him, just as he had done with her.

Soon, she reached the private room next to theirs.

However, the Ritz Carlton had good privacy, so Myra couldn't hear anything from next door at all.

She gave it some thought, then sent a text message to Tony.

"Tony, I'm in the private room next to you. I want to give you a gift. Can you please come over?"

The text message was sent, but was ignored.

Myra had expected this, so she simply got out of the private room and casually beckoned a waiter over before handing him an object. "I need to trouble you with something. Later..."

Earlier, when Kris came out from the Stark Tower, she saw the silver Bentley that was parked outside the entrance.

Obviously, it was Tony's car.

Her face lit up with glee. She was about to follow Tony's footsteps and get into the car, but to her surprise, after Tony got into the car, he closed the back seat door without asking her, and the car quickly drove off.

Her face turned a little stiff. She didn't expect Tony to be so ill-mannered, so she could only swallow her anger and ask her assistant to bring her car to the front. She then chased after Tony's car and drove toward the Ritz Carlton.

Tony was an incomparable man in Bradford City, and none of the men she had met before could compare to him.

It was inevitable for him to be so arrogant.

Kris knew that such a man had his own unique charm and taste.

If I could marry into the Hart Family... Myra wouldn't dare to make fun of me anymore! The corners of Kris' lips were curled slightly, and after getting into the car, she took out her cosmetic bag and reapplied her makeup.

After getting out of the car, fortunately, Tony didn't go directly into the private room.

When Kris stepped out, the perfect smile on her face had been restored as she walked toward the man. "Director Hart, let's go in."

She smiled at him.

She knew how beautiful she was when she smiled.

Seeing the look on her face, Tony narrowed his eyes slightly. Then, he walked inside expressionlessly.

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This meal was probably one that Kris had spent the most thought on.

Yet, somehow, Tony's expression was sour from the very beginning. Ever since they entered the private room, Kris' advances had been repeatedly turned down.

"Director Hart, I heard that you love playing golf. I quite like it too. My father was the one who taught me. I wonder if we can play together soon."

Kris tried to remain calm as she expressed her status in the Stark Family in hopes of giving herself extra credit.

When she ate, she acted even more elegant than usual.

Tony took out a cigarette and lit it before casting her a glance. "I've been busy lately."

Kris' body went slightly stiff, but she quickly recovered with a laugh. "That's normal. Since you're busy, we'll talk about it again in the future when you're free. By the way, Director Hart, how high of a chance does the Stark Group have of cooperating with the Hart Group on the Elsinore Garden Project?"

The fact that Tony came to the Stark Group to personally meet with her today showed that he intended to let them take charge of this project. Besides, he came to the office but didn't look for anyone else—not even her father. As for his purpose... Kris was well aware that some men liked to maintain their image. If they expressed their feelings at once, it would be meaningless.

Tony inhaled deeply, then slowly exhaled white mist through his thin lips. His posture was laid-back, yet he gave off a domineering and reserved aura that filled Kris with fascination.

For a man like him, even if he didn't have any bonus traits, his presence alone was enough to drive a number of women crazy!

Kris was about to continue talking about the Elsinore Garden Project when suddenly, Tony's phone vibrated and he quickly retrieved it. Even though he just glanced casually at his phone, Kris sensed that his expression changed for the better. But, when he faced her again, he was still a little indifferent.

"Director Hart, actually, I really admire you." Kris felt an inexplicable sense of alarm in her heart. Perhaps it was the womanly sixth sense in her telling her that she had to speed up her pace and not let him escape when he was just within her grasp. She let out a light cough, then displayed her most beautiful look for Tony. Lifting her fingers, she tucked her hair behind her ears. "I—"

"Miss Stark, you look quite like your sister." Just as Kris was about to speak, Tony interrupted her.

He stubbed out the cigarette but showed no intention of picking up his cutlery.

Kris laughed dryly. "Everyone says that we look alike."

After speaking, Kris suddenly remembered that Myra and Tony lived next to each other. The two... must have known each other for some time. However, when they were in the elevator that day, she didn't see them greet each other. It was as if they didn't know each other.

Her heart wavered and she said nonchalantly, "My sister is two years older than me. She married Sean from the Chase Family two years ago. But, I heard that she didn't behave well and was forced by the Chase Family to get a divorce. I've just recently returned to the Stark Group, but I won't believe those things that people are saying. Although my sister has always had some opinions of me, I still believe her. She wouldn't go fooling around outside."

Her statement had a certain quality to it. Not only did she mention Myra's marriage issues, she even brought up that Myra was a divorcee, and that she had a bad personality—all while managing to praise herself.

Even so, she saw that there was no change in expression on the man opposite her. Instead, his eyes seemed to have hardened.

Biting her lip, Kris asked cautiously, "I don't know if I'm just thinking too much, but I feel like you've encountered something or someone that's unsatisfactory. Today, you seem... a little upset?"

"You think so?" Tony glanced back at her with a blank look. The emotions in his eyes were unreadable, and it made Kris somewhat frustrated.

She seemed to have asked him out at an untimely moment, as Tony was obviously in a bad mood at present.

"Hehe, there's no such thing as a smooth-sailing life. Every undesirable thing will eventually pass. Director Hart, if you treat me as a friend, why don't you tell me what you're upset about? Perhaps having a listening ear will make you feel better."

Kris spared no effort to continue acting like an intellectual woman.

At this moment, there was a sudden knock on the door of the private room. Kris frowned slightly, then she controlled herself and called out impatiently, "Come in."

A waiter walked in with a tray.

Kris' eyebrows furrowed even more when she saw what was on the tray. "What's this?"

Giving her an apologetic smile, the waiter walked toward Tony. "Mr. Hart, a young lady gave this to you, saying that she had just sent you a text message. The lady also said that she's just returning this to its original owner."

Kris' eyebrows twitched. Without a doubt, she knew what was inside a red velvet box like that.

As a trace of anger grew in her heart, she looked nervously at Tony.

Since the man had come to meet her in person, it indicated that he had some interest in her, so he wouldn't possibly accept another woman's gift right now.

But, Kris was wrong. Although Tony's expression was complicated and incomprehensible, he still accepted the red velvet box.

When the waiter saw Tony taking the box, he breathed a sigh of relief and said, "The lady said that she'll wait for you, Mr. Hart."

With that, the waiter left.

An overwhelming wave of rage surged inside Kris.

She wondered which woman saw her meeting with Tony and decided to ruin things! One hand was placed on her knee, and her nails were nearly digging into the palm of her hand.

On the surface, she tried to pretend to be composed as she asked Tony, "Director Hart, I wonder which lady knew that you were dining at the Ritz Carlton and came here to send you a gift?"

"My lover," Tony answered casually, playing with the velvet box.

"Lover!" Kris' voice rang out suddenly.

Realizing that she had lost herself, Kris eased her distorted face.

Didn't he come to express his goodwill? Why does he suddenly have a lover? And, how come I've never heard of this before? Hasn't he been single all this while?

For an instant, too many questions popped up in Kris' mind, and she could no longer maintain the perfect smile that had been on her face just now.

She forced out the words. "Director Hart, you're kidding, right?"

Tony looked up abruptly, then his dark eyes fixed the woman in front of him with a blank gaze. "Do you think I'm kidding?"

Kris' expression hardened.

"Miss Stark, have you eaten your fill?" Tony was already standing up.

When he walked into the private room earlier, not only did he not take off his jacket, but he also didn't pick up the cutlery on the table. He just looked like he was ready to leave.

He had no plans to eat with me at all!

Kris steadied herself again, but she couldn't hold it in anymore. Standing up, her expression turned cold as well. "Director Hart, what's the meaning of this?"



“Miss Stark, you gave me a warm invite, so it wouldn’t be nice of me to decline,” Tony responded bleakly.

“Wouldn’t be nice to decline? I think you did it on purpose! Director Hart, since you didn’t plan on eating with me at all, why did you bother coming to the Ritz Carlton?”

Kris was angry from embarrassment.

When she looked at the red velvet box in Tony’s hand, something clicked in her mind, and she looked straight at him. “Director Hart, you came today to have lunch with someone else, right?!”

Tony lit another cigarette, refusing to comment. His voice was impassive and indifferent as he said, “I’ll hand the Elsinore Garden Project to the Stark Group.”

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Kris was dumbfounded, unable to keep up with Tony’s train of thought at all. A mix of emotions flooded her eyes and her face relaxed a little. “All right. Then—”

“But, I’m sorry, Miss Stark. I can’t let you be in charge of this project.”

What he just said diminished Kris’ ability to maintain her ladylike demeanor. Her face twisted horribly. “Director Hart, I didn’t do anything to upset you. Aren’t you going a bit too far?”

“Upset me?” Tony’s eyes turned frosty in an instant. His gaze swept over her plainly before he walked out. “Miss Stark, perhaps you don’t know, but I cover my shortcomings.”

After that, his figure disappeared from the door of the private room.

Inside the room, there was a ‘crash’ as plates were hurled onto the ground.

Kris was trembling with anger.

She didn’t expect that the beautiful moment she anticipated would turn out to be like this.

Obviously, she almost had Tony in the palm of her hands. Who would suddenly intervene and disrupt her plans? Damn it! His lover, huh?

Thinking of how he said 'I cover my shortcomings' before he left, Kris pushed down her anger and thought of all the things she had done since the beginning that was related to Tony. She simply couldn't remember who she had offended to let Tony humiliate her this way!

Tony Hart...

Kris silently muttered these two words.

To date, not a single man that Kris wanted had escaped her grasp!

Since his lover's existence hadn't been announced yet, she must not have an important position in Tony's heart.

Kris figured that he was just fooling around. After he got bored with her, he would get rid of her.

Kris suddenly thought of what the waiter said to Tony.

"The lady said that she'll wait for you, Mr. Tony."

A cold gleam flashed across Kris' eyes.

After leaving the private room, Tony stopped at the door, then leaned against the wall and opened the red velvet box that the waiter had just given him. To his surprise, there was a ring inside the box. What was even more surprising was the diamond on the ring.

He suddenly thought of the waiter's words.

"The lady also said that she's just returning this to its original owner."

Tony squinted his eyes and carefully studied the diamond again.

The corners of his mouth froze, and a touch of warmth rose up inside him.

Was Myra telling him that back when she cried in his arms, she already felt something for him? So, after pulling off his diamond cufflinks, she didn't return it to him, but had kept it for herself instead?

There was no doubt that when Myra was asleep in his arms last night, she muttered the name of the other man in her sleep. It truly made him feel uncomfortable.

But, when Kris slandered Myra just now, intentionally or otherwise, Tony knew deep down that he didn't like it when people said such things about her.

Which was why he said those things so mercilessly to Kris earlier. It was also why he had done such a childish act today.

Tony gave the exquisite ring a firm squeeze, then consciously placed it back into the box before pushing open the door of the next private room.

Inside, a woman had her back facing him, and she was eating at a table full of food.

She has quite the appetite.

Tony's eyes narrowed slightly as he walked straight over, pulled out the chair next to her, and sat down. He was about to smoke a cigarette when a fair hand suddenly reached out from beside him to snatch the cigarette away and throw it aside.

Meeting his mischievous eyes, Myra's gaze was extremely soft as she waved her hand at him. "Did you see the gift I gave you? Look; I have one too. I had a couple's set custom-made. Next time, when I wear it, everyone will know that I belong to someone."

Perhaps it was the words 'couple's set' that relieved Tony's sulking. Despite that, he was still scowling when he grunted faintly.

Myra, however, was not discouraged. She took the red velvet box from his hands and grabbed his left hand.

In the beginning, Tony's hand was very stiff, but Myra simply looked at him with a pair of huge, bright eyes that were full of pleadings. In the end, he couldn't bear to be ruthless and let her take his hand.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Myra took out the ring from the box before carefully putting it on the middle finger of Tony's left hand.

His fingers were beautiful; they were all slender and with distinct joints. Myra slid the ring little by little onto his finger, but she was rather nervous.

Tony lowered his head and saw Myra's long eyelashes. Her forehead was fair while her long curly hair draped softly over her shoulders; her face was scrunched up in concentration.

After Myra put on the ring, she promptly looked up.

Tony couldn't shift his gaze in time, so the woman caught sight of the gentleness in his eyes at this moment.

She was surprised, and she felt as if something had crashed into her heart. She could take it no longer, so she hugged the man in front of her and said gloomily, "Tony... I had a dream about Sean last night. You're unhappy today because of that, right?"

Tony's body became rigid immediately, and his face sank. He wanted to push Myra away, but she only held him even tighter.

"I don't know if I said something wrong last night, but in the dream, you appeared and asked me if I still have feelings for Sean. You asked me why I still dreamed about him. In fact, I don't know why I dreamed about him." Myra spoke rapidly, fearing that the man in front of her would interrupt her. She continued in a low voice, "But, I told you that I don't like Sean anymore. I really don't."

They had argued because of Sean for way too long and for too many times. If this problem wasn't solved, it would always be like a fishbone that was lodged in both of their throats.

Myra's grip tightened involuntarily. "I have no way of changing the past six years. If God will let me do it all over again, I'll definitely wait for you to show up. But..." She took a deep breath and looked up. As she fixed her gaze on the man with mixed emotions in his eyes, she felt a little helpless. "I can't change what happened in the past six years. If you're still concerned about this issue, then I can leave you for a while. Maybe when the both of us calm down—"

When she said the last sentence, she slowly let go of her arms that were around Tony's waist.

When Tony heard her say 'I can leave you for a while', his expression changed slightly, and his eyes turned as gloomy as the sky before a storm. Slightly narrowing his eyes, he stared at her. "You want to leave me?"

Myra shook her head roughly. "I didn't say that I want to leave you. I just wanted to give both of us space to calm down. We'll wait until—"

"Myra, you're heartless!" Tony suddenly interrupted her before she said something that would anger him even more.

Myra's body went stiff. Lifting her head, she met Tony's rage-filled eyes. "Then, do you want me to leave? Tony, do you believe me? I don't love Sean. Even though I dreamed about him, I've long since stopped loving him."

Peering at her calm face, Tony realized that she had said those things just now to agitate him.

She had deliberately said such things knowing that he wouldn't be willing to let her leave.

There was a huge wave in Tony's eyes, and the dark clouds inside rolled over layer by layer. He reckoned if other women dared to act so recklessly with him, he would've made them suffer to no end.

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Myra stared straight into Tony's eyes. Her eyes were as tranquil and lovely as the moon on an autumn night. There was no sign of impatience, and Tony couldn't explain why they were able to soothe his aggravation, leading him to trust her words subconsciously. He quickly retracted his gaze.

Noticing his behavior, Myra felt a sourness and numbness at the back of her throat. She took him into her arms again and whispered, "To be honest, I don't want to leave you too. All I want is for you to keep me. Tony... I'm in love with you. So, it hurts me when you think that I still love Sean."

Then, the man in her arms stiffened. Myra felt her eyes burning. She leaned in before she suddenly gave him a peck at the corner of his mouth. "Tilly told me that men need coaxing too. Here I am, coaxing you like this, so aren't you going to forgive me?" She looked into his eyes. As usual, his eyes were deep and cold. Yet, at this moment, there was an incomprehensible emotion inside them.

Back when Myra was in love with Sean, she committed herself to the relationship and did all sorts of things for him. Nonetheless, to coax and comfort someone like that was something she had never done before because she knew Sean didn't love her and was sure that Tony did. Her gaze dimmed gradually at Tony's constant silence. Slowly, she let go of him and got up on her feet.

A split second later, Myra was pulled downward by the man in front of her again, and she ended up sitting on his lap. One of his hands was wrapped around her waist while the other was grabbing her shoulder. His grip on her was so strong that she felt like he could crush her bones.

Myra sat down at once. By the time she looked up, her eyes met a pair of bottomless, gloomy eyes. "Myra, sometimes I wish I had never met you!" Tony's thin lips parted and closed. His expression sank as though a thunderstorm was approaching.

If he had never met her, Elliot and the others' jokes about his love life might have come true. He might have simply found a woman, who could aid him in his career, and married her. There might be no love between them, and they would spend the rest of their lives dully. Yet, he ended up bumping into her!

Tony remembered their first encounter; he was still trapped in that feeling and unable to free himself from it... Looking at the pair of innocent eyes in front of him, he wished he could strangle the owner to death. He reckoned that might be the best way for him to escape from her constant aggravating behaviors.

"You're a sweet-talking liar!" Savagely, he spat out those words. Then, he ducked down his head and pressed his lips against hers fiercely. His eyes narrowed before he bit her lip hard.

Myra moaned in pain. This time, she wrapped her arms around his neck obediently. Tony's gaze deepened at her response. He tightened his grip on her waist and pressed her closer to him as if he wanted to melt her into his body.

They didn't know how long they kissed. Nevertheless, Myra knew Tony finally released her from the kiss when she was in need of oxygen and her vision went black. Her face was blushed to the extreme. As she gasped for air desperately, she buried her face into his arms. His chest was toned, and it always gave her a great sense of security. She snuggled into his embrace and said softly, "Have you forgiven me?"

Tony's eyes darkened when he heard her question. He then hugged the woman in his arms tightly. After a long moment of silence, he said with his hoarse voice, "Next time, stay away from that b\*stard. Don't talk to him, and don't let him bother you again."

Although Myra knew there were things that she couldn't control, she didn't want to irritate the man in front of her again. Thus, she nodded obediently. "Okay."

"And don't think about him! Stop letting him into your dreams!" He was getting unreasonable, but Myra proceeded to nod in agreement gently. "I won't think about him anymore. In fact, I've never thought about him. If he shows up in my dreams again, I'll kick him out. Does that sound good to you?"

Tony's expression finally got better, although his face remained stoic. Nevertheless, Myra was finally relieved. She pressed her face against his chest and thought, As expected, men need coaxing too. Although Tony is a macho man, he's quite childish at times as well!

The pair snuggled together, and the tense atmosphere slowly loosened up and became warm. Myra no longer wanted to eat. Every now and then, she would play with the buttons on Tony's shirt. Seeing the ring on her left hand, she felt her heart soften.

"Tony, you're so much better than Sean. You're better than him in everything. Why are you still afraid that I'd like him instead of you?" she muttered.

Tony ducked his head at her remarks. His face was still blank, but his gaze was deep and dark. Those eyes that were staring at Myra were so deep that she could see no end in them. Myra had no idea why she felt like someone was grabbing her heart. She shuddered at the sight of him and wanted to look away. However, before she could turn away, a big hand quickly took hold of her head.

"Myra," he called her with a deep, hoarse voice.

Myra didn't make a sound. Instead, she bit her lip hard. Tony's gaze became darker. Suddenly, he kissed her again. Myra knew she was comforting him, so she didn't mind taking the initiative once in a while! As she felt her heart racing and about to jump out of her throat, she went all out...

When they were leaving the room, Myra took a glance at the man beside her, whose brows were relaxed although his side profile remained cold. She couldn't help but shoot him a vicious glare.

"What's wrong? Do you still want it?" Tony turned around all of a sudden and whispered in her ear.

Tony's voice was beautiful, and it reminded Myra of a female employee back in her previous company. After she fell head over heels for a voice actor, she exaggerated, "Just listening to him can get you pregnant!"

Even though Myra thought she had oversold his voice, when Tony was whispering in her ear, she really thought she could melt.

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"We're outside!"

Myra quickly turned her head away. Her ears were flushing as if blood was about to drip out from them. Tony could see the fine hair around her ears. The softness hit something in his heart. Suddenly, he pulled her into his arms.

Myra struggled to break free. Nonetheless, realizing that she couldn't break free from him, she gave up and let him be, walking out of the Ritz Carlton half-hugged and half-dragged by him. When they came to the entrance, she saw Aaron blinking at her as he laughed at her mischievously. She couldn't help but glare at him.

However, Aaron soon felt a cold gaze glancing at him. In the next instant, his face stiffened. Letting out a dry cough, he looked away and thought, This kid from the Hart Family is too mean.

By the time they got to the entrance, the valet quickly got Tony his silver sports car.

Tony opened the door to the passenger seat. After Myra got in, he went around the car and got into the driver's seat. Yet, the car did not leave immediately. Closing the door, Tony proceeded to stare at Myra with his calm gaze. He didn't speak as he pulled his lips into a tight line.

For a second, Myra didn't know what was happening. Nevertheless, she quickly took in his intention and couldn't help but curse him in secret for his



stinginess. Without a choice, she leaned closer to him and went on to tug at his safety belt and fastened it carefully. After that, she glanced at his stunning face. Leaning in on a whim, she gave him a peck on his pursed lips. Then, she returned to her seat and sat properly, learning the way he always acted after doing something indecent. When she noticed his mischievous glance, she tried to keep her composure and asked, "Aren't we leaving?"

Her expression managed to elicit a chuckle from Tony. There was finally a touch of softness in his eyes. He didn't say anything to her question. Instead, he started the engine and drove the car into the flowing traffic.

Unbeknownst to them, after their departure, a woman came out from behind an enormous pot of a pine tree that was taller than an average man outside the entrance of the Ritz Carlton. She was beautiful and delicate. Yet, her gorgeous face was rather twisted at the moment.

Kris' nails had already dug into her flesh, but she couldn't feel the pain in her palm. She finally understood what Tony meant when he said he covered his shortcomings! She didn't expect Myra to be the one that had hooked up with him! Myra was the one who made him leave when they were in the middle of a meal!

Myra... Myra... You're a master! How did you manage to hide it so well?

No wonder Myra still looked so indifferent after she got a divorce from her beloved Sean. She even so quickly committed herself to another relationship, looking oh-so-sweet! Turns out she hooked up with Tony!

Myra gave him a ring and fastened his seatbelt for him. She even flirted with him and kissed him in public! How can she be so shameless! No wonder she looked so fearless when she came back to the Stark Group!

Kris' hands were trembling out of anger. Quickly, she pulled out her phone and called a number. When the call was connected, she exclaimed angrily and desperately, "Didn't you want me to stop her from getting her hands on the Stark Group when you told me her actual capabilities? Then, why didn't you tell me—" She came to a stop abruptly.

As a man, Tony was a great temptation for most women. At least that was the case for Kris. She was strongly attracted to him, and she wanted to be with him no matter what! She knew very well that a man like Tony wouldn't lay his eyes on a woman so easily, let alone a divorced woman like Myra! From the

fact that he didn't announce their relationship to the public, she knew he was only fooling around with Myra! Therefore, how could she lose her head!

In the blink of an eye, many thoughts had crossed Kris' mind. She couldn't expose something like that on her own! She would never allow herself to appear as if she had been defeated by Myra to the outsiders! She wanted to kick Myra away from Tony's side and replace her!

When the one on the other side heard her pause, they asked, "Didn't tell you what?"

For a moment, Kris was overwhelmed by a mixture of wrath and hatred. Coldly, she replied, "Nothing. Lyla Fisher, we're on the same side. I hope you'll never keep anything away from me. Remember; Myra is our common enemy. If you want to remain as the young mistress of the Chase Family without worries, you better help me take over the Stark Group! This is also for your own good!"

On the other side of the phone, when Lyla, who had been annoyed by the small quarrel with Eve, heard Kris' tone, she was slightly discontented. "I have nothing to hide from you, Miss Stark. As for you... Huh. I don't mind if you're hiding something from me. We are, of course, allies. So, you should quickly handle Myra. Don't go out for wool and come home shorn. You won't look good by then."

At her remarks, Kris' expression sank. She wanted to say something more, but Lyla had already hung up.

Lyla was the Chase Family's young mistress. However, her life didn't go according to her plan. Back then, Eve allowed her to get married to Sean in order to save the Chase Group. Nevertheless, Eve had been making Lyla's life difficult after she got married into the family. Every time she came back from a day of shopping, Eve was either complaining that she spent lavishly, or that she never stayed home after the marriage and never helped out with the chores.

She found Eve's complaints ridiculous because she only spent the money she saved before the marriage. Sean worked daily, so he had no time for her. If she didn't go out shopping and stayed home all the time, she would have died of boredom. Besides, didn't they hire housemaids to do the chores?

Knowing that Eve merely found her dissatisfying, Lyla decided to put up with her initially, thinking that they would get along after they spent some time together. Yet, Eve was only getting worse. When Lyla came back this afternoon, Eve didn't even ask the housemaid to cook her lunch for her. Instead, she simply left her a 'cook yourself if you want to eat' before going upstairs indifferently.

Lyla's face darkened as she tossed her phone on the sofa. Just when the phone landed on the sofa, it went off with a buzz. Annoyed, she didn't want to answer the call.

However, her ringtone had always been loud. Soon, Eve came out of her room with a gloomy expression. With her face cold, Eve looked down at her arrogantly. "Can't you turn down the volume? Don't you know that I'm used to taking a nap in the afternoon?"

Lyla's body stiffened. Then, she tightened her lips slightly. "I'm sorry, Mom. I'll turn the volume down now."

When Eve heard her calling her 'Mom', she wanted to say something subconsciously. Nevertheless, before she could say it out loud, her rationale held her back. Turning around, she slammed the door behind her with a 'bang'.

Lyla's expression became uglier. Eve treated her as if she was her God when she needed her to do something. Now that the Chase Group's crisis was over, she loathed her in every way. She always acted as though she was mightier than her; as if Lyla was only married into the Chase Family after groveling by her feet!

Picking up her phone, Lyla glanced at the caller ID in discontent. The moment she saw the number, she froze. With her phone in her hand, she hurried outside.

Right at that moment, Eve suddenly came out of her room. Lyla's nervous expression didn't go unnoticed by her. Her eyes narrowed in suspicion. It's just a phone call. Is it necessary to answer it outside?

It was a phone call that Lyla thought necessary to answer outside. And she even had to answer it without anybody noticing.

After she left the house, the call that had been disconnected came again.

## Standing before Love Chapter 176

This time, Lyla took a deep breath before quickly answering the call. Immediately, a gloomy man's voice was heard on the line. "Lyla, it's been so long since you went back. Did you find yourself a new boy toy? You forgot about me so fast, and you didn't even pick up my call!"

As soon as Lyla heard his gloomy and ruthless voice, her hand trembled subconsciously. Then, she pretended as though she was cold when she said, "Director Walton, I broke up with you before I left. I hope you won't call me again. You're disturbing me."

"Ugh..." There seemed to be a woman moaning softly from the other side of the phone, and it was coupled with an ambiguous thumping sound. Lyla was very clear as to what was happening over there. Although she felt disgusted, she only bit her lip instead of hanging up. Gideon's cold voice that sounded discontented rose again. "Disturbing... It looks like you've really found yourself someone new. But, what should we do? When you first came to me, this game wasn't something you could end just because you wanted to. Now that you've found someone better, you want to leave? You never asked if I agreed!"

As his merciless voice sounded, Lyla heard that woman crying out in pain too. Her expression changed subtly. Taking a deep breath, she tried to soften her tone. "Director Walton, you promised me that if I followed you, you would make sure to inform your family about our relationship and marry me. But, I was with you for over a year, and you didn't marry me. Instead, you're fooling around with more and more women! I love you, but I can't stand the thought of sharing you with other women at the same time. I'd rather die..."

"You love me?" echoed the man as if he had heard a joke. He went on with his disdainful tone, "It just so happens that I'll be going back to Bradford City later next month. I would like to see how much you love me by then!" After saying that, he hung up straight away.

When Lyla heard the beep sound as the call ended, she only felt a chill all over her body.

That gloomy man was as ruthless as the devil. Back then, when she first went to him, she did it partly because she didn't have a choice and partly because it was a fantasy of hers. It turned out that he would never belong to a woman.

Besides, he had this weird kink in bed where he would torture her to the point of death. This was also one of the main reasons she hated Myra so much.

If he's coming to Bradford City...

"Who did you just talk to on the phone?" Suddenly, a voice rose. In that instant, Lyla felt the hair on the back of her neck stand on end. She quickly turned around, only to see Eve walking out from the house without an expression.

She forced out a smile. "Mom, weren't you taking a nap? Why did you come out?"

However, Eve seemed like she didn't hear her question. She stared straight at Lyla. "Are you feeling guilty? Who did you talk to on the phone just now?"

"Guilty?" Lyla pretended to be indifferent as she smiled at her. "I was just worried that I would disturb you, so I came out and answered the call. It was a friend from abroad who's coming to Bradford City next month and wants to look for me."

"A friend?" Lyla's stiffened figure didn't go unnoticed by Eve when she called her earlier. She twisted the corners of her mouth. "Male or female?"

Lyla noticed the meaning behind Eve's question, and the smile she barely managed to put on faded in an instant. She returned her gaze and suddenly, she got tired of having to deal with her constant harassment. Faintly, she said, "Mom, don't you believe me? I'm married to Sean, so I'll never hurt him. You don't want to see this family fall apart, do you? It's tough for Sean to get caught in the middle of our squabbles."

Eve never paid much attention to Lyla's words. However, she agreed with her earlier statement. Now that Lyla was married to her son, if the two of them really got into a fight, her son would suffer the most.

To be honest, the reason Eve's attitude toward Lyla changed recently was due to a chat she had with her friends some time ago at the salon.

After the crisis at the Chase Group, she started hanging out with her friends again. Those rich ladies loved to compare everything between themselves, including their jewelry, their outfits, their sons, and their daughters-in-law. At first, Eve despised that behavior. However, after Sean divorced Myra and

married Lyla, somehow, she started to concern herself with what they said. For instance, which family's daughter-in-law was married to their son with how much dowry, and whose daughter-in-law was the backbone of the project their son had completed. The more she heard about those things, the more depressed she got. Eventually, one of her friends asked her about Lyla.

Eve had no idea if that woman had asked her intentionally even though she knew Lyla's identity and that she couldn't do anything to help the Chase Group. Eve was embarrassed by her question. Nevertheless, she didn't want to lose face in front of them. Hence, she said calmly, "Our Lyla is an acquaintance of the Walton Group and the Hart Group. When the Chase Group encountered some financial issues and couldn't sell the land in Hillville, Lyla was the one who got a customer to buy it."

Immediately, her friends started looking at her differently as they praised Lyla and her luck.

Eve was slightly delighted for a while. Although she wasn't satisfied with Lyla, she was somewhat useful. Suddenly, she heard one of her friends say, "Wait; didn't the Hart Group terminate Lyla's commercial endorsement publicly? They even said that the Hart Group will never find her to endorse their products anymore. How could she possibly be good friends with them?"

At that moment, Eve was caught off guard. Lyla was the one who told her that she was an acquaintance of the Walton Group. However, her relationship with the Hart Group was something she learned from her son. Besides, she didn't know that the Hart Group had terminated Lyla's endorsement contract. Or perhaps, she should say that she never cared about her matters at all.

Then, her friends started to agree with that earlier woman, saying that they had heard about that as well.

At the end of the day, Eve was no longer in a good mood. Her friends had been looking at her as though she was lying in order to build some kind of relationship with the Hart Group and the Walton Group. On the verge of flying into a rage, she heard those women criticizing her behind her back when she was in the restroom.

"Don't you guys think that Mrs. Chase is dumb? How can she let her son divorce the girl from the Stark Family and marry an underrated pianist who only knows how to have fun?"

“That’s right! I call her a pianist out of respect, but she’s merely making a living as a performer. Two days ago, I even saw her shopping for designer clothing and purses in a high-end shop like a country bumpkin. For God’s sake; luckily, my son didn’t marry someone like her! How dare she lie to her mother-in-law that she’s acquainted with the Hart Family? How ridiculous! If she had a good relationship with them, why would she marry into the Chase Family? The one who bought the Chase Group’s land in Hillville was probably the man she spent a night with, and the price of the land was the amount she got for a night with him!”

“You don’t say! Didn’t she find another man back then because she thought the Chase Group was on its last legs? I heard she found herself a rich man. Perhaps, her years in that circle have expanded her network.”

That last sentence was like an arrow shooting straight into its target; it hit right into Eve’s heart.

In the past, although Eve had warned Lyla to leave her son alone publicly, Lyla had gotten into another relationship a little too quickly. She did it so rapidly as though she already had an affair with that guy. And it was because of what Eve did that allowed Lyla to announce her relationship with him to the public.

## Standing before Love Chapter 177

Naturally, that conversation became a thorn in Eve’s heart. She was never fond of Lyla, and now, Lyla was just a real eyesore.

Eve’s expression was gloomy, yet Lyla didn’t seem to have the patience to entertain her anymore. She walked past her directly and went straight for the house.

Eve’s expression sank further. Infuriated, she pulled her lips into a tight line, though she could only choke down her rage. This wasn’t the time. She didn’t want Sean to be caught in the middle of their fight. Still, don’t let me find out what you did behind my son’s back, Lyla! she thought as her heart boiled with hatred.

After Lyla hung up on her, Kris didn’t look good. She knew what kind of woman Lyla was. Nonetheless, they had a common enemy. The enemy of her enemy was her friend. This wasn’t the time for her to fall out with Lyla. But, the scene of Myra flirting with Tony set the rage in her heart ablaze.

Tony dropped Myra off somewhere near the Stark Tower.

Taking her time to unfasten her seatbelt, Myra glanced at the man beside her. In the past, Tony would have leaned over and kissed her before she got out. However, he showed no sign of doing that today.

Remembering that they had just made up with each other, Myra bit her lip, unfastened her seatbelt, and took the initiative to approach him before she kissed the corner of his pursed lips. "Can you pick me up tonight?"

The man turned around and looked at her with arched brows. "Aren't you afraid that the others would see us?"

Myra knew he said that on purpose. Thus, she reached out and pulled his hand that was resting on the steering wheel and shook it. "So what if they see us? They'll find out that you're mine sooner or later anyway."

At her remarks, Tony's expression relaxed. He pressed her head toward him and gave her a peck on her forehead. "I'm not sure if I'm busy tonight. If I'm caught up by something, I'll send Leo to pick you up."

"Okay." Myra nodded. Glancing at the ring on her left hand, she felt soft in her heart. Then, she got out of the car.

After she saw Tony's car leave, she walked back to the Stark Tower, feeling sweet. Unexpectedly, she ran into Kris, who had been waiting for her outside the company. Myra pretended as though she didn't see her and walked straight into the building.

She was feeling good at the moment. Therefore, she didn't want to make a fuss. Nevertheless, the fact that she didn't want to cause trouble didn't mean that someone else didn't want to.

Kris had raced back here on purpose because she wanted to find Myra. When she saw Myra, the corners of her lips lifted into an indifferent grin. She approached her, blocking her from moving forward as she sized her up. "Sis, I didn't know you're getting better at seducing men. However, as your sister, I have to remind you to be very careful; otherwise, you'll fail miserably. You should know what you're capable of and the boundaries before you bite someone. You aren't supposed to mess with some people. Stop dreaming!" After saying that, she sneered and turned around, walking gracefully back to the company.



Standing at the entrance, Myra stared at her arrogant figure as her brows slowly furrowed. Apparently, Kris' words had a hidden meaning. Is she mad because she found out about my relationship with Tony?

Just like Kris, a disdainful grin found its way across Myra's lips. It didn't matter to Myra whether Kris knew about that because Kris would never tell Cameron about the relationship since she herself had eyes for Tony. Telling Cameron would do no good to her. Furthermore, Myra no longer cared whether the father-daughter pair knew about her relationship with Tony. If the Stark Family wants to exploit our relationship and gain something from Tony, I'll never allow it! Her eyes narrowed at the thought.

After Tony left the Stark Tower, his pursed lips gradually relaxed into a small grin. He had been entertained by Myra's sweet-talking. As he stared at the ring on his left hand, the grin on his face grew wider. Suddenly, he pulled up the car by the roadside and fell into a moment of contemplation. Then, he pulled his phone out and took a photo of his fingers. The photo was quickly uploaded on his Stories with a caption: 'I know it's kind of ugly, but I'll just wear it'. It was as though he really hated the ring.

Nevertheless, those who saw his post were cursing him silently, I know you're showing affection in public. There's no need to pretend!

Elliot: 'Tony, the ring is so pretty. The one who gave it to you must have put in a lot of effort to choose it! It must be a gift from Myra, right?'

Usually, Tony despised what Elliot said. However, Elliot suddenly struck him as a smart person today, and he couldn't help but reply, 'Yeah'.

Elliot pouted further at his reply, but his fingers continued to tap out the words he didn't really mean: 'Tsk, tsk. It looks like Myra really loves you. I've never seen a woman who took the initiative to give a man a ring. Indeed, Myra is very unique.'. He managed to flatter Tony with every word he sent.

When the others saw his comment, they couldn't help but spurn him.

Unlike them, the corners of Tony's lips lifted further. She really loves me?

He took another glance at the ring on his finger and arched an eyebrow as if he didn't care. It's just a ring. Is it really worth it for Elliot to exaggerate like that? Be that as it may, his mood had obviously brightened up.

During the afternoon, Leo told him that Bradford University would be holding 'Bradford City's Road to Success Conference' tomorrow, and the principal had formally sent Tony an invitation letter.

The university had invited most of their notable alumni. However, because the current students had been looking up to Tony, the principal decided to comply with their wishes and invited him at the last minute. Usually, Leo would never show him this kind of letter. Nevertheless, today...

Tony tossed away the pen in his hand. Looking up at his secretary, he raised an eyebrow. "Reason."

When Tony was working, he normally held the cigarette with his right index and middle fingers. When he needed to write something, he would hold it between his thin lips. Nonetheless, he was holding the cigarette with his left hand today. After he said that, he put the cigarette back between his thin lips.

Leo was very observant. Immediately, he noticed the ring on Tony's left hand and understood why his boss was in a good mood when he went to his house this afternoon. Quickly, he began, "Bradford University is Miss Stark's alma mater. I heard that the principal also sent her an invitation letter since she's an outstanding designer. Apart from Miss Stark, Director Chase from the Chase Group is amongst the invitees as well..."

When Leo mentioned Sean, he held his breath to avoid provoking his boss, acting as if he was just mentioning the fact. Soon, he heard his boss's low voice that carried a hint of disdain. "That brat is considered one of the successful people in Bradford City too?"

Leo wanted to laugh. Although he had a prejudice against Sean, he had to admit that Sean was considered one of the young talents in Bradford City, though he didn't agree with his despicable behavior.

"So..." He continued to ask tentatively, "Are you going to accept the invitation from Bradford City's principal and attend the conference, Director Hart?"

Tony narrowed his eyes at his question. Then, he put out the cigarette on the ashtray.

"Clear out my schedule for tomorrow."

## Standing before Love Chapter 178

In the afternoon, Cameron gave Myra a new mission: she had to acquire the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Project that the Bradford City's government had recently called for tender. The Stark Group had attached great importance to the project, considering it as important as the Elsinore Garden Project for the second half of the year. When Myra got her hands on the project, the company was stunned, and they appreciated her effort.

At night, before Tony called her, Myra had taken the initiative to give him a call, telling him that she had to work overtime tonight, so she might be going home late.

By the time Tony received the call, he had already driven his car to the entrance of the Stark Tower. Leaning against his car, he smoked nonchalantly. He was dressed in a suit with the buttons on his chest undone, exposing the white shirt underneath his suit jacket. His outfit added a touch of sass to his originally serious aura. The waves of smoke brought out the beauty of his handsome facial features.

It was the rush hour, and his appearance drew the attention of many Stark Group employees.

When Kris went to the first floor, some of the employees from the same department grinned at her meaningfully. "Miss Kris, Director Hart came to pick you up in person. Is something good happening soon?"

Another employee quickly added, "Of course. Besides Miss Kris, who else is worthy of a man like Director Hart?"

That remark pleased Kris profoundly. For the first time, she stood in front of them with a pleasant smile. "Nonsense. We have no plans yet!"

When they heard her, the smiles on their faces grew more ambiguous. "Then, you have to come up with a definite plan quickly, Miss Kris! If you don't act faster and keep a man like him with you, he might run away. Miss Kris, you should take the initiative. Men nowadays love women who are bold and open-minded, let alone a man like Director Hart who has spent most some years in the States."

Their words hit Kris hard. Remembering Myra's bold behavior toward Tony during the afternoon, she narrowed her eyes and said, "You guys should go first. I have something else to do."

There was a touch of shyness on her face, so the others quickly left, knowing what she was about to do.

However, Kris didn't go to Tony. Instead, she made her way to the underground car park and left in her red sports car. She was already some distance away from Tony's car. Deep in her heart, she knew very well that Myra couldn't stay with Tony tonight.

When Tony heard Myra's words, he stubbed out the cigarette in his hand. He didn't mention to her that he was already outside the company. Jamming one of his hands into his pocket, he looked up slightly, staring at the floor Myra was at. "What time are you leaving tonight, then?"

Myra looked at the pile of documents in front of her. "I'm not sure yet. Probably around ten or eleven."

Because the bid was shifted to an earlier date, Myra panicked since she just got the documents.

Tony hummed in response and said, "I'll come pick you up later."

His voice was so low and flat. Nevertheless, Myra managed to pick up the softness in his voice. Her lips curved slightly. "You don't have to come later. It's going to be late. I'll drive myself back." She knew Tony was very busy with work, so she didn't want to see him running around.

Nevertheless, Tony always meant what he said. "Call me in advance."

Listening to his determination, Myra felt helpless but happy at the same time. "Fine." She nodded.

They talked for a while before ending the call.

Tony got into his car after the call ended. Thinking for a while, he gave Elliot a call and drove straight to the Zion Club after finding out his whereabouts.

A red sports car was following him from behind.

When Tony noticed the flash of red from the rear-view mirror, he remained unconcerned and took out another cigarette.

By the time Tony arrived at the Zion Club, the others were already partying there. When they saw him coming in, some of them, especially Elliot, rushed toward him dramatically and approached him. "Tony, are you lonely and came to us because Myra couldn't make time for you?"

Tony lifted one of the corners of his mouth into a vague smile. Holding the cigarette between his thin lips, he glared at Elliot. "I'm feeling lucky lately, so I decided to come and earn some money for baby formula."

"Money for baby formula?" Elliot's voice pitched higher as he stared at Tony in shock. "Tony, you and Myra... Are you guys ready to have a child?"

"Why are you so shocked? Tony is no spring chicken. Isn't it normal to want a child? Besides..." Philip let out a low chuckle. "With a child, Tony will be able to keep Myra bound to him."

Elliot's eyes widened at his words. Yet, when he saw Tony's calm expression, he couldn't help but twitch the corners of his mouth. It was the first time he knew a child could have a role like that.

The four of them took their seats. After dinner, they moved to the card table. During the game, Lucas received a message. He then frowned and looked at Tony. "Tony, it seems like Sean is suddenly looking into the one who bought the land in Hilliville."

When Elliot heard that, he pouted and tossed a card on the table. "So what if he finds out? Is he going to buy it back?"

Nonetheless, Lucas and Philip knitted their brows. Even Tony slightly narrowed his eyes. Elliot couldn't help but shut his mouth at the sight. Suddenly, he remembered the trap they had set up...

Philip was the first to break the silence as he looked at Tony. "Tony, is he... suspecting us?"

Back then, all of them had participated in the plan to help Tony win Myra's heart. Therefore, besides the Hilliville Project, they were also involved in the Marina Bay Bridge Project...

Tony let out a smirk. He recalled the number that called Myra in the middle of the night a few days back. With his expression stoic, he took a drag on his cigarette and pulled it away from his lips. His handsome features were blurred by the smoke, concealing his expression as well.

“What a clown,” he said suddenly.

At his remarks, the others breathed out a sigh of relief. After all, they all knew what Myra meant to Tony. They were afraid that that brat from the Chase Family would overestimate himself and make a fuss again. However, looking at Tony, who was so at ease, they guessed that he had probably already won Myra’s heart.

He’s right, though...

At the same time, they turned their gazes to Tony’s left hand that was resting on the table. Tony was never someone who would waste his time on wearing accessories. The ring he wore was naturally the same ring he posted on his Stories in the afternoon.

“But, my driver said he saw an unfamiliar Lamborghini when he passed by the Hart Residence yesterday night. There was someone inside, but they didn’t come out nor turn on the headlights. They just sat there and stared at the gate. Could it be Sean? Don’t tell me he changed his mind and wants to take back...” Lucas didn’t let the last word slip out of his mouth. Yet, the others in the room knew what he meant.

To take back who? Of course, it’s Myra.

Holding a few pieces of cards in his left hand, Tony slightly bent his right index and middle fingers, tapping the surface of the table. The tapping sound hit the others’ hearts, beat by beat. There was a layer of darkness under Tony’s eyes, and his emotions were indecipherable.

Suddenly, silence flooded the air.

“Get the word out. Tell the public that the Hart Group will soon acquire the Hillville and all businessmen are welcome.” After a long while, Tony finally said something in his flat tone. Suddenly, he tossed the cards away, stood up from his seat, and simply took the suit jacket he left beside him. “The Hart Group will sign a three-year contract with the first fifty percent who move in.”

The other three were shocked. At first, they only wanted to launch the Hillville Project sometime later. Looks like...

They exchanged a glance with one another.

Looks like someone will regret their decision soon.

## Standing before Love Chapter 179

“Tony, are you leaving?” Elliot was a little excited to hear that he would have something to do again. However, Tony’s actions quickly rendered him speechless.

Tony used to be a man who spent time with them until one to two in the morning before he went home. Now that he had suddenly turned into a family man, arriving late and leaving early, Elliot thought Myra had given him a curfew.

“Myra’s still at the company,” Tony said and put out his cigarette before he walked outside, leaving behind three men who couldn’t stand the change in his personality.

The night was slightly cool in early autumn. After Tony left the Zion Club, he put on the suit jacket casually. By the time he made it to the entrance, the valet had already got his car ready and gave him his key the moment he saw him.

Tony took the key and saw someone at the corner of his eye. His eyes slightly narrowed and something crossed his mind. Instead of leaving the club, he ended up walking toward the corner next to Zion Club.

Zion Club was a vintage-style building built in the suburbs. Because it was surrounded by hot springs, flowers that weren’t in season still managed to bloom on the land. Tony stood beside a cluster of delicate Bengal Roses as he pulled out a cigarette and lit it.

He was tall and broad. His suit brought out his calm aura, and his handsome facial features were concealed by the waves of smoke. Nonetheless, his noble aura couldn’t be hidden by any means.

Kris saw his gorgeous figure from afar, and her heart was pounding fast.

Tony Hart was indeed an exceptional man in Bradford City. If she let him slip, she might not be able to find another man that had the perfect identity, status, capabilities, appearance, and aura like him here in the city.

Kris became even more determined as she thought about that. Clenching her fists, she got out of her car. After a moment of hesitation, she put on a gentle smile and walked toward the corner where Tony was standing. As soon as she stood still beside him, she saw the man put the cigarette between his thin lips. He looked elegant, though there was a hint of impudence in the air around him. He reached out gracefully to pluck the Bengal Rose in front of him. "You followed me all the way here. Aren't you tired, Miss Stark?"

His voice was deep and cold. Apparently, he had long known that she had been following him.

Kris' heart flinched at his words. Carefully, she tried to read Tony's expression. Nevertheless, when she noticed there was no hatred on his face, the weight on her shoulders disappeared. Her smile grew more tender. "You may have misunderstood me, Director Hart. I had to visit Zion Club today too. When I saw you from afar, I thought my eyes had deceived me."

"Is that so?" Tony plucked another Bengal Rose. Then, he turned around with a disdainful smile. "Since you're right, Miss Stark, you may leave now."

Upon hearing that, Kris stiffened. She naturally didn't want to leave like that. Therefore, she hastily changed the subject of the conversation and asked tentatively, "Director Hart, you seem to have drunk some alcohol. Do you... need a ride?"

Earlier, when she approached him, she could faintly smell alcohol on him. And she couldn't help feeling delighted. If she could have a one-night stand with him under the influence of alcohol... she could guarantee that Myra could no longer compete with her!

Her eyes were similar to Myra's. Whenever their eyes sparkled, they looked especially pitiful. Staring at the man in front of her intently, Kris tried to bring out her best gaze.

Pluck. She heard Tony picking another flower. There was no sympathy on his face. "Do you love to give men rides home, Miss Stark?"



Instantly, Kris' expression changed. "Are you kidding, Director Hart? In Bradford City, you're the only one I've ever made such an offer to."

As though something had crossed her mind, her expression became even more gentle. "Director Hart, you don't want me to say that to other men? Don't worry; apart from you, no one can catch my eye. Besides, I've never said something like that to anyone else. You're the first one whom I'm willing to approach." After she said that, she couldn't help but take a step forward. Her bright eyes stared straight at Tony; she looked like she had never regretted falling in love with him.

Tony's hand that was plucking the flowers halted. He was already holding two Bengal Roses in his left hand. With his right hand, he took the cigarette away from his lips and tapped it slightly. The smoke concealed his eyes further, and he suddenly let out a chuckle. Nonetheless, there was no warmth in his laughter. "If that's the case, does it mean that you have feelings for me?"

If that sentence was spoken by any other man, Kris would have found them arrogant and disgusting. However, when it was Tony who said that, she could only feel her heart melting. Her ivory white teeth bit on her lower lip, and her face was painted red. Secretly, she took a glance at the man in front of her before she ducked her head and hummed softly in response.

As she looked down, she missed the hint of contempt that flashed before his eyes. By the time she looked up at him again, he was already taking in a drag of his cigarette. Faintly, he said, "What can you bring me, then, Miss Stark?" He glanced at Kris, who was stunned, before he went on, "You're probably aware that I have a lover. You must have something that I'm interested in if you can stand in front of me so confidently despite the circumstances."

"Of course, I have!"

Without a second thought, Kris affirmed his question. At that moment, her heart started pounding wildly. As expected, Tony is only fooling around with Myra. As soon as there's a more valuable interest, he will break up with her heartlessly. Kris could already imagine how miserable Myra would end up after she was abandoned by him!

The corners of Kris' lips lifted, and she looked proud. "In the future, the Stark Group will be inherited by me. If I offer the entire Stark Group to you, will that show you my sincerity, Director Hart?"

“Is that the only thing you can offer me?” Nevertheless, Tony only twitched his lips. Tapping the cigarette, he looked away.

Kris’ heart tightened. She knew the Stark Group was nothing compared to the Hart Group. However, apart from that, she had nothing else... Maybe...

“Have you heard about Hillville, Director Hart? I might also own nearly forty percent of the property in Hillville, as well as fifty percent of the Ritz Carlton after I inherit the company!”

“Okay. That sounds good.” Nonchalantly, Tony stubbed out the cigarette before he plucked another flower. When he turned around, ridicule was visible in his gaze. “However, you’re not the only young lady of the Stark Family, right? Not to mention...” After he said that, he came to a stop intentionally, only to see the panic in her eyes as he had expected.

“As far as I know, your mother is about to give birth to a boy. If that’s the case, can I assume that what you said just now was just to entertain me, Miss Stark?” His expression sank as his words ended.

At that moment, Kris was dumbfounded. Then, she was overwhelmed by anxiety. She reached out and grabbed his arm without even thinking twice.

When Tony felt her touch on his arm, his expression darkened, and he slapped her hand away subconsciously.

Kris stumbled at his action. Her foot slipped out of her heel and she stepped into the Bengal Rose shrub beside her. Immediately, she felt a prickling pain on the sole of her foot. Her face turned ashen from the pain. Yet, as soon as she saw Tony was about to leave, she hurriedly exclaimed, “Director Hart, what I said is true. In the future, the Stark Group will be mine. You have to believe in me!”

“What about your brother?”

At his remarks, Kris’ eyes glinted, and she bit her lip. “Believe me; the Stark Group will only be mine in the future!”

Will the Stark Group really belong to Kris in the future?

Turning his back on Kris, Tony looked incomprehensible. Something flashed before his bottomless eyes, but he didn't say another word as he walked straight ahead.

Kris was puzzled. In the next moment, Tony had gotten into his silver sports car.

"Hey, Director Hart, Director Hart! Wait for me... Director Hart!"

Kris tried to chase after his car as she stumbled with her injured foot. However, Tony's car was moving at an extremely fast speed. She had only gone less than two meters before the car took a sharp turn and drove out of the area.

When Kris ran two steps forward, a waiter followed her and called her softly, "Miss, your shoe..."

## Standing before Love Chapter 180

Kris was exasperated as she went to get her shoe back. When she walked back out again, Tony's car was already gone.

She stomped her foot in anger but could only return to her car for the time being.

Tony gave Elliot a call upon leaving the Zion Club. Once the call was answered, his brows pulled together as he asked, "Can you look into Kris' mother, Rachel Parker's, pregnancy?"

Since Elliot had him on speaker, the other two people there also heard him. Philip chuckled, "I was wondering why you were dealing with that woman at the door. It looks like you were trying to get information."

Tony had a blank expression. He did not want to play along with Kris initially, but since she walked up to him herself, he thought of taking the chance to ask some questions. As expected, there were some problems.

"From what I heard, Cameron's current wife is pregnant with a boy. According to Cameron's priorities and shrewdness, even if we don't consider the gender of the baby, this pregnancy shouldn't be fake," Lucas interrupted from the side.

Tony also had the same thought in mind. Narrowing his eyes, a thought occurred to him and he went on, "Look into her recent diet and lifestyle. There must be some clues."

By the time Myra looked up from her paperwork, it was already ten at night.

As she stretched her back, she felt a terrible ache around her waist area. Standing up, she walked toward the French windows and looked down at the busy streets below.

Bradford City was incredibly beautiful at night. Brightened up with lights, the entire city looked much warmer compared to the rigidity and desolation during the day.

Her phone seemed to have vibrated earlier, but she was too absorbed at the time to look at it.

Grabbing her phone, she took a look at the message while drinking a cup of milk. It was from Tony who wanted to know if she was done with work yet.

He did not call her because he was worried that he would interrupt her, so he simply sent a text.

She felt her heart warm up and called him right back.

"Hello?"

When he heard her voice, he murmured, "Are you finally done with work now?"

"Yes." She nodded. After she finished off the last bit of warm milk, she returned to her chair and started to pack up her things. "Are you... here to pick me up?"

"What do you think?" It was a short question that was filled with tenderness.

At that moment, she felt the exhaustion in her body melt away. Smiling, she quickly packed her things up and headed toward the elevator.

Inside the elevator, she even tidied herself up subconsciously.

When she walked out of Stark Tower, she saw him standing not too far away below.

She thought, He must be God's favorite. Even though he was not doing anything and only leaning against the car with a subtle expression, he was able to make it look relaxed and elegant. He was wearing a white shirt with two buttons open at the top. The sleeve on his left arm was pulled up and he had a cigarette between his index and middle fingers. Amid the white cloud of smoke, his eyes looked even more deep and dark.

He seemed to have noticed her gaze. Lifting his head, he looked right at her and smiled when their eyes met. Shortly after, he put out the cigarette in his hand.

For some reason, her face started to turn red under his gaze. She walked up to him and asked bashfully, "Why didn't you call me when you got here? You must have waited a long time."

The text was sent half an hour ago. There were also three to four cigarette buds scattered on the ground.

"It hasn't been that long." He smiled and opened the passenger side door for her.

She was going to go in when he suddenly embraced her and placed a kiss on her forehead before letting her go. "Go on in."

Stunned, she looked up at his deep and boundless black eyes. They seemed to have magic that could make her feel like she was trapped whenever she looked into them.

A low chuckle came from beside her. Feeling the tip of her ears heat up, she quickly went inside the car.

Shortly after, the car started and brought them away from the place.

As soon as she sat inside the car, she noticed several beautiful rose stalks beneath the windshield of the car. She grabbed one out of surprise and smiled as she looked at it. "These roses bloomed quite late."

"Do you like them?" He glanced over at her briefly from the driver's seat. The side of his face was indifferent, but it also had a hint of deliberate tenderness.

"I like them." She retrieved the other two flower stalks. Her smiling eyes were in the shape of a crescent moon. "Are they for me?"

“Yes.” Seeing the happiness on her face, Tony felt his heart soften and took her left hand in his unoccupied right hand.

The ring on her left hand naturally entered his field of vision. With her hand in his, he gave her palm a short squeeze.

Myra was filled with bliss and contentment. Despite being careful while holding the roses, she still got pricked lightly by the thorns.

Moreover, the thorns on those roses were sharp and hard and she guessed that it hadn't been a long time since the roses were picked. After glancing at Tony, she suddenly flipped his hand over and took a closer look at it.

He seemed to have known her intention. Without making a sound, he wanted to pull his hand away, but she did not let him. Seeing the obvious marks from the roses on his beautiful finger pads, she had a painful look in her eyes. “You could've been more careful.”

Her voice was filled with concern. He decided not to pull his hand back now and said, “It's just a small wound.”

Just then, she noticed a cut on the index finger of his right hand. He accidentally got cut by the thorns when his hand clasped around the flowers suddenly upon hearing Kris say that the Stark Group would be hers.

Myra shot him a glance. “Does it have to be bleeding for it to be considered a major wound? Does it still hurt?”

In her innocent expression, she also showed hints of pain and panic. He felt a flutter inside then stepped on the brake abruptly.

How could such a small scratch like this hurt until now?

Unfastening his seatbelt, he leaned in front of her and pecked her softly on the lips.

The struggle she put up at first slowly turned into having her arms wrapped around his neck.

When he tasted the scent of milk in her mouth, his eyes became even darker. Moving away from her lips, he leaned into her ear and murmured, “Have my child, Myra.”

His breath tickled her ear and made her body tremble slightly.

She froze as soon as she heard his words. Burying her head in his chest, she whispered, "Okay." Having his child doesn't sound too bad.

The thought of having a little bundle of joy being closely cared for by two people filled her heart with happiness.

When he heard her answer, he smiled and tightened his arms around her.