

Love Until Death Do Us Part

Chapter 23

Leonard dropped a line that turned heads all over the place. Athena lifted her gaze to check him out, and after five years, he still looked just like the guy she remembered.

Their families went way back, Nancy and Anna were BFFs, and Leonard was right there with Athena as they grew up. Both families were just counting down the days until Athena graduated to set her wedding with Leonard in stone.

But who would've thought she'd up and vanish out of the blue? By the time she bounced back to Stardale City, Athena was no longer the picture of innocence and even had a kiddo in tow.

She was all about getting her **groove** back then, plotting her sweet revenge on Anna, and keeping busy by locking horns with Simon and David.

Just like that, Leonard ghosted her life, and it was months before Athena caught wind that Leonard, as the hotshot CEO of the Bishop Group, had already jetted off abroad for work.

For five years, there was radio silence between them, except for the odd birthday and holiday e-cards.

Leonard strolled over, looking sharp as ever, rocking a crisp white shirt and a sleek, tailored gray suit the guy was all elegance and charm.

This dude was like a masterpiece carved out by the big guy upstairs, exuding an air of nobility and sophistication from head to

toe.

"Leonard?" Nancy called out softly, her voice barely above a whisper, Belinda had invited Athena with a plan to make her leave the party with her tail between her legs, even going as far as to send someone to sidetrack Leonard.

Looks like whoever was sent didn't do a good job of keeping him **busy**.

Leonard reached out and snagged the stone carving ornament from Nancy's hands.

He lowered his lashes and gently traced his finger over the unsightly crack on the stone.

“This stone carving is exquisite, and the material itself is top-notch. Athena sure knows how to pick a gift for Grandma. If Grandma doesn’t appreciate this piece, then I’ll just take it off your hands.

Leonard looked up, his eyes meeting Athena’s with a soft smile, filled with warmth.

“Leonard, a broken stone has no value as a collectible,” Belinda’s voice turned icy.

Leonard kept it short and sweet, “Can’t put a price on what I fancy”

Belinda’s face could’ve dripped with gloom. She didn’t want to make a scene **at her** own birthday bash, “I’m too old to deal with you!”

Belinda couldn’t help but nag. “Mark my words, you’ll regret not listening to your elders!”

Leonard had come back home this year ‘cause his five-year stint abroad was up. As soon as he landed in Stardale City, Belinda was on pins and needles, scared that he still had a soft spot for Athena.

Leonard handed the stone over to his assistant, instructing them to keep it safe.

He approached Athena with a tender **smile**, “Long time no see, Athena.”

The Bishop family had given her a rough time back in the day, and now when Athena looked at Leonard, her gaze was calm but tinged with a touch of distance.

She grabbed a glass of champagne from a passing waiter and raised it to Leonard, “Thanks.”

Cheers to him for having her back just now,

Leonard let out a sudden chuckle, “Seems like we’ve become strangers.”

“Five years apart can turn even the closest of friends into strangers,” Athena mused. They could never go back to the carefree days of their youth..

The sparkle in Leonard’s eyes dimmed as he looked past Athena’s slender shoulders to the man behind her.

Even with sunglasses on, Newman’s looks and vibe were a magnet for attention. Leonard had seen his full face before – the kind that drove the whole Market wild.

“Your new bodyguard? Leonard inquired

Athena flashed a charming smile, “Been through a couple of bodyguards already, this one’s just temp work.”

This time Leonard took a closer look at Newman.

The guy had an air of cool indifference, not showing the slightest hint of submission even in front of the Bishop family's golden boy Newman stood behind Athena, his sunglasses barely concealing the proud, I'm-the-king-of-the-world vibe.

Yet, Leonard could still sense a natural aura of authority coming from him.

Athena's temporary bodyguard didn't seem ordinary at all.

Leonard invited Athena to the dessert area for a bite, and she followed him over.

Newman, playing the role of the bodyguard, hung back in the lounge area.

Then out of nowhere came a wave of pungent perfume.

Nancy handed her wine glass to the man in front of her.

"Hey, handsome, have a drink on me."

Newman's face was a blank **slate**, not a peep from him.

He was the epitome of cool and couldn't care less about Nancy.

Another bodyguard from a wealthy family tried to smooth things over, "Ms. Bishop, I think he's Ms. Dempsey's driver. He's not supposed to drink."

Nancy let out a frustrated "tsk, realizing she'd missed the chance.

with a room

tonight."

Her smile bloomed as she tried to flirt with the guy, "If you drink with me, I'll hook you up. Nancy was laying it on thick, no secret what she was after. She loved toying with men, and every good-looking male escort in Stardale City had been on her radar.

Any young and strong bodyguard from a wealthy family only **needed** a nod from her, and they'd be delivered to her doorstep to cozy up to the Bishop family.

Newman lounged on a crimson sofa, his casual posture and stunning looks barely concealed by the sunglasses.

He took the wine glass from Nancy's hand, and her **eyes** lit up with the thrill of the hunt.

But then Newman did the unexpected he lifted the glass over Nancy's head, and the cold wine cascaded down, washing away the thick layers of her makeup!

“Ah! Ah! **Ah!** AHE

Nancy’s wails drew gazes from all around.

Athena turned around at the sound of Nancy’s shrill cursing.

“How dare you splash me? Did Athena give you the guts to do this?”

The Bishop family’s bodyguard quickly stepped up, shielding Nancy behind him. Someone handed her a tissue, while another was dabbing at her hair,

The moment Belinda saw Nancy getting bullied, she hustled over.

“Nancy, what’s going down?”

“Granny! Athena’s bodyguard splashed wine on me!”

Belinda was fuming, turning around to scan the crowd for Athena.

Athena strolled over with Leonard, and upon seeing Nancy’s clown face stained with red wine, she couldn’t help but snort with laughter, totally uncool.

“Athena! You think this is funny? Did you do this on purpose?”

“Ms. Bishop, my bodyguard wouldn’t just drench someone in wine for no reason.”

Before Athena could finish, Nancy lunged at her.

She might not be able to take on a towering six-footer, but she was sure going to deal with Athena.

Athena braced for the incoming slap

But Nancy’s feet slipped, and before her hand could meet Athena’s face, she face-planted onto the floor!

In a panic, Nancy grabbed a tablecloth, bringing down a champagne tower with a crash!

In the ensuing chaos, Athena was **yanked** into Newman’s arms, while a barrage of **falling** glasses rained down on the man’s back.

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Athena’s head was tightly shielded, Newman’s strong heartbeat pounding into her ear.

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