

# This Time, I Will Get My Divorce, Mr

## Chapter 246

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Toby went over and hugged her. Everyone thought he cared about her, but only he knew this hug was only done because he didn't want to get into trouble.

"We need an explanation, manager." Carl took his jacket off and covered Sonia with it before asking the manager coldly.

I knew it. The manager sighed. "We're very sorry, customers. We never expected this to happen. It's an overlook on our part, so we'll take full responsibility for this. Your bill will be waived, and we'll pay for your medical bills. And we'll also give you a member card. Is that fine with you?" He looked at Carl and Toby carefully, since they looked like the ones calling the shots.

But Carl looked at Sonia. "What do you think, Sonia?"

Sonia massaged her forehead. "Sure. It's not completely their fault anyway. This is just an accident, and we ran straight into it."

"Alright. Do as she says," Carl replied to the manager.

The manager thanked them profusely, "Thank you for your understanding. We're very sorry for ruining the experience." He bowed to Sonia and Carl.

Carl pulled the manager back up and looked at Toby. "What about you two?"

Worried Tina might go on a rampage again, Toby answered, "Same here."

The manager thanked him, since he was worried they might not let it slide so easily. It was obvious Tina was a fussy one, but luckily Toby was an understanding man, or the injury on Tina's face alone could cost them a ton. Now that the problem was settled, the manager wiped the sweat off of his forehead and heaved a sigh of relief.

But then, the waiter who was handling the aftermath said, "Sir, something's off with this chandelier."

"How so?" The manager went over.

Carl and Sonia looked at them curiously, and even Toby shifted his attention to the chandelier.

"This one." The waiter pointed at the column. "The column isn't rusty or corroded, so how did it break?"

"Um..." The manager couldn't come up with the answer. He kept staring at the column, but he couldn't figure out what happened.

The column connected the chandelier to the ceiling. It was big, sturdy, and made out of alloy. Not even a strong earthquake could break it unless it was corroded. However, alloys wouldn't rust that easily. It'd take at least a decade or two to corrode, but the restaurant hadn't been open for even a year.

Sonia squinted. "Someone might have sabotaged you guys."

Carl nodded. "It's possible. Since it's almost impossible to break by itself, someone might have done this."

"S-Someone did this?" Shocked, the manager said, "This is not a joke, sir. We won't do anything to our customers. That'll be bad for business."

Sonia smiled. "You got it wrong. He isn't saying you guys did it."

The manager heaved a sigh of relief, but he got curious. "Then who did this?"

Sonia shook her head, having no answer to his question. At the same time, Toby was reminded of his car crash. Someone planned that, but he couldn't find the culprit even until now. Today, the chandelier fell down on him. Technically, Sonia got the brunt of the impact, but his table was less than a meter away from hers, so it might have been targeting him.

Maybe the same person did this. But he refuted his guess right away. When he and Tina came out, they only said they were out for dinner, but they didn't mention their location. They only came to this restaurant since they came across it on their way. In other words, he made the decision on the spot, but sabotages had to be done beforehand. Not even the culprit knew he'd come here, so they couldn't have done this. Unless they were clairvoyant.

Another person shared his sentiment—Carl. Ironically, he was the one who proposed the sabotage theory. He looked up at the ceiling, then the chandelier, and puzzlement painted his face. "Odd."

"What is it, Carl? Did you notice something?" Sonia looked at him.

Carl rubbed his chin and nodded. "The ceiling's too high. Probably around ten meters. Most ladders can't reach that height, so it's impossible for anyone to climb up there. They could have used a forklift, but it's too big for this place."

The manager agreed, "He's right. Our restaurant is built with the style of Renaissance-era English castles in mind. Back then, ceilings stretched really tall, so we installed the chandeliers using lift platforms. The doors were installed last, since the platforms were too big for the place."

"So it's not sabotage?" Sonia frowned.

Before Carl could answer, Tina interrupted, "Mr. Lee, first you said it's sabotage, and now you say it isn't. Don't you think throwing random guesses is a bit irresponsible?"

Carl glared at her.

Sonia clutched her arm. "He's just pointing out his guesses based on the clues he has. It's not random guesses. Besides, interrupting someone is rude, Miss Gray. Oh wait, someone like you doesn't have an ounce of decency in them, so I guess being rude is natural for you."

"Why you..." Tina glared at her.

Sonia sneered. "Look at you, gnashing your teeth. Do you want to bite me? Well, come on then." She beckoned Tina, as if Tina was a dog.

Tina trembled, her eyes turning red with anger. "I am not a dog, Sonia!"

"Hey, I didn't say anything. But since you think you're a dog, I don't mind seeing you as one. Stop overreacting, will you?" Sonia flicked her hair and shook her head. "Can't believe someone actually wants to be a dog. Very well then. Carl, don't argue with her. I mean, she thinks she's a dog, and I'm sure you don't really argue with dogs, right?"

Carl knew Sonia was insulting Tina for his sake, and he was touched. He looked at her, his gaze as gentle as the spring breeze. "Sure, Sonia. I don't argue with dogs, really."

The manager watched the argument quietly. Hot damn. Catfights are seriously intense.

"Why you..." Tina was pointing at them, her finger trembling. However, Carl and Sonia didn't even look at her, obviously seeing her as less than human. She almost fainted from her fury, but she turned around and held Toby's sleeve. "Toby, they insulted me." She gave him a look of complaint. "Aren't you going to do something?"

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"No." He stared down, hiding the laugh in his eyes. Nicely done.

Tina stared at him in disbelief. "What? Why?"

Carl and Sonia looked at him as well. Yeah, he didn't even help her when we insulted her. I thought he loved her and would do anything for her. Why did he let us do what we wanted? Odd.

Toby could guess what Sonia was thinking from the change in her expression. He wanted to tell her he didn't love Tina, so whatever

happened to her wasn't his business. However, he had a hunch that something bad would happen if he said that, and the feeling was too strong for him to ignore. In the end, Toby let Tina go and put his hand in his pocket so he could clench it without anyone seeing. "Because it's a bit hard to handle," he said coolly.

"Why?" Tina was curious.

Sonia arched her eyebrow. She too wanted to know his answer.

Toby pursed his lips and lied, "Sonia didn't call you a dog. You did it yourself. If I defend you, that means you'll be really nothing but a dog." He deliberately emphasized the word 'dog.'

Sonia thought she was hearing things. Is he emphasizing the last word? What? Why? Does he think she's a b\*tch too? Sonia was amused by that thought, and she shook her head. Impossible. I must be hearing things. He loves her more than anything. There's no way he thinks she's a b\*tch.

Tina didn't notice the emphasis, so she bit her lip and nodded. "I see." She thought something was off, but she couldn't put a finger on it, so she put it behind her.

Now that she wouldn't throw a tantrum, Toby stopped frowning. I get the gist now. As long as she stays calm, I won't have to follow her every whim and desire, nor will I get punished for disobeying her. Toby rubbed his fingers. "Since we can't solve the mystery, we'll let the cops handle it. As for you guys..." He looked at the manager.

The manager stood up straight. "We'll cooperate with the cops."

Toby nodded, then he looked at Sonia, his gaze mellow. "What do you think?"

Sonia didn't answer, for she was surprised.

Carl nudged her on the shoulder. "Sonia?"

“Huh? Oh, sorry. I was thinking about something else. What is it?” She snapped out of it and smiled apologetically. However, she was shaken to her core, for she could see the old Toby for an instant when he was looking at her earlier.

Carl didn’t notice her shock, and he answered gently, “President Fuller said to let the cops handle this since we can’t solve the mystery ourselves.”

“That works. Sure.” Sonia nodded.

The manager went to call the cops. After they came and took Sonia, Carl, Tina, and Toby’s testimonials, they let the four of them go. Carl and Sonia left first, while Toby and Tina waited for Toby’s driver.

Toby was staring at Sonia as she left, and Tina was jealous about it. She wanted to turn his head and tell him to only have eyes on her, not anyone else. Not even Sonia. Especially not Sonia. However, she didn’t do it. If she did that, he’d give her the silent treatment again. She didn’t want it, not after they finally patched things up.

When she saw Toby’s car, she took a deep breath and held her fury down. She forced a smile and called out to Toby, snatching his attention back to her. “The car’s here, Toby.”

In response, Toby merely nodded and hobbled toward the car.

Tina stomped her foot, since Toby didn’t even call her to go together with him. “Wait for me, Toby.”

Toby pretended he didn’t hear her. After he handed the crutch over to the driver, he went into the car. Tina sat beside him and closed the door. “Why didn’t you wait for me, Toby?” She looked at him, slightly annoyed.

“Quiet. My head hurts.” Toby closed his eyes and told her to shut up.

Tina wanted to argue, but when she remembered how Toby almost fell twice in the restaurant, she shut up.

An hour of silence later, they arrived at Tina’s house. Before she got out of the car, Tina looked at the man beside her. His eyes

were closed, seemingly because he was in a deep sleep. Toby showed no signs of getting out even after the car had stopped. Tina bit her lip. She wanted to wake him up and tell him they were at her home. But when she realized he was frowning, she gave up and got out by herself. Fine. He gets a pass, since he's unwell. I'll get him to love me more after this. That thought made her feel much better.

Thud. The moment she closed the door, Toby opened his eyes, his gaze as cold as Helheim. "Drive," he ordered.

The driver felt a chill running up his spine. He quickly turned away and drove into the distance.

The exhaust smoke enveloped Tina. She didn't expect that coming, and she almost puked, but more than that, she was furious. What the heck? How dare that driver do this to me? I'll get Toby to fire him tomorrow! She wiped her face off angrily before going into the mansion.

Julia was going through her skincare routine in the living room. When she noticed her daughter coming in looking furious, she quickly took her mask off. "What happened, Tina? I thought you were on a dinner date with Toby. Did you patch things up with him? Are you guys okay now?"

Tina sat down beside Julia. "Yes." She didn't get an affirmative answer, and Toby didn't tell her either. But since he was acting nice again, she thought they had patched things up.

"That's great, then. So why do you look so down?" Julia looked at her in confusion.

Tina gritted her teeth. "It's his driver. Got the exhaust smoke all over me."

Julia gave her a glass of honey water. "That's nothing to trouble yourself over. Just tell Toby to fire him. Don't waste your time getting angry over that. Here, have some water."

Tina took it and had a sip without even saying thank you. "Where's Dad?" she asked.

Julia pointed upstairs. "Working in his study."

Tina nodded. "I see."

Then a servant came downstairs. "Madam, the room's ready."

"Are we expecting guests today, Mom?" Tina put her glass down and looked at Julia.

Julia touched her necklace, smiling gently. "No. It's for your sister."

Tina was shaken, and she asked stiffly, "Rina's coming back?" Dammit. They couldn't have found her, right? Why else would they set a room up for her?

"No." Julia sighed. "No news yet, but I want to set it up so she can live in it right after she comes back."

"I see..." Tina forced a smile, "celebrating" the occasion.

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Oh, good, so Rina hasn't actually been found yet. But it seems as if Mom can't wait to see her because why else would she bother decorating Rina's bedroom before the girl is even located? At this rate, Mom's attention will be stolen by her the moment she returns.

Tina's hands curled into fists on top of her knees as she dwelled upon these thoughts. She lowered her head by a fraction and hid the dark look on her face.

After a pause, she looked up once more and feigned concern as she asked Julia, "Mom, what if—and this is a big what-if—Rina has a weak and cowardly character because she'd grown up in a poor family? Assuming that is the case, she would only embarrass you in public because she's too afraid and too incapable of doing anything right. Would you still like her and look forward to meeting her?"



Julia shot her daughter an affronted look, her face no longer a picture of gentle compassion as she demanded, "Tina, why would you ask such a thing?"

Tina held her by the arm coquettishly and explained, "I was only curious because that's how most soap operas go—you know, how the long-lost child from some affluent family is finally reunited with their parents. But they end up getting shunned by them because their incapability is humiliating. I'm just worried that you and Dad might treat Rina the same way."

"Oh, is that it?" Julia batted away her doubts and smoothed Tina's hair affectionately. "Pay no mind to things like that, seeing as they only ever happen in soap operas."

"So you won't end up treating Rina like an outcast even if something like that happens?" Tina narrowed her eyes slightly as an icy gleam lit up her depthless orbs.

Julia nodded firmly. "Of course not. I carried her and gave birth to her, not to mention she was the child your father looked most forward to. You have no idea how your father—" She broke off with a quick sigh, then added, "It doesn't matter. The bottom line is that you have absolutely nothing to worry about. Your father and I won't mistreat or sideline your sister that way, and even if she were to be in such unfortunate circumstances, it would only make us love her harder. We wouldn't shun her or dislike her at all. In fact, we'd try to make it up to her even more!"

"I'm so happy to hear that!" Tina broke into a smile, looking as if she truly was relieved on Rina's part.

However, the bad premonition she had had was amplified, and she was the only one who was acutely aware of the crisis she would face soon.

She had painted a rather tragic backstory for Rina in hopes of luring her mother into revealing her true feelings about her lost daughter. That had backfired, though, seeing as it did not curb Julia's excitement for the reunion but prompted her to want to make it up to Rina instead.

Just as I thought, Rina is turning out to be my biggest hurdle next to Sonia. Tina grew mutinous, and a sinister gleam flashed in her eyes as she became seized with the urge to annihilate anyone who got in her way.

...

Presently, at the Fullers' Residence, Toby stepped out of the car with the chauffeur's support.

Meanwhile, Rose came out of the house to greet Toby as soon as she heard the sound of the car pulling up. She had been so worried about her grandson that she decided to remain at the Fuller's Residence and refused to return to the old manor.

"You're home late, Toby," she remarked disapprovingly as she made her way to the car.

Toby graciously took the cane the driver had handed him, then said, "I was stuck in traffic, Grandma. Shall we go into the house?"

He had no intention of telling the old woman about what happened at the restaurant earlier, fearing that she would be mortified by it.

"Yes, of course we shall," Rose agreed with a nod.

The both of them proceeded toward the house with their individual canes, which proved an entertaining sight, given the decades between them.

Jean was carrying out a platter of fruits from the kitchen when she saw Rose and Toby. "Oh, you're home, Toby!" she exclaimed in greeting.

Toby nodded briskly in acknowledgment. "Mom."

"Take a seat," she urged as she hastily put the platter down and made to help him.

However, he brushed her off and said, "I've got it." There might not be any strength in his legs, but that didn't mean he couldn't manage sitting on his own.

He set his cane aside and held onto the armrest of the couch as he slowly eased into his seat. Jean, on the other hand, pushed the fruit platter toward him and asked cheerfully, "Have you patched things up with Tina, Toby?"

Patch things up? Toby lowered his gaze when he heard his mother but made no reply. He wondered why his mother would even see this as something even possible.

When he recalled how his every thought and emotion had been inexplicably swayed and manipulated because of her, he wanted nothing more than to kill her!

If Tina truly was Maple, Toby was willing to overlook all that he had done for her before the accident—regardless of whether he was being manipulated at the time—given that he really was in love with Maple.

However, if Tina had been pretending to be Maple all along, then there was no way he would let her get away with such a despicable form of deceit!

At the thought of this, Toby grabbed his cane and rose from his seat. "Grandma, Mom, if you'll excuse me, I'll be going back to my room to rest. I'm a little tired."

In truth, he wanted to return to his bedroom so that he could find out for sure if Tina was Maple, though he already knew the answer to that. Having said what he did, he headed for the elevator.

Meanwhile, Jean glanced at the untouched platter of fruits, then at Toby's back. Slightly peeved, she grumbled, "He didn't even answer my question."

Rose rolled her eyes at the younger woman pointedly, then stalked into her own bedroom without another word. She found it pointless and grating on the nerves to continue sharing the same space with this daughter-in-law of hers, seeing as Toby had already left. If it weren't for the fact that this woman has been good to Toby and Tyler, I would have kicked her out of the Fuller Family long ago.

In the bedroom, Toby pulled open his drawer, intending to take out Maple's past letters to him and read through them once more.

However, he froze in shock when he saw that his drawer had been emptied out, and not a single letter from Maple remained.

At that moment, he felt as if his own heart had been emptied out, but he quickly became apoplectic.

He stormed downstairs and summoned all the household servants. With a voice like thunder, he demanded, "Who took my letters from my drawer?"

The servants exchanged helpless and bewildered looks. They shook their heads slowly and denied opening the drawer in question.

Seeing this, Toby thought that none of them was willing to confess to the crime, and he grew even more furious as he snapped, "I said that no one is allowed to step into my room without my permission, let alone touch my things! Did none of you pay attention?"

Unable to stand the blank accusations, one of the servants who had been working the longest in the Fullers' Residence finally spoke up. "Young Master Toby, we really did not open your drawer."

When the other servants heard this, they nodded and said hastily, "That's right, Young Master Toby. We really didn't."

Toby narrowed his eyes as he surveyed them and tried to see if they were lying, but having assessed their expressions, he realized that all of them spoke the truth. None of them flinched or averted his gaze; the steady and genuine look in their eyes and on their faces showed that they weren't lying to him.

He fell silent. If they didn't touch my drawer, then how did my letters go missing in the first place?

Just then, Jean let out a small yawn as she rounded the second-floor landing. "Toby, what in the world are you doing?"

"Madam, it seems as if Young Master Toby's letters have gone missing, and he's extremely angry about it," the first servant who had spoken up earlier explained.

Jean cast a curious look at her son. "Toby, what letters are they referring to?"

"My letters with Maple," Toby answered swiftly. He didn't have to lie about this. After all, it was no secret among the Fullers that he had been pen pals with Maple.

"Oh, you mean the letters you exchanged with Tina? I thought she burned them into ashes." Jean let out another yawn as she said this, revealing two rows of slightly stained teeth.

Toby's face darkened at this, and he looked so dangerous that even his voice came out cold and cutting. "Did you just say that Tina burned them?"

"Yes, and you agreed to it, too. Don't you remember?" Jean threw him a confused look.

Toby stiffened at this. I agreed to it? Why would I even agree to let Tina burn those letters? They meant more to me than anything else I own; I wouldn't have saved them for over ten years otherwise!

But the next moment, a certain memory surfaced in his mind: it was a scene from nearly three months ago when Tina had only just awakened. She told him that there was no point in keeping the letters now that she had regained consciousness and would stay next to him. She had said that the letters would be better off burned away into nothing—and he had agreed to it!

He had actually agreed to it! Mortified and in complete disbelief, Toby clutched his cane even tighter. How in the world could I have agreed to do something so awful? I couldn't possibly have done that! What wretched power in the world has compelled me to do something like that?

His knuckles turned white, and the veins on the back of his hand throbbed as he tightened his hold on the cane.

That's right! I was not as lucid after the accident as I am now. Tina could have said anything, and I'd agree to it without stopping to think if it was problematic. I didn't even bother saying no to her at the time, and I've certainly never experienced heart-wrenching pain.

Suddenly, it was as if everything made sense. The only reason why he even agreed to let Tina burn those letters was because he had been under the influence of some strange persuasive force, and he never truly intended to do so in the first place.

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It was at that precise moment that Toby became sure of the truth: Tina was not Maple.

After all, if she indeed was Maple, then why would she burn the letters which had brought them together instead of keeping them and reminiscing over them? Because she was afraid that keeping those letters would one day bring her lies crumbling down.

Jean saw that Toby was trembling slightly, like he was suppressing insurmountable rage. A chill ran down her spine as she swallowed and asked hesitantly, "T-Toby, what's the matter with you?"

Toby ignored her and took out his phone to make a call.

Before long, Tom's groggy voice sounded from the other line as he yawned and asked, "President Fuller, is there something wrong?"

"Come by the Fuller Residence now. I need to ask you something." Having said that brusquely, Toby hung up the call without another word.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the phone, Tom sat up in bed with a spaced-out look on his face. Did he just ask me to drop by the Fuller Residence?

As his mind cleared up, he detached the phone from his ear and stared at the screen. When he saw that it was close to midnight, he let out a frustrated groan. For heaven's sake, it's late at night, and it's nearly midnight! He must be insane to have asked me to go by the Fullers' Residence! Whatever this is about, why couldn't

he have told me over the phone and insisted that I go over to his place?

Despite Tom's resentment, he got out of bed anyway and begrudgingly began to get ready, then headed over to the Fuller Residence as ordered.

At around 1.00AM, he found himself standing in Toby's study. "What is it that you needed to ask me, President Fuller?" he asked with a polite smile, though he was cursing Toby over and over in his heart.

As though sensing the man's annoyance, Toby shot him a pointed look and tapped his fingers against his ice-cold desk. "Do you think Tina is Maple?"

"Huh?" Tom was taken aback by this, but he quickly regained his composure. "President Fuller, are you suspecting that Miss Gray is not your pen pal from all those years ago?"

Toby nodded in affirmation.

Tom stared at him intently for a while, and after making sure that the man was not joking, he said after a long pause, "To tell you the truth, President Fuller, I don't think Tina and Maple are the same person at all. I've been by your side for all these years, and I've seen you exchange letters with Maple. From what I've gathered about her, she's warm and kind, not to mention outgoing and witty, but Miss Gray boasts none of these qualities."

When he was done speaking, he peered up at Toby apprehensively, worried that he might have angered the latter.

Much to his surprise, Toby did not appear furious at all but looked as if he was immersed in thought.

Tom let out a quiet breath of relief. Thank goodness President Fuller isn't mad at me for making those disparaging comments about Miss Gray, but I wonder why he doubts her identity as Maple. He scratched his head, unable to figure out what Toby was thinking.

Minutes ticked by, and Toby finally said in a cold voice, "You're right. She has none of these qualities, and she has no right to assume Maple's identity."

Upon hearing this, Tom felt something click in his mind. He pushed his glasses up his nose bridge and asked, "Have you discovered something that made you doubt Miss Gray's identity as Maple, President Fuller?"

It's no wonder then that President Fuller's been cold and distant to Miss Gray for the past two days. That makes sense, seeing how he was only kind and loving to her because he believed she was Maple. If the opposite were true, then he would naturally grow indifferent toward her. After all, Miss Reed is the one he's truly in love with.

Toby narrowed his eyes pensively without answering Tom's question and asked instead, "You were the one who collected Maple's letters on my behalf when I was too tied up with work before, so you would know her postal address, right?"

Tom nodded hastily. "I remember her address. Do you want me to drop by the place and find out if Maple truly isn't Miss Gray?"

"Yes," Toby replied.

"I'll get right on it, sir," Tom said dutifully. "I'll head over to Marina City right away and—wait!"

He broke off, and his eyes widened as the sudden realization that something was off dawned upon him.

Toby frowned at this. "What is it?"

"There's something odd going on here. President Fuller, Maple lives all the way in Marina City, but the Gray Residence is in Eastbourne. Both these cities are practically sixty kilometers away, and the Gray Family has been in Eastbourne for the last twenty years; they never once moved. It's as clear as day now that Tina really isn't Maple!"

Toby stiffened when he heard Tom's deduction, and his eyes widened by a fraction as he pondered on this new revelation.



That's right. If Tina really was Maple, then the postal address would have been Eastbourne and not Marina City.

While Toby was deep in thought, Tom spoke up again from across the desk, "I remember you mentioned that Maple used to have a pet dog, President Fuller."

Toby's chin jerked slightly. "Bucky."

"That's the one. However, the Gray Family has never had any pet dogs. You also mentioned that Maple has a stepmother and a sister, but Mrs. Gray has always been the first wife. All these aside, I caught a glimpse of Tina's handwriting last month when she got bored in your office and scribbled a couple of things. While she didn't often write after she was discharged from the hospital, I noticed that her penmanship is completely different to Maple's," Tom informed solemnly.

Tom had never read any of the letters Maple wrote to Toby, but she did pen the address on the envelopes, which was enough to make him come to the conclusion that she had understated and refined handwriting. It was distinct and easy on the eyes, unlike Tina's, which was as plain as it was common.

Granted, a person who had been comatose for six years would not necessarily have the best handwriting, having not touched pen and paper for so long. However, muscle memory would kick in as the body recovered, and the person's handwriting would eventually start to look the way it had before. As such, it made no sense that Tina's handwriting could have changed so drastically even after she had been hospitalized for six years.

Tom felt goosebumps raised along his skin at the thought of this. "It gets stranger and stranger the more I think about it, President Fuller. How could we not have realized that there was something off when these doubts have been present all along? Besides, there were cracks in Tina's behavior and stories that should have made us suspicious, so why did it take us this long to look back and discover this despicable charade?"

Toby lowered his gaze and fell silent. When Tom was speaking earlier, it was as though a veil that had been obscuring Toby's sight was finally lifted. It was like the lights had shifted at that moment, and he could finally see the world with sharp clarity.

Indeed, how could I have missed all the cracks and inconsistencies in Tina's stories and behavior? More to the point, how did Tom manage to overlook all these, too? All these questions flooded Toby's mind, and he grew unsettled at how wrong everything was.

Even as he thought this, he knew well the reason why he never saw through Tina's pretenses—it was all because of that strange and mysterious force. That being said, he didn't think Tom would be influenced by it as well.

"Why are you looking at me like that, President Fuller?" Tom asked uneasily.

Toby pursed his lips and said hoarsely, "No reason. Anyway, drop by Marina City tomorrow and find the real Maple." She's the person I'm truly in love with!

"Yes, sir!" Tom nodded. Then, seemingly remembering something, he paused and added, "So, about Tina..."

A dangerous gleam flashed in Toby's eyes as he replied ominously, "I'll take care of it. I'll let her know that Maple isn't just some mask she can put on at her own whim and fancy!"

There was an insidious undertone to his voice that made Tom shudder. He knew at that moment that Tina was done for.

But she's definitely getting what's coming for her. She should have thought better than to pretend to be Maple and deceive President Fuller for the past six years.

Dark glee rose within Tom as he adjusted his glasses and turned to leave the study.

When the door closed, Toby rose from his seat and crossed over to where the French windows to the side of the room, whereupon he stared out at the night scene with his brows drawn together as all the doubts plagued him. What is that mysterious force? How did it manipulate me into loving Tina? And what other secrets is Tina hiding?

All these questions seemed to crack the strange rose-colored glass that had shielded Toby from reality. He had believed that he was fine, but what he had not expected was that he would be

unknowingly pulled into the drowsy depths of the mysterious force.

As soon as he thought of this, a sharp headache attacked him. For a moment, he thought he might have seen the light at the end of the tunnel, but that was before the dizzying halos came into his vision. Submitting to the inexplicable pain that overcame him, he couldn't help but lower his head in hopes of finding quick relief.

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At the same time, the explosive crack of thunder sounded overhead just as a purplish-white streak of lightning split the night sky in half, ominously igniting the darkness that fell over the land.

Tucked away in Bayside Residence, Sonia bolted upright in bed and gasped. Her heart felt constricted with panic, but she had no idea why.

To switch on the bedside lamp, she had to bring her hand up. After that, she massaged her temples and reached for the glass of water on her nightstand, then took a sip as she tried to calm herself down.

She was done drinking and was just about to place the glass back on the nightstand when her eyes widened in horror; the curtains had not been drawn over the French windows at the foot of her bed, and on the rain-splattered glass appeared a terrifying figment of what looked like a skull.

Am I imagining things? Sonia shut her eyes tight and opened them again, then looked up at the French windows once more.

This time, she was met with darkness, which was weakly illuminated by the neon lights of the nightscape that refracted off the glass. There was no skull at all.

“Phew.” She let out a huge sigh of relief and patted her chest to soothe her wildly-beating heart.

As it turned out, she had been imagining things after all. Of course I was. With the way modern society is progressing, I should be jaded enough to ignore all the nonsense about paranormal stuff. She shook her head and let out a self-effacing laugh at her own rich imagination.

When Sonia arrived at work the next day, Daphne—who had been waiting at the former’s office doorway—bowed and greeted, “Good morning, President Reed.”

“Good morning. Why are you here waiting for me? Has something happened?” Sonia asked as she took out her card key and swiped it across the sensor on the door, then made her way into the office.

Daphne fell in step behind her. “I just got a call from Fuller Group. They want you to go over for a meeting; it’s about alternative energy collaboration.”

Sonia was pulling up her chair when she heard this and paused. “Is the meeting at Fuller Group?”

Daphne nodded earnestly. “Yes.”

The divot between Sonia’s brows went as quickly as it came. “Very well, then. What time is the meeting?”

In all honesty, she was reluctant to go over to Fuller Group, but Toby was the person in charge of the collaboration, and he called the shots when it came to the time and place for any relevant meetings. No one would dare speak up against his decisions unless they were prepared to lose out on the project. Sonia had fought tooth and nail to procure the partnership, so abandoning the project halfway was not an option, which meant she was left with no choice but to attend the meeting.

“It’s scheduled for 2.00PM,” Daphne answered dutifully.

Sonia took off her coat and sat down. "Got it. Is there anything else?"

"Yes—Mr. Lee has left you a ticket this morning." Daphne opened the folder she was carrying and produced a ticket, then handed it over to Sonia.

Taking it and reading the brief introduction on fashion inscribed upon it, Sonia couldn't help but laugh while musing, "I can't believe he actually gave me this."

"He wanted to wait to give it to you personally, but he got a phone call and had to leave urgently," Daphne explained.

Sonia kept the ticket in the drawer and said, "Maybe it was a work call. Speaking of which, you should get back to work now."

"Alright." Daphne nodded once and left the office.

Presently, Daphne opened up her laptop and set herself to work. When lunchtime rolled around, she got a call from the police station and was informed that the investigation into the restaurant incident had been completed.

The police concluded that the whole thing had been an accident, and having checked through all the security footage, they were sure that no one sabotaged the crystal chandelier. As to why the chandelier had fallen in the first place, the investigation showed that it was purely due to a worn-out supporting chain.

While Sonia found the explanation to be lazy and unreliable, in the absence of rust and sabotage, she could come up with no other reason as to how the incident could have occurred in the first place.

Regardless of her dissatisfaction, she allowed the incident to come to an end and did not press further on the matter.

She hung up the phone and glanced at her bandaged arm, then heaved a sigh before carrying on eating her meal.

Afterward, she got into her car and drove over to Fuller Group all on her own.

Meanwhile, in the presidential office at Fuller Group, Toby's gaze flickered over to the time displayed on the bottom right corner of his laptop screen and asked, "Has everyone arrived?"

Tom, who was standing to the side, immediately understood what Toby was asking and nodded. "I saw three of the collaborators on my way here, so I assume the rest of them ought to have arrived by now."

Toby hummed curtly in response. "Let's go, then."

He took the cane that was resting against the edge of the table and hoisted himself to his feet, then proceeded toward the door. Tom, on the other hand, carried the documents as he followed suit.

Upon their arrival at the conference room, Toby and Tom made their way through the door, and those who were already waiting inside immediately stopped chattering as they stood up and greeted, "President Fuller."

Naturally, Sonia maintained a courteous and formal front along with the rest of her peers.

Toby's gaze swept across those who gathered at the conference table before it lingered briefly on Sonia, and only then did he look away. "Please take your seats."

Sonia and the others did as they were told, and Tom began to hand out the information related to the meeting agenda. However, a look of astonishment flashed in his eyes when he noticed Sonia's bandaged arm as she reached for the document, but he quickly recomposed himself.

It was only after he had returned to his usual spot behind Toby that he pointed out in a low voice, "President Fuller, it seems as if Miss Reed has been injured."

"I know," came Toby's stoic reply, though there was a meaningful gleam in his eyes.

Tom raised a brow. Okay, so I've unnecessarily voiced out my observation. I thought he had no idea about her injury.

The meeting officially began, and the agenda for the day was with regards to the essential uses for which the alternative energy technology might be used after business discussions were concluded, as well as the pros and cons of such uses.

Sonia might have read up as much as she could on the subject of alternative energy, and she might have sat through several college classes for the same, but her knowledge on the matter was superficial at best.

Seeing as she had never done an extensive study on alternative energy, she couldn't very well grasp whatever content and opinions Toby presented throughout the meeting. She felt like she was listening to gibberish.

Left helpless, she resorted to writing down every single point of discussion, planning to review and read up on them once she got home that evening. Alas, Toby spoke much too quickly for her to jot down anything coherent, and her hand grew tired before her brain could register his words.

Frowning, she shook her wrist to relieve the onset of a cramp.

Meanwhile, from the main seat, Toby's gaze darkened when he noticed her gesture out of the corners of his eyes and decidedly slowed down in his speech.

Now, Sonia could finally catch up with whatever he was saying, and her notes were starting to look more put-together than they had moments ago. However, she couldn't resist peering at him once or twice. She did wonder why he had slowed down in his speech all of a sudden, but she was not narcissistic enough to think it had anything to do with her.

Nearly two hours later, Toby raised his mug of coffee to his lips and took a sip. "That's all for the meeting today. Do any of you need clarification on anything we've discussed today?"

He might sound as if he was offering everyone the chance to seek further explanation, but his stony gaze was fixed on Sonia alone.

Sonia, on the other hand, stared at her notebook uneasily and bit down on her lip.

She wanted to say she had plenty of things she needed clarification on, but when she saw that no one else was asking questions, she figured she would be made the laughingstock of the industry if she were to say she was clueless about pretty much everything on the agenda.

Of course, she wouldn't mind if she was made the laughingstock, but she couldn't live down the possibility of Paradigm Co. becoming the butt of the joke, too. She refused to even weigh the risk of it. I'm better off going through these notes when I get back to the office so that I can try to understand them better.

With that in mind, she lowered her head and remained silent.

At the sight of this, Toby pursed his lips, displeased by her stubborn silence. Does she take her pride so seriously that she'd rather feign comprehension than ask questions?

He supposed that the few men in her life must have put in their fair share of work in order to keep her afloat in the business world.

A shadow passed over his handsome face when he thought about Charles, Carl, and the other men in Sonia's life, and the air around him suddenly grew cold. He slammed his coffee mug against the table and said darkly, "Seeing as all of you have a firm grasp of the subject matter, I want each of you to go back and write out an analytical report on the uses of alternative energy. I want the report emailed to me by tomorrow. Dismissed!"

An analytical report? Sonia looked up anxiously when she heard this. How am I supposed to write a report when I can't even make sense of the meeting today? More importantly, how am I going to finish the report in less than a day?

She looked around and noted how everyone was unfazed, unlike herself. Before she could hold herself back, she stood up and began slowly, "President Fuller..."

Toby turned to look at her, and his expression softened slightly as he said, "Go on."

She dug her nails into her palms and asked, "May I have a copy of the security footage for the conference room?"



She knew that the security camera would have recorded the audio along with the progress of the meeting, and if she could get her hands on the footage, then she could easily fill in the gaps in her notes.

So I'll lose out on sleep tonight, but surely I could finish writing up the report if I were to burn the midnight oil, right?