

## A Farewell 21

### Chapter 21

Ian had even gotten the idea that Sage was demanding a divorce because she was throwing a tantrum over what had happened that day.

Even if it was unnecessary, she still couldn't help asking, "Since you knew that was the fifth anniversary of our first meeting, you must've known how important it was to me. Why did you still leave with Ivy?"

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Ian looked calm. "To me, it was no different from any other day."

Of course. Since he didn't love her, what did any sort of anniversary matter? All of this" was nothing but her single-sided expectations.

Sage muttered self-deprecatingly, "I wonder where I found the courage to think I could move you one day."

Ian didn't hear her properly. When he turned to look at her, her expression had already gone back to normal. "I'm not throwing a tantrum or kicking up a fuss. I'm serious. about wanting to divorce."

She was still going on about the divorce! Ian's expression darkened. "Do you think marriage is a game? Do you think you can get married and divorced whenever you want?"

Sage found this funny. "What, don't you want to get rid of me as soon as possible so you can get together with your lovely Ivy?"

Ian despised Sage's tone. She sounded harsh, contemptuous, and uncaring. "That's my business. You have no right to use Grandma to force me into getting married when you want, then demand a divorce just because you want one!"

“What do you want, then?”

“Since you’ve tormented me for so long, you have to wait until I’m done tormenting you!”

“You’re nuts.” Sage put down her cutlery and stood up. “There’s more than a month left until Grandma’s birthday. Once it’s over, we’re getting divorced. I’m not waiting a second longer!”

“Don’t you even dare think about it, Sage!” Ian was steely-faced now. “You love being Mrs. Holcomb, don’t you? You can keep that identity until I’m sick of you!”

He flung his cutlery onto the table and left.

“What the fuck is wrong with you, Ian?” Sage shouted at his back.

Just a few days ago, he’d been desperate to get rid of her. Today, he was saying that she had to stick around until he was sick of her. Hadn’t he gotten sick of her ages ago?

“Go get your head checked if something’s wrong with it!”

But no matter how loudly Sage shouted, Ian didn’t turn to look at her. He opened the front door and strode out of the house, leaving Sage fuming along in the dining room. Just then, her phone rang. The ringtone was one she’d recorded specially for Ian to use, but he’d scorned it. So, Sage set it as her own ringtone. She figured there was a chance Ian would use it once he was used to it.

God, how could she have been such a hopeless romantic in the past?

Sage answered the phone. “Hey, Tiana.”

“Did someone step on your tail or something? Why do you sound so mad?” Tiana Ford asked.

"It's nothing. I got bitten by a dog." Sage sighed in exasperation. "Why are you calling me instead of spending time with your precious?"

"He's on the night shift," Tiana said sweetly. "It's almost his birthday, so I was thinking of heading to the mall to pick out something for him. Are you free tomorrow? Can you come with me?"

Sage looked at the black card before her. "Sure!"

Not only would she go shopping with Tiana, but she would also swipe the hell out of Ian's card to vent her frustrations.

The next day, Tiana and Sage met up at the mall.

Tiana said teasingly, "My, my. It's only been half a month since we've seen each other, but you look so spirited now. Has Ian finally been showering you with his love?"

Sage had stopped dieting recently and was taking her meals regularly. Plus, Wanda had been making her nutritious meals every day. How could she not be more spirited?

"Don't even mention him. I don't want to get in a bad mood." Sage said, "I'm a natural beauty who doesn't need any bastard's love."

Tiana asked uncertainly, "Is the bastard you're referring to..."

"It can't be your precious Dr. Tate, right?"

"But-"

Ian?"

“No buts.” Sage knew what Tiana wanted to say—it had to be something about how much she loved Ian. She linked arms with Tiana. “Let’s go shopping. We can talk while looking around!”

Their first stop was at a jewelry store. Sage pointed at the most expensive pieces in the store. “I want this one, this one, that one, that one, and that one. Wrap them all up for me!”

The sales clerk’s eyes lit up at her words. She was this close to getting on her knees and kissing Sage’s feet.

On the other hand, Tiana was stunned. “What’s gotten into you, Sage? You may have money now, but this isn’t the way you should spend it!”

Sage said, “It’s the bastard’s money. I might as well use it instead of letting it go to waste!”

Even if she didn’t spend the money, it would end up in Ivy’s pocket. There was no way she would let Ivy get her hands on a single cent!

“Has anything caught your eye? I’ll buy it for you!” Sage said after paying for the things she’d picked out.

Tiana shook her head. “Thanks, but no thanks. I’m gonna check out the discounted items in the men’s section.”

She didn’t actually need to buy discounted items; with William Tate’s salary, she could spend several thousand dollars in a single shopping spree without batting an eyelid. There was no way she could afford to splurge as Sage had just done, though.

The jewelry Sage had purchased was too valuable for her to carry around in the mall, so the sales clerk offered to have it delivered to her home.

As Sage and Tiana made their way to the men’s section, Sage stopped to buy several luxury items like clothes and shoes.

Tiana gaped at her. "Are you really okay, Sage?"

## Chapter 22

Sage tended to go shopping in the past, but she had never bought this many items,

Did she suffer from some sort of shock or trauma?

Sage smiled as she responded with a question of her own. "Do I not look fine to you?" Tiana nodded immediately. "Yes, you look a little less than fine!"

Now rendered speechless, Sage could only pat Tiana on the shoulder. "Don't worry. I'm fine. I know what I'm doing."

By the time the women reached the men's apparel section, Sage's arms were already loaded with shopping bags.

Tiana started browsing the display of ties on the racks. "Sage, do you want to pick out a gift for Ian as well?"

Sage rejected her immediately. "No way. He's not worthy of anything."

Tiana fell silent at that response. Sage was definitely not fine at all.

"How could you stain the tuxedo? When I loaned it to you, I made it very clear that you mustn't get any dirt or grime on it!"

At that moment, Sage and Tiana heard a loud voice berating someone else from the luxury tuxedo store which was located across from the store they were in.

Sage turned to see a tall and handsome young man apologizing to the salesperson in

the tuxedo store.

“I’m so sorry about that. It’s just that an accident happened at the venue I wore this to. Is it possible for the tux to be sent to a dry cleaner? I’ll foot the bill, I promise!”

“There’s no way that tux can get dry cleaned! Our tuxedos are all masterpieces produced by famous designers! The fabric used on the tuxes is extremely expensive, you

know!

“This tux will be degraded to a second-rate outfit if I were to send it to the dry cleaner! You have to buy this tuxedo right here, right now!”

The poor man looked rather flustered. “Can’t you just let me off the hook this one time? I don’t mind paying extra for the dry cleaning bill!”

“No way-

“How much is the tux? I’ll pay for it.”

Sage had approached the arguing duo at that moment.

Both the customer and the salesperson were surprised to see her. When the salesperson noticed the shopping bags hanging off Sage’s arms, he simpered at her in an attempt to butter her up.

“Ma’am, this tuxedo happens to be one of the latest designs fresh off the fall lineup. It comes with a price tag of 28,800 dollars.”

Sage passed her black card to the salesperson. “Use this card. There’s no need for any authorization procedures.”

The surprised salesperson grabbed the card and rang the tuxedo up immediately.

Meanwhile, the handsome man gazed at Sage gratefully, though the nervousness on his face was palpable for all to see.

“Thank you so much. I’ll make sure to scrub the grime away later properly.”

The salesperson returned to Sage with the card and the bagged tuxedo at that moment. So, Sage passed the shopping bag over to the man.

“Take it,” she said.

“Please give me your address and phone number, miss. I’ll deliver the tuxedo to you once it’s thoroughly cleaned.”

Sage chuckled in response. “There’s no need for that. You can keep the tux for yourself.”

“No way!” The man waved his hands immediately. “I can’t accept the tux! I didn’t do anything to earn it!”

“It’s just an outfit. Even if you were to give it to me, I couldn’t wear it at all. You can’t just throw it away, right? That’d be a huge waste.”

Sage spent the next few minutes trying to convince the man to accept the tuxedo. Still, he was too uneasy and reluctant to do so.

Hence, she offered smilingly, “How about I make a deal with you? You have to help me out when I ask you for a favor in the future.”

She bore a serious and determined expression at that moment.

A moment's hesitation later, the man finally accepted her offer. A solemn look fled across his clear eyes as he replied, "Of course, miss. I'll give you my phone number,"

Sage shook her head. "Nah, it's fine. I'll seek you out when it's time."

"Alright." The man nodded at Sage gratefully before leaving with the tuxedo,

"I can't believe you just gifted a tux that's almost worth 30 thousand dollars to a stranger!" Tiana gasped out as she approached Sage. "You really are kind-hearted, Sage."

Of course, Sage wasn't that kind to lend a helping hand to a stranger. She knew who that man was. He was destined to stand out in a singing talent show.

In Sage's past life, Mimosa had hired the man as their spokesperson after it was enlisted as a proper company. The man's handsome appearance and charming personality ended up boosting Mimosa's popularity.

Because of that reason, Sage chose to help the man out. She thought of her benevolent actions as an investment she had made in advance.

Also, she was using Ian's money the whole time. It was all the more reason for her to be a good Samaritan.

Sage opted to not tell Tiana for any of those reasons. Instead, she spun another excuse

on the spot.

"It's in my nature to help people out, you know."

Tiana didn't know what to say afterward. So, she



outfits and a delicate pen for Wilson.

that hailed from a luxuried

on picking out a few casual

“He’ll be attending an international convention next month. This pen will surely come in handy for him.”

“Since we’re already here, why don’t you pick out some clothes for yourself?” Sage

asked.

Tiana shook her head in response. “I don’t need them. I still have plenty of clothes in my closet. Besides, I don’t have time to doll up because of my job.”

Sage didn’t hesitate to expose her best friend’s actual thoughts. “You’re worried that your mother-in-law might diss you for spending so much money without being capable of earning a big fat paycheck, right?”

Tiana was a nurse with a low salary. But she decided to get married to Wilson, a

handsome and wealthy doctor working at one of the most elite hospitals via a shotgun marriage.

Wilson’s parents were extremely dissatisfied with Tiana’s background and qualities. They often nitpicked at her flaws.

Tiana let out a small sigh at that thought. “I do feel aggrieved sometimes, but I feel that all the hardships I’ve been enduring are worth it the moment I see Wilson’s face.”

Sage and Tiana weren't best friends without a reason. Both women were hopeless romantics who cared about their partners' looks the most. Also, they tended to give their all just to please the men they loved.

The recollection of how Tiana and Wilson's marriage had ended filled Sage's heart with grief and pain.

Then again, she had gone through similar events as well. That was why she knew very well that no one else could persuade Tiana to dump Wilson's ass.

At that moment, Tiana's mother-in-law called her on the phone and urged her to go home immediately.

Sage could only envelope Tiana in a hug. "Tiana, you have to love yourself a alright?"

"Yes, yes. Got it. Don't make this a sappy goodbye, okay? Everyone has their own problems to face in their own lives. I'm a strong woman, you know."

amore,

Back at Holcolm Corporation, Terry kept staring at the messages showing the amount charged to Ian's black card popping up on the screen of his work phone. Shock and uneasiness gripped his heart tightly the whole time.

If Sage kept making more purchases with the black card, she'd definitely go over the credit limit.

Of course, Terry knew very well that Sage was the one using this card.

Ian had given this card to her in the past, but she had never used it in her entire life. Why did she make so many purchases out of the blue?

Terry pondered over this issue for a very long time. In the end, he still knocked on Ian's office door.

“What is it?”

Ian’s unfriendly tone made Terry’s heart skip a beat anxiously.

## Chapter 23

Terry found himself regretting his decision.

Ian had worked overtime till the wee hours of the morning. He proceeded to spend the entire day wearing nothing but a poker face. It was clear that he was in a bad mood.

Would Terry be making things worse for Ian by bringing up Sage’s shopping spree at this time?

“Get your ass over here right now if you want to talk to me about something!” Ian grumbled impatiently.

Terry had no choice but to walk over to Ian. There, he tapped on the messaging app cautiously and displayed the horde of messages.

Ian shot a glance at the screen, soon noticing the automated messages sent by various

mall-based stores.

There were purchases that exceeded hundreds of thousands of dollars, but there were also purchases showcasing only triple digits. All of these messages were sent from jewelry and apparel stores which were frequented by ladies.

At that moment, a new message popped up on the screen with a loud ding.

“Thank you for shopping at Gentlemen’s Style! Your bill is 28,800 dollars! We hope to see you next time!”

Terry didn't know if he was seeing things. He thought he noticed Ian's furrowed brows relaxing slightly at the sight of the message.

Even though clothes with such a meager price tag would never be part of Ian's daily wardrobe, Terry decided to risk his life by giving Ian a compliment.

"It seems that Mrs. Holcomb has even bought you clothes even though she's out on a shopping spree. She really cares about you, Mr. Holcomb,"

As expected, Ian's expression softened a lot. Still, he harrumphed coldly at Terry's words.

"I don't care about her.

Terry picked up on the underlying meaning in Ian's response immediately.

"Mr. Holcomb would must

You even spent the day working non-stop. Why don't you go home and get some rest?"

Ian stretched lazily. It was true that he felt rather exhausted.

"Have Wanda brew a pot of strong coffee for me. I need it to perk up.

"Yes, sir.

It was almost 5:00 pm when Sage finally returned to Solaris Estate. She had visited a beauty salon on a whim just to get her hair done right after Tiana left the mall.

The sight of her high-spirited reflection in the mirror left her in a pretty good mood..

“Mrs. Holcomb, Mr. Holcomb is already home. He’s currently in his study on the second floor,” Wanda reported the moment Sage entered the mansion.

Why would Ian be at home at a time like this? Was he planning to question Sage for almost overcharging the black card?

It’d be great if that were the case. Sage would take advantage of Ian’s abhorrence toward her to bring up the divorce once again.

She passed the shopping bags to Wanda before ascending the stairs. The door of Ian’s study was left ajar, so she strode toward the doorway immediately.

Just as Sage was about to knock on the door, she spotted Ian sitting on the couch while engaging in a video call with another person.

“Ian, what’s with the bidding contract?” That was Ivy’s voice.

“Uncle Ron has always wanted to be in charge of this project, hasn’t he? I had Terry secure the contract for him.”

“Ian, you’ve already helped my family out numerous times in the past. You shouldn’t be worrying about my family’s affairs from now on. Dad and I are able to deal with them. properly, you know.”

Ivy’s tone had taken on a grateful edge at that point.

It seemed that Ian had just gifted his future father-in-law a precious contract just to please Ivy, his female best friend. Said friend was incredibly grateful to him as a result. Soon, those two would open up to each other with heartfelt confessions.

As Ian’s legal wife, what should Sage do in order to maintain her elegance and composure?

She chose to turn around and leave the doorway.

Before Sage descended the stairs, she could still hear Ian's gentle voice drifting from the study.

"I did promise you in the past that I'd..."

Not only did Ian give Sage a black card, but he had also given Ivy a contract. That man sure was good at appeasing both love interests.

When Sage reached the living room, she saw Wanda arranging everything she had bought during her shopping spree.

"Mrs. Holcomb, I've already placed the jewelry the mall's staff had delivered here this afternoon. Should I do the same to the rest of the haul?"

"Go ahead."

A thought popped into Sage's mind the moment she responded to Wanda. She added hastily, "By the way, I want you to pack up all the clothes stowed away on the first row of the closet and donate them."

"You want me to donate them?" Wanda looked astonished. "Aren't those your favorite clothes, Mrs. Holcomb?"

In the past, Sage used to change into one of those many outfits and put on beautiful

makeup.

happened to spare her more than a glance, she'd be so elated that she'd

buy more outfits of a similar style.

To think that Sage wanted Wanda to donate all of those clothes...

Sage knew what Wanda was thinking, so she flashed her a small smile.

“Those clothes never suited me anyway. They’d just make me feel even more suffocated if I were to leave them lying around here. You can just donate them to people who need them more.

She had picked those clothes out according to Ian’s preferences.

Well, to put it more accurately, she had picked those clothes out according to Ivy’s dressing style.

Sage had once thought that Ian would pay her more heed if she were to dress up like Ivy. Oh, how foolish she was in the past.

“Just start dinner without me, Wanda. I’m going to practice driving for a bit.”

Sage started walking toward the garage as she spoke.

Sometime later, Ian had already drained a pot of coffee and dealt with numerous emails in his inbox. He left his study after realizing that it would be dinnertime soon.

Sage was nowhere to be found in the master bedroom, but Ian could hear rustling sounds coming from the walk-in closet.

He walked over to the walk-in closet to see Wanda folding some clothes and putting them away in plastic bags.

“Why are you here at this hour?” he asked.

“My apologies, Mr. Holcomb. I’ll prepare dinner right away,” Wanda answered nervously. “Mrs. Holcomb told me that she wanted to donate these clothes. I got so immersed in cleaning out the closet that I’ve completely lost track of the time.”

“She wants to donate the clothes?”

“Yes,

1. r. Holcomb stated that she no longer wished to keep the clothes that didn’t suit her,” Wanda responded honestly.

Ian was already used to Sage acting on a whim. He shot a glance at the row of sealed clothes, shoes, and bags sitting on the floor. All of them came from luxury brands catering to ladies.

“Mrs. Holcomb bought these things today. I didn’t have a chance to put them away,” Wanda explained hurriedly.

“Is everything here?” Ian asked flatly, his expression carefully neutral.

Wanda was puzzled by the question, but she still answered Ian truthfully. “Yes, everything’s laid out here other than the jewelry. I’ve already put them away for Mrs. Holcomb earlier this afternoon.

Ian pursed his lips in response. “Where is she?”

“Mrs. Holcomb has mentioned that she’ll be practicing her driving skills.”

Sage had taken her Maserati out for a spin today. Thanks to the accident from before, she dared not drive on the roads which were congested with traffic. Instead, she practiced on the wide field behind the affluent neighborhood.

Just as Sage was having fun practicing her driving skills, she caught sight of a black car



parked some distance away from her. Ian happened to be standing right next to it.

The sky had already darkened at that time. The only source of light came from the streetlights which were erected next to the road.

Ian stood next to his car, still clad in a suit that brought out his charms. He folded his arms casually in front of his chest. His figure seemed even taller and more slender under the illumination of a nearby

streetlight.

That scenery resembled a picturesque movie poster which forever sealed the timeless beauty of the moment.

Sage's momentary loss of focus caused yet another incident to arise. One of her car's right tires got itself lodged in a pit at that moment.

It wasn't exactly a deep pit, but Sage couldn't free the tire from the pit even after stepping down on the gas pedal a few times.

This was why she shouldn't get distracted by beauty and nice things!

To think that she'd get one of her tires stuck in a pit just because she spent a few extra seconds staring at Ian!

It was a good thing that Sage wasn't driving on the road right now. She could've gotten into another accident if that were to happen to her again.

"Get out of the car. I'll do it for you.

HOME

## Chapter 24

Ian's voice came drifting into Sage's ear when she was in the midst of stomping on the gas pedal. She raised her head immediately, only to find out that Ian was already standing next to her car.

Yes, she might be embarrassed because of what happened, but she wasn't so immature to turn down his helping hand at a time like this.

Sage pouted as she undid her seatbelt and got out of the driving seat.

Ian got into the driving seat and spun the steering wheel around casually. Then, he threw the gear into reverse and slammed his foot onto the gas pedal. Just like that, he was able to back the tire out of the pit effortlessly.

Soon, he got out of the driving seat. "You can continue practicing now."

Sage pouted once again as she got back into the seat. The moment she buckled her seatbelt, she was surprised to see Ian getting into the front passenger seat.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded with a frown.

Ian shot Sage a glance. Instead of answering her question, he asked, "Why did you style your hair like this?"

Sage gazed at her shoulder-length wavy hair in the rearview mirror.

"It's my hair. I do as I please to it. It has nothing to do with you."

Ian's expression crumbled slightly at Sage's response.

“Is there anything else you’d like to talk about? If not, then get out of my car. Can’t you see that I’m busy?”

Sage didn’t hesitate to chase Ian out of her car.

Ian forced his anger down for the time being. He put on his seatbelt before snapping coldly, “Aren’t you going to practice your driving skills? What are you sitting around for?”

Sage could tell what Ian was up to. “Mind your own business. I’m fine with practicing

on my own.

Ian huffed in response. “In that case, how the hell did you get your tire stuck in a pit just now?”

“It was too dark. I just so happened to not notice the pit,” Sage grumbled stubbornly. “Are you sure you’ll be driving to brightly lit places without any obstacles in your way from now on?”

“I”

Just as Sage was about to refute, Ian cut her off impatiently. “I don’t want to be the one cleaning up your messes every time you fuck up! Now, start practicing already!”

Sage was rendered speechless. It was true that she was in the wrong for what had happened last time.

She decided to not argue with Ian anymore as she turned her attention back to the windshield. Then, she stepped down on the gas pedal.

No matter how reluctant Sage was to put up with Ian’s teaching, she had to admit that it was easier to drive thanks to him giving her occasional driving tips.

Soon, Sage was starting to get the hang of actions such as driving forward, turning the car around, and reversing the car.

“I’m tired, so I’ll continue practicing next time.”

Sage wasn’t just weary from the practice. Mimosa’s matters still weighed heavily on her mind. She couldn’t help but wonder if Shane had already gone through the initial draft of her proposal.

“Get out of the car, then.”

Sage parked her car next to Ian’s.

Ian didn’t budge from his seat at all. Instead, he remarked casually, “Leave your car here. The driver will pick it up tomorrow morning. I want to see how skilled you are at reversing my car into the garage.”

Sage opted to not say anything about it.

When she finally drove back to the estate’s garage, she was bummed out by the

difficulty of having to reverse into the garage.

Even though there was a rearview camera helping her out on the monitor, she still couldn’t park the car properly in reverse.

“Pay attention to the yellow lines sketched on both sides of the tires. You should adjust the car’s angle while turning the steering wheel around slowly.”

To Sage’s surprise, Ian actually leaned over to grab one of her

the steering wheel. She could feel his warmth seeping through the back of her hand. At the same time, she felt Ian’s rock-hard chest resting against one of her shoulders.

The sensation of Ian's warm breath hitting Sage's ear made her extremely uncomfortable. She wanted to withdraw her hand while ducking to the left in order to avoid him, but she didn't expect him to press his hand down onto hers.

"Focus. You'd better learn well," he said seriously.

Once again, Sage fell silent.

Fine. She'd treat Ian as a driving instructor who offered his services free of charge. In fact, she'd view him as a tool at her own disposal. She had to bear with him for the time being for the sake of learning how to drive.

Sage silently chanted those reasons like a mantra as she followed Ian's instructions dutifully. She started adjusting her car's angle by spinning the steering wheel around. She looked incredibly serious during her practice. A light frown graced her features as she stared at the points of fixation seriously. Beads of sweat started to form on the tip of her nose from the intensity of the practice.

Ian could feel Sage's soft hand under his own. At the same time, he could smell the light fragrance from her hair wafting up his nostrils.

For some reason, he found himself getting attracted to her.

Finally, Sage spun the steering wheel to the neutral axis and reversed the car into the garage once again. This time, the car was successfully parked within the slot.

"I did it!"

Sage raised her head happily, only to realize that Ian was staring right at her. She could see her wide smile being reflected in those deep eyes of his.

They were awfully close to each other at that moment. Heck, they were so close that they could feel each other's breaths.

It was Sage's first time being so close to Ian without quarreling with him. Her mind had gone blank at that moment. All she could do was stare at Ian in a daze.

Ian slowly dipped his head toward Sage. She could see his handsome face slowly magnifying before her eyes. She could make out every strand of his thick and curly eyelashes as well as the outline of his lips...

"What the hell do you think you're doing?"

Sage finally snapped out of her stupor when Ian's lips were about to touch hers. Her first instinct was to shove him away from her hastily.

"Did you get kicked in the head?" she roared, feeling a mixture of embarrassment and anger washing over her senses.

After that, she darted out of the car as quickly as she could.

Sage slapped herself in the head several times in a row. She mentally chastised herself for being pathetic and weak in front of Ian.

All he did was get awfully close to her. How the hell did she get so smitten with him?

They were about to get a divorce, damn it!

Once Sage reached the dining room, she saw Wanda, who was waiting for her and Ian to show up for dinner.

"Mrs. Holcomb, the staff from Holcomb Manor had brought over some corn chowder earlier. They said Mrs. Holcomb Senior was the one who specifically prepared it for you, so you must finish everything."

Linda had a habit of having the staff at Holcomb Manor bring over some homemade dishes to Solaris Estate every now and then.

Sage used to love using Linda as an excuse to get Ian to visit Holcomb Manor. Now, she refused to be in the same room as him.

“I’m not hungry, Wanda. I’m going to skip dinner tonight.”

“I thought you were anemic. Sit down and have dinner with me,” Ian spoke up at that moment.

But Sage refused to acknowledge Ian’s order. She soon disappeared up the stairs.

“Sir, I’ll put away some leftovers for Mrs. Holcomb. She can have dinner later when she’s hungry.”

Ian disliked Sage’s flippant attitude greatly. “Don’t bother keeping any leftovers for her. She doesn’t want to have dinner, after all.”

Wanda dared not say anything after that.

Ian sat long enough to finish a bowl of corn chowder. He was still frustrated at that time, so he threw his spoon onto the bowl in a loud clatter.

“Keep some leftovers. I’ll have them for supper.”

After that, Ian left for the study.

Wanda looked quite puzzled at that request. Ian wasn’t the type to have supper at all.

Once Sage was done with her shower, she opened her inbox.

Shane had already shot her an email by then. Not only did he acknowledge her skills and capabilities, but he also made a few reasonable suggestions to help improve her proposal.

It turned out that Shane was a quick and efficient worker despite looking like a hedonistic playboy.

Sage knew very well that she needed to go over many generic aspects if she wanted to draft a detailed investment proposal. She was now pumped and ready to start working on the proposal.

Suddenly, a dull thud echoed from outside the room.

## Chapter 25

It sounded as though a drunkard had just crashed into the wall after losing their balance,

That thought weirded Sage out. Wanda and Ian were the only ones staying in Solaris Estate. None of them would ever drink.

The next thing she knew, her room door was flung open from the outside with a loud click.

Ian actually stumbled into the room afterward. He staggered about like he was about to keel over at any given moment. His cheeks were unnaturally flushed, with sweat beading on his forehead. Even the corners of his eyes were unusually red.

Sage's instincts screamed at her that something was wrong. She closed her laptop with the intention of kicking Ian out of her room.

"Did you drink alcohol?" she asked as she opened the door. "Wan—mmph!"



Before Sage could call out Wanda's name, she felt intense pain prickling from her lips.. It turned out that Jan had just captured her lips with his own.

"You-

Shocked, Sage tried to push Ian away, but he responded by kissing her passionately.

Ian's body was burning up at that time. He was also crushing her in a bear hug without the intention to let her struggle. After that, he pinned Sage against the wall next to the doorframe while kissing her wildly.

Sage balled up her fists, hoping that she could land a hit on him. Unfortunately, Ian was quick to pin her wrists above her head.

The difference in strength between Sage and Ian was too vast. Sage could barely move an inch, seeing as she was trapped in Ian's powerful hold. Heck, she couldn't even utter

a word.

She was starting to suffocate due to the lack of oxygen. All she could do was whine pathetically into the kiss.

When Ian heard the whining, he didn't stop kissing her at all. Instead, he responded by biting down on her lips forcibly as though he was annoyed by the sounds.

use the opportunity to breathe, Ian dragged her up to her feet in an attempt to bite her

on the neck.

"Mrs. Hol- | |

Wanda bounded up the stairs hurriedly as soon as she heard Sage's scream. It was then she saw Ian and Sage trapped in an intimate embrace, his head hovering inches above her neck hungrily.

Stunned, Wanda was rooted to the spot.

"Wanda, help me-

"

"Get out!" Ian covered Sage's mouth while growling out that order hoarsely.

Even though Wanda was worried about Sage's safety, she dared not overstay her

welcome.

Whatever happened between Ian and Sage was strictly between them, after all. Wanda was nothing but a mere housekeeper. She shouldn't be here in the first place.

Hence, Wanda left the corridor as quickly as her legs could carry her.

"Let go of me!"

Sage took advantage of Ian's moment of distraction to shove him off of her. She made sure to readjust the straps of her pajamas afterward.

Ian pinned her against the wall once again. He ran a slender finger across her lips, which now sported a fresh wound.

His hoarse voice was unusually enticing as he demanded, "Sage Joyner, you were the one who convinced Grandma to add aphrodisiacs into the chowder, right?"

What? Linda's chowder was laced with aphrodisiacs?

No wonder Sage couldn't smell any alcohol from Ian's breath despite feeling the scorching heat coming from his body.

Thank goodness she didn't eat the chowder. Otherwise, both of them would be fucking like rabbits by now.

How would they proceed with the divorce if they were to engage in a ridiculous night of

"Ahh!"

Ian finally released Sage's lips as he listened to her pained screams. Before she could use the opportunity to breathe, Ian dragged her up to her feet in an attempt to bite her on the neck.

"Mrs. Hol-"

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How would they proceed with the divorce if they were to engage in a ridiculous night of

passion?

Numerous thoughts flashed through Sage's mind at that moment. It was then she felt Ian's finger sliding from her lips to her chin.

She slapped his offending hand away while saying calmly, "I'll call a doctor for you."

When Sage attempted to reach for her phone, she felt Ian pulling her into a hug once again.

"What for? Sage, you keep complaining that I don't spend time with you at all. Yet, you coerced Grandma into drugging the chowder. You did all that just so you could sleep with me, right?

your--"

"Since that's the case, I might as well grant your

Before Ian could finish his sentences, Sage delivered a heavy slap right across his face. without warning.

"Get the fuck out!" she roared.

Ian's affected cheek reddened immediately from the slap. His gaze turned frighteningly

cold in an instant.

"How dare you fight back, Sage Joyner!"

He gripped Sage's chin tightly. She was in so much pain that she couldn't move an inch. Then again, she didn't have the guts to move at all.

Ian was groomed to become the next successor of the Holcomb family since he was a little boy. It shaped his domineering and headstrong personality. Throughout the years, he got used to everyone submitting to him meekly.

This was probably his first time getting slapped in his entire life.

But what was done was done. Sage didn't regret her actions one bit.

She had spent her past life being overly cautious around Ian. When she was faced with hardships, she forced herself to endure everything.

This time, she swore to not let Ian walk all over her.

The sight of Sage looking fearless despite having laid a hand on him caused Ian to feel even more frustrated and irritated.

He even developed an urge to pin her down and take her virginity by force on the spot,

Beads of blood were already budding from Sage's wounded lips at that time. Her brows were heavily knitted because of the pain that racked through her body.

But Sage refused to back down no matter what. Her icy eyes held a defensive and

cautious glint the whole time.

Ian gritted his teeth before shoving Sage away with all his might. He then stumbled out of her room with a thunderous expression.

Sage quickly locked the door afterward. Only then did she slide down to the floor in an exhausted slump.

That was extremely dangerous.

If Ian truly wanted to take advantage of Sage, she wouldn't be able to resist him because of how weak she was.

It wasn't as though she intended to protect her chastity for the rest of her life.

She and Ian weren't meant to be together at all, so why would she get intimately involved with him?

—

Sage spent the next few days working on the investment proposal.

That night, Ian had left Solaris Estate in a huff. He no longer returned home after that. Naturally, Sage was happy to have some peace and quiet for once.

Once she finally nailed down the data concerning the fixed, intangible, and other long-term assets of the proposal, she stretched her body lazily.

She was immensely exhausted from working on the proposal. She desperately needed

some time to relax.

Sage tapped on her phone and started scrolling through her social media feed. That was when she saw Ivy's latest status, which was updated five minutes ago.

4M4

Chapter 26

"I don't care about the beginning and the end of my life. Life goes on for me as usual. I'll forever cherish all three meals every day, and I'll also remember to be kind throughout the seasons of life. The best moment will come to me on the best day with the nicest weather where someone finally joins me on my walkway of life."

There was a photo of a fancy spread decked out on the table below the post. Next to it was a selfie of Ivy's side profile.

The photos and the tagline made it seem like Ivy was just posting about her daily life in an artistic way. But those who were observant enough would notice a small section of a man's arm being revealed in a corner of Ivy's selfie.

It was evident that the man was wearing a dress shirt. The watch he wore might not be eye-catching, but it came from a luxury brand.

Sage was very familiar with the watch. In fact, it was one of the watches Ian often

wore.

It turned out that Ian had been staying with Ivy this whole time.

Then again, it wasn't unusual for him to be there. He had summoned all of his willpower just to suppress his lust that night.

Since Sage refused to sleep with Ian, he'd have to find another woman to bed. He

was known to be a germaphobe who couldn't care less about random women,

hence the lack of romantic scandals he was involved in.

That was why Ian had no choice but to seek comfort and relief from Ivy, also

known as his female best friend.

Ian and Ivy must have gotten a lot closer than usual these days. That was probably the reason why Ivy decided to post such sentimental stuff on her feed.



Sage chuckled dryly as she deleted Ivy from her friends list on the social media platform.

She had added Ivy in the past just so she could spy on her. Now that she no longer

cared about Ian, she decided to kick Ivy out of her social media feed so that she

could finally relax.

After putting her phone away, Sage decided to go out for some fresh air. The moment she drove out of the garage, she heard her phone's ringtone.

Sage glanced at the caller ID. It was a call from Delilah Stromberg, also known as her best friend in her past life.

The Stromberg family had transitioned into expanding their company in the finance industry over the past two years. The scale of their company was quite small for the time being.

In Sage's past life, the Strombergs somehow got affiliated with Holcomb Corporation right after her admittance into the mental asylum. As a result, the Strombergs' company shares started skyrocketing.

Despite knowing about Sage's admittance into the asylum, Delilah never bothered visiting her at all.

Humans tended to weigh the pros and cons when their own benefits were infringed. Sage knew that principle well, so she didn't really resent Delilah for

what the latter did.

But Sage also knew that she could never trust Delilah anymore in this lifetime. That was the reason why she never contacted Delilah ever since she came to this lifetime.

So, why was Delilah calling her at this time?

Sage nudged her foot onto the brakes in order to stop the car. Then, she swiped a finger across her phone's screen.

"Where are you right now, Sage?" Delilah's anxious voice drifted through the speakers the moment Sage answered the call.

"I was about to go on a joyride. What's the matter?"

"How are you still in the mood for that? Didn't you see I-bitch's post on her social media feed?"

"And what's wrong with that?"

115 BONUS

"Everything's wrong with the post! Hurry up and check it out!" Delilah urged. "I bitch cooked up a feast and even posted a selfie with a man's arm like the manipulative whore she is!

"She wrote some bullshit about someone joining her on the walkway of life! God, she might as well announce to the whole world that Ian is spending time with her right now!"

Sage was calm as ever. "What does that have to do with me?"

"Are you nuts, Sage? This is terrible news! How could you say it has nothing to do with you?"

Delilah continued angrily, "Don't go out right now! I'll come pick you up! Let's head over to I-bitch's place and expose her ugly face! That bitch is being shameless as usual!"

Delilah kept getting angry on Sage's behalf in her past life. Sage had believed everything Delilah said, causing her to humiliate Ivy countless times afterward. The more Sage humiliated Ivy, the more disgusted and resentful Ian grew.

Now, Sage didn't want to waste time doing such meaningless things. If she wanted to humiliate Ivy once and for all, she'd do so by stealing Ivy's thunder at her own profession which she took pride in.

So, Sage replied, "Nah. I might as well use the time to read a few more books. I'm going to end the call now if that's all you have to say."

"Sage!" Delilah called out hurriedly. "Is it because you're worried that you might run into Ian there? Is that why you don't want to go over to I-bitch's place?"

"Why are you this dumb? You'll be able to get evidence of him cheating on you with I-bitch if you catch him there! Once you hand over the evidence to Mrs. Holcomb Senior, she'll deal with I-bitch for you! That way, you won't even have to dirty your own hands!"

Why would Delilah involve Linda in Sage's mess of a marriage? Was she planning on stressing the old woman out?

Sage's response came out more clipped than usual. "I said, I'm not going. Do you not understand me?"

"Sage-"

Sage hung up on Delilah right away.

The fact that Delilah kept provoking her to start a ruckus at Ivy's place was more

than enough to prove that she was up to no good.

If it weren't for the fact that the Joyners and the Strombergs were good friends,

which led to Sage and Delilah being best friends for years, she would've started a fight with Delilah over the phone just now.

The recollection of her experiences while being confined in the mental asylum, coupled with the unpleasant memory of almost getting sexually assaulted by Ian a few days ago, gave Sage an idea. She wanted to pick up some self-defense skills just so she could protect herself.

Sage had always been a decisive person. She wasted no time in researching a couple of gyms and complexes that provided classes on various combat arts.

Sometime later, she selected a large-scale sports complex that specialized in

kickboxing techniques.

The trainers there had actual combat experience as well. So, Sage keyed the

location into her car's GPS and drove over immediately.

There were only a few fancy posters advertising the sports complex being pasted on the building's exterior walls. Then again, it came with a vast parking lot with countless parking slots. That itself was a huge pro in Sage's book.

After successfully parking in one of the slots, Sage walked into the sports

complex.

The complex was very big. It played host to a variety of courts that were meant for combat art training. They were all decked out with an array of professional training equipment.

More importantly, the trainers were all clad in camouflage outfits that showcased their amazing figures. The outlines of their muscles could be seen through the fabric. All in all, those trainers were the epitome of masculinity.

Ian might be good-looking as well, but he always slapped on an icy expression

whenever Sage saw him. Because of that, she was in no mood to admire his looks

no matter how handsome he was.

After ogling the trainers to her fill, Sage registered for a kickboxing class without any hesitation.

“Would you like a private trainer, Ms. Joyner? That way, you’ll be able to focus more on your training!”  
A staff member recommended the option to Sage.

Sage turned him down tactfully. “No, thank you.”

If she were to choose that option, she’d lose the opportunity to train with the other trainers. She didn’t want to settle down with one private trainer when she could easily have access to all the other trainers.

After paying the registration fees, Sage filled in her personal information at the reception counter. After that, she booked her first kickboxing class.

When she was about to leave, she heard a surprised voice booming from behind her.

“It really is you, miss!”

Sage turned around to see a young man in his early 20s clad in a camo outfit that was standardized for all trainers working at the sports complex. He was good-looking and had a pair of bright eyes. He might seem like a tall and slender man at first glance, but he was actually pretty muscular. 1

What a coincidence. It turned out that Sage had bought the soiled tux for this very man at the shopping mall a few days ago.

“I’m Michael Olsen, and I’m working as a part-time trainer here.” Michael introduced himself albeit bashfully. “Why did you come here, miss?”

## Chapter 27

Sage shot Michael a smile. "I've just registered for a kickboxing class."

Delight fled across Michael's expression. "What a coincidence! I'm a trainer who specializes in kickboxing!"

It really was a coincidence.

Sage thought the next time she'd meet Michael would be at a business meeting where they'd negotiate about the collaboration. She didn't expect to see him so

soon.

"I guess I'll be seeing more of you in the future," Sage said smilingly. "Have fun working. I'll be leaving now."

"Wait, miss!" Michael called out.

"What is it?" Sage asked.

Michael offered shyly, "I don't know how to repay you for the kindness you've shown me back then. Why don't I treat you to a cup of joe?"

Sage just smiled while shaking her head. "Perhaps next time. I don't want to take up your time since you're working at the moment."

"It's fine. Actually, I'm about to get off work," Michael said hurriedly.

He had a youthful face, to begin with. The sight of him looking so anxious made him seem like an inexperienced and gullible teenager.

Sage could finally understand how older women felt when they laid their eyes on vulnerable young men like Michael. She could practically feel her heart go out to

him.

Her lips curled into a small smile. "In that case, I'll take you up on your offer."

"Okay! Just give me a moment, yeah? I'll be back as soon as I change my clothes!"

Michael acted very quickly. He had already exited the sports complex by the time Sage reversed her car out of the parking slot.

"Get in," she said.

Michael got into the car while looking at ease.

Sage said jokingly, "I'm not that good at driving, so you'd better be prepared for what's about to happen."

"It's fine. I trust you," Michael responded seriously, his clear eyes boring into Sage's eyes.

For some reason, she felt responsible for his safety. This elicited a light giggle from her.

"Where are we going?" she asked.

"What would you like to drink? It's my treat."

Sage thought for a moment before replying, "Let's go to a coffee shop."

She had always been a huge fan of lattes when she was still studying at her university. There was one time when she wanted to share her favorite beverage

with Ian.

One day, Sage spent almost an hour lining up just to buy a hot latte which happened to be the most popular drink at a well-known coffee shop in the university town. When she handed it to Ian, he claimed that he took his coffee black and that he would never drink low-quality coffee.

"Ian, the coffee powder is made of high-quality coffee beans, and the milk is super fresh. I assure you that it'll taste great. Just try it out, alright?"

Back then, Ian was probably in a rush to use the elevator, so he accepted the latte reluctantly.

After Sage washed her hands in the restroom and walked out, she noticed an extra latte nestling inside a trash can when she walked past it.

She was saddened by Ian's heartless act for a moment. Then, she thought she shouldn't like the things that Ian clearly disliked.

Since then, Sage no longer drank lattes.

Right now, Sage thought that she must have been dropped on the head as a baby. Why else would she act like a total idiot in the past?

Ian was the one who didn't appreciate her efforts of going to great lengths just to buy him a latte. In that case, why did she put the blame on herself?



“Miss, you don’t have to take my financial situation into consideration. I have a few part–time jobs, so I can always treat you to a nice cup of coffee or even a glass of martini at the bar,” Michael quickly explained.

Sage just giggled in response. “I’m not looking down on you. I’m really craving a latte right now.”

Michael rubbed the back of his head bashfully. “I know a shop that makes a great

latte.”

Sage drove to the coffee shop with Michael navigating her the whole time. Business at the coffee shop was booming, that was for sure. The customers visiting the establishment were mostly youngsters.

“What would you like to drink, miss?” Michael asked.

Sage decided to remind him. “Just call me Madam Joyner from now on.”

She might be 23 years old this year, but her experiences in her past life gave her a feeling that she was mentally in her 30s.

It was weird for Michael to call her “miss” the whole time.

“No way! It’d make you seem so old!” Michael shot that idea down on the spot.

He added seriously, “The reason why I call you ‘miss’ is because I don’t know

your name. The truth is, you look like any other university student out there.”

Sage had to admit that she was pleased to hear Michael’s reasoning. Women loved to be showered with compliments, especially when said compliments came from a young man as pure–hearted as Michael.

“I’ll have a rose latte. Less syrup, more milk.” Sage gave her order afterward.

“Got it!”

Soon, Michael was done placing the order for both of them.

While he waited for the beverages to be served, he said to Sage, “Miss, think of the sum you paid for my tux as a loan you’ve given to me. I’ll work hard at earning money so that I can clear the debt.”

Sage shot Michael a look. “It’s fine. There’s no need for you to pay me back. Besides, you didn’t get that tux for nothing. I’ll ask you for a favor in the future, that’s for sure.”

“Just let me know when you need help. I’ll definitely do all I can for you.” Michael was persistent about the payment. “But I still need to pay you back. I’ll add you on Venmo so that I can pay you back in installments.”

At the end of the day, Michael was just a pure-hearted young man who had yet to be exposed to the ugly nature of society. If another shrewd person were in his shoes right now, they’d be more than eager to hound Sage for more benefits.

To think that Michael was eager to pay Sage back for the tuxedo!

No wonder he had countless fans supporting him in the future.

Sage’s admiration for Michael grew exponentially. “Alright, then. I’ll do as you say.”

She opened her Venmo app and added Michael there. Just then, their beverages were done.

While Michael went to collect their beverages, Sage decided to search for Michael on the social media app she frequently used.

At that moment, a series of loud notification sounds blared from her phone.

## Chapter 28

It turned out that Delilah had sent Sage a barrage of text messages. There were photos and video clips as well as audio recordings in those messages.

Sage decided to look at the photos first. Delilah had snapped a photo of the apartment's exterior where Ivy stayed. Next came a photo of Ivy's front door.

Since the video clip spanned for a few minutes, Sage decided to listen to the audio recordings next.

"Sage, I've already taught I-bitch a lesson on your behalf! I can't just sit back and watch you suffer from more grievances!"

The moment the recording ended, Sage saw Michael approaching the table with the drinks in hand.

"Miss, here's your rose latte."

"Thank you." Sage got up to her feet after accepting the latte. "Something just came up. Sorry, but I have to leave now."<sup>1</sup>

Michael was sensible enough to hold his tongue when he noticed Sage's frosty expression. He waved at her politely instead.

"I'll see you at the sports complex, then."

“Alright.”

Once Sage exited the coffee shop and got into her car, she finally tapped open the video clip that Delilah had sent her earlier.

Delilah had already knocked on Ivy’s front door in the video. When she noticed

Ian in the apartment as well, she started berating Ivy furiously for being a

shameless mistress who dated a married man behind his wife’s back.

Ivy looked flustered and embarrassed, though she did her best to swallow her

anger.

“Ms. Stromberg, I was merely thanking Ian for what he has done for my father. That’s why I treated him to a meal here.”

“Hmph! As if anyone will believe that shoddy excuse! Let this be a warning for you, Shekdotter! Sage is Ian’s actual wife! Don’t think you’re in a special relationship with him just because you have known him for many years!

“You’re just a maid’s daughter at the end of the day! No matter how much you doll up, you’ll never be a good match for Ian!”

“Ms. Stromberg, watch your manners. What you’re doing right now is equivalent to trespassing,” Ian spoke up coldly at that moment.

“Stop trying to intimidate me, Ian! I’m just standing up for Sage!” Delilah refuted this in a self-righteous manner.

“By the way, Ian, Sage told me that she’d been waiting for you to go home for dinner every night! You kept giving her excuses about being busy with work! Who’d have thought that you’d be busy spending time with your beloved

mistress!”

“Ms. Stromberg, you and Mrs. Holcomb have truly misunderstood me—ah!”

Ivy wanted to explain herself, but Delilah cut her off by shoving her away. “Get lost! Stop pretending already!”

Poor Ivy stumbled backward from Delilah’s push. Ian, who had already risen to his feet, was able to steady her on her feet just in time.

“That’s enough! Get the hell out of here!” he demanded icily. “Tell Sage to keep to herself and settle down! Otherwise, not even Grandma will be able to help her

out!”

Angered and dissatisfied, Delilah tried to rebuke Ian’s words on the spot. That was when the management staff barged into Ivy’s apartment.

The video clip ended right there. Delilah had sent Sage two more audio recordings

after that.

“Sage, Ian kept defending I—bitch the whole time! Ugh, he pisses me off so much! Once he gets home, you have to question the hell out of him!”

The second audio recording was soon triggered. “Don’t cower from him, and don’t be afraid of him too! I’ll always have your back, Sage! I’ll always support

you and take your side! If that's not enough, we still have Mrs. Holcomb Senior as our ultimate backup plan!"

Sage opted to not respond to Delilah at all. Instead, she closed WhatsApp immediately.

After taking a sip of the warm and sweet latte, Sage started her car and drove back to Solaris Estate.

That night, Sage had Wanda retire to her room for an early respite. She left her room door open as she worked on her proposal while waiting for Ian's return. 1

Just as expected, Ian's footsteps echoed from the distance about half an hour later.

Sage closed her laptop and grabbed two documents, which had been sitting on her table. Then, she exited her bedroom.

There, she bumped into Ian in the corridor. Ian was still wearing the black dress shirt which was shown in Ivy's selfie. He looked as handsome as ever, though his dark expression and frosty eyes made it clear that he wasn't in a good mood.

The moment Ian laid his eyes on Sage, he frowned instinctively. He was about to speak up when Sage cut him off.

"I know what you want to say. Let's talk about it in your study. I promise I'll give you a satisfactory solution."

Ian decided to hold his tongue for now. He glanced at Sage before striding toward his study.

Chapter 29

Sage trailed behind Ian, looking as composed as ever.

Soon, Ian sank into the couch in his study. As he tugged his tie off, he said, "I wonder how you'll be able to satisfy me with this solution of yours."

Sage handed Ian the two documents.

"I have two copies of the divorce agreement. One of them states that I'll divorce you without getting any of your assets in return. The other one states that you'll have to pay me 100 million dollars in alimony.

"I've already signed both copies of the agreement. Choose whichever copy that has the conditions you want and sign it."

Ian raised his head immediately. "100 million dollars?"

Businessmen were all money-minded, as expected. Ian's first reaction was to

mentally complain about the absurd amount of money he had to pay.

"Yup," Sage replied. "You promised me ten million dollars back then, but I don't think that's enough for me.

"Come to think of it, you're the one who wronged me in this marriage. Besides, you're the one who was more eager to get a divorce. That's why I think it's only reasonable for you to cough up 100 million dollars."

In the past, Sage didn't think of asking Ian for money because she wanted to get

the divorce over with as soon as possible.

But now, she needed 100 million dollars in order to work with Shane.

If she could obtain that amount of money from Ian and use it to fight against him.

in the business industry, she'd feel extremely satisfied.

Meanwhile, Ian's lips curled into a cold smirk. But he didn't respond to Sage at all. Instead, he decided to be patient and wait for her to continue speaking.

"It's true that I'm the one who forced this marriage to happen, but I never cheated on you, did I? If we were to take this to court, I'd be entitled to more than

just 100 million dollars," Sage said.

"Now, you're given a chance to pay 100 million dollars just to get your peace and freedom back. Once you sign the divorce agreement, you can be with whomever you want without hiding your relationship.

"The incident that happened earlier today will never happen to you ever again. Isn't this a win-win situation for us?"

Ian chortled sarcastically. "I never knew you had such a sharp tongue, Sage."

There was so much about her that he didn't know, that was for sure.

Sage knew how stubborn Ian was about the divorce agreement, so she pressed on. "Of course, you can choose to not give me a single cent. I won't blame you for being stingy with your money. After all, I'm determined to get a divorce no matter what."

She felt a pang of sadness the moment she was done speaking.

It was bad enough that she'd married a man who never cared about her. But the thought of her not being able to obtain some of his assets as alimony saddened her greatly.



It would be a major loss for her if Ian chose to not pay her anything.

Ian picked up on the hint of remorse in Sage's tone. Now that he was no longer in a rush to question her about Ivy's incident, he relaxed his posture by propping his legs onto the coffee table.

"Do you want more money?" he asked coldly.

Sage widened her eyes slightly in response.

Ian's handsome face was still as stony as ever. "Continue playing the part of Mrs. Holcomb. As long as we stay married, our assets will be shared. My money is considered yours in that case."

"No, thank you!" Sage waved that offer away immediately. "I don't want your entire fortune! Let's just get the divorce over with!"

Ian huffed once again, his expression now crumbling. "Is giving me two copies of the divorce agreement your so-called solution?"

she

Sage replied, "Yup! Aren't you going to stick up for Ivy for what happened earlier? I'll let her have the honor of becoming Mrs. Holcomb! That way, won't be bullied anymore in the future!

"Just sign one of the copies. I'll make sure that we both get a copy of the particular agreement you signed. Once the time's up, we'll grab our divorce certificates.

"Don't worry. I won't interfere with anything you do before the divorce certificates are out. Heck, you can choose to not live here at all!"

Linda had Sage promise her that she wouldn't move out. She never said anything about Ian having to stay in the estate.

Even if Linda were to ask Sage for Ian's whereabouts, Sage would just tell her that Ian had gone out on a business trip.

They just needed to tough it out for about 30 days or so. It would be a piece of cake for Sage to lie to Linda.

Ian's expression darkened even more after hearing Sage's so-called considerate suggestion. His eyes turned frosty immediately.

Suddenly, he withdrew his legs from the coffee table and shot to his feet. His sudden movement startled Sage so much that she backed away from him subconsciously.

"W-What are you doing?"

The sight of Sage having her guard up vigilantly elicited a cold chuckle from Ian. " Stop acting as though I'm interested in you."

## Chapter 30

Ian was not romantically interested in Sage, but she had an inkling that he was interested in her body.

After he had injured her lips that night, she had to suffer for three long days. before the injury finally healed.

Sage didn't want to argue with Ian. Instead, she asked, "Have you decided on which agreement you'll be signing?"

"It's difficult for me to make up my mind at this time."

Ian grabbed both copies of the divorce agreement as he continued casually, ' That's why I've decided to let your grandfather review the conditions of both

copies properly. Perhaps he might be able to provide me with a better suggestion.

Π

“You don’t have to make your choice anymore!” Sage reached out to stop Ian. I’ll just get a clean divorce without any additional payment from you!”

Ian looked down at her. “I’m the one who wronged you in this marriage. If we were to take this to court, I’d have to pay you more than 100 million dollars, you know. I don’t think your grandfather will want you to lose out on the benefits.”

Sage was speechless. Damn that bastard! How dare he use her words against her!

Ian was a head taller than Sage. The fact that he was looming over her effortlessly

intimidated her to no end.

Angered by the difference in height, Sage moved to stand on the couch.

She peered down at Ian while retorting furiously, “Our divorce is strictly between us! Just how sick are you to drag Grandpa into this mess!”

Even though Ian was now shorter than Sage, his demeanor remained oppressive.

“If you really want to divorce me, then why don’t you have the gall to tell him about our eventual separation, hmm?”

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“I ...” Sage’s answer was stuck in her throat.<sup>1</sup>

It was true that she dared not breathe a word about her upcoming divorce to Donald. He had high blood pressure, so he couldn't withstand the agitation of receiving shocking news.

Sage had tried to gauge Donald's reaction by bringing up the topic of divorce in

the

past, which worried him to no end. If Ian were to show him the divorce agreements, Donald would get an aneurysm from the shock and fury.

Her initial plan was to find a nice opportunity to come clean to Donald once the divorce was settled.

Once Sage could prove that she was still able to lead a happy and carefree life after her divorce, she'd spend some time acting cute and admitting that she was in the wrong in front of Donald. That way,

Donald would be able to accept the fact that she got divorced, albeit calmly.

Meanwhile, Ian looked rather pleased as he drank in the sight of Sage looking so furious that she couldn't even say a word.

"Or is it because you never wanted to get a divorce with me from the start? Are you trying to use this divorce as a way to get my attention and make me think that you're very important to me?"

"Hell no! I just want a divorce!"

Ian chortled icily in response. "There's no such thing as a perfect deal in this world. You don't want to be chained down by the bonds of marriage, yet you still

intend on reaping the benefits that come with our holy matrimony."

Sage instantly understood what Ian was talking about.

The Joyners mainly traded spices and perfumes, but they were still closely affiliated with the Holcombs in terms of business dealings. Many brands decided to work with the Joyners purely because of their affiliation with the Holcombs.

This was like a game of dominoes.

If the news of Sage and Ian's divorce were to get out, the Joyners' business would suffer from a heavy impact.

Even though this wasn't the exact reason why Sage didn't want to tell Donald

about her impending divorce, she was still surprised when she heard Ian's words.

Sage had always viewed the subject of her marriage as a rather simple one. She thought that she could always get a divorce if she no longer loved Ian. It turned out that she had completely forgotten about the other problems that were tied to her marriage.

"If it weren't for Grandma's efforts to stop us, we would've gotten a divorce a long time ago. Why won't you sign the divorce agreement now?" Sage asked.

Ian gazed at her coldly. "I don't have time to play games with you, Sage."

Exasperated, Sage retorted, "What do I have to do to convince you that I'm not playing around? I really want a divorce!"

"I'll only believe you when both of our families are gathered in the same room with the intention to discuss our divorce in an amicable manner."

Sage fell silent at that response.

She could try her best to convince Donald to do that, but there was no way in hell that her aunt and uncle would agree to the divorce.

“Why must you make this divorce a huge pain in the neck for both of us, Ian?”

Don’t you want to go through with it as soon as possible so that you can officially be with Ivy?”