

Chapter 19 Birthday Party

Sylvia sat stiffly on his lap, instinctively leaning back. If it weren't for his hand supporting her back, she would have fallen over.

She really suspected that Hiram had already seen through her. He might even know she was planning to escape. But why didn't he call her out directly?

Sylvia looked into his eyes, and involuntarily swallowed hard.

Hiram stared at her deeply, then suddenly let out a low chuckle, his finger lightly tapping her nose. "Scared now? Could it be you actually understand what I'm saying? Your craziness doesn't seem all that serious."

"..."

Sylvia's mind went blank. She had no idea how to deal with the man in front of her. He was much harder to handle than anyone from the Clark family.

After saying those words, Hiram acted as if nothing had happened, wrapping his arms around her and continuing to play his game, completely at ease. It was as if he had seen through her and yet hadn't seen anything at all.

Sylvia sat numbly on his lap, unable to focus on the game on the TV screen, her eyes fixed on the flower petals that Lucy was pounding one by one.

Thud, thud.

The sound wasn't loud, but it resonated in her mind.

Sylvia felt like she was those lilacs in the mortar, being ground into pulp and juice bit by bit.

That day, after Hiram left, Sylvia decided not to escape for the time being. Whether or not Hiram had seen through her, she had to prepare for the worst. If he had figured her out but didn't expose her, it meant he wasn't going to do anything to her for now. If she tried to escape, it could end badly.

She couldn't afford to make Hiram a powerful enemy. She needed to save her energy to deal with the Clark family.

Sylvia sat on the sofa, looking at the newspaper in her hands, reading it upside down. To Lucy and Lily, this was just another sign of her supposed mental instability.

But even upside down, Sylvia knew exactly what was in the news. The Clark family had been in the headlines for days, but now a new hot topic had taken over, and the Clark family's hype was dying down.

People forget so easily. Soon, no one would remember what the Clark family had done, and Bella would still have a horde of admirers.

Sylvia realized that everything she had done so far hadn't affected the Clark family at all. It seemed she would need to resort to more extreme measures.

"Then next Saturday at 8 PM, it's my girlfriend's birthday. I will host a birthday party for her at the Summer Hotel. Please make sure to come, I will come to the entrance to pick you up."

Sylvia recalled Richard's words and started formulating a new plan.

As she was deep in thought, she heard Lucy's excited voice, "Young Master had new clothes delivered. Actually, the clothes here at Lilac Land are more than enough."

Sylvia looked up to see Lily and Lucy standing in the living room, holding up one beautiful outfit after another, marveling at them, "These are gorgeous. Miss would look amazing in these, but sadly, she never has a chance to wear them out."

Sylvia noticed that the clothes were indeed very exquisite, some of them even being dressed.

Hiram, who claimed to be interested in her, had never actually touched her. He bought her clothes and shoes, but what was his real motive?

To him, was she a stand-in or just a plaything? Would he really go to great lengths to find her if she escaped and then bury her?

Sylvia couldn't figure it out.

Suddenly, she realized that her thoughts had wandered back to Hiram. She should have been thinking about the Clark family.

She patted her own head, forcing herself to stop thinking about that man.

In no time, the weekend arrived.

The Summer Hotel stood tall in the center of N City.

In the brightly lit dressing room, Bella put on an intricate evening gown with the help of the staff.

Today was her 21st birthday. She had chosen this gown three months ago. It was a labor of love, with a pale pink color that made her skin look even fairer. The strapless design was very sexy, with lace in the front and a floor-length train. It was absolutely stunning.

"Wow, it's gorgeous," her friends exclaimed in unison as they watched her.

Bella was quite pleased.

One of her friends, Maggie Davis, said, "Bella, your family sure knows how to throw a party, booking an entire floor of the Summer Hotel."

Everyone knew the Summer Hotel was the most prestigious in the country. Regular people couldn't get in even if they had the money. You needed connections just to make a reservation. Booking an entire floor was unheard of, a move unique to the highest of the high class. Many newly rich people would do anything just to stay there for one night to prove their status.

And Bella had booked an entire floor.

"It's nothing," Bella said with a smile.

In fact, it was Richard who had arranged everything. As the third son of the James Family Group, he probably used some influence to get his father to book the floor for her birthday. Richard was pretty good to her, after all. Unfortunately, he wasn't her final choice.

"I heard there will be a lot of rich guys here tonight. Bella, with so many of them around, who will you choose?" another friend asked.

Bella sat down in front of the makeup mirror, opening her jewelry box. "They're just friends coming to celebrate my birthday. Why would I have to choose?"

"I'm so jealous of all your powerful friends," Maggie said, sitting beside her enviously. "Why don't you introduce me to one?"

Bella smiled slightly and put on her pink pearl earrings. "Who would you like me to introduce?"

"The James family's third son, Richard. I think he's the most handsome among all these rich guys."

Maggie rested her face in her hands, lost in romantic fantasies. "I saw him outside just now. Can you introduce me to him at the party?"

Bella, always claiming to be single to boost her value, kept even her friends in the dark about her true status. She glanced at Maggie, secretly mocking her. With such average looks, she dared to dream about Richard.

Bella smiled and didn't respond, instead asking, "Richard? What was he doing outside?"

"He seemed to be waiting for someone, looking around anxiously," Maggie said, her eyes filled with envy as she looked at the array of jewelry.

Waiting for someone? Bella's eyes grew cold. Richard must be waiting for Sylvia. How could Sylvia dare to come to a place like this?

The birthday party began.

The lighting was soft, the atmosphere warm, and the venue was adorned with flowers everywhere, even on the ceiling. It looked like a grand, delicate garden had been transported inside, incredibly romantic. From a distance, it looked like a beautiful scene from a movie.

Bella had invited only young people today, but these were not just any young people. They were all wealthy and influential, each dressed impeccably and carrying an air of superiority.

Suddenly, the music stopped, and the lights dimmed.

The dinner party officially began.

Everyone looked up and saw Bella slowly descending on a white swing suspended in the air. She wore a nude pink gown with a long train flowing behind her, and the lights created the illusion of wings, making her look like a fairy descending to earth.

Bella adjusted the mic near her face and began to sing, her red lips moving softly. She was known for her angelic voice, and as she started to sing, the ethereal sound captivated everyone's attention.

As she looked down at the admiring gazes from the crowd, Bella felt a surge of pride. The swing gently touched the ground, and Richard, dressed in a white suit, walked gracefully towards her, extending his hand to invite her to dance. Bella smiled and placed her hand in his.

The handsome couple started to dance, drawing all eyes to them. The surrounding guests encircled them, making Bella feel even more proud of being the center of attention. She felt she deserved to be in the spotlight.

"You look stunning tonight," Richard whispered, his hand resting on her waist as they waltzed, his eyes full of admiration.

"Thank you for giving me such a wonderful birthday party," Bella whispered back, leaning close to his ear. If only Hiram were dancing with her instead, then she would be the envy of every woman in the country.

"I have another surprise for you," Richard murmured in her ear, his voice soft and warm.

Could it be another precious piece of jewelry or that limited edition bag she had mentioned? Bella wondered as the dance ended, and they came to a stop.

"Bella, look who's here," Richard said, stepping aside.

Bella looked up, her smile freezing on her face.