

Chapter 151 What's The Rush

After coming out of their private room, Rachel went straight to the elevator. She always had a bad feeling about the place. She wanted to get away as soon as possible because her subconscious was telling her something bad might happen if she stayed for long.

As she looked at the numbers going down on the elevator screen, she suddenly shivered. Perhaps she had drunk too much water and needed to use the ladies' room.

Looking up at the signboards, she thought it would be fine to head for the washroom first.

But as soon as she took a step towards the bathroom, the elevator door opened with a ding. Inside, Carson leaned against the wall lazily. He fiddled with his phone in one hand, the other, in his pocket. He blinked, seeing the trace of a familiar woman. Before the elevator door could close, he pressed a button and poked his head out.

He gazed at Rachel's back and grinned. "What a coincidence."

His phone rang at the same time. Looking at the caller ID, a smile appeared on Carson's face. As soon as he picked up the phone, he heard Victor's cold voice on the other line.

"Where are you?"

"The third floor. I'll be there soon," Carson replied, watching Rachel's figure disappear at the washroom corner.

As soon as he got the answer, Victor hung up without saying a word.

Looking at the phone screen, Carson clicked his tongue. He wasn't done talking!

After a while, his eyes lit up mischievously and waved at a waiter not far away.

A few moments later.

Rachel dried her hands with paper towels before leaving the toilet. When she opened the door, she almost bumped into a waitress carrying a plate.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I didn't mean to!" Pale-faced, the waitress apologized.

"It's okay. No one got hurt." Rachel smiled.

After Rachel fixed herself and walked a few steps away from the waitress, the girl suddenly grabbed her by the wrist.

"What's wrong?" Rachel stared down on her arm, and then panned her gaze to the young woman's face.

She didn't realize it at first, but the waitress' face was morbidly pale.

"Miss, could you... Could you do me a favor?" She slowly let go of Rachel's hand and look at her timidly. "Could you please deliver the food for me?"

Rachel looked back at her, mouth agape. She wanted to refuse.

The Crown Club was owned by Victor, after all. Although it was not a difficult task, she didn't want to get herself in trouble.

"Please..." Sensing her hesitation, the waitress begged once more, the desperation clear in her voice.

The waitress looked like she would pass out anytime. Her frailty reminded Rachel of Abby, and she sighed with pity. "Where should I take this?"

"In room 7056."

Rachel found herself at the door of room 7056. Steadying the food in her hand, she rang the bell.

At this moment, the room was full of noise, with deafening music and loud laughter.

On the curved sofa, young men and women from the upper class of Apliaria sat together.

Carson had been sitting at the bar counter since he came back with the gift. When he heard the doorbell, he drank up the rest of his wine, got off the high chair, and walked towards the door.

Rachel had been waiting outside. When she was about to ring the bell again, the door opened from the inside.

A tall man with a familiar face came into view.

Rachel's heart jolted. Her first instinct was to run away, but the man grabbed her arm as soon as she stepped back. All at once, the man easily pulled her inside the room.

In an instant, she was transported into a different world, the music assaulting her eardrums.

The party was in full swing and no one seemed to notice her presence. Carson's broad back also shielded her from their eyes.

"Miss Bennet, why were you in a rush to leave? Since you're here, how about we have some fun?" Carson grinned playfully.

He wasn't surprised to see her at all.

Anger welled up in Rachel's eyes, realizing what happened. "Carson, you paid that waitress to lead me here, didn't you?!"

"You really are sharp." Carson chuckled.

Rachel gritted her teeth. "Let me go!" It was a struggle to get her arm out of his grip.

"Sorry, but I can't. I wanted you here for a reason." All of a sudden, Carson pulled Rachel into his arms. Ignoring her resistance, he grabbed her shoulder, turned around, and said loudly, "Everyone! Look who's here!"

Hearing the announcement, the party-goers caught the spotlight roaming around. They all looked around in suspense until the rotating colorful light above fell on the woman by the entrance.

"Rachel? What..." Alicia bolted out of her seat with a frown. "What are you doing here?"

Rachel Bennet? The people couldn't believe what they were seeing. When did Rachel become so attractive?

Carson dragged her to the front. "It was such a coincidence meeting her here, so I thought I'd

invite her to Miss Schultz's birthday. The more, the merrier, right? Miss Schultz, I hope it's okay for you."

Alicia let out a tiny gasp and clenched her fists. Since it was Carson's request, she tried to suppress her anger.

"Of, course. It's not a big deal." She glared at Rachel for a moment then turned to look at the bar counter.

Still, Rachel could feel a pair of cold eyes staring at her.

It sent chills down her spine.

At the bar counter, there was a languid figure resting on the high chair. He had one foot on the floor, the other on the footrest, the shadow outlining his taut body. The man's sullenly cold expression was out of place in such a vibrant party.

And that man was staring at Rachel.

Rachel felt a punch in her gut. Carson being there meant another thing, something she desperately wanted to avoid. Running into Victor was the last thing she wanted.

But lo and behold...

Alicia noticed that Victor was staring at the unexpected visitor. She was reminded of what happened in the Sue Garden a few days ago. She barely contained her feelings, wanting to scream at Rachel and drag her out.

Alicia's roommate saw the flash of anger and jealousy in her eyes. Without a second thought, she poured a glass of wine and walked towards Rachel.

"Happy Birthday, indeed right? We were about to toast to Alicia's name, Miss Bennet. So, how about you do the honors?" Then, she handed Rachel the glass of red wine, smiling maliciously.

Chapter 152 One Should Always Be Grateful

Rachel stared down at the red wine with an ice-cold expression on her face. She did not intend to take it.

"What's this? You don't want to make a toast to Alicia and wish her a happy birthday, Miss Bennet?" Rachel remained still and Lori, Alicia's roommate, noticed that she had been quiet. With a sneer, she pushed the glass of wine towards the newcomer again.

Everyone else in the room was giggling, eyeing Rachel with mockery.

Alicia never thought that her roommate would do something like this out of the blue. She hesitated for a while whether or not she should intervene because she assumed Rachel was pregnant and couldn't drink. In the end, she just clenched her fists and averted her gaze.

Her eyes fell on the bar counter.

Victor had already stood up from his seat and placed his empty wine glass on the bar's counter. He was still looking at them, but Alicia knew he had his eyes focused only on Rachel.

She unconsciously bit her lower lip and tightened her fists even more. Her perfectly manicured nails dug into the skin of her palm, causing a burst of pain.

Lori's hand was a little sore and numb from holding the glass of wine, but Rachel still seemed unconcerned. She couldn't help but feel frustrated. "Are you..."

But before she could finish, someone abruptly took the wine glass in her hand.

Carson sniffed the wine and said, "Miss Bennet is allergic to alcohol and is unable to drink. Since I was the one who invited her, she's under my watch. I'll drink the three glasses of wine on her behalf. Would that be okay?"

Lori was taken aback and stuttered, "Mr... Mr. Scott, you want to drink it for her?"

"Of course." Carson raised his eyebrows. "How about this? I'll double that and drink six glasses of wine. Is that sincere enough?"

Lori pressed her lips tightly. She never expected Carson to suddenly step in and help Rachel out.

When he came in with Rachel earlier, they all thought that he wanted to embarrass her.

But judging from Carson's attitude, this was clearly not the case.

But why? Everyone knew Carson and Victor were best friends. Everybody knew that Victor despised Rachel, and after their divorce, he had driven her out of the Sue Garden. How could Carson help Victor's ex-wife?

Before the others could react, Carson released his grip on Rachel's hand and asked the waiter to prepare the glasses. The waiter obliged and poured the drinks for him and he wasted no time chugging down six glasses of wine on the table.

Rachel frowned, rubbing her aching wrist and immediately distanced herself from Carson. She looked around, trying to find an opportunity to leave this damned place.

But she couldn't shake off the icy glare from Victor.

Suddenly, a clap echoed throughout the entire room.

"Mr. Scott, hands down to you!" Someone took the initiative to applaud. The rest followed cheering as soon as he ended.

Carson's face lit up with a smile as he glanced at Rachel. Then, he turned to look at Alicia's dumbfounded roommate and said, "Is that okay now?"

Lori suddenly snapped out of it and felt embarrassed. It felt like she was slapped in the face multiple times. It was humiliating.

"I... Um..." Her family wasn't rich. She wouldn't have met with these wealthy people if she had not been Alicia's roommate. That was why she was keen on fitting in and becoming one of them.

And the best way to achieve that goal was to please Alicia.

Alicia had told her so much about Victor and Rachel. Seeing her roommate holding back, Lori wanted to please her and decided to pick on Rachel, planning to embarrass her in front of everyone.

But now, her plan backfired. She thought Rachel would become a laughing stock in everyone's eyes, but she ended up humiliating herself for offending Carson.

To think of she had offended Carson!

Lori pursed her lips and lowered her head. ①

Rachel turned to glance at Carson and saw that he seemed to be fixed on Lori for now. She took a step back and turned around quickly, planning to sneak out.

As soon as she headed to the nearest exit, she felt something on her skin.

"Where are you going, Miss Bennet?" There was no escape. Carson caught her again.

But something was off.

Carson felt a cold glare from behind. As he got closer to Rachel, that intensity continued to freeze him.

Without any doubt, it had to be Victor.

He couldn't help but grin.

Carson tricked Rachel in since he thought the birthday party would be boring. Not only that, but he also wanted to confirm his suspicions. He wanted to confirm whether his best friend was falling in love.

"I just drank six glasses of wine for you, but you don't seem to appreciate it. Is sneaking out your way of thanking me?" Carson chuckled.

Since his grip wasn't as hard as before, Rachel managed to slip her hand away.

"No," she murmured sarcastically, taking a step back to keep her distance.

She didn't need Carson's help. Rachel didn't care if things would get awkward or it would screw up Alicia's birthday. She could've saved herself.

Carson was stunned for a moment, then chuckled. He didn't expect that Rachel could still be so feisty.

Rachel looked at him with a confused expression. She didn't know what Carson was laughing at.

"It's honestly a shame, Miss Bennet. If only you weren't my best friend's woman, I think I'd really like you. You're quite an intriguing woman." With one hand in his pocket, Carson tilted his head and smiled mischievously.

Rachel would've ignored him. But when she heard what Carson said, she felt wary and stood her ground.

She could feel that Carson was up to something.

She needed to be prepared for anything.

"Since no one has taught you, I'm going to do the honors. You'll have to learn to be grateful." Carson came closer and grabbed her hand again. "Besides, did you really think you can leave? I don't think you came to the Crown Club for nothing, am I right? If I tell Victor about this, what would happen? Do you think he'll try to investigate why you came to this place? Huh?" Hearing the threat, Rachel raised her head and met his eyes defiantly.

Chapter 153 Dare

Carson stood upright. He had a smile on his face. It appeared as if nothing had happened. "Miss Bennet, do you still want to leave now?"

But there was something about the tone with which he spoke. It was somewhat threatening! Rachel clenched her fists tightly while staring at the man for a long time. She cursed him incessantly in her heart. Notwithstanding, plans were being put in place with respect to leaving the city. Hence, it became necessary to avoid any trouble at the moment. Therefore, she was left with no choice but to hold back her anger. Any other action would have been counteractive.

"What do you want to do, Mr. Scott?"

Carson grinned satisfactorily. Thereafter, he raised his hand in an attempt to place it on her shoulder again.

However, before he could do so, someone else cast a penetrating gaze directly into his eyes. For a moment, he even thought that the person wouldn't hesitate to break his arm the second it touched her! Apart from that, Carson clearly felt something on his waist.

When he took a look, it was a silver object.

He was caught unaware! Rachel held a corkscrew and the tip was pressed against him.

"Miss Bennet, do you really want to play it the hard way?" He squinted.

Rachel looked up and blinked. She had a pair of bright eyes which gave people a feeling of innocence and harmlessness. "If you don't know how to control your own hands, I don't mind teaching you!"

Carson was lost for words. The corners of his mouth twitched. How could Victor and Rachel be so cruel? It seemed like both of them were made for each other.

Before she could react, Carson pressed her wrist with his thumb. Feeling that her hand suddenly went numb, Rachel immediately dropped the corkscrew in her hand and Carson grabbed it in an instant.

"Girls ought to behave in a gentler manner!" Carson grinned before throwing the corkscrew backwards. His aim was really accurate. The object fell into the waiter's hand.

Rachel was quite astounded.

Carson made a gesture which signified, 'Please.' Then he said to her, "Miss Bennet, take a seat."

As soon as she had recovered from the pain and astonishment, Rachel frowned slightly while looking at him from head to toe. Nonetheless, Carson still looked cynical and dandiacal. It was hard to imagine how skillful the man was when he took away the corkscrew just now.

Immediately she took a seat, everyone's eyes were fixed on her.

Alicia bit her lower lip. Tonight was supposed to be about her. But it had taken a different turn since Rachel appeared. Somehow everybody's attention had been diverted.

The feeling of abandonment grew crazily in her heart like weeds. She gulped down some wine and slammed the glass on the table.

The crisp sound attracted everyone's attention.

The burning anger in Alicia's eyes was very evident. She stared at Rachel fiercely. "It's boring to just drink like this. How about we play a game to kill time and have fun?"

Of course, Rachel noticed the way that Alicia looked at her. She thought the hatred those eyes emitted were capable of killing someone, if indeed anger could hurt.

Carson was thrilled by the idea of playing a game. So he declared his interest. "Count me in."

Immediately she witnessed his agreement, Rachel subconsciously felt that he must be thinking of some bad idea. She looked up at him and gnashed her teeth. Perhaps it was due to the fact that she had been tricked by Carson on several occasions.

"But, what game do you want us to play exactly?" Someone asked her.

But before Alicia gave an answer, Carson leaned back lazily. "How about truth or dare?" he asked.

"That sounds good to me!" Looking straight at Rachel, Alicia asked her, "Even if you won't do alcohol, can you at least play games?"

She no longer hid her hostility towards Rachel. Therefore, it became obvious to the people present.

"Of course you can! Right? I don't think Miss Bennet is a killjoy." A rich lady who was always close to Alicia said in a mocking tone. ①

In response, Rachel raised her head and looked back at Alicia who swallowed unconsciously because she felt guilty.

Her heart missed a beat when she realized how intensely focused Rachel was.

Despite how dim the light was, she could still feel the fierceness.

But, it soon dawned on her that she should be the center of attention, given the fact that it was her birthday today. Therefore, she immediately straightened up and maintained her gaze.

Suddenly, a faint smile appeared on Rachel's face. "Okay, but it isn't really fun to tell the truth. How about we skip that part and just play dare?"

"Just dare?" Alicia was a bit surprised for a moment, but soon reacted by snorting coldly, "Rachel, do you seriously want us to go on with it? Do not end up regretting your action later!"

Still, Rachel just took a sip of juice without saying a word.

Alicia gritted her teeth while she ordered a waiter to bring the poker cards.

In no time, the cards were made available, a quarter of which was drawn by Carson. He skillfully shuffled them before handing everything to the waiter again.

The cards were soon unfolded and everyone present was allowed to draw freely.

Taking a look at his card, Carson lazily put his long arm on the back of the sofa, lifted his lips and said, "There is only one king of hearts. Whoever gets it will be the winner. He or she can assign anyone to carry out a single task."

In no time, everyone drew theirs until it became Rachel's turn.

But then, there were only two cards left.

Rachel raised her eyebrows and she took one without hesitation.

"What! Every one of us picked a card. Why is one card still remaining?" A voice asked in confusion. "Who is yet to take theirs?" "It ought to be Mr. Sullivan," another voice replied.

All of a sudden, there was an uneasy silence. No one dared to ask whether or not Victor was willing to play.

It was evident that they all disdained and feared him.

From their point of view, all of them were born into rich and powerful families. So they regarded themselves as being noble.

But, to be blunt, Victor was nothing but a bastard son of another rich man!

However, the bastard they looked down upon had transformed into the leader of the Sullivan Group. A single order from him could make them lose every means of survival in Apliaria. Therefore, they were very careful about their choice of words in order not to accidentally offend him and end up destroying their whole family.

The waiter looked at the bar counter subconsciously. There was a man sitting in the darkness. As a result, it was quite difficult to see the expression on his face or figure out his mood.

While he was taking his time to deliberate whether or not to give Victor the card, the man stood up.

The man walked over. His presence made the waiter lower his head nervously. It felt like the air around him had suddenly become cold because Victor sauntered near.

"The card." Victor's oppressive and unemotional voice suddenly echoed in the waiter's ears and he found himself shaking.

His anxiety was so great that he didn't hear what Victor said clearly. "What... What?" the man asked still trembling.

There was an impatient look in Victor's eyes. He frowned slightly, took the card from the waiter's hand and walked to the sofa.

Carson was seated right next to him. He raised his hand to touch the tip of his nose and coughed. Victor might actually sent him far away from this country if he didn't behave himself.

"This seat is not good for me. I didn't get the king of hearts. You take it!" Carson said before quickly standing up.

Then he moved to the other side and sat there.

As soon as Victor took the seat, Rachel's hand holding the card tightened. It was as if her body had become enveloped by the cold aura around Victor. It was so intimidating!

Somehow, everybody's nerves were set on edge. Perhaps, it was as a result of Victor's involvement.

"So, who has the king?" Carson asked. Then he placed his card on the table. 1

"I have it!" Someone raised the card in his hand and said excitedly, "I win, right?" He looked around for a while and said a little louder, "In that case, I choose three!"

The person was barely done speaking before everyone looked down at the cards in their hands hurriedly.

Rachel took a quick glance at hers. She had the four of hearts, so it wasn't her.

"Who has it?" Someone asked.

"I do! A cold and deep voice suddenly thundered from her side. Rachel's hand holding the card paused for a moment. She turned her head and looked at the person. It was none else but Victor!

Chapter 155 Have A Cigarette

"Wow! Alicia! That's awesome!"

"Lucky I'm not number nine! If somebody dares me to kiss an ugly stranger, I'd really be sick!"

Everyone's voices were mixed up in a commotion.

The room was filled with anxious anticipation. Some people checked the cards in their hands, again and again, to make sure they were safe. Some gloated about which unfortunate soul got the card.

"Who has number nine?" One excited guest asked. They'd been waiting for the person to come forward, but no one stood up to receive the punishment.

Driven by curiosity, people started checking at their seatmate's cards. Playful arguments broke out, denying their hands. In the end, there were only three people left unchecked.

Carson shook the glass in his hand and lazily answered, "Not me."

After taking a sip of his drink, he flicked his fingertips. The card spun two circles in the air and fell on the table for everyone to see.

His card was the eight of spades.

If not him, then...

It was only down to two.

Realizing this, everyone unconsciously took a deep breath. They looked at the cards they were holding, feeling both nervous and excited.

Glancing at the card in his hand, Victor's eyes turned grim. No one knew what he was thinking, but it seemed like he didn't intend to show his card.

Rachel felt the air around them tensing. Victor's aura was suddenly heavy.

She frowned slightly, her eyes turning to take a peek into the man's card. Unfortunately, Victor caught on and put the card on the table, so no one could see his number.

"What do you have, Rachel?" Noticing Victor's move, Alicia was bothered. 'He must know that Rachel has it. Does he still want to protect her?' she thought.

She would never allow it!

Alicia wanted to humiliate her. Alicia thought that if Rachel kissed someone else, Victor would only hate his ex-wife more. Alicia wanted to ruin her image, branding her a shameless woman.

"Yeah, Miss Bennet. What's your card?" Another person chimed in. Without waiting for Rachel's answer, he plucked out the card that she put on the table.

"A nine! She had it!"

Fanfare erupted in the room in a mix of laughter and whistles. The guests clapped their hands, looking at Rachel like she had given them the best kind of entertainment.

Alicia couldn't be more pleased. A sinister smile appeared on her face as she swiped the card and stared at Rachel mockingly.

"Time for your punishment, Rachel. Or are you going to chicken out?" Alicia sneered.

Rachel raised her head, staring back into her eyes.

Alicia thought Rachel would lose it, yet she remained indifferent, as if nothing had happened. That was what Alicia hated the most about her. Every time Rachel acted like this, Alicia felt like instead of Rachel, she was the fool.

"If you don't want that, I can give you another kind of punishment." Alicia glared. "What do you think about wiping my shoes? That should be easy, right?"

Alicia took a quick glance at Victor's face from the corner of her eyes to see how he would react.

Even if people think Victor hated this woman, Alicia's faith couldn't help but waver. They were married and they lived together. Just now, Victor protected her in his own quiet way. Alicia wasn't so sure that Victor despised Rachel anymore.

Even so, it seemed like he had no intention to help her now.

That was her ray of hope. Smiling, Alicia thought maybe she was just thinking too much. Why would Victor want to help Rachel anyway? If it weren't for the baby in Rachel's belly, he wouldn't have tolerated her!

"Alicia, you are being too kind." The girl beside her spoke with discontent.

"That's right! Rules are rules and losers get punished! Miss Bennet wouldn't want to be a party pooper, right?" The other girl looked at Rachel expectantly. "You wanted to play this game after all, didn't you?"

She nudged Rachel.

"Kiss the first man I met outside?" With a serious look on her face, Rachel asked, "What if I don't meet any men?"

"Are you kidding me? That's impossible! Oh, quit trying to stall us." Alicia huffed.

"I'm just asking 'what if?'" Rachel folded her arms.

Seeing Rachel's point made Alicia tick. She thought about the possibility for a moment, but then shook her head. There should be no room for doubts. It was simply impossible! Not including the customers, there were around 200 male waiters serving the club.

"If you don't meet any man along the way, I'll do it instead." Alicia held her chin up.

Rachel smiled.

That was exactly what she wanted.

"Now, hurry and go." Alicia smiled.

Rachel picked up the phone and walked out with a grin. Staring at her back, Alicia ordered a waiter to follow Rachel's tracks with a phone. Then, she turned on the video chat and showed everything on the big screen.

"What kind of man will Rachel see? Who wants to bet?" A young man shouted excitedly.

"I bet ten thousand! He must be a waiter!"

"Fifty thousand! I'm guessing that's the old man I saw next door. He's about 60, so he must be ready to go home and sleep at this hour. Damn, he would be lucking out!"

"One hundred thousand. I bet it's a boy!"

The audience started placing their bets, watching Rachel's footage with voracious eyes.

"Hey. Isn't Rachel kind of hot? I can't believe I'm noticing just now." Somebody blurted out.

"Just now? I had my eyes on her when she came in! She's got a pretty good figure. I haven't seen anyone sexier."

"Damn, maybe I should have pretended to go to the bathroom. If I ran into her, I'd be one lucky guy kissing her now."

The men kept talking about Rachel in unsavory ways.

Victor wasn't paying any attention to the show and was busy texting someone. Tapping his chin, Carson leaned over to his best friend's side. "I just found something interesting. Any idea how Alicia got the king of hearts card? Sure enough, you never know how cunning people can be."

His words couldn't be more obvious.

Still, Victor ignored him. Carson took a deep breath and looked at the screen. "Seriously, dude, aren't you curious what's going to happen? I think I'd want to bet too."

As soon as he turned off the phone screen, Victor looked at him, "Carson, one more word and you will find yourself shipped off in the middle of nowhere."

Carson pressed his lips together. He nodded silently, retreating to his seat.

After a short while, Victor stood up and headed for the door.

Carson jolted out of his seat and followed him, "Where are you going? The party's not over yet."

"I'll be out for a cigarette."

A cigarette?

Carson scoffed, looking back at the pack of cigarettes on the table. 'What a liar.'