

A Farewell 31

Chapter 31

Ian's cold gaze bore into Sage, who stood defiantly on the couch. "My affairs don't warrant your concern. If you really want a divorce, show some sincerity!"

Then, he casually tossed the divorce agreement onto the table and strode toward

his desk.

The lingering repercussions of their previous unsuccessful attempt at divorce had eroded Ian's trust in her. Subsequently, the situation had become

unnecessarily complicated.

Feeling disheartened, Sage descended from her perch on the couch. She clutched the divorce papers as she prepared to retreat to her room.

"Sage, stop your provocations. I don't have the patience to entertain your whims each time," Ian cautioned. His voice carried an icy tone.

From the way he put it, it sounded like he was insinuating that the cause for Ivy's predicament was a part of Sage's tricks to make him come back to her.

How absurd!

"I couldn't care less about your patience," Sage challenged while raising her head in defiance. "I won't stop until you sign the divorce agreement. You'll regret this!"

With those words hanging in the air, Sage confidently strode away without waiting for Ian's reaction. However, back in her room, she was overwhelmed with

frustration.

She cursed him internally. Why couldn't he extend his trust once more?

Unable to contain her grievances, Sage reached out to Tiana for solace.

"You mean Ian would only agree to sign the divorce papers with the consent of both your families?" Tiana pondered after hearing Sage's woes. She found the situation strange.

"But why would he go to such lengths? Based on the way you describe his disdain, for you, he should be more than willing to sign them regardless of whether you're

being serious."

"I know, right? His mind is twisted," Sage lamented.

"Sage, have you considered another possibility?" Tiana inquired mysteriously.

"What possibility?"

"Ian might have developed feelings for you. That's why he's reluctant to sever ties with you."

"No way!" Sage vehemently rejected the notion and proceeded to tell Tiana about Ian's furious vow to torment her during their last argument.

"He must be irked by my persistent mention of divorce and is purposely going against me. Yes, that's it," she said. She felt like she had suddenly grasped the

situation.

After all, Ian was an arrogant and prideful man. He wouldn't readily admit his feelings despite his strong desires.

"After Grandma's birthday, he'll likely be eager to obtain the divorce certificate

with me!"

Tiana felt speechless while listening to Sage's thoughts. She said, "You're an outstanding woman. After living under the same roof with him for so long, even a dog would—Sorry, excuse the crude metaphor."

After giving a quick apology, Tiana resumed her explanation. "What I mean is, Ian might have developed feelings for you without realizing it."

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If it were the old Sage, she would have rejoiced at such a revelation. Now, she remained impassive as she replied, "I know I'm outstanding, but he's too blind to

notice. I won't indulge in wishful thinking."

Tiana sighed softly. "You really don't want to hang on a bit longer?"

"I'm tired of it," Sage admitted. She sighed as she lay back on the bed.

"They say marriage is the graveyard of love. Others' graves may at least bury true love, but mine only holds unrequited affection. It's my fault for forcing this bitter fruit upon myself."

As Sage reflected on herself, she sensed someone near the door. She sat up and cast a fleeting glance at the doorway but saw nothing

Nevertheless, she took precautionary measures by closing the door and locking it.

Meanwhile, Tiana's comforting words echoed through the phone. "Don't be so pessimistic. At least you're brave. You gave it a try. Otherwise, you wouldn't have known how it would turn out."

"Yeah, you're right."

The two of them shared a moment of levity before Sage inquired, "Did Wilson like the gift you bought him last time?"

At the mention of her husband, Tiana's voice softened. Her tone carried a hint of sweetness.

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"He didn't say. But for his business trip to Lathuyria, he packed the new clothes and the pen I bought for him."

At the mention of Lathuyria, Sage calculated the time difference and suddenly thought of something. "Tiana, can't you take a day off? Why don't you accompany Wilson on his trip?"

"I don't have the time. My mother-in-law's housekeeper is on leave, so I have to go clean and cook for them every day. In the evenings, I even have to do exercises with her."

"Then, hire a temporary worker to fill in the housekeeper's role. Go to Lathuyria and be with Wilson," Sage suggested. "You two haven't had a honeymoon; now is the perfect time to make up for it."

Although she was tempted, Tiana turned down the idea. She said, "Nah, my visa has expired. We'll plan another trip next time."

“You can renew your visa or at least join a tour group through a travel agency. It’s a great opportunity. Don’t you want to spend some quality time alone with

Wilson?”

Finally, Tiana was convinced. “Should I give it a try?”

“Yes! Right now!” Sage urged.

Tiana found it odd and asked, “You rarely inquire about my husband and me. Why are you suddenly so concerned today?”

Sage remained composed as she answered, “Well, my marriage has been a failure. I just hope my best friend can find some happiness. Is that wrong?”

Tiana couldn’t refute her.

While Sage was never inclined to use emotions and intuition, Tiana found herself persuaded. “You’re right. I’ll look into renewing my visa.”

“Good.” Sage hung up the phone. She felt a bit relieved.

If she remembered the events in her previous life correctly, when Wilson went to Lathuyria on a business trip, he encountered his first love.

Later, his first love was transferred to the hospital where he worked. That became the catalyst for Tiana and Wilson’s marital problems.

Thus, she hoped that Tiana accompanying Wilson this time could change the

course of events.

Having offered the necessary reminders and vented her frustrations, Sage

continued refining the investment plan. She wanted to finish it quickly and hand it over to Shane.

Data analysis might seem mundane, but understanding a company's operational development through data and making it public-listed was a fascinating and fulfilling endeavor.

After another night of work, Sage finally completed the investment plan. Looking up, she noticed the dawn breaking on the horizon.

Perhaps due to the fatigue wearing off, Sage found herself unable to sleep no matter how she tried. On a whim, she grabbed her camera and headed to the rooftop to capture the sunrise.

The rooftop had a small garden, a swimming pool, and a dedicated relaxation area, where Sage settled into a reclining chair.

The sunrise was yet to grace the sky, and the morning breeze was cool and refreshing. Leaning on the chair comfortably, she inadvertently dozed off.

By the time Sage opened her eyes, sunlight bathed her entire being. She rubbed

her eyes, stretched lazily, and then noticed a piece of clothing on the floor.

Upon looking down, she found that it was a black suit jacket. The exquisite fabric and meticulous craftsmanship revealed its owner's status.

Sage went back to the living room while carrying the camera and suit jacket.

Meanwhile, Wanda was watering the plants. When she saw Sage, she exclaimed, " Mrs. Holcomb, why did you sleep on the rooftop? I couldn't find you for breakfast. and was quite worried!"

“I wanted to capture the sunrise, but I ended up falling asleep,” Sage confessed while tossing the suit jacket onto the couch. “Wanda, did you bring this up for me?”

“It should have been Mr. Holcomb,” Wanda replied.

“I told him you were missing. He saw that your phone was here and that you hadn’t changed your shoes, so he figured you were at home and made me search every room. I searched for a while, and then he told me that you fell asleep on the rooftop.”

Sage couldn’t help thinking, “Ian came back last night?”

She was too engrossed in her data analysis to notice.

But what puzzled Sage more was Ian’s reaction to finding her sleeping on the rooftop. Not only did he not wake her, but he also covered her with his suit jacket.

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“Mrs. Holcomb, I have heated up your breakfast. You can have it any time,” Wanda added.

“Okay. I’ll go freshen up first.”

Sage took a shower and changed into a clean set of clothes. After dressing up, she planned to have breakfast and then meet up with Shane.

However, upon walking to her laptop, she noticed that the USB drive plugged into the adjacent port was missing. Sage searched around, but it was nowhere to be found.

She had stored the investment plan in it last night, so where could it have gone?

Sage went downstairs and asked Wanda, who shook her head. “You didn’t respond when I knocked on your door this morning. Since the door wasn’t locked, I took a peek but didn’t touch your things.”

“Did Ian enter my room this morning?”

Unnerved by Sage’s solemn expression, Wanda responded, “Yes, he did. Mr. Holcomb saw your phone in the room and told me you hadn’t gone out. Mrs. Holcomb, is the USB drive important? Should I help you look for it?”

The USB drive wasn’t crucial, but the data stored in it was. If Ian were to discover it, all her efforts would be in vain! 2

“No need. I’ll find it myself.”

Then, Sage immediately called Ian, but it went unanswered. She silently cursed, “Damn it, why bother having a phone if you don’t pick up calls?”

Sage put away her phone, had a quick breakfast, and drove to Holcomb Corporation.

Arriving at the lobby, Sage thought she might face some obstruction again.

Nevertheless, it was a different receptionist, and the new face greeted her with a polite smile.

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Warm and appropriately welcoming, she said, “Mrs. Holcomb, you’re here. Let me take you to the president’s office right away,”

Puzzled, Sage asked, “Does Ian know I’m coming?”

The receptionist smiled. "We didn't receive any notification from Mr. Holcomb, But we have a rule that claims if Mrs. Holcomb visits, no one can stop her. She must be taken to the president's office immediately."

Sage couldn't believe Ian managed to pass such a ridiculous rule.

"How did you recognize me?" she prompted.

The receptionist answered, "As part of our training, the first thing we must do is to familiarize ourselves with Holcomb Corporation and the important individuals.

around Mr. Holcomb."

Sage felt even more bewildered. She wasn't part of Holcomb Corporation, and the significant individuals around Ian were even less relevant to her.

For a moment, she wondered if she had stumbled upon a fake Holcomb

Corporation.

"Mrs. Holcomb, this way, please." The receptionist politely motioned with her

hand.

"Okay, thank you."

Sage didn't bother overthinking it. It seemed that, with her title as Ian's wife, the employees had considered her "important" for maintaining overall harmony.

When she arrived at the president's office, the secretary informed her that Ian was in a meeting. She was then led to the office and offered tea courteously.

In the past, Sage could barely enter this floor unless she came with Linda, let alone receive such good treatment.

Just as Sage was speculating about Ian's conspiracy, the office door suddenly opened. Looking up, she saw Ian and Terry entering. Both were dressed smartly.

Terry was reporting something to Ian. Upon seeing her, he politely greeted, "Mrs.. Holcomb."

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Sage smiled in acknowledgment but turned to Ian indifferently. "Did you take my USB drive?"

Ian's gaze darkened. He walked to the couch and sat down. Instead of answering, he asked, "Why did you go to the rooftop this morning?"

Sage scoffed. "Don't worry. I wasn't attempting suicide."

Ian paused, and his expression turned gloomier. "Sage, the day has just started. Who offended you now?"

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Sage shot Ian a cold glance. She found his question ironic. She thought, "Who else could it be besides you? You took my USB drive and did not answer my calls."

Ian sensed Sage's dissatisfaction but held back his annoyance. "I've reviewed

your investment plan for Mimosa. It was well-executed, given your effort.

Considering that, I can offer you an internship opportunity at Bolton Investment.

At this moment, Terry astutely presented a document to Sage. She frowned as she took it. It was an offer letter of employment as an intern at Holcomb Corporation.

“When did I say I wanted to be an intern at Bolton Investment?” Sage couldn’t help but chuckle.

Thinking she was unhappy with the intern role, Ian patiently explained, Holcomb Corporation has strict hiring standards. Based on your investment plan alone, you don’t meet the criteria for a permanent employee yet.

“As long as you continue with your dedication to proposal drafting and learn diligently, a suitable position will be arranged for you after a month.”

Sage didn’t know where to start with the absurdity of his words. “What position will be arranged for me?”

Though her smile held a touch of scorn, Ian still answered, “Normally, it would be an assistant investment analyst. But if you excel, you can apply for the position you desire.”

“Can I aim for the position of an investment director then?”

“Sage!” Ian’s tone carried a warning.

“Why are you shouting? Are you willing to offer it to me or not?”

Sage’s expression turned cold as she continued, “You peeked at my investment

plan without my permission and spoke condescendingly about offering me an internship opportunity. Who do you think you are?”

“You!” Ian choked out.

Seeing the intense confrontation between Ian and Sage, Terry quickly interjected, “Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb, I have something to attend to. I’ll leave now.”

After saying that, he swiftly escaped from the office.

“Sage, stop acting up!” Ian was burning with anger. He berated, “Do you think being an intern diminishes your worth? Do you know how many people would die for such an opportunity?”

“Stop being so self-righteous, Ian!” Sage retorted without hesitation, “I never intended to join Bolton Investment in the first place. It was you who stole my USB drive!”

Taking something without asking was equivalent to stealing!

Not only did he steal it, but he also looked through it. The investment plan she prepared to counter Bolton Investment had been fully exposed to the enemy. What was the point now?

Facing Sage’s fierceness and frustration, Ian knew arguing further was futile. He struggled to suppress the rising anger within him.

“You knew that Bolton Investment intends to invest in Mimosa, and you made such a detailed plan. Tell me, weren’t you aiming to join the company?”

“Who says I can’t create an investment plan for Mimosa without joining Bolton Investment?”

Ian was once again stumped.

“Sage, can you stop being so childish? Ivy majored in finance at an international university and has excelled in the field. Do you think you can prove yourself superior to her with just a proposal?”

At last, Ian had spoken his mind. He believed Sage had made the investment plan just to compete with Ivy. Although Sage did aim to outshine Ivy, it wasn't for the

reasons Ian assumed.

"Ian, I don't need to prove myself to anyone, especially not to you!" With a cold statement, Sage turned around and left. 1

As he watched her retreating figure at the door, Ian's face darkened further. He

called for Terry.

"Mr. Holcomb, you called?" Terry's scalp tingled. He was afraid he might be dragged into the conflict.

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Ian tossed the USB drive to Terry. "Print out the investment plan and send it to Bolton Investment. If it gets approved, reward Sage accordingly."

Although Mimosa couldn't be considered a top-tier investment, it was Holcomb Corporation's first acquisition project for Bolton Investment. Therefore, it needed to be meticulously prepared to make a strong impression.

That was also the reason why the company's investment analysts had been working on proposals recently. To motivate them, the company even established bonuses for the best proposals.

Unexpectedly, Sage also expressed interest in participating and managed to produce a plan that gained Ian's acknowledgment within such a short period.

Thinking of this, Terry silently admired Sage's ability and took the USB drive. "Alright, Mr. Holcomb."

“Ms. Joyner, feel free to order anything you like. Don’t be shy.”

In the luxurious and low-key private club, Shane lounged on a soft couch. He

casually propped his feet up on the coffee table. Two slim and graceful women sat by his sides.

To keen eyes, Shane’s relaxed demeanor suggested it was a business meeting. But to those unaware, it might seem like a display of his lavish lifestyle.

“Mr. Morrison, is it possible for them to leave?” Sage asked.

“No.” Shane smiled devilishly. “Ms. Joyner, if they leave, we’ll be alone together. Wouldn’t that be inappropriate?”

After a moment of speechlessness, Sage remarked, “Mr. Morrison, you can

consider me as a dude.”

Shane nonchalantly responded, “No can do, Ms. Joyner. Who would see such a beautiful woman like you as a dude?”

Sage didn’t bother arguing with him and turned directly to the two beautiful women. She said, “I noticed that there’s a spa area here. Please go and have a full -body spa to relax. Don’t worry, Mr. Morrison will cover all the expenses.”

As the two women exchanged glances, Shane raised an eyebrow. He quipped, “ Ms. Joyner has given the word. Go ahead.”

Then, he teased Sage, “Looks like you’re as stingy as Ian.”

Sage remained composed. "If word got out that you spend someone else's money on women, I'm afraid it'll be embarrassing for you."

"I suppose I should thank you for being considerate." Having mocked her, Shane revealed a more businesslike demeanor. "Ms. Joyner, is the investment plan ready?"

"Yes, but there's been a bit of an unexpected situation."

With a suspicious look from Shane, Sage briefly explained the incident of Ian taking her USB drive. "Although I have a backup on my laptop, he has already seen the contents. It could complicate things."

Sage could only blame herself for not having the habit of shutting down her laptop and for assuming Ian wouldn't enter her room. She had let her guard down. 1

After all, revising the investment plan wasn't just a matter of time constraints; certain crucial data was challenging to alter.

Shane asked, "So, how do you plan to handle this?"

Sage knew that Shane didn't completely trust her, and he probably had backup plans himself. However, his failure to secure Mimosa in the previous timeline indicated the ineffectiveness of his plans.

Sage suggested, "Let's go directly to Mimosa and discuss a collaboration. As long as we're a step ahead, Bolton Investment's proposal won't affect us."

Chuckling, Shane pointed out, "That's a good idea. But Ms. Joyner, have you considered that by initiating the collaboration first, we're essentially revealing our cards? It would allow Bolton Investment to adjust their pricing at any time."

Usually, competition in investment projects boiled down to money. When two rival companies had equal strength, the one with more money had the upper

hand.

Sage understood this well, so she proposed, “What if we establish a collaboration in advance?”

By confirming the collaboration, Bolton Investment wouldn’t have a chance even if they offered a higher price later.

“Ms. Joyner, are you joking?”

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Shane cast a mocking glance at Sage. “Do you think Mimosa would abandon such a lucrative opportunity to collaborate with us before Bolton Investment makes an offer?”

Sage replied, “Under normal circumstances, no. But with the right influence, things might change.”

“Oh?” Shane adjusted his sitting posture. He was becoming more interested in hearing Sage’s next words.

Sage took out her phone, retrieved some information, and handed it to Shane. “This is Mimosa’s manager, Benjamin Xenith. I’ve gathered some background

information on him through various channels.

“It’s said that he managed to establish the winery not only due to an exclusive recipe but also with financial support from his in-laws. Therefore, he tends to

listen to his wife, who is quite assertive.”

“Are you planning to convince Benjamin to collaborate with us through his wife?”

Shane's tone became lighter, and his patience was running thin. He thought that Sage initiating the collaboration was just for show because she lacked substantial

ideas.

He pushed back Sage's phone and said, "This concerns the future listing

operation of Mimosa. Even though she's his wife, she wouldn't make such a hasty

decision."

Naturally, Sage noticed Shane's impatience. She casually smiled and said, "Mr. Morrison, take another look at this."

She pulled up a photo. In it, Benjamin and his wife were posing with an elderly lady in a wheelchair.

Sage explained, "The elderly lady is Benjamin's mother-in-law. A few months ago, she had a heart attack and was on the verge of death. A nurse performed timely resuscitation, which saved her life. Mrs. Xenith is particularly grateful."

Shane remained silent and waited for Sage to continue.

"The nurse is my close friend. She has already told Mrs. Xenith about our intentions and helped arrange for us to visit Mrs. Xenith tomorrow morning with the proposal."

Then, Sage handed Shane a simplified investment plan. "To avoid complications, I've prepared a simplified version for you to review."

Shane took it, and a hint of surprise appeared in his eyes. "It has only been a few hours since you lost the USB drive, yet you managed to do so much?"

Sage responded nonchalantly, "Opportunities like this don't come often.

couldn't afford to miss it."

Her connection with Priscilla Xenith was purely accidental.

After leaving Holcomb Corporation, she had received a call from Tiana. Tiana

said that her visa had been successfully renewed, and she could leave for

Lathuyria the next day.

Sage had congratulated Tiana, then shared her frustration about the futile investment plan for Mimosa.

Tiana had asked her, "Are you talking about Mimosa the winery?"

"Yeah. Do you know about it?"

Following that, Tiana had revealed that she had saved Priscilla's mother in the

past. "Mrs. Xenith has thanked me many times and even sent me a

commendation. I heard that Mr. Xenith is particularly obedient to his wife. If you

want to meet Mrs. Xenith, I can help you out."

The world was truly small. Who would have thought that Tiana knew Priscilla?

Just like that, Sage contacted Priscilla through Tiana and spent a few hours optimizing the collaboration proposal.

While company experts might review extensive proposals, presenting Priscilla with a clear and concise overview of the benefits and responsibilities would

suffice.

“Not bad,” Shane sincerely praised after reviewing it. “The data is succinct and covers all aspects. But won’t our shareholding percentage be a bit low?”

Sage affirmed, “Based on my analysis, this is the optimal ratio considering the circumstances. After all, Mimosa is a well-known firm. They wouldn’t be willing to give up too many shares.”

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Sage had determined the shareholding percentage based on the ownership ratio of Holcomb Corporation from her previous life. To ensure success, she

deliberately set it half a point lower.

Although Farsight Investment might not match Holcomb Corporation’s prestige, the percentage was considered optimal, taking into account all factors.

Upon hearing this, Shane didn’t insist any further. “Do you need me to send someone with you tomorrow?”

“No need.” Sage shook her head. “I think it’s better to approach it in a friendly

way.”

“Ms. Joyner, you are more intelligent than I imagined.” Shane looked up smile, though one couldn’t tell whether it was praise or a jest.

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Sage took it as a compliment. “Thank you, Mr. Morrison.”

Shane didn’t dwell on it. He returned the investment plan to Sage and said, “I’ll await your good news.”

The next day, Sage got up early to dress up and headed to Benjamin’s house.

The Xeniths lived in a high–end estate within the city, which featured a courtyard and flower beds on the ground floor.

When Sage arrived, Priscilla was accompanying her mother outside to bask in the sun. Sage greeted them gracefully, introduced herself, and presented the gifts she

brought.

After that, Sage didn’t rush into the discussion about Mimosa. Instead, she spent some time with the elderly lady and enjoyed the sun with her. Then, she joined

the two for lunch.

Only after the meal did Sage bring up business.

“Priscilla, I apologize for bothering you with this matter. I know there are

multiple companies interested in investing in Mimosa, but Farsight Investment is undoubtedly the best choice.”

Sage handed Priscilla the letter of intent to invest along with the investment plan while adding, "Take a look at the investment amount and shareholding percentage. You'll see our sincerity."

Priscilla was knowledgeable about the market. She examined the documents carefully. There was a hint of satisfaction on her face.

"Alright. I'll discuss this matter with Ben and the shareholders later today. You'll hear from me in the next couple of days."

To Sage, not receiving a refusal was already a good start. She expressed her gratitude to Priscilla.

"Don't be so polite. Putting aside everything, you and Tiana are good friends. Of course, I have to help you with this favor."

Priscilla was efficient and straightforward. Putting business matters aside, Sage admired her character.

"Once Tiana returns to the country, I'll come with her to have a meal with you."

"Sure!"

After parting ways with Priscilla, Sage called Shane. She updated him on the day's events and asked him to prepare relevant materials and contracts for prompt delivery when needed.

With everything settled, Sage returned to Solaris Estate. While Priscilla had indicated her willingness to help, nothing was certain until the contract was signed. So, as a precaution, Sage decided to create a new proposal just in case.

As she was busy with this, her phone rang. It was a call from Josephine.

"Mrs. Holcomb, Mr. Holcomb's great uncle is hosting a dinner tomorrow. Mrs. Holcomb Senior wants you and Mr. Holcomb to accompany her."

Ian's grandfather, Elijah Holcomb, had two brothers. Each of the brothers had two children, which made it a large family with frequent gatherings.

Sage used to enjoy such occasions because, with the elders around, Ian wouldn't

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give her a hard time. Sometimes, at Linda's request, he would even pick food and serve water for her.

But now, Sage didn't feel like going as she saw no meaning in attending family gatherings when she and Ian were going to get divorced.

"Josephine, please let Grandma know that I already have plans tomorrow

"Mrs. Holcomb, you can tell Mrs. Holcomb Senior yourself," Josephine interrupted and immediately handed the phone to Linda.

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The phone was on speaker, and soon Sage heard Linda's saddened voice on the other end. "Sage, are you not willing to accompany me just because you're upset

with Ian?"

Sage had never heard Linda speak in such a tone, so she quickly replied, "I'm willing to accompany you, Grandma."

"Then it's settled. I'll have the driver pick you both up tomorrow!"

Before Sage could say anything else, Linda had already ended the call. Her tone sounded noticeably lighter.

Sage felt helpless.

The next afternoon, Sage received a call from the driver when it was time to

depart. Upon reaching the car and opening the door, she was surprised to find Ian already sitting in the backseat.

He was wearing a black suit. He exuded an air of cold sophistication as he focused

on his laptop. He looked every bit like a successful figure on the cover of a financial magazine.

When he heard the door open, Ian glanced at her nonchalantly before returning his attention to the laptop.

Sage cursed him in her heart. She was annoyed that he insisted on having Linda's driver pick him up when he had his own personal driver.

Not wanting to sit with him, Sage decided to close the door and head to the front

passenger seat.

"Don't be difficult. Grandma is still waiting," Ian spoke up upon sensing her intentions.

Sage frowned. Wasn't he looking at the laptop? How did he know what she was thinking?

Then, she noticed the driver staring at her and realized her actions were a bit childish. She pursed her lips and reluctantly got into the backseat.

During the journey, Sage was occupied with her phone. She did not speak to Ian. He, too, remained absorbed in his work in silence.

After a while, the driver suddenly slammed the brakes, which caused Sage to lurch forward. She almost hit her head on the front seat.

“Be careful.” Ian reached out to pull her back, and she ended up falling into his

arms.

“Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb, I’m sorry! Someone cut in our lane!” the driver apologized nervously.

Ian didn’t say a word, while Sage was now partially leaning against his chest.

For the dinner gathering, she wore a short-sleeved apricot top. From his perspective, he could see her delicate collarbone and a hint of her chest.

“Where are you looking!” Sage shook off his hand. She was wide-eyed.

Ian coldly glanced at her and retorted, “Why are you afraid of people looking when you’re dressed like that?”

Sage was dumbfounded. Her outfit was pretty ordinary. It was nothing revealing -no cleavage, no exposed back. Why did he put it in such a crude way?

“I guess people with dirty minds see things differently,” Sage rebutted without

hesitation.

Ian was taken aback. “Sage, have you completely abandoned your ladylike pretense?”

“Oh, so you still see a ladylike side of me? Haven’t you always said I was nasty and without a single redeeming quality?” argued Sage mockingly.

Ian snapped, “I might not know about your other qualities, but your sharp tongue is truly unmatched!”

“I’ll take that as a compliment. Thank you!”

At a loss for words, Ian didn’t argue further. He picked up his laptop and casually remarked, “Your proposal has been submitted to Bolton Investment. After

several rounds of screening by the higher-ups, they’ve decided to use it.”

Sage didn’t expect Ian to take her investment plan to Bolton Investment. “Didn’t you understand what I said yesterday? I have no interest in joining Bolton Investment. Also, you can’t use my proposal without my consent!”

Ian, still focused on the laptop, calmly stated, “You’ll get one million dollars as a bonus.”

Immediately, Sage was stunned.

She intended to use the 100 million dollars from her grandfather to collaborate with Shane. Meanwhile, she had maxed out Ian’s black card previously.

Thus, with limited cash on hand, this additional amount would make a significant difference.

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Regardless, since the investment plan was of no use to her anymore, Sage

decided to let Bolton Investment use it. She probed, "Can you add an extra ten thousand?"

Ian looked at her and said disapprovingly, "Sage, if you love money so much, why did you act so high and mighty before and claim you wouldn't accept a penny for personal use?"

When they first got married, Ian had offered her a credit card to cover household expenses. But she had refused it. She had wanted to prove she wasn't in it for the

money.

Consequently, she used her own funds for gifts and daily expenses. In hindsight, she genuinely regretted that decision.

"Why don't you compensate me now?" Sage asked tentatively.

Surprisingly, Ian scoffed in response. "You're divorcing me. Why should I cover your expenses?"

That was a predictable response from a businessman. He wouldn't take any

losses.

Sage decided not to dwell on the matter. "Fine. One million it is."

Ian then laid out his conditions. He said, "You'll have to be involved in following up on the project and handling any modifications to the proposal."

"Ian, you just don't want to give me the money, do you?" Sage fumed. "I told you I won't join Bolton Investment, and I won't be involved in anything related to them!"

Ian suppressed his annoyance and said with a frown, "I can make an exception. and let you become an investment analyst in this project. This is your last chance. If you refuse, even talking to Grandma won't help."

"I don't give a flying fuck! Are you seriously expecting me to be grateful to you?"

Sage ignored Ian's angry yet confused expression and continued yelling, "Keep

your intentions to yourself. I won't join Bolton Investment even if you come begging, much less go to Grandma for help!"

Hearing this, Ian couldn't bear it anymore. "Sage, that's enough with your act! Why did you spend so much effort making this investment, then? Don't tell me it was just for fun?"

Sage chuckled. "It's none of your business."

Ian studied her indifferent face and bellowed, "You better not regret it!"

After that, he focused on his emails and ignored her.

Sage was relieved to be left alone and continued scrolling on her phone.

The car fell into silence again.

Shortly after, the driver brought them to a distinctive restaurant in Haldon City. It had a serene atmosphere, refreshing air, various private rooms with excellent views, and a garden area. It was a favorite spot among the upper class.

Once out of the car, Ian unexpectedly offered his arm to her. He gestured for her

to hold it.

Sage was befuddled. She asked, “Are you okay? Why act like a loving couple at a time like this?”

Ian retorted with a stern face, “Haven’t I humored you many times in such acts?”

Indeed, Ian used to cooperate with her in such situations. It was partly due to Linda’s request. The other reason was to avoid being the subject of gossip among

relatives.

It was easier to put on a show and save themselves the trouble.

To enjoy a peaceful meal, Sage forced a smile and linked her arm with Ian.

The waiter guided them to a charming private room by the garden. The room had excellent lighting, and in the center was a large round table with a decorative,

man-made waterfall. On the other side was an area for leisure and tea

ceremonies.

At this point, several relatives were already present. They were either sipping tea

or chatting, which created a harmonious atmosphere.

Linda sat in a high-backed chair. She was surrounded by elegantly dressed women engaged in conversation.

“Grandma,” Sage called out.

Everyone’s eyes turned towards them, and Linda’s face lit up when she saw Sage. “Sage, you’re here!”

Then, Sage and Ian walked over to Linda together.

Chapter 40

“Good evening, Grandma and everyone,” Ian greeted gracefully.

“Ian, you’re truly dutiful. You always come to accompany your grandmother, unlike those ungrateful brats in our family who always say they’re busy as an excuse not to show up!”

“No kidding! Can anyone be busier than Ian? He runs such a huge corporation. and still manages to make time. I think our grandchildren simply find us

bothersome!”

“Alas, Ian never disappoints. He is both capable and respectful. Mrs. Holcomb

Senior is blessed!”

As he listened to the aunts’ praises, Ian wore a subtle smile. Glancing at Sage, he calmly said, “You all are too kind. I don’t have much time to be with Grandma regularly. It’s my Sage who spends more time with her.”

Hearing “my Sage” coming from Ian’s mouth made Sage think she was hearing things. Even during social niceties, he had never addressed her like that before!

Sage stared at Ian while trying to read his face. However, his expression. remained impassive, like nothing happened.

Meanwhile, Linda discreetly observed both of their expressions. She turned to Ian and said, “You’re a sensible boy. It’s good that you know Sage’s virtues!”

“Yes, Sage is a dutiful child as well! And she’s beautiful. She’s a perfect match for Ian!”

The women continued to shower Sage with compliments. In the midst of the flattering, several other of Ian’s relatives approached him for a talk.

Acting like a considerate husband, Ian turned to Sage and said, “You stay with Grandma for a while; I’ll join you shortly.”

Sage played along by offering a gracious smile. “Okay.”

“Sage and Ian seem to be growing closer!” one of the aunts from Sage’s family remarked. “Sage, when are you two planning to have children? Let’s expand the

family! Grandma, what do you think?”

Linda chuckled at that. “No rush. Sage is still young. When she wants to have

children, she will naturally. I’m not that old–fashioned that I would urge for great -grandchildren!”

After a few more light–hearted conversations, Linda expressed her desire to take a stroll in the garden, and Sage volunteered to accompany her.

After helping Linda up, Sage walked with her to the garden.

“Sage, it’s been many days since you contacted me. Do you not want your grandma anymore?” Linda scolded playfully.

“Grandma, what are you saying?” Sage pouted. “I’ve said it before; even if I divorce Ian, you’ll still be my grandma!”

Linda playfully tapped Sage's head and chided, "A couple should quarrel and make up in bed. Did you eat the corn chowder I had someone send you last time?"

When she recalled the last incident, Sage felt a tingling sensation on her lips. Grandma, please don't do that again. We haven't done anything, and it caused quite a bit of unpleasantness."

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"It must be that brat's fault again!" Linda shook her head in frustration. "Sage, I can see that Ian is starting to care about you. Aren't you thinking of changing your mind?"

Sage shook her head. They had just put on a facade for the elders.

She said in a serious tone, "Grandma, I know you suggested postponing the divorce until after your birthday to give us some time to cool off. But we don't

need it.

"I insisted on this marriage. No matter how much time passes, Ian won't change his views on me. I don't want to tie him down anymore either."

Linda held Sage's hand and responded earnestly, "Sage, Ian has always been a determined person. If he truly didn't want to marry you, I can't have forced him in the first place."