

Can't Win Me Back Chapter 391 - 400

Chapter 391

Why was Jasper still out there? What was he trying to get at?

Was that an attempt at winning her sympathy? Alyssa would never fall for such an off-putting move!

Fueled by anger, she stormed into her bedroom, only to come to an abrupt halt.

The rain in fall was not as mild as the summer showers. In Solana City, the nighttime temperatures during fall could plummet below freezing.

She pondered. Jasper had been standing out there for hours in a thin outfit. If he stayed put...

It'd be a huge hassle to deal with the police if he dropped dead at her gates!

At the thought, she hurried back to her room and dialed his number. She was dismayed to learn that his phone was turned off.

She was completely baffled by his move. She might not have felt sympathy for him, but her curiosity got the better of her. Hence, she left the villa with a large black umbrella.

Jasper had been standing in hunger and the rain for too long. He even momentarily mistook Alyssa's petite figure as an illusion.

He was taken aback and touched when she came to a halt right in front of him. She schooled him in a shrill

voice, "What on earth are you doing? Are you ever going to stop?"

"Aren't you cold in that nightdress?" He was as indifferent as usual. He shakingly attempted to unbutton his jacket to drape over her, only to realize that he was completely drenched. He stopped himself in awkwardness.

"Why did you switch off your phone?" she demanded to know.

"It ran out of battery," he replied honestly, much like a man who had been reprimanded by his wife.

Jasper was oddly comforted by the tone of her voice. Indeed, he was just like the average man, who loved being yelled at and put in their place.

"Did you really plan to stand here all night if I hadn't come to meet you?"

“Yes. I needed to talk to you.”

She laughed at the absurdity of it. “Why do you always make me look down on you? Do you have anything else up your sleeve apart from trying to earn pity? You are the president of Beckett Group, not some street

hooligan!”

“I don’t care what method I use as long as I get to see you.” His voice carried a chilly edge, but his eyes sparkled with intensity.

Her chest heaved as she took deep breaths, a sight that tempted him. Yet, he managed to restrain his desires, owing to his unwavering moral compass and the strict discipline instilled in him during his days at military school.

“Did you have a good sleep tonight?”

“What?”

“I remember you always slept through the night.”

Feeling a rush of emotions, she clenched harder on the umbrella. When they were first married, they shared a bed for about six months.

He always had his back turned to her when they slept together. The distance between them felt as vast as the oceans.

She knew that Jasper was a light sleeper, but she was more surprised that he had observed her sleep patterns.

“I thought you had something to discuss? Spit it out. It’s freaking cold out here.” She shivered.

“Let’s talk in the car.” He took her umbrella, swiftly opened the car door, and guided her inside.

The air in the car was damp. She finally noticed his lips quivering under the dim light. His hand, resting on his knee, had turned slightly purple from the cold.

She pressed her lips together, and to her surprise, he produced a blanket and wrapped it around her.

“I found the culprit behind the leak. She’s Abigail Grant, the daughter of Michael Grant. You probably know what’s going on by now. That was her attempt to seek revenge for her father.”

She looked up with surprise. “Is this the reason you came to meet me? To tell me about this?”

“Partly.” His voice trembled. “I also wanted to check if you were doing okay after all that happened.”

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As Alyssa was no longer in love with Jasper, she shed off any pretense of a demure lady and doubled over in laughter.

“Why would I be upset over nothing? I'm Taylor. It's hard to faze me. Don't you think you've underestimated me?”

“That's good to hear.” Jasper looked glad.

“Why did you come all this way to tell me that? Alyssa wondered, never once considering that he might have done so out of love for her.

After all, he had had many chances to fall for her in the three years of marriage. It didn't make sense for him to suddenly develop feelings now. That would be a ridiculously delayed response.

“Alyssa, at the end of the day, I am indebted to you. Ours might have been a paper marriage, but that was no excuse for my poor treatment of you,” he tried to explain his behavior. “So, if there's a chance, I'd like to make it up to you.”

“Make it up to me? Sure.” She cast him an indifferent glance. “How about you promise to keep out of my sight and stay out of my business? That's all.”

He furrowed his brows, feeling like a sharp knife had pierced his gut.

She shook off the blanket and smirked. “Never mention making it up to me again. I'd prefer it if you said you were doing so to thwart Betty.”

Jasper felt hollow inside as he watched her dash back to the villa in the rain. Deep down, he clung to the hope that she might still have feelings for him.

It felt unfair, but he was helpless.

Was this how she had felt throughout their loveless marriage?

When Alyssa was back at the villa, she pressed her back against the door and took a deep breath to calm her emotions.

The distant roar of an engine outside signaled that Jasper had finally left. She wandered back to her bed

and looked out of the window.

Suddenly, a warm hand rested on her shoulder, sending a jolt of panic coursing through her veins. She

wore a bitter smile when she turned around and saw who it was.

She complained, “Jonah, it’s in the middle of the night. You made me jump. Why were you moving around like a ghost?”

“I wasn’t particularly stealthy. You were just lost in thought, staring out the window.” Jonah let out a sigh and wrapped an arm

around her shoulder. Together, they turned their attention outside.

“Has he left?”

“Yeah. Sorry for waking you up.” She lowered her gaze sheepishly and leaned against his broad shoulders. “Just now, he

dropped by to tell me that he found out about Abigail Grant.”

“Was that all?”

“Yeah.”

The two siblings fell into a shared, unspoken silence.

Jonah broke the silence after a while and pinched her shoulder with a smile. “What if Jasper had fallen for you-”

“Jonah!” she playfully scolded him with a frown.

“It’s a hypothetical question. Would you give him a second chance if he were willing to make sacrifices because he had fallen for

you?” Jonah inquired while staring squarely at her. “He was the man you spent your youth on.”

“No.” Bitterness seeped into her words. “Jonah, forgiveness and second chances are no longer my concern. I am simply fearful

of a relationship.

“I’ve dwelled in disappointment and anticipation for far too long. I’d rather not emotionally invest in a man

anymore.

*I am tired of waiting for him through the night, making his meals, and never receiving a word of appreciation. That's tiring, Jonah. I won't repeat the same mistake."

"You're right. Jasper has no right to feel remorseful after all the heartless things he put you through."

Jonah grasped her cold hand and sighed in pain. "He doesn't deserve you. Let him live in regret forever."

Chapter 393

The day after the K'S World Hotel scandal, Betty dressed up nicely to meet with Ada at the presidential suite of Berenike Hotel.

It was clear to her that Betty fell short in comparison to Alyssa in terms of fashion sense, class, and eloquence.

In ordi

ordinary circumstances, Ada would never have considered associating with such a superficial person were it not for the fact that

Betty was a Beckett.

"Madam Ada, KS World's contractual breach has led to the postponement of your wedding. Even I was worried when I heard the news. Their handling of the situation was amateur and careless.

"It was highly unprofessional of them to expose client's information online. This case will no doubt be the perfect cautionary tale in the industry." Betty indignantly bashed KS World Hotel, oblivious to the sullen look on Ada's face.

She went on, "Had you chosen Berenike Hotel, you wouldn't have gotten into this mess."

"Are

Are you implying that I was bad at decisions?" confronted Ada, who took a sip of the black tea in amusement.

Betty's face froze. She stammered, "I-I didn't mean that."

"Ms. Beckett, I'd like you to know that the termination of my partnership with KS World Hotel does not

I mean I'll choose Berenike Hotel.

"Ms. Alyssa is an excellent manager. Perhaps there were some untold issues behind their breach of

contract. Who knows? Their competitors might have framed them."

Betty was stung by Ada's casual remark because of her guilt.

"B-But didn't you terminate the contract with KS World Hotel?"

"That's because we needed to honor the terms of the contract." Ada snickered and added, "There's a

common saying in Cyriss about refraining from gossiping behind others' backs.

"I believe you're familiar with it due to your excellent upbringing. Moreover, there is no reason for the prestigious Beckett Group to put others down just to uplift itself."

Betty's

expression stiffened at Ada's jab, and she felt like she was sitting on pins and needles.

She had initially thought that Alyssa and Ada's relationship had soured due to the photo leak. To her

"Madam Ada, there isn't enough time before your wedding to switch hotels and restart the planning." Betty realized that she

might have been overly confident and quickly put on a humble attitude.

She advised, "If you choose the Berenike Hotel, we will not postpone the wedding.

We will set up the wedding venue right away and ensure everything is completed on schedule."

"I can work with the Beckett Group, but on one condition," replied Ada. She tossed her short hair absent-mindedly. "I want Mr.

Beckett to liaise with me through the process. He's the only one I trust at the company."

Betty stormed out of the hotel in a fit of anger.

She felt deeply humiliated by Ada's unwavering trust in Jasper. She wished she could shake Ada by the shoulders to snap her

out of whatever spell Alyssa had cast on her. Why else would Ada continue to defy

her?

Betty called her mother, tears streaming down her face. “Mom! What should I do now?”

“Does that actress really think she’s the queen because she’s having a wedding? How dare she dismiss my daughter? I hope her marriage falls apart. Sophia was outraged.

Her voice turned icy as she continued, “Go beg your dad to put some pressure on that bitch for now. Javier will step in to protect the hotel’s interest.”

Taking Sophia’s orders, Betty rushed to the Beckett Group building. In the chairman’s office, she sobbed

on Javier’s shoulders about the cold treatment she received from Ada.

“Betty, you’re too naive and sheltered to understand the harshness of the world.”

Javier massaged her

neck, feeling sorry for his beloved daughter.

He advised, “You are still a little tactless because you’ve just started the job. Take this as a lesson.

Remember, your facial expression and the look in your eyes are a reflection of your inner thoughts.”

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“You cannot allow others to read your mind through your actions. It’s a risky behavior, Javier cautioned Betty.

“Got it, Dad.”

Then, Javier made a video call to Jasper. Jasper’s stoic face appeared on the screen. Seeing that, Betty clung tighter onto Javier’s arm in an attempt to put on the act of a loving family.

Jasper ignored her and asked, “What’s the matter?”

“Your sister has secured the partnership with Ada Kingsley. We just need you to formalize the agreement,” Javier instructed him.

“Meet her as soon as you can and close the deal.”

volle

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“You won’t need me at all if Ada is on board, Jasper answered with a smirk.

“Congratulations in advance, Betty. You’ve won a project from Alyssa that will surely help your career.

woman,

“As you are capable I will leave the contract signing to you, I wouldn’t want to steal your thunder.”

Betty smoldered in anger, but without Jasper’s help, she could not resolve the awkward situation with Ada.

“Jasper, Betty is your little sister. She’s done her best to move the deal to this stage.

Can’t you lend her a helping hand?” Javier

hissed, anger burning in his eyes

“She is responsible for the outcome of this partnership. There is no free lunch in this world. How can you expect me to do the dirty work while she takes all the credit?”

Javier was nettled when Jasper talked back to him. He bellowed, “Jasper Beckett!”

“If you

i want to get this done, why don’t you speak to Ada in person? I believe that handling a celebrity is a piece of cake for the group’s chairman.” With that, Jasper hung up on him.

The Harpers were in trouble as well. Penelope Miller had been in competition against Lucille Schmidt in hosting a jewelry charity auction.

She had almost closed the discussions with Vincent’s team, only to receive the disheartening news yesterday that Vincent had decided to collaborate with the Schmidts instead.

Crushed, Penelope sank into a foul mood after her previous efforts went down the drain.

Zoe felt a growing resentment as she watched her mother struggle. She knew the reason behind Vincent’s sudden change of mind. It was a deliberate move to avenge Alyssa.

Zoe retired to her room, where she paced back and forth with rage. Feeling utterly powerless, she decided to reach out to her

fair-weather friend Betty.

She said, “Hey, Betty, I’m in a terrible mood today. How about joining me tonight at Landon’s nightclub for a party? Let’s have a few drinks.”

“Ugh! Zoe, drop it. I’m down in the dumps as well,” Betty groaned and shared with Zoe the trouble with Ada. “We might have foiled Ada and Alyssa’s partnership, but I didn’t get anything out of it. It’s frustrating!

“Don’t worry too much. Ada might be too proud to admit that she had made a mistake. She’ll come around in a few days,” Zoe replied.

Zoe wandered into her dressing room and browsed through the branded items in her wardrobe. She asked casually. “So many things have been happening lately, and it’s all getting to me. Betty, can you help me take my mind off things in any way?”

Betty was taken aback by the request. It didn’t take long for her to understand the meaning behind Zoe’s words. She grinned and assured her friend, “Don’t worry. I’ll make sure you have the time of your life tonight!”

Chapter 395

After escaping from London that night, Lauren found herself unable to sleep. Upon returning home, she discovered her injuries.

She had a severe scrape on her elbow that was bleeding and oozing pus. The stinging pain brought tears to her eyes.

As she had hurt herself after sneaking out, she kept quiet about her wounds and quickly tended to her injuries with whatever was available in the first aid kit.

Then, she snuggled with her teddy bear under the covers, but that didn’t help. She ended up tossing and turning throughout the night.

Between sleep and consciousness, a flood of memories inundated her mind.

She remembered the degrading experience of being forced to eat lunch in a squalid restroom. She also remembered the humiliating incident of being dunked head first into a trashcan by a male student under Zoe's command.

She recalled the shocking discovery of a dead rat hidden in her bag and her cherished novel torn into shreds by Zoe's cruel hands.

And then there was the harrowing memory of the music room piano. It was a nightmarish episode that would haunt her forever.

Zoe Harper. Landon Harper. She replayed the names in her mind. Did that mean Zoe was Landon's younger sister?

She clutched the blanket tightly, tears streaming down her face as she quietly sobbed until the break of dawn.

Despite Lauren's psychological and developmental struggles, she wasn't thoughtless or naive. Even after discovering that Zoe was Landon's little sister, she remained grateful to Landon for saving her from a potentially fatal car crash.

That afternoon, Lauren sneaked into the kitchen and made a blueberry mousse cake using an online

recipe. She planned to have Jasper deliver her token of appreciation to Landon. After the cake was ready, she refrigerated it and dusted her hands off. Then, she returned to her bedroom.

Upon opening the door, her expression froze as she stumbled backward. There, Betty sat in a chair, legs crossed and arms folded, wearing an evil smile.

Lauren went numb.

"Why didn't you greet your sister?" Betty flicked her newly manicured nails and sneered, "You're just dumb, not mute, you know."

"B-Betty..." Lauren mumbled in a hushed voice.

"I'll take you out for some fun. How does that sound?" Betty beamed at her.

“It’s okay. I don’t really know how to have fun. You’ll probably find me boring.”
Lauren replied, her head hanging low.

“Are you sure? Tsk. Fine.” Betty slowly rose from her chair, a hint of a smirk in her eyes. “I thought we could strengthen our sisterhood, but I won’t force you if you’re not up for it.”

Then, Betty left the room with her arms behind her.

With that, Betty left the room, her hands behind her back.

Lauren let out a long sigh and dragged herself into the room. Suddenly, she rushed to her headboard in shock, frantically searching through the carefully made bed, tossing the blankets and pillows aside. No matter how hard she looked, she failed to find her treasured teddy bear, a gift from Alyssa.

“Teddy... My teddy bear... Betty!” Lauren knew all too well that Betty wouldn’t have entered her room without a reason. She concluded that Betty must have taken the bear.

the entrance, she

Drenched in sweat, Lauren stumbled out of the door and hurried to the first floor.

At the

found Betty seated gracefully in the car. The butler promptly closed the car door behind Betty.

“Give it back! Give my teddy back!” Lauren yelled and ran in Betty’s direction. Betty rolled down the car window and made a face at the sweaty Lauren.

She then taunted Lauren further by waving the teddy bear in her direction before instructing the chauffeur,

“Leave now.”

The engine roared to life, and the car began to move away, slowly disappearing into the horizon as Lauren

helplessly cried out, “Betty, give it back! Give me my teddy bear!”

Her desperate pleas and tears were in vain. She felt like a mother whose child had been taken from her.

Even the butler couldn’t help but sympathize with her.

“Get the car ready!” She glowered at the butler. For the first time in her life, she gave orders to the

household staff like an owner.

“But, Ms. Lauren, Madam Sophia doesn’t allow you to leave without permission...” The butler hesitated.

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“I’m Ms. Lauren, the daughter of Javier Beckett. Why do you listen to Betty but not me? Go, now!” Lauren growled.

The butler scurried off to get her a car with a sullen look.

The city shimmered with the glow of night lights. In a luxury lounge in ACE, Zoe and a few rich kids in Solana City drank alcohol and smoked. She looked more like a female gangster than a young lady from an esteemed family.

Zoe went to Yoarkley for her studies after graduating junior high. She didn’t have many friends left in Solana City,

The ladies and gents that night were from the same social cli to bully Lauren,

“How’s Lauren these days? I haven’t seen her since we graduated profile for a Beckett?” someone wondered aloud.

in her junior high class and her lackeys

Isn’t she keeping an unusually low

Another gossiped, ‘Hey, I heard from my mom that Lauren’s mentally challenged.

That’s why Madam Sophia doesn’t parade her around.”

“Seriously? No wonder she always seemed dumb and slow in junior high. Looks like she’s a retard!” a third one commented callously.

“Hey, hey, that’s rude,” Zoe interjected. She crossed her legs and took a drag.

“They call it ‘autism’ now.”

“Ha! It’s the same as retarded! Hahaha!”

Everyone erupted in laughter. Zoe snickered gleefully amid the mocking laughs.

The lounge’s door swung open. A waiter led Betty in.

A hushed silence fell on the crowd, who exchanged confused glances upon Betty Beckett’s arrival.

“Relax. Just keep going. Betty is one of our own,” Zoe introduced and beckoned at someone. A rich guy

promptly handed her a crystal ashtray, into which she tapped the cigarette ash.

Betty couldn't help but gape at the scene. She thought that Liana was the master of duplicity, but it turned out.

out that Zoe was equally adept at wearing different masks.

She wondered if Landon would be mad after seeing his usually elegant and well-bred sister acting like a

“Eh, Betty, did you not bring Lauren along?” Zoe looked annoyed when she saw Betty alone. “Sigh, it's going to be less fun tonight.”

“My sister is getting more rebellious as she ages,” Betty complained and sighed.

Then, she flashed a mischievous grin and

waved a teddy bear. “But, Zoe, don't worry about it. She'll show up if I have this.”

“Why? Are you going to try some new tricks tonight?” Zoe raised a brow.

“Haha. Just wait and see.”

Lauren's car arrived shortly after Betty entered ACE. The extravagant entrance of the nightclub and the tremendous flow of traffic

and people triggered Lauren's social anxiety. Her lips trembled, and her face paled.

She hastily retreated to her car and dialed Betty's number.

“What's wrong, dear sister?” Lauren could discern the malice in Betty's tone amid a noisy background.

“G-Give my teddy bear back!” Lauren stammered, her face now flushed with anxiety.

“You mean that dirty thing? I've hidden it.”

“Where?” Tears welled up in Lauren's eyes as she panicked.

“Somewhere in ACE. Tsk, it's not much of a 'hide' if I reveal the location,” Betty grumbled in a sickly sweet and wicked voice.

She continued, “My dear sister, I have not played with you much, Why don't we play a game tonight? Find your teddy bear. It

must be feeling quite lonely, abandoned in some forgotten corner. Hahaha!”

Rage surged in Lauren's eyes. Betty's demonic laughter made her hair stand on end. Even during moments when Betty had

belittled and bullied her, Lauren had never experienced such intense hatred. With teary eyes, she bit the bullet and dashed into

ACE is like a rocket.

Chapter 397

An eerie hush filled the air of another luxury lounge despite the deafening music reverberating from beyond its walls.

Dressed in black from head to toe, Landon had left his silk shirt partly unbuttoned, exposing a glinting silver necklace that swayed in rhythm with his breath.

Landon took a languid sip from his red wine and crossed his slender legs.

He casually brushed away a drop of red wine in the corner of his lip with his fingertip. He looked leisurely and even insolent, but his eyes were an icy, unfathomable depth.

A row of men stood in the lounge. Landon downed the red wine and snapped his fingers. His bodyguards split into two lines and revealed a badly beaten man on the floor who was tied up.

“M-Mr. Harper, it’s my fault. Please.” After losing a few teeth to the beating, the man spoke with a lisp. Drool mixed with blood fell from his mouth.

“Tsk. Your blood is all over the floor.” Landon shot him a disdainful look and arched a brow, questioning, “Do you know how Is the carpet in this room? You can’t even pay for it with the money from selling your organs.”

“Mr. Harper! The man crawled up to Landon but was kicked away. He professed, “I’ve served you loyally for

many years. I messed up this time because Preston blackmailed me!

“Well, he didn’t ask me to do anything much. He just wanted me to monitor and report your v

Preston Harper was Landon’s uncle and the only brother of Landon’s late father. When Lando lost his father in a plane crash. abouts.”

Fortunately, his father had transferred shares and all assets under Landon and Penelope’s names, span them from a precarious life.

Landon’s grandfather, Cornelius Harper, held the reins of the Harper Group. The CEO position that belonged to Landon’s late Father was handed over to Preston, even though Landon was the eldest grandson in the family.

Preston, who cried his heart out in front of his brother’s grave, turned out to be a snake. He appeared to take good care of

Landon’s family, only to put up his guard against Landon.

The weak Penelope and the innocent Zoe wouldn’t know about that. As the man of the family, Landon carried the weight of it all, never once complaining, even to his closest friend, Jasper.

“You’re pretty good at making a case, aren’t you? You’re well aware of your seniority, and you wanted to woo both Preston and me to get some extra money. What good is that, though? You might not have the years to enjoy your wealth.”

Landon let go of the glass, and it shattered on the floor. The dangerous look in his eyes sent a chill down one’s spine.

The man repeatedly bowed to Landon. His forehead made many loud thuds against the plush carpet.

“I’m fine with lying. Any successful businessman is bound to run into a traitor or two—that’s the hallmark of success,” Landon remarked as he leaned forward, casting an elegant shadow.

The man seemed to have glimpsed the Grim Reaper lurking behind Landon.

Landon lowered his gaze with a sneer and added, “But you made a mistake by not keeping it a lie forever. You should have kept I’m happy that you’ll live more days.”

“M-Mr. Harper... Please.” The man trembled like a leaf and almost peed himself.

“I haven’t visited Uncle Preston for a while. I ought to show some courtesy.

Angelina, Landon called out to his assistant and squinted.

A cold beauty in a low-back evening dress emerged from the shadows. She was Landon’s ever-present assistant.

“Mr. Harper,” she greeted him politely.

Landon’s smile faded. “Cut his little rat tongue off.”

“Sure.”

“No, no! No, please! Argh! Mmph.

Angelina Brands stoically severed the man’s tongue with decisiveness and accuracy that could rival a

market butcher.

Landon rose slowly with his left hand in the pocket. He ran his right hand through his dark hair and issued his final directive,

“Wrap that thing up and deliver it to Uncle Preston. It will make a good drinking snack.”

An outrageous scene unfolded in a different lounge. Zoe had instructed the staff to connect all the ACE

surveillance cameras to the lounge’s TV screen.

The camera footage would switch according to Lauren’s location, all for their entertainment.

Lauren was as helpless and nervous as a deer caught in the headlights while Zoe and her friends watched on with a thrill.

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Zoe and her friends couldn’t help but share a laugh at Lauren’s expense.

Lauren was darting around the room like a lost kite. Drunk customers shoved and pulled her around. Some perverted patrons even groped her. *

Her attempts at dodging the unwanted advances were met with reprimands.

That was better entertainment than any comedy.

“Hahaha! That retard! Why has she not changed from junior high at all? Did she stop growing by then?” Zoe laughed and pointed

on the screen. “Betty, I’m dying to know. Where did you stash that stupid bear?”

“I hid it at...” Betty laughed and whispered something into Zoe’s ears.

Zoe laughed loudly. “What a brilliant idea! That dimwit won’t stand a chance of finding it anytime soon.”

Lauren desperately scoured the space beneath the tables and was kicked multiple times by the customers. She suffered bruises all over her body.

She stood there, dazed and trembling, wrapping her arms around herself for comfort. Her mind went blank at the funny looks of the strangers around her. Her breathing became labored with each passing second. All of a sudden, the lighting changed. Confetti materialized in mid-air and cascaded down. The erupted in cheers and danced the night away on the dance floor.

“My teddy bear ... Lauren remained focused on her search for the toy and leaned down to look around.

Suddenly, her sweaty face bumped into a warm body. She was left feeling dizzy and numb from the collision, which prompted tears to roll down her face.

“I-I’m sorry.” Lauren hung her head and was ready to run when the figure stood in her way.

“I-I’m really s-sorry!” she stammered.

“Laurie?”

Her heart was beating like crazy. She covered her button nose and carefully lifted her gaze. She stared right into Landon’s tipsy and bottomless eyes.

He exclaimed, “Is this a dream? It’s you!”

+15 BONUS

In the next moment, he pulled her into a hug. There was a noticeable change in his eyes. He wrapped one arm around her waist and gently placed the other on her nape to shield her from the frenzy on the dance floor.

The adrenaline-charged patrons would not care about her safety when they were riding the high.

She felt her heart drumming against her chest as she pressed a shaky hand on his sleeve.

Initially, she had wanted to push him away, but in that very moment, she yearned for a brief respite after a night of feeling adrift in the crowd.

She shouldn't have done this, she repeatedly reminded herself. He was a decent man, but at the end of the day, he was still Zoe Harper's brother.

The people on the dance floor gasped at Landon's entrance as if they were witnessing the descent of a deity. His alluring face was the object of adulation of countless women and the misery of many a man. In Solana City, his upturned eyes were infamous for bearing a sultry and erotic quality.

However, Landon's gaze remained unwaveringly fixed on the young woman cradled in his arms. All the hustle and bustle of the world seemed distant. At that moment, they were alone in their world of two "Why are you here alone?" he said in a volume that was only audible between them.

She nodded before shaking her head again.

"What happened? Tell me," he coaxed her gently with a gleam in his eyes.

"I-I lost my teddy bear. She had wanted to keep that a secret from him, but his patience broke down defenses.

Tears streamed down her face as she stammered, "Landon, it's missing... It was a gift from Alyssa... My favorite teddy bear..."

Landon almost melted from Lauren calling his name. He swallowed hard as he surprisingly found his blood rushing.

The tears that rolled off her reddened eyes sent ripples across his heart. Almost instantly, he put aside the memory of that night when she left him behind.

"Oh, did Alyssa give it to you?" He scrunched up his eyes and wiped away her tears with his coarse fingertips.

She gave him a hard nod. Her nose was red.

“Where? Did you lose it in the club?”

She nodded again, her eyes red from crying.

“Don’t worry. I’ll help.” He took her hand and led her to the stage with everyone’s eyes on them.

A dreamy light was cast on them, creating a picturesque scene.

Lauren timidly looked at her feet but stole occasional glances at him.

He might look unfriendly, but she had to admit that he was beautiful. He had chiseled and regal features that were unrivaled and a pair of hawkish eyes.

She pursed her lips as she stealthily checked out his features and etched his face in her memory.

“Music, stop,” Landon spoke into a microphone at the DJ’s booth. The noisy crowd instantly fell into a hush.

Meanwhile, Zoe and Betty were deeply engrossed in the party. It wasn’t until someone tapped them on the shoulder that they turned to the screen.

Zoe instantly jumped from the couch and let out an angry yelp that startled everyone, as if she were possessed.

Betty’s anger flared as she discovered Lauren standing next to Landon; the two were hand-in-hand. Her mind went blank from the shock.

Landon cast an affectionate glance at Lauren. The two seemed to be in their own world. Was it a public display of love?

“Lauren, you little bitch!” Betty vowed to teach her sister a lesson for making a move on Landon.

“What’s going on? Why is Landon with that airhead?” Zoe summoned her bodyguard and interrogated him, “Didn’t I

ask you to keep an eye on that dumbo? How did she run into my brother?”

*P-Please calm down, Ms. Zoe. I did keep a close watch on her the whole time, but I did not expect Mr. Landon to show up at ACE tonight.

“She’d have eventually bumped into him from the way she was running around tonight the bodyguard rambled in panic.

“Useless thing!” Zoe kicked him in the leg to release her anger. However, the bodyguard stood steadily while Zoe lost her balance and ended up slipping comically on the floor with a yelp. Betty and Zoe’s friends couldn’t help but laugh at her misfortune. On the other hand, Landon smilingly addressed the crowd, “Seems like everyone’s in high spirits today. I’ll play a game with you all. How does that sound?”

“My dear sister here has lost a teddy bear in the club.”

After that, a picture of the lost teddy bear flashed across the massive screen on the stage. It was a photo from Lauren’s phone gallery. This immediately sparked whispers among the crowd.

“Sister? I heard Mr. Landon has a sister who’s the protégé of a famous pianist, but she looks different here.”

“This ‘sister’ is probably one of his girls. Don’t take it literally. Didn’t you just call that old man daddy?” someone joked,

“That young lady looks childlike, though. She must be quite inexperienced. Wait, could she be und

“You know nothing. Rich guys love frail and nerdy girls like her. They think she’s more “natural!””

Lauren blushed at the gossip about her and struggled to withdraw her hand from Landon’s hold.

In situations like this, the only thing on her mind was to escape. However, he gripped her hand tightly. She had no way to break free.

“Ladies and gentlemen, whoever finds the teddy bear will be granted free entry to ACE, with all expenses on the house, for an entire year!” Landon announced, and the crowd roared and cheered.

The timer on the screen began its countdown. “Five, four, three, two, one. Let the game begin!” Landon exclaimed, waving his hand with a wide grin.

The crowd quickly dispersed to each corner of the club. It was a scene to behold from the vantage point of the stage. Lauren blinked in awe, her jaw practically dropping to the floor.

BONUS

Landon's eyes deepened when he noticed the astonishment on her face. He said to her, "Come, let's wait together in the lounge. We'll find your teddy bear soon."

Chapter 400

Landon led Lauren to another lounge, where the escorts were drinking with three other young men. The men were Landon's friends in Solana City.

Lauren blushed at the intimacy among the strangers, to the point she wanted to bury her head in the sand. Landon had to drag her into the room.

Upon their entrance, the men started whistling and cheering.

One of them joked, "Oh! Hello there, future sister-in-law! Aren't you young and successful for nailing down Landon at this age?"

She panicked and paled at the joke.

"Shut your trap! She's..." Landon stopped himself before introducing Lauren. He was reminded of Jasper's remark and quickly explained, "She's my sister. Stop with that nonsense!"

*Hey, Landon, her teddy bear is pretty expensive, though. You could easily rack up tens of thousands of dollars in spending per visit to ACE.

‘That will be hundreds of thousands a year if that lucky customer swings by daily! And this is all for her teddy bear? You can supply her a ton of teddy bears with that reward you dished out!’

Landon’s friends refused to change the way they addressed Lauren. They knew Landon gave Lauren a special treatment not accorded to the other ladies who swooned at him. There was definitely som more between the two!

‘Lauren only has eyes for that teddy bear. My first love gave it to her. It’s meaningful.’ Landon rolled hi eves at his shallow-minded, rich friends.

‘F-First love? Do you mean Alyssa?’ Lauren widened her eyes.

‘Yeah, I had a crush on her. She’s my first love,’ admitted Landon with a smile. Although he was painfully rejected, he took pride in the fact that Alyssa was his first love.

That immediately set off Lauren. She yelped and said to him, ‘No, you can’t fall for Alyssa! She belongs to Jasper! Nobody should take her from Jasper!’

‘Don’t you know the bro code? How could you go after his girl?’ Lauren clenched her fists indignantly. ‘He would be really upset if he found out that you were courting his woman! If you take her away, I-I’ll never speak to you anymore!’

Lauren couldn’t think of a better way to scare him and blurted out a comical threat. Laughter ensued in the lounge.

She blushed even deeper and nervously played with her sleeves.

Landon initially found it amusing but stopped laughing when he noticed her embarrassment. He glared at his friends, who promptly caught themselves and refrained from laughing at Lauren’s expense.

‘Laurie, you’re a good egg.’ Landon bent over and caressed her hair. He squinted and added, ‘I know you’re speaking up for your brother. But the others might think you’re bitten by the green-eyed monster.’

‘Bitten by a monster? I did not get bitten anywhere,’ Lauren replied earnestly.

Landon was rendered speechless. He finally learned that he and Lauren were not of the same world. However, he found himself increasingly intrigued by her world.

The glammed-up guys and gals in ACE were running all over the place in search of Lauren's teddy bear. The glass door of the lounge opened out to a huge balcony.

While Landon enjoyed drinks with his friends in the lounge, Lauren stood on the balcony, gripping the railing tightly and praying that someone would find her beloved teddy bear.

"I found it! I found it!" A woman jumped on stage and held a teddy bear above her head.

"Damn! Where the fuck did you find it?"

"In the water tank of the men's restroom!"

The men at the nightclub instinctively covered their crotches. Women could be crazily competitive if they were serious.

Lauren jumped around like an excited child.

"Wow, that was faster than I expected. Money sure holds power. I bet they'd still wear a grin if I jokingly asked them to do the unthinkable," Landon quipped and stretched his neck.

He strolled over to the balcony. A cigarette dangled from his lips, its orange ember flickering Intermittently.

"I'll go get the teddy bear!" Lauren was wary of being in the same space as Landon,

When she was about to slip past him, he stood in her way.

He had learned his lesson from the car crash. Since then, he vowed not to let her slip away.

"There's no rush. Your teddy bear's wet. I'll get that other lady to dry it and return it to you," he suggested.

Lauren cast her eyes downward avoiding his flirtatious gaze She mumbled, "Thank
"Congratulations to this young lady for winning the prizer You are the winner of
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Much to everyone's jealousy, the patron was over the moon, for ACE was the most
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Landon narrowed his eyes and gestured at Angelina with the cigarette between his fingers

She got the hint and announced with a smile. “We appreciate everyone’s efforts in finding the lost item Mr. Harper will foot your bills tonight

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