

"Stop dreaming," Zachary replied, his voice emotionless as he looked icily at the woman in front of him.

"I would have done the same for any woman that became my wife. You're not special at all."

Charlotte's lips curled into a self deprecating smile as she said, "Save your breath. I know my own place."

She wasn't special?

The higher the status of a person, the more they cared about their reputation. She had publicly defeated Zachary twice and won two bets. In other words, she had left him with an egg on his face twice in public. Therefore, it was considered a blessing from God that Zachary was not holding a grudge against her, and she was not foolish enough to think that she deserved a special place in his heart.

Zachary did not answer but scanned her up and down with a clearly disdainful gaze. Then, he turned around and left the bathroom.

He slammed the door shut. His black, jewel-like eyes were dark as he listened to the rippling sound of water that wafted from the bathroom.

'D*mn it!'

Did Charlotte not have legs? Did she not know how to walk? Why would he take her in his arms as if he was possessed when he had seen her curl up on the couch with tears in her eyes?

'Hah... Charlotte Simmons. You're indeed the daughter of a tramp. That's why you're so good at seducing people!'

When Zachary returned to the living room, his icy gaze shifted from the group of bodyguards and Victor before finally stopping on the bodyguard who had helped Victor pin Charlotte on the couch.

"What did Victor Rutherford want to do to

Charlotte?"

Before the bodyguard could say anything, Victor interjected and said, "Mr. Connor, I was just messing with Miss Charlotte. I didn't..."

"Shut up," Zachary ordered him forcefully, making Victor fall silent immediately.

After hushing Victor, Zachary turned to look at the bodyguard once again and commanded him indifferently, "You, talk now."

The bodyguard dared not challenge Zachary at all. He took one last look at Victor before spilling the beans. "Mr.

Rutherford was trying to discredit Miss Simmons. He was going to force himself on Miss Simmons and have us record the whole process so that he could post it online."

"Shut up, you fool!"

Victor could not keep his cool anymore. He frantically crawled over to Zachary and clutched at his right leg. "Don't listen to him, Mr. Connor. He doesn't know what he is talking about. I'm fully aware that Miss Simmons is married to you, so no matter what, I would never have the audacity to do something like that to her. I ...I was just messing with Miss Simmons. You must not believe... Argh-"

Before he could finish his sentence, Zachary kicked his chest and sent him crashing on the floor.

"Do you think I'm stupid?" Zachary said, his voice dripping with annoyance.

Victor knew there was no way to keep the cat in the bag anymore. When he thought about how cruel and cold blooded Zachary was to his enemies, his voice began to tremble as he begged with a face covered in tears. "Please, please forgive me, Mr. Zachary. As... As long as you let me go this time, I will... I will do anything for you..."

Zachary did not even spare a glance for Victor. He lit a cigarette and said, "Hold on."

He threw himself back onto the couch, pulled out his phone, and made a call.

"Get the two guys that you brought to torment Auditor Channings and meet me at the Simmons Residence in 10 minutes."

Then, without waiting for the other person to say anything, he hung up.

Victor felt like heart was in his throat. He did not know what Zachary was going to do with him, but judging from the fact that he had used the word "torment" on the phone, he could imagine that what awaited him next would be some humiliation.

Right now, he could do nothing but lie on the ground and wait submissively like a lamb waiting to be slaughtered. After all, regardless of how Zachary was going to settle the score, he was certain that things would only get even worse if he tried to resist or escape.

The group of bodyguards stood frozen and stiff in place as they looked at each other.

Holding a cigarette between his lips, Zachary looked ahead expressionlessly, his eyes deep as the fathomless sea.

Nobody dared to say anything, and the atmosphere in the hall was oppressive.

Time passed second by second, and each second was as long as a century for Victor.

Roughly eight minutes later, a series of footsteps were heard from the other side of the door.

The footfalls grew louder and louder and then stopped. The door was pushed open, and two men, one tall and one short, stepped into their line of vision and appeared in the living room. Both of them bowed reverently before Zachary and said,

"Mr. Connor, we heard you were looking for us?"

Victor took a glance at the two men, and his stomach started to flip-flop.

He had never seen anyone as ugly as them before. Not only were their facial features grotesque, but their faces were also filled with purplish-red cysts to the point that he could smell their stench even though there was still some distance between them. Victor knew he was not a very pleasant-looking person himself, but the ugliness of these two people was on a whole new level.

Zachary pointed at Victor casually, and Victor had a bad feeling.

"Alright, Mr. Connor," the two ugly men answered at the same time. Then, they approached Victor together and pulled him up from the floor, causing him to shout out in fear, "What are you guys doing? No, no, please! Stay away from me! Help, help!" Victor shouted and struggled with all his might, yet nobody came to his rescue. In just a few seconds, he was dragged into the bedroom by the two ugly men.

Zachary's expression remained unchanged. He looked at the two bodyguards holding the camera in the living room and said, "Record everything and post it online."

These two bodyguards had been brought by Victor. However, from the moment Zachary had shown up, they had been racking their heads to think of a way to please Zachary so that he would forgive them. This was the best opportunity for them to redeem themselves. With an ingratiating smile on

their faces, they followed the two men into the bedroom to do Zachary's bidding.

When Charlotte emerged from the

bathroom, the first thing she heard was Victor scream from the bedroom. She'd vaguely heard everything Zachary had said while taking a bath in the bathroom, so she knew what was happening to Victor right now.

An eye for an eye. Zachary would never let anyone who dared to oppose him go easily.

Victor was one of the most famous people in Rothesay, but after today, he would be utterly discredited and would become the laughing stock of the whole city.

See?

This was Zachary Connor!

He would get rid of anyone who opposed him mercilessly and ruthlessly.

"Erm..." Charlotte cleared her throat. " Although I don't quite agree with your fight-fire-with-fire approach, I still owe you one for helping me get rid of Victor Rutherford."

However, Zachary did not reply. He studied Charlotte from head to toe, and his expression gradually turned grim.

"Are you trying to seduce me?"

'What?! I was just expressing my gratitude, okay? Why would he say I'm trying to seduce him?' Charlotte was dumbfounded.

Amusement flashed across Zachary's face as he stared at Charlotte with his pair of eyes, which seemed like an endless tunnel. He said, "I know what you're trying to do, but unfortunately, I've seen too many women like you, so whatever you want to do is not going to work on me."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Charlotte replied exasperatedly.

The darkness in Zachary's eyes deepened, and his voice grew grimmer. "Go put on your clothes and stop walking in front of me like that!" a

'What?'

'What did he mean by that? I'm clearly wrapped in a large towel!'

Besides, Victor had torn her clothes to shreds. This towel was the only thing in the bathroom that was big enough to cover her entire body!

'What more does he want from me?'

'Was I supposed to stay in the bathtub forever?'

Charlotte wasn't in the mood to argue with Zachary. She pursed her lips and trudged resentfully

toward her bedroom.

Zachary shot a nonchalant glance at her figure.

'Charlotte Simmons!' 'How typical! She's just like any other celebrity stupid.'

They all thought that they could worm their way into his good graces simply by stripping and exposing their naked bodies in front of him.

More than five minutes later, Charlotte re entered the living room after putting on a new set of clothes.

Zachary had only intended to glance at her at first... but he couldn't seem to tear his eyes away from her. This time, Charlotte was wearing a white shirt, casual pants, and comfy sports shoes. She looked fresh faced and refined.

Charlotte was surprised by how long Zachary had been staring at her. "What are you looking at?"

Zachary raised his brows, then quietly steered his pupils away. "Scheming little b *tch!" "What?"

She was wearing an outfit that she had chosen at random. How did that make her a "scheming little b*tch"?

Charlotte simply couldn't understand how she'd ended up being attacked. She hadn't done anything to deserve this!

"Get your bags," Zachary ordered before he turned around and headed toward the door.

Charlotte didn't have time to consider any

of that. She took her luggage and dragged i

t along as she followed Zachary.

Zachary did not wait for her at all.

She had to jog in order to catch up to him and stay one meter away from him. "Why, dad is still unconscious. I need to know if Victor will sue him when he awakes."

"Do you think he'd dare?" Zachary asked,

keeping his eyes ahead. "I know he wouldn't have the nerve to insult you again, but what if it does happen? Today was a good example. He took the risk despite knowing our marital status and did that..." Charlotte persisted, her cheeks blushing when she broached the subject.

However, she continued anyway. "I'd like to know if he'd throw caution to the wind and take my father to court simply out of resentment. After all, you humiliated him today."

"A buffoon like Victor has no right to resent me," Zachary replied.

"But..." Charlotte continued.

"Your father will be fine. I guarantee it. Is that enough?"

Zachary cut Charlotte off indifferently, silencing her at once.

Mr. Connor's words carried enormous weight in Rothesay. He always kept his word, so it was a guarantee.

Suddenly, Zachary turned around, catching Charlotte off guard and looking her in the eye. His beautiful eyes, which were as deep as the ocean, drew her in instantly, leaving her breathless.

Zachary pressed his thin lips against her ear, saying in his cold, icy tone, "Remember, if you ever betray me, I'll make things very difficult for your father - a hundred times worse than being sent to jail by Victor Rutherford."

Charlotte immediately felt as if she had

been put in a freezing cave.

Zachary had already entered the car by the

time she came back to her senses.

The corners of her lips twitched helplessly.

'Zachary Connor!'

This man had saved her twice at the lowest point of her life.

Was he her guardian angel or a demon that had jumped out of her nightmares?

PREVIOUS

Chapter 34 Room No. 7

NEXT

Click 'Setting' button to setting theme

Charlotte got into the car.

"Now, tell me. How on earth did you manage to drive the car across the river?" Zachary casually asked as he sat in the driver's seat.

Charlotte would have completely forgotten about that if he hadn't mentioned it.

She stared out of the window absent mindedly. "This river may seem to be filled with water on the surface, but there are two stone pillars hidden in its depths. The surface of the stone pillars is around 20 centimeters beneath the river's surface. The distance between those stone pillars is similar to the distance between a car's tires. I used those pillars to drive the car across the river." "Oh?" Zachary

mused.

He was the King of Drag Racing, who had driven through every harsh terrain in Rothesay, yet he was not aware of this hidden gem. How could a frail little girl like her possibly be aware of this?

A hint of sadness flitted across Charlotte's eyes, she knew exactly what Zachary was thinking.

"Bryson loved motorcycle racing. I joined his motorcade just to keep him company. I've pretty much explored every single corner of Rothesay during bike rides with him. He and I discovered that river's secret by accident last year."

Zachary felt strangely uncomfortable when Charlotte mentioned Bryson. "I would never take advantage of another human being. If you can't let go of your ex-husband, I'd be happy to give you a divorce." 'My ex-husband? Why did that sound so ironic?'

It was true!

She may have had a wedding party with Bryson, but they had never actually registered their marriage. She and Bryson were not really considered husband and wife at the end of the day.

As one of the parties involved, she had failed to see the truth at the time.

All things considered, perhaps Bryson had never considered her his wife at all. She, on the other hand, had considered Bryson the only one for her. She had been completely devoted to him and had stupidly carried a stranger's child for his sake...

Who didn't make stupid decisions in their youth?

What kind of girl wouldn't encounter a jerk or two?

However, she was certainly not going to make the same mistake again!

Charlotte steeled herself and turned to Zachary. "I admit that I had ulterior motives when I married you. Our marriage happened abruptly. However, marriage is sacred. You are my husband now and the only man I'll ever care for. I will do my best to stay away from other men, especially Bryce."

There was no response.

Zachary simply raised his dark brows. He tilted his gaze ever so slightly toward Charlotte.

Charlotte's heart was pounding under his gaze. She didn't know what to do with her hands.

This carried on for at least three seconds, until Zachary finally curled his lips enigmatically and said, "That's rhetoric." Charlotte felt cynical.

'Does Zachary have something against me? Or does he always treat women this way?'

Zachary's mansion was huge. The compound spanned 10,000 square meters and included a luxurious swimming pool, a golf course, and a helipad. The main building had 99 living rooms and 201 bedrooms. Anyone unfamiliar with the area would easily lose their way.

A servant took Charlotte's luggage and carried it to the second floor. "You are Mr. Connor's wife and, therefore, the mistress of this house," the servant said, pointing at bedroom number seven. "You can sleep in any room you like, except room number seven. You are not allowed to enter it without Mr. Connor's permission."

"Why?" Charlotte asked, feeling puzzled. "Because that's Mr. Connor's room. Mr. Connor is a man with principles. He does not allow women in his room."

'Fine! Did he have to make it sound so tactful? He might as well have said "Zachary Connor wants to sleep in separate rooms and has drawn a line-you are not allowed to enter his room".'

Zachary's actions did not surprise her at all. She could sense it-Zachary didn't just

detest her. He wanted to be as far away from her as possible. She, on the other hand, felt nothing for him. If Zachary had insisted on sleeping in the same bed with her, she would've felt very awkward.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 35

Charlotte chose a room she liked.

She had received the devastating news that her father had fallen into Bryson and Victor's trap after her delivery. She'd had to drag her frail body everywhere, like a small boat adrift in a violent storm at sea, unable to find peace. Now, she had successfully put her father's worries to rest, and her mind was finally at ease.

Charlotte had not expected that the man who saved a lonely, helpless little boat like her would have been a stranger to her just a few days ago.

She fell asleep as soon as her head landed on the pillow.

Then, she had a dream-another dream about Bryson. In her dream, she and Bryson were in a strange, large room. The room was dark, and there were no lights. Bryson was walking in front of her and would turn around and smile at her from time to time. "Hold onto my hand, Charlotte. Don't get lost, or I'll lose you forever."

Charlotte ran toward him but couldn't catch up to him at all.

'Bryson... Bryce!'

She wanted to call out his name, but she felt as if a sponge had been stuffed down her throat. She

couldn't make a sound. She extended her hand but couldn't catch him.

She could only run after him.

Bryson opened a door and walked into a room. Charlotte followed him.

He sat on the bed and smiled, beckoning

for her to join him. Charlotte did.

Suddenly, Bryce disappeared into thin air. She was about to stop by the bedside, but her right foot stumbled and she fell on the bed.

She felt no pain.

Charlotte was currently caught between 90 % sleep and 10% consciousness. She had a faint inkling that she was dreaming.

How could she possibly feel any pain in a dream?

All she felt was a soft, gentle brush on her lips and a delicate minty fragrance. It reminded her of her favorite childhood mint-flavored lollipop.

"Charlotte Simmons!"

Suddenly, she heard a cold, deep voice yelling into her ear. Then, a large, forceful hand wrapped itself around her neck, choking her.

Charlotte woke up in an instant. Her eyes flew open as she came face to face with his cold, deep eyes. She shivered from fright, instantly filled with fear.

The hand around her neck belonged to none other than Zachary Connor.

Zachary was lying on his bed, and so was Charlotte, who was lying right on top of him... Charlotte may have shifted position due to Zachary's hold over her neck, but she was still pressed against Zachary's face, and her arms were wrapped around Zachary's head!

The most confusing and flustering part of it all? The tip of her tongue was brushing against his lips...

'Wh-What am I doing?'

Amid her confusion, Zachary forcefully pushed Charlotte off the bed.

Thud!

Charlotte toppled heavily on the floor. The bad shock and severe impact on her back left her mind completely blank. Shock reverberated throughout her body.

Zachary got off the bed and pulled her to her feet by the collar.

"Do you want me to kill you, woman?" he yelled, blasting her with his icy voice.

"I-I... N-No, I don't want to die... I'm innocent. I-I don't know what happened ..." Charlotte stumbled over her words in fright. Zachary's face before her was full of sinister lines, and his eyes were bloodshot, making him look like an enraged wild animal.

"You boldly climbed into my bed and now you claim to be innocent? You insist you don't know what happened?" The man's tone was laden with a thick layer of frost, and he was seething through his white teeth as he spoke.

"Do you really think that you can escape death right now simply by pretending to be a fool?" Words related to "death" were

included in Zachary's every sentence as he tightened his grip on her clothes. Charlotte had never seen such a terrifying side of him before. She trembled fearfully, feeling tongue-tied and unable to speak.

"Speak. Name your punishment."

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NEXT: CHAPTER 36

His intimidation was like a breath of ice hurtling against Charlotte.

Charlotte was immediately reminded of Zachary's punishment for Victor. Her face was instantly drained of color. "L- Listen t o me... I-I didn't mean to do it. I-I was sleep-walking... That's right! I have

sleep walking tendencies. Just ask my dad. I really don't know what happened. I really was sleeping-walking!"

She noticed the corners of Zachary's lips lift just as she said this.

Even a casual curl of his lips could result in a perfect line on this extremely handsome man, who was absolutely stunning.

'Is he smiling?' However, Charlotte soon realized how stupid that notion was. How could Zachary possibly be smiling? The corners of his lips were obviously quivering from rage!

"Are you implying that I look like an idiot to you?" Zachary's icy lips seethed, enunciating every single word, every syllable coated in bone-piercing frost.

Charlotte felt as if she had been turned into ice.

Zachary released her, removing his support and causing her to land on the ground with a loud thump.

"You will be placed in confinement." He removed his cold, irritable gaze from her and looked straight ahead. "From now on, this house will be your prison. You are not allowed to take a single step out until you've served your sentence."

'What?' Charlotte heard a buzzing noise in her head. She immediately lost control and rose to her feet, then confronted Zachary face to face.

"I walked into your room by mistake. I didn't mean to do it. What gives you the right to take my freedom away?"

"Mistake?"

Zachary stared back at her disdainfully and laughed mockingly.

"You still have the nerve to insist that it was a mistake?"

Charlotte felt helpless.

It was true!

Of course, Zachary wouldn't believe her.

She herself wouldn't have believed that she had been sleep-walking if she hadn't woken up to find Zachary's hand around her throat. Furthermore, she had ended up sleep-walking all the way into Zachary's bed of all places.

"Remember, Charlotte. You signed a prenup, and according to that contract, I have total control over you. I have the

right to control everything about you.

The six-foot-tall Zachary was an entire head taller than Charlotte, so his voice swept above her head.

Charlotte remembered the 26 clauses in that prenup and was left even more speechless than ever.

"So, are you still going to question my right to lock you up?" asked Zachary.

Charlotte immediately lost all hope.

"You have ten seconds to get out of my room. If you ever do this again... Well, consider Victor an example!" Zachary snapped, then turned around and left.

At that very moment, Zachary had successfully provoked Charlotte's innate stubbornness. She smirked as she watched him leave.

"So what if I've deliberately climbed into your bed? I'm your wife. It's my right to sleep in the same bed with you. Do you have to do this to me?"

His back was turned against her, and Zachary's ink-black eyes were filled with ridicule. "So you're finally admitting it. Your sexual urges overpowered you."

'What?'

Charlotte bit her lips resentfully as tears brimmed threateningly in her eyes. "After everything I've said, you've not listened to me at all."

Zachary continued walking, his eyes filled with a frosty glaze.

"I'll say it again, Charlotte. I make every decision for you. If I say you'll sleep in my bed, you will sleep in my bed. If I say you won't, you won't."

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NEXT: CHAPTER 37

Zachary promptly marched out of the bedroom as he spoke.

Charlotte was close to a breakdown, and her eyes were filled with desolate tears.

"You say that you're placing me in confinement. How long will that last?"

"That will depend on your behavior," replied Zachary. "It could be a week, a month, a year... It could even last until the day you die."

Charlotte's legs gave way, and she slumped onto the ground with a loud thump. Zachary turned around. His expression was cold and sinister.

"Remember, you have ten seconds to get out of my room. One second more, and I'll extend your confinement by another year." Charlotte was left speechless, and her face twitched. She scrambled to

her feet a second later and bolted out of Zachary's room.

She locked her bedroom door, sat on her bed, and indignantly snatched the teddy bear, which was sitting by the head of her bed. Then, she forcefully jabbed the teddy bear's nose with her finger. "Zachary, you jerk! You're a huge jerk! You are an unreasonable assh*le!"

Zachary walked into the bathroom.

His large, loose pajamas landed softly on the ground, exposing his lean, muscular, model-like figure. He turned on the shower, releasing delicate, crystalline water droplets upon his body and letting them stream down his skin.

He soaped himself and scrubbed his body over and over again. Unfortunately, her scent still remained on his skin, especially the faint, fragrant, feminine scent of her lips.

His room was off-limits. He had clearly instructed the servants to convey that message to her, but she had refused to listen. She had the audacity to break into his room at night while he was asleep and sneak into his bed!

It would have been too late if he hadn't woken up in time...

'Charlotte Simmons! She's too impatient!'

He could have had her thrown out of the house after this heavy mistake. However, his heart had softened for some strange reason when he had looked into her "innocent" eyes. Thus, he had changed his mind and talked about confinement instead.

The most confusing part? He might have felt disgusted when she'd climbed on top of him, but he had lost control...

'D*mn it! Charlotte Simmons is insane. Am I going insane too?'

Charlotte slept until her biological clock had had enough sleep.

It was now 3:30 p.m.

She reached out to grab the alarm clock at the head of her bed with her eyes closed, as she usually would. However, her right hand found empty space. Only then did she realize that she wasn't in her own home anymore.

No!

The house she had been living in for the past ten months belonged to Bryson. Bryson had never treated her as family. That house had belonged to Bryson alone. It had never belonged to her.

Then, Charlotte's phone rang. It was a call from Lamington, the butler. She answered it.

"Miss, Mr. Simmons is awake. You're the first person he's asked for. Come to the hospital as soon as you can..." Lamington's voice trembled with emotion.

Charlotte was overjoyed, and tears streamed down her face as she replied, " Tell dad that I'll be there soon."

She couldn't be bothered to change clothes. She ran out immediately in her pajamas.

She suddenly heard a chilly voice behind her.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 38

By the time Charlotte reached the living room on the first floor, Zachary was sitting on the couch. However, since she was in a rush to see her father, she failed to notice him when she ran past him despite his imposing presence.

She slowed down a little, but she was still walking toward the door. "My dad is awake. I have to go to the hospital to see him now."

Zachary replied expressionlessly upon hearing her words, "Have you forgotten that I've placed you in confinement?"

Charlotte suddenly stopped dead in her tracks, petrified by his words. Her face was ashen, and her eyes were filled with disbelief. She turned her head around and looked at Zachary as if she was staring at a demon.

"Look, if you're talking about the incident that happened last night, regardless of the cause, I admit I was the one who climbed into your bed. I didn't mean to oppose your decision to place me in confinement because of what I did. However, things are different today. My dad's awake, and I have to see him. You can't strip me of my responsibility as a daughter, and you can't prevent me from visiting him!"

"So, are you saying that it's my fault?" the man replied as he slowly rose from the couch, his tall stature looming over the woman in front of him. He looked breathtakingly handsome and imposing in his well-pressed black suit.

"Don't be an idiot now, Charlotte Simmons. You're the one who made a mistake in the first place. I'm just doing what I should be doing. If you want to blame anyone, you have to blame yourself." 'F*cking assh*le! Why does he always have a way to justify everything he does!?'

Charlotte was well aware that she would not be able to win this argument, so she stamped her feet in frustration and snarled, "I don't care! I have to see my father now. If you dare to stop me, I'll call the cops and tell them that you're illegally confining me."

After saying that, she continued walking toward the door.

"Your father will not be able to stay in the hospital without me after waking up. Instead, Victor Rutherford will send him to prison. I can save him, but I can destroy him as well."

Zachary's voice was bereft of any emotion, and every syllable that escaped his lips rammed into Charlotte's ears loud and clear.

Charlotte calmed down as if someone had thrown cold water on her.

"Are... Are you threatening me?"

"Yes. I'm threatening you."

Then, Zachary took one large stride and stopped right in front of Charlotte. Like a king overlooking the world in a condescending manner, he lowered his head to look at Charlotte with a satirical grin on his lips.

"Remember, if you disobey me, you and your family will face certain death."

Charlotte's eyes were filled with despair and thwarted ambition. She kept her head low in defiance as she refused to look at Zachary.

Zachary gripped her chin and forcibly lifted her face up so that her gaze met his.

"Understood?" He pressed on. Charlotte pressed her lips so tight that they were trembling. She did not want to say anything in response, but there was nothing she could do. At present, all she wanted was to get away from here, from the man in front of her that looked like a demon. In the end, she gave in and responded in defiance, "Understood."

Upon hearing her answer, Zachary nodded in assent. At the same time, a trace of satisfaction, which Charlotte failed to notice, flitted across his brown eyes.

Who said that Charlotte Simmons, the most wanted socialite, was gentle and highly cultured?

She was just a naughty wild cat!

He had said no to her so many times, yet she still would not learn her lesson and had dared to challenge him. Did she not know how to learn from her mistakes?

What was even more ridiculous was that this woman had just stomped her feet and pouted in front of him!

Hah...

If she thought she could get her way by acting all affectionate, then she was terribly wrong!

He was Zachary Conner, the second master, who would strike fear into people's hearts with just his name. There was no way he would fall or give way to a woman just because she acted vulnerable in front of him.

That said, he did find some interesting elements in Charlotte. After all, it would be too boring if his wife was too obedient and quiet.

Charlotte was left with no other options, so she could only go back to her room and talk to her father via video chat. She nearly broke into tears of joy when she saw that her father's complexion had turned better and he no longer required medical instruments to stay alive.

"Carlie, Lamington has told me everything about you and Zachary Connor. Even though Zachary has a bad reputation, as long as he's nice to you, I'm fine with him being your husband. Besides, it's all thanks to him that we, the Simmons, have been saved from being humiliated by those scumbags. We have to be grateful to him. Carlie, promise me. Since you guys are married now, you have to let Bryson go and be a good wife to Zachary," Walter said earnestly.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 39

Charlotte bobbed her head and replied, " Don't worry, dad."

"How can I not worry about you? You're my daughter, and I know you the best. Everyone thinks that you're pretty and intelligent, but none of them knows that's just a mask you wear to keep your true self hidden. You're a headstrong girl, and you're rebellious. You refuse to yield to anyone, and if anyone tries to keep you under control, you will certainly fight back. Anyway, listen to me, Carlie. You have to take it down a notch with your attitude now that you're somebody's wife. You must not keep fighting with Zachary, and-"

"Hold up, hold up! Please stop wittering o n, dad. I know what I'm doing." Charlotte interjected, laughing through her tears. She talked to her father through the video camera for nearly an hour.

She learned from her father that not only had Victor Rutherford dropped the charges against him, but he had also returned Simmons Inc's management rights to her father. After her father recovered and was discharged from the hospital, he could preside over Simmons Inc. again.

Before this, her father had fallen sick after Bryson and Victor's betrayal. When he had learned that Zachary had helped him set everything right after waking up, he'd felt a lot better. The doctor had also said he could get discharged from the hospital in 1 o more days.

Zachary had given the Simmons everything they had now.

If it were not for him, Victor Rutherford would have sent her father to prison and she would have been at his mercy. It was a scenario that Charlotte dared not imagine.

Her father said that Zachary was the one who had saved them from the pits of hell. She should be grateful to him, and she should not fight with him all the time.

After she ended her conversation with her father, Charlotte felt a lot calmer.

She left her bedroom and found Zachary reading a classic masterpiece in front of

the French windows.

Zachary was tall and physically fit. He had a perfect body shape, which was further accentuated by the designer black suit that he was wearing. The afternoon sunlight was sprinkled on his extremely handsome face like silver shavings, granting him the vibe of an ethereal from heaven. that had descended

Truth be told, in Charlotte's opinion, Zachary was more handsome than Bryson. It was just that Zachary was too cold and harsh to the people around him-that was why girls would not surround him wherever he went like Bryson.

That said, Zachary was still the most wanted and perfect spouse that many socialites in Rothesay yearned for.

Even Charlotte would have a hard time peeling her eyes away from him whenever she saw him.

"Is there anything on my face?" asked Zachary, startling Charlotte. After all, she had not expected him to notice her at all given the fact that he'd never looked away from the book in front of him.

Charlotte shrugged in embarrassment.

"I've thought it over. Since I've already signed my name on the prenuptial agreement, that means I accept every clause of the agreement and I should comply with it as promised. This time, I am the one who violated the agreement, so I should accept your punishment and stop fighting with you."

Zachary raised his head from the book and looked at her.

"Well, honestly, these are not changes I would expect from a woman who acts affectionate and cute in order to run away from her punishment an hour ago."

'Huh!?'

Charlotte admitted that she had refused to accept the punishment before, but when had she acted all affectionate and cute in front of him!?

"My dad is very grateful to you, and he wants me to be as obedient as possible," Charlotte said after forcing herself to calm down. The corner of her lips was still

Zachary raised his eyebrows disdainfully as he looked at her with an intrigued gaze.

Well, even though this woman was beyond unreasonable, she had a good and reasonable father.

At the same time, someone rapped on the door, prompting Charlotte to look toward the source of the noise.

A golden head emerged from the gap. The man was none other than Lucas.

Upon sensing Charlotte's gaze, Lucas waved at her.

"Hello, Charlotte," he said.

Charlotte replied with a grin, "Hello."

"Are you here to say hi to her?" Zachary's

indifferent voice rang out.

"Nope, nope, nope. I'm here to report to you about the task you assigned me, Second Master." Lucas grinned like the Cheshire Cat as he approached Zachary. Then, he whispered into his ear, "It's about the woman you're looking for,

Second Master. Should I let Charlotte

know as well?"

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NEXT: CHAPTER 40

Zachary said, "You shouldn't." He then cast a pithy gaze at Charlotte.

He was clearly telling her, "I have some private matters to discuss with Lucas. You can go out already...'

Charlotte was not so unworldly that she would not even understand what people meant in an instant. Plus, she had no intention of interfering with Zachary's private affairs, so she shook her head and exited the living room.

Lucas continued after Charlotte walked away. "That incident was clearly plotted very carefully, and his purpose was to get you to sleep with that lady. After an around -the-clock, full-throttle, all-out

investigation, I've finally found out that

the person who drugged you that night was one of your uncle's men. In other words, the person who devised the whole scheme against you behind the scenes isn't someone else. It's most likely your uncle!"

Zachary's eyes dimmed-the word "uncle" felt like someone was rubbing salt on the bleeding wound in his heart.

"Sigh... Second Master, all that is in the past. Aren't you in a new relationship now? Let's forget the past and move on.' Lucas patted Zachary's back distressingly.

Zachary's uncle had something to do with Ms. Larson's separation from Zachary, so his uncle was also his love rival at the end of the day.

Back then, Ms. Larson had been the only one who had truly entered Zachary's heart and formed a bond with him. Although Zachary had still been a cold person in the past, his indifference had not been as terrifying as it was now. He had become even more merciless and remorseless ever since Ms. Larson had left him, and Lucas had never seen him smile as cheerfully as he used to since then.

Lucas noticed Zachary's distressed expression, so he changed the subject immediately. "Second Master, I think we should stop the investigation here. Let's not dig any deeper."

"No, continue the investigation." Clear, cold syllables escaped from Zachary's thin lips.

Lucas touched his oversized earrings. "But Second Master, you and Ms. Larson have already broken up. Ms. Larson even gave birth to a baby the day before yesterday. What could you do even if you were to find out the truth?"

"Everything I do has nothing to do with her." Zachary interrupted Lucas indifferently, his gaze grim. Lucas could only nod helplessly. "Okay, I'll proceed." He bowed his head and left after receiving this order.

Zachary put the classical masterpiece in his hand on the window sill and took an emerald locket out of his pocket.

That night ten months ago, he had been set up and sent to an unfamiliar room. The room had been so dark that he hadn't been able to see a thing, and he had then been driven to leap onto the lady who had been left in the room...

He hadn't had the chance to see the lady's face that night, and he could only remember that the lady's fragrance had been enchanting.

After waking up with a splitting headache in the hotel the next day, he had been clutching this emerald locket that he had somehow torn from her body ever since.

He had been looking for the lady for the past ten months, but he had been unable to find any useful piece of information. Thus, this heart-shaped emerald had become the only clue to finding the girl.

"O & E." Zachary stared at the letters carved on the emerald.

He had carefully studied the underlying meaning behind these words countless times, but he was still puzzled.

Clatter!

Clatter!

Clatter!

Footsteps could be heard coming from behind him, and Zachary defensively grabbed the locket into his palm.

When he saw that it was Charlotte, his gaze turned piercingly cold. "Don't you know how to knock?"

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NEXT: CHAPTER 41

'What?'

Charlotte had knocked on the door nine times and had almost broken her finger. She had only opened the door and entered the room because of the lack of response from Zachary, okay?

Charlotte, who had walked into the room, saw Zachary staring at the emerald locket in a daze. She did not want to disturb him, so she tried to tiptoe back to the bedroom without making a noise, but she was discovered before she could make a move.

Seeing that Zachary was looking rather upset, Charlotte did not want to argue with him, so she smiled. "Okay, my bad. I'll knock next time. I won't bother you now, so you can continue to stare at your baby in a trance." Zachary opened his mouth, but before he had the time to speak, Charlotte had already stridden into her bedroom and slammed the door shut.

Zachary furrowed his picture-perfect brows unpleasantly.

'Charlotte Simmons! Is this rebellion?'

Charlotte, who had returned to her bedroom peacefully, heaved a long sigh of relief.

If she had not escaped from the room in time, she did not know how difficult he would've made things for her.

When thinking of Zachary, she could not help but think of the emerald locket that h e had been staring blankly at and the one that she had once owned...

Four years ago, after she and Bryson had made their relationship official, Bryson had given her an emerald locket. The initials "O & E" on it had been carved by hand by Bryson himself over the course of a whole night.

Bryson had explained, "O & E are the initials of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus symbolizes me, while Eurydice symbolizes you. They're one of the most famous pairs of lovers in ancient Greek mythology.

Orpheus was brave enough to go to the underworld and strike a deal with Hades t o save Eurydice when she died. It means that I'll travel to the end of the world and d o anything for you."

Charlotte clearly remembered that she had cried like a baby when Bryson had helped her put on the locket while saying those words.

Since then, she had never taken the locket off. She had even vorn it while taking a bath.

However, ten months ago, after she'd spent her wedding night with Bryson with a stranger, the emerald locket had disappeared. She had failed to locate it to this day.

'Zachary actually has a similar emerald locket. He must have bought it from the same jewelry store as Bryson.'

The next day, Charlotte did not see Zachary for the whole day.

She went to the bathroom at about 11:30 a.m, and when she exited the bathroom, she met Lucas, who had just returned with Zachary.

"Second Master has been liaising with a client on a big project recently, and the client is one hell of a man to deal with. He insisted that Second Master must get drunk before he'll let him leave the banquet, and I'm the one who has to help him all the way back here. This is so exhausting!"

Lucas felt like he had met his savior when he saw Charlotte. He swiftly handed Zachary over to Charlotte and escaped.

Although Zachary would not allow her to set foot in his bedroom, and the villa had hundreds of bedrooms, Zachary had never slept in any other bedroom than his own. Thus, Charlotte could only bite the bullet and help him into his bedroom.

Zachary was drunk and unconscious. His eyes were closed, his brows were tightly creased, and his defined face was slightly red. Zachary did not react to any movements at all until Charlotte placed him on the bed.

"Stay with me." Zachary grabbed Charlotte's wrist abruptly with his huge hand when she was about to leave.

The effect of the alcohol made his palm extremely warm, and Charlotte felt a sudden jolt of electricity from the wrist he touched coursing through her body and making her tremble.

Suddenly, a powerful force hauled her and fell on the bed. Zachary then embraced Charlotte before she could recover from the shock.

The man's thin lips were already on the bridge of her nose. His warm breaths were hitting her cheeks, and his left arm was wrapped around her waist.

She was frightened, and everything was chaotic. "Zachary Connor! You... Uuf!"

She could not make a sound anymore as Zachary had sealed her tender lips firmly with a kiss.

She felt like thunder had struck her mind, and her heart skipped a few beats. A man who was indifferent and as precious as a king also had a charm that no woman could resist.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 42

There was a cool and refreshing scent of mint coming from him. It was faint but so unique that it could not be ignored-it was as addictive as a drug.

Charlotte had the illusion that she had fallen into a blooming garden and completely forgot that Zachary was kissing her...

The person kissing her was Zachary!

After his lips twitched and separated from hers, Charlotte gradually regained her rationality.

As soon as she became sober again, confusion, shock, and panic struck her all at once. "Zachary Connor, why did you... kiss me?"

Zachary was still hugging her tightly-the warmth coming from his breath and chest as hot as a prairie fire. Every extra second in his arms made her lose the ability to reason bit by bit.

"Please don't leave me..." The man's thin, warm lips were pressed against the spot between her eyebrows, and he was still whispering through them, "I love you."

Charlotte was shocked instantly, "You..."

What did you say?"

"I love you." He hugged her tighter in his powerful arms as if he was holding onto a rare treasure that was more important than his own life. He wanted to embrace her for the rest of his life and never let her go.

This man was usually as cold as the devil himself, but his gentle voice could melt an iceberg at the moment.

"Lory, please don't go.

"Lory, please stay with me. "I love you, Lory..."

It turned out that Zachary had mistaken her for another woman. Unexpectedly, Charlotte felt a little disappointed all of a sudden and envied this woman named "Lory".

"Lory, don't go....

"Lory..."

"Lory!"

Perhaps he was dreaming about Lory leaving him, so Zachary's slightly hoarse voice sounded very anxious. Charlotte could feel that his arms were trembling while embracing her tightly.

He opened his eyes suddenly.

Because of the effect of alcohol, the white surrounding his iris at the center of his eyes was bloodshot. It was like a drop of red ink blooming when it dripped into a clear deep pond. It looked captivating and suffocating.

At the same time, deep, intense agony could be sensed in these eyes. It was a torment that only those who had seen deep affection die away up close and personal would feel.

People who appeared to be indifferent on the surface often tended to be more emotional at heart. Charlotte had not expected that although Zachary was usually cold and unapproachable, he would be hiding such an inaccessible, bloody incision deep down...

'Zachary and I actually share the same past.' Charlotte's heart melted away.

The hand that was originally pushing Zachary away stopped doing so, and it was lightly placed on the delicate skin of his forehead. Charlotte patted him lightly and whispered in his ear, "Don't worry, I'm not leaving. I'll stay with you." When he heard her voice, Zachary's tight grasp loosened gradually, and his eyelids closed once again.

The man, who had always been cold and domineering when he was awake even though he was still acting like a king when he was asleep, looked much more approachable now.

Charlotte shoved him tentatively. Upon seeing that he did not react to the thrust, she safely broke away from his arms and got out of bed in a hurry.

She had to get out of there immediately. If he were to find out that she had entered his bedroom again and even gotten into his bed, he would think that she was a pervert again.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 43

Charlotte returned to her bedroom, but her heart was still beating vigorously. While she looked in the mirror, her lips were as crimson as if they were bleeding, and her mouth was filled with a faint sweet and metallic blood aftertaste, as if Zachary's intense kiss was still lingering on her lips...

Whenever Zachary approached her, she would always feel panic and awe. She'd even had the illusion that she had returned to the night when that stranger had defiled her ten months ago.

This time around, was it because Zachary had mistaken her for his beloved woman? His kiss had been so affectionate that Charlotte had only felt warmth.

"Ugh!" Charlotte gave her reflection in the mirror the middle finger to express her contempt and simultaneously murmured to comfort herself. "Charlotte Simmons, you're doing just fine. There's nothing wrong with you. No woman should be able to resist that scourge's charm."

As Charlotte was lying on the bed and caressing her belly, she thought of the child she had given birth to.

The baby had been taken away as soon as he had been born. She had not even gotten a chance to look at the baby. She only knew that it was a boy, and he was exquisite and adorable.

She had been living in Bryson's lies in the past, thinking that she would give birth to the baby to save Bryson's life. She had only learned that she was Tiffany's sacrificial lamb after giving birth to the baby

In order to safeguard Tiffany's integrity, Bryson had tricked her into sleeping with a stranger on behalf of Tiffany.

Charlotte still wanted to search for the child after learning the truth, but she knew that the person who had taken the child had not left a single clue behind. Thus, she was unable to locate the baby.

Besides, it was safe to say that even if she could find the child, she would still be Zachary's wife. She knew that even though Zachary did not care about her past for unknown reasons, he would never allow her to bring a stranger's child home to live with them.

"Charlotte Simmons!"

Charlotte was dragged back to reality by a low, deep shout and the sound of someone smacking on her door. She opened the door with a foreboding feeling, met the cold glare of the person outside, and took two steps back in terror. "Are... Are you okay?"

"Did you break into my bedroom again last night?"

Although Zachary had an attractive appearance that could awe the whole world, he was gloomier than a graveyard on a wet Sunday.

"No... No..." Charlotte's heartbeat was off the charts. "I did enter your bedroom, but I didn't break into it... I was just... helping

you out of kindness..."

Her voice was not trembling because of her guilty conscience but because of Zachary's devilish, murderous expression.

"You sneaked your way into my bed and kissed me again?" Zachary's eyes looked like they were covered in layers of snow as they glanced at her indifferently. They were cold, arrogant, and condescending.

Charlotte was speechless.

She felt wronged and wanted to explain herself, but due to the effect of Zachary's domineering aura, she felt that she could be frozen into an ice block within minutes, and her tongue seemed to have been

knotted. She stared at him blankly. Her rose-like lips were slightly open, but she could not utter a single word... It seemed as if she was acquiescing in his accusations!

Seeing Zachary's gaze, which was as cold as a blizzard getting dimmer and dimmer in winter, Charlotte knew that this was it for her!

The last time this had happened was when she had sleep-walked into Zachary's bed and almost made out with him. However, she truly had no idea how Zachary had discovered the clues this time. If he were to mistakenly think that she had sneaked into his bed again, she would not dare imagine how this would end for her.

"Come here." Zachary's voice was indifferent but melodious.

Charlotte's body was so stiff that it felt like it had been trapped in an ice block. How could she move?

"I told you to get over here." Zachary's voice got deeper, and the slight change in his voice made it sound even more imposing than the battle cry of an army.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 44

Charlotte was so frightened that her legs and feet suddenly became nimble. They were moving as if her body was no longer under the control of her brain, and because of that, she walked toward him mechanically.

She then felt a weight pulling her shoulders downward all of a sudden. Zachary was pulling her in his arms, and she ran into his body, which was as tough as an iron plate, and felt a faint ache.

Before she could recover from this daze, Zachary's lips had already met hers.

Gasp...

Their lips were locked tightly once again.

The sound of a thunder strike pierced the trance in her mind, and a space in her heart seemed to have been emptied. She wanted to escape in a panic, but Zachary's powerful hand was holding the back of her head and pushing her face against his.

"Mmm!"

His mint-like unique coolness and the liquor's faint fragrance engulfed her like overwhelming waves. Charlotte seemed to have been devoured, and it felt like she was freefalling into a sweet dream. She was deeply immersed in it and was unable to extricate herself.

She lost her rationality once again and started to surrender...

"Second Master, I'm here-Argh!" A sharp screech came out of nowhere, and Zachary sobered up and let go of Charlotte.

It took at least three more seconds before Charlotte gradually recovered from the trance. Her cheeks were flushed, and she looked at Zachary in disbelief while stepping back.

"What the hell were you doing? Why did you kiss me..."

She thought Zachary was going to give her hell, but unexpectedly, it turned out that she'd earned herself a reward.

A reward?

Why would she think that it was a reward?!

What she did not know was that Zachary

was at a loss too.

He'd only wanted to get her in front of him to warn her up close and solemnly so that she would remember not to do so again in the future. However, the moment she had come near him, a sultry, pleasant scent had come pouring into his nose. Enchanted all of a sudden, he had turned into a beast.

After he'd gotten a taste of the goodliness between her lips, a certain savageness that had been hibernating within him for many years awakened instantaneously, and a boiling lust began to gather in his abdomen, waiting to gush out in one go.

Had it not been for Lucas's scream, he would have lost control and defiled Charlotte...

What had happened!? The moment he had gotten close to her, the self-discipline and restraint that he had always been proud of seemed to have gone down the toilet, crumbling and shattering into pieces silently in an instant.

Zachary was much taller than Charlotte. Even though he was very emotional right now, all Charlotte saw was his cold gaze and unconcerned expression. She could not see a hint of a mood swing whatsoever.

"I'm so sorry to bother you, Second Master and milady. Just pretend I never showed up. You should continue whatever you were doing seconds ago. I'm leaving now..."

"He he... There's no need to see me off. I can leave by myself." Lucas turned around and escaped the scene immediately.

The second master had been kissing a woman. This was a situation rarer than hen's teeth.

Excluding the incident of him being drugged ten months ago, Lucas was sure that this was the first time his master had taken the initiative to kiss a woman.

That was why Lucas had screamed as if he had just seen a ghost when he had seen this.

It had not been the right time for him to call out. Judging from the passionate look of his second master just now, that might have evolved into something even more exciting if he had not interrupted the show...

"What are you doing here?" Zachary shifted his gaze onto Lucas and managed to escape Charlotte's questioning without a trace.

"Huh? Second Master, you don't know why I'm here? You and President Zaleski already reached a consensus about the project last night. Didn't you ask me to come over and pick you up this morning so that you could attend the contract signing with President Zaleski?"

Lucas rubbed his golden afro. His second master, who had always been very ambitious and cautious with his work, had actually forgotten such an important matter. That was a first!

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NEXT: CHAPTER 45

Only then did Zachary recall their original plan. "Okay."

His tone sounded casual, but it still gave everyone present the feeling that he had just remembered about the meeting.

He took a huge stride on his long, slender legs and walked toward Lucas. "Are you not coming with me?"

Lucas stared at Charlotte, who Zachary

had cleverly placed in front of the bedroom door. "Second Master, you were having such an intimate moment with Charlotte just minutes ago... Are you really going to leave her like this?"

As he spoke, Lucas suddenly felt a chill down his spine, raised his head, and as expected, ran into Zachary's grim gaze. He was so scared that he almost knelt on the spot and begged Jesus for His blessing.

Zachary's indifferent gaze was something that he had to deal with daily, and one glance had always been enough to frighten him out of his wits. Why would he stare at him with such a terrorizing glare then?

'Wait a minute! The second master wants to leave the scene in a hurry... Is he trying to avoid Ms.

Simmons?".

Lucas took a glimpse at Charlotte again. She looked panicked, confused, and dumbfounded, and he immediately guessed what had happened.

"Understood, Second Master. I'll take you to the designated location and leave with you without stopping for a second." Lucas held Zachary's arm, walked toward the door, and then turned around, giving Charlotte a smirk. "Milady, were you feeling it just now?" "Ahh" Lucas screamed when he saw. Zachary's charming face dim and turn into the face of a murderous devil.

He dared not say anything mischievous anymore and waved at Charlotte earnestly. "There's no need to answer me, milady. Let's move on, let's move on!"

Zachary and Lucas had already stepped out of Charlotte's sight, but she was still standing there like a doll as if she was wool-gathering. However, the warm sensation that she was still feeling on her lips reminded her that everything was true.

But why?

Last night, Zachary had mistaken her for his beloved woman.

But what about today?

Since Charlotte could not understand what was on his mind, she simply stopped thinking about it. 'Maybe people who are as exalted as royalty act differently from ordinary people like me. Perhaps a kiss is equivalent to a form of punishment in Zachary's life dictionary. Can there be any other reasonable explanation?'

Lucas noticed something strange about Zachary as he was walking next to him. His eyes lit up as if he had just seen a miracle. "Second Master, is this true? You're actually interested in women?"

His second master had always been extremely indifferent when it came to his love life. He'd had no interest in making out with Ms. Larson even when they had been in a relationship. That was why they had signed up for in-vitro fertilization at the hospital when he'd wanted to have a child.

But now, he actually had feelings for Charlotte?

Zachary's attractive face dimmed, and he gave Lucas the cold shoulder.

"You know what, Second Master? If I hadn't witnessed it with my own eyes, even I, the person who's always had faith in you, wouldn't be able to help suspecting that you're gay!"

Lucas was so excited that he totally overlooked Zachary's cold and ferocious glare.

"Second Master, you were really getting it on with Ms. Simmons, weren't you? But I've read in an encyclopedia that a woman will keep on bleeding for several days after she's given birth. You have the heart to treat her like this!?"

"I'll make you bleed for several days if you continue to talk about this topic." Zachary's voice sounded like the blizzard engulfing the top of a mountain. Lucas grinned cheekily. "Second Master, I'm not interested in men, so you might as well go back to Ms. Simmons-Aah!"

Lucas fell to the ground when Zachary kicked his buttock with all his force.

"Second Master, you don't love me anymore!"

Charlotte did not see Zachary again for over 20 consecutive days.

According to the butler, Zachary had personally gone to Country M to take a closer look into the potential of expanding the foreign market. He did not know when he would return, so Charlotte could only stay in the villa and wait for him in confinement.

Charlotte was by herself when her cell phone rang, watching the goldfish by the pond in the yard. It was a call from Cora, so she picked it up immediately.

"I just returned. Should we meet at the same place?" She was still the same hearty and unruly lady, and her voice sounded extremely lively through the phone.

If the invitation had come months ago, Charlotte would have agreed to meet her decisively. However, Charlotte hesitated this time around, thinking that she was still in confinement.

"We haven't seen each other in more than two months. The first thing that I did once I arrived in Rothesay was call you. I haven't even seen my parents, yet what I get in return is hesitation? Carlie, what's wrong? Don't tell me that you're planning to ditch your BFF?"

Coraline's adorable, lovely face seemed to appear in front of her eyes. Charlotte could not wait to meet this woman, so she responded instantly, disregarding all possible consequences, "Wait for me."

She then strode swiftly to the gate of the villa.

The guard at the gate stopped her. "Ma'am, please stop right here. The second master has placed you in confinement, so I can't let you go through this gate."

Charlotte pretended to be bold. "You just addressed me as your ma'am. That proves you clearly know that I'm your master's wife. This also means that you know that I'm the mistress of this villa. What kind of guard would stop their own employer?"

Charlotte tried to rush outside.

She had been in confinement for 26 days

and should have been released after

serving her sentence.

The guard could only beg. "Ma'am, what about this? I'll call the second master and ask for his permission personally. I'll let you go as long as he allows it. But if he doesn't, please don't make it difficult for me, okay?"

Charlotte nodded, and the guard got through to Zachary's phone.

Charlotte could not hear what Zachary was saying on the phone, but she started to feel nervous all of a sudden.

She could only listen to the guard describe the situation respectfully and concisely.

Then, the security guard turned to Charlotte and said, "Ma'am, the second

master asked if you've missed him."

Charlotte was taken aback.

"The second master said that if you answer the question correctly, he'll allow you to go out."

Charlotte was even more bewildered. Whether she had been thinking about a

person was purely her own business. How was there a correct or wrong answer to such a question?

Charlotte made up her mind and confessed. "You can tell him that I haven't missed him."

"Second Master, Ms. Simmons said that she hasn't missed you..."

Charlotte could feel her heartbeat getting faster as she listened to the security guard report the truth to Zachary. She could not help but bite her lower lip with her white teeth.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 46

She watched as the bodyguard put down the phone and respectfully stepped aside. " Second Master has given you permission t o leave, ma'am."

'Huh?'

The good news had arrived abruptly. Charlotte stayed in her spot in a daze before she could move her legs. As soon as she walked out the door, she turned around, unable to help herself. "Are you saying that I answered correctly?"

"I believe the results have nothing to do with your answer, ma'am." The bodyguard stared at Charlotte with a reverent yet mysterious look in his eyes. " Knowing Second Master, if he was determined to keep you here, any answer would have been wrong. Similarly, if he wished to release you, any answer would have been the right one.'

Charlotte stumbled over her feet.

So Zachary had intended to release her after all.

El Paradiso was a famous restaurant in Rothesay. It was also Charlotte and Coraline's favorite hang-out spot.

Charlotte headed toward the window seat o In the southeast side as soon as she arrived - that was hers and Coraline's favorite table.

As expected, Coraline was sitting there.

"Oh, my poor Carlie. It's been less than a month since you've had your baby, but your figure looks no different from your pre-pregnancy figure. Tsk. Look at this pretty little face and this flat yet squishy tummy... Those lean legs and that tiny waist. The world will be mesmerized by you..."

Coraline's exuberant remarks immediately drew everyone's attention.

Charlotte gently pushed her away.

"Aw... Come on, that's enough. Stop it." Those who were aware of her relationship with Coraline-they were like sisters - probably wouldn't take this the wrong way. Those who didn't would think that they were dating...

Coraline pulled Charlotte into her seat. " Carlie, according to statistics, 60% of men turn into a completely different person after their wives' pregnancies. Is Bryson one of those men? Does he still treat you like he used to?"

Charlotte had deliberately avoided thinking of Bryson ever since she had decided to forget about him. She had separated herself from anything related to him.

She thought that she had completely forgotten about him, but when Coraline mentioned him, the wound that Bryson had left in her heart split open again, leaving her in bloody, agonizing pain.

Charlotte had to calm herself and gather her strength to speak again.

"I have so much to tell you, Cora... But you have to promise to stay calm. You mustn't try to pick a fight."

Coraline had a casual expression on her youthful face, "Mm." She and Charlotte were like sisters, and she was one of the most important people in Charlotte's life.

Two months ago, Coraline's company had sent her to H Country for an important training program. She was Charlotte's first confidante in any incident related to her family, but Coraline had a brutally frank personality. If she had known about Bryson's betrayal, she would have jumped on a plane and flown back to Rothesay at a moment's notice and fought with Bryson.

Charlotte had kept this from Coraline so she could complete her training worry free.

Coraline had no idea that things had changed so much in a month. She was still under the impression that Charlotte had safely delivered Bryson's baby and was living happily ever after.

Thus, after listening to Charlotte's story, she couldn't help gritting her teeth and cursing Bryson for being such an asshole despite giving Charlotte her word earlier.

"I'm so pissed that I need to use the ladies room. Come with me?"

"Okay."

The two women, who had enchanting figures, got up hand in hand, attracting countless heated stares.

"He he... And I was wondering who was showing off... If it isn't Charlotte Simmons, the most wanted socialite who eagerly begged Mr. Connor to marry her after getting dumped by Bryson Harper." A clear, sharp voice full of derision suddenly rang out.

Charlotte followed the sound and saw a sexy young woman with bright red curly hair. She was at least five foot and seven inches tall and was wearing a tiny miniskirt, showing off her long, lean legs for everyone to see.

Charlotte glanced indifferently at the gorgeous, supermodel-like woman.

"I don't know you, and I don't want any trouble. However, I'm not scared of you. Insult me again, and I'll make you pay."

"Ooooh... I'm sooo scared."

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NEXT: CHAPTER 47

She placed her hands on her tiny waist, which was the size of an A4 paper, and smirked.

"Come on, come and look at the tramp who seduced Mr. Connor, everyone... What a joke. Mr. Connor

is the very epitome of grace. He has a severe case of

germophobia when it comes to women. Pure, virginal girls have never caught his eye, let alone gotten any form of result. Why would Mr. Connor possibly want someone else's unwanted second-hand model? She must have disgusted him. Look at how close she is with that woman. Has she switched targets after failing to seduce men? Is she after women now?"

A cold sensation rose from within Charlotte's heart, She raised her hand, ready to give the woman a slap... but a splash of red wine got to her first.

"Ah!" The woman's pretty face drained of color. She glared at Coraline, who was next to Charlotte, in disbelief as she wiped the wine off her face. "How dare you! Do you have any idea who I am?"

Coraline lifted her small, palm-sized face with an obstinate look in her eyes. She curled the corners of her pretty lips and replied, "Of course I do! I can't stand the sight of a mad dog biting random strangers, so I just had to teach it a lesson for its master's sake."

"You..." This woman, who was used to bossing people around, could not accept being treated this way. She lifted her hand in a villainous manner, ready to fling it at Coraline.

Coraline grinned.

She caught the woman by her wrists and swiftly threw her over her shoulder.

Then, a loud thump resounded. The woman landed heavily on the floor, with her slender arms and legs in a spread eagle position. Her eyes were wide open. She couldn't get up, and only her chest was rising and falling visibly. A crowd formed around her, but no one wanted to help the woman to her feet.

This woman was notorious in their social circle. Everyone knew that she used her older brother's influence to push people around. Now, she had finally gotten her just deserts. Everyone was overjoyed.

"That glass of wine was for me. That slam was for Carlie. Watch your mouth and have some respect." Coraline stared down at her with clear eyes that flashed icily like a hailstorm.

She could put up with others pushing her around, but she had zero patience when it came to Carlie. Charlotte was no pushover either. She would have taught the woman a lesson if Coraline hadn't stepped in. Since Coraline had helped her dole out the woman's well deserved punishment, she gave it a rest and kept walking hand in hand to the washroom with Coraline.

"Mimi! What happened, Mimi?" A frail looking, fair-skinned girl rushed toward the woman on the ground, crying out in a panicked, cutesy voice.

That voice stung Charlotte's heart like a poisonous thorn. She turned around and, a s luck would have it, saw that face. It was soft, tender, and delicate, like the face of a damsel in distress, and she had a figure that resembled a sickly baby bird...

"Tiffany Miller! She's friends with that red -haired woman?"

Luckily, Coraline hadn't met Tiffany yet, even though Charlotte had already told her about her affair with Bryson. Otherwise, Coraline would have insisted on turning around and starting an argument with Tiffany.

Charlotte shot Tiffany a look and continued on her way.

She was definitely not a pushover.

Tiffany and Bryson's lie had cost her her valued purity and caused her to carry a child for ten months, only to experience the agony of having her child ripped away from her. She would make them pay for everything they had done one day.

However, now was not the time.

She had promised Zachary that she would never see Bryson again, and Zachary still held some reservations against her. She couldn't risk challenging Bryson and Tiffany in her precarious position.

"Hmph! Birds of a feather definitely flock together. That girl who's been hanging out with that sl*t, Charlotte? She's just like her-a tramp! I'll show her!" The red haired woman seethed as Tiffany helped her to her feet, her eyes filled with hatred.

"Forget it, Mimi. Charlotte may be a wh*r e, but she's not all bad. You can't be sure if that woman attacked you because she instigated it," Tiffany said with the expression of a peacekeeping nun.

She was obviously implying that Charlotte had manipulated Coraline.

As expected, the viciousness in the woman's eyes doubled over, and her voice spat with even more hatred than ever, Charlotte Simmons... That scheming, insolent little wh*re... I swear, I'll make her beg for mercy, or my name won't be Miranda Connor!"

Tiffany seemed reluctant, as if she didn't want the situation to get any worse... on the surface. However, she was jumping in joy deep down. 'I bet you have no idea who you're up against this time, do you, Charlotte Simmons? Did you really think that you could rise from the ashes just because you got your claws on Zachary Connor? This time, I'm going to watch your painful, agonizing death in silence!'

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NEXT: CHAPTER 48

Meanwhile...

Zachary staggered into the presidential suite on the third floor of a certain hotel.

He had just returned to the country that afternoon. The business moguls of Rothesay had welcomed him back with a dinner, and it was difficult to refuse their kindness. Zachary felt sick after a few drinks with them.

He could usually drink countless glasses of liquor and still remain sober. However, this time, he couldn't even walk straight.

He fumbled his way into the bedroom without turning on the lights. He was just about to climb into bed when he heard an exquisitely dainty voice from the bed. "You're finally here, Zekie."

Zachary's eyes instantly sharpened like

knives.

The table lamp was switched on, illuminating the room with its warm glow. The woman on the bed was Sarah Collins, the famous top model from Rothesay.

Sarah was wearing a nurse's cap on her head and had a thin, nearly-translucent gauze draped over her body. Based on her experience, men were suckers for this type of half-hidden, teasing get-up.

Unfortunately, this sight disgusted Zachary even more. He turned his gaze away from Sarah's body as if he were turning his face away from a pile of disgusting trash.

"You're testing my patience, and you've opened my eyes to how senseless a woman can truly be!" Even though there was another bed in the presidential suite, Sarah had contaminated more than this particular bed. Zachary felt as if her disgusting scent had contaminated the entire suite.

Thus, he turned around and left.

However, he felt a sudden wave of fatigue after taking less than two steps, as if his legs were made of lead. He couldn't take another step.

Then, Sarah eagerly got off the bed and ran toward him, throwing her arms around his neck. "Don't you know how much I love you, Zekie? I don't need to be your wife. I just want to be with you. I love you, Zekie. Don't go, okay?"

'Zekie...'

"Who are you to call me by that name?"

Zachary's sharp, chiseled face grew even colder and more terrifying, but Sarah refused to retreat. Instead, she pressed her body up against him even more.

Zachary's eyes were filled with disgust. He wanted to push the woman away but

couldn't move at all.

Normally, he would feel averse to Sarah's heavy perfume, but now... her scent made him feel restless...

When he sensed Zachary's hesitation, Sarah's movements grew even bolder.

"Out!" The man suddenly bellowed through his white teeth in a cold, hard tone.

Then, he mercilessly forced Sarah away with a bit of strength he had gathered out of nowhere.

"Argh!"

Thud!

The woman's barely-covered body landed heavily on the cold, hard floor. Zachary had used so much force that it was as if her entire body was broken. Nevertheless, she did not feel any pain. She stared at Zachary in shock.

'It's not possible! How could he possibly control himself? I tried it out with another guy last week, and this time, I increased the dosage tenfold!'

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NEXT: CHAPTER 49

'Is Zachary Connor some sort of freak of nature?'

"Consider your career in the entertainment industry over. From now on, I will do everything in my power to crush you." Zachary spoke in a mildly husky voice, but his eyes were cold and sinister like Satan's.

Sarah's face was drained of color.

She was a famous model and had only begun her career in the entertainment industry half a year ago. Her gorgeous looks and amazing figure had earned her connections with a few influential figures in the entertainment industry. She had risen to the ranks of a B-list actress in just half a year.. However, Sarah was far from satisfied.

She wanted to be an A-lister and play in the big leagues, but her connections with those big wigs were not enough to put her on that pedestal. Only someone like Zachary had the power to...

It didn't matter if Zachary didn't like her. Tonight was all she needed, and she could blackmail Zachary into making her famous.

Unfortunately, contrary to Sarah's expectations, she had shot herself in the foot. She had not managed to rise to fame. Instead, Zachary had sent her straight to hell.

"Coal mining in Fricana would suit you better. I'll have someone take you there tomorrow. You are forbidden to set foot in this country for the rest of your life. If you do, I will make your life a living hell."

'What?' She, a top model, coal mining in Fricana? For the rest of her life!?

Zachary's cold and resolute declaration froze her like a column of ice.

Zachary forcefully steered his legs into walking away.

The burning sensation in his body was suffocating, even worse than death, as if poisonous venom could kill him at any time. The antidote, which was in the form of Sarah Collins, was right in front of him and had even offered up her lips to him. If only he had closed his eyes, endured the taste of disgust in his mouth, and swallowed that "antidote", he would have been cured. He would have felt rejuvenated and refreshed.

However, regardless of how much determination he summoned, every time he thought of Sarah's sexy, charming face, he would feel disgusted, grossed out, nauseated, unable to swallow that bitter pill...

'Why, of all times, am I thinking of Charlotte Simmons now? D*mn it!'

He was suddenly reminded of that forced kiss he'd had with her just before he had left the country, and her body's faint scent of chrysanthemum seemed to crawl into his nostrils.

www

El Paradiso was the hottest hotel in Rothesay. The restaurant was located on the first and second floor, and the high class hotel was located above the second floor.

It was now dinner time. The first and second floor were crowded with customers, and the line outside the washroom was long. Thus, Charlotte and Coraline took the elevator to the third floor to use the hotel washroom. Charlotte was finished first, so she left the washroom to wait for Coraline in the hallway.

Click!

The sound of a door opening hastily drew her attention. She turned toward the noise and saw the door of Room 319, which was located on the right far ahead, being flung open. Then, a tall man staggered out of the room while propping himself against the wall.

Initially, Charlotte thought that she was hallucinating when she saw the man's handsome face. However, upon closer inspection...

"Zachary?" she cried out in shock.

Zachary was clearly shocked too.

Then, his thin lips parted into a husky plea. "Help me."

His voice might have sounded frail, but his sovereign tone left no room for objection. Charlotte's legs moved toward him, ignoring her personal instinct. It was as if she were under his spell.

She stretched out her hands to support him when she was one step away from him. However, he wrapped his right arm around her waist and pulled her into his arms.

Charlotte panicked.

His body was radiating intense heat, and she felt as if he could melt her into a puddle.

Zachary forcefully pushed her into the suite next to Room 319 with his arm around her waist.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 50

Bam!

The door slammed shut and vibrated continuously.

Charlotte was still in a daze due to this string of shocking events. Zachary had now pressed her body up against the door.

She heard a loud tear, and her clean white

dress was ruined.

Charlotte was like a blooming flower assaulted by a sudden cold wind. Goosebumps crawled over her delicate, white skin.

"Wh-What... Are you... Ah!"

Zachary's large, forceful hand immediately exposed Charlotte even more.

This was Charlotte's second embarrassing experience with a man.

The first one had happened ten months

ago.

At the time, it had been so dark that she had been unable to even see her fingers. She had never seen the man's face.

This time, the room was pitch black too. Even though she knew that the man before her was Zachary, she couldn't see his face. This was eerily familiar!

"Stand still. Don't move." His cold yet magnetic voice growled into Charlotte's ear.

Then, the man kissed her. She was suddenly rendered completely breathless.

She felt as if she had returned to her wedding night with Bryson, when her cozy, blissful honeymoon suite had been turned into hell on earth. There had been no light, and she had been drowning in darkness, left with a strange man who had ground her into dust like a demon....

Charlotte shut her eyes, and tears

streamed down her agonized face. After an immeasurable amount of time...

Zachary turned on the light.

The bright light hit the lines on his body. He had a lean, fit figure. His muscles were not as overly defined as a male model's, but every muscle seemed to contain endless power. He was perfect, and it almost seemed as if he was showing off.

Any man could charm the entire world with a body like that, let alone a man with Zachary's flawless features. His was the face of God's favorite son. Despite the circumstances, the sight of this man was enough to interrupt Charlotte's thoughts.

Then, a chilly breeze brushed across her skin, jolting her from her waking dream. She shivered and wrapped her arms around her body defensively. "Why are you punishing me like this? What have I done wrong?" Charlotte wept pitifully.

'Punishing her? Fine! I was blinded by the strong influence of alcohol at the time. It's completely logical for her to consider this punishment. But why does that make me feel strangely uncomfortable?'

Zachary curled his thin lips into an icy curve. "Isn't this what you wanted?"

'What?'

An insurmountable amount of humiliation struck Charlotte's heart. She immediately lost control. "Zachary Connor, it's bad enough that you've taken my freedom away! How could you insult my dignity like that?"

"Dignity?" Zachary looked as if he had heard the funniest joke in the world.

"You've snuck into my room twice. Wasn't this what you were after? I've granted your wish, and you're concerned about your dignity?"

Charlotte was left speechless.

"If you hated it that much, what are you

looking at?" Zachary asked.

Charlotte had no retort. She was instantly pulled back to reality, as if a bucket of ice cold water had been poured over her head. She had forgotten to turn her gaze away out of anger and she had been glaring at him without blinking...

Only now did she remember to turn away.

Unfortunately, it was too late. Zachary's right hand was now firmly wrapped around her little face, preventing her from turning her head away and forcing her to keep her eyes on him.

She suddenly caught a peculiar, fleeting glint in Zachary's cold pupils. It was like something perverse, something that implied he had bad intentions...

"Wh-Wh-What... are you doing?" Charlotte asked, trembling.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 51

Zachary replied, "I want to punish you."

'What?!' Before Charlotte could react, Zachary had come at her again with his tall, buff figure.

The lights were still on, so everything was still brightly illuminated.

She seemed to be engulfed by waves and dragged to the bottom of the sea again. She felt suffocated, but at the same time, inexplicably intoxicated...

Intoxicated? What was wrong with her?

About an hour later, Zachary was putting on his clothes, showing off his majestic figure under the bright chandelier.

Charlotte lay on her side on the carpet with her arms wrapped around her knees. Her back was against the cold wall, and tears were cascading down the side of her eyes and her flushed cheeks like pearls rolling down a bloody hill.

Zachary could not help but look at her again.

He had never been a sympathetic person, but when he saw that Charlotte was in tears, his cold heart seemed to melt inexplicably. He also felt an acute pain, as if dozens of needles were pricking his heart, as her tears continued to roll down.

"Don't cry." Zachary's voice was cold and deep.

Unexpectedly, Charlotte's tears gushed even more rapidly, but she did not let out a single weep, arrogantly defending the last trace of her dignity.

Zachary felt even more distressed deep down. His Adam's apple rolled up and down, trying its best to moisturize his throat.

"Can you stop crying?" His voice sounded so warm that it even stunned him.

Charlotte felt like a warm spring breeze

was brushing past her, which made her suspect that she had an auditory hallucination. She raised her teary eyes in surprise, wanting to verify it by checking Zachary's expression. However, Zachary had already turned around and walked toward his bedroom.

"Heh heh..." Charlotte laughed at herself in a self-deprecating manner.

It was, of course, one of her auditory hallucinations! What kind of person was Zachary Connor? She would rather believe in the existence of unicorns and leprechauns than that this iceberg would speak to her in such a warm tone.

In the blink of an eye, Zachary returned with a pure-white bedsheet in his arms. Put this on."

The bedsheet was dropped on Charlotte's knees.

The clothes Charlotte had been wearing before had been torn into pieces, and Zachary wanted her to put on the bedsheet instead.

Charlotte wrapped herself tightly in the sheet, opened the door, and left the room as if Zachary was not there at all.

"Are you going to leave the room just like this?" Zachary looked down.

Charlotte, who had wrapped herself tightly from her chin to her ankles, could only edge out of the room with small steps, just like a walking burrito.

"Should I go out without any clothes on instead?" Charlotte expressed her dissatisfaction without looking back. She jumped over the threshold and continued to move forward with tiny steps. "Come into my arms." Zachary's voice came from behind her and sounded melodious and slightly warm.

'What's with this warmth?'

Was she having another auditory

hallucination!?

"No!" Charlotte refused firmly and moved

forward steadfastly and stubbornly. "I can walk by myself. I never bother others with things that I can accomplish by myself."

Zachary picked her up before she could finish this sentence.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 52

Zachary, you'd better let me down. I don't need "

"Are you sure you want to rebel against me?" Zachary's voice sounded extremely unconcerned, but Charlotte became as silent as the day giving way to nightfall.

Upon thinking of the method Zachary had used to punish her, she was sure... that she would not defy him ever again!

At that moment, she could no longer see the smile that flashed across Zachary's eyes. It looked like a drop of thick black ink dripping into a wide snowfield.

Charlotte Simmons was the woman that he had married and brought into his villa to be used as an embellishment to his already magnificent life. He did not have any feelings for her and actually

despised her. But why would he feel better whenever he saw her?

Zachary carried Charlotte straight to the parking lot, placed her in the backseat, took a handbag out of the trunk, and threw it to her. "Try this on."

Inside the exquisite handmade knitted bag were a pearl white dress and a pair of crystal-embedded heels that were glimmering even in the dim car.

Zachary did not get into the car after throwing the clothes to her in order to make room for Charlotte to put them on.

Charlotte changed into the dress and got out of the car. Zachary wanted to take a quick glance at her indifferently, but her glamorous and elegant appearance mesmerized him. Although he rarely showed his emotions, his eyes betrayed a beaming hint of appreciation at that moment.

Charlotte stepped back in fear when she realized the sudden change in his gaze, and her slender figure was pushed against the door of the car.

Zachary took a few long strides and walked toward her.

She looked up at him defensively. "What are you doing?"

"Don't move."

When a man with the power and presence of an emperor spoke, every word that came out of his mouth would sound like an undefiable command. Charlotte did not dare move anymore. She kept her tiny face slightly raised and watched as Zachary got closer and closer to her while her heart rate increased.

The position Zachary stopped at was only less than an inch away from her, and the tip of her nose was only a piece of paper away from grazing his chest.

He, who was taller than her by half a head, slowly lowered his head, and his thin lips got closer and closer to her.

Was he going to kiss her again?

His warm and refreshing breath approached her along with his lips, and Charlotte failed herself once again by running short of breath.

She was obviously very afraid of him and she hated him... However, she wanted him to kiss her so badly deep down.

She then felt a sudden chill on her skin as Zachary pressed his finger against the corner of her eye.

Her skin was tender and delicate, and Zachary rubbed his soft fingertip against it for a while. When he removed his finger, there was a strand of a black, shiny eyelash on the tip of his index finger. It turned out that he'd been trying to help her remove the eyelash that had fallen off her eyelid and onto the corner of her eye!

Charlotte's stiff body loosened up gradually, but she felt inexplicably disappointed deep down.

"Get in the car. We're going home." Zachary's voice was as cold as the water of a frozen lake.

Upon seeing him look away as indifferently as he would normally do, Charlotte felt a self-deprecating smirk form at the corners of her mouth.

Zachary had kissed her twice. The first time was because he had mistaken her for another woman, while the second time had been to punish her....

He had not even kissed her while they'd been getting it on on the floor.

Why would he kiss her for no reason then? "Heh heh..."

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NEXT: CHAPTER 53

'Don't be naive, Charlotte Simmons! Did you think that he would develop feelings for you just because you've become husband and wife legally? Don't forget that he's Zachary Connor. He's known best only for his coldness and ruthlessness. There was no chemistry when he was cornering you against the wall. It was pure humiliation!'

"Second Master, turns out you're here. I've just gone through hell to find you!" Lucas' voice sounded extremely surprised as he ran in through the garage door with bright eyes.

"You were no longer there when I returned to the dining table from the washroom. President Collins said that you were drunk and returned to your suite to rest. I had a hunch that something didn't make sense, so I fastened myself onto that old fox and fished for more information. It turns out that his niece, Sarah, was waiting for you in your suite."

Charlotte immediately understood that someone was behind this scheme-that was the reason Zachary had treated her like that.

He was not punishing her, but he did not love her either. He was just...

"He he... Second Master, look at that refreshing look of yours! Although Sarah Collins has a bad reputation, she's also the top supermodel in Rothesay. I swear that she'd show you a great time... Ouch-"

When he came closer and saw Charlotte, who had been hiding behind Zachary's tall figure, Lucas squealed like a pig. He grinned stiffly a moment later. "Hey, milady is here too! Ha ha! What I just said was my way of joking with Second Master..."

The corners of Charlotte's lips formed an ironic smirk.

It was true! Zachary would go for it no matter who appeared in the room...

At that moment, although Zachary did not give off any emotions and there was no expression on his well-defined face, his obsidian-like eyes were dim.

He never liked to cover up facts. However, for unknown reasons, he did not want Charlotte to know the truth this time.

When he saw that Charlotte had gone from looking disappointed to sneering ironically, an unprecedented void appeared in Zachary's heart. It engulfed

and suffocated him like a tsunami. Was he sick? Maybe it was time for him to

go see a doctor.

"About that, milady-" "Are you done with all that blabbering?" Zachary interrupted Lucas coldly.

Lucas was so frightened that he shut his mouth, turned away, and shuddered while staring at Zachary's gaze. Those were the eyes of a general that was about to massacre an entire city.

Zachary was once again staring at him with a terrifying glare!

The last time he had received such treatment was when he had talked too much around Zachary and Ms. Charlotte as well.

That time, Zachary had even kicked his butt. It still hurt faintly even after 20 days.

Just as Lucas was getting his buttocks ready to receive another kick, the phone in Zachary's pocket started buzzing. Lucas heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Zachary pick up the phone and then turned his attention to Charlotte. He suddenly realized something after looking at the bloodshot corners of her eyes.

"Milady! The woman who was with Second Master was you!"

Charlotte was speechless. Her cheeks were as red as if a flame was lighting them on fire.

In order to avoid being killed once again b

y Zachary's signature glare, Lucas held back his laughter, leaned closer to Charlotte's face, and whispered in her ear, "Tsk, tsk, tsk! No wonder Second Master was acting so strange just now. It turns out that the two of you... Ha..."

"However, that's not a bad thing, milady. Second Master is not only breathtakingly handsome but also very discreet about his private life. Let me tell you a secret. This is only Second Master's second go with a woman."

What!? A question appeared in Charlotte's mind.

"Then... who was his first?"

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NEXT: CHAPTER 54

Lucas, who knew what she was thinking, took a peek at Zachary, who was fully occupied with the phone call, and lowered his voice. "Second Master's first go took place ten months ago. That night, Second Master drank a lot and ended up getting intoxicated. It turned out that someone had set him up."

Ten months ago!? She had been robbed of her chastity by a stranger ten months ago too!

Besides, every time Zachary approached her, she would have the illusion of returning to that night, as if the man who had smelled like a wine keg was pouncing on her...

Could the stranger be Zachary!? For no reason, Charlotte was excited when she thought that Zachary might be the man from that night and she might have given birth to Zachary's child. She was so thrilled that even her lips started trembling.

Zachary...

How she wished that the stranger from that night was indeed him!

"Oh, milady, did I say anything wrong? Why are you pinching me so hard? Ouch! Milady, it hurts so bad! Milady, please have mercy..."

Charlotte recovered from the trance upon hearing Lucas' screams. She gradually let go of her right hand, which was grasping Lucas's arm firmly, and let out an embarrassed chuckle from the corners of her lips.

"Heh, I'm so sorry. About that... Luke, may I know who was the woman who slept with Zachary that night?"

"That I don't know. Even Second Master did not get a good look at her face. That's why Second Master is still looking for her to this day."

Just in case Charlotte misunderstood Zachary, Lucas added instantly, "Um, Second Master has already married you, so he would never have an affair with other women. He also mentioned that the lady from that night was a virgin, so she was not only pure but also clean. Besides, that lady was the antidote that saved Second Master's life. He's never been an ungrateful person. He'll definitely repay the lady when he manages to find her."

Charlotte did not pay attention to the second half of Lucas's explanation at all and asked anxiously, "Where did that happen?"

"It happened in a hotel," Lucas answered without hesitation. Charlotte's heart sank to the bottom of her chest cavity in an instant. What had happened between her and the stranger had taken place in Bryson's wedding suite. She would never forget it.

However, she refused to give up for some unknown reason. She was unwilling to accept that the stranger with whom she had spent the night was not Zachary. Charlotte seemed like a person who was about to drown, clutching to the final strand of a life-saving straw and refusing to let go. She did not give up hope and continued to ask questions.

"I want to know what happened to Zachary and that lady after that night. Did that lady get pregnant? Did she give birth to Zachary's child?"

"Ha! Milady, how can you be so naive? No matter how strong Second Master is, it would be impossible for him to impregnate a woman in one go, right? And if that lady were to get pregnant with Second Master's child, it would be akin to hitting the biggest jackpot in the world. She would've come to find Second Master and held him responsible long ago..."

Charlotte's gaze was filled with disappointment.

At first, when she'd thought that the man from that night was Zachary, she'd had high hopes and felt extremely happy deep down. However, after learning the truth, she seemed to have fallen from heaven to hell and shattered into pieces...

She knew that Tiffany had accidentally hit someone and caused the woman to miscarry. In order to save Tiffany, Bryson had then lied to her to get her to conceive a baby with the husband of the woman Tiffany had injured.

Zachary had never been married and had no children, so the stranger could not be him! "He he."
Seeing Charlotte's disappointed

expression, Lucas grabbed his oversized earrings and stopped gossiping.

In fact, the fact that Zachary and the lady

had spent the night in a hotel was merely

his deduction.

Zachary had already been unconscious due to the effect of wine and the drug as he had been transferred to a dark room that night. He had then woken up on the bed of the hotel the next day, and his hand had been clasping the emerald locket he had torn off the lady...

"Go and get the car." A car key was flung toward Lucas.

"Sir! Yes, sir!" Lucas grinned widely immediately.

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NEXT: CHAPTER 55

"Second Master, do you want me to drive you and Ms. Connor home?"

Zachary's face was cold and his gaze gloomy. "Take us to The People's Hospital of Rothesay."

"Huh!? Why do you need to go to the hospital?"

"Mimi got beaten." Freezing-cold syllables escaped his gnashing teeth.

Lucas looked worried.

Zachary's younger sister had always been a n arrogant lady. He had spoiled her so much that she kept stirring up trouble around the city without having to bear any of the consequences. She was so full of herself that even Lucas could not get along with her. Therefore, Lucas was not worried about how severe her injuries were but how the person who had hit her would end up.

Had that person not looked up whose sister Miranda was before hitting her?

At the hospital...

Zachary knocked on the door of a delux ward.

The nurse opened the door quickly.

The interior of the ward looked magnificent. A custom-made, luxurious bed was in a ventilated corner, and a lady with fiery red, wavy hair was lying on it. Another woman, who had a slightly ill complexion, was standing in front of the bed, looking so feeble that even a gentle breeze could knock her out cold.

Charlotte recognized this woman at first glance it was Tiffany.

The woman lying on the hospital bed was the red-haired belle Coraline had splashed wine on and slammed to the ground not long ago.

"Bro, why are you so late? Your dear sister might've died in the hospital if you had arrived a few minutes later."

The red-haired woman pouted her small mouth and acted coquettishly in front of Zachary. At the same time, she gave Charlotte, who was standing next to Zachary, a bragging gaze.

Charlotte immediately felt a sheer chill coursing down her spine and shooting back up again.

Rumor had it that Zachary had a sister living in Rothesay. Although she was not related to him, he always pampered her like a treasure chest on board a pirate ship. Thus, she had been spoiled by Zachary.

Because of how Zachary had been treating her, she had become an infamous lawless brat in Rothesay, and everyone in the city despised her.

This red-haired beauty had to be Zachary's younger sister, the legendary Miranda Connor, who everyone abhorred, but no one dared to provoke!

However, Coraline had hit her...

"What happened?" While dealing with Miranda's coquettish behavior, Zachary did not give her the cold shoulder that any other woman would have gotten from him at that moment. He only asked her what had happened in his calm and steady baritone.

Miranda took a bite of the apple and complained in a dull voice. "Hmph! Don't throw this question at

me knowingly. Don't you know what that vixen, aka your wife, has done!?"

Zachary turned to Charlotte. "Are you the one who beat up Mimi?" Charlotte nodded without any hesitation. " Yes, I was the one who hit her. I splashed her face with wine and flung her to the ground. I'll take the blame."

At that moment, Miranda's right hand, which was holding the apple, could not help but freeze.

Tiffany's enchanting, pallid face could not help but express shock.

She had heard that Charlotte and Coraline were close friends, but she had not expected Charlotte to harbor such devoted affection for Coraline. She should know that Zachary would never let anyone bully his sister, yet she had not even hesitated before taking the fall for Coraline.

"Really?" Zachary's terrifying yet charming voice brushed Charlotte's face and ruffled her hair.

His cold eyes were calm and indifferent, but Charlotte felt that he only needed to take a glimpse at her eyes to read her

thoughts....

Her heart fluttered like a nervous bird in a cage in her ribcage as her initial bravery and confidence slowly withered away. While she took the brunt of Zachary's high -wattage aura, her teeth and lips were chattering. She could not even utter a single syllable.

"Please don't give Carlie a hard time, Mr. Connor. I was there when the accident happened, so I can vouch for Carlie. The person who injured Mimi was not her but her bestie, Coraline. She must have been worried that you'd get back at Coraline, so she took the blame for her," Tiffany chimed in as she offered Charlotte an assuring grin. Charlotte sneered inwardly. She was not stupid enough to believe that Tiffany would stand up for her. After all, Tiffany must have known that if she were given a choice, she would rather she received Zachary's wrath herself.

It was just that she did not know what Zachary was thinking right now.

Practically every single man that walked the earth would fall for a petite, fragile girl like Tiffany, and Charlotte was certain that Zachary was no exception either.

She knew it was not the right time to think about something like this, but she could not prevent herself from caring about Zachary's attitude toward Tiffany.

There was no expression on Zachary's perfectly chiseled, handsome face. Then, Charlotte suddenly noticed something in his eyes change. Unfortunately, she could not decipher the meaning behind his gaze. When Tiffany did not receive a response from Zachary, she continued, trying her very best to get Zachary on her side. "

Carlie is a good girl, not to mention that she's loyal to her friend. Otherwise, she wouldn't have taken the blame so that her friend could escape your wrath. I truly admire her, but at the same time, I want to say sorry to her. After all, I'm the reason Bryce broke up with her. I know Carlie loves Bryce deeply and that she will need more time to let go of her relationship with him. However, since she's married to you, Mr. Connor, I believe that it'll only be a matter of time before she finally gets over Bryce and

falls completely for you-"

"Are you done?" Zachary interjected.

Even though there was no emotion in his voice, Tiffany felt like a volley of icicles was piercing her. She screamed slightly in fear and dropped her purse on the floor.

"If you think you can cast a bone between us with only a few words, then I suggest you save your breath." Zachary continued, his words sharp.

Charlotte did not know why, but she suddenly felt a tinge of warmth surging from her heart and spreading to every nerve ending in her body. It had been a very long time since she had felt this way, and she had missed it a lot.

At the same time, Tiffany, who was frozen stiff from fear, opened her mouth once more and tried to explain, "You've misunderstood me, Mr. Connor. I meant Carlie no harm, and I never intended to sow discord between you two-"

"You meant no harm? Really?" Zachary interjected as a sarcastic grin hopped on the corner of his lips. He did not spare a single glance for Tiffany as he added. "As her love rival, don't you think you're a little too lenient? Are you a saint or something?" Tiffany did not know how to reply.

Zachary's eyes were filled with mockery. "If you really have the heart of a saint, then why didn't you pull out of their relationship instead of becoming Bryson's

mistress?"

A rush of pink crawled up Tiffany's ashen white face, as Zachary's comments made her feel embarrassed. However, she refused to back away just like this. She pressed her thin lips, acted all vulnerable, and said, "Mr. Connor, I-

"Get out of here," Zachary commanded sternly.

Tiffany dared not stay any longer. She quickly picked her purse up from the floor in a panic and fled with her tail between her legs, not bothering to say goodbye to Miranda, who was lying on her sickbed.

"Zach, Tiff is my best and only friend. How could you treat her so badly?" Miranda said as she discontentedly threw the apple in her hand into the trash can.

Zachary replied flatly, "Stay away from her in the future. Becoming friends with a calculative woman like her will be nothing but a bad influence on you."

"Hah! Tiff is an open book. Unlike a certain woman who pretended to be pure and innocent. She is, in fact, the vilest and most calculative woman in the world. You should stay away from a woman like that"
"Miranda said as she rolled her eyes at Charlotte.

She then hastily changed the topic upon seeing that Zachary's face had turned grim again. "This is the report from the hospital. Take a look at it."

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Zachary took the report and opened the folder.

Charlotte craned her neck to look at the report as well, and the line of words written in red stated, "Comminuted fracture of the lower leg. Degree of disability: Severe." The words stung her eyes.

She recalled the scene of Coraline pushing Miranda, and she wondered if Coraline had really pushed her that hard.

Zachary's expression turned grimmer as he read the report. Even though Charlotte was standing half a meter away from him, she knew that he was angry right now.

"The doctor said I will not be able to get out of bed for at least three months. Even if I do get up after three months, I will have to be in a wheelchair, and it will take at least a year before I can walk. However, I will never be as flexible as before."

Miranda then said in a choking voice as tears began to flow madly on her face, "Tiff already told you who's the culprit, Zach, so you... you have to do something for me."

Zachary sat by her bedside and used his right hand to help her wipe her tears away. At that moment, his usually emotionless eyes showed signs of warmth and love as he asked, "What do you want me to

do to her then?"

This was the first time Charlotte saw such a look in Zachary's eyes. This was also the first time she realized that even a stone hearted person like him would have a soft spot for the person he cared about.

"Zach, you treat me the best. You're the one who treats me the best in the world. You even said that you wouldn't allow anyone to hurt me. As for those who hurt me, you will make them suffer in the same way 100 times..." Miranda said, filling the room with her choking voice and resentment to the brim.

"Zach, that little b*tch Coraline splashed my face with red wine in front of everyone. She threw me to the ground hard and walked away, ignoring my injuries. I want t o splash her with 100 glasses of red wine. I want you to break her legs so that she won't walk for 100 years, for the rest of

her life, forever!" Charlotte sucked in air through her teeth, a s she was on pins and needles.

Zachary replied, "Okay."

His voice sounded flat, but it was packed with strength, just like a king who had come to the world to give orders. It made Charlotte's blood turn cold. He then pulled his phone out of his pocket and made a call. "Break the legs of the woman who splashed Mimi's face with red wine. Then, get her-"

Charlotte realized she had to do something to save her best friend upon hearing his order. She

mustered up every ounce of courage in her while gritting her teeth, dashed straight toward Zachary, and snatched his phone.

"Charlotte Simmons!" roared Zachary. His brows furrowed deeply, and apparent anger flared in his eyes.

"Do you have any idea what you are doing

now?"

Even Miranda was thrown for a loop by Charlotte's action.

Even though Zachary doted on her, she would never challenge his patience, and right now, Charlotte, this crazy woman, had dared to take his phone!? However, a surge of excitement soon flooded her heart after the initial shock.

'You're playing with death itself, Charlotte Simmons!'

However, Charlotte paid Zachary no mind. She put the phone closer to her mouth and shouted, "I'm Zachary Connor's wife. He drank too much tonight, and he's sleeping right now. He was just sleep-talking, so don't take his order seriously!"

"Huh? You must be Ms. Simmons, right? But President Connor's voice doesn't sound like he has drunk any alcohol to me. Can you put him back on the phone, Ma'am? I need to confirm this with him." The person on the other end was a middle aged man.

"That is not necessary. I said he's sleeping! That's all!"

After saying that, she hurriedly hung up the call. Then, she suddenly felt a chill rush down her spine. Slowly, ever so slowly, she turned her head and realized that Zachary was staring icily at her.

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Charlotte gulped hard in fear.

"I'll give you three seconds. Give me back my phone, and I'll act like you're sleepwalking again," Zachary said as he reached out toward Charlotte with his right hand.

Miranda stared in disbelief at Zachary, wondering if her ears had failed her.

After all, he was Zachary Connor, a man who had zero tolerance for any act of rebellion.

Charlotte had brazenly interrupted him

while he had been giving orders to his subordinate, and she had even told his subordinate that he was sleep-talking. If this was not an act of rebellion, then what was? Now, her brother had decided not to take any action against her and had just asked her to return the phone?

"I can give you back your phone, but you have to promise me that you won't send anyone to

Coraline." Charlotte clasped Zachary's phone as she looked at him dauntlessly, causing a surprised expression to appear on Zachary's flawless counte

However, the surprised expression did not stay long on his face. He soon regained his composure and said in an icy voice, "So, should I consider this blackmail?"

Zachary rose to his feet and began walking with large, confident strides toward Charlotte.

His overwhelming oppression daunted

Charlotte as he got nearer and nearer to her. She felt like her heart would stop pumping at any second due to the increasing fear in it, but she refused to back away. She willed herself to raise her head, looking defiantly at the approaching man, and said, "I didn't mean to blackmail you. I would never do that. I just wanted to..."

She cleared her throat. The closer Zachary was to her, the more appalled she was. However, no matter how scared or nervous she was, she could not back down. If she wanted to save Coraline, she could not give in.

"Coraline got into a fight with your sister because of me. It's your sister who insulted me first, and you could never imagine the unbearable, vicious words that can come out of the mouth of a girl like her. Even if Coraline hadn't splashed her with wine, I would have slapped her myself and slammed her to the ground because she deserved it!"

Miranda, who was lying on her sickbed, glared viciously at Charlotte and clenched her hands into fists. Charlotte could sense her gaze, but she paid her no mind as she continued. "Coral just did what I wanted to do in the first place. This matter has nothing to do with her, and if you want to blame anyone, blame me. I will take all the blame!"

The resentment in Miranda turned into surprise.

'She will take all the blame? That's even better!'

"So you want me to break your legs instead of your bestie's?" Zachary asked, stopping in front of Charlotte as he looked icily at her.

The corner of Charlotte's lips twitched. Then, she mustered up her strength and replied, "As I said, it's your sister who started the argument. If you really want to break someone's legs, as she wishes, then I have nothing else to say."

The fear in her heart disappeared into thin air, and she calmed down after throwing

caution to the wind. Even though she was Zachary's wife, it

was merely nominal. She was certain that

she was no one in Zachary's heart.

Therefore, how could he possibly show mercy to her? After all, the person that had gotten injured was his cherished sister.

Well, she did not expect him to show her any mercy either-it was just that she could not fathom why she would feel slightly disappointed at the thought.

"If you have nothing to say, then I have something to say." Zachary's husky voice rang out. "Little girl, do you think I'd be so brain-dead as to let my wife break her legs for an irrelevant person?"

'Little girl? He called me a little girl? Why do I kinda like it, though?'

While Charlotte was distracted, she felt a faint pain in her right hand. By the time she came back to her senses, Zachary had already retrieved his phone from her hand by prying her fingers open.

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Don't ever do that again."

Zachary made another call as he said that.

Charlotte knew how lucky she was that Zachary had released her. Regardless of how much courage she had, she didn't dare poke the proverbial dragon. However, the thought that Coraline's legs could be broken after a single call from Zachary filled Charlotte's eyes with desolation.

"You're nothing but a clown. Despite your painstaking efforts, the outcome remains the same. Just you

wait. You'll watch that best friend of yours suffer." Miranda mocked her triumphantly.

Charlotte stared at Miranda's complacent face and recalled every single detail of that incident. She understood what had happened. She rushed to her bedside, gathered all of her strength, and slapped Miranda in the face.

Smack!

The resounding sound of the slap could be heard from a distance.

She had never thought that Charlotte would be crazy enough to slap her in front of Zachary. Miranda stared at Charlotte in a daze, but her lips slowly parted two seconds later. "Y-You... What's gotten into you? Why'd you hit me?"

The sudden turn of events caused Zachary

to stop in his tracks.

"Mr. Connor, how can I help you?" the person on the other side of the line asked. However, Zachary kept his lips tightly shut and did not respond.

Charlotte smirked. "That's for me and

Coraline," Miranda's face was a mixture of shock and venom. "What did you say? Have you lost your mind-ARGH!"

Her own screams cut her off, as Charlotte had picked up the glass of lemonade on the bedside table and splashed it all over Miranda's face.

"How dare you, you little sl*t! I'm going t o kill you!"

How could Miranda possibly endure this humiliation? She was used to pushing other people around. Her mind was incensed. She lost her cool and cursed out loud as she crawled out of her bed, extending her arms and grabbing Charlotte by the neck.

"ARGH!"

An even more blood-curdling scream resounded, followed by the loud thump of a heavy object landing on the ground. Charlotte had flung Miranda onto the ground!

"Charlotte Simmons, I'm going to kill you!"

The unprecedented pain, combined with humiliation, caused Miranda to completely lose control. She disregarded everything else and nimbly crawled to her feet, then lunged at Charlotte again.

Charlotte did not try to avoid her or throw Miranda onto the ground again. This was because she had seen Zachary

walking toward her.

Before Miranda could push her to the ground, Zachary stopped her. Thus, Miranda failed to strangle Charlotte. Instead, she wrapped her fingers firmly around Zachary's neck...

"Big brother..."

Miranda immediately came back to her senses when she saw Zachary's cold,

sharp gaze. She released him from her

grasp in a panic.

"You saw it, Zach! That little tramp hit me, splashed lemonade on me, and threw me onto the ground, so 1-"

"So your leg is completely healed? Did it heal on its own without resting on a hospital bed for three months?" Zachary's expressionless voice contained no trace of warmth.

"Zach, I... I..."

At this point, there was no use acting. Miranda gave up on her attempted explanation. She shot Charlotte a venomous glare, wishing that she could tear her to pieces.

There was nothing wrong with her leg at all.

She had bribed the doctor to forge the entire thing. She'd wanted to manipulate Zachary into punishing Coraline for her. That way, Charlotte would be upset, and she would know that Miranda was more important to Zachary than she was.

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"You're a man with well-distinguished principles, Mr. Connor. The truth has now come to light. Cora is innocent. I'm sure you wouldn't harm her now, would you, M r. Connor?" Charlotte calmly said, heaving a sigh of relief.

She had taken a risk when she had hit Miranda.

If she managed to rile Miranda up enough that she would lose all her senses, everything would play out just as she had planned. If Miranda had been slightly more clever and had remained completely calm despite being slapped and splashed, not only would Charlotte's plan have failed, but Zachary would also have doubled the punishment. In the end, she had achieved the desired result... Charlotte had believed that her plan would have a higher chance of success, as she believed that a spoiled brat like Miranda would never be able to endure such an ordeal.

"I won't," Zachary

"Mm." Charlotte nodded in I believe that you'd like to speak to your sister in private, Mr. Connor. I'll leave you to it then," she said before she walked out the door.

Zachary remained silent, but his dark, shapely brows were furrowed even more than ever.

No one in Rothesay, aside from his relatives, would have the guts to call him b y his name. However, Charlotte had boldly been addressing him as "Zachary" from the moment they'd met. He had never opposed it, but when Charlotte addressed him as "Mr. Connor", he felt strangely uncomfortable.

Zachary turned his gaze back to Miranda when Charlotte left the room.

"I'm cutting your yearly allowance in half. Also, you will return last week's pre ordered Bugatti."

"But Zach!" Miranda panicked. "I'm your sister! How could you be so cruel to me?" Miranda had no job, and every single cent she had came from Zachary. Now that Zachary had cut her allowance, how was she going to have fun for the next six months?

And that pre-ordered luxury car? She'd had to talk Zachary's ear off to convince him to get it for her.

"Well, since you're my sister, you should be well aware that I do not tolerate being lied to or manipulated," replied Zachary.

"I admit it, I lied, but your punishment is too harsh. Half a year? You're not giving me my allowance for half a year? How am I supposed to maintain my lifestyle? I'm sorry, Zach. I won't ever do it again! You're always so good to me, Zach. Revise my punishment, okay?"

Miranda threw her arms around his arm, begging for mercy at the sight of Zachary's stern face..

Unfortunately, Zachary coldly pushed her away. "I do not compromise my principles. You know this too. Get your hands off me, or I'll extend your limited allowance for another year."

Miranda stiffened, and tears streamed down her face.

Zachary icily turned around, refusing to look at her any longer.

He might indulge his sister without question, but he could never allow her to step over the line. Miranda knew this very well too. Thus, regardless of how atrocious or insane she was in public, she would never have the nerve to lie to him.

As a result, Zachary had completely believed her when she had claimed that Coraline had beaten her to a pulp.

This was the first time Miranda had lied to Zachary.

"Wait!" Miranda quickly ran after him. "Fine! I know how much your principles mean to you, so I accept your punishment. But what about Charlotte? Aren't you going to punish her too?"

Zachary paused in his tracks, and a layer of frost instantly formed on his brown eyes.

"Charlotte slapped me in front of you, splashed me with cold lemonade, and flung me onto the ground. You saw it yourself! You said you'd never let anyone push me around. Aren't you going to stand up for me?"

Miranda stood in front of Zachary, feeling a heated sting on her face when she remembered how Charlotte had humiliated her.

How could she possibly put up with such a heavy insult?

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