

This Time, I Will Get My Divorce, Mr

Chapter 131

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Charles and the others had also returned from their race. The three of them were sweating profusely, but their eyes were bright from the exercise, and it was hard not to notice the enthusiasm on their faces. It was clear to see that they had a good race.

“Here’s some water, President Lane,” Rebecca said as she took up two bottles of water and tossed one of them to Charles.

He took it over and quipped, “Thanks.”

“What about me?” Zane regarded Rebecca unhappily when she did not give him bottled water like she did Charles. “I was the one who drove you here. Why is he the only one who gets water?”

Rebecca rolled her eyes at him. “Okay, here you go!” She took another bottle and tossed it to him.

It was only then that Zane broke into a satisfied grin. He twisted open the cap and took a few gulps, then doused the remaining water over his head and face. “That’s the stuff!”

“Feels pretty good,” Charles agreed heartily as he shook water droplets from the tips of his hair.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the field, Tina handed a bottle of water to Toby as well. “Here you go, Toby. Have a drink of water.”

“Okay.” Toby took the bottle and twisted the cap, but he did not drink and instead gave the bottle back to her. “You can take the first sip.”

At the sight of his warm chivalry, Tina broke into a dazzling smile. “Thank you, Toby.”

He dismissed this and bent over to take another bottle of water, then drank deeply. He had only just taken several gulps when a panicked shriek came from the other side of the field.

Everyone paused in whatever they were doing. Charles looked into the distance and saw that Sonia's horse was thrashing wildly.

Sonia, on the other hand, was scared witless as she tried to keep herself steady on the saddle. Her body tipped back and forth uncontrollably. She might have a tight grip on the reins now, but if this were to go on, the horse would shake her off at any given moment.

"Baby!" Charles yelled and threw his water bottle down, then ran over to his horse so he could go to Sonia's rescue.

However, he had only just mounted his horse when a figure on another horse dashed past him, beating him to the scene.

It was none other than Toby, and at the sight of this, Charles frowned. Nonetheless, he wasted no time in digging his heels into his horse's sides, swiftly catching up to the other man as they both rushed to save Sonia.

Right now, only Zane and Tina remained.

Rebecca had just left for the restroom, and Tyler had yet to come back from the other track.

Zane was highly amused when he saw Tina grimace, and he chortled as he asked, "Oh my, it looks like Toby is going to rescue Sonia. Does that make you unhappy?"

Tina knew that he was trying to get on her nerves by making a joke out of her. She forced out a tight smile, though her hands were clenching the bottle tightly as she said, "Of course not. It's only natural that Toby saves Miss Reed from trouble. Why would I be unhappy?"

"Really? But judging from the way you're behaving, I think you're lying," Zane teased, his smile growing ever more wicked as his eyes fell on the distorted water bottle in her hand.

She stiffened when she heard this and quickly loosened her grip on the bottle, then chose to remain silent.

Zane chuckled at her reticence. “You’re as two-faced as usual, Miss Gray. I can’t believe someone like you has managed to win Toby over; he must have been blind. That being said, it looks like he’s getting better.”

He cupped his own cheek as he watched Toby, who had successfully saved Sonia from danger. “You know, there’s no hiding the panic on Toby’s face earlier, which means he still cares about Sonia. It’s just that he has yet to realize this, but when he does, I wonder what might happen to you, Miss Gra—”

“That’s enough! Stop talking!” Tina snapped icily, cutting him off. She dug her nails into her palms and stood up.

He quirked a brow at her. “What, are you mad?”

She glowered at him mutinously as she warned, “Mr. Coleman, I know that the incident with my father has greatly offended your family, but there is no need for you to be so hostile as to try and pick on my relationship with Toby, is there? Aren’t you worried that Toby would be unhappy if he were to know about this?”

“Why would I be worried?” Zane grinned at her ferociously. “He’s my friend, after all. I have his best interests at heart, and if I were to ask him to leave you because I think you aren’t good enough for him, then surely he would not blame me for it.”

“You—” She broke off, her face turning white, then red with fury.

Zane, on the other hand, looked like the cat that ate the canary.

He hadn’t wanted to do something as underhanded as picking on Tina’s relationship with Toby, given that they did not get in his way, regardless of how they turned out. However, the Gray Family just had to be unethical and nearly dragged the Coleman Family’s plans—which were carefully curated over many years—through the mud. Naturally, following such an incident, Zane had no intention of going easy on Tina. But such is the philosophy of a vengeful person like me.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the riding track, Toby was holding a trembling Sonia in his arms. She was clearly still traumatized after what had happened earlier.

He could feel the fear that emanated from her. Patting her back gently, he comforted her in a soothing voice, "There, there. Everything's alright now. Don't be afraid."

However, Sonia made no reply, but she was shrinking into herself from all the violent trembling.

At that moment, Charles strode over, and his eyes were stormy when he saw Toby holding Sonia in his arms. Nonetheless, he said courteously, "Thank you for saving her, President Fuller."

He was reluctant to thank Toby, but the truth remained that the latter beat him to Sonia's rescue; the truth remained that he was much slower than Toby.

"It's no big deal," Toby plainly answered as he gave Charles a brief glance.

Charles got down from his horse with grace. "Well then, could you perhaps let my darling go now? Don't forget that she's my girlfriend; it's inappropriate for you to keep holding her like that, considering your fiancée is still watching."

Upon hearing this, Toby abruptly stopped patting Sonia on the back, and it was only then that he registered that the woman in his arms was his ex-wife, not to mention somebody else's girlfriend.

It was inappropriate indeed to hold her the way he did.

At this realization, Toby turned to look at the lounge area, whereupon he met Tina's red and watery eyes. He pursed his thin lips, then released Sonia unwillingly from his embrace.

As soon as he did so, Charles reached out to grab Sonia by the wrist and pulled her into his arms, then asked anxiously, "Baby, are you okay? Are you hurt?"

She was still in a stupor as she shook her head and answered in a quivering voice, "I'm fine."

She had been close to dropping off the horse's back when Toby showed up in time to save her, so she narrowly escaped getting hurt.

But Charles was still worried as he appraised her from head to toe, and when he was sure that she was free from injury, he let out a sigh of relief. "Well, as long as you're okay. I thought my heart was going to stop beating just now. I was that shocked. I mean, the horse was completely fine, wasn't it? Why did it go crazy all of a sudden?"

The question hung in the air as Toby turned to glance at the now-calm horse that was in the distance. His eyes glimmered darkly.

"I don't know either," Sonia confessed feebly, shaking her head.

She had been perfectly fine as she rode the horse, but before she knew it, the creature picked up its pace and started to thrash around wildly. She had been scared witless, and there was no way she had the mental bandwidth to figure out a plausible reason behind the horse's mood swing.

"It's fine; I'll look into this matter. Baby, why don't you go back into the room and take a break. Look at how your legs are still shaking." Charles was staring at her legs, which were trembling.

Sonia merely nodded her head in agreement.

At the sight of this, he wrapped an arm around her, supporting her weight as he guided her toward the villa.

Toby, on the other hand, only watched with his lips pressed into a thin line as the two of them walked away from the tracks.

It wasn't until half an hour later that Charles returned from the upstairs, only to see Toby and the others sitting in the living room, having returned from the riding tracks.

Tyler was the first to notice Charles descending the stairs. He rose quickly from his seat as he demanded urgently, "Hey, is it true that Sonia got into an accident with the horse? How is she doing now?"

While everyone waited for Charles' answer, Tina noted the panic and concern on Tyler's face, and she lowered her gaze to hide the sinister gleam in her eyes. She recalled how much Tyler had hated Sonia back in the day. Why is it that he seems to have taken a liking to her and shows his concern for her now that she and Toby are divorced? What kind of spell has that wretched girl cast on Tyler?

"Yeah, President Lane," Rebecca interjected. "Is Sonia alright?"

Rebecca had been occupied in the restroom during Sonia's accident. It was only after her return that Zane told her about the story of the horse going wild, nearly toppling Sonia over to the ground.

Presently, Charles ignored Tyler as he addressed Rebecca, saying, "There's nothing to worry about. Sonia's fine, but she's still experiencing the after-shock. She's asleep now."

Rebecca let out a sigh of relief. "That's good to know."

Tyler, on the other hand, was unhappy to have been ignored by Charles, but upon hearing that Sonia had escaped danger and was recuperating, he decided to brush off the pointed snubbing.

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Charles' expression grew abruptly cold, and his icy gaze swept over the other five people in the room before it finally landed on Tina. "The mare Sonia picked out was the tamest of the bunch, and I know this because I deliberately asked the stable attendant about it. Logically speaking, it's impossible that the horse would go crazy all of a sudden, so I figured something fishy must be going on here."

"Are you saying that someone did something to President Reed's horse, President Lane?" Rebecca was quick to catch on as she asked with wide eyes.

“It wasn’t me,” Tyler interjected defensively with a shake of his head, waving his hands as though to bat away any accusation or suspicion that might be thrown his way.

Zane was calm as he sipped his tea and quipped, “It wasn’t me, either.”

“Well, it definitely couldn’t have been me,” Rebecca said, raising her hands.

As such, Charles’ gaze fixed on the remaining duo, who had yet to voice their denial. “That just leaves President Fuller and Miss Gray, but seeing as President Fuller went to Sonia’s rescue, I’m sure that he was not the one who pulled the dirty trick. After all, it’s not as if he would purposely start trouble only to solve it himself—no one has the time for that, which means...”

“Which means you’re suspecting me,” Tina continued his sentence for him. She dug her nails into her palms and looked so flustered that she might be on the brink of crying.

Charles clapped in a flamboyant display of mockery as he sneered, “It looks like you are perceptive after all. You’re right—I am suspicious of you because out of everyone here, you’re the only one who would most likely go out of her way to hurt Sonia, and you have a track record to prove it.”

“I didn’t do anything!” Tina’s tears streamed down her cheeks. She grabbed Toby’s hand and pleaded, “You have to believe me, Toby! I didn’t do it!”

“I believe you,” Toby reassured her and squeezed her hand gently, signaling her to calm down.

Upon hearing that he still believed in her, she nodded and regained her composure.

Charles, on the other hand, rolled his eyes in exasperation as he accused, “Well, of course, you’d believe her. She could commit murder, and you’d let her get away with it as soon as she breaks

out the waterworks. It's not as if everyone here is oblivious to how overly-indulgent you are toward her!"

Rebecca and Zane nodded in silent affirmation to this fact.

Not even Tyler could deny this, and he nodded along as well. Toby does spoil her every now and then.

"I believe in Tina not because I indulge in her every whim, but because she has a solid alibi," Toby argued, though he did not seem angry even while everyone else refused to stand on his side. He eyed Charles darkly as he elaborated, "She did not come into contact with Sonia's horse at any point of time, so why don't you tell me how she managed to pull off a sabotage?"

In the beginning, Toby wondered if Tina's other personality had been the one to orchestrate this incident, but upon careful analysis, he concluded that the opposite was true; the other personality never did come out at any point in time.

Meanwhile, Charles bristled at Toby's argument, but as soon as he gave it some thought, he realized that the latter was speaking the truth.

Tina had indeed been nowhere near the stable when Sonia picked out the horse, and it wasn't as if she could pull off the sabotage beforehand, given that there was no telling which horse Sonia would pick out of the bunch in the stable; Tina might be devious, but she was no prophet.

He allowed the possibility of Tina taking it upon herself to sabotage every single horse in the stable, but if that were the case, their horses ought to have gone crazy as well. However, they rode around the tracks unscathed. Could this really be just an accident, then? Charles thought uneasily.

Zane was the first one to offer a solution. "Why don't we get one of the stable attendants to come over and ask him about this? We'll know what happened as soon as he runs a check on the horse."

Toby shrugged indifferently. "That's fine by me."

It wasn't long before the attendant came over as asked, and when Charles pressed them on what had happened to Sonia's horse, they simply answered, "Miss Reed's horse was in heat."

"What?" Everyone gaped at the attendant in surprise.

Tina was the only one who lowered her head to conceal the smirk on her lips.

"Did you just say the horse was in heat?" Charles was bewildered. "But it isn't mating season for the animals!"

Zane, Rebecca, and Tyler were staring at the attendant, waiting eagerly for his explanation.

However, he only shook his head as he pointed out, "The season might be over, but it doesn't mean the animals would not go into heat. Sometimes, there are other factors that might stimulate the animals to go into heat."

Toby queried in a low voice, "So why did Sonia's horse go into heat in the first place?"

The attendant pondered on this momentarily, then replied, "We can't say for sure, but perhaps the horse picked up on any particular scent or took in a stimulant or something. There's no certainty for now, but these are the few possibilities I can come up with."

"Well, the second possibility is not viable, seeing as the horse didn't eat anything when it was led out of the stables," Rebecca chimed.

She had been there when Sonia picked out the horse, so she could attest to this fact.

Charles rubbed his jaw as he suggested, "So the horse probably picked up on a scent?"

Zane chuckled suddenly. "Please tell me the scent wasn't Sonia's perfume."

Everyone made various noises of doubt as their lips twitched, but none could deny the plausibility of this.

Rebecca turned her palms up as if resigned. “Does this mean that whatever happened to President Reed is just an accident?”

As reluctant as Charles was to admit this, he was compelled to. Without another word, he turned to go up the stairwell.

Having dismissed the attendant with a wave of his hand, Toby called out to stop Charles in his tracks, “Hold on.”

Charles stopped and asked stoically, “What is it?”

Zane, Rebecca, and Tyler—and even Tina—turned simultaneously to look at Toby in curiosity.

Toby took Tina by the hand as he insisted coolly, “Now that the situation has been cleared up, shouldn’t you apologize for wrongfully accusing Tina earlier?”

Charles narrowed his eyes at this and laughed incredulously. “Apologize? You want me to apologize to her?” He jabbed a finger in Tina’s direction.

Toby eyed him steadily and demanded, “Do you not want to?”

“Yeah, I’m not apologizing, and why should I? I admit that I wrongfully accused her this time, but I didn’t for all the things she did to Sonia in the past. Has she apologized to Sonia for all the other stuff? No. You were the one who apologized on her behalf.”

There was a disdainful sneer on his face as he glowered at Toby defiantly. “She uses you as a shield after all that she did to hurt Sonia, and she never once bothered to make reparations. But you don’t see me demanding an apology for Sonia like what you are doing now for Tina. So what right do you have to force an apology out of me?”

Upon hearing this retort, Toby grew sullen.

Tina, on the other hand, was embarrassed as she fixed her gaze on the tips of her shoes.

Meanwhile, Zane had his hands behind his head as he watched the show. He was entertained, and he encouraged Rebecca to sit back and enjoy the drama as he did.

Tyler was the only fool who blinked and asked, “Toby, what did Tina do to Sonia, and why did you have to apologize on her behalf?”

Anger flashed in Tina’s eyes when she heard this. Of all the times for Tyler to bring this up, he has to pick now? Is he trying to make things worse for me on purpose?

“Shut up,” Toby barked coldly, frowning.

Tyler fell into resentful silence at this. He only wanted to know the truth of what had happened, and he could not understand why he was asked to shut up instead. Why does he get to tell me to shut up?

Seeing how unhappy Tyler was, Charles seized the opportunity and crossed his arms in front of his chest as he offered, “Hey, kid. If you want to know what happened, I can tell you.”

Tyler visibly perked up at this, and his eyes shone as he said, “Okay.”

“Toby—” Tina anxiously tugged on Toby’s arm, as though asking him to stop Charles from speaking.

However, it was too late, for Charles had already started off the narrative. “Listen, kid. Your gorgeous soon-to-be sister-in-law is as insidious as they come. She used public opinion to accuse Sonia of running her down with a car six years ago, and thankfully, Sonia managed to clear her name by getting her hands on the camera footage from back then.”

“And also, there was that time at the resort when she squirted shower gel all over the bathroom floor and caused Sonia to slip and fall, thereby hitting her head. Two days ago, she even pushed Sonia down a flight of stairs in an attempt to kill her. So now you know all that Tina has done to Sonia in the past. What do you think, kid?” Charles was clearly satisfied as he stared at Tyler, who appeared to have gone into shock.

Zane and Rebecca, too, were astonished, given how they had no idea of any of these.

“Are these all true, Toby? Did Tina really do all those horrible things to Sonia?” Tyler clenched his fists as he glared at his brother with hostility. All this time, he had been so focused on basketball that he did not know what Sonia endured.

Toby was grim, but he said nothing.

Tina, on the other hand, gripped his arm tightly, and she did not make to defend herself either.

At the sight of this, Tyler understood immediately that Charles had been speaking the truth.

In recent times, he had realized that Tina was not as wonderful as he initially thought, but he certainly didn't think that she was more vicious than he imagined. How could she be so despicable as to do all those things to Sonia?

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Tyler lowered his head, looking as crestfallen as he was stunned.

Meanwhile, Charles scoffed as he glanced over at Toby haughtily. “So, do you still want me to apologize, President Fuller?”

The subtext of his question was clear: if he were to be forced to apologize, then he would expose even more startling crimes on Tina's track record.

Toby understood what was at stake, and he was grim as he returned Charles' sullen gaze.

Tina, on the other hand, was somewhat terrified as she tugged on Toby's arm. She forced out a tight smile and said, “Let's forget about this, Toby. Charles is right; I've done so many terrible things

to Miss Reed, so it's only right that we excuse them from making an apology."

Charles quirked his lips mockingly. "It looks like you guys have given up on an apology from me, so I'm going to take my leave now. The air here reeks of hypocrisy."

As he said this, he flapped his hand in front of his nose as though to fan away some repulsive scent and headed up the stairs.

Seeing this, Rebecca let out a full-body yawn and interjected, "I'm worn out from all the horseback riding. I think I'll take a nap in my room."

"Well, I'm not staying here if the rest of you are leaving," Zane concluded as he rose from his seat.

Very soon, Toby and the two others were the only ones remaining in the living room.

Tyler glanced at Toby, then Tina. At last, he grabbed the former by the arm and proceeded to guide him toward the veranda. "Come over here, Toby. I need to talk to you about something."

When they reached the veranda, Toby drew his arm back and demanded, "What is it?"

Tyler closed the door to the veranda behind him. "Toby, you know all about what Tina has done to Sonia, don't you?"

He found it rather repulsive to call Tina by her given name so affectionately after learning all the terrible things she had inflicted upon Sonia. As far as he was concerned, he should adopt a more fitting nickname for the wretched woman.

Toby pursed his lips briefly, then admitted, "Yes, I do."

Tyler was obviously aggrieved by such an affirmation. "So, what are you still doing with her?"

Toby frowned and snapped, "This is my business, and it doesn't concern you one bit."

“How so? I’m your biological brother, Toby. Don’t you think I have the right to be concerned?” Tyler’s eyes widened incredulously as he went on to say, “Listen to me, Toby. You have to break up with Tina as soon as possible. She’s a terrible human being, and I am totally against the both of you being together!”

A woman like Tina was basically the epitome of evil; there was no telling what other wicked schemes she might be up to next. What if she throws Toby under the bus? Or worse—what if she drags our family name through the mud?

However, Toby only grew impatient as he said, “Okay, that’s enough. Just watch your own back and stop butting into my affairs.” With that, he opened the door to the veranda and left.

Tina happened to be standing behind the door, and her eyes rimmed red as she regarded them plaintively. “Toby…” she began, chewing her lip anxiously.

Toby sighed tiredly. “Did you hear everything?”

She nodded and hummed sadly in response.

Meanwhile, Tyler was slightly flustered as he averted his gaze, not wanting to look her in the eyes.

After all, she had heard all of his bad-mouthing, and he would inevitably feel embarrassed regardless of how thick-skinned he might be. He let out a dry cough and made to walk away.

Just then, Tina called out to him, “Tyler.”

He stopped in his tracks and asked icily, “What is it? If you’re looking for an apology, then let’s just say you’d be disappointed because there’s no way I’m going to say sorry for speaking the truth.”

I’m not in the wrong here. It’s true that she is evil enough to attempt murder, and it’s not my fault for wanting to keep her away from Toby!

“Tyler!” Toby was clearly displeased as he exclaimed his brother’s name, sounding as if he was building up to an admonishment.

Tyler clenched his fists, and he was about to say something in retort when Tina interjected woefully, "No, Tyler, it isn't an apology I'm looking for. I just wanted to say that I have, indeed, done some grievous things to Miss Reed. However, I have reasons for it, and it was not my intention to hurt her. I—"

"Whatever the reasons might be and regardless of your intentions, you were still behind all those things, weren't you?" Tyler cut her off bluntly. Then, he added, "There was a time when I thought you were a kind and gentle person, and I was completely fine with you being together with my brother. But now, I realize how blind and ridiculous I was. A wicked and vicious woman like you has no right marrying my brother. You're only going to burden him and drag him down!"

Having said that, he scoffed contemptuously at her and stalked off.

Tina watched his retreating figure and bit down hard on her lower lip as the storm clouds gathered ominously in her dark eyes.

So, it was Zane at first, and now Tyler is trying to tear Toby away from me, too? This is what Charles and Sonia are up to. They want to turn everyone around Toby and me over to their side and gang up against us.

At the thought of this, she shuddered in anger and felt a strong surge of hatred for all these people.

While she was simmering in spite, Toby thought she might be crying and pulled her into an embrace from behind as he placated, "I'm sorry, Tina. Tyler is still a kid, and he doesn't think before he speaks. I hope you won't hold it against him."

Tina regained her composure and schooled her features into an expression of empathy, then shook her head. "I don't blame him at all. He wasn't wrong anyway. I'm just a little scared."

"What are you scared of?" Toby turned her in his arms and gazed down at her.

She rested her head on his chest and listened to the steady rhythm of his heartbeat, then answered in a trembling voice, "I'm

scared that Tyler may try to convince you to break up with me. I'm terrified that you really will leave me."

He sighed when he heard this and cupped her face in his hands, then dipped his head to look at her solemnly as he promised, "I won't ever leave you. Don't you believe me?"

After all, he had relentlessly pursued her several times before she agreed to go out with him and become his girlfriend; there was no way he would leave her.

She blinked and asked, "Really?"

"Really." He nodded in assurance.

"B-But Tyler is your brother. Surely he would talk to your mother and force you to break up with me. Would you still be so adamant when your family pressures you?" Tina gazed up at him hopefully.

He smoothed down her hair and murmured, "Yes. I'm the head of the Fuller Family, anyway, so it's not like they have a say in whatever I decide. There's nothing for you to worry about."

She hummed in satisfaction and broke into a smile, then nuzzled into his chest once more. "That makes me feel safe."

He hugged her gently and smoothed her hair. His gestures were gentle and compassionate, but there was an icy gleam in his eyes, which were dark pools devoid of warmth.

He wasn't sure what was happening to him. He was embracing a woman he loved dearly but found that he was growing distant from her; there was a newfound sense of calm in him that made him more level-headed whenever he assessed her.

...

That night, there was a torrential downpour that was accompanied by rough winds and rumbling thunder, turning the scene outside the villa to one that was almost apocalyptic.

Tina was so frightened that all the color drained from her face, and she screamed when the thunder boomed overhead.

As of now, she was curled into a ball on the couch. "Miss Harper, could you please draw the curtains? The storm is terrifying," she pleaded with Rebecca, who was standing by the French windows while admiring the storm raging outside.

Rebecca turned slightly to cast her a baleful look, and contempt rose within her.

However, she did not want to stir up unnecessary trouble and decidedly drew the curtains as told.

"Thank you, Miss Harper." Tina breathed a sigh of relief and flashed the other girl a grateful, albeit watery smile.

Rebecca was impassive as she snapped, "There's no need to thank me. Do you honestly think I'd give a damn about you if President Fuller weren't backing you up?"

Having thrown these words over her shoulders, she stormed into the kitchen.

Tina lowered her gaze to hide the spite in her eyes, though she put on a resentful front.

Toby pulled out a woman's coat from the closet upstairs, and at the sight of Tina looking like a wounded kitten, he frowned. "What's wrong, Tina?"

"I'm fine." Tina lifted her head and gave him a small smile. "It's nothing to do with Miss Harper."

He pursed his lips. "Did Rebecca bully you?"

"Not at all." Tina flapped her hand dismissively. "I'm scared of thunder, and I asked her to draw the curtains earlier, but I seemed to have interrupted her storm-gazing plans, so she's a little unhappy with me at the moment. That being said, she didn't bully me at all. I'm the one who feels bad about this."

"You shouldn't have to," Toby argued while draping the coat over her slender frame. "The villa is for communal use; it was not your fault that you were afraid of thunder and asked that she draw the curtains. Anyway, are you still cold?"

“Not anymore,” she answered with a gentle shake of her head.

He hummed in response. “That’s good to know.”

Just then, the sound of thudding footsteps sounded from upstairs.

As it turned out, Zane, Charles, and Sonia were making their way down the staircase.

Raking his fingers through his hair insouciantly, Zane asked aloud, “Hey, it’s getting late! What’s the chef doing? Where’s our dinner?”

Charles smiled smugly at Tyler, then followed her.

As for Rebecca, she suddenly thought of something and raised her hand before saying loudly, “President Reed, I’ll help you out. Will you make an extra portion for me?”

“Me too, Sonia. Last time you hurt your foot, and I was the one who took you to the hospital.” Zane also spoke up.

Sonia smiled at them. “Okay, then all of you come over and help.”

“Got it.” Zane and Rebecca laughingly followed.

In the living room, Toby and the others could still hear the sound of laughter coming from the kitchen from time to time. They had no idea what the people inside said, but Sonia laughed very loudly. Pursing his lips, Toby sat on the sofa, and when he thought of her smiling at Charles and the others, he felt frustrated.

Am I really that annoying to her?

Tina did not say anything and only slightly lowered her head with her hands folded together.

Soon, the rich aroma of food wafted out of the kitchen. When Tyler smelled it, he felt even hungrier, and his stomach rumbled. The knot in Toby’s throat couldn’t help but move, and his eyes were slightly dark. He knew that Sonia could cook because she

had cooked for him before, but he never ate anything she made. Yet, it turned out that she was so good at cooking; just the aroma alone made people salivate, so one could imagine how delicious it was when they ate it.

“Toby, why don’t we go cook too?” Suddenly, Tina pulled Toby’s sleeve and proposed.

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Tina was so hungry that she couldn’t stand it anymore. When she smelled the aroma of the food, she felt even hungrier. Then, Toby looked at Tina’s hungry appearance and finally agreed. “Let’s go.”

“Mm.” Tina smiled and nodded. Just after walking a few steps, she suddenly stopped again and looked back at Tyler on the sofa.

“Tyler, do you want to come along?”

“I’m not coming with you,” Tyler answered with a cold attitude, making Tina lower her head in the gloom.

Toby pursed his lips. “If you don’t come over to help, then you won’t get to eat tonight.”

After saying that, he pulled Tina and continued to walk toward the kitchen.

Clutching his hair in exasperation, Tyler really wanted to just ignore them, but his stomach was growling. In the end, he went to the kitchen as well.

The kitchen was very large, so all of them could move around in it without any issue. When Toby came in, the three of them saw Sonia flinging the pan, and the food in it rose up in the air, flipped over, and fell back in neatly.

Charles, Zane, and Rebecca stood by the side, all of them looking stunned. "Amazing!" Rebecca marveled.

Zane followed with a nod. "What a great chef!"

"Darling..." Charles's face contorted as he both felt happy and heartbroken. He was happy that he could eat Sonia's cooking later, but he was heartbroken that the woman he cherished so much had been bullied by the Fuller Family so much that she even knew such a difficult technique. After all, she had never done this in the past before.

Thinking of this, he turned and glared at the three who had just entered.

The three of them were also watching Sonia flipping the food, and it was not until they felt Charles' glare that they snapped back to their senses. In fact, they were actually fascinated by Sonia's skills.

"Let's go over there." Toby coughed lightly, withdrew his gaze, and pointed to the other side of the stove. So, Tina took his arm and went over with him. After that, Tyler looked at Sonia, and then at his brother, and then followed him with his head hanging low. The three of them came to the stove and looked at the pots and pans in front of them with difficulty because none of them had ever cooked before. Thus, they couldn't even recognize anything, so now they didn't know where to start.

"Toby, how do we start?" Tina picked up the spatula and looked at it, then asked the man beside her with difficulty.

The man was silent for a few seconds before saying, "Let's wash the vegetables first, and we'll see what you want to eat?"

"But where are the vegetables?" Tina was at a loss.

Tyler snorted. "Even if I can't cook, I know the vegetables are in the refrigerator."

After saying that, he turned around and walked toward the refrigerator. Tina bit her lower lip, her eyes reddening. "Toby, am I useless? I don't even know where the vegetables are."

"No, it's normal not to know this if you don't know how to cook." Toby stroked her hair.

However, Charles couldn't help but roll his eyes at this. "How is that normal? This is common sense, okay? Your fiancée doesn't even have common sense. President Fuller, you even lied to her and convinced her that this is normal. How brainless can she be not to understand that it's just a lie to comfort her!"

Hearing this, Rebecca and Zane couldn't hold back their laughter, while Sonia also hooked up the corners of her mouth. Toby's face was ugly as he looked at Charles, his eyes icy cold. As for Tina, she looked like she was about to cry. "Charles, you are too much!"

How dare he call me brainless?

"How is that too much? I'm just telling the truth. You can't accept the truth?" Charles stretched his hands, smiling recklessly at Tina's chest that rose and fell violently.

Charles was about to continue mocking her, but Sonia pulled him back. "That's enough, Charles. It'll be a hassle if she gets too angry and ends up doing something bad."

"All right. Since you said so, darling, I'll shut up," Charles said with a smile.

Tina squeezed her hands and looked at Toby. "Toby, do you also think I'm stupid and don't even have common sense?"

"No."

"Really?" Tina was obviously a little unconvinced.

Toby felt a little tired, but he still nodded with patience. "Really."

Tina could see that he was being serious, so her mood improved.

At this time, Tyler had already returned with a bunch of food ingredients he wanted to eat. "Toby, let's cook these." He looked at Toby excitedly.

Toby, however, frowned at the food ingredients he was carrying. "Do you know how to cook them? Why did you take so much?"

Tyler's face froze because he obviously had not thought about this, and scratching his head, he asked, "Then what should I do?"

Toby was silent, while Tina didn't know what to say as well. Next to them, Sonia was directing the three others to get plates and seasonings, and they were all busy with a lot of enthusiasm. The three people over on Toby's side, however, looked at the cold empty pots and stove for a long time without any action. With that, the two sides formed a stark contrast.

After a while, Toby sighed lightly, then took out his phone and searched for cooking instructions. Finally, they started cooking. However, the food that was made in the end looked unappetizing.

"Toby, is this blackened thing an eggplant?" Tyler asked very politely, pointing to a dish in front of him that could no longer be discerned. Hearing that, Toby pursed his thin lips into a straight line, and he nodded stiffly.

The corners of Tyler's mouth twitched as Tyler pointed to another plate. "Are these potatoes?"

Toby narrowed his eyes and swept a cold glance at him, which made Tyler shrink back and not dare to ask further questions.

When Tina saw that the atmosphere was a little stiff, she smiled a little and took the initiative to ease the situation. "Well Tyler, although these dishes look a little unattractive, the taste should still be good. After all, Toby personally made them. Try it."

She handed a fork to Tyler, who pretended not to see and picked up another fork instead. Then, he simply reached for the eggplant. When Tina saw this, her hand froze in the air. However, Toby squeezed her hand and said, "It's okay. Eat it yourself."

"Mm." Tina forced a smile, but in her heart, she secretly held a grudge against Tyler, who had disgraced herself.

After I marry Toby, I will definitely drive Tyler out of the Fuller Residence.

“Blergh!” When Tina and Toby were preparing to eat, Tyler suddenly vomited all the food he had eaten with a contorted face.

“What’s this? It’s terrible! The taste is salty one moment and sweet next. Toby, you’re really a genius at cooking.” Tyler hurriedly drank water while extending his thumb toward Toby.

Toby’s eyebrows furrowed together. “Is it very bad?”

“It’s disgusting, okay?!” Tyler yelled loudly.

Toby lowered his eyes to look at the dish he had made. After hesitating for a moment, he grabbed a piece and put it into his mouth, and then his brows wrinkled even more, but he still swallowed the food.

“Toby, how is it? Is it disgusting?” Tyler came close to him and asked with a smile. Toby didn’t say anything; his face was expressionless as he sipped his water as a tacit acknowledgment.

After the little episode, Tina silently withdrew her fork that was originally stretched out toward the food.

Forget it! I’m not gonna eat that.

Tina’s action was noticed by Sonia, who was enjoying the food at the next table. Sonia decided to ignore it and continued enjoying her sumptuous meal.

As for Zane and Rebecca, they also did not want to cause trouble. After all, good food was in front of them, so they did not have the mood to care about anything else. Honestly speaking, Sonia’s cooking was just too delicious, especially the fish, which simply melted in their mouths like butter.

Suddenly, Charles blinked as an idea crossed his mind. Putting down his cutlery, he turned his head to look at the next table. “Miss Gray, this is the dinner that President Fuller personally made, so why don’t you eat it?”

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Tina didn't expect that Charles would ask about her, so she politely smiled and said, "I..."

"Is the food not up your alley?" Charles interrupted her speech.

Tina shook her head in denial. "That's not it."

"Then, why aren't you eating them?" Charles led the conversation back to where it started. In the meantime, Sonia and the others knew he was trying to mess around and drive a wedge between Tina and Toby. Therefore, they all put down their silverware and waited to enjoy the show.

"That's right, Miss Gray. Since you're okay with Toby's cooking, you should probably start eating." Zane propped his face with his hand, echoing Charles' words in a deadpan manner.

Jumping on the bandwagon, Rebecca nodded. "President Fuller prepared these dishes himself, and it wouldn't look nice if you don't try any of them, Miss Gray. Furthermore, you love him, don't you? So shouldn't you show him your support?"

Tyler puckered his lips and was about to say something, only to be stopped by Toby with a cold glare. Meanwhile, Sonia was seen enjoying her soup calmly without saying a single word, her eyes filled with mischief as if she had nothing to do with Tina's humiliation.

Fixing her angry eyes on each of them, Tina could feel her rage burning inside her.

These people are obviously trying to make a fool out of me by forcing me to eat these terrible dishes. They want to embarrass me. They even used Toby to pressure me just so that they can be sure to reach their goal; if I refuse to eat those dishes, my love for Toby will be doubted and called into question. By then, Toby will

lose his faith in me, even though he may not talk about it. How wicked these people are!

“Fine, I’m going to start eating now!” Tina took a deep breath and forced a smile.

Charles and the others were stunned for a while before they all gloated with a gleeful laugh. Then, Rebecca gave Tina a thumbs up and said, “That’s a good one, Miss Gray. Your love for President Fuller is true and indisputable.”

Tina smiled in silence while angrily refuting them on the inside. True and indisputable? What does this have to do with my love for him? I wouldn’t be forced to eat these terrible dishes if it weren’t for the few of you. At the thought of that, she bit her lip and reluctantly picked up her fork and knife.

Toby held her hand to stop her from eating. “Don’t do it. You don’t actually have to give two hoots about what they said.”

“It’s okay. They’re right. This is the first time cooking, and I should try it,” Tina replied and gently put the man’s hand away.

Despite his disagreement with Tina’s decision to eat those dishes, Toby didn’t do anything else to stop her from pressing on. Deep down, a part of him knew how she would react after she put those dishes into her mouth.

While everyone fixed their eyes on Tina without blinking, she picked up the fork and knife before placing some potatoes and beans on her plate. When she held the food in front of her mouth, she hesitated for a few moments, to which Charles urged her to eat it in frustration. “Come on! What’re you waiting for?”

Despite her strong grudge toward them, Tina knew she had no choice but to swallow the food. Thus, she closed her eyes and braced herself as she put the potatoes into her mouth.

In that instant, a weird taste swept through her taste buds just when her face changed. In the end, she gave in to the terrible taste and covered her mouth before running into the restroom.

Even when she was inside the restroom, she could hear the others laughing out loud at her outside.

“Toby, it looks like Miss Gray doesn’t really like your cooking so much that she can’t take it and has to throw up.” Zane drank his fruit juice and pulled Toby’s leg.

“Well, who knows Miss Gray doesn’t love President Fuller that much, either? Otherwise, how does she explain why she’d puke? If I was in her place, I would finish my darling’s dishes instead of spitting them out, no matter how terrible they tasted,” Charles chuckled and said.

Nevertheless, Toby’s face darkened as he pursed his lips in silence. Deep down, he understood why Tina would react that way because his dishes tasted terrible. However, it didn’t sit well with him when he saw her heading to the restroom to puke. After all, like Charles said, Tina might not have been considerate enough to think about protecting Toby’s pride.

“Alright. Let’s dig in and talk later.” Sonia broke her silence when she noticed the unhappy look on Toby’s face. While she didn’t do that to save Toby from embarrassment, she was trying to prevent Charles and the others from running their mouths off before they took it too far.

At the same time, Charles and the other two seemingly sensed Toby’s anger as they shrugged their shoulders and continued to enjoy their meal. Soon, Tina returned from the restroom and pulled out her seat before she sat down and carefully peered at Toby beside her. Knowing that her reaction might have embarrassed Toby, she guiltily apologized to him and said, “I’m sorry, Toby. I didn’t want to puke on purpose. I just...”

“It’s alright. I know the dishes taste really bad, so it’s normal that you threw up,” Toby cut her short and said.

Sensing the coldness in his voice, Tina knew he was not happy with her reaction. Thus, her heart sank as she felt mad at the thought of that. This is all Sonia’s fault. If they hadn’t forced me to eat those dishes, I wouldn’t have thrown up, and neither would Toby have been unhappy with me.

In that instant, the atmosphere around Toby, Tina, and Tyler was shrouded in awkward silence. At the same time, neither of them said anything or picked up their silverware once again amidst the oppressive vibe. Meanwhile, Sonia and the others were happily enjoying their food at the next table as the aroma of the dishes wafted toward Toby, Tyler, and Tina, making them feel even more uneasy.

“Ah! I can’t take this anymore. I’m starving!” Tyler impatiently patted the table. “Toby, can you arrange for someone to deliver us some decent food in a helicopter?”

Tina’s eyes lit up and fell upon Toby when she heard those words. However, the man placed his hand on his forehead and shook his head. “No way. There is a thunderstorm outside, and it’s dangerous for a helicopter to fly here.”

“So, are we going to starve ourselves like that?” Tyler’s eyes widened.

“If you don’t want to starve yourself, you’d better start eating.” Toby looked up and met his gaze.

“I’d rather starve myself than eat these,” Tyler pouted and said.

Radiating a cold and intimidating aura, Toby didn’t force his brother. “Fine then. Get out of my face!”

“I will.” Tyler stood up and left his seat, but instead of heading upstairs, he made his way to Sonia and the rest, who were sitting at the table beside Toby.

Charles noticed that and raised his eyebrows. “That dude is coming over here, darling.”

While Sonia tilted her head, Tyler revealed an innocent smile and greeted her. “Sonia.”

Tsk! His smile makes him look dumb. Sonia brushed it off in an unconcerned manner and pretended as if she didn’t hear him as she took his eyes off him. On the other hand, Tyler’s face darkened for a split second when he noticed Sonia’s indifferent attitude. Nonetheless, he continued to stand beside the table while sucking his own finger. At the same time, his eyes were

glued to the delicious dishes on the table with his hungry desire written all over his face. As he continued to stare at the few of them, Sonia and the others felt too uncomfortable to carry on with their meal.

Charles put down his glass of fruit juice. "What're you doing, dude?"

Tyler didn't bother to respond to him but instead gazed at Sonia with a sympathetic look. "Your dishes smell delicious, Sonia."

Sonia curled her lips and asked, "What's wrong? Do you want to try them?"

Thinking Sonia understood what he meant, Tyler nodded while his eyes lit up with excitement. "Can I?"

"Come back here, Tyler." Before Sonia could answer, Tina called out to Tyler. "You don't have to beg someone for food."

"That's none of your goddamn business!" Tyler replied in frustration.

Tina bit her lip and tearfully answered, "I was just concerned about you."

"I don't need your concern. You can save that for my brother," Tyler pursed his lips and said.

"Toby..." Tina fell into Toby's arms, hoping to find some comfort as she thought he would console her like he usually would and even make Tyler apologize to her. However, Toby only hugged her without saying a single word while squinting in a preoccupied manner.

While Tina was bitterly upset, Charles appeared to be gleeful about that and complimented Tyler. "Good job, kid!"

Nevertheless, Tyler ignored him once more as he looked at Sonia with his eyes lighting up. Then, he asked once again, "Can I, Sonia?"

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“Of course not. It’s not like you don’t have anything to eat. Your brother prepared a table full of dishes for you right there, so get back to where you came from and finish your meal.” Charles pointed at Toby and turned Tyler away.

Tyler glared at him and said, “I’m not talking to you, so who are you to answer me?”

“I am Sonia’s boyfriend, which is all the reason I need to answer your question.” Charles wrapped his arm around Sonia’s shoulders, to which the latter didn’t show any sign of resistance. When Sonia didn’t back away, Charles appeared to be even more complacent. “So, how is it going to be? Do you have a problem with that now?”

Tyler was piqued as he immediately turned his attention to Sonia and sympathetically begged her to let him eat. “Sonia, I’m really hungry now, so can I have some of your cooking? Pretty please.” He placed his palms together and put on a pitiful look on his face.

At that moment, Tyler’s reaction reminded Sonia of a poodle she reared many years ago. Back in the day, the puppy would behave sympathetically by raising both of its front paws to beg for something to eat, just like what Tyler was doing. Therefore, Sonia’s pity eventually got the better of her as she pointed at the empty seat and said, “Alright, help yourself.”

“Yeah, you’re the best, Sonia!” Tyler happily scampered to the kitchen to grab himself a fork and spoon.

“Are you really going to let him eat, darling?” Charles looked at Sonia in disbelief, while Zane and Rebecca seemed to be as surprised as Toby did. After all, they all knew that she once said she would make the Fuller Family pay for what they did to her. Therefore, they didn’t understand why she’d let Tyler have her cooking.

“Yes, of course,” Sonia answered.

“Why?” Charles knitted his eyebrows and asked. In the meantime, Toby pricked up his ears to listen closely because he was also curious to know how Sonia would answer Charles’ question as well.

“It’s nothing too complicated. The way he looked just reminded me of Bucky.” Sonia smiled while the memories of the past filled her with nostalgia.

At the same time, Charles tried to recall how Bucky looked from a long time ago as he nodded in agreement. “Yeah, you’re right indeed.”

“Did you guys just talk about Bucky?” Toby suddenly stood up, asking with a desperate voice while fixing his gaze on Sonia with a tense look on his face.

Wondering whether Toby was referring to the same ‘Bucky’ they were talking about, Sonia and Charles exchanged gazes with each other in confusion because they didn’t understand why Toby was so agitated. Before both of them could tell him that Bucky was actually just a poodle, Tina suddenly bent over and buried her head under the table while coughing.

An anxious expression appeared on Toby’s face as he patted her back and asked in a concerned manner, “How do you feel, Tina?”

“Toby, I’m feeling a little dizzy now. I guess I must have caught a cold, so would you please walk me to my room?” Tina gazed at the man with a pale face.

“Sure.” Toby nodded.

Tina thanked him with a weak voice as she heaved a sigh of relief on the inside. In fact, she had long known that Bucky was a poodle from Toby’s letters that she read earlier. Therefore, she was taken aback by his reaction when he heard Sonia suddenly mention Bucky. Because of that, she was grateful that she was able to interrupt their conversation and prevent them from going further about Bucky. Otherwise, Toby would know that the ‘Bucky’ he was asking was, in fact, the same poodle Sonia was referring to. If that

happened, he would know that Sonia was the one who had been corresponding with him, as well as the one he truly loved.

“Where is my brother?” Tyler curiously asked when he returned from the kitchen with his silverware and saw Toby and Tina gone.

Charles responded by pointing upstairs. “They’re back to their room, so you should go back to yours too. Forget about the meal.”

“Why should I listen to you?!” Tyler rolled his eyes upward at Charles and proceeded to sit down, whereupon he started enjoying his meal.

As soon as he put the food into his mouth, he felt so touched that tears almost rolled down his face. “Now, this is what I call ‘food’,” Tyler exclaimed happily.

Nevertheless, his happiness didn’t last long when Sonia decided to rain on his parade after putting down her fork and knife.

“Remember to wash the dish and clean the table when you’re done.”

“Why?” Tyler’s eyes widened in surprise.

“Why?” Sonia ambiguously gazed at him and answered his question, saying, “Because each of us contributed to making this meal. I cooked the dishes while Rebecca rinsed the vegetables; Charles took care of the seasoning while Zane scraped away the fish scale for cooking. Therefore, you’re going to have to pull your weight around in exchange for this meal.”

“I...” Tyler looked down and said, “Alright, I get it.”

Sonia looked at the few strands of hair on Tyler’s head and rubbed it with her hand. “Good boy.”

Tyler’s face blushed. “Are you treating me as a kid?”

“Whatever you say.” Sonia stood up from her seat and headed upstairs to her room.

At the same time, Charles and the rest began to leave the table when they were done with their meals. By the time they were

gone, Tyler was left alone at the table as he poured all the dishes onto his plate and indulged himself in the delicious meal.

.....

In the middle of the night, Sonia suddenly felt thirsty, so she got off her bed and headed to the kettle on the table to pour herself a glass of water, only to realize it was empty. Helpless, she reluctantly decided to step out of the room and head downstairs to quench her thirst. At that moment, there was no longer thunder, although it continued to rain. As the howling wind blew, it sent chills down Sonia's spine and made her hair stand on end so much that she kept rubbing her arms with her palms.

In that instant, the lights above Sonia's head suddenly went out just when the entire mansion was engulfed by darkness. Wondering what was wrong, Sonia subconsciously held onto the railing beside her as she didn't dare to move a muscle. After all, she couldn't see anything in the dark, which would probably expose her to risks of getting hurt as she might fall down from the stairs or bump herself into something. "Charles. Charles?" Sonia called out with a trembling voice, hoping Charles could hear her and come to her aid.

At that moment, she regretted not bringing her phone along with her when she left her room, otherwise she wouldn't have been stranded in the dark with her phone's flashlight. Soon, the door was open, whereupon footsteps were heard and accompanied by a ray of light that seemed to be coming from a cell phone.

At the sight of the light, Sonia felt much more relieved, her body feeling less tense. She then looked at the person who was approaching her and asked, "Is that you, Charles?" While the person was shining on the floor with the flashlight, the poor lighting made it even harder for her to make out their appearance. Thus, she wasn't sure whether it was Charles who came for her.

When Toby heard how Sonia mistook him for Charles, his face darkened. How on earth do I look like Charles?

"It's me," Toby puckered his lips and said.

"President Fuller? Why are you here?" Sonia sounded surprised.

“What’s wrong? Are you disappointed?” Toby pursed his lips unhappily.

Sonia shook her head and replied, “Not really. Just a little surprised.”

Amidst the terrifying darkness, Sonia was grateful that someone came to her aid, no matter who it was. Nonetheless, she was surprised that her voice woke Toby instead of Charles up.

“I heard your voice, so I came out to check on you,” Toby answered. In fact, he wasn’t in a deep sleep because of his hunger, so he woke up to her voice with expected ease. Even though she had called out to Charles to help, he would also come out to investigate what was wrong anyway.

“I see.” Sonia nodded to show acknowledgement.

“What are you doing here in the middle of the night?” Toby looked at her.

“I wanted to grab myself a glass of water, but the power went out downstairs before I could do so,” Sonia bitterly answered.

Toby responded with an affirmative hum and said, “In that case, I’ll go after you and shine through the way ahead.”

“You’re going to shine through the way ahead for me?” Sonia raised her eyebrows and looked at him, but due to the bright light, she could only make out the silhouette of his face.

“Yeah, do you have a problem with that?” Toby jutted his chin and asked.

“Oh, of course not. Thanks.” Sonia slightly nodded at him while expressing her gratitude. Although she was stunned by his kindness, she didn’t see a reason to turn down his help. Thus, she held onto the railing next to her and slowly descended the stairs while Toby walked behind her and held the flashlight high up in the air.

Soon, both of them arrived at the living room, whereupon Sonia stood in front of the desk and shook the kettle to hear whether there was water inside. After making sure there was water in the

kettle, she smiled as Toby stood beside her and looked at her with a darkened gaze.

“By the way, do you need a glass of water too?” Sonia turned around and looked at Toby, nearly forgetting about him when she was pouring herself a glass of water.

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Although Toby wasn't thirsty, he somehow nodded and said, “Yeah, sure.”

Sonia replied with an affirmative hum and proceeded to pour him a glass of water, to which he took over. “Thanks.”

“Not at all.” Sonia waved her hand and kept her head down to drink her water. In the meantime, Toby didn't take a single sip of water from his glass, but instead fixed his eyes on her without blinking.

After finishing the water, Sonia put down the glass and was about to tell the man that she would be returning to her room just when she heard a growling sound, only to realize it came from Toby's stomach. Meanwhile, Toby didn't expect his stomach to growl at that moment as an awkward look appeared on his glacial face.

Sonia curled her lips slightly upward, trying to keep a straight face as she just witnessed one of Toby's rarest sides.

“Um...” Toby gulped, seemingly wanting to say something.

“What's the matter?” Sonia looked at him.

“Do you mind making a little something for me to eat?” Toby kept his head down and asked.

Sonia raised her eyebrows in disbelief. "Did you just ask me to make you something to eat?"

"Yeah." Toby nodded, as he was indeed hungry.

Sonia pursed her lips, finding his plea sarcastic. After all, she had learned to cook because she wanted to have his heart in the last six years. However, he never really showed any interest in her, neither did he ever cast an eye on her. Therefore, she couldn't help but find it laughable now that Toby asked her to cook for him.

As Sonia didn't answer his question, Toby felt overwhelmed by a pang of disappointment, his eyes darkening. However, he hid his feelings and tried to play it cool. "It's okay. Just forget about it."

"I'll do it." Sonia looked up and met his gaze.

Toby paused in a trance and met her eyes in surprise. "Do you agree with that?"

Sonia nodded. "Just think of it as a return of favor for shining the way for me. Let's go to the kitchen."

Toby smiled and responded with an affirmative hum, whereupon both of them entered the kitchen.

Soon, Sonia opened the refrigerator, only to realize nothing much was left inside besides some vegetables. Upon a short contemplation, she turned around before she was quickly surprised by Toby, who was standing behind her and looking at the refrigerator with his back bent over. Then, her lips inevitably came into contact with his lips.

After both of them looked at each other in a trance, Toby was the first of the two to snap out of his trance and back away. Then, he stood straight and apologized with a deep voice. "I'm sorry." After all, he didn't think she would turn around so suddenly.

Sonia's face blushed as she covered her mouth and awkwardly replied, "It's not your fault. I'm the one who should apologize."

Deep down, she reckoned it was her fault to turn around and put both of them in such an awkward position.

In that instant, the spacious kitchen was shrouded in a strange silence without a word from either of them but only the sound of their breathing. A few moments later, Toby puckered his lips and broke the silence. "Were you trying to ask me something?"

Knowing that the man was trying to turn the awkward situation around, Sonia didn't stay silent any longer as she nodded and said, "I was trying to tell you that there's nothing much left in the refrigerator. So, do you mind if I make you some pasta instead?"

"Sure." Toby agreed.

Sonia proceeded to take whatever was left in the refrigerator and headed to the sink while Toby followed right behind her to shine for her. Not long after that, the pasta was ready, whereupon both of them made their way to the dining area.

Then, Sonia placed the pasta on the table and said, "Enjoy."

"Thanks." Toby politely expressed his gratitude, his eyes fixed on the steaming and aromatic pasta.

On the other hand, Sonia yawned and wiped the tears that trickled down her cheeks, tiredly urging the man to finish his food. "Alright, hurry up. Walk me back to the third floor when you're done."

"Alright." Toby somehow found Sonia's impatient look adorable before he pulled out a chair and sat on it to enjoy his pasta. Meanwhile, Sonia sat beside him, propping her head with her arms while waiting for him to be done.

A few moments later, Sonia began to yawn more and more frequently as she struggled to keep her eyes peeled. At the same time, her head felt heavier and heavier with a sleepy look on her face. When Toby noticed her reaction, he unknowingly smiled and picked up his pace in finishing his pasta, but before he could finish it, Sonia eventually gave way to her sleepiness and dozed off on the table.

Toby was stunned by the sight of that before he laughed in amusement. Soon, he calmed himself down and put down his silverware, whereupon he walked closer to Sonia and gently nudged her. "Wake up, Sonia. Let's get you upstairs."

At that moment, Sonia was in a dream, in which she found herself caught by a monster. Thus, she knitted her eyebrows and mumbled in her sleep. "Don't touch me! Stay away from me!"

Thinking he had woken her up, Toby took his hand off her. A few moments later, he realized Sonia was, in fact, still asleep when she continued to remain still. She must be murmuring in her dream. As he helplessly rubbed his forehead, he gave up the idea of waking Sonia up. Instead, he decided to carry her in his arms and took her upstairs to her room.

When Toby arrived on the third floor, he immediately spotted the room with the door left open and surmised that it must be Sonia's room. Thus, he walked inside while carrying the lady in his arms, barely finding his way with the dim flashlight from his phone. When he bent over to put her down on the bed, Sonia wrapped her arms around his neck and refused to let go. Unable to stand straight, Toby found himself bending over as he said with a deep voice, "Let go, Sonia."

"Please don't go," Sonia suddenly blurted out with a fearful look on her face, which looked like she was having a bad dream.

While that was the first time he saw Sonia behave like that, he softened up and gently replied, "Alright, I'll stay."

Having seemingly heard his voice, Sonia seemed to be more relaxed and slowly curled her lips upward. At the same time, Toby fixed his eyes on her lips and recalled the moment they accidentally kissed each other in the kitchen. Although their lips barely touched each other's, the soft sensation he felt on her lips was etched in his mind.

Therefore, Toby looked down and eyed her lips before planting a kiss on them. This feels just like the way I remember. So soft and sweet! I want more of it! In reality, he did exactly what was on his mind, getting on one knee while holding Sonia's chin. The moment she opened her mouth, he slipped his tongue into it, only to hear

her seductive and gentle moan. At that moment, his eyes seemed unfathomable as he kissed her even deeper.

Soon, Toby began to crave more and slid his wandering hands along Sonia's body. In the meantime, he shifted his lips downward along her neck when Sonia called out a name. "Charles..."

Toby felt as if he had been splashed with a bucket of ice water while snapping out of his fantasy with a darkened look on his face. Then, he took his hands off Sonia and stood up, staring at her with a sinister glare. How could she call someone else's name in the middle of our intimacy? Nonetheless, what frustrated Toby the most was the touchy-feely behavior that he failed to stop himself from doing to her once again, which was already the third time. At the thought of that, he unhappily left with a heavy heart.

Sonia turned around and hugged her blanket, mumbling in an unsatisfactory voice. "Charles, don't take Bucky away from me."

Later that night, Toby couldn't fall asleep as he kept dwelling on the inappropriate action he did to Sonia. Why does that ruin my mood so much? I don't feel like myself right now. Because of that, he woke up with a tired look the next day, with some faint dark circles around his eyes.

When Tina saw him, she quickly expressed her concern and asked, "What's wrong, Toby? Did you have a rough night last night?"

Before Toby could answer her, Zane came closer with a glass of beer and said, "Wow, Toby! It looks like you had a pretty enjoyable night last night. You should take a look at your dark circles. Don't worry. I'll tell the cook to prepare some oysters to boost your libido. After all, Miss Gray mustn't be stripped of the happiness she deserves."

Tina understood what he was implying as her face blushed in bashfulness. While the lady kept her head down in embarrassment, Toby knitted his eyebrows and glacially told Zane off. "Get out of my face!"

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Zane wasn't angry, but he simply laughed as he sipped his beer while walking toward the sofa and turned on the TV. Not long after, several people got up and came downstairs, except for Sonia. Tina watched as they greeted each other but ignored her and Toby. It was clear that they were deliberately sidelining her and Toby!

"President Lane, isn't President Reed up yet?" At this time, Rebecca suddenly asked. When Toby heard it, his eyes flickered slightly, but they soon returned to normal.

"No, she was tired from cooking last night, so let her sleep a little longer." Charles opened a bottle of beer as he answered. Thus, Rebecca nodded and didn't ask any more questions. Soon, the cook came over and informed everyone that breakfast was ready. Hence, they left the living room to the dining room.

At this point, Sonia hadn't come down yet. So, Charles looked at his watch and stood up from his chair. "You guys eat first; I'll go upstairs to wake my darling up."

"Go on, go on." Zane waved his hand, signaling him to go quickly.

Seeing this, Tyler muttered with a dissatisfied face, "Why should he go and wake her up?"

Zane heard him say this and laughed. "He is Sonia's boyfriend, so why not?"

"Hmph, what makes him worthy of being Sonia's boyfriend?" Tyler said with a darkened face.

At that, Zane hooked up the corner of his mouth. "If he does not deserve it, do you deserve it? Look at you being a child and yet want a woman already."

Embarrassed, Tyler flushed and stood up, saying loudly, "When have I ever said that?!"

“You don’t? Then why do you have an opinion about who Sonia is with?” Zane propped up his head and looked at Tyler with a smirk.

“I-I just don’t think they are suitable to be together.” Tyler’s eyes shifted.

At the next table, Toby held his coffee cup and lowered his eyes. Well, he’s not wrong. As early as when Charles and Sonia just got together, he had thought they were not suitable.

After Tina saw the man’s movements and guessed what he was thinking, she bit her lip. Despite the fire of jealousy surging in her heart, she smiled and said, “Tyler, you’re wrong. They grew up together as childhood friends, so they know each other best and are most suitable to be together.”

“But why do I hear that the majority of childhood friends are not suitable to be together because they know each other too well?” Tyler retorted back impatiently.

Tina frowned for a moment and soon smiled again. “It’s true, but it’s not absolute.”

“Anyway, I just don’t think they’re suitable.”

Tyler poked the sandwich on his plate with his fork and grunted, “Just like you and my brother don’t suit each other.”

Tina froze, obviously not expecting him to suddenly turn the tables on her. At this moment, she hated him in her heart. On the other hand, Zane and Rebecca laughed aloud because Tina’s expression was too funny, and they couldn’t help it.

“Toby...” Tina aggrievedly looked at the man beside her.

The man rubbed his eyebrows, then unhappily scolded Tyler. “All right, just eat up. No matter if Sonia and Charles are suitable or not, this is their business, so you don’t need to care.”

Hearing that, Tyler pursed his mouth and fell silent.

On the third floor, Charles came to the door of Sonia’s room, then raised his hand and knocked on the door. “Darling, are you up?”

In the room, Sonia's eyebrows twitched, and the next moment, she opened her eyes. She looked at the clean white ceiling and touched the quilt on her body, her mind a little confused. She remembered that she had fallen asleep downstairs last night, but how did she wake up in her room? How the hell did I get back?

"Darling?" The knocking outside the door continued.

Interrupted in her thoughts, Sonia patted her cheeks and sat up. "What's up?"

Hearing her response, Charles stopped opening the door and said aloud, "Breakfast is ready. I came to get you for breakfast."

"I got it. You go down first, and I'll come later," Sonia replied lazily.

Charles nodded. "That's fine then, but hurry up as breakfast will get cold later."

"Mm," Sonia answered. Then, Charles turned around and walked away. After Sonia heard the footsteps fade away, she lifted the blankets and got out of bed. Next, she went to the floor-to-ceiling windows and pulled the curtains open. The dazzling white light shone in, so Sonia couldn't help but raise her hand to block it in front of her eyes and squint. It was only after a while that she slowly reopened her eyes. Now, it was no longer raining outside, and the sun was shining. She opened the floor-to-ceiling window, smelled the air that had a faint scent of grass after the rain, and finally smiled happily. Stretching her back, she went to the bathroom to wash up.

"Hmm?" While she was washing herself, she suddenly saw a small red mark on her neck from the mirror. The color was quite dark, so it was hard to ignore. Sonia couldn't help but raise her hand to touch it, and when she didn't feel the bump from a typical mosquito bite, her face sank.

She was not an untouched girl, and the marks were exactly like the ones he left all over her neck and body the last time. So, she was pretty sure that the marks on her neck were hickeys.

Thinking of this, Sonia instantly thought of someone: Toby Fuller.

She had fallen asleep on the first floor last night, and he was with her at that time. So, he should have sent her back to her room, and thus the marks on her neck were also very likely his doing. Thinking of this, Sonia had her red lips pursed up tightly. She felt extremely complicated; there was anger and also other emotions.

After a while, she patted her cheeks irritably, spit out the content in her mouth, rinsed her mouth hurriedly, and went back to her room to change her clothes and put on makeup. She covered the marks on her neck with a thick layer of foundation.

I need to make sure no one sees this! Alright, I guess this should work.

After the preparatory work, she opened the door to head downstairs.

“Darling, you’re finally here.” When Charles saw Sonia coming, he hurriedly pulled out the chair beside him.

Zane, Tyler, and Rebecca also nodded along. Sonia smiled at them with embarrassment and said, “Sorry for making you guys wait.”

“Okay, okay, sit down and eat.” Charles patted the chair beside him.

Sitting down, Sonia picked up the cutlery and started to eat. During this time, she cast her eyes towards Toby several times, as if she wanted to see what was going on with him. But Toby’s expression was as cold as ever, so she couldn’t see through anything either.

After the meal, Zane suddenly stood up and clapped his hands. “Everyone, how about we go climb a mountain later? I heard that there is a viewing platform on the mountain, and the view from there is magnificent.”

“Toby, let’s go.” Tina hugged the arm of the man beside her and looked at him expectantly.

Toby couldn’t bear to see her disappointment and so nodded in agreement.

“Good, now we have two people who have signed up. Anyone else wants to tag along?” Zane looked at Sonia and the others.

“Darling, are you going?” Charles asked Sonia with a sideways glance, while Toby also glanced at her.

“What about you?” Sonia asked instead of answering.

Charles said smilingly, “I’ll go if you go, and I’ll stay here with you if you don’t want to go.”

“Then let’s go. Anyway, we’ve come this far, so it’s a pity not to go,” said Sonia after thinking about it.

When Toby heard that Sonia would also go, he felt pleased in his heart but did not show it. Then, Tyler also hurriedly raised his hand. “Since Sonia is going, then I will also go.”

Finally, Rebecca scratched her hair and said in a lazy tone, “If you all go, there’s no point for me to stay here either. I guess I’ll be joining.”

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“Since everyone has agreed to go mountain climbing, what are you still waiting for? Why don’t you go back and change your clothes?” Zane looked at the attire of the others and rolled his eyes.

Charles looked down at the silk floral shirt he was wearing, and the corners of his mouth twitched. “This attire of mine is indeed not very suitable for climbing.”

“Then go and change.” Sonia waved her hand, signaling him to go quickly. She would not need to change because when she came down, she was already wearing sportswear, which was just right for climbing.

“Toby, then I’ll go back to my room to change too.” Tina looked at the skirt she was wearing and spoke to Toby.

Toby lifted his chin slightly. "Go ahead." He did not need to change either; although he was not wearing sportswear, his current attire would work just fine.

"Wait for me." With that, Tina turned around and went back upstairs. The others also went back to their rooms to get changed, while Zane went outside to prepare the car.

Only Sonia and Toby were left in the dining room. This was perfect for Sonia because she had something to ask him. "President Fuller." Sonia suddenly spoke up.

Toby looked at her. "What is it?"

"Was it you who sent me back to my room last night?" Sonia looked back at him, her eyes calm.

Toby nodded. "It was me."

Sonia's face fell. "Why didn't you wake me up?"

"I did." Toby's thin lips slightly opened. "But you slept too deeply, so you did not wake up."

The corners of Sonia's eyes twitched at that. "Is that so?"

"Mm-hmm." Toby nodded, and she could tell that he was serious and not lying, so she felt a little embarrassed. She couldn't even wake up? Just how sleepy was she?

Coughing awkwardly twice, Sonia collected her composure and added, "Well, thank you, but..."

"What?" Toby took a sip of his coffee while she lowered her eyes, then looked at him with a stern gaze. "But did you do anything to me in my sleep?"

"Do what?" Toby raised his eyebrows and locked eyes with her. "Exactly what are you referring to?"

“For example, did you wring my neck or something?” Sonia asked as she took a deep breath. She couldn’t ask him directly if he had kissed her, so she could only ask that. Besides, she deliberately mentioned the neck, so he would definitely understand what she was really referring to.

Toby gripped his cup again and replied lightly, “No.”

“Really?” Sonia frowned slightly; she was obviously not convinced.

Toby looked at her. “Why would I do that to you?”

Why? How would I know why?

Just when Sonia was feeling exasperated, Toby sipped his coffee and said again, “Don’t worry, I didn’t do anything to you. I put you in the room and left.”

His expression was cool, without the slightest hint of guilt. Sonia looked at him steadily for a while and did not see anything wrong with him, so she could not help but believe his words. Maybe the hickey on her neck really wasn’t his doing. But if not him, then who else could it be? It was hard to believe that after he left last night, there was another person who entered her room.

Thinking about this, Sonia clenched her palms, her chest heaving violently in anger. She really did not expect...

“Darling, I’m done changing.” At this time, Charles’ voice came, interrupting Sonia’s thoughts.

Sonia looked at the man who came over and asked in a low voice, “Did you go out in the middle of the night last night?”

“Go out?” Charles blinked. “No, I slept until morning; why are you asking me this?”

Sonia looked at his bewildered face to make sure he wasn’t lying, then waved her hand. “It’s nothing.”

There were only four men here. Besides Toby and Charles, there were Zane and Tyler left. It should not be Tyler as he was only a teenager, so Zane was the only possible suspect left.

Just when she was thinking about Zane, he appeared, jingling the car keys in his hand. "The car has been filled with gas, and I also had the chef put a lot of food in the car. At noon, we will eat our lunch at the top of the mountain. You..."

Before he could finish, he felt a sharp, probing gaze on him, rendering him speechless. "Sonia, why are you looking at me like that? Is there something on my face?" Zane touched his face suspiciously.

Sonia narrowed her eyes at him. "Did you go out in the middle of the night last night?"

"No, why would I go out?" Zane had a very strange expression on his face.

Sonia felt that he was also telling the truth, so her face sank. If it wasn't Toby nor Charles nor Zane, then who could it be? Last night, there were only a few of them in the villa and no outsiders, so could it be that she had really misunderstood and the mark on her neck was not a hickey but a mosquito bite?

For a moment, the expression on Sonia's face was a bit dazed, and then she left the dining room in a trance. After that, Charles and Zane looked at each other. "What's going on?" Zane asked.

Charles shook his head, indicating that he didn't know either. Then in the next second, he suddenly thought of something else, so he narrowed his eyes and looked at the man who was still sitting at the table drinking coffee. He questioned in a harsh tone, "Did you bully my darling?"

The words 'my darling' felt excruciatingly grating to Toby's ears. With a cold face, he stood up, ignored everyone, and walked out of the dining room.

"What's with his attitude?" Charles pointed in the direction Toby left, looking annoyed. However, Zane shrugged and did not say anything.

Soon, the group of people gathered outside the villa. There were two kilometers from the entrance to the start of the hike, and it was too slow to walk there, so it was better to drive. Thus, the

group of seven people in two separate cars headed toward the foot of the mountain.

Sonia and the other four sat in one, while Toby and Tina sat in the other because no one wanted to sit with them, not even Tyler. Thus, it was obvious how much the others disliked them.

When they arrived at the foot of the mountain, they got off and started to hike up the mountain. Tina looked up at the top of the mountain, a slight hint of hesitation appearing on her face. "It's so high up, Toby. Are we really going to climb up there and not take the cable car?"

Before Toby could answer, Charles spoke first. "What? You want to take the cable car up the mountain?"

"No?" Tina looked at him, her large eyes filled with innocence.

Pursing his lips, Charles replied, "It's not impossible, but we've agreed not to take the cable car up the mountain before. We'll take it down the mountain; otherwise, it won't be a hiking trip!"

"But it's too high up." Tina bit her lip, her tone full of resistance.

"So go back then. Don't stay around and ruin our mood," Charles impatiently said.

"You!" Tina's face turned red with anger, and then she looked at Toby.

Toby asked, "Tina, do you want to go back? If you want to go back, I will send you back."

"I—"

"Hey, Miss Gray, can't you even go through a little hard work?" Before Tina could answer, Zane interrupted her.

When Tina heard that, she had a flash of bad premonition surged in her heart. Then, Sonia and Rebecca looked at each other and smiled. They knew that Zane was up to something.

“Mr. Coleman, what do you mean?” Tina squeezed her hands tightly, barely maintaining a smile on her face as she looked at Zane.

The corners of Zane’s mouth hooked up into a playful smile. “I don’t mean anything other than you being too weak and pretentious.”

“Zane!” Toby pursed his lips and looked at him unhappily.

Zane spread his hands. “Toby, I’m not wrong, am I? If your fiancée thinks the mountain is too high and doesn’t want to hike, then she shouldn’t have come in the beginning. Isn’t it pretentious of her now that she’s here but wants to give up even before trying?”

Toby furrowed his eyebrows. Although he did not like Zane’s attitude, it was undeniable that what Zane said was the truth.