

A Lifetime With You –

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Chapter 349 - Grown Conscious -

Edith leaned on the kitchen counter with a bowl of fruits on the table. She stabbed one of the apple slices and took a bite as she listened to her friend, Lily, updating her about their kids' situation.

"Doesn't this mean that Alex is sort of on probation?" Lily asked after a while. "They were going to date anyway, why not just agree and date."

"Hazel had never paid attention to anyone and think of being of a relationship. It was not easy to find out that her best friend is in love with her." Edith let out a sigh. "Hazel thinks it was a little hard to think of Alex as something else other than friends, but at the same time, she finds it hard to imagine a life without Alex around her. Since Hazel couldn't figure out what she wanted to do, giving Alex a chance to convince her was the best thing she can come up with."

"You're taking Hazel's side."

"Of course, she's my kid," Edith said. "Whatever it is, I will support and respect her decision."

Lily let out a long, exasperating sigh. "It's not that I don't understand what Hazel was thinking... Just that, I'm anxious about my boy. This is the first time he was going to chase after someone."

"You think Alex couldn't do it?"

Lily went quiet for a few seconds. "I believe in Alex. That boy... ever since he was a little child, he would be able to achieve what he wanted to achieve if he put his heart and mind into it." She knew her son best. Even if he might fail, Alex was someone who would fight for what he desired.

"Then, just sit back and relax," Edith said. "This matter... it would be best if we stood at the side and watch. They will work together and figure out their future. Don't you know that if the mother-in-law meddled too much in the kids' relationship, it will only make a couple unhappy?"

Hearing the word 'mother-in-law' made Lily slightly happy. In the end, she agreed with what Edith had said.

Edith heard a movement coming from the living room and craned her head to see that Hazel had come down with her luggage. "Alright. Hazel is here. Alex should be here soon. I've got to go."

After ending her call with Lily, Edith walked over to Hazel in the living room.

"Auntie Edith," Hazel flashed an awkward smile.

"Mmm... have you packed everything you need?" Edith glanced at the luggage beside the sofa.

"Yeah... we will be going for one night. I'll come back tomorrow. Auntie Edith, don't miss me too much."

Edith laughed upon hearing her words. "You know Z Town best. If you run into trouble, just go and find your Uncle Aaron, alright?"

"I know," Hazel nodded.

The two of them turned around simultaneously as one of the aunts mentioned that Alex had arrived outside.

Hearing his name, Hazel was suddenly anxious. It was their first meeting after she had agreed to give him a chance and Hazel did not know how she should face Alex at this moment.

The doorbell rang and Alex entered the house a while later. His expression was bright and it could be seen just how much he was looking forward to this trip. The second Alex walked in, his gaze immediately found Hazel and he was unable to look away. In his eyes, Hazel Mo's smile was as bright as the sunlight.

Someone let out a cough and Alex finally retracted his gaze. "Auntie Edith," he greeted timidly. Earlier, he was a little stunned to see Hazel that he had not noticed anything else.

Edith tried to suppress her laughter. As someone who stood at the side, Edith thought that the two of them were adorable. At this time, Edith was a little relieved that Neil had gone out. Or else, she cannot imagine what that vinegar jar would do to make trouble for Alex.

"Alright. You still a few hours before you reach Z Town," Edith said. "You need to be there before lunch hour, right? Go ahead or you will be late."

Hazel grabbed her bag at the side and turned to head to the door.

"Let me take that for you," Alex said. Habitually, he reached for her luggage habitually and turned to head over to his vehicle.

"Alright." Edith patted the girl on the shoulder. "Let loose and have fun alright. If you need me, you can call me anytime."

A warm smile appeared on Hazel's face. Hazel leaned in and hugged Edith. After a few seconds, she pulled away and followed Alex. She took a deep breath and watched as Alex helped her with the door.

Her eyes widened as Alex suddenly leaned over to her. Hazel froze as she wondered what he was going to do. The soft click snapped her out of her trance and it was then that Hazel realized that Alex had helped to fasten the seat belt for her.

Alex stepped back and closed the door.

Hazel took a deep breath to calm down and was surprised upon finding that Alex's smell wafted to her nose. This was not the first time that Alex had helped her to fasten her seat belt, but Hazel thought that ever since she had agreed to give him a chance, she had grown conscious of Alex and everything he does.

It felt as if everything was going on as usual. Alex had not changed much after that day, but it was her alone who had changed the way she viewed Alex.

Alex slid into the driver's seat and turned around to grab the bag of snacks. "It will be a while before we arrive at Z Town. You can have something to eat and drink to pad your stomach."

"Thank you."

"Don't be nervous," Alex said. "I won't do anything that will make you unhappy, You can treat me as usual if it will make you feel better." He pursed his lips, feeling a little conflicted as he said those words. "But Hazel, I hope that you can look at me more."

Hazel swallowed and slowly nodded. "Oh."

Alex heaved a sigh of relief when Hazel did not push him. Then, he turned and started to focus on his driving.

As Alex's AUDI moved to leave the house slowly, Hazel peeked into the bag and saw that it was full of the snacks that she liked.

Really... Alex had not changed much from the last time she mentioned that she was willing to give him a chance. Everything he did was almost the same as what he would

do previously. The things that he did for her were something that a boyfriend would do for a girlfriend.

It was at this time that Hazel seemed to realize something—perhaps, Alex has been trying to court her for a long time.. It was just that... she was a little too slow and a little blind to see it.

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The journey to Z Town was quiet. The two of them did not speak much. Alex continued to focus on his driving and Hazel turned on the radio to listen to some songs.

She had visited Z Town many times and was very familiar with the scenery outside the window. As the two sat side by side, Hazel continued to look out of the window.

She could not imagine having Alex as her boyfriend, but at the same time, Hazel could not imagine not having Alex by her side. How many years have they been together? They went to the same kindergarten and then, the same school. They visited each other's house countless times and shared the same hobby. In short, they have spent a lot of time together.

Hazel could not deny that she was a little used to Alex's presence around her. Perhaps, it was because of that that she had missed a few clues that Alex had sent to her.

Each time that Alex turned to her, he would only ask her various things—Did she feel comfortable? Is she hungry? Is the air-conditioner was too cold for her?

Now that she was conscious of his feelings, Hazel started to notice that he was always concerned about her.

Hazel did not know just how long has she been in a trance as she was trying to figure out what she really felt for Alex. When she looked up again, Hazel noticed that they have almost reached Z Town.

She peeked at the person beside her and was surprised when their gaze met for seconds.

"We will arrive soon," Alex said. "Do you want to go straight to the hotel or would you like to stop somewhere to grab a lunch first?"

"Let's just go straight to the hotel," Hazel said. "Didn't your classmates arranged for everyone to have lunch together?"

"Mmm... You're right." Alex nodded and did not speak again.

After a while, the two of them finally arrived at the hotel. Alex found a parking spot and pulled over.

Initially, Alex wanted to drop Hazel at the entrance and let her wait in the lobby, however, Hazel had rejected him as she was not too close to his other's classmates.

They both did not bring too much luggage, and Hazel thought it would be better if they walk from the parking together.

Hazel watched as Alex took out their luggage and called his name, "Alex?"

"Hmm?" Alex turned around swiftly and smiled. "What's wrong?"

"You... how long have you liked me?"

His movement halted. Alex put his luggage on the ground and closed the trunk. His expression was a little awkward as he was not expecting Hazel to ask such a question. Hazel's expression told him that she was genuinely curious and she would not move until he gave her the answer she wanted.

"Around seven years."

Hazel widened her eyes. "Seven years ago... I was fourteen!"

"Mmm..." Alex shifted his gaze and picked up the luggage that he had put down earlier.

It turned out that Alex had liked her for so long!

"Then, why have you never said anything to me before?" Hazel asked.

There was a brief silence before Alex answered. "I was waiting until we both grew up." At this time, he decided not to mention anything about his deal with Hazel's uncle. "I did not want anyone to assume that this was nothing but puppy love. I liked you, so, I am willing to wait."

Hazel shifted her gaze from him and lowered her head. It was not hard for her to figure out that the reason Alex had decided to confess to her after so long. Right now they were both grown-ups. Alex had entered the workforce, and she would finish her study soon.

Alex wanted to be stable before he can pursue her.

Hazel thought of any hints that Alex might have dropped for that seven years and suddenly, Hazel thought that all these years, she has been a little slow and stupid.

A smile curled on his lips upon seeing that the girl in front of him was a little embarrassed. "Hazel, you can ask me anything that you wanted to know about me. I will try and answer your questions." A chuckle escaped him when Hazel stared at him with her round eyes.

The look on her face was too adorable and Alex was a little worried that he might be unable to restrain himself.

"Come on," Alex said. "Let's go and check-in first. The others should be waiting for us."

"Oh." Hazel nodded slowly.

A few of Alex's classmates gathered around the lobby area as they waited for the others to arrive. Once they saw both Alex and Hazel together, the Class Monitor, who was put to be in charge of their room walked over. After exchanging a few words with Alex, he then gave them two sets of keys.

"Alex, you're going to be in the same room with Tyler," the Class Monitor said. He turned to Hazel and smiled. "As for you, you're going to stay with Megan." His gaze returned to Alex and a teasing smile curled on his lips. "Don't worry, I assigned your rooms to be side by side."

"Thank you," Alex said.

"Tyler has not shown up yet, but Megan has arrived around ten minutes ago," the Class Monitor said. "She should be in her room. You can rest around for half an hour, then, everyone should gather in the hotel's coffee house for lunch. We are planning to have a barbecue party in the evening. I will assign tasks during lunch."

After exchanging a few more words, Alex led Hazel to the elevator and they both arrived at their floor.

The Class Monitor had assigned their room to be next to each other as per Alex's request. Hazel had come with him to attend his classmates' gathering and he wanted to stay closer to Hazel so that he can look after her.

They arrived at their rooms and stood in front of their doors. Alex turned to Hazel and saw that she too was looking at him.

"I will see you again in half an hour," Alex said. "Don't be late."

Hazel nodded. "I know."

Alex waited for Hazel to walk into her room and exhaled a long sigh as he watched Hazel close the door. He thought about their little interaction since early morning and thought that they did not make a lot of progress.

He really needed to work hard if he wanted Hazel to stay by his side as his lover.

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As soon as Hazel entered the room, Megan greeted her with a wide smile before she leaped to Hazel and pulled the girl into her embrace.

"Hazel! I thought that you were not going to show up."

Hazel laughed. "Why would you think that? I promised that I will come and join you, right? Moreover, it is a rare chance for me to see you. Who knows when will be the next time I can see you?"

Megan giggled happily as she pulled Hazel to the bed and then showed her around the room. The two of them chatted for a while and Megan realized that it was almost time for lunch.

"Let's go," Megan said. "Our Class Monitor is a punctual man. He would nag for hours if we did not show up on time."

After freshened up a little bit, the two girls walked out of their room.

Just outside the room, Alex stood in the corridor with his back leaning on the wall. He had one hand in his pocket as he was looking at something on his phone. The moment he heard the door move, Alex instinctively shifted his gaze.

"Alex, you're here," Megan said. Her lips tilted up when she saw the man's posture. "Were you waiting for us?"

"Mmm..." Alex glanced at Megan before his gaze moved to Hazel again. "Let's go. The others should be waiting for us downstairs." He stretched his hand and Hazel moved to hold his hand.

At the side, Megan watched the two people in front of her with a dazed expression. Seeing the two of them walking together side by side and holding hands reminded her of their younger days.

The look on Alex's face remained the same, but Megan noticed that there was something different about Hazel. But... what was it?

"Alex, wait up," Megan called when she realized that she was a few steps behind. "You were always the same. Always so cold. Can't you be gentler to the other gender?"

The man did not even look at Megan. Alex thought that he can only be gentle towards the person he really liked.

Seeing that Alex continued to walk forward, Hazel tugged at his hand, making him slow down so that the three of them could walk to the elevator together. As the elevator arrived, the three of them entered together. Alex continued to stay silent as the two girls were chatting about their activity next.

When they arrived at the restaurant, the Class Monitor had arrived along with a few others. The waiter led them to a reserved corner where everyone sat around freely.

Naturally, Hazel was seated next to Alex.

As everyone was seated, the Class Monitor stood up and coughed. "Our classmate, Tyler Lu called earlier and said that he will not be able to join us today. Something came up at his company and he was called to return."

Hazel glanced at Alex and noticed for the first time that Alex's best friend, Tyler, was not around.

After giving everyone a few updates on their activities, the Class Monitor called for the waiter and their food was served. Soon, varieties of food were served on the table and everyone started to dig in.

The food selection was discussed a few days earlier after the Class Monitor had asked around for everyone's preferences and allergies.

Hazel picked up her cutlery and took a bite at the stir-fried vegetables on her bowl. A few seconds later, Alex reached over with his chopstick and took out the carrot from her bowl.

Swiftly, Hazel turned her head at Alex and saw him munching those carrots as he continued to listen to his classmates' chatters.

Another thought came to her mind. Hazel was not a big fan of carrots and would always avoid eating them whenever she can. She was not a fan of its taste.

Every time the two of them had a meal together, Alex would always take out any carrot from her plates and eat them for her.

Hazel tried to think of when did this begin and was shocked upon realizing that Alex had done so from the time they two started to get close during kindergarten.

Suddenly, Hazel realized that the man beside her was always attentive to her. Hazel tried to think of everything she knew about Alex. Although she was always close to Alex

from a young age and know of his secret and preferences, Hazel did not think that she can be as attentive as Alex.

Alex had told her that he had liked her for seven years. But was it really true? Once she started to analyze things, Hazel realized that Alex had started to treat her differently earlier than that.

Various thoughts came to her mind and Hazel slowly lowered her head to eat. From the corner of her eyes, Hazel began to observe Alex's movement and every little thing he does.

The meal finally ended after the Class Monitor had briefed everyone about their barbecue activity on the night. Since there were a few hours before they can start to prepare, the others decided to return to their room and rest.

Alex waited for the others to leave before he turned to Hazel. "Do you want to walk around this place?"

Hazel looked out the glass window towards the blue sky. The weather was good and it was always good to take a walk after eating. "Alright." She turned to Megan and asked, "Megan, do you want to join us?"

Alex wrapped his hand on Hazel's before he shot a look at Megan.

As if she could understand Alex's warning, Megan rolled her eyes and waved. "You guys go ahead. I'm going to call my fiance lest he worries about me."

If her fiance was free to join them, then she would not have to suffer being fed with dog food!

From the moment Alex had shown up, the man kept on showing off his affection to Hazel. Although Hazel had insisted that they were only friends, as the person who stood at the sideline, how can Megan not see anything? A person had to be blind if they cannot see just how much Alex had doted on her clueless friend.

Megan was feeling slightly aggrieved and decided to complain a little bit to her fiance later.

Hazel watched Megan left with a puzzled expression. Her friend was still alright a few seconds ago, but why did Hazel sense as if Megan was a little annoyed?

"Let's go."

Hazel turned to Alex and nodded. "Oh."

The sky was blue and the weather was great. The sea breeze blew gently as walked around the hotel area.

Hazel looked at the scenery in front of her and felt as if the hand that Alex was holding was a little sweaty. The two of them had always walk around holding hands, but for the first time, Hazel was a little anxious.. The two of them were alone and Hazel was looking forward to seeing what Alex would do next.

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Hazel peeked at Alex and was a little startled upon meeting his gaze. Swiftly, Hazel looked away and tucked a few strands of hair behind her ear. Her face fell a little hot and Hazel was sure it was because of the scorching sun.

After a while, Hazel peeked at Alex again and heaved a sigh when she found that he was not looking at her.

Now that she thought about it, these days, she would often catch Alex watching her.

Or perhaps, Alex had always been watching over her. It was just that, she was the one who was too slow to notice him.

The two of them were always together, but how was it possible that she had never noticed this? When did she become clueless towards the people around her? Was it possible that she has been too focused on her study that she had started to notice things?

Suddenly, Hazel was reminded of her last conversation with her Great-Grandpa. He had reminded her to raise her head and look around at what was in front of her.

Her gaze shifted towards their intertwining hands. Alex had always held on to her hands whenever they were together. Now that she looked closely, Hazel began to realize that Alex's hands were big and warm.

The two of them were supposed to be on a walk and enjoying the beach scene, but in the end, they were both watching each other secretly.

Without realizing it, the two of them had made a full circle at the hotel's garden.

"There are still a few hours before everyone would gather around to play at the beach."

Hazel snapped out of her trance when she heard his voice.

"Let's go upstairs and rest before the time comes. Later, we can play by the beach before the barbecue party began," Alex said. "The others are planning to swim around the beach. Let's go together, alright?"

Seeing that the girl in front of him merely replied to him with a nod, Alex let out a chuckle. He ruffled her hair before he held her hand again and led her to the elevator and back to their floor.

Before she realized it, she had already walked into the room that she shared with Megan. Hazel leaned her back on the door and wondered just what on earth just happened.

She was expecting that Alex was going to make a move and convince her why she should be dating him. But other than watching the beach scenery and taking a walk together it seemed that Alex had not done anything. Didn't he say that he was going to court her? Why didn't he do anything?

Or was it that she was expecting too much from him?

As Hazel continued to ponder what was going on, Megan walked out of the bathroom and smiled. "You're back. How was your walk?"

"It was interesting..." Hazel said. Her mind was still on Alex and his strange behavior.

Megan watched as Hazel walked over to the sofa and sat down. The television was on, but Hazel does not seem to be interested in the show.

"Hazel... can I ask you something?"

Hazel snapped out of her trance when she heard Megan's voice. "What is it?"

Megan stared at Hazel silently as she tried to rearrange the question in her mind. "Alex and you... why does it feel as if the two of you were acting a little different than the last time I saw you?"

"Ah?"

"Well, to be precise, why does it seem as if you're acting a little different when you were with Alex?"

"What do you mean different?"

"Although the two of you are together, it seemed that you were avoiding his gaze." Megan pondered over Hazel's strange action and could not think of anything. Now that she thought about it, the air around the two of them had changed a little bit.

Hazel was a little surprised upon hearing what Megan had said. "You think I was avoiding him?" She watched Megan nod and was a little anxious. "Was it that obvious?"

Megan opened her mouth to speak but stopped herself as her intuition warned her that there was something strange from Hazel's words. Megan sat down beside Hazel and narrowed her eyes. "Speak out. What is going on between you and Alex?"

Hazel shrunk her neck, her cheek felt a little hot. "Nothing is going on."

Megan continued to observe her friend. "It doesn't look as if there's nothing." She poked at Hazel's waist and smiled. "Come on. Tell me."

After thinking about the problem that has been in her mind for a while, Hazel decided to confide in Megan. After all, Megan was someone who had been in a relationship. Surely, she would be able to offer some advice to her.

"It is a little different," Hazel spoke in a low voice. She peeked at Megan's reaction and continued, "After that class reunion dinner, Alex confessed to me."

Megan let out a loud gasp and a cursing word. "That boy finally grew some balls, huh?" Her gaze shifted to Hazel again and Megan had to suppress her laugh upon seeing how Hazel's face had turned red. "Then, the two of you have started dating?"

"We're not dating."

"Ah?" Megan could not hide her surprise. "Why not?"

"I honestly not sure what I feel towards Alex," Hazel said. "I just thought that it was a little strange to be dating Alex."

"What's so strange about it? From what I see, the two of you are always together. It almost looks as if you have dated him for a long time."

Hazel was slightly startled by Megan's words.

"Holding hands and doing almost everything together... aren't those are what a couple would do? The two of you have always been together from kindergarten and are always for each other while you were growing up. Back then, we always thought that the two of you were dating. We always dubbed you two as childhood sweetheart." Megan heaved a sigh. "The two of you had done almost everything a couple would do. Why don't you go out with him? You don't like Alex that way?"

Hazel bit at her lips. She really could not explain well the reason why she did not agree right away to go steady with Alex.

She was uncertain of her feelings. Hazel thought that it would be cruel for Alex if she agreed to date him with this feeling.

"I'm a little confused," Hazel nodded.

"What are you confused about? Come, tell me." Megan waved her hands. "Big sister will help you to analyze things for you."

Hazel took a deep breath before she started to tell Megan about the promise she made with Alex and how it was bothering her when Alex did not seem as if he wanted to work on it.

When she finished, Megan burst into laughter. "Hazel Mo, you're such an adorable clueless girl. Everything that Alex had done today, wasn't those counted as courting you? Sometimes, a man did not have to make a big gesture to pursue a woman. Sometimes, a small gesture was enough. Don't tell me that you weren't a little touched after watching how Alex moved around you. He would help you to get the dishes that you couldn't reach and stopped the boys from teasing you too much during lunch."

Hazel was surprised that Megan had noticed those little things. She did feel something fluttering in her heart when she started to watch Alex a little closer and noticed those things.

"You were surprised when you know that Alex wanted to be more than friends with you... I think Alex was worried that he might frighten you if he made a sudden big move.." A thought came to her mind, but Megan decided not to say them out loud lest she would ruin Alex's plan.

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In the evening, when the sun was not as hot, Hazel and Megan decided to head over to the beach and joined the others. Alex was already waiting for the girls outside. He looked up from his phone and his gaze instantly went to Hazel.

After having a little chat with Megan about Alex, Hazel was prepared to look closely at his action. Seeing that the man had kept his eyes on her the moment she came out, Hazel felt a little embarrassed. Alex... he did not even bother to look at Megan who was with them.

Was this how he would always look at her?

Unable to bear his scorching gaze, Hazel lowered her head and urged, "Let's go. Didn't you say that we're going to play at the beach?" Instinctively, Hazel stretched her hand to hold Alex's.

Her movement halted when she realized what she had done. From the corner of her eyes, Hazel could see that Megan was secretly laughing at her.

Holding hands had become a habit from childhood and she was used to it. However, now that she was aware of Alex's feelings towards her, reaching to hold his hands first gave her a different feeling.

Her heart was beating furiously and Hazel was a little worried at how Alex was going to react.

Just as Hazel was about to pull her hand away, Alex had grasped her hand tightly in his.

"Let's go."

Hazel could imagine that the smile on his lips although she was not looking at him. She pursed her lips and followed his lead.

Megan rolled her eyes as she watched the silly couple in front of her. She pulled out her phone and texted her fiance how much she was missing him.

Their classmates gathered at the beach when they arrived. They saw how Alex was holding hands with his sweetheart and started to whistle to tease them. The single boys began to complain and urge them to stop showing PDA.

"Do you want to go for a swim?" Alex asked.

Hazel turned to look at the sea and was a little stunned at the beautiful scenery. However, the scenery was not as beautiful as the beaches that Auntie Edith had taken her. Hazel still thought that the beach on the east side was a lot prettier.

She saw a few kids playing around the water and suddenly had the urge to go in. It felt as if it has been a long time since she dipped her feet in the seawater.

"You guys go ahead," Megan said. "Let me watch over your stuff. I'm just going to sit around and enjoy the sun."

Hazel handed her belongings over to Megan and took off her cover-ups.

Alex swallowed the moment Hazel reached to his side in her high neck halter and shorts swimwear. Although it was very modest, Hazel had exposed a lot of skins. His gaze stopped at her toned tummy and he had the urge to touch them.

Hazel has been training with her Great-Grandpa and Auntie Edith from a young age and had never slacked off. Because of that, her body was well proportioned.

Alex noticed the way the others were throwing their glance at her and suddenly regretted asking the question. He should have asked her to walk around the beach instead.

Hazel ran slowly towards the beach and quickly entered the water.

"If you don't go over, the other guys are going to join her."

His face turned darker as he listened to Megan's reminder. After leaving his possession to Megan, Alex then entered the water to join Hazel. When he reached her side, Ian Huo, one of his classmates was seen swimming around Hazel.

The moment he saw that boy, Alex was a little unhappy. He had always known that Ian Huo had liked Hazel. Back then, it was because of this boy that Cindy Bai had made Hazel run away with tears on her face.

Every time he saw her tear-stained face, Alex would feel distressed.

"You're here." Hazel quickly went over to Alex's side the moment she saw him approaching.

If one looked closely, one will notice the relief on her face when she saw him.

"Alex, you're here as well." Ian was a little unhappy upon seeing Alex around. He had thought that he would have a chance to talk to Hazel for a little bit, but suddenly, this light bulb appeared. It was not as if he did not know how protective Alex can be towards Hazel.

Back then, when they were in high school, Ian had witnessed how Alex had warned other boys to stay away from Hazel. Hazel was popular for her indifference towards the other gender. Then, there were rumors that a senior who was in the soccer club had approached Hazel.

Somehow, Alex had caught rumors that the boys from the soccer club made a bet. Whoever can ask Hazel out will receive an amount of money. Then, a fight broke out, and fortunately, a teacher had walked past by to stop them.

Ian was not sure of the details, but in the end, Alex got off the situation unscathed, while the senior was given a warning.

"Mmm..." Alex merely nodded towards Ian.

Seeing Alex's unpleasant gaze, Ian did not know whether he wanted to get angry or laugh. He raised both hands and smiled. "I was just asking Hazel if she's having fun."

He knew that Hazel had joined this trip as Alex's plus one and knew that he would be at a disadvantage if he tried to create trouble.

"I am," Hazel said. She swam over to Alex and hid behind him. "Alex is here, so I'll be fine."

Ian got the hint and finally left with an awkward smile on his face.

"Are you alright?" Alex asked. He watched Hazel nodded and let out a breath of relief. "Let's just swim around for a while."

"Alex, hold on," Hazel called.

Alex cocked his head as he watched Hazel approached him and slowly reached to touch his arm. His gaze followed to look at the place she touched and Alex was puzzled at what Hazel was trying to do.

"What are you doing?" Alex continued to watch her, amused.

His voice snapped her out of her trance. Hazel lifted her gaze to meet Alex's and was suddenly shocked at what she had done. "Nothing. I was just trying to figure out things."

"What thing?"

Earlier, she had lowered her guard and let Ian grabbed at her hand. Hazel always knew that she did not like it when others tried to touch her. But, why was Alex a little different?

These days, her heart would jump whenever they hold hands. It was a strange feeling. But, it was not an uncomfortable feeling. In fact, with Alex, everything felt very natural.

"I don't like it when other people touched me. But, I think being around you is quite comfortable."

Alex was surprised upon hearing her words and a little happy knowing that Hazel was slowly trying hard to figure out her feelings. If he leaned in and kiss her, would she find it uncomfortable?

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The man and woman were facing each other and the background scenery was beautiful. However, Alex decided to suppress his urge. Hazel was still trying to figure out things and he did not want to scare her. Alex thought that he was lucky enough that Hazel had wanted to give him a chance. If she was frightened and chose to run away, it was him who was going to suffer.

Since he was already planning to take small steps, he can only be patient. Didn't they say that waiting will only make things sweeter?

After changing their clothes, Alex and Hazel went to the hotel's barbecue area. When they arrived, someone had already started the fire. The boys gathered over the grill while the girls were arranging the side dishes. A few commis and hotel staff were at the side to assist them.

The sky was turning darker and there were fairy lights hung around. The barbecue area was facing the beach and everyone was enjoying the beautiful scenery and the gentle breeze.

Megan waved her hand the moment she saw Hazel walked over with Alex. "Hazel, over here!"

"Go ahead." Alex motioned her to join Megan and the other girls. "What do you want to eat?" I'll bring them over to you."

Hazel glanced at the griller and answered, "Anything is fine. I'm not picky."

There were too many people around and Hazel figured out that the others are going to be scrambling for food. After swimming around earlier, she was a little famished and did not mind having anything to pad her stomach.

Hazel left his side and walked over towards Hazel where the girls were gossiping about their classmates and then, moved to discuss the latest fashion. Although Hazel knew everyone in the cycle, she was not very close to them. Therefore, she only sat there while listening to their conversation.

Just then, the boys walked over towards the group of girls while carrying a tray of barbecued foods. Instantly, the girls started to clamor and fight for the food.

Most of Alex's classmates were from high-status families. The sight of everyone fighting for food was quite interesting. Before Hazel was about to join in the fun, a plate of mixed grilled food appeared in front of her. Hazel tilted her head and met Alex's gaze.

"For you," Alex said. "I pick a little bit of everything."

Hazel glanced at the plate of food and her stomach started to grumble, demanding to be fed. "Thank you." She took the plate from Alex and noticed that there was only one serving. "What about you?"

Alex turned towards the griller where the commis continued to grill more food. "I can wait."

"We can share," Hazel suggested. She bit her lips and watched as a smile bloomed on his lips.

"Alright," Alex nodded. He led Hazel to sit down near the others and the two began to share their food.

With good food on their plates, the others began to eat and chatted merrily. The food was prepared by the professional chefs as per their request and it tasted delicious. The boys were initially going to be in charge of the grilling, but after a while, they gave up and passed the job to the staff.

Their laughter reverberated around the area as they joked around about various things.

Hazel munched at the chicken skewers as she continued to listen. Her lips tilted up to a smile as she watched one of the boys pulling a prank at another.

Just as she had put down the skewers, Hazel noticed that the prawn on her plate was peeled. Hazel turned to Alex and saw that he was busy peeling the prawn as he discussed something with the person beside him.

The peeled prawn was closer to her while its shell was piled up at his side. It didn't take her too long to figure out that Alex had peeled the prawn for her.

A chuckle escaped her. Hazel picked up a piece and ate them slowly. Somehow, Hazel thought that this prawn tasted a little sweet than the one that she had peeled herself.

The barbecue party continued with the others discussing various things.

After a while, one of the boys began to mention a serial murder case that happened around Z Town around thirty years ago. It was gruesome and the boys decided to liven up the mood with this story.

Hazel ate her food silently as she continued to listen to their chattering. A few minutes passed and soon, Hazel's expression began to change. It did not take her too long to figure out about this case.

A few years ago, her Uncle had told her the truth about her parents' death. They told her that her parents died in an accident after investigating corruption in the company.

Then, Auntie Edith had mentioned to her about this serial murder. Auntie Edith's mother was among the victim of this murder and Great-Grandpa and Uncle Aaron took part in the investigation.

Both her Uncle and Auntie Edith then told her that the person who caused her parents to die in this accident was the same as this murderer.

Sometimes, pieces of her childhood memories would return and Hazel would recall that man's face. Hazel recalled that how frightened she was every time she saw that man. Then, she would recall her dreams...

Alex seemed to notice that something was not right. Hazel was still eating her food a few seconds ago, but then, he began to notice that her movement had paused.

Turning around, Alex was a little surprised to see that Hazel's face was a little pale. He placed the plate on the table and frowned. "Hazel? Are you alright?"

Hazel snapped out of her trance when she heard his voice. She stared at Alex with a dazed expression and blinked.

"Are you feeling uncomfortable? Do you want to return to your room?" His frown deepened when he noticed that Hazel did not answer his question.

"I'm... fine." Hazel evaded his gaze. She swallowed and suddenly felt that the atmosphere was a little stuffy. Hazel picked up a napkin beside her and started to wipe her hands. "I'm sorry, I need some fresh air." She stood up suddenly and left the crowd in silence.

Alex was surprised when Hazel had got up and left suddenly. He tried to figure out if he had done something wrong but could not think of anything. It was at this time that he overheard the others were discussing the serial murder that happened years ago.

Previously, Alex was busy discussing some other matters with the person beside him and he did not listen to the others' gossiping. But once he had listened to their discussion, Alex finally figured out why Hazel had left suddenly.

His expression darkened.. Alex then left the plate on the table and rushed to find Hazel.

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When Alex found Hazel again, the girl was alone in the dark. His steps halted as he watched Hazel bent forward with both hands on her knees. Alex blew a breath of relief

when he found her safe and sound. He took a step towards her and stopped again, wondering if he should leave her alone.

He had heard a few words of his classmate's discussion and knew that Hazel was upset.

A few years ago, his mother had once told him about what had happened to Hazel and her family. It was Hazel's parents' death anniversary and he saw how her mood was a little off. Alex was worried about Hazel, and it was at this time that his mother told him that if he really liked Hazel, he has to treat her well and never bully her. Hazel was a pitiful girl and had suffered a lot of grievance from a young age.

When Alex found out how Hazel had lost her parents, he was unable to react.

How old was Hazel when she lost both parents at the same time?

It was then that recalled their childhood. There was a period when Hazel had not shown up at kindergarten. When she returned, the cheerful Hazel had suddenly become very quiet. It was around this time that the two of them started to be close.

His heart ached when he thought of what happened to Hazel. Fortunately, that man was dead years ago and could no longer harm Hazel or other people.

Standing at the other side, Alex continued to watch Hazel from afar. As long as he was close by, he could always guard her. If something happened, he would reach her in time.

Just then, Hazel stood up straight and started to pace back and forth. Then, she stopped again before she suddenly fell on her bottom.

Alarmed, Alex ran over to her side only to see that she was hyperventilating. For a few seconds, Alex was a little lost at what he should do. He fell on both knees on the white sand and placed his hands on her shoulders.

"Hazel, are you alright?"

The girl lifted her head to look at him with a teary face. Hazel tried to open her mouth to speak, but no words came out.

Alex held her face in his hands and forced her to look into his eyes. "Relax. Just focus on me. Take a deep breath."

Hazel whimpered.

"Just follow me, alright? Take a slow, deep breath through your nose." His voice was soft and coaxing. Alex continued to monitor her until she started to breathe as per his instruction. "Now, breathe out slowly through your mouth. Good. Now breath in again."

Alex continued to assist her until her breathing gradually calm down. "Are you feeling better now?"

Hazel nodded slowly and Alex heaved with relief upon finding that the girl was alright. Slowly, he gathered her in his arms and pulled her into his embrace. His hands started to stroke her back, coaxing her as if she was a child.

"It's alright. It's going to be alright. I'm right here with you."

Hazel nuzzled to find a comfortable place in his arms and closed her eyes as she tried to think of happy things to distract her mind. Suddenly, her eyes shot open. Her head went blank and her body froze momentarily when Hazel felt something warm and wet pressed against her temple.

It did not take her too long to figure out what just happened.

Did Alex... just kissed her face?

Suddenly, Hazel was unable to react. Previously, her heartbeat had started to calm down after Alex had helped her with the breathing exercise. However, her heartbeat accelerated once again due to his action.

Her face grew slightly hot and Hazel was suddenly at loss. At this time, she did not dare to lift her head and look at his face.

She stayed in his embrace and suddenly thought of how his scent filled her nostrils. Hazel had wanted to pull away, but she was still embarrassed. After staying silent for a while, Hazel began to find that this familiar scent had a calming effect on her. She closed her eyes again and listened to his coaxing.

"Hazel... Don't cry, alright?"

An image of a younger version of Alex saying those words to her appeared in her mind. Hazel finally pulled away from his embrace and wiped her tear-stained face with the back of her hand. "I'm not crying."

His lips turned up into a faint smile. "Okay. If you say that you're not, then, you're not."

Hazel stared at his face and saw the concern on his face. It seemed... as if Alex had not noticed what he had done earlier. Perhaps he was too anxious when he saw her panicking and had only tried to help her to calm down.

There was a brief silence between them before Alex spoke again. "Are you feeling better?"

Hazel replied with a nod. Then, she leaned in and pressed her forehead on his shoulders. Her thought went back towards the scenes that keep on appearing in her nightmares. Now that she was calmer, Hazel was able to think with a clear mind.

At the thought that Hazel was still feeling a bit rattled, Alex stayed still and continued to coax her.

"The murder that your classmates were discussing earlier..."

Alex paused when he heard her started to speak.

"The person who had murdered those women... had also murdered my parents." Her voice was soft and weak. "They say that my parents had died in an accident, but that's not true. It was that man who had murdered my parents."

Hazel felt his arms tightening around her shoulders. In fact, she had never told anyone about what she had witnessed in the hospital. Perhaps this matter has been bugging her mind for too long. Perhaps she was in a weak state and Alex was someone she trusted. Whatever the reason was, for the first time, Hazel decided to talk about it.

"I have always thought that I was imagining things," Hazel continued. "It was later that I understood what was going on. The scene I saw was not just a dream. Alex... I was at the hospital when that man entered. He did not see me because my grandma had wrapped me in a blanket. But I saw him. That man had someone injected something into the IV drip. The next morning, my parents were gone."

There was a glint in his eyes as Alex continued to listen to Hazel's story. His throat felt a little dry as he tried to imagine what Hazel felt when she was forced to witness such scenes. When her parents passed away.... Hazel was only five!

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Alex stood at the side as he watched Hazel washed her tear-stained face. A few minutes passed and Hazel finally turned off the tap water. However, she did not dare to lift her face and look at Alex.

"What's wrong?"

Even without looking into the mirror, Hazel was able to tell that her eyes should look very swollen at the moment. Somehow, she did not dare to let Alex see her ugly face.

Hazel gently tapped the area around her eyes in hope that she could reduce the swelling around her eyes. However, she knew very well that there was no way that the swell would go down in a short time.

Seeing that the woman in front of him did not answer her question, Alex then grabbed at her hands and pulled them away from covering her face. Hazel continued to lower her head, avoiding his gaze.

Alex placed his finger under her chin and tilted it up so that Hazel would look at him.

This time, Hazel quickly shut her eyes. She raised her hand again and covered her eyes.

Because Hazel was still trying to cover her eyes, his gaze moved downwards and finally stopped at her lips. Realizing that his thought might have gone astray, Alex forced himself to shift his gaze away.

"What are you doing?" Alex asked at the strange way Hazel was behaving.

"Don't look at me," Hazel said. Her voice was a little shaky after crying for too long. "My eyes should look very swollen right now."

His lips twitched. The two of them had grown up together and he had watched her crying face from a young age. However, he had learned his lesson in the past that there are some words that he should not say out loud.

"Really? Let me take a look at them?" Alex tried to coax.

Hazel turned away. "No. It's fine. Let's head back upstairs. The others should still be enjoying the barbecue. If we go now, we won't run into them."

"Hazel..." His voice turned slightly mellow. "Let me look at them, alright? If it was bad, then, I'll help you to get some ice."

Hearing his words, Hazel started to waver. Slowly, she removed her hands away from her eyes and tilted her head up to look at him. "How is it?"

Alex looked at her slight puffy eyes and pursed his lips.

"Is it really bad?" Hazel asked when Alex did not say a word.

Alex stretched his arms and started to help her to massage the area to stimulate blood flow. "I will get you some ice. Next morning, the swell should disappear." He stopped after a few minutes and tucked a few strands of hair behind her ear. "Let's go back first."

"Oh." Hazel nodded. She watched the way Alex held her hand and intertwining their fingers. Something warm flow in her heart as she looked at his large hand envelope hers. After a few steps, Hazel stopped on her track and tugged at his hands lightly.

Alex turned around and saw the hesitation in her expression.

"Alex, the thing I mentioned to you just now... can you promise that you will not let others know about it?" Hazel said.

His eyes darkened Alex could not believe that Hazel would ask him such a question. "I won't say a word to anyone else."

"You cannot let my Uncle or Auntie Edith know about them as well."

A frown appeared on his face. "They... didn't know?"

Alex was a little surprised at this information. He knew how close Hazel was with Auntie Edith. The two would share almost everything with each other. He had thought that the two of them should know about such important matters.

However... he did not like that Hazel had chosen to suffer alone for a long time. Just how many times that she had to experience that nightmare? She had no one to console her after she woke up from that nightmare.

Hazel shook her head. "I don't want to mention this to them. It has been a long time and that person had received his punishment and died. My uncle and my late father were very close as brothers. It was not easy for my uncle after my parents passed away. If he knew the truth, he would be sad. Moreover... I don't want them to worry."

She could still remember how her Uncle and Auntie Edith would often worry about her. Growing up, sometimes, Hazel had thought that the couple had treated her better than they treated the two siblings.

Alex stared continued to stare at Hazel for a long time before he spoke again. "You don't need to ask. I won't mention this matter to anyone. Hazel, you can trust me."

"Un." Hazel nodded. "I know."

The two of them continued to walk and soon returned to their floor. Hazel took her key card from her pocket and pushed the door open. Just then, the door was suddenly pulled from the inside, and Megan appeared with an anxious look on her face.

A look of relief washed over her as Megan saw Hazel in front of her. "Hazel! You're back!" Megan quickly pulled the clueless girl into her embrace. "You disappeared for so long and I was worried." She took a step back and finally noticed that something was not right with her friend. "What happened to you." Her eyes shifted and Megan noticed that Alex was with Hazel.

Suddenly, Megan tugged at Hazel's hand and pulled her behind her. Megan stepped forward and shot a dangerous look at Alex. "Did you bully my Hazel?"

His expression turned dark at the accusation. Moreover... he did not like the way Megan had claimed Hazel as hers. Clearly... Hazel was his!

Megan turned to Hazel and patted her shoulders lightly. "Hazel, tell me. What did Alex do to you?"

"Nothing."

"Don't be afraid. I can protect you."

Something warm spread through her heart as Hazel saw what Megan was trying to do. Although their relationship was not as close as it used to be, Megan continued to act protectively towards her. Ever since kindergarten, Megan had taken her role as the big sister seriously.

"Megan... Alex really didn't do anything," Hazel spoke. Her face was a little red from embarrassment.

"Then, why did he makes you cry?" Megan asked. She watched Hazel opened her mouth and warned, "And don't tell me that sands got into your eyes because I will not believe that lousy excuse."

"He didn't make me cry." Hazel tugged at the corner of Megan's shirt. "We were just talking and somehow, we talked about my late parents. I missed them, so I might have cried a little bit."

Megan continued to stare at Hazel as if she did not believe her words. After a while, her gaze softened and Megan pulled the girl into a hug. Then, she narrowed her eyes at Alex and shot him a warning gaze.

Alex heaved a breath when he saw that they have cleared the misunderstanding. "I'll just go downstairs to get some ice and some food. Hazel.... you should wait here with Megan."

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The class's reunion trip ended the next day and everyone checked out from the hotel after breakfast as most of them would have to head back to the office the next day.

Hazel exchanged a few words with Megan and the two promised to keep in touch with each other before they parted on their own way.

Alex sat behind the wheels as he drove them back to L City. Once in a while, Hazel would glance at the man beside her. Their trip was short, but Hazel thought that she was no longer weird out at the thought of dating Alex.

Last night, Alex had returned with a pack of eyes to help her with the swelling around her eyes along with some food that he ordered from the hotel's coffee house.

Hazel was still eating when the boys brought up the serial murder in Z Town. Then, she had left and had not had her meal properly. Her stomach grumbled the moment Alex arrived with food.

After Alex had left, Megan eyed the food that he had brought for Hazel and commented that he should earn an extra point for being a good boyfriend. At this time, Hazel was too hungry that she did not have the time to correct Megan that Alex was not her boyfriend. At least not yet.

In this two days and one night trip, Hazel had watched Alex properly and thought that his moves indeed touched her.

Although she was still a little unsure of her feelings, Hazel thought that after a month had passed, she would be willing to try and date him. She didn't know how the change in their relationship will end up, however, Hazel was willing to give it a chance.

Everyone around her advised that if she didn't take the chance, she might miss out on something great. Hazel did not want to miss out on something that could have been amazing. She didn't want to regret anything.

As the thought came to her mind, Hazel thought that her body felt a little lighter and soon, she drifted into sleep.

When Hazel woke up again, the vehicle had just entered L City. She glanced at Alex and was suddenly a little embarrassed that she had slept through the journey instead of accompanying him.

"You're awake," Alex spoke as he glanced at Hazel.

"Mmm..." Hazel nodded. She glanced at her reflection in the mirror and was relieved that she did not look too terrible after waking up.

"We should arrive at your house in twenty minutes," Alex said. His heart was a little heavy at the thought that they were going to separate after this.

Tomorrow, he had promised his father that he would show up at the company. Because Alex was planning to stay in B City so that he can stay closer to Hazel, Alex had to work hard and clear his workload.

The next time he can see Hazel again was probably next week when he would drive her back to B City.

"Do you have time?" Hazel spoke. She turned to Alex and cocked her head. "Want to have lunch together?"

Alex glanced at Hazel, and then at the clock. "Are you hungry?"

Hazel saw the way his gaze lit up a little bit after she had brought up having lunch together and was suddenly amused. She didn't think that Alex would get excited about this easily. "Mmm... a little hungry."

"Then, let's have lunch together." The corner of his lips tilted up at the thought that he would have a few minutes more with Hazel. "What do you want to eat?"

"Noodles. I want to eat noodles."

Alex pondered over her words and decided to take her to her favorite restaurant. He found a parking spot and pulled over. As soon as they alighted, Alex took time to look around.

This place was very close to their high school. Once upon a time, the two of them would often come over to this area to eat.

"It has been a while since I come over to this area," Hazel said. "I wonder if the elderly couple is still around?"

Alex reached to hold her hand and the two walked over to the restaurant together. Hazel looked around at the familiar surrounding and the memories of her life as a student flashed in her head. In each memory, Alex would always be there with her.

An older woman greeted them as soon as they entered the restaurant. The woman's expression changed when she recognized both Hazel and Alex, and suddenly, her bright smile showed on her face.

"Auntie Liu, I haven't seen you in a while," Hazel greeted.

"Hazel and Alex," Auntie Liu called the moment she recalled their name. "The two of you haven't visited this shop for a long time. Auntie Liu missed you so much." She then

turned around and shouted, "Old Liu, come here and look who came over to our shop today."

Alex glanced at the woman beside him and the corner of his lips tilted up. He didn't know how Hazel had done it, but it seemed that wherever she goes, the elderly would like her a lot.

In a short while, an elder man in glasses walked out from the kitchen. It took them seconds to recognize their guests and he walked over to greet them. His gaze went to their intertwined hands. "It's good to see that the two of you are still together."

Hazel felt her face heating a little bit upon hearing the old man's words.

"Come on in," Auntie Liu ushered. "Go and sit down first. I'll bring out the food soon. What do you feel like eating today?"

"The usual fish soup noodle," Hazel answered.

"Make it two servings," Alex said.

The two picked a table near the entrance where they would often sit whenever they come over.

Hazel watched as Alex started to wipe the cutlery and was suddenly in a daze.

"What's wrong?" Alex asked when he noticed her gaze.

Hazel shook her head. "Just had a thought... In the past, you would always sit at this very same table whenever I come over to meet you after school activity."

She would always choose a spot in the corner if she was to be the first to arrive. However, Alex would always choose this seat.

A faint smile curled on his lips. "Mmm... this spot would make it easier for me to see you and you can always spot me right away when you come to find me."

Hazel was a little stunned upon hearing his answer.

Back then, in their last years in the same high school, Alex would always end his lesson first, but Hazel would be busy joining the extracurricular activities. Therefore, it was always Alex waiting for her.

Hazel felt a bit touched and guilty at the same time. Alex said that he had liked her for seven years.. This man has been waiting for her for a long time and she was very clueless about it.

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After having lunch together, Alex sent Hazel back to Mo's residence. When Alex pulled over his AUDI, Neil had just alighted from his SUV. Neil narrowed his eyes as he watched Alex helped his niece with the door.

"Uncle, did you just got here as well?" Hazel asked with a bright smile on her face.

Neil finally shifted his gaze away from Alex. He saw the smile on Hazel's face and finally, his expression became lighter. "Mmm... Did you make a stop somewhere?"

Earlier, Hazel had texted him and Edith to inform them that she had checked out from the hotel. Because Neil was used to traveling back and forth to Z Town, he knew that based on the time given, Hazel should have arrived at least an hour earlier.

"We went out for lunch," Hazel said.

Seeing the look on their faces, Neil began to suspect that something had happened between the two kids. Neil shifted his gaze back to Alex and wondered if the boy had told Hazel the words he always wanted to say from seven years ago.

In Neil's opinion, the bright look on Alex's face was a little suspicious.

Mmm... It seemed that he should talk to his wife and ask if she knows anything.

"Alex, do you want to come inside?" Hazel asked as she took her luggage from him.

Alex glanced at Neil and saw that the man doesn't look too happy. "It's fine. You should be tired. Go in and rest."

He would love to spend more time with Hazel, but at this time, Alex was not ready if Neil would ask to see him in the office for the second time. Anyway, when they return to B City next week, he can always find an excuse to see Hazel.

"Oh," Hazel lowered her head to hide her disappointment.

Since Alex had declined Hazel's invitation, Neil found no reason to stay around and head back into the house.

Alex released a breath of relief when Hazel's uncle turned around. Suddenly, he found that the air was no longer as heavier. "Just go in first. I'll call you when I get home, alright?"

Hazel nodded. "Oh. Drive safely, alright?"

A faint smile turned on his lips at her concern.

Hazel watched as Alex went into his car and left. Then, she stood alone and pondered over her interaction with Alex the past few days. After a while, Hazel finally turned around and entered the house.

Edith was in the living room when Hazel walked in. She studied Hazel's expression for a few seconds and flashed a smile. "How was it? Did you have fun?"

"Mmm..." Hazel nodded. "The beach was not as pretty as the one you always bring us to. Even the beach near Grandma Li's B&B had a prettier scenery."

Edith laughed upon hearing her words. She tilted her head up to look in the direction of the office and saw that the door was closed. "Come over here." She patted the sofa softly. Her expression showed her eagerness.

Hazel placed her luggage at the side and walked over. She sat down beside Edith and cocked her head. "Auntie Edith, what's wrong?" Seeing the strange smile on her Auntie Edith's face, Hazel was suddenly worried.

"How was your trip?" Edith spoke with a low voice.

A slight frown appeared on Hazel's face. A few seconds ago, didn't Auntie Edith had asked the same thing? Suddenly, Hazel was a little worried that perhaps, Auntie Edith's pregnancy had turned her into a forgetful person.

"Why are you in a daze?" Edith said. "Quickly answer me."

"Auntie Edith," Hazel whispered back. "Why are you whispering?"

Edith glanced at her husband's office again. "Of course it's because I'm afraid that your uncle going to suddenly show up."

Earlier, the first question Neil had asked her the moment he walked into the house was about Hazel and Alex. Edith told him what she knew, that Hazel and Alex were not dating. However, she did not mention anything to Neil that Hazel was still considering the idea of dating Alex.

"Ah?" Hazel was a little clueless why her Auntie Edith wanted to hide from her uncle.

"How was it?" Edith urged when Hazel didn't answer. "Quickly tell me... During the two days trip, did your opinion of Alex had changed a little bit? Have you considered properly?"

Hazel's face gradually turned a little red upon hearing the questions and Hazel lowered her head. It was not the first time that the two of them had a conversation about Alex, but this time, Hazel was a little embarrassed to look up.

"Oho... judging from that expression, I'm guessing that something did happen?" Edith teased.

"Auntie Edith, don't tease me. Nothing happened," Hazel said a little quickly.

Edith narrowed her eyes as she studied Hazel's expression.

"However..." Hazel pulled at her fingers. "During this trip, I did look at Alex and try to consider that."

Edith was a little stunned upon seeing the shy look on Hazel's face. The pink on her face spread from her cheek to the tip of her ear. Hazel's expression was a little adorable and Edith had the urge to pinch her on both cheeks.

"What do you think?"

Hazel was a little embarrassed to speak, but she felt that she needed to talk to someone about whatever was going on in her heart. Moreover, Auntie Edith was someone that she trusted and she was used to telling everything to her.

"I guess... after thinking about it, it didn't feel too weird if I date him." Hazel sighed. Though she had decided to share her thoughts with her Auntie Edith, Hazel found that she did not know how she can express her thoughts.

At this time, her head was a little jumbled.

She recalled the way Alex had stared at her when the two were swimming at the beach and then, that time when Alex had pressed his lips on her temple.

Hazel was always worried that she would not be able to adapt to the change in their relationship if they suddenly turned from friends to lovers. She knew what will happen once they change the status. Once they dated, Alex will want to do other things that friends would not do.

However, she found that she was not disgusted when they shared a brief intimate moment.

"Then, are you planning to date him?" Edith asked.

"Mmm... but not right away. Megan said I should let Alex chase me first." Hazel looked up and smiled. "Auntie Edith, back then, how did my uncle chase you?"

"Your uncle?" Edith tried to think about it and suddenly realized that she could not remember anything. The only time he chased her was when she had suddenly left his side and headed to Z Town. He caught her and dragged her to get their marriage certificate. Later, she was pregnant with Hayden.

Of course, Edith could not say these things to Hazel.

"Your uncle didn't chase me."

"Then, did you chase him instead?"

Edith laughed. "I guess, with your uncle, everything just happens naturally. He said he liked me and then we started to date."

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Later at night, Edith walked out of the bathroom and saw that her husband was sitting on the one-seater sofa in a corner of their bedroom. She walked around him before she draped her arms around his shoulders from behind.

A familiar scent entered his nose and Neil looked up from the book he was reading, tilted his head sideways, and pecked at his wife's cheek.

"Darling..." Edith called with a languid tone.

Neil found that he was distracted when his wife whispered close to his ears. "Hmm?"

"I just realized something... How come you didn't chase me before we started to date?"

Back then, the two of them has been living together for Hazel. Therefore, when Neil had asked to date him, Edith had quickly agreed. She liked him and didn't want to miss out on a chance of being with him.

But after her conversation with Hazel earlier, Edith realized that she had never experienced the feeling and excitement of being chased.

Neil was startled by her question. "Why did you suddenly ask me this?"

Edith pursed her lips, knowing that couldn't tell him about his conversation with Hazel. "No. I was just wondering."

Neil continued to stare at the woman in front of him. Because she was pregnant with twins this time, the bulging on her stomach could be seen at this earlier stage. Fortunately, her pregnancy reaction was not as bad as it was during her pregnancy with Hayden.

Neil thought back about their early relationship and recalled how it started. Edith was a little drunk when she had suddenly kissed him and told him that she liked him.

It was after that event that he had started to pay a little more attention to her. Perhaps, one part of the reason they were together was because of Hazel, but after getting along together in that short time, their feelings accumulated and Neil knew right away that Edith is the person he wanted to spend his life with.

"What?" Neil cocked his head. "Are you going to tell me that you're silently regretting that we got together a little earlier?"

"It's not that." Edith let out a sigh. "I was just thinking how I have missed out on the excitement."

He closed the book and placed them on the side table. Then, Neil removed her arms around his neck, pulled her over, and let her sit on his lap. "Well... Look. I already caught you."

Edith narrowed her eyes at him and clicked her tongue.

Neil chuckled when he saw the look on her face. He buried his nose in her neck and inhaled deeply. "Let's not talk about chasing or running away. Isn't it good that we can get together a little earlier? Each second spent with you is very precious to me." He pulled away and looked straight into her eyes. "If you wanted some excitement, we can always try something else."

Edith bit at her lips when she saw the way his eyes slowly darkened. She had seen this look on his face for years and knew what was in his mind. Her lips curled into a teasing smile. "Darling, what do you have in mind?"

Neil leaned forward again and whispered a few words to her. When he looked into her eyes again, he did not miss the anticipation of her expression.

Her gaze went down towards his lips. Edith hooked her arms around his neck and began to kiss him slowly.

...

Meanwhile...

Hazel sat in front of the mirror and patted her face slowly as she applied some night skincare routine. The phone on her table buzzed and Hazel looked at her roommates' group chat.

At this time, her roommates were discussing that their vacation would soon end and they will have to return to their college in a few days. Hazel joined in their conversation and discussed the various tests and assignments they will have to face once they returned.

Hazel thought about how she will return to B City with Alex in a few days and was suddenly found herself looking forward to it.

Her phone rang to a different tune. Hazel glanced at the screen and a faint smile appeared on her lips when she saw that Alex was video calling her. After adjusting her shirt a little bit, Hazel swiped her fingers on the screen.

Hazel felt her heart skipped a beat the moment his face smiling appeared on the screen. "Alex? What's wrong?"

Alex was a little dazed when he saw that Hazel's filled his phone screen. The lighting in Hazel's bedroom was a little dim, but he can see her soft and moisturized face clearly. Suddenly, Alex had this urge to bite at her cheek.

Sensing that his thought had gone astray, Alex shifted his gaze away for a few seconds before he looked at her again. "I can only call you when there is something wrong?"

"That's not what I meant," Hazel said. "It's late. I thought that you called for something urgent."

His expression turned solemn. "Well, I do have an urgent matter."

"Ah?" Hazel sat up straight. "What is it?"

"Hazel Mo, I miss you."

It took her a few seconds to react. Hazel lowered her head and was a little embarrassed. The AC was on, but her body heated up. Her heart was beating erratically and Hazel thought that her head would explode.

Alex saw her shy expression and was a little happy. The look on her face was as adorable it was years ago. However, he knew that he should not be teasing her too much, and therefore, Alex decided to change the subject.

"Do you have any plan for tomorrow?"

Hazel pondered over the question and shook her head.

"Then, I will pick you up tomorrow, and let's have lunch together, alright?"

"Didn't you say that you have to help your father to look at the company's matter? Won't you be busy?" Hazel asked.

She knew that the reason Alex was able to send her back to B City was that he wanted to look at the company that he had invested in. However, because of this, he had to work hard and deal with a few things in L City.

"Mmm... But I will still need to eat," Alex said. He thought for a while and continued, "My work is important, but convincing you to agree and date me is equally important."

Hazel was a little stunned upon hearing his words. She had known Alex for years, but why didn't she know that he can be a sweet-talker? She was not used to this and her face went red again.

At this time, Hazel suddenly recalled her conversation with her Auntie Edith earlier. Her Auntie had told her stories about why she had agreed to date her Uncle. In the end, Auntie Edith said that a person should have the courage to love.

Since she had already decided to give Alex a chance, she had to cooperate and not make things too hard for him.

"Accompany me for lunch, alright?" Alex spoke when Hazel did not answer.

Hazel saw at the anticipation on his face and nodded.

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Hazel looked at her reflection in the mirror and heaved a sigh. She still thought that the slim-fit jeans and the blacktop were a little too simple.

Should she wear a dress instead? But wouldn't that show that she was trying too hard? After all, Alex was still pursuing her. She was just going to accompany him to lunch. It cannot be considered a date, right?

After going back and forth several times, Hazel decided that the jeans and blacktop were the most suitable. After spending her while on her makeup, Hazel walked downstairs and saw the two siblings were accompanying their Great-Grandpa to eat.

Hailey was the first to notice her. A soft gasp escaped her and suddenly, Hazel found that everyone was looking at her.

"Sister, are you going out?" Hailey asked. Her eyes were bright as she looked at Hazel curiously.

"Mmm..." Hazel replied with a slow nod.

"Sister, are you going out alone? Can I come with you?" Hailey said. Her gaze was pleading.

"That..." Hazel hesitated a little bit.

In the past, it was normal for Hazel to bring out the siblings with her whenever she went out with Alex. Moreover, Alex would be taking his sister, Ellie, too. However, at this time, she was a little reluctant to take Hailey with her.

At this time, Edith walked in from the side door that led to the garden. In her hand was a basket of fresh vegetables that they have planted. She looked at Hazel and smiled.

"Going out?"

"Mmm..." Hazel nodded again.

Edith turned to her daughter and frowned. "Why do you want to follow your sister around? Hailey Mo, you haven't finished your revision yet."

Hailey pouted. "Mom..."

"You can only go out when you have finished your revision," Edith said. She turned to Hayden and continued, "Hayden, you stay and look after your sister."

Hayden looked up from his bowl of dumpling soup and alternate his gaze between his mother and sister. "Oh." He gave a short answer and resumed his eating.

Seeing that her brother had not cooperated with her, Hailey can only resign to her fate and spend her days studying.

Edith handed over the basket of vegetables to the auntie and walked over to Hazel.

"Going out with Alex?"

Hazel nodded again. Because her Auntie Edith knew about her relationship with Alex, Hazel was a little shy. "Auntie Edith, do I look alright?"

Edith looked at her outfit and the light makeup and nodded, giving her approval. "You look adorable. Don't worry. Just go on, be yourself, and have fun."

At this time, the phone in Hazel's hand started to chime. She glanced at the caller ID and felt her heart skipped a beat. Hazel swiped her finger on the screen and pressed her phone to her ear.

"Hazel, I'm here," Alex said.

"Un. I'll come out shortly," Hazel spoke softly. When she hung up, her Auntie Edith was staring at her with a teasing smile.

"Alright. Have fun. Don't go out for too long," Edith whispered. After all, it would be a little complicated if her husband came back and run into both Hazel and Alex again.

After exchanging a few more words, Hazel walked out and found that Alex was leaning on his AUDI as he waited for her. Seeing that the man was wearing a suit and tie, Hazel was a little stunned. She could not remember when was the last time she had seen Alex dressed up like this.

As if sensing that someone was watching him, Alex looked up from his phone and smiled when he saw Hazel. He watched as Hazel walked over to his side with unblinking eyes.

"I didn't know where we'll be having our lunch," Hazel said. "Is my outfit too simple?"

Alex looked at the woman in front of him and felt a lump in his throat. Although this was how Hazel would usually dress, Alex could imagine that she had spent a little more time picking up the outfit. The makeup on her face was light and fresh. At this time, he had an urge to play around the soft curls rested on her shoulder, then, maybe he could run his hands in her hair before he can kiss her luscious lips.

As the thought came to his mind, Alex quickly looked away and wondered why did he sound like a pervert.

"It's fine," Alex said. "Just wear anything that you are comfortable with." He moved to a side and helped her with the door and leaned in to help her with her seat belt.

Hazel held her breath and pressed her back on the seat as Alex was too close. His cologne filled her nostrils and Hazel felt a little dizzy. It was only after Alex had finished that she realized what was Alex trying to do.

"Hazel?"

"Huh?" Hazel looked up and blinked.

A smile tided on his lips. "You look beautiful today."

His voice was a little deep and Hazel felt her ears turned hot. "Thank you."

Alex let out a soft chuckle before he walked around the vehicle and slid into the driver seat.

"Where are we going?" Hazel asked as Alex entered the main road.

Alex glanced at her and flashed a mysterious smile. "A secret. Don't worry. I promise that I will send you back to your place in one piece once we had our lunch."

A frown appeared on her face as Hazel wondered why was he being so mysterious. As Alex continued to drive, Hazel looked out the window and admired the scenery outside.

They soon entered a newly developed area and Hazel immediately recognized that this area was one of MH Group's development projects. She had seen the brochure before and knew about the safety and amenities provided for this area.

"Isn't this is a housing area?" Hazel asked. However, the man did not answer and continued to smile mysteriously at her.

After a while, Alex pulled over at a parking spot and led Hazel into the elevator. Knowing that the man would not answer her question, Hazel decided to just follow his lead.

They entered a unit and Hazel was a little surprised that Alex had taken her to a small studio apartment.

Hazel looked at Alex and frowned. "What are we doing here? Didn't you say that we are going to lunch?"

Alex saw the anxious look on her face and began to worry a little bit that his plan might go awry. "We are going to have lunch."

"Here? What are we going to eat here?" Hazel was a little upset at the thought that Alex might have tricked her. "Don't tell me that you are planning to cook?"

He nodded and saw the look of disbelief on her face. "You are right. I am planning to cook."

"Ah?" Hazel was a little startled.

"The reason I brought you here was to tell you... one of the perks of dating me is that... I can cook."

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Hazel walked around the unit and finally stop when she reached the kitchen. She stood at the entrance and leaned on the wall as she looked at the scene in front of her.

At this time, Alex had taken off his coat and tie. The top button of his shirt was unbuttoned, his sleeve was rolled up, and he was wearing an apron. Looking at how he was chopping the garlic in a quick motion, Hazel was a little stunned.

She didn't think that he would really cook. Moreover, the way he was holding the knife showed this was not the first time he had cooked.

Alex glanced at Hazel when he saw that the woman was watching her. His lips curled into a smile as their gaze met.

"Focus on your chopping," Hazel warned. Her tone was a little anxious. "You're still holding a knife. Don't get yourself cut."

He let out a helpless sigh before he focused on his task. He was trying to seduce her with his smile but got scolded instead. However, the thought that she was concerned about him made him happy.

Hazel did not leave and continued to stand at the entrance.

"Is this apartment... yours?" Hazel asked.

"Mmm..." Alex answered. "I saw the brochure and thought that it was not bad. After thinking about it for a while, I decided to buy a unit."

"Then, I have to thank you for supporting MH Group's project."

Hearing her words, Alex let out a chuckle. Since she had the mood to joke around, Alex guessed that she was not as angry as she was before and was relieved that he did not ruin this day for them.

"I heard that the value of this area would rise in a few years," Alex continued. "It's good for an investment."

After standing at the entrance and watching him prepare the vegetables for too long, Hazel then asked, "Do you need any help?"

"It's fine. I can do this." Alex glance at her again. "Anyway, the main purpose for today is to show you how capable I am."

Hazel fought the urge to roll her eyes. Feeling a little tired, she finally took a seat at the bar counter. "When did you learn how to cook?"

"A while ago. But I cooked a lot when I was in college," Alex said.

He had taken a few part-time jobs while he was still studying. In his final year, Alex had rented a place near his college. It was during this time that he had started to cook more. After looking at a lot of recipes and videos, his cooking skill had improved a lot.

"If you're bored, you can stay in the living room and watch TV. I'll call you when the food is done," Alex said. "It will not take too long."

"Didn't you say that you want to impress me with your cooking skill? Just continue and cook. I will sit here and watch."

Alex laughed before he continued and cooked silently.

A while later, the kitchen hood was turned on and the fragrant smell of garlic filled the air. Alex continued to move around from the stove, the kitchen counter, and the sink. His movement was smooth and it did not look like he was going to need her help at all.

Hazel propped both hands under her cheek as she continued to watch him.

At this time, a tone could be heard coming from the living area. Alex immediately recognized it as his ring tone and turned to Hazel. The way she propped her hands was a little cute and the slight pout on her lips gave him ideas.

Alex let out a dry cough and spoke, "Can you help me and get my phone? It should be in my coat."

"Oh."

The call might be from the office, or something important had come up. Hazel saw that at this time, it would be inconvenient for him to pick up his phone and decided to help him. She went to the living room where Alex had left his coat and found his phone in his pocket.

One glance at the caller ID told her that the caller was a woman.

Hazel took the phone back to the kitchen and dangled his phone in front of him.

Alex looked up from the stir-fry beef and spoke, "Just let it be. I'll return the call later."

"Oh." Hazel placed his phone on the bar counter and slid back into her seat to watch him cook. The name she saw on his phone popped up in her mind and Hazel was a little curious.

"Who is Miss Carina Lin?"

Alex turned when he heard her question. He saw the probing look on her expression and became a little happy at the thought that Hazel might be a little jealous.

"A lawyer who was helping us with the company in B City," Alex said.

Hazel felt her heart was a little lighter. "Then, is it alright if you did not pick up the phone? What if it's something important?"

"It's fine. She will try to reach my business partner once she could not reach me," Alex said. "Moreover, I am more of an investor in the company. Any decision should be made by my friend."

Hazel nodded, thinking that his words do make sense. "Since you're an investor and are not directly involved in the business, why did you decide to move to B City."

Alex paused. He could not tell her that his intention to get close to her at this time. He was very sure that he will only get scolded again once she learned of his intention. "It was decided that I should help them around until the business is a lot more stable."

"Oh."

A while later, the food was done and served in the dining area. Alex had prepared three dishes and one soup. Looking at the dishes on the table, Hazel was amazed at how the food turned out. They were simple dishes, but each of them was plated as if they belonged to a restaurant.

Hazel could not fight the urge to snap a few photos. When she looked up, Alex came out from the kitchen carrying their bowl of rice. Their gaze met and Hazel immediately looked away and focused on her phone.

"I'm taking commemoration photos," Hazel said. "This is the first time that Alex had cooked for me."

The smile on his face widened. Alex pulled a chair and looked at Hazel. "My lady, please have a seat."

Her cheek turned slightly pink upon hearing the way he had called her. Hazel took a seat and Alex slid into the seat beside her. Picking up her chopstick, Hazel clipped at the broccoli dishes and took a bite.

It tasted good, tender, and well seasoned.

"How was it? Not bad, right?" Alex stared at the girl across him anxiously.

He has been cooking the same dishes many times, but facing this important judge in front of him, Alex was a little worried that his anxiousness would lead him to make a mistake somewhere.

Did he made a mistake somewhere and substitute salt for sugar?

Although he was familiar with the taste that Hazel preferred, he was still worried.

Soon, Hazel looked up and smiled. "Not bad."

Alex heaved a sigh upon hearing her words. "Then, how about dating me?"

Hazel was a little relieved that she had swallowed her food before he asked her the question. "Mmm... It's good that you can cook." She let out a long breath and frowned as if she was in deep thought. "But this is an important matter after all. I still have a lot to consider." She looked at him and flashed a teasing smile.. "Alex He, you should continue and work harder."

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The vacation finally reached the end and it was time for Hazel to return to B City.

Hazel walked down the stairs and saw that everyone was watching her. Seeing the expression on their face, Hazel was somewhat reluctant to return to her college. It seemed that a month's break was not enough to spend her time with her family.

At this time, an auntie walked over from the outside to announce that Alex had arrived.

"Sister..." Hailey pouted when she saw the luggage.

After she was born, it was Hazel who often looked after her and they have been close ever since. Because they were closer in age, Hazel became the person she would often confide in.

Edith swiftly pulled her daughter aside. "Alright, stop looking at your sister like that. She's only going back to college. We'll see her soon when she returned for another break."

Hearing his mother's words, Hailey could only bury her feelings.

"Is everything packed?" Edith asked as she walked over.

"Mmm..." Hazel nodded.

"I made a few snacks for you to bring back to college. Later, don't forget to share them with your friends, alright?" Edith turned to her son and spoke, "Hayden, go and help your sister carry the snacks to the car."

The boy looked up from his phone, stood up, and went into the kitchen to pick up the boxes that his mother had prepared earlier.

As Hazel was going to leave, she exchanged a few words with her Great-Grandpa and Hailey. Then, she looked at her Auntie's stomach and blew a soft sigh. "This time, I would not be able to stay and watch the babies grow."

Edith laughed as she heard this. "I will post you an update. You won't miss anything."

Hazel flashed a smile but knew that the feeling would not be the same. Suddenly, she was regretting a little bit that she had chosen to study in a different city. Hazel snapped out of her thoughts and walked out with her luggage.

When Hazel and Edith stepped out of the house, Alex had alighted from his car and was talking to Neil. Edith saw this scene and felt the corner of her lips started to twitch.

A few days ago, Hazel had mentioned that she was going to head back to B City with Alex and Edith could see that her husband was a little upset. Fortunately, he did not make any comment about this matter.

Seeing that the two men were talking in a low voice, Edith turned around and dragged Hazel away with her.

It would be better to leave the two men to talk alone. Though Neil would always say that he did not like how Alex has been around Hazel, Edith had the confidence that her husband would not do anything that would harm Alex and make Hazel hate him.

Hazel looked at her auntie and blinked. "Auntie Edith, where are we going? I need to put my luggage first."

"I forgot that there is something that I wanted to give you," Edith said. "Let Hayden and Alex help you with your luggage."

"Oh." Hazel nodded obediently and the two went back into the house.

Meanwhile, Alex could not hide his anxiousness the moment he saw Hazel's uncle was walking over to him. Initially, he was going to take out his phone and tell Hazel that he had arrived.

But the man had appeared out of nowhere, scaring him. In the end, Alex could only greet Hazel's uncle politely. The air suddenly turned colder and Alex could only pretend that he was not affected by the man's scrutinizing stare.

Alex wanted to say something to break the ice but found that he could not come up with a topic after he had said his greetings. The two continued to stare at each other for a long time, making Alex uncomfortable...

"I heard that you are starting a company with a few friends in B City." It was Neil who broke their silence. "Why B City?"

Alex felt his back was starting to perspire upon hearing the question. Just as he opened his mouth to speak...

"Forget it. It's not like I don't know why you choose to start in B City," Neil said. "Starting a business is not an easy thing. Are you confident that you can do it?"

After their conversation a few years ago, Neil had someone to keep an eye on Alex. Back then, the boy was persistent that he wanted to pursue Hazel. Neil had given him his condition and the boy was very confident that he will be able to do what Neil had requested.

Since then, Neil had asked someone to keep an eye on Alex. Naturally, he was aware of the things that Alex had done and all of his achievements.

Alex had gone to a different university in the past and had done very well in his study. Moreover... Neil also found out that the boy had never been entangled with another woman and instead, had kept in contact with Hazel as friends.

Though he could not deny that Alex might be good for Hazel, Neil decided that he could not make things easier for Alex.

Hazel is the child that Adam and Claire had left behind. As Hazel's uncle, as Adam's brother, Neil thought that it was his responsibility to look after Hazel. His wife might say that he was a little overprotective, but Neil knew that he only wanted the best for Hazel. The girl was pitiful enough after she had lost her parents. Neil just did not want to see the girl suffer any grievance anymore.

Alex stood up straight. He had heard that Hazel's uncle was a legend in the business world when he took over the almost bankrupted company with his brother and turned things around. Up to this day, the story would still circulate when one was talking about Neil Mo.

"Although I am only part of the company as the investor and advisor, I am confident that the company will go well," Alex said. He shifted the weight between his feet and continued. "I still remember what I have promised you previously. I think at this time I am qualified enough to pursue Hazel. I can protect her and will do my best to protect her."

Neil shot a dangerous look at Alex, and he was suddenly irritated that the boy was not as frightened as he was a few years ago. From his words, Neil was able to guess that Alex had started to pursue Hazel. Suddenly, Neil was a little unhappy.

"Whether you can pursue Hazel or not, it will all depend on Hazel," Neil said and snorted.

"Of course." Alex was very confident that Hazel and he will eventually end up together.

Neil gave Alex another scrutinizing look before he turned around and headed into the house.

Alex's eyes glinted when he noticed that Hazel's uncle was not as difficult as he was years ago. Doesn't this mean that Hazel's uncle will not make things difficult for him once Hazel agreed to date him?

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After five hours of driving, the two of them finally arrived in B City.

Because Hazel had too much stuff in the car, Alex found the reason to drive into the campus until they reached Hazel's dorm. Hazel went back to L City with only one small bag but came back to B City with the car full of her stuff.

Earlier, Auntie Edith had filled the car with boxes of snacks. Since the snacks were personally prepared by her Auntie Edith, of course, Hazel would take them all with her. Then, Alex mentioned that his mother had packed a few snacks for her as well.

Hazel looked at the amount of food in the trunk and did not know if she should laugh about it. The elders were so worried that she would not be eating while Hazel was a little worried that she might gain some weight after this.

She had already eaten too much good stuff and gained a little weight after indulging herself in festivity food. Moreover... her Auntie Edith's craft was always good and Hazel was unable to refuse them.

"How do you plan to carry all these?" Alex asked as the two of them stared at the boxes in the trunk.

If only men would be allowed to enter the dorm, Alex would have helped Haze to carry her stuff to her room.

Alex tilted his head up to look at the tall building. He seemed to recall that Hazel had said that her room was on the third floor. Wouldn't she get tired of carrying everything by herself?

As the thought came to his mind, Alex was a little distressed.

"Hold on. I will get someone to help me," Hazel said. She took out her phone and tapped her fingers on the screen. A few seconds later, Hazel flashed a smile to Alex. "My roommates are coming to help."

A few minutes later, two girls were seen walking down the stairs. Hazel called their names and waved the moment she saw her roommates. Just as the two girls were heading towards Hazel, they began to notice a familiar figure behind Hazel and their steps gradually slow down.

Michelle poked at Crystal's waist and whispered, "Don't tell me that is the same person who picked up Hazel before our winter break?"

Crystal nodded and whispered back, "It was him. Last time, Hazel had introduced him to me."

Michelle let out a cursing word. "You're right. He actually looks better in real life." She grabbed at Crystal's arms tightly. "Then, this should be the same person that Hazel was talking about a while ago. That childhood friend who confessed to her?"

Crystal let out a loud gasp. "Why did Hazel still need time to consider him? If I had a childhood friend who is good looking as this man, I'd agree to date him right away!"

The two girls reached Hazel's side and decided to stop their discussion. They glanced at Alex and then at Hazel.

"Alex, these are my roommates," Hazel said. "You remember Crystal."

Alex nodded to Crystal. "Hello."

"Hello. Hello," Crystal greeted anxiously.

"And this is Michelle," Hazel introduced.

The two of them exchanged a polite greeting before Hazel led them to look at the stuff in the trunk. Seeing the number of boxes, the two girls were surprised.

"It will take us two trips to get everything upstairs," Michelle said. She turned to her friend and commented, "Are you sure you are not trying to open up a small snack stall?"

The girls joked around as they helped Hazel to lift the boxes upstairs while Alex waited at his car. When everything was brought upstairs, Hazel walked down alone while her friends tried to watch the situation from the window.

After going up and down the stairs while carrying her stuff, Hazel was a little out of breath. Her chest heaved up and down, her cheek was a little rosy and there were beads of perspiration on her forehead.

Alex watched the woman in front of him in a daze. He snapped out of his trance and pulled out a few tissue papers to help her dry her sweat.

Hazel was totally unprepared when Alex suddenly stretched his hand to dry her sweat. She stared at his hand and lowered her gaze. Her rosy cheek turned into a darker blush.

"I will be in this city for a while. If you encountered any trouble or need any help, you can come to me."

Hazel nodded. "Un. I know."

"Hazel Mo."

"Ah?" Hazel looked up swiftly and her heart skipped a beat as she met his gentle gaze.

"What should I do? I don't think I'm willing to part with you." Alex heaved a sigh knowing that saying those words will only make parting with her a little harder.

"We're going to be in the same city. We can still see each other during the weekend," Hazel said.

A light smile appeared on his lips when Alex heard her words. There were still around two weeks left for Hazel to consider him and finally give him an answer. Alex was a little anxious to know what her answer will be and wished that the time will come soon. Noticing that the way Hazel looked at him had changed, Alex was sure that he would get the answer he wanted. However, this was not the reason for him to slack off.

"I will call you later, alright?"

Hazel nodded again.

"Don't forget to think of me."

Hazel was a little stunned when she heard those words. She continued to stare at him with a dazed expression before he looked away and nodded. "Un. I know."

A light chuckle escaped him. His Hazel was too adorable. The look on her face just now was just like a rabbit caught in the headlights.

Mmm... his little bunny.

The two of them exchanged a few more words. Then, Hazel waved her hands as she watched as his vehicle drive away to leave. Hazel heaved a soft sigh when she could no longer see his car. She raised her hands and placed them on her chest.

At this time, Hazel thought that there was a strange feeling. It felt as if she was not willing to part with him...

Hazel was a little surprised when the thought crossed her mind. She slapped at her cheeks lightly before Hazel went up the stairs slowly.

The moment she entered her room, her roommates were staring at her with a weird glint in their eyes. Hazel thought the way they were looking at her was almost the same as a hungry lion looking at its prey...

Hazel subconsciously took a step back.

"Hazel Mo," Michelle called her name. Her lips stretched up into a strange smile..
"Tonight, you are not getting any sleep until you answer everything we need to know."

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Hazel pulled out her phone as she walked out of the lecture hall and saw that there were a few missed calls and texts. Her heart skipped a beat when she saw that Alex had called her earlier. After thinking about it for a bit, Hazel decided to return his call.

In less than five seconds, Alex had picked up the phone and spoke on the other line.
"Hazel?"

Hazel felt a tremor upon hearing his voice.

Ever since she had decided to give Alex a chance and considered changing their relationship from friends to lovers, Hazel realized that there would be times when she would feel like this—a little excited and a little anxious when she was around Alex.

It was a strange feeling, but Hazel found that it was not something that she disliked.

According to her roommates, the only reason she felt that way was because her feelings were awakened. Perhaps, all this while, she had liked Alex a little bit but had not realized anything. After Alex had confessed to her, Hazel began to realize that she had feelings for him and that feeling had continued to bloom and grew.

"Mmm..." Hazel bit at her lips. "Sorry. I was in class just now and had set my phone on silent. Why did you call?"

At this time, Crystal walked out of the hall to look for her. The moment Crystal saw the expression on Hazel's face and the phone pressed against her ears, she immediately figured out who was the caller. Their gaze met and Crystal wriggled her eyebrow teasingly at Hazel.

Seeing the warning look on Hazel's face, Crystal decided to run to save her life.

"I miss you," Alex said.

Her heart warmed and her heartbeat accelerated. It was as if there was a group of deer jumping around in her heart. Hazel looked away, knowing that her face should look a little red at this moment.

Noticing that the woman on the other line did not answer, Alex could guess that Hazel should be a little shy at this moment. He could almost imagine the pink blush on her cheek.

Recently, this was the image he would always see whenever he had teased Hazel. He realized that he liked the pink blush on her cheek and the shy look on her face. It was adorable and it would give him the urge to pinch her cheek. Later, he could not stop himself from teasing her.

A sigh escaped him, knowing that Hazel would not say those words back to him. "Later, send to me your class schedule. So that I will know when I should call you."

"Oh."

"Do you have any plan for the evening?"

Hazel thought about it for a while and answered, "No."

"Then, do you want to have dinner with me?"

Hazel was a little stunned to hear his invitation. Slowly, her lips curled into a smile. "Are you going to cook for me again?" She thought of the last time he had invited her to his apartment in L City so that he can cook for her. Alex's cooking was good and it was something that suited her palate.

"Then..." Alex made a pause. "Do you want to come over to my apartment?"

Hazel jumped at the thought of visiting his apartment and the thought made her a little anxious.

The last time she had visited his apartment in L City, Hazel was a little upset as she had thought that Alex had wanted to trick her. Afterward, the two ate their lunch and chatted as usual. It was a while later that Hazel thought that it was a little awkward for her to come over to Alex's place.

Although she trusted that Alex would not do anything that she did not like, it was still a little awkward.

"No," Hazel answered quickly. "It's fine. Let's just have dinner somewhere close to the campus. I still need to return early and do some revision for tomorrow's class."

Alex let out a chuckle. "Alright. We'll have dinner somewhere nearby. I will come over and pick you up."

The two exchanged a few more words before Hazel hung up.

Hazel slid her phone into her bag and lowered her head. She found that the smile on her face would not go away even after she could no longer hear his voice. Suddenly, Hazel was a little worried that whatever was going on with herself would turn her into a fool.

"What are you still standing here for?"

Hazel snapped out of her trance and was surprised to find that Crystal had crept up to her. The teasing smile on Crystal's face remained and Hazel was a little embarrassed that her friend had caught her smiling like an idiot.

Crystal was a little surprised to see the look on Hazel's face. She had known Hazel for so long and knew that Hazel was someone who always wore a serious look on her face. But after she had returned from their winter break, everything had changed. Crystal thought that the Hazel in front of her looked and acted more girlish.

It was a little cute.

"Are we still going to watch the game?" Crystal asked.

Hazel glanced at the time and realized that they should be heading to the basketball court at this time. Picking up their pace, both of them headed over to the court. When they arrived, their roommates, Michelle was already waiting and had reserved a place for them.

The moment Hazel appeared at the basketball court, everyone turned their head at her and started to whisper a few things.

It was well known among everyone that Hazel had rejected the basketball captain, Kevin Xu a month ago.

The basketball captain had confessed to Hazel in front of a lot of eyewitnesses. Because of that, the news that Hazel had rejected him had spread like wildfire and Kevin Xu was embarrassed. Fortunately for him, the winter break had started and he could avoid the others for a while.

Now that Hazel had appeared at the basketball court, everyone was starting to make a lot of assumptions.

It couldn't be that Hazel Mo had set her eyes on someone else other than Captain Kevin Xu, right?

Suddenly, the onlookers started to guess at the person that Hazel had set her eyes on.

Meanwhile, Kevin Xu had just entered the area when he had heard the discussion. He looked at Hazel for a long time and his eyes narrowed dangerously. He tried to follow her gaze and saw that she was looking in the direction where a junior in his team was standing.

A chuckle escaped him as he thought that Hazel's taste was a little peculiar. Kevin Xu threw the water bottle in his hand to his friend and walked over to Hazel.

The onlookers saw this situation and were a little excited to see the drama that was about to start.

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Hazel and her roommates were sitting on the bleachers, unaware of the upcoming drama.

Crystal had told Michelle about the silly face on Hazel's face when she talked to Alex and the two of them began to tease her until her the pink blush appeared on her cheek. Suddenly, they noticed that someone had blocked the sunlight in front of them.

The three roommates looked up and were surprised to see Kevin Xu stood in front of them. Instantly, both Crystal and Michelle had a frown on their faces.

Kevin stood in front of the girls and narrowed his eyes when he saw the blush on Hazel's face. Hazel was well known among the guys as the goddess who always had a cold look on her face. It was a little surprising for Hazel to have this expression on her face.

At the thought that Hazel had pulled this look on her face because of his junior, Kevin became unhappy.

Kevin tightened his hand into a fist and sneered. "Hazel Mo, so you like that kind of guy, huh?"

Hazel tilted her head to look at the person in front of her and blinked. The shy look on her face completely disappeared and the cold look on her face returned. "Excuse me, but who are you?"

The onlookers who had their eyes on their interaction chuckled and laughed upon hearing Hazel's question.

It was only a month ago when Kevin Xu had confessed and was rejected. However, it seemed as if Hazel could not remember who he is.

The onlookers began to gossip behind their backs.

Even if Hazel could not remember about the person who had confessed to her before their winter break began, surely, she would know about the basketball captain, Kevin Xu, right?

After all, Kevin Xu was popular on their campus for basketball and his good look.

Some of them could not help but wonder if Hazel was only pretending.

However, Hazel really could not recall seeing the man in front of her. For Hazel, she would not remember the people she did not have interaction with on daily basis.

Kevin Xu was not someone from the same department and she had never shared a class with him. To Hazel, he was merely a passerby and was not important enough to remember.

Meanwhile, Kevin's expression turned ugly when he heard her question. The onlookers' words entered his ears and Kevin was infuriated. However, he could not just leave and bear the humiliation.

"Who are you pretending for? The last time didn't you rejected me in front of so many people?" His voice was low and only those who are closer could hear his words.

Hazel frowned as she tried to recall the person in front of her, but she could not remember him.

"I always saw you coming over to watch our basketball practice, but I did not expect that it was to for someone else. Hazel Mo, rather than setting your eyes on that person, how

about you date me instead? Every one around can see that I am a better choice." Kevin raised his hand and wanted to grab Hazel's.

However, before he could touch her, Hazel had swatted his hand away. His lower arm was in pain, causing Kevin to be in a daze. Then, Hazel hit him on his stomach area, causing him to stagger a few steps backward.

Fortunately for him, his friends were right behind him, or else, Kevin might fell on his butt and embarrass himself further.

When he looked up again, Hazel had already stood up and was watching him with a dangerous look in her eyes.

Kevin could still remember how Hazel had pulled his hand on his back the last time he tried to touch her. Back then, Kevin had thought that Hazel was very lucky to be able to pull such movements.

"I don't know who you are but you better leave me and my friends," Hazel spoke with a threatening gaze.

Kevin felt his face heated up with embarrassment. All around him, he could feel the others were looking at him with their mocking gaze.

"What a pretentious woman," Kevin spat.

Hazel really did not want to pay attention to a person like Kevin. It was such a waste of time. She had come to watch the basketball practice, but it was not to watch the boys.

At this time, a group of girls in their basketball jersey walked over to their side. They were having their practices at a side of the court when they noticed the commotion. However, with so many people around, they could not get a clear view of what was going on.

A girl with a long ponytail pushed the crowd apart to walk through. She looked at Hazel and saw that she was looking at someone with an angry expression. Following Hazel's gaze, the girl then saw that Kevin Xu was at the scene as well. She immediately figured out what was going on.

A chuckle escaped her. "Captain Xu, what are you doing, ganging up on a few girls?"

Everyone around heard the voice and immediately turned around. The onlookers began to whisper and wondered how will this drama progress as Eira Zhang, the captain of the women's basketball team had made her appearance.

"How about spending your time to practice with your teammates? Let's not forget how you had lost to me a few months ago," Eira said. A smile curled on her lips. "Should we have a rematch?"

Kevin turned his head to the newcomer and his expression changed. "You stay out of this."

Eira clicked her tongue. "I can't. Not when you are harassing my roommates."

The onlookers began to discuss this new turn of events. The girl's words stuck in their head.

Roommates?

She pointed her fingers at the three girls in front of her. "They are my roommates."

Instantly, they were able to figure out the truth.

Kevin Xu had thought that Hazel has been coming to watch the basketball practice because of him. It turned out that Hazel would always show up at the court to watch the women's basketball practices!

Eira overheard the onlookers' discussions and laughed. "Captain Xu, can you not be narcissistic? What makes you dare to assume that my roommates came to watch your practice? Obviously, they come for me."

Kevin gritted her teeth. "Don't fool around. What roommates? Everyone knows that you never live on campus."

"Just because I don't always stay in my dorm doesn't mean that I don't live on campus," Eira said. "My grandmother happens to live in B City. Of course, as a good granddaughter, I always stayed over at her place." She crossed her arms on her chest and continued, "Do I have to return to my dorm and spent a few nights to convince everyone?"

Only the people around her knew that Eira would return to her dorm to take a nap. In the evening, she would then return to her grandmother's place. Her grandmother made delicious meals for her every day and would always spoil her. Why won't she choose to return and accompany her?

However, just because she did not always stay in the dorm, doesn't mean that her relationship with her roommates was not good.

The girls in the basketball team who knew about this habit immediately help to speak for her.

Hearing their words, Kevin could only grit his teeth. Although he did not like Eira Zhang for her arrogance, there was nothing he could do about it. He still knew that there are people that he should never mess up with. Eira Zhang was someone with a strong backing. He did not expect that the girl was very close to Hazel.

In the end, he could only bear the humiliation and left the basketball court. He could only choose to retaliate another time.

Seeing that Kevin Xu had left, the others began to laugh and cheer.

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"Wait, is he going to leave just like that?" Eira asked. She turned to the direction where Kevin had disappeared and clicked her tongue. "And here I thought, I can make him accompany me a game or two."

Michelle stood up and patted at their friend's shoulder. "Alright, you basketball maniac. Stop bullying other people. The boys' basketball team would cry if they heard your words. You're even stricter than their captain!"

Their roommate, Eira Zhang was a little tomboyish and domineering. Truly the daughter of Zhang Group Worldwide's President. Just like her father, she loved basketball a little too much and would bully people with her skills. It is said that she was the only girl in her generation. Being surrounded by her male siblings, she was naturally a little spoiled.

"What bullying? I was about to ask for a friendly match, okay? It would do their team a favor to practice with us." Eira laughed happily when her roommates rolled their eyes at her. She turned to Hazel and asked, "Are you alright? He didn't cause you any trouble, did he?"

"I'm fine." Hazel smiled. "He could not make trouble for me."

"Let's not forget that Hazel is really good at self-defense," Crystal said. "You didn't see it just now. Hazel hit him two times and the expression on his face was too funny. Eira, you will never get your chance to play a hero with Hazel around."

Michelle heaved a sigh as she turned to Hazel. "I did not think that Kevin would dare to harass you after you had rejected him the last time. Even if you have someone else that you liked, what does that got to do with him?"

"He had never got a rejection from any girls and Hazel was the first." Crystal shrugged. "I guess this hurts his pride and he could not accept it."

"Let's stop talking about him. He's not that important to us," Hazel said. She looked at Eira and raised a brow. "Are you still practicing or what?"

Eira heaved a long sigh. "The girls will file a complaint against me if I continued to make them practice." She turned towards her teammates and smiled.

"No. No. Captain! We can still practice!" One of the girls spoke and received her teammates' threatening gaze.

"It's fine." Eira laughed. "Let's call it a day. I still want to hang out with my fellow friends."

The rest of the basketball members had a cheery look on their faces upon hearing their captain's words.

"Alright. Alright. Our practice ends here. Go ahead and leave." Eira waved her hands. The members shouted their gratitude and scampered away.

"Are you really going to stay the night at the dorm?" Crystal asked.

Eira thought about it and said, "Maybe next time. I have told my grandmother that I will return tonight. She said that she was going to make my favorite chicken wings!"

Crystal heaved a sigh. She went over to Michelle's side and draped her arms on her shoulder. "Michelle ah... It seemed that we'll be having dinner just the two of us today."

Eira heard her words and turned to Hazel "Where are you going?"

The smile on Crystal's face stretched out wide. "Our Hazel here got a date with her childhood friend. He invited Hazel for dinner together and our Hazel had agreed."

"You weren't there the last time Hazel's boyfriend dropped her off," Michelle said. "He's really good-looking."

"He's not my boyfriend," Hazel said quickly. Sensing her roommates' gaze, Hazel lowered her head. "At least, not yet."

The girls rolled their eyes at Hazel.

"Wait! You've seen Hazel's boyfriend?" Eira stared at Michelle with her eyes wide. "Doesn't this mean that I'm the only one who had not seen him yet?"

Michelle laughed. "Isn't it because you rarely spend your time in your room?"

Eira sucked in a deep breath and turned to Hazel. "Hazel Mo! I thought we are sisters! How can you do this to me? Quickly introduce him to me and let me see if he's qualified enough to be your boyfriend."

"How about you hang around on campus a while longer?" Michelle suggested. "Then we call all spy on them together."

"Alright, stop teasing me too much," Hazel said. Her face gradually turned red.

This was the first time that Eira had seen a shy expression from Hazel and she was a little surprised. She thought that Hazel should like the boy a little bit. Or else, she would not have that expression on her face, right?

"Hazel, how about taking this boyfriend over to my house and introduce him to my mother as well," Eira said. "My mother will be very happy to see you both coming over."

In the past, Hazel's parents and Eira's mother were best friends. Hazel's mother and Eira's mother went to the same college and became friends ever since. Years have passed and this time, Hazel and Eira were admitted to the same college and were fated to be roommates. Because her mothers were a friend, the two of them had known each other for a long time.

Hazel thought about her friend's words and spoke, "I will think about it."

The roommates continued their chat and fooled around a little bit before they all returned to their dorm.

Curious at how Hazel's boyfriend would look like, Eira had called her grandmother and told her that she will be heading home a little later.

Hazel looked at her roommates and let out a helpless sigh.

Once they were back in their room, the girls started to help Hazel to choose an appropriate dress and did her makeup. When they finished, Hazel took a step back and stared at her reflection in the mirror. Seeing the light blue dress on her body, the light makeup on her face and the soft curls rested on her shoulders, Hazel was a little stunned.

"We're only having our dinner somewhere closer to the campus," Hazel said. "I don't need to dress up like this."

"What do you know?" Michelle stopped Hazel from tugging at the hem of her dress. "It's not about dressing up. It's about making effort. Your boyfriend would be motivated when he saw that you're making effort to see him. This is how you're telling him that you are interested in him without saying it out loud."

Hazel thought of how Alex was going to react when he saw her and her face turned crimson again.

The phone on her desk started to ring and the girls exchanged a look when they saw the name on the screen.

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When Hazel walked downstairs, Alex was already waiting for her. The man was standing under the tree inconspicuously. His head lowered to look at his phone, but the moment he sensed someone was staring at him, Alex lifted his head to look at Hazel.

Their gaze met and Alex was a little stunned, looking at the beauty in front of him.

Seeing the way Alex was looking at her, Hazel could not help but to lower her head. After a brief pause, Hazel walked over and stopped in front of him. "Why... are you looking at me like that?"

Alex snapped out of his trance when he heard her voice. He turned and let out a dry cough before he looked at her again. "Nothing. Just that... you look beautiful today."

Her face was a little heated up. Being stared at by Alex and was called beautiful made her heart jumped up. At this time, loud laughing voices could be heard coming from one of the dorm rooms, startling them both. Subconsciously, they both looked up.

Hazel saw her roommates stood on the balcony and closed her eyes. Knowing that the girls were spying on them, Hazel was a little embarrassed. Suddenly, she couldn't help but want to look for a hole to hide in immediately.

"Let's go," Hazel said. Her hand moved to reach Alex's, wanting to drag him away from the place quickly.

Alex looked at their intertwined hands and a satisfied smile. He tightened his hold against hers and led her to his car.

The moment Hazel sat in the passenger's seat, her phone started to chime. The corner of her lips twitched as she read her roommates' reminder to let Alex pick a day and buy them a meal.

Alex slid behind the wheels and noticed the strange way Hazel was staring at her phone. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," Hazel lowered her phone and smiled. "Just my roommates asking me questions about some assignments."

Alex turned the ignition and turned the car to leave the campus area. He glanced at the woman beside him and her lips couldn't stop from smiling. "Have you been busy with your studies and assignments?"

"It's my final year. I don't have many classes, but there are a lot of assignments. But it's still manageable," Hazel said. She looked out the window and watched as the scenery changed. "Where are we going?"

"A friend recommended a western restaurant," Alex said. "You don't mind that, do you?"

"It's alright. As long as I don't have to spend my money."

Alex laughed when he heard her words.

The two of them continued to talk about Hazel's study on their way to the restaurant. Alex noticed the way her eyes would sparkle when she explained about her robotic studies and was a little stunned.

After a twenty minutes drive, the two of them passed by a large amusement park. Hazel lifted her head to look at the dazzling lights. She seemed to remember that this site was a collaboration of MH Group with a few large companies.

When her parents were still alive, they had once taken her to this amusement park to play around. However, she was too young and she could not remember anything other than what she had seen from the pictures in the photo album.

Once she came to B City to pursue her study, Hazel would sometimes pass by around this area but had never entered the amusement park again. Her friends had invited her to play at the amusement park a few times, but she was always busy with her studies.

Alex glanced at the woman beside him and noticed that she was staring out the window in a daze. "Have you went to this amusement park before?"

Hazel snapped out of her thoughts and turned to Alex. "My parents took me here once. But of course, I don't remember much about it."

Alex pursed his lips into a thin line. At the mention of her parents, Alex suddenly did not know how to continue this conversation. He recalled the secret that Hazel had shared with him at the beach.

He just did not want to let her remember all the unpleasant things and see her sad expression. Alex could still remember how she started to panic and how she had cried until her eyes were swollen when she talked about her parents.

"Alex?"

He snapped out of his thoughts and turned to Hazel. "Huh?"

A smile bloomed on her face. "Do you want to come with me and play at this amusement park? I've been living in B City for a few years and had never set my foot in here. I just thought that it would be too bad if I graduated and leave B City without stepping into this place."

"Alright." Alex nodded. "Let's set a date."

The light turned green and Alex finally turned and entered a district. He found a parking spot and pulled over.

When they alighted, Hazel was a little dazed as she looked at the rows of restaurants and cafes. The area was lively with people walking down the street. On one side, there was a long line of people who were queuing to buy the new flavored ice creams.

It was then that she recalled how Eira would often mention this district. According to her friend, there is one restaurant around this area that served chicken wings that is worth dying for.

However, Hazel had never gone out to this part of the city. She was someone who was not very picky about her food and would not care to travel far to eat delicious food. Her Auntie Edith is an excellent cook and Hazel thought that her auntie's home-cooked meal is the best.

"Come on." Alex stretched his hand and Hazel linked her hands with him.

The two of them walked around the area for a while and arrived in front of a western-style restaurant. Hazel looked at the interior from the outside and was stunned to find how pretty it was. It has a minimalist design, but the decorative plants will make it seem as if they were having a meal in a pretty garden.

As Alex had already made his reservation, the two of them were lead to their table on the second floor.

The waiter handed them their menu and poured them with glasses of water.

The two made their decision quickly and waited for their food. Seeing the pretty interior, Hazel could not help but to snap a few pictures to show her roommates.

"There's still no one around. How about you stand at that corner and I'll snap a few photos for you?"

Hazel turned to the direction where Alex had pointed at her and hesitated. The greenery background with fairy lights was indeed pretty. Seeing that they were the only people around, Hazel immediately agreed.

The two of them walked over to the corner and Hazel struck a few poses. However, because she was a little timid, they only spent a short time taking pictures.

"Come, look at the pictures."

Hazel walked over to his side and looked at the phone. For a few seconds, Hazel was a little stunned. The girl in the photo was pretty and Hazel had a hard time believing that she could have that expression on her face. Her lips bloomed into a smile and there was a twinkle in her eyes.

"Later, I'll send the pictures to you, alright?"

"Oh." It was then that Hazel realized Alex had used his phone to snap the pictures.

The waiter showed up with their drinks and the two returned to their seat. A while later, her phone started to buzz and Hazel saw that Alex had sent the pictures to her.

"How about I snap a few pictures for you as well?" Hazel cocked her head as she looked at Alex.

Alex laughed. "It's fine."

Just then, the two of them heard a movement and saw that a waiter had let a couple upstairs. The woman's eyes caught the sight of Alex and Hazel and quickly dragged her partner to greet them.

Flashing the sweetest smile on her face the woman then spoke, "Alex He, what a nice surprise.. I did not expect to see you here."

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Hearing the woman's words, Hazel turned to Alex and shot him an inquiring gaze.

Alex flashed a smile that did not reach his eyes. He looked at his friend who was being dragged by the woman and narrowed his eyes dangerously. "Daniel?"

"I met Miss Lin outside the office just now," the man said. "She invited me for a meal and I didn't expect that she would ask me here. Alex, this is a coincidence."

Alex quickly shifted his gaze away.

Earlier, when he was asking for the staff's for their restaurant recommendation, Daniel was just beside him. It would be impossible for him not to know that he would show up at the restaurant.

He took a deep breath and turned to Hazel again. "Hazel, this is my business partner, Daniel Qin, and our company's lawyer, Carina Lin. Daniel, Carina, this is Hazel Mo."

Hazel blinked when she heard that familiar name. She gave the woman a look over and smiled. However, Hazel did not miss the provocation look that Miss Lin shot at her.

"It was a rare chance for us to run into each other like this," Carina said. "Since this is a fated meeting, why don't we have a meal together. I'm sure—"

"No," Alex spoke before the woman could finish her sentence.

The smile on Carina's face turned stiff.

"I'm sorry," Alex said. "You see, I am still in the process to woo this lady to become my girlfriend. It would be inappropriate if you join our table, Miss Lin."

Carina glanced at Hazel with an awkward look on her face. Though Alex's words should let her know about Hazel's position, she thought that this was not her time to give up. After all, she had been chasing after Alex since they were in college.

It was fate that Alex would move to B City. Why should she let go of this chance?

Hazel saw the pleading look that Carina shot at her and was amused. Just a while ago, this woman has been shooting daggers at her. Now that Alex had chased her away, why did she wanted her to help? She did not know Carina too well and she was not that generous to strangers.

Swiftly, Hazel looked away. She grabbed at her glass of water in front of her and took a slow sip. It was as if she was enjoying the drama that was about to come, and this drama had nothing to do with her.

"I was just thinking that we could discuss your business project while we eat," Carina said. Her tone sounded a little pitiful and it would usually melt the opposite gender's heart.

"Miss Lin, as I have mentioned to you previously, every business decision will be made by Daniel," Alex said. "If you needed to discuss, you can discuss everything with him." Once he finished his words, Alex shot his friend a look.

Daniel felt his body trembled upon meeting Alex's gaze. He immediately knew that if he did not leave with Carina, Alex would be furious. What would happen if Alex chose to pull away from his investment in his company? His company was just a baby. He would not be able to survive the impact if he lost a large sum of investment.

As the thought came to his mind, Daniel let out a cough and tugged at Carina's arms. "Miss Lin, it's not good for us to be a huge light bulb and disturb these lovers." He seemed to notice Carina's angry stare, but at this time, Daniel was more afraid of Alex. Daniel turned to Hazel. "Miss Mo, pardon me for disturbing your date. I won't disturb you any further."

Seeing that Hazel had flashed him an understanding smile, Daniel was relieved. Before Carina would stop causing trouble for him, Daniel quickly pulled that woman away.

Once the two people had disappeared from their eyesight, Hazel put down the glass in her hand and flashed a smile at Alex, causing the man to worry over his life. "That Miss Lin... she seemed to like you."

"Too bad. I only like you." Alex said. His gaze was staring straight at Hazel, unblinking. It was as if he was worried that he might miss something important from her expression.

Hazel lowered her head upon hearing his words. Seconds later, she looked at Alex again and was not surprised to see that he was still staring at her. "Why do you like me?"

"Hmm..." Alex pondered for a while and smiled. "You're cute."

Hazel started to laugh. "So, it was because of my look?"

"I like your smile and how you laughed."

Instantly, her laughter stopped.

"I like how you would always focus on building those models," Alex continued. "I like your positivity even after everything you have gone through. There are just too many things that I liked about you. In the beginning, it might be because I am used to having your presence around... But once I realized that what I feel was not something that a friend would feel for another, I just could not imagine being around anyone else other than you."

"Really?" Hazel flashed him a stiff, teasing smile.

"You know me. The moment I found something that I liked, I was unable to look away," Alex said. "Just like how I liked building those models after my father introduced them to me... the moment I like you, I could not like anyone else. It did not feel right. Hazel Mo, I love you that much."

Hazel stared back at Alex with a stunned expression. Her heart was beating furiously against her ribcage. She could feel the heat creeping on her face, but at this time, Hazel thought that she was unable to look away from his gaze.

At this time, the waiter decided to come and deliver their appetizer, giving her the chance to look away.

Alex heaved a breath, slowly, with frustration at the waiter timing.

He was beginning to enjoy getting lost in Hazel's gaze when this man had appeared. Seeing that Hazel had chosen to stare at her food instead of looking up at him, Alex was a little disappointed.

Hazel poked at her shrimp appetizer and paused as Alex's words replayed in her mind. "You're saying that you're a loyal type."

Alex was surprised when Hazel started to speak again. A smile appeared on his lips. "Hmm... after knowing that, would you consider giving me an answer at this time?"

Hazel cocked her head to one side. "No."

Alex lowered his head upon hearing her answer.

"You said that you were going to chase me for one month. Therefore, you have to chase me for one month." Hazel saw the sparkle in his eyes and quickly looked at her appetizer again. She stabbed at a piece and shoved it into her mouth. "Good things happen to those who are patient."

His heart trembled at her words. Those words... don't they meant that he had a huge chance to change their relationship status from friends to lovers once the one-month period is over?

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Remembering that Hazel wanted to return to her dorm earlier to do her revision for tomorrow's class, Alex decided to send her back after dinner.

Hazel thought that Alex would take her to walk around after dinner and was a little regretful that she had told him such lies. In the end, their meeting was cut short and they have to part again.

Alex pulled over his vehicle at a spot and turned to Hazel, who was looking at something on her phone. "We're here."

Hazel lifted her head and saw her dorm building in front of her. She heard Alex opened his door to alight before he went over to her side and helped her with her door. After she stepped out of the vehicle, Hazel patted at her skirt softly, trying to flatten the crease on them. She looked up again and saw the hesitation on his face. "What's wrong? Why are you making that face?"

A sigh escaped. "What am I going to do? Time flies so fast and I am not willing to part with you."

Hazel chuckled upon hearing his words. Recently, she found that Alex was getting better at speaking sweet words.

"Did you say these words to everyone?" Hazel teased.

"If everyone is Hazel Mo, then I will say these words frequently."

Seeing the serious look on his face, Hazel could not help but laugh. "Such sweet-talker."

Alex took a deep breath and smiled. "Go in. I will text you once I arrived at my apartment."

"Alright."

"Study well."

"I know."

"Don't forget to think of me and my suggestion whenever you're free."

"I will." A soft smile curled on her lips. Hazel thought that even if she did not want to think of Alex, the man would sometimes pop up in her mind, reminding her to think of his suggestion properly.

Alex pursed his lips into a thin line as it seemed that he had run out of things to say. He moved slightly to give her room and leave. "Alright. I won't take your time anymore."

Hazel took a few steps forward and stopped. When she turned around, Alex was still watching her. The smile on her face widened upon seeing the expression on his face that was beginning to look like a lost puppy.

A thought crossed her mind and Hazel took out her phone. After checking the information she wanted to find, Hazel looked at Alex again. "Are you free on Saturday, eleventh?"

His mind whirled as he tried to think of his schedule and wondered if it was a special day. "I'm free." Even if he was not free, he would make time for Hazel.

"Good. Then, let's go and play at the amusement park, alright?"

His expression turned slightly bright at the thought that Hazel was taking the initiative to ask him out on a date. "Alright."

Hazel clenched the phone in her hand a little tighter. Her cheek was a little red, but fortunately, Alex would not notice them under the night sky. "Then... I will give you the answer on that day."

A glint appeared on his eyes when Alex realized that the one-month duration would end on the eleventh. Before he was able to react well, the woman had already turned around and walked over to her dorm.

Alex continued to stand at the spot as he wanted to watch her enter the building. Just before her figure disappeared behind the wall, Hazel turned around and waved at him.

A chuckle escaped him as he thought of how adorable that girl is. Suddenly, Alex was anticipating the day to come. He had a feeling that Hazel would not let him down with her answer.

After he had calmed down a little bit, Alex slid behind the wheels and reached for his phone at the side. He recalled that he had snapped a few photos of Hazel earlier and had wanted to set them as his wallpapers.

However, the little smile on his face gradually disappeared the moment he saw the text messages. After composing a reply, Alex put the keys in the ignition and drive off.

Once he arrived at his apartment building, Alex saw that his friend, Daniel was waiting for him at the lounge. He walked over to his direction and Daniel lifted his head upon hearing the sound of his footsteps.

"Alex!" Daniel stood up immediately. "I'm sorry. I did not expect that she would come over and try to disturb you on your date. Miss Lin said that she had something important to discuss with you."

"Even so, I am not happy when someone disturbs me during my private time. This is not working hours and I am merely an investor and advisor to your company, Daniel. I told you from the very beginning that you will be the one who will make a decision."

"Sorry." Daniel lowered his head. "You know that I am lacking confidence in managing the company. I just thought... that if you were around during any negotiation, everything will be alright."

Alex took a deep breath to calm down. "You need to build that confidence fast. I trust that you will do well and decided to invest in this company. Why can't you have a little more trust in yourself?"

His expression grew warm upon hearing Alex's words. They became friends in college and Alex would often tell him that he always had good ideas and would become a good leader if he had a little more confidence.

"I won't be staying in B City forever," Alex reminded him. "After a year, I will leave and return to L City."

"I know. I remember." Daniel nodded. There was silence between them. Daniel peeked at Alex's face and recalled his date earlier. "That woman earlier... Miss Mo... is she the woman you often mentioned previously?"

The two were friends in college and Daniel had witnessed a few girls trying to hit on him, but the man would never give them any chance. Later, they had asked him why Alex was never interested in those girls and Alex told them that he had someone he liked. Later, Alex would sometimes mention his childhood sweetheart whenever he was in a good mood.

Hazel's gentle face appeared on his mind and his expression grew lighter. "Hmm..." He then recalled the thing that Carina tried to pull and decided to give Daniel a little warning. "Previously, I had agreed to hire Miss Lin as our lawyer as she was someone from the same college, but Daniel, I don't like how she would always show up around me."

"Sorry. Miss Lin asked for my help and I couldn't find a reason to reject her," Daniel said. "I didn't know that your childhood sweetheart would be in B City as well."

"If Miss Lin continued to pester me, then I would suggest you work with a new lawyer instead," Alex said. "You can tell those words to Miss Lin."

"I know."

Alex heaved a sigh. "It's getting late.. Go back to your place and have a rest. Tomorrow, don't you still have an important business meeting with a client?"

Chapter 370 - Make An Excuse To See Him

After her class ended, Hazel went straight back to her dorm and found that a parcel from home. After carrying the parcel back into her room, Hazel peeked into the box and found that there were more snacks and delicacies inside.

A helpless laugh escaped her and Hazel picked up her phone and dialed her Auntie's number.

The phone got through after a few rings. Her heart softened the moment Hazel heard her Auntie Edith's voice on the other line. It hasn't been a long time since the last time she went back home, but Hazel found that she was missing her family.

"Auntie Edith, what are you doing just now?"

"Nothing much. I had just returned from a checkup with your uncle just now," Edith reported. A soft sigh escaped her. "Your uncle has been really overly worried about my pregnancy this time."

Now that she thought about it, Neil was a little more anxious than the first time she was pregnant with Hayden.

Hazel laughed at the other line. "Auntie Edith, this time, you are pregnant with a twin. Of course, my uncle would be worried," Hazel said.

Moreover, after reading too many articles online, Neil was beginning to worry that her late pregnancy might be a little risky. Every link he clicked would list out the risk for the mother and child.

"The doctor said, as long as I look over my diet well and don't stress up myself, everything should be fine," Edith said.

"How are my younger siblings? Are they behaving well?"

"They were very small. Even if they moved around a little bit, I couldn't notice their movement yet. But in a few months, they will start to move. I just hope that the two would not quarrel too much in there and move around too much," Edith said. "Why did you call? Miss me?"

"Auntie Edith, I always missed you. Especially your crab dishes."

Edith laughed. "Alright. I know. I will make them again when you come back for your next vacation."

"Auntie Edith, I called to let you know that I have received your parcel," Hazel said.

"Why did you sent me more snacks? My roommates and I have not finished the snacks that you packed for me the last time. Are you not worried that I might gain a little too much weight?"

"Those are from your maternal grandparents in F Country," Edith said. "It seemed that the postage got delayed because of the festivity and reach home after you had gone

back to B City. Therefore, I sent them over to you. Later, don't forget to call your grandparents in F Country, alright?"

"Hmm... I know." Hazel glanced at the parcel again. Though she was happy that her maternal grandparents remembered to send her a box of snacks and delicacies, it was still a little too much.

"If you think that you cannot finish them, go ahead and share them with your classmates," Edith suggested. "Or... you can give some to Alex as well. Mmm... go ahead and make an excuse to see him."

Hearing the suggestion, Hazel lowered her head shyly. "Auntie Edith..."

"What are you embarrassed about? It can't be that you cannot make an excuse to see your best friend, right?"

Hazel thought that her auntie was a little addicted to teasing her.

The two of them exchanged a few words before hanging up. Hazel glanced at the box of snacks again and thought of her Auntie's suggestion.

After they had gone out for dinner together, Hazel was suddenly busy with too many assignments. Because she was in her final year, her professors were even more demanding. Although they would still talk on the phone every day, Hazel has not seen Alex for a few days...

Hazel thought of her Auntie Edith's suggestion and hesitated. Taking a deep breath, Hazel pressed the call button.

The call went through immediately and her heart skipped a beat upon hearing his voice, calling out her name.

"Hazel?"

It was at this time that Hazel began to realize that Alex's voice was a little deep and rich. The sound of his voice entered her ear and Hazel felt a little tremor.

"Mmm..."

"Is your classes over?"

"It was over a while ago," Hazel said. "My next class is canceled as my professor had something urgent. So now I am back at my dorm to take a break."

Alex chuckled at the other line. "Then, you should take this chance to rest well. Recently you have been too busy with too many assignments."

"I know." Hazel clenched at the hem of her shirt and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Nothing much. I was just looking at some documents in my office."

"Are you busy?"

"It was still alright."

"Then... will it be alright if I come over and find you?"

Alex paused when he heard her words.

"My maternal grandparents sent me some snacks and I wanted to share them with you," Hazel said.

"I will come over and find you."

"No. Let me go and find you instead," Hazel said. "I thought about it. It seemed that I have never been to your company before and I am curious to know about your new company. Is it alright if I wanted to come over and look around?"

Alex was a little stunned. He snapped out of his trance immediately and smiled. "Of course. Hazel, you can come over anytime you want. Are you sure you won't need me to come over and pick you up?"

"It's fine. The public transport in B City is pretty good. Just send me your address. I'll come over and find you soon."

A faint smile curled on Alex's lips as they ended their conversation. The thought that Hazel had made an effort to come over and see him made him a little happy. Suddenly, Alex found that the documents on her table were not as interesting as it was before. At this time, he was looking forward to seeing Hazel appear in the office.

Meanwhile... Hazel raised a brow when she saw the address that Alex had sent to her. She did not think that his office and her campus would be quite close.

Hazel stood in front of her closet and pondered about her outfit. This time, her roommates were not around to help her dress up as they were all spending their time studying in the library.

After arranging the stuff that she wanted to give to Alex, Hazel left her dorm with a small paper bag in her hand.

She took a bus and arrived at Alex's office building almost fifteen minutes later. Hazel tilted her head to look at the tall building and took her phone to call Alex again.

"You've arrived?" Alex asked the moment the call was connected.

"Un..." Hazel could not help but smile when she heard his anxious tone. "I just got here."

"Just wait for me at the lounge.. I will come over and find you."

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Hazel walked into the building and began to scan around the place.

To enter the office's floor, one will need a special pass or register at the security. Since Alex had told her to wait, Hazel chose to walk around. Her eyes caught the list of the companies in the building and she began to guess at which one was Alex's.

Hearing the footsteps coming from behind her, Hazel turned around and saw the man's anxious face as he walked over to her. The moment their gaze met, his gaze turned gentler and a warm smile appeared on his lips.

"Why do you look so anxious?" Hazel asked when she saw him.

"I didn't want you to wait for too long," Alex said.

Hazel stretched her hand to pass him the paper bag in her hand. "For you."

Alex reached to grab the bag but did not spare a glance at it. His gaze on Hazel's face was unwavering. "Let's go upstairs. I'll show you around the place."

"Mmm..." Hazel nodded. She let him reach for her hands and the two walked into the elevator.

"Do you have any plan after this?" Alex asked as they were waiting for the elevator to arrive on their floor.

Hazel had guessed that Alex was going to ask her out for a meal. Earlier, she had texted her friends that she will be going out and would return to the dorm after dinner. Perhaps, the girls were too preoccupied with their studies in the library, and the last time Hazel checked her phone, the girls have not replied to her messages. Fortunately, she could still get away with their teasing at this time.

"I don't," Hazel said.

"Then, let's go out and have dinner together afterward," Alex said. "I will send you over to your dorm later."

The elevator arrived on the floor and the two walked out. The moment Alex led her into the office, Hazel began to notice the strange way that the receptionist was looking at her.

In the beginning, Hazel thought of nothing, but once they walked further into the office, she began to notice that everyone around her was looking at her with the same, strange smile on their faces. Just as she thought that she wanted to turn and look properly, the other side had lowered their heads quickly.

Her head cocked to one side as Hazel wondered if she was imagining things.

Of course, Hazel was unaware that Alex had told the staff that his girlfriend would be visiting their office. Once they heard that the boss's girlfriend would be visiting, the staff was a little excited and curious.

Seeing that the two walked into the office with their hands intertwined, the staff guessed that the couple's relationship was pretty good.

After a brief tour around the office and explaining what they do at the company, Alex brought Hazel into his office to rest.

"Currently, we only hired eight employees in the office," Alex said. "When the company grew, we'll consider adding more staff. Right. Do you want something to drink? Coffee? Tea?"

"Water is fine," Hazel said.

"Wait for a while." Alex popped his head outside and came back in a while later. He was explaining to Hazel something about the technology they used when someone knocked at the door.

One of the staff walked in with a tray of refreshments and placed them on the coffee table. Just as the woman was about to leave, she glanced at Hazel with her lips curled in disdain.

Her brow shot up. This was the first time that she had seen this woman and Hazel could not understand the woman's attitude towards her.

Hazel caught the way the woman peeked at Alex in a brief second and understood what was going on. The door was closed and other than the rustling sounds of the papers, there was only silence in the room.

"Who was that?" Hazel asked.

Alex lifted his head to look at Hazel and glanced at the door. "The person who sent in the drinks?" He watched Hazel nod and continued, "That's Ashley Tang, Daniel's assistant. Since I don't come over often, she would sometimes come and act as my assistant as well. What's wrong?"

Hazel shook her head. "Nothing. I was casually asking." A smile curled on her lips. "Go ahead and do your job. Didn't you say that you're going to take me to dinner later?"

His eyes sparkled and Alex lowered his head to look at the documents again.

The smile on Hazel's face gradually disappeared. A few days ago there was a Carina, and now, there's another one called Ashley. It seemed that Alex was pretty popular among the ladies.

As the thought crossed her mind, Hazel began to observe the man in front of her for a long time.

It was true that Alex is quite attractive. With his look alone, he could easily attract some bees and butterflies. Hazel seemed to recall that his academic record in school, was pretty good. After he had joined her to attend a few self-defense classes, Alex began to work out more and his body built was not that bad. She could always feel his toned muscle every time she held on to his arms while they were walking together.

Hazel paused as the thought crossed her mind and she quickly scolded herself for letting her mind go astray.

At this time, someone came over and knocked on the door. Alex's partner, Daniel showed up at the door and hesitated when he saw Hazel.

"What is it?" Alex asked.

Daniel let out a dry cough. "No. It's just that something happened. I've gathered everyone in the meeting room for a brief discussion." He looked at Hazel again and flashed an awkward smile.

After Alex had warned him the other day, Daniel decided that he needed to be careful around Hazel. If he accidentally makes this woman upset, then wouldn't Alex find him to settle the score?

"Go ahead. I'll just stay here and wait for you," Hazel said as she looked at Alex.

"Will you be alright?"

A soft laugh escaped her. "Of course."

Alex felt as if something bloomed in his heart when he heard her laughing voice. "If you're bored and wanted to look around the office, go ahead. Just don't leave without saying anything to me alright?"

Hazel flashed a smile and watched Alex walked out.

Finding nothing to do, Hazel checked on her phone and was surprised to see her roommates' messages in their group. Hazel told them that she would return after having her dinner with Alex and soon, the girls started to tease her again.

Hazel chatted with the girls for a while before she put her phone down. She decided to walk around the office area and finally, stopped in front of the french window to look at the scenery outside.

The sound of high heels clicking on the floor could be heard from a distance. Hazel turned around and was a little surprised as her gaze met with the woman.

"Why are you here?" Carina asked.. She did not bother to hide her contempt.

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Hazel tilted her head to one side. "Why can't I be here?"

Carina swept her gaze around the office and saw that the staff was not around. A front appeared on her face. "Did you sneak into the office?"

"Miss Lin, you are a funny woman," Hazel let out a laugh. "The security in this building is quite tight. How do you think I can sneak in? Obviously, someone allowed me to be here."

Her hands clenched into fists, knowing that Hazel was telling the truth. One of the reasons that Alex and Daniel chose this office space was because of its safety. Not anyone could enter the building. Unless if they had a special pass or if they were invited by the tenant upstairs, the security will not allow just anyone to enter.

Carina was allowed to enter the building after she had registered her information at security. Then, the security had to confirm with Daniel that she had an appointment with him before she was given the pass and was allowed to enter the building.

However, when Carina saw Hazel's appearance at the office, she was very unhappy.

Just a few days ago, Daniel had warned her not to cause any trouble or else they were going to fire her as their lawyer and used someone else instead.

When Alex and Daniel decided to use her service as their lawyer, the law firm had given her a lot of raise. If she had suddenly lost this important client, how would she face her colleague?

However, at this time, there was no one around. Even if she said something to the woman before her, no one would know. The last time they ran into each other at the restaurant, Carina had seen the way Hazel interacted with Alex.

Looking at her indifferent expression at that time, Carina was very sure that Hazel did not have a feeling towards Alex.

Hazel continued to look at Carina's changing expression and thought that it was a little amusing. "You... like Alex."

Carina's expression turned awkward. However, that expression quickly disappeared. "Yes. I like him. Since you're not his girlfriend yet, who said that I won't have a chance to be with him?" She took a step closer. "Miss Mo, since you're not interested in Alex, why don't you just back off?"

"Who said that I am not interested?" Hazel flashed her a playful smile. "If I'm not interested, why would I show up here?"

The woman's expression turned unhappy. She gave Hazel a look over and saw that the outfit on Hazel's body was nothing expensive. A thought crossed her mind and Carina let out a scoff. "I have seen a few girls like you when I was in university. A girl like you isn't suitable for Alex at all."

Hazel did not care for her mocking, but she did not miss that little information. "You and Alex... you went to the same university?"

"That's right." There was a look of arrogance on her face as Carina thought of how she had known Alex longer than Hazel. "We went to the same university and I have known him for years."

Hazel was suddenly curious at how Alex was during his years in university.

The two of them always went to the same school. It was only after Alex had entered university that the two of them were no longer together. Hazel could not deny that she grew a little restless the first month that she couldn't see him. Fortunately, they were still able to talk through phones and meet during their holidays.

It seemed that from then on, Alex had grown up. Every time she met him again, the man seemed to grow a little taller.

"Miss Mo, don't get your hopes up high. Alex might seem as if he is interested in you now, but I'm sure that it will not last too long," Carina said. "Once he learned of your intention to get close to him, he will only hate you."

Hazel snapped out of her trance. "You think I have an intention to get close to Alex?"

"Don't you?" Carina's lips curled into a mocking smile.

"Then, what do you think is my intention of getting close to him?"

Carina scanned the clothing on Hazel's body again. "You know that he's from a wealthy family in L City. You only got close to him for his money. Don't try to pretend otherwise."

Hazel thought that this should be one of the funniest jokes she heard.

Even though Alex came from a wealthy family, the He's family money could not be compared to the Mo's.

Moreover... after her uncle had given her her parents had left behind, Hazel had turned into a rich lady. If one added the amount of money she received from MH Group every month, Hazel could live her life doing nothing at all and still able to feed her family for a few generations.

From the way Carina was looking at her in contempt, Hazel knew that the woman was looking down at her just because of the way she had dressed. From the beginning she entered university, Hazel has always kept a very low profile.

Unlike in the school that she attended, there will be a lot of students coming from different social classes. Showing off will only make things a little troublesome for her as she might run into people who wanted to be friends with her for other benefits.

This was what her Auntie Edith had said to her when she entered university.

Until now, there were not many people who knew that she's Hazel Mo of MH Group.

"Miss Lin, are you sure you are not talking about yourself?" Hazel asked. "The reason you liked Alex, wasn't it because of his money as well?"

The room turned silent as Carina was unable to respond. Carina's face turned a little red, as she was not expecting Hazel to return her accusation. However, she was not willing to admit that initially, that was the reason why she was attracted to Alex.

Suddenly, the two of them heard a voice coming from a direction and saw that the group of employees had come out of the meeting room. As Carina was someone who would frequently come over to the company, the employee had recognized her and exchanged their greetings.

"Hazel?"

The two women shifted their gaze upon hearing the voice. The employees parted to make ways and Alex appeared. The moment Alex saw that Carina was around, his expression turned darker.

"Alex!" Carina went forward to him, but her movement halted as someone had moved faster than her. Seeing the way Hazel had linked her arms with Alex's Carina became unhappy. However, under the employee's eyes, she could only behave herself.

"Sorry to let you wait. Are you bored?"

"It's fine." Hazel flashed him a smile. "Miss Lin accompanied me for a chat, so I wasn't that bored."

Alex narrowed his eyes dangerously at Carina, but that look disappeared when he looked at Hazel again. "What were you two chatting about?"

"Just something about my boyfriend's years in university."

A glint flashed in his eyes upon hearing her words. Alex was very sure that his mind was not playing tricks on him. Just now... when Hazel mentioned her boyfriend, she was obviously talking about him, right?

Before Alex could question Hazel about it, the woman had already looked away, avoiding his gaze.

"I'm hungry.." Hazel tugged at his arm. "If you're done with your work, let's go out and have something to eat, alright?"

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Alex noticed that the person beside him has been keeping her silent the moment they entered the vehicle. Seeing the way she acted, Alex was worried, but he did not know what went wrong.

Hazel was still fine when they were at his office. He had even thought that Hazel had mentioned him as her boyfriend. Could he be mistaken?

A soft sigh escaped him. Alex thought that sometimes, a woman's mind was a little too hard to understand. He had known Hazel for years, but there would still be a time when he could not figure out what she was thinking about.

Alex tried to think of the reason for the sudden mood change in Hazel. The last person she had talked to was Carina.

His face darkened at the thought that Hazel became unhappy after chatting with that woman. Alex made a note to talk to Daniel and let him choose a new lawyer to aid the company matters.

After twenty minutes of driving, Alex parked his vehicle and turned to Hazel. "We're here."

Hazel snapped out of her trance and looked out the window. Noticing that the car had pulled over at the lakeside garden, Hazel swiftly turned to look at Alex. "Why are we here?"

"To have dinner. I heard that there's a pretty good seafood restaurant nearby," Alex said. "We may have to walk a little bit."

"Oh." Hazel nodded at his explanation. She got out of the vehicle and looked around the surroundings. The fresh air and the green scenery immediately make her feel more at ease. Hazel turned around when Alex tugged at her hand. She looked at him and cocked her head to one side. "What's wrong?"

"Hazel..." His voice sounded as if he was aggrieved. "Are you angry?"

A look of surprise flashed on her face. "Why would you think that I'm angry?"

"Then, why aren't you speaking to me?" Alex asked. "Did Miss Lin said something that upset you?"

Hazel thought of the conversation with Carina earlier and lowered her head.

"What did she said to you?" Alex continued to ask when Hazel did not answer.

Initially, she had tried to avoid Alex's gaze because she was a little embarrassed after referring to him as her boyfriend in front of others. Hazel did not think that Alex would misunderstand her.

She had finally calmed down and adjusted her thoughts, but hearing Carina's name again, Hazel became unhappy.

That woman was annoying and a little brainless for a lawyer. That woman had tried to show off her relationship with Alex and once Hazel saw that she had tried to get closer to him, she instinctively moved to Alex just to annoy her. So what if she was being petty?

"Stop thinking too much. I am not angry." Hazel flashed him a smile.

His lips pursed into a thin line. Though he was not convinced, Alex thought that if he pried too much into it, Hazel would really get mad at him. "If you said you're not angry, then you're not angry."

A laugh escaped her and her mood lightened up a little. Hazel recalled that when they were both kids, Alex would often say something like this to coax her.

Hazel let out a helpless sigh when she saw that the frown on his face had disappeared. "Let's go. Didn't you say that there's a pretty good seafood restaurant around here?"

Alex held on her hands and led her to walk around the park. After a brief silence, he spoke again. "Earlier... I heard it."

Hazel looked at him inquiringly. "What did you hear?"

His steps halted and Alex turned so that they were facing each other. His expression showed that he was a little hesitant, while the look in his eyes showed his hopefulness.

"You called me your boyfriend in front of others... right?"

Her heart skipped a beat. As he had not asked anything, Hazel had thought that Alex had not noticed the word she said. There was a brief silence before Hazel nodded softly. "Un."

His eyes flashed with joy. His lips slowly turned into a smile. Alex had thought that Hazel would avoid this matter and tell him that everything was just his imagination.

"You said that you were going to wait until it has been a month before you can give me an answer," Alex said.

"Well, I changed my mind." Hazel narrowed her eyes at him. "There are just too many people set their eyes on you and I'm worried that you might be tempted by them. What? You're not happy? If you're not happy then, we'll just pretend that I didn't say anything."

There was a touch of blush on her cheek. Hazel was shy but had still chosen to act tough.

Alex knew well that Hazel was embarrassed but, seeing the cold look on her face reminded him of her scary uncle. Suddenly, he was a little scared of teasing her.

"No. I'm happy. I'm very happy." He gave her hand a little tug and wrapped his arms around her. The smile on his face widened. Alex tightened his embrace and spoke again, "You said it. You cannot change your mind."

"That would have to depend on your performance," Hazel said. Initially, she wanted to struggle out of his embrace but feeling his tight embrace, Hazel decided to stay still. and let him hug her.

"I won't let you change your mind."

Though Hazel was unable to look at his expression, she could imagine that silly grin on his face. A faint smile curled on her lips. Hazel rested her on his chest and was a little surprised to hear the loud beating of his heart. As she closed her eyes, the familiar scent of Alex entered her nose.

"Alex He..."

"Hmm?"

"I'm a little unhappy."

Alex released her from his embrace to look at her face. "What's wrong?"

"If we were born in the same year, then, the two of us could attend the same university," Hazel said. "I suddenly feel like I have missed the four years you were away to study."

There was a glint of amusement in his eyes. "Why do you suddenly think of this?"

"Miss Lin said that there were a lot of girls who tried to get close to you in university," Alex said. "I just thought that I don't know anything about the university's Alex."

His lips curled into a helpless smile. "If you wanted to know, then, I can tell you anything. Don't listen to Miss Lin's words. I am not that close to her, whether a few years ago or now." Alex raised his hand and could not stop pinching at his girlfriend's cheek.

Mmm... His girlfriend. Alex thought that he really liked the sound of that.

"It doesn't matter if we have lost a few years," Alex continued.. "All I know is that, in the future, you will always have me and I will always have you."

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When Hazel returned to her dorm, both Crystal and Michelle were already there. The two of them looked up from their books the moment Hazel entered and quickly blocked her path.

Hazel looked at the two girls each holding on to her arms and grew a little scared upon meeting their gaze.

"Hazel Mo..." The smile on Crystal's lips turned a little frightening. "Tell us honestly, where did you go with that childhood sweetheart of yours today?"

"You said you were going to drop off some stuff, but look at you..." Michelle clicked her tongue as she gave Hazel a look over. "Only returning to your dorm five minutes before curfew. Young lady, tell us what you did."

Hazel opened her mouth but did not know how to answer them. When she thought about what happened earlier that day, her cheek turned a shade redder.

Unfortunately for her, Michelle seemed to notice the change and a loud gasp escaped her. "Hazel Mo, what did you do? If you don't tell us this moment, don't think about going to bed."

Crystal nodded in agreement. "That's right. No sleep for you tonight." There was a look of confusion on her face for a few seconds. Crystal shifted her gaze between Hazel and Michelle and finally noticed Hazel's sheepish smile.

Hazel lowered her head as her friends continued to tease her. "What did I do? After sending some staff, of course, we went for a walk and had dinner together."

"Just having dinner together, and your face had turned red like this?" Michelle said. "I don't believe you."

Crystal continued to stare at Hazel. After a while, she turned to Michelle and said, "Detective Michelle, what did you find out?"

Michelle started to caress her imaginative beard. "I can almost see it. Hazel's spring is here. That smile on her face and the glint in her eyes is the evidence."

Hazel looked at her roommates and could no longer hold her laughter, especially when she saw the dramatic look on Michelle's face. Hazel walked past her roommates and turned around with a mysterious smile on her face. "Do you really want to know?"

The two girls nodded simultaneously.

Initially, Hazel had wanted to keep the news a secret from her friends, but once she saw the look on their faces, Hazel was suddenly excited. "Earlier today..." Hazel paused to study the two's expression, then lowered her head in the last seconds. "I agreed to be Alex's girlfriend."

The girls let out another gasp. It took them a few seconds to process the news. And then, they started to bomb her with questions and Hazel willingly answered them.

Crystal held up a hand as a thought crossed her mind. "He sent you back just like that? No good night kiss?"

Seeing that Hazel's face turned red again, her roommates could not help but to tease her again.

She had just agreed to be his girlfriend and Hazel had not thought further about kissing and stuff. Last time, Alex had kissed her on her head to coax her to stop crying, but that kiss was different, right?

At the thought that they were going to act more intimate than just holding hands, Hazel felt as if her head was about to burst from the overloading CPU. Just trying to imagine kissing Alex had turned her face as red as lobster.

Michelle looked at Hazel's expression and heaved a sigh. Hazel always had this cool look on her face. Those who were not close to her had thought that she was a little cocky and pretentious. As Hazel's roommate, Michelle knew that Hazel was a sweetheart once she got to know her.

Seeing the shy look on Hazel's face, Michelle could not help but want to tease her again. Their roommate was a little innocent and precious. If she was a man, Michelle thought that she would definitely go for someone like Hazel.

A while later, Crystal reached for her phone and filled in Eira with the latest situation. It was at this time that Eira was regretting that she had not lived in the dorm. It seemed that she had always missed the fun while staying away with the girls.

After answering their questions, the girls finally let her off. Hazel went to the bathroom to wash up and prepared to go to sleep. As she laid down on her bed, the phone on her hand started to buzz.

Once she saw the name on the screen, a sweet smile appeared on her lips as she slid her finger to pick up the call.

"What are you doing?" Alex asked as the phone call was connected.

"Just getting ready for bed," Hazel answered. She heard his deep chuckle at the other line and bit at her lips shyly.

Hazel thought that it was a little strange. The two of them have been speaking to each other from kindergarten, but after knowing that Alex liked her, her heart would often feel a little strange when she heard his voice. Now that their status has changed from friends to lovers, she had suddenly felt a little giddy.

The smile on her face could not disappear and her heart felt like it was going to burst.

"When will you be free tomorrow?" Alex asked.

"Tomorrow..." Hazel thought of her schedule and a frown appeared on her face. "Tomorrow, my schedule is jammed pack with classes. In the afternoon, I have to meet one of my professors to discuss my thesis."

"Then, let's meet up and have dinner together," Alex said.

"Un."

A smile curled on his lips. "I'll come over and pick you up, alright?"

"Okay."

The two continued to chat for a while until Alex realized that he should not be disturbing his girlfriend as she still had to go to class tomorrow.

"Alright. I won't hold you back," Alex said. "Go to sleep."

"Un. I know. You too." Hazel rubbed at her eyes as she was starting to feel a little sleepy.

"Hazel?"

"Un." Her voice was starting to sound a little groggy.

"I love you."

Hazel felt as if the sleepiness had suddenly disappeared upon hearing those words. Though this was not the first time that Hazel had heard those words from Alex, hearing them again would still make her heart beat a little faster.

Her lips parted as she wanted to give her response, but her throat felt a little dry and she could not find her voice. A few seconds later, Hazel felt her face grew hot and the heat spread all through her body. Hazel thought that she was still a little shy to say those words back.

Alex let out a soft chuckle when he could not hear a thing from Hazel's side. He let out a breath helplessly and spoke, "Good night, Hazel."

"Good night, Alex."

In the morning, Hazel was walking out of the female's dorm with Crystal when her friend suddenly gave a tug at her arms. Turning to Crystal, Hazel noticed that her friend was staring in a direction. Hazel followed Crystal's line of sight and was surprised to see that Alex was standing under a tree.

The girls who had just gone out to head to their classes took a second glance at him as they wondered who was this man and what was he doing standing around the female's dorm.

It was a rare sight for someone that good-looking to appear around the women's dorm. Looking at the way he acted, the girls knew the man was waiting for someone. It was just that... they could not figure out who was that lucky girl.

While the girls were looking at him and checking him out, Alex had his head lowered as he stared at the pebbles under his feet.

For a second, Hazel was too stunned that she was unable to move. It was only after Crystal had nudged her on the waist did Hazel snapped out of her trance.

"Hazel, I'll be heading to the cafeteria first," Crystal whispered before she disappeared along with the crowd.

Hazel lifted her head again to look at the person who stood not far away from her. At this time, Alex suddenly raised his head. The moment their gaze met, Alex's lips bloomed into a smile. Hazel thought that the look on his face was too mesmerizing.

A few girls around her started to whisper and talk about Alex. Hearing them praising her boyfriend, Hazel was both proud and unhappy. She walked over to him in slow, small steps and tilted her head to look at him. "What are you doing here?"

"I was going out for breakfast," Alex said. "Then, I remember that you will have an early class today." He raised the bag in his hand. "I bought breakfast for you as well. Have you eaten yet?"

Hazel shook her head. "I was about to head over to the cafeteria for breakfast."

"Then, I'm glad that I caught you before you had your breakfast."

Hazel watched the man smiled at her again and was a little stunned. The way Alex was staring back at her was making her face turned red again. Hazel lowered her head again and her hand moved to tuck a few strands of hair behind her ear.

Alex swallowed as he watched her movement. Though Hazel did not do anything much, her shy reaction made his heart pounded. Hazel probably did not realize how adorable

looked at this moment. He really wanted to pull her into his embrace and never let her leave his side.

Her ears picked up the voices of the girls praising Alex's good look again and the unhappy feeling she had earlier resurfaced. She did not want others to stare at her boyfriend.

Once she was able to figure out that feeling, Hazel was surprised that she can be someone that petty.

"Next time, you can just wait in your car and call me. I will come over to you," Hazel said.

All around her, Hazel could still hear the girls discussing their relationship. Hazel could guess that in a few minutes, the forum would be filled with the news of her and a good-looking man outside the female's dorm. Soon, they will start trying to find out news about Alex.

"Hazel..."

"Ah?" Hazel raised her head again and looked at him.

"I miss you." Alex simply wanted to let her know that the reason he was came over to find her early in the morning.

He woke up early in the morning in a good mood knowing that the girl that he has been in love with for so many years had become his girlfriend. He was doubting whether everything that happened was nothing but a good dream. Suddenly, Alex had the urge to see her and would not feel at ease until he had seen her again.

There was a stampede in her heart and Hazel was starting to feel a little giddy. She had known Alex for years, but why didn't she know that this man can say words that make her feel very light-headed. She was embarrassed, but Hazel did not hate the way he made her feel.

Suddenly, the conversation with her roommates last night resurfaced. The thought of having an intimate moment with Alex made her mind go blank. Hazel scolded herself for having such thoughts and tried her best to stop her mind from going astray.

"I'll accompany you for breakfast, alright?"

Hazel looked at the person in front of her absentmindedly and nodded. The moment they showed up in the cafeteria, the noise all around them had gradually turned down.

It was their first time for everyone to see that Hazel was walking around the campus with a boy and they could not hide their curiosity. The two picked up a quiet corner and Alex took out the food that he had bought for her.

Hazel was stunned the moment she saw that there were a few selections of food on the table. Each of them came from a well-known store near her campus. A few of them had a long line queue and one will have to show up earlier if they wanted to buy the breakfast item.

"I didn't know which one you feel like eating today, so I bought a few."

Hearing his explanation, Hazel was a little speechless.

"Come on." Alex flashed a smile. "Eat up."

Hazel picked up her cutleries and started to eat her breakfast.

Walking around the campus and having breakfast with Alex gave her the feeling as if the two were attending the same university. Hazel was reminded of what she had said to Alex yesterday and wondered if he had this intention when he came over to find her.

Whatever it was, Hazel knew that at this moment, she was happy.

...

Meanwhile, in L City...

Lily could no longer suppress her excitement the moment she heard the news from her son last night. Initially, Lily wanted to give her best friend, Edith a call the moment she heard the good news. However, once she recalled that it was late, and her friend was pregnant and probably has gone to bed early, Lily had to cancel her plan. After all, Lily did not want to make Edith's husband unhappy by disturbing their time together at night.

As soon as Ellie had left for school and Ethan had left for work, Lily immediately picked up the phone and dialed a number.

Edith picked up the phone after a few rings and greeted Lily with a languid tone.

"Have you heard the news?" Lily asked.

Edith laughed when she heard Lily's excited voice. "Un. I heard about it last night."

"My dear friend, we are going to be in-laws soon!"

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at or

On the weekend morning, a tall man was seen waiting for someone near the female's dorm. The students who were walking past by the area could not help but to spare another glance at the man and whispered a few words.

Recently, this man had frequently appeared around the female dorm and had caught the attention of the mainly female passerby. In the beginning, some of them would try to talk to him. Once they figured out who was the person this man was waiting for, the girls had reluctantly given up trying to get his attention.

However, not everyone would have the same thinking.

At this time, a girl in a blue midi dress and high heels was walking over towards the man. The girl had an innocent and pure look on her face and would usually attract the opposite gender with her docile look.

Everyone knew that this man belonged to Hazel Mo. The man was seen delivering breakfast for Hazel every morning, and the two would eat together in the cafeteria.

Seeing that the girl had daringly approached the man, the passerby was getting excited that they were about to get another interesting drama. A few busybodies took out their phone and ready to record the footage.

Whether this pure girl was going to be rejected or not, it will still make it interesting content for them to post on social media.

When Hazel walked out, she was surprised to see that the entrance was blocked by a few students. Hearing their whispering, Hazel walked through the people and saw that a girl was talking to Alex.

Instantly, her expression turned dark.

As if sensing her gaze, Alex looked up in time and saw the dark look on her face that resembled her scary uncle. A sense of panic came over. Alex was annoyed at the girl who would not leave him though he had made it obvious that he did not want to talk to her.

Alex immediately stepped forward, ignoring that chatty girl, and stopped in front of his girlfriend. "Hazel." His voice sounded a little helpless.

Hazel shifted her gaze between Alex and the girl. "Do you know her?"

"I don't," Alex answered quickly. "She came over and would not stop asking me this and that. I did not say a word to her."

"I know." Hazel flashed him a smile. "What are you anxious about?"

Seeing the smile on her face, Alex felt his anxiety heightened. However, he did not know how should he convince his girlfriend that he was really innocent.

"Come on. Let's go." Hazel linked her arms with Alex's and shot a warning gaze towards that woman before she dragged him away.

Once they reached to his car, Alex peeked a few glances at Hazel to check on her mood. Alex heaved a sigh upon seeing that Hazel was not upset after that incident.

He put the keys into the ignition and started to focus on the road.

"I already got a pass from a friend. Later, we can go and play around using this express pass," Hazel said.

Due to Hazel's request, the two of them were planning to have a date at the amusement park.

"A friend?"

"Mmm... You should know that the development project in Tourism City is one of MH Group's projects with a few big companies. My friend's father was one of the investors. It was easier to get a pass from my friend rather than asking from my uncle."

Alex glanced at the woman beside him. "Your friend... is she the one from Zhang Group Worldwide? I seemed to recall you mentioning her before."

Hazel was happy knowing that he would remember things that she had mentioned in the past. "My parents and Eira's parents were best friends." Her head lowered again when Hazel thought of her deceased parents. After a while, she forced herself to look up and smile. "Right. Later, I will introduce you to my friends. My roommates... they were eager to meet you. As my boyfriend, you should treat them to a meal, right?"

Alex let out a chuckle. "Of course. Let your friends pick the date and place."

After almost half an hour of driving, the two finally arrived at the amusement park. Alex found a parking spot and the two walked over to the entrance, holding hands. After showing the pass, both of them were allowed to enter through the VVIP passage.

The two of them started to walk around and stopped in front of the big map in the middle of the park.

"This park is a little similar to the one in L City," Alex commented as he looked at the layout.

"Mmm... I heard that they have the same designer team." Hazel turned to Alex and raised a brow. "What do you want to ride first?"

"Your choice."

Hazel scanned the map and pointed in a direction. "Then, let's ride the cable car. It's closer and we can look around while we're at it."

Alex obviously had no objection. The two of them went over to the cable car station, flashed their express pass, and were allowed to enter without having to queue like others. The two of them sat down and started to look around. They both began to make their next plan as they watched the scenery.

Hazel took out her phone and started to snap a few photos of the scenery. A thought came to her mind and Hazel passed her phone to Alex. "Help me to take a picture."

"Alright." Alex turned the camera to Hazel and snapped a picture.

"No. I meant our photo."

Alex halted. Then, he stretched his hand to take their picture together and noticed that there was a space between them. "Come over closer."

Hazel scooted closer. "Like this?"

His lips curled into a smile. He wrapped one arm around Hazel's shoulder and hugged her tighter. Then, he snapped a few pictures of them together.

Because of his unexpected move, Hazel had different expressions in each photo. In the beginning, she was a little shy and after a while, Hazel finally lifted her head and looked at the camera.

Seeing that the girl has become a little relaxed in his embrace, Alex then lowered his head to kiss the top of her head. Then, he snapped a few photos of this act as well.

Hazel was unprepared by this sudden move and did not have the time to react. When she finally realized what was going on, Alex had returned the phone to her.

"Take a look at the photos first. If it's not good, I can help you shoot again."

Hazel lowered her head as she checked on the photos. Her gaze stopped at the last photo and her heart began to pound against her ribcage. The top of her head felt a little hot and Hazel thought that she did not dislike this feeling.

"Alex?"

"Hmm?"

"Next time you don't have to wait for me in front of the dorm," Hazel spoke. "This is not the first time some girl would come over and try to talk to you."

Alex heaved a sigh helplessly. "I won't talk to them. You know that."

"I know. But watching them going around you makes me feel a little uncomfortable."

Alex was a little stunned upon hearing her words. He had thought that Hazel was not affected by the incident earlier.

It was at this time that he seemed to recall that it was because of Carina that Hazel had changed her mind and decided to agree to be with him. At the thought that his girlfriend was someone who would easily get jealous, Alex did not know whether he should be happy or not.

"Next time, tell me when you arrived," Hazel said. "I will come over and find you, alright?"

His gaze turned warmer. "Alright. I'll listen to you.. We'll do as you say."

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The couple walked around the park and tried a few attractions in the park.

After getting off the roller coaster ride, Hazel sat at the bench to calm down. She saw the ride from their cable car ride and thought that it looked a bit fun. It was said that riding a roller coaster could relieve stress and Hazel wanted to try them.

At the end of it, Hazel thought that the experience almost let her soul leave her body. It was exciting, but the speed was a little scary. Hazel was a little worried that she might have left a bad impression on Alex with how she had screamed all the way down.

"Drink up. This should help you a little bit."

Hazel looked up and found that Alex was looking at her with concern. "Thank you."

Alex watched as Hazel took a few sips and was relieved to see the color on her face. "Are you alright?"

Hazel nodded. "Let's not take another exciting ride."

A chuckle escaped him at her words. "We can continue to walk around the park. Then let's and have our lunch somewhere else."

Hearing his suggestion, Hazel quickly agreed. After resting a little bit, the two walked around and decided to enter the arcade. Hazel dragged Alex to the Dance Dance Revolution machine and challenged him for a duel.

After losing to Hazel for a few rounds, Alex finally gave up and decided to watch his girlfriend as she was having fun. Her long hair bounced along as she moved, her cheek turned red and there were beads of perspiration on her face after going on the machine for a while.

Once Hazel had enough, Alex passed her a bottle of drinking water and helped her to wipe her sweats with tissue paper.

"Did you have fun?"

"Mhm..." Hazel nodded enthusiastically. "I didn't think that you would be so bad at it. Your sister, Ellie, liked to play this game with Hayley. I thought that she would drag you to play with her as well."

"She tried." Alex chuckled. "Later she said I'm too hopeless and decided that it would be better if I never step on the machine lest I would embarrass her." A thought came to his mind and Alex tried not to grimace. "The moment I stepped off the machine, Ellie tried to stay away from me and would not admit that I'm her brother."

Hazel laughed as she heard this. She could almost imagine Ellie's disdain expression after watching her brother on the machine. Hazel thought that it was funny how the siblings often tease each other when they met. However, since Ellie was the younger one, Alex often had to give in to his sister.

"After a few more practice, you should be good at it," Hazel said.

Alex replied with a smile. Seeing that Hazel was still trying to catch up with her breath, Alex took her towards the claw machine at the corner. He turned to Hazel and raised a brow. "Which one would you like?"

Her eyes brightened up. "Are you going to win them for me?"

Alex nodded.

"I heard that winning one is difficult," Hazel said. "It's fine. We have a few tokens left. You can try and play, but let's not get our hope up." Seeing the determinate look in his eyes, Hazel peeked into the machine and pointed at the pink bunny. "That one."

Alex followed her direction and saw that it looked a little tricky for him to pull out the pink bunny. After assessing the situation for a while, he put in the token and started to move the claw.

Hazel stood at the side and watched in anticipation. Although she had said that she would not get her hopes up, seeing the way the claw started to move, Hazel was a little excited.

A sigh of disappointment escaped her upon seeing that the claw had dropped to another plushy. However, as they watched that the claw had grabbed that plush towards them, Hazel became excited again.

A while later, Hazel was hugging an adorable sleepy sloth plush with a bright smile on her face. The sloth expression was a little funny and Hazel could not help but laugh upon seeing the face.

Just then, Hazel noticed that Alex had put in another token in the machine.

"You're going to try again?"

"Hmm..." Alex nodded.

"You already win this adorable sloth. I think this one is enough."

"It's fine. I just wanted to finish the token," Alex said. His lips tilted up to a smile. Then, he started to focus on the claw machine again.

After he had removed that sloth, it was easier for him to grab the pink bunny. Alex pushed the button and watched as the claw descended and grabbed that bunny.

Hazel held her breath as she watched the claw raised the pink bunny and brought it over to them.

Alex bent down to pick up the plush and handed it over to Hazel. "For you."

Hazel watched the two plush toys in her arms with a dazed look on her face. Then, she looked up and there was a look of admiration in her gaze. "It turned out that you're really good with the claw machine."

"Mmm..." Alex smiled. "In the past, Ellie would beg me to win some plushy for her and cried when I failed. It took me a while to finally figure out how to use this machine."

"Then... have you win anything from the claw machine for someone else?"

Alex thought about it and suddenly, an amused smile curled on his lips. "No. It's just you and Ellie. Fortunately, with the past experience, I know how to use this machine and make my girlfriend happy."

Hazel felt a heat crept up on her face. Something warm burst in her heart and spread throughout her body.

"I seemed to remember that you have a pink bunny plush when you were little," Alex said. "You used to drag it around everywhere you go."

"Hmm..." Her lips curled into a faint smile as she recalled the plush bunny that she always carried around in the past. "That plushy was something that my mom gave me. It was the last gift she bought for me."

Alex looked at Hazel with a complicated gaze. He did not expect that there will be a story behind that bunny plush.

"It was a little worn out, but I still have them in my uncle's house." Hazel lifted her head and saw the look on Alex's face. "Why are you looking at me like that? I'm fine."

His heart ached upon seeing the sad look in her eyes. He pulled her into his embrace and ran his hand on her back as if coaxing her.

Hazel was a little startled. She laid her head on his chest and let him hug her for a while longer. A few seconds later, Hazel pulled away as it was getting uncomfortable with the plush toys pressed between them. "Let's leave this place and have something to eat.. It's lunch hour and I'm hungry."

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The two of them left the amusement park and Alex drove over to a street where there was a lot of restaurant and cafes around. A while ago, they have come over to this street and Alex had bought her to a Western restaurant. At that time, they ran into Alex's partners, Daniel, and Carina.

This time, the two did not make any reservation and instead, chose to walk around and find a place that they think would be a good place to eat. After a while, they decided to enter a cafe. The atmosphere looks good and it was not as crowded as other places.

Once they entered, the waiter ushered them to a corner and jotted down their order.

As the waiter left, Hazel took out her phone and checked on her phone.

Earlier, she had posted a few pictures of her and Alex having fun at the amusement park. Seeing their comments under her pictures, Hazel finally realized that she had unintentionally revealed to everyone that she was dating Alex.

Ellie: Sister, are you dating my brother?"

Her gaze stopped at the comment and Hazel suddenly forgot how to breathe. Scrolling at the list of people who had liked her photos, Hazel saw that even Auntie Lily had liked the pictures.

At the thought that Alex's family was aware of their relationship, Hazel was suddenly shy.

Of course, Alex would notice the change in her expression. "What's wrong?"

Hazel looked up and bit at her lips. "No. I just realized something. I... made a mistake." Hazel turned the phone to Alex and showed him its contents.

Alex saw the post that Hazel had shown to him and smiled. "Why is it a mistake. Hazel, could it be that you don't want others to know about our relationship?"

"No. That's not what I meant. I just... did not expect that your mother would know about it too." Hazel covered her face with both hands. "Suddenly, I did not know how to face Auntie Lily again."

Alex laughed softly. "My mother and Auntie Edith are best friends. Even if you did not post that photos, did you think that the two of them would not discuss us?"

Hazel thought about it and found that it was indeed true. Since she had told Auntie Edith about it, surely, Auntie Lily would know about it as well. Moreover... she did not tell Auntie Edith that she could not tell anyone.

"Then... what did your parents say? They don't mind?"

"Why would they mind?" Alex looked at the woman in front of him, amused. "Hazel, my mother loves you. If it was up to her, she would want you to be her daughter-in-law as soon as possible."

Hazel was momentarily stunned. Her pink cheek turned into a darker shade of red. "What daughter-in-law?"

Alex's expression turned serious. "Hazel, I dated you intend to marry you. Did you perhaps... did not share this thought?"

"But we... had just started to date."

"For others, they used this dating period to get to know each other and their families well. However, we have known each other for a long time. You know my family and I know yours. Our families are very close."

"But I haven't thought about this matter. I don't think that I'm ready for it."

"I didn't say that we should get married right away." Alex flashed her an assuring smile. "I will wait whenever you are ready for it."

"I—I will think about it."

Alex heard her answer and his heart was all warm inside. He was going to hand Hazel her phone back when he noticed a new comment under the post.

Uncle Neil: Hazel, are you dating?

Seeing the name that suddenly popped up, Alex almost dropped the phone.

He had just mentioned marriage to Hazel and suddenly, her scary uncle had appeared.

Fortunately, he was quick to compose himself and had tightened her grip on the phone before it would fall.

...

After walking around for a while longer, Alex finally sent Hazel back to her dormitory. The sky had turned dark and Alex wanted to let Hazel rest after playing around all day.

Alex parked his car at a dark corner under the tree and helped Hazel with the door.

"Wait here," Alex said before he walked over to the trunk.

Hazel followed him with her gaze and watched as Alex came back with a bouquet. Her eyes widened and Hazel was a little surprised to see the bouquet of pink flowers.

"For you."

Hazel took the flowers from Alex and lowered her head to inhale the fragrant flower. Then, she looked at Alex again with a smile on her face. "Why did you buy these flowers?"

"To woo my girlfriend." His lips stretched up upon seeing the shy look on her face.

Hazel tucked a few loose strands behind her ears. "When did you buy them?"

"A while ago, when you went away to the restroom."

Hazel held the bouquet tighter and could not stop inhaling the fragrant flowers. This was the first time that someone else other than her uncle had given her a bouquet and she was happy to the point that she could not stop smiling.

A thought came to her mind and Hazel felt a little giddy. Seeing that Alex had turned his head in another direction, Hazel stood up tiptoed and aimed her lips to his cheek.

However, Alex turned his head at this time.

Instead of kissing his cheek, their lips met for a peck. When she realized what was going on, Hazel swiftly took a step back. She lowered her gaze and her face was a little flustered.

"I—I'm sorry. It was an accident." Hazel glanced at his face and saw that he did have any reaction. She bit at her lips and spoke again, "I should go now. Good night, Alex."

"Hazel."

Before Hazel could turn around, Alex had tugged at her arms, forcing her to face him. Suddenly, his lips were pressed against hers again.

Hazel felt her heart pounded. This time, it was no longer a brief touch. The sensation sent firework inside her brain and Hazel felt a little dizzy. Hazel found that she did not know what she should do and froze on spot.

This was the first time that Alex had kissed anyone and he too was a little clueless at what he should do. The moment his lips touched her soft and delicious lips, Alex grew anxious.

The two of them stood in this stiff and awkward position until Alex finally tried to move. However, due to their inexperience, their nose and forehead bumped into each other. With the slight pain, Alex had no other choice but to pull away. Seeing that Hazel was uninjured, his gaze went back to her lips and he pondered whether he should go and kiss her again.

Hazel thought that her head might explode anytime. Seeing the way Alex was looking at her, made her breathless.. Hazel gripped the bouquet in her hand tightly and quickly made her escape.

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Closing the door behind her, Hazel then leaned on the door and tried to catch up her breath.

Her face turned scarlet. It was not known whether it was because she was embarrassed after what happened, or whether it was because she has been running up the stairs.

As soon as she was able to calm down, Hazel was surprised to find a pair of eyes staring back at her.

"What's wrong with you?" Michelle asked.

"Yes. Why do you look so frightened? You look as if you have seen a ghost." Crystal asked. Her gaze then fell on the bouquet in Hazel's hand and her lips curled into a smile. "Is that from Mr. Childhood Sweetheart? How was your date?"

Can she just tell them both that she had encountered a ghost at the stairs earlier?

Hazel followed Crystal's gaze and the scene from earlier replayed in her mind. Fortunately, because she had her head lowered, her friends were unable to see her expression. She wanted to touch her lips but was afraid that her roommates were going to find out what happened based on her action.

Seeing that Hazel had not said a word, her two roommates began to worry.

"Hazel?" Michelle called again. "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine. It's nothing. I ate a little too much and wanted to exercise a little bit by running up the stairs."

The two roommates exchanged a glance but decided not to ask further.

Hazel put the bouquet on the table and glanced outside the window. However, it was too dark outside and she could not be sure whether Alex was still standing at the same spot.

Just then, her phone started to buzz.

Her breathing quickened again. However, she was a little disappointed to see the name on the screen was not the person she was expecting. Hazel took a deep breath to compose herself before she picked up the phone call.

"Hazel."

"Un. Auntie Edith."

Edith laughed softly at the other line. "Are you still outside? Or have you returned to your dorm?"

"I'm at my dorm. What's the matter?"

"Nothing. It's your uncle." Edith glanced at the person who was sitting behind the desk. His gaze was on his computer, but Edith knew that he was looking at her, waiting for her to tell him the answer. "It's getting late and he wanted to know whether you had returned safely to your dorm after going out all day."

A faint smile curled on her lips. "Auntie Edith, tell my uncle not to worry."

Edith mouthed at her husband to tell him that his niece had safely arrived at her dorm before she walked out of his study. She closed the door behind her and asked, "How was your date?"

Hazel walked over to the balcony. The cold wind helped to make her head a little clearer. "It was good," Hazel told her a few details about their date but did not mention anything about the kiss. The thought that she was hiding something from Auntie Edith made Hazel felt a little guilty.

The two of them chatted for a while and after hearing news about the twins' progress, Hazel began to calm down a lot.

"That's right." Edith's voice turned serious. "Will you come back next month? Do we need to book a flight ticket for you or will you come back with Alex?"

Hazel thought about the date and recalled that it would be her parents' death anniversary next month. "I will come back. Don't worry. Just that... I haven't asked Alex whether he wanted to return with me. He might be busy with his new company, but I will ask him later."

"Hmm... if you need to book a ticket, just tell me alright? I will help you handle that matter."

"Thank you, Auntie Edith."

Hazel hung up after talking to her Auntie for a while. Seeing that her roommates were busy looking at their computer, Hazel grabbed her clothes and went to the bathroom to clean up.

She looked into her reflection in the mirror and her gaze fell at her lips. The memories of that brief kiss came to mind and Hazel raised a hand to touch her lips. The touch felt a little different. At least, Alex's lips were warmer and softer.

Her thoughts had gone astray again and Hazel immediately looked away and scolded herself.

When she walked out of the bathroom, Crystal turned to her and spoke, "Hazel, your phone has been buzzing non-stop."

Hazel walked over to her bed and picked up her phone. There were several messages and missed calls. Hazel stared at her phone in a daze upon seeing that they were all from Alex.

At this time, her phone started to buzz again. Alex's name popped up on the screen. Knowing that he would be worried, Hazel picked up the phone call.

"Hazel?" His tone was anxious.

"Un."

Alex finally breathed a sigh in relief when he could hear her voice again. "I called you earlier and was worried when you did not pick up."

"Sorry. I was in the bathroom just now."

"You forgot to take the plush toys with you."

It was then that Hazel recalled that she had put the plush toys that Alex had won for her on the back seat. "Then, can you keep it for me and give them to me when we meet again?"

"Of course," Alex said. There was a brief silence between them. It was as if none of them knew what to say next. "I'm glad that you are not angry." Alex broke the silence.

Hazel bit her lips. "Why would I be angry?" She glanced at her roommates, worried that they would be listening to her conversation. Fortunately, they were both on their headphones.

"You did not pick up your phone or reply to my messages. I just thought that you would be angry after I kissed you earlier," Alex said. "If that makes you uncomfortable, I promise that I won't do it without your permission again."

Hazel thought about that brief moment when their lips touched and felt her face heated up again. "I'm not angry... or uncomfortable. Sorry. I ran away because I was too embarrassed."

She liked the way it felt when their lips touched, but Hazel found that she could not say them out loud.

"Then..." Alex smiled. "Will it be alright if I kiss you again next time?"

Her heart was beating hard that she could hear them in her ears. Hazel thought that it might jump out of her chest anytime soon if she did not calm down. However, the thought of kissing again made her excited and Hazel found that she was anticipating for it to happen again.

"Okay."

Chapter 380 - Gossips Threads

In the next few days, Hazel's friends were surprised that they could not see Alex waiting for Hazel with her breakfast in his hand. Usually, whenever they came down with Hazel, the man would be waiting for Hazel under the tree. However, these past few days, Hazel would be the one who had to look for Alex after she came down.

"I asked him not to wait for me," Hazel said. "There are always girls who tried to talk with him when he was waiting. Since he did not like it when others tried to approach him, it would be better if he waited in his car and waited for me to go and find him instead."

Michelle nodded. "That's true. It's better if you didn't give them any chance at all. Later who knows what kind of story would pop up in the school's forum."

Hazel turned around. "Why? Is there anything about me on the forum?"

Michelle and Crystal exchanged a glance.

"Michelle? Crystal?" Hazel raised her brow at them. "Why aren't you guys saying anything?"

Crystal shot a look at Michelle for mentioning this matter. Previously, they had agreed that it would be better if Hazel was unaware of this rumor. Hazel was someone who did not check on the school's gossip forum. It would be better if it stayed that way. They did not want this rumor to affect Hazel in any way.

Seeing Hazel's probing look, Michelle decided to answer. "Just something about you rejecting the previous guys because you're aiming to date someone with money,"

Hazel was shocked. She glanced at Crystal and knew that Michelle was telling the truth.

Taking out her phone, Hazel began to scroll the school's gossip forum that she rarely went to. To her surprise, there were a few gossips threads about her. It seemed that the

students have been too stressed out with studying that they decided to gossip about her for fun.

Hazel thought that this was amusing. Why would people assume that she would be after Alex's money?

It was at this time that Hazel seemed to realize that there were times when she noticed that others have been looking at her strangely. However, when she first entered the university, she was used to getting those kinds of looks from them and Hazel thought that it would be best if she chose to ignore them.

"Do I look like I'm poor enough that I would choose to date for money?" Hazel asked as she looked at her friends.

"Of course not," Crystal said. "We have been roommates with you for years. We know that you are not that kind of person."

Both Crystal and Michelle were not clear about Hazel's background. However, they knew that both her parents had passed away and she was living with her uncle. Hazel did not seem as if she came from a loaded family. However, she did not seem as if she was someone who would need money desperately either.

"Alright. Stop looking at that forum. It wouldn't do you any good," Michelle said and smiled. "Your boyfriend is still waiting for you. Go ahead and find him or else, he would be worried."

Hazel turned her head to the direction where Alex had parked his vehicle and went over to find him after parting with the girls. Hazel knocked twice at the window before she sat in the passenger's side.

Seeing his warm smile when he saw her, the rumors she saw on the forum earlier quickly disappeared from her thoughts.

"Good morning," Alex said. He glanced at the place where he had seen Hazel chatting with her roommates earlier and asked, "What were you and your roommates chatting about earlier?"

"You saw us?"

"Hmm... I can always find you in the crowd, don't you know?"

Hazel narrowed her eyes and laughed. She thought that Alex was only bluffing. "Nothing. We were just discussing our class."

Alex did not think that it was nothing. Though he was far away, he could still see that Hazel was tensed and upset. However, since Hazel did not want to tell him, he could not force her to tell him anything.

"Are we not going to have breakfast at the cafeteria today?" Alex asked.

"Let's not," Hazel said. "I don't have a morning class today. How about we go out and have breakfast somewhere else?"

Hazel did not want Alex to notice the student's strange gaze and get affected by it. Anyway, Hazel was too lazy to face people who were unrelated to her.

"Alright." Alex nodded. "I know a good place that served good breakfast around here. How about we try to go to that place?"

"Un. I don't mind."

Hazel held her phone and was about to check on her messages when she noticed that Alex had suddenly come closer. Her eyes widened and Hazel held her breath at the thought that Alex was going to kiss her.

A few seconds later, Hazel heard a clicking sound and Alex flashed her a smile.

"Safety first."

It was then that Hazel realized that Alex had helped her to put on her seat belt. At the thought that she has been expecting a kiss from him, her face turned bright red and Hazel did not dare to lift her head and look at him.

The vehicle move and entered the main street. Hazel turned the air-conditioner to face her and her heart gradually calm down. She cast a few glances at Alex and thought that his side profile was quite attractive.

"Don't look at me like that," Alex said. "I'm afraid that I cannot concentrate if you continue to stare at me like that."

Hazel laughed. "It's not like I've never looked at your face in the past."

"This time it's different. This time you are my girlfriend," Alex said and glanced at her.

Various exciting thoughts came over to her mind as she heard his words. It felt as if being Alex He's girlfriend is a magical thing. Just hearing that word, 'girlfriend' alone could make her heartbeat accelerated.

Hazel bit her lips and lowered her head. She could imagine that the look on her face would be very silly at the moment. She shifted her gaze at the back seat and noticed that her plushy toys were not there.

"Where are my plushies?"

Alex tightened his grip on the steering wheels. "They are in my apartment. Next time, I'll bring them to you."

"Oh." Hazel did not think too much about it and nodded. "That's right. I forgot to tell you that I'm going back to L City next month. It's... my parents' death anniversary."

"Have you bought your tickets yet?"

Hazel shook her head. "Not yet."

"Good. Then, let's head back together. Anyway, I can help my father to look into a few matters as well."

"Aren't you busy with your work at the new company?"

"It's fine." Alex smiled. "Daniel is capable enough to handle everything."

Hearing his words, Hazel immediately agreed and the two made a date to head back together to L City.