

A dynamic splash of water in shades of blue and white, set against a dark blue background. The water is captured in mid-air, creating a sense of movement and energy. The splash originates from the top left and curves downwards, with smaller droplets scattered throughout the scene.

*Unleashed*

COLOURS  
*of*  
LOVE

KATHRYN  
TAYLOR

“I think Jonathan is going to leave me,” I say, forcing out the words in little bursts and feeling the first tears of helplessness running down my cheeks as I speak my greatest fear aloud.

Annie’s eyes widen. “What? What gives you that idea?”

I take a deep breath and wipe the tears from my cheeks. “I ... overheard it. He told Yuuto just now, up in his office.”

“Yuuto’s here?” Annie clearly finds this piece of information confusing. “I thought the guy didn’t want to have anything more to do with Huntington Ventures.”

“So did I,” I say. “That’s just it. Yuuto’s here again, Annie. And I happened to overhear Jonathan telling him that he made a big mistake, which now he wants to put right.” I shrug my shoulders unhappily. “I think he meant me.”

Annie stretches out her arms, pulls me toward her, and holds me really tight. It really does me good.

“Oh sweetie, that’s complete nonsense! Jonathan loves you and he wouldn’t dream of leaving you. The man is crazy about you!”

I release myself from her arms and shake my head.

“No, he isn’t. Not anymore. He’s changed, Annie — I just didn’t know what to make of it all. But, now that Yuuto is here again, it all makes sense. Jonathan probably feels I don’t give him enough space. And, at the latest, when he finds out that I, I ...” I pause because I didn’t actually mean to bring up the subject.

“That you what?” Annie insists, looking at me in a way that says that she’s not going to let me off that easily.

“That I’m pregnant,” I finish my sentence and wait for her reaction. She raises her eyebrows.

“But — that’s wonderful, isn’t it?” she asks, visibly surprised.

“No, it isn’t. At least, not for Jonathan,” I explain, feeling the tears welling up in my eyes again. “He doesn’t want any children, Annie. And now I’m scared that he’ll use it as a reason to end our rela ...”

Annie and I both whip round when the door suddenly opens. We both stare open-mouthed at Jonathan, who’s standing in the doorway.

## 4

“Annie, would you mind leaving Grace and me alone for a moment,” he says in that calm but very determined voice which brooks no contradiction, holding my gaze as he speaks. His blue eyes are sparkling, but that’s not anger that I can see inside them. I least I don’t think so, because actually I’m far too confused to be able to think straight at all.

I don’t want Annie to leave, but I can’t stop her. She just squeezes my hand briefly once more, smiles encouragingly at me, and then walks past Jonathan to the door, closing it behind her again.

For a moment, Jonathan and I stand facing each other in the small room, which suddenly feels way too cramped. My heart is beating wildly and I can feel everything drawing me toward him — the way I always feel. That will probably never change. But I cross my arms in front of my chest and resist the urge to go to him, as I normally would. Because after everything I just heard, it seems as though that’s exactly what he no longer wants.

“What were you doing upstairs just now?” he asks, and his blue eyes fix me so penetratingly that I swallow. So he saw me after all. I should have known it wouldn’t escape his notice.

“I wanted to come see you,” I say, because it’s true.

“And why did you run away again?”

“Do you really need to ask?” The despair I’ve been feeling flips over into anger again. “You’ve been meeting Yuuto behind my back, which is already bad enough. And then I hear you telling him that marrying me was a big mistake which you want to set right.” I swallow as I say it, and fresh tears are stinging my eyes. But I hold his gaze, I don’t want him to see that it’s tearing me apart inside. “Now at least I know the worst,” I continue. “I just wish you’d been honest with me and told me yourself that you’d had enough of me. Then at least I would have had the chance to ...”

Jonathan reaches me in two steps, takes me in his arms, covers my mouth with a kiss, and won’t let me finish speaking. The world disappears for a moment as I completely abandon myself to the desire he awakens in me. Then he releases my lips. But he goes on holding me tight, which is a good thing because my knees have gone weak and I’m finally way too confused to put up any resistance.

“Grace, you completely misunderstood the situation. When I said I’d made a very big mistake, I wasn’t talking about you; I was talking about the company. I was angry that I hadn’t been paying more attention, hadn’t noticed earlier just how critical the situation had become. That’s what I want to put right — not my marriage to you.”

The news completely takes the wind out of my sails, and my anger vanishes into thin air. I look at him in surprise. “And why are you meeting with Yuuto again?”

„Because I think he’s behind all this. I wanted to see if I could get anything out of him, because I can’t prove it. But he’s acting as though he had nothing to do with it.”

“You should have told me! I’m your wife. If you’re having problems with the company I want to know — and I want to know if you’re meeting with Yuuto again!” I complain.

Jonathan releases me again and runs his hand through his hair.

“I didn’t want to upset you. Yuuto’s done enough damage already. I just wanted to keep him away from you. I didn’t want you to have to worry about him again.”

That was pretty chivalrous of him, it’s true, and I feel a warm fuzzy feeling spreading inside me when it registers once more just how much I love him. But I definitely can’t just let this one go. “But I did worry. Because I noticed something was wrong, and I simply couldn’t work out what was troubling you so much.”

Jonathan smiles and puts his arms around me again, pulling me toward him. “And the only explanation you could come up with is that I didn’t love you anymore?” He shakes his head and kisses me. “You must have a lot of faith in me.”

I look at him indignantly, even though I’ve actually long since forgiven him.

“Then next time, just tell me the truth right away — so I don’t have to come up with any funny ideas,” I scold him. “If you hadn’t kept this business with Yuuto a secret, all this would never have occurred to me.”

I get up onto my tiptoes and try to kiss him, but he places a finger to my lips. He’s looking me at me earnestly now.

“And what secrets have you been keeping from me?”

I stare at him, shocked.

“Grace, I’m not blind. Something is bothering you. At first, I thought you were missing your family, but that doesn’t seem to be it, does it?” His eyes are fixed on mine and I see the same uncertainty in them that I felt when I noticed that he was keeping secrets from me. It endangered our relationship, so it’s got to stop now, I think.

“No, it’s something else,” I confess. “Something you probably won’t like.”

Jonathan sighs. Deeply. “Whatever it is, Grace, as long as it doesn’t change anything between us, I can live with it.” “But I’m afraid something is going to change,” I say and his gaze darkens. But I carry on speaking. “I’m pregnant, Jonathan.”

It takes him a while to grasp the news, and I don’t take my eyes off his face, watching as his expression changes from shock to astonishment to — relief.

“I didn’t plan it, it just happened,” I explain. “And since you don’t want to have any children, I didn’t know how to tell you. I was afraid you would have trouble getting used to the idea.”

Jonathan smiles a little wryly.

“Well, yes, the thought does take some getting used to,” he says. “But I think we’ll manage somehow.”

“Then you don’t mind?” I can’t quite grasp the fact that he’s taking it so lightly.

“Believe it or not, Grace, I’m not the same man who told you children were out of the question for me. You’re right, it was unthinkable to me for a long time — but so were many other things, before I met you. Now the only thing that matters to me is that you’re happy, and if you want this child, I want it, too.” He sighs. “Just promise me that

everything's OK, and nothing bad is happening. And you'll have to be patient with me. I really don't believe I'll be a particularly good father."

A broad grin spreads across my face as I feel the weight of the past few days finally falling off my shoulders.

"You'll be the best father. You're always the best at everything, after all!" I reassure him. When we kiss each other, my heart feels lighter than it has in a long time.

But there's just one problem.

"So, what are we going to do about Yuuto?"

Jonathan shrugs his shoulders. "No idea. I'm in a bit of a bind. I'm certain he's behind the attacks on Huntington Ventures, but, as I said, I don't have any proof. That's why I summoned him. I acted as though I wanted his advice; because I thought he might give me a clue as to what kind of a game he's playing, what he's up to with me. But he was cool as a cucumber, and acted like it was none of his concern. But when I looked into his eyes, I could see he looked triumphant. And rightly so — he really is damaging us, and if I don't find out soon whether he truly is behind this and what he's planning to do, we're going to have a problem on our hands."

It's worrying him, I can see that, and now I understand why he's been so busy these past few weeks. It must have been quite a blow to him, that the Japanese man was able to trick him like that. Since I believe I was partly responsible — after all, I often distracted him -, I also feel like I have a responsibility to help him.

"Maybe you've just been going about this the wrong way," I say, smiling at him, as he looks at me in surprise.

"What do you mean?"

"I think a quite different approach might work with Yuuto," I explain. "And I've already got an idea as to what you could do."

I pull Jonathan down toward me with a mischievous smile, to let him in on the plan that's beginning to take shape in my mind.

## 5

Catherine Shepard sticks her head around the door.

“Mr. Nagako is on his way up now,” she informs me, and I nod to her from my seat at Jonathan’s desk. I can’t manage a smile; I’m too worked up for that.

When I confided my plan to Jonathan in the kitchen yesterday, it all sounded so simple. But now that I’m sitting here, waiting for the arrival of a man who is definitely one of the creepiest people I’ve ever met, it doesn’t seem so easy. My palms are sweaty and I can feel how hot my cheeks are — signs of my nerves, which are getting worse by the moment. So I’m happy when, soon afterwards, there’s a knock at the door and Catherine lets the Japanese man in.

He’s hardly changed since I last saw him. He’s greying at the temples a bit more, but he’s still pretty impressive — tall, dark, and strangely impassive. Somehow cold, at least at first sight. Because I recognise an angry gleam in his eyes when he spots me sitting at the desk. He wasn’t expecting that — which is a good thing.

“Please sit down, Mr. Nagako,” I say, indicating the visitor’s chair with a tight smile and waiting for him to approach, which he finally does, after a little hesitation. But then he fixes me with his dark almond eyes suspiciously.

“What’s going on?” he asks, visibly angry. “Where’s Jonathan?”

I smile once more, hoping he won’t notice how difficult I’m finding this. “He sent me in his place. I’m his wife, after all. You don’t mind, do you?”

Yuuto’s lips shrivel to a narrow white line and he has trouble suppressing his anger at the affront.

“This is outrageous. I had an appointment with Jonathan.” His eyes are shooting out bolts of lightning, and he gets up again, about to leave. “Bring him here. I want to speak to him, not to you.”

I lean back in Jonathan’s chair, which is actually far too big for me, and keep on smiling. “Well, I’m afraid you’ll have to settle for me. He doesn’t have time for you right now,” I explain, watching his lips narrow even more — if that’s even possible. “As his wife, I have a lot of influence over him. And since I have a problem with you showing up here, he’s not going to meet with you anymore. I’m so sorry.”

Yuuto scrunches his hands up into fists. He’s all but foaming at the mouth now; I can see that, so I add insult to injury by indicating the door.

“That’s all I wish to say to you. It was nice talking to you. Catherine will be happy to escort you downstairs. Have a nice life, Mr. Nagako.”

“Who do you think you are!” he roars at me. “Do you think you can just decide whether Jonathan can see me? I think you’re seriously overestimating what you mean to him.”