

CHAPTER 11

Lily was nervous, and her hands hung on both sides of her body as she unconsciously grabbed the sheets underneath her. She had heard about this on TV and read it in novels but was apprehensive.

Alexander attentively noticed her nervousness and looked at her tightly closed eyes, "If you're not ready, we can wait."

Lily, trembling slightly, suddenly opened her eyes. She saw sincerity and respect in his eyes. The feeling of being cherished warmed her heart, and she shook her head and let go of Alexander's hand.

Then she raised her arm to wrap them around his neck. "I can do this! P-Please continue."

She was shocked. That familiar feeling made her realize something but would not be that coincidental. It was too late. Lily curled her legs, grabbed a pillow beside her, and covered her face. She wanted to dig a hole and hide.

Alexander instantly reacted when he saw her actions. The burning flames in his eyes dimmed as he straightened up. He attempted to sigh but laughed instead. After a few seconds of silence, he finally bent down to pick Lily up again.

"W-What?!"

Lily's body lightened abruptly, and she began to panic. The pillow fell from her face as she could no longer avoid looking at her husband. She looked like a deer in headlights.

"Don't worry. I won't touch unnecessarily," Alexander spoke without changing his expression. He had already entered the shower and put Lily down. He removed the showerhead and adjusted the water temperature. Then he handed the showerhead to her and said, "I'll wait outside for you."

Lily finally gathered her thoughts after being in shock for a while. She felt relaxed because the water temperature was just right as it flowed down her body. She had to admit that Alexander was very considerate and caring. It was hard for Lily to imagine Alexander being like that since he was known for being ruthless and bold in business.

She rinsed herself in a conflicted mood, and an even more embarrassing matter occurred. She did not have any sanitary pads with her. She had been so busy with First Love that she forgot about her period. Lily counted the days and found that her period came a little earlier than expected.

'I wonder if the hotel provides sanitary pads, or should I call for a shopping agent to send me some? B- But I left my phone outside, and it would be embarrassing if Alex found out.'

Lily struggled with her thoughts when Alexander opened the door. He returned to place a bag of things in the dry area. "Here, use this," he exited the shower again afterward.

Lily walked toward the bag and saw a stack of clean pajamas and brand-new underwear. More importantly, there were sanitary pads in the bag. Alexander had prepared for everything, and everything was of the best quality. There were enough clothes and supplies to last Lily three months. She was surprised and quickly changed.

Although her cheeks were still red, she was no longer embarrassed as she exited the shower.

The mattress was brand-new, and Alexander sat on a chair beside it in his silk pajamas. He had a laptop on his lap and a cup of hot coffee. The coffee's fragrance wafted throughout the room. Still, Alexander drank coffee at night. Was he not planning to sleep? "Come here," Alexander said as he looked at Lily.

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Lily approached Alexander meekly but saw him turn toward the table. Then he pointed his chin toward the table and said, "Drink that and go to sleep."

Lily looked at the drink – it was hot chocolate. She was amazed that Alexander was so considerate and had prepared a lot for her in such a short time. Lily pursed her lips and drank the hot chocolate obediently. Her lower abdomen felt warm and relaxed as she sat on the bed. She almost dozed off.

Alexander dimmed the lights and glanced at her, "What is it?"

Lily could not hold back her yawn as she sleepily asked, "Aren't you coming to bed?"

"I'll sleep later. Don't worry about me," Alexander responded. He adjusted his wife's pillow and tucked her in attentively. He sat down again and adjusted the air conditioner's temperature before taking another sip of coffee.

Lily watched her husband's movements drowsily as a faint yellow light bounced off him, reflecting on his face. He appeared blurry with a vague outline. Alexander was extraordinarily handsome and flawless from every angle. How had Lily not noticed it before?

She watched him and noticed he was drinking black coffee. Lily could not help but say, "Y-You can't fall asleep if you drink coffee at night." Alexander put down the cup in his hand and casually asked, "What else do I drink then?" However, there was no response. The woman was leaning on the bed, still half-recumbent. Her eyes were closed as she snored slightly. She fell asleep rather quickly. Alexander smiled and looked at Lily. He stopped reading his documents and emails, put his laptop aside, and dimmed the lights. Then he moved around to the other side of the bed, lifted the blanket, and prepared to sleep.

He hugged Lily gently from behind, unsure if he had woken her up. Lily grunted lowly, turned around to face Alexander, and hugged him back. Alexander raised his eyebrows and adjusted Lily's sleeping position, stretching out to embrace her. Lily was in Alexander's arms, but they did not do anything even though it was their wedding night.

Lily woke up feeling refreshed the following day, without discomfort from her period. She realized she had not slept so soundly in a long time. She wanted to stretch her waist but could not because someone was lying beside her.

Moreover, Lily's head was resting on the person's arm. She hurriedly sat up and scratched her head. Then her memories gradually returned, and she remembered she had gotten married the previous day.

"You're awake already?" Alexander's low voice sounded from beside Lily.

Lily nodded. "Good morning." "Are you hungry," Alexander asked. "N-Not really," Lily responded. She usually lived alone and had never shared a bed with anyone else, so she was not used to having someone by her side as soon as she woke up. "All right, but I am." Alexander leaned close to Lily, his eyes presumptuous and passionate. He

snuggled close to her, almost touching Lily's earlobe. "Go and call for room service. The phone is just outside."

"Okay!" Lily immediately jumped out of bed and bolted out.

Alexander smiled as he looked at his wife leaving. Then he frowned and moved his arm only to find his muscles numb.

CHAPTER 13

The hotel served a wide selection of food for breakfast, and the two enjoyed it delightfully. The sunshine poured in through the window, creating serenity for them.

"I'll be going to the company office later. Let me give you a ride since Rebirth is on the way," Alexander said slowly while spreading butter on a piece of toast.

Lily took a sip of milk and shook her head hurriedly. "It's fine. I'm planning to go to Rebirth later in the afternoon. Plus, didn't we agree not to announce our..." Lily abruptly stopped talking when Alexander looked up at her. She was unable to finish the rest of her sentence.¹ Alexander handed her the buttered toast and retracted his hand. "Don't worry. I'm a man of my word. Only Rebirth's management knows La Beauté Group has invited you to join the company. Edward was the one who communicated this matter to them, so they don't know that..."

Alexander raised his brow as his gaze swept Lily casually, but it made her heart skip. "You're my wife." After pausing for a moment, he said these four words, which sounded quite profound

Lily could feel her heart rate suddenly hasten as she thought, 'He's such a good flirt!'

Alexander seemed to be a celibate man. His words might sound like they meant nothing, but recalling them would make one blush for no reason.

"That's great." Lily's gaze fell erratically on the food in front of her as she finished the toast in her hand in a few bites. "I'm done. I'm going to make a call."

Since Lily was leaving MN Inc., she had to settle her matters over there so it would not affect Olivia's work. However, she noticed 20 missed calls when she checked her phone. They all came from Nathaniel. She was shocked before revealing a smirk.

Lily muted her phone yesterday after getting into the car because she did not want to be bothered by anyone. She wanted to be at peace for a while. She had a hunch that Nathaniel would contact her, but she did not expect him to do it to that extent.

It seemed that Nathaniel was genuinely anxious. He rarely called Lily first, even when they had been dating for so long. Even if he did, it was mostly for work.

Lily was about to swipe to her home screen when another call came in. As expected, it was from Nathaniel.

'Hmph, that was quick.'

Lily looked at the name flashing on her screen, then averted her gaze toward Alexander, sitting at the dining table, slowly eating his breakfast. Like a prince from a fairy tale, he was elegant, graceful, and so noble that he seemed beyond reach. Still, after some thought, she decided to answer the call.

After what happened at the competition last night, there was no turning back for her and Nathaniel. Since Lily was not Alexander's wife, she no longer needed to hide anything from him. She was sincere in her relationship with Alexander, so there was nothing she feared for him to know.

"Hello?" Lily answered Nathaniel's call

"Lily, where are you?" Nathaniel's voice sounded slightly hoarse. It was easy to tell he did not have a good rest the night before. "What can I help you with, Mr. Hall?" Lily feigned ignorance and asked him in return. "Lily, it's pointless for you to run away like this. Do you honestly think you can escape?" His words almost made Lily laugh. She did not commit any crimes, nor did she do anything shameful. Why would she run away? "Run away? Now, why would I need to do that?"

CHAPTER 14

"If you didn't run away, why didn't you come home yesterday? Do you know I stayed up all night for you?" Nathaniel paused before continuing, "I'm sure there's some misunderstanding about yesterday. I don't blame you. Just come home, and it'll be all right after we talk things out, okay?"

After some pondering, Lily smiled faintly. "Sure, I'll meet you at the office later." She hung up the call and walked back to the dining table. It was only now that Alexander looked up at her, "You're leaving now?"

"Nah, I'm not in a hurry." Smiling, she sat back down and adjusted her seat as she was in high spirits and had a better appetite. In an unhurried manner, she continued to eat. "I'm not the one who is in a hurry."

There were countless occasions when Lily had to wait for Nathaniel to return. Was it finally his turn to wait for her now?

"He's not going to let what happened yesterday go easily." Nathaniel was a petty man. He was calculative even about the slightest things. One could only imagine how big of a deal he would make about the humiliation he faced yesterday. Moreover, Lily's departure was undoubtedly a fatal blow to his small company. "Me too," Lily said as she looked at Alexander with a smile plastered on her face.

Alexander smiled back at her too.

Nathaniel waited for the whole day and even skipped lunch during his wait. However, Lily was still nowhere to be seen at 3 pm. He called her, but she did not answer his calls again. Frustration filled him up, and he almost smashed his phone to the ground.

"Nate, I told you we can't trust Lily! It was too naive of you to believe in her." Melanie was leaning against the spacious leather sofa while slicing an apple. "What happened last night was a trap set up for us. Remember when I told you she seemed strange yesterday? You said there wasn't any problem with her, but look at..." 1

"Shut up!" Nathaniel was frustrated to the brim. He thought about calling Lily again but knew it would be pointless, so he vented his anger on Melanie instead. Melanie got upset that Nathaniel yelled at her. She pursed her lips and lowered her gaze.

"Why are you getting mad at me? I wasn't the one who betrayed you and the company! I've been by your side, taking care of you! I was the only one who cared about you all along!" Then, she walked over and handed Nathaniel the sliced apple plate. "Here! You should still eat something no matter how mad you are. I'm concerned about your health. What would I do if something happens to you?"

Melanie became teary-eyed as she spoke, looking as if her tears would fall any minute. Even though she had a pitiful appearance now, she still looked beautiful. At that sight, Nathaniel's heart instantly softened as he took the plate from her with a sigh.

He circled his arm around her shoulders and comforted her, "I'm not mad at you. It's just that I'm in an awful mood. Forgive me for what I did earlier, okay? I'm sorry. I know you only want

the best for me. Darling, don't cry anymore, all right?"

"You're just coaxing me, but you're still thinking about Lily." Melanie cried and struggled slightly in his embrace. However, her words and actions brought her closer to Nathaniel's heart as it hit his soft spot.

"Mr. Hall, I..." The door opened and revealed Lily, who poked her head in. At the sight of Melanie and Nathaniel being intimate, Lily smiled. "Oops. It seems like I came at a bad time.

Then I'll..."

"Lily!" As soon as Nathaniel saw Lily, he retracted his hands from Melanie's shoulders as if her skin scorched him.

He strode toward Lily in big steps, afraid she would leave the next second. "Come back here!" Lily was finally here after the long wait, and Nathaniel would not let her leave so quickly. "Where did you go? Why didn't you answer my calls? Do you know how worried I was? What have you been doing?" After a series of questions, Nathaniel grabbed Lily's wrist and pulled her into his office before closing the door.

Lily's eyes widened because of what she saw. Nathaniel looked anxious, and he sounded genuinely concerned about her. It was as if he truly cared about her, but what was he doing just before she opened the door?

From the corner of her eye, Lily glanced at Melanie, who was on the other side of the room. Melanie appeared to be sullen, but she immediately put on a gentle smile when Lily turned to face her.

"Nate's right. Lily, we were so anxious because you didn't come home the whole night. Where have you been? Why were you with those people from Rebirth? Did you hear some sort of nonsense from them? You should be wary of them. They might be deceiving you!"

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"What nonsense could they have possibly told me?" Lily broke free from Nathaniel's grip and approached Melanie. "I'm interested to know what you think they would tell me."

Under the scrutiny of Lily's sharp gaze, Melanie averted hers. "How would I know what they told you? But I'm guessing they want to offer you a role even when they know you're working with us. They probably badmouthed us and boasted about themselves. Lily..." After a slight pause, Melanie continued, looking like she had just remembered something.

"Did they offer you a higher salary?"

“Higher salary? What would you consider that to be?” Lily asked in return and blinked her eyes innocently as if she knew nothing about what Melanie had just mentioned.

Melanie was disgusted by Lily’s act and thought, Such an idiot. She doesn’t even know how to negotiate for a higher salary. How did she even connect to the people from Rebirth? There must be a mastermind who planned everything last night. Someone must’ve persuaded her to do those things.’

“Lily, I’m just worried about you. Don’t speak to me that way, please? I’m afraid they’ve deceived you,” Melanie said concernedly. She took advantage of the situation and held Lily’s arm.

Melanie was taller than Lily, so it was a little inconvenient for her to hold Lily’s arm. Melanie had to lean down a little, but she was unwilling to do so. As a result, she pulled Lily’s arm up to match her height without caring if Lily would feel uncomfortable.

Lily turned and looked up at Melanie, her ‘good friend’ of many years, as she started thinking that she must’ve been blind to keep such a pretentious woman by her side.

Lily had poured her heart and soul into perfume research, causing her to neglect her social life. Moreover, she did not like to involve herself in meaningless social interactions as she believed it was enough for her to have a few good friends. Little did Lily know that some people treated her like a fool even when she was sincere in their friendship.

Lily put strength into her arm and clamped down on Melanie’s tightly. Then she pulled Melanie down closer to meet her gaze. “How am I talking now? I’ve always spoken to you this way. Oh, I get it. Are you mad because I told everyone I created First Love?” Blinking innocently, Lily continued, “But it’s true that I created First Love. Didn’t you say we might fail in the competition? I didn’t want you to take the blame for me; that was why I said First Love was my work. Still, you said I stole your formula for First Love during the competition yesterday, didn’t you?”

Melanie’s arm was slightly sore from Lily’s tugging. With the addition of the contentious question from Lily, she became flustered and looked toward Nathaniel for help.

“Lily, anger blinded all of us during yesterday’s competition, and we did not mean what we said. Plus, we said certain things because you left us no choice. That was the case for Melanie and me, and I’m sure the same goes for you. You should let bygones be bygones!”

Nathaniel raised his hand and patted Lily’s shoulder, saying gently, “Did you know that Mel and I looked everywhere for you last night because you didn’t come home? Can’t we talk and sort out all of our misunderstandings? You’re too naive, and I’m afraid others will use you for their benefits.”

“You guys looked for me the whole night?” Lily chuckled. When she turned to face Nathaniel, she forcefully turned Melanie’s body through their tangled arms. Suffering the pain from Lily’s forceful movement, Melanie cried, “L-Lily, my arm.”

“Yeah?” Lily looked as if she had just realized what she had done and loosened her grasp on Melanie, allowing Melanie to retract her arm. “Sorry. I didn’t notice that your arm reached into my space.” Melanie did not know how to respond to that. She frowned, feeling a hidden meaning behind

Lily’s words.

Ignoring Melanie, Lily continued questioning Nathaniel, “If I remember correctly, didn’t Ms. Thayer pass out yesterday? She recovered pretty fast that she could even look for me the entire night. I feel awful now.”

Melanie pursed her lips and suppressed the anger in her gaze. Forcing a smile, she said, “Lily, we’re friends! You’ve dated Nate for so many years, and the both of you have deep feelings for each other.

You shouldn't listen to what others say. Also, why did you do all that last night? Are you aware of how much that would hurt MN Inc. and Nate? What exactly did Rebirth tell you?"

Melanie's questions were what Nathaniel wanted to ask Lily too. What exactly happened yesterday?

CHAPTER 16

They could not figure out why Lily's behavior had changed. Lily had always been well behaved and docile, but when she spoke confidently on the stage, they thought Lily was an entirely different person.

No signs could have prepared them for Lily's sudden change. She turned into a different person overnight and almost ruined MN Inc.

Nathaniel thought, 'If it weren't because I could still use her, I would have killed her on the spot! Does she know about Mel and me? Is that why she changed so drastically? That's impossible! If she had known about us, she would've made a fuss, right? Instead, she had no reactions, which is not normal for a woman in such a situation.'

The sight of Melanie and Nathaniel boiling with anger but trying their best to suppress their emotions was hilarious to Lily. Initially, Lily planned to shed all her pretenses. She did not sign any contract with MN Inc. anyway, so she could leave with all her things as she wished.

However, she did not expect Melanie and Nathaniel to continue with their acts in front of her. Did they honestly think she was an idiot? Did they genuinely think they could have persuaded her to continue working in MN Inc. even after all the things that happened yesterday? Lily may be a little naive, but she was no fool.

"They said..." Lily deliberately dragged her words out to create suspense for the shameful couple. She paced forward slowly with her head bowed low. It looked like she was in a dilemma.

Behind Lily stood Melanie and Nathaniel, who shared looks as if to say, 'We were right. Someone was using her to get to us.'

"What did they say?" Nathaniel asked anxiously.

"Well..." Lily still bowed as she shook her head, looking like she was internally struggling with whether to tell them everything. She was dying to laugh out loud. It was her turn to fool the shameless couple.

'Is it nice to let someone toy with you like this? This is only the beginning,' Lily thought.

In mere seconds, Lily decided she would act with them and put on the most incredible show ever. 'They enjoy acting in front of me, don't they? They seem to be pretty good at it too. If that's the case, let's see the show through to the end!' Frustration filled Melanie while she looked at Lily and listened to her speak hesitantly. Yesterday's incident was infuriating enough for Melanie. To Melanie, she would have won the award gracefully and made headlines if it were not for the scene Lily created.

Melanie still managed to make the headlines today. Still, it was full of photos of her passing out, accompanied by harsh words that insinuated she plagiarized and stole another person's creation. It was all because of Lily that such a thing happened to Melanie. At least, that was what Melanie believed.

However, it was not the right time to turn against Lily now. With this thought, Melanie stepped forward to stop Lily. "Lily, tell us quickly! What exactly did they tell you? If you don't tell us, I will look for them. It's terrible etiquette in the business world to bad-mouth another company just for their benefits!"

Melanie said that but did not look like she would take action anytime soon. As she blocked Lily's path, Lily stopped and abruptly looked up. Lily no longer hesitated and babbled, "They said..."

CHAPTER 17

"They said you're an adulterer and that you guys worked together to take advantage of me!"

Nathaniel's expression changed suddenly. "What nonsense are you spewing?!"

On the contrary, Melanie, facing Lily, was stunned hearing that. Facing, such a direct and strict accusation, she subconsciously felt guilty, and her eyes instinctively avoided it.

After hearing Nathaniel's voice, she returned to her senses, "Yeah, how can you believe such words. It's just slander!"

"Lily, the three of us have known each other for so long. Do you still need someone else to tell you about our relationship? How could you believe such a boring provocation? It's hurtful to us if you believe them." After a few words, Melanie's eyes were red as tears were about to fall. It looked like she was aggrieved.

Lily was speechless with her act. She thought it was a pity Melanie was not an actress. However, if life was like a play that depended on acting, anyone could do that!

Lily pursed her lips and drooped her eyes. She acted as though she was confused to face the situation. "They're not the only ones saying this. Others said that you and Nate..."

"Lily!" Before she could finish, Nathaniel sternly interrupted her and grabbed her arm.

"Are you stupid?! Why would you believe rumors like that?! Do you blindly believe rumors without thinking?! They are strangers, and we've known each other for years, so you should know who to believe and who you shouldn't!"

Nathaniel sounded aggressive when scolding Lily as if she had greatly insulted him. Yeah, she did not think with her brain. Otherwise, how could both of them deceive Lily for so long?

However, the more Lily looked at Nathaniel in a state of anger and guilt, the more she found it amusing. She thought they had already reached the point where the shameless couple would instantly admit their deceit.

However, that was fine. If the shameless couple wanted to continue their facade, Lily would oblige without hesitation.

"Since the situation is already like this. Why not just announce that Mel and I jointly developed First Love?"

"No!" Melanie immediately refused decisively. "No one will believe it since what happened yesterday! It will not help restore MN Inc.'s reputation. It definitely won't work!"

Nathaniel was hesitant initially, but when he heard Melanie say that, he immediately followed suit. "Yeah! That won't work. Plus, you know you have a lousy track record in the industry. Admitting that you and Mel had developed First Love together will be like admitting we were wronged last night, especially with your last terrible performance. I won't let that happen, absolutely not!"

"Then what?" Lily already guessed they would disagree. She was curious how they wanted to solve the turmoil that happened yesterday.

"Lily." Nathaniel held her arms with both hands and spoke in a low voice, his eyes fixed on her. "It's the only way. You need to do it."

"What do you mean?" Lily raised her eyebrows calmly. "I'll inform the reporters to hold a press conference. You will admit your mistake, saying you got lost in the moment and wanted to take all the credit. Then apologize to Mel. The company will come forward to forgive you and turn the situation around," Nathaniel effortlessly spoke as if he had thought about this repeatedly. Lily looked worried and did not refute.

"B-But what about Rebirth?"

"Just reject them. Did you already sign a contract with Rebirth?" Nathaniel was unhappy, frowning at just the thought of the issue. Frowning, by just thinking of this issue, he was unhappy.

CHAPTER 18

Nathaniel felt that way because he did not know anything that happened between Lily and Rebirth.

Lily shook her head. "I didn't."

"That's great. Since you didn't sign a contract with La Beauté, we can still fix things.

They're just manipulating you. I'm already kind enough not to sue Rebirth for slandering us."

With a sigh of relief, Nathaniel patted Lily's arm. "Lily, you are too naive to understand the complexity and filth of the business field. It's all for your good. We don't want you to get involved in this complicated stuff."

"Let Mel and I deal with this matter for you. Now you can focus on producing perfumes. Don't you love making new scents? Wouldn't it be great to do what you love?"

Lily looked at him. He gaslighted her all along, making her willing to do things for them without wanting anything in return. Even now, they only wanted her to take the blame for everything. Still, they plausibly said everything was for her good. Suppose she admitted that she stole formulas and wanted job hopping now. She would be humiliated and could never continue in this industry for the rest of her life.

Nathaniel told Lily to do that because he wanted to protect MN Inc. and Melanie's reputation and to destroy Lily's. If that happened, Lily would have no choice but to listen to Nathaniel no matter what.

It was all too good to be true! How calculative was he?!

"Is it possible for MN Inc. to recover as long as I admit my mistake? You won't blame me, would you?" Lily asked Nathaniel with a nervous expression on her face.

Nathaniel was satisfied. That was the Lily he knew all too well. She had always cared about his feelings the most, so how could she betray him?

“Don’t worry. I know someone capable has influenced you, so you aren’t to blame. We should blame those who are sinister and intentional,” Nathaniel said warmly while gently hugging Lily’s shoulders.

“It’s okay, don’t be afraid. Mel and I will accompany you during the press conference. It will be all right. We’re here for you!”

Lily nodded, enduring the disgust and resentment in her heart. “I’ll let you guys handle it.” Melanie looked at them with jealousy, wishing to pull them apart immediately. It was more important to look at the bigger picture now, so she needed to bear with it for the time being.

When Lily left the office, Melanie finally released all her pent-up anger. “Are you fascinated by her?! How could you believe everything she says?! Did you believe that Rebirth was the one who manipulated her? How could they know our relationship? Why would they tell her?”

“It’s hard to say whether it’s Rebirth who told her about us, but she’s suspicious for sure.” Nathaniel picked up the box of cigarettes on the table and took one out of it.

He lit it and smoked, narrowing his eyes. “It doesn’t matter. The most important thing now is to let the issue cool down.”

“Hmph!” Melanie sneered and said, “Will she do as you say? Don’t forget how eloquent she was last night and how she dominated the scene. Aren’t you afraid she will do it again during the press conference?” Although Melanie thought Lily was a fool, she still felt something was off about the situation. “She doesn’t dare!” Nathaniel shook his head, exhaling smoke. After a pause, he continued, “Even if she does, I have countermeasures. Still, she is not that intelligent. What happened yesterday may just be a misunderstanding.”

CHAPTER 19

Lily went to the laboratory after leaving MN Inc., which was located far from the company. Lily and Olivia were mainly involved in research and development and would only mass produce their latest products after proving their success rates.

However, Nathaniel was usually eager for quick success and would rush for production, even though the product had yet to pass its tests. He would always jump the gun and launch newer products.

He said that the market was ever-changing, and others would soon replace them if they did not seize their opportunities. Therefore, he thought it was necessary to push new products to capture the consumers’ attention.

Lily disagreed with his aggressive marketing because she knew developing a new product would require a process of inspiration and experimentation. Newer products needed repeated tests to succeed, and they could not rush to release them.

Although Lily disagreed, she could only make suggestions because she was not qualified enough. Nathaniel told her she did not know how to run a business and only needed to focus on producing newer products quicker. Nathaniel also said she would be a wealthy wife who would enjoy the rewards of his success.

However, Lily never wanted that. She would be content as long as she could be with him. She had sacrificed many things for him, but he took advantage of her all along.

Lily hurriedly stepped on the breaks when the lights turned red and collected her thoughts. She told herself to stop thinking about Nathaniel and that she needed to move on. She knew it was not too late to do so.

When she arrived at the lab, she realized Nathaniel was more cunning than she thought. Olivia was not there, but she was in the archives room with several strangers who seemed hostile.

“What’s going on?” Lily asked calmly. “L–Lily!” Olivia looked like she had found her savior as soon as she saw Lily. “You’re finally here! These people are about to destroy the archives!”

Lily glared at the strangers as Olivia told her what was happening. Then, Lily patted Olivia’s back to calm her down as she asked the strangers, “Who are you guys?” “Mr. Hall sent us,” one of them responded with an arrogant attitude.

“Nonsense. Mr. Hall never told me about this.”

“This is none of your concern. Mr. Hall has ordered us to work with you at the lab starting today to hasten the development of newer products as soon as possible.”

Nathaniel told them to work with me? He just wants to keep an eye on me!’ Lily thought.

It seemed Nathaniel was still naive because he assumed Lily would continue to work for him as if nothing had happened during the competition yesterday.

“Since you’re all here to work with me, you should be in the lab. What are you doing in the archives room instead?” Lily said mockingly.

“T–These guys told me to locate all the research and development documents. They also demanded that I hand over the keys to the archives room!” Olivia hurriedly explained.

“The R&D documents? Why should we give you confidential information?”

“Mr. Hall said...”

Lily interrupted the man before he finished speaking, “Stop mentioning Mr. Hall and tell him to speak to me in person instead. You said this is all Mr. Hall’s doing, right? Well, I could say that you are a spy from another company!” The men looked at each other in dismay after Lily rebuked them,

CHAPTER 20

In the end, one of them took the initiative and stepped forward, “Lily, we’re just following: orders. You can seek Mr. Hall if you are dissatisfied. We’re only doing what Mr. Hall instructed us to do!”

“All right, you think i’m scared?” Lily focused her gaze on the man as she removed her phone from her pocket to call Nathaniel. However, there was no answer, even though Lily was sure Nathaniel was reachable. She knew then that Nathaniel was doing what she did to him.

Nathaniel thought it would frustrate her until she finally admitted her mistake. The man before Lily revealed a smug smile as if he knew her call would go unanswered. The man said, “Lily, your assistant has been beating around the bush for over an hour. It’s pointless to waste time like this when Mr. Hall has plenty of it. Sure, the information he wants is confidential, but it belongs to the company, and Mr. Hall wants you to hand them over. Don’t worry. We’ll take good care of it.”

Lily hung up the phone and said, "Oh, wow. It seems Nate has good intentions." Then she looked at Oliva, smiling coldly.

However, Olivia, who was ready to fight to the death against Nathaniel's lackeys, was surprised by Lily's words.

"Lily, you worked hard for those documents. Aren't they precious to you? They must have ulterior motives if they want to take them away all of a sudden!"

Lily knew Nathaniel was watching her and wanted to take away her documents. If she were to argue with him, he would have enough information and evidence to prove Melanie was the one who developed all their previous perfumes.

Without blinking, Lily said sternly, "Give it to them, Liv. My colleague here is right. No matter how confidential the information is, it belongs to the company, and we should give it to Mr. Hall since he had requested it.

Olivia was reluctant, but Lily had already spoken, so she could only give them what they wanted. She looked at Lily again, and she did not seem to change her mind. Olivia was puzzled and wanted to ask Lily what she was thinking, but she refrained

The documents were thick and piled high. The men moved them to the parked car and immediately took the archives room key.

"You guys have already taken all the documents, so why would you want the keys to an empty room?!" Olivia thundered.

"Mr. Hall requested that..."

"Give it to him, Liv," Lily said indifferently, raising her chin to signal Olivia to hand over the key.

Nathaniel believed those documents were crucial, but the essential details were in Lily's mind. He thought he could threaten her by taking all her documents away.

Olivia gritted her teeth and shoved the key onto the man's chest, simultaneously pushing him backward.

The man was agile and grabbed the key. Then he turned to get into the car, wanting to return to Nathaniel, but Lily did not question him.

Olivia watched the car drive off and could not help but ask, "Why did you give them the documents? How can you prove you developed all those perfumes without them?!" "Liv, do you honestly think I can't prove myself without that data?" Lily smiled mockingly. "Don't worry. I've got other ways to do that." She would dare to fight back if Nathaniel set her up.

Although Olivia was still puzzled, she did not ask further when she noticed Lily's confidence. "Weren't you planning to quit MN Inc.? Why did you come back?"