

## A Farewell 41

### Chapter 41

Sage picked out the meaning behind Linda's words, yet she refused to deceive herself. "Linda, you don't have to comfort me. I'm well aware of Ian's attitude."

Leaving aside the fact that Ian still despised her, she couldn't allow herself to harbor illusions about him any longer, even if there were a genuine change in his feelings.

She did not want to interfere with the tacit understanding and emotions between him and Ivy again in this lifetime.

When she saw Sage's determined expression, Linda refrained from further persuasion. Clearly, Sage had experienced enough heartache and disappointment

to make such a resolute decision.

Linda only hoped that Ian would quickly realize the truth and mend Sage's heart.

In the leisure area of the private room, a group of women discussed their children.

"My son's birthday is approaching, and he mentioned that Gentlemen's Style's high-end clothes are good. The store sent me a link with several styles; could you

all take a look for me?"

One of them pulled out a tablet, and everyone leaned in to see.

Ian happened to pass by and glanced at the screen.

“Ian, you have great taste in fashion. Could you help me decide?” the woman

asked.

When everyone expected Ián to decline, he surprised them by picking up the tablet. He browsed through the new arrivals on the homepage and then checked. the price range.

Ultimately, he filtered the selection under 30 grand and chose a ready-made suit.

priced at 28,800 dollars. It was a rather casual black suit.

“Ian, I may not be as wealthy as you, but I can afford more than that,” the

woman said with a smile.

Jan chuckled and returned to the homepage. He pointed at a custom-made suit worth a million dollars.

“This one looks good to me.”

“Oh, indeed! It’s elegant and stylish. Come and take a look, everyone!”

As the women gathered, Jan handed back the tablet and walked toward the garden outside.

At this moment, Linda was seated on a wooden chair while Sage was taking photos of her. “Maintain that smile. Perfect! Grandma, you look beautiful as always!”

Linda beamed at the compliment. She cooperated with Sage by tilting her head left and right in various poses.

Ian always knew that Sage was good at winning Linda's favor. He had thought it was through sweet talk and flattery, but now it seemed he had underestimated

her.

Despite Sage's usual irrational behavior, her sincerity toward Linda was

undeniable.

"Ian, why are you standing there? Come and take photos with us!" Linda spotted

him and called out.

Sage also turned toward Jan. Her bright smile faded a little upon seeing him. However, she quickly ignored him and continued taking photos of Linda.

Feeling a twinge of dissatisfaction, Ian noticed that Sage's attitude toward him had worsened lately. In the past, even without Linda's prompting, she would joyfully run toward him and be eager to share the photos she had taken.

He had even given her a black card for her shopping spree. Why was she still acting so strangely?

"Why do women hold onto grudges?" Ian felt frustrated and sent a message to Calvin Luther, who claimed to understand women best.

Calvin replied almost instantly, "Who? What kind of woman is she? Ian, are you looking for a side chick?"

Ian couldn't be bothered to entertain Calvin's nonsense and approached Linda.

Linda called Sage over and instructed Ian to take pictures. "Go, take some beautiful shots for me and Sage."

Ian took the camera and snapped a few shots.

Linda then said, "Sage, the scenery there is beautiful. Stand there and let Ian take

a photo of you."

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To avoid dampening Linda's spirits, Sage did as instructed,

Before reaching the spot, she was captivated by a blooming orchid by the side. She bent down and sniffed it. The wonderful fragrance caused her features to relax instantly, and a gentle smile graced her lips.

Sunlight shone on Sage's delicate face as she leaned toward the pristine orchid.

Ian couldn't decide whether the flower or the woman was more beautiful. Almost

instinctively, he captured the scene with his phone.

After an afternoon of leisure activities, the dinner banquet finally commenced.

The family of 20 gathered around a table, which created a harmonious

atmosphere.

Linda and Aiden Holcomb, Ian's great uncle, were not as energetic compared to

the middle-aged and young people present. Thus, they ended up leaving early.

Ian found himself surrounded by his uncles, while Sage assisted Linda and saw

her off.

As she watched the car disappear into the distance, Sage decided against returning to feign affection with Ian and wandered around the surroundings

instead.

As dusk settled, colorful lights illuminated the garden and created a unique

ambiance. Sage strolled toward a secluded area near a small forest. It was quieter than the front, and two guards stood outside a private room.

Sage tactfully halted her steps. When she was heading back to where she came from, she noticed a slim man leading a group of young girls to the private room.

The man sternly warned, "Be mindful when serving our distinguished guest later. Or else, you'll have to face the consequences!"

One of the girls with an attractive figure cautiously said, "I'm not feeling well today. Can I skip drinking?"

"Nonsense! It's just drinking! Where do you think the money came from for you

+15 BONUS

to afford such an expensive phone and clothes? Keep Mr. Xenith happy, and your prosperous days will follow!"

Upon hearing the name “Mr. Xenith,” Sage instinctively glanced toward the

private room they entered. The door happened to open at that moment. It revealed three men respectfully toasting the slightly chubby man occupying the main seat.

The latter looked familiar; Sage had seen his photos quite a few times recently. He was none other than Benjamin, the manager of Mimosa.

After the slim man led the girls into the private room, the one with the best figure was pushed to sit on Benjamin’s lap. “Hurry and greet Mr. Xenith!”

“Mr. Xenith,” the girl nestled in Benjamin’s arms coquettishly called.

“Hello, my little princess. I haven’t seen you in a few days, and you’ve become even more beautiful. Do you miss me?” Benjamin said before kissing the girl on

the face.

The others at the table seemed accustomed to such behavior. They erupted into laughter and cheers.

As the door closed, Sage was in utter shock.

Benjamin was well-known for his enthusiasm for charity and his deep love for his wife. So, why would he engage in such lewd behavior with a young girl?

Moreover, judging from his actions, it appeared that this wasn’t the first time.

“Who’s out there?” Suddenly, one of the guards outside the private room shouted.

Not daring to linger, Sage quickly left. She hurried back to the garden. She looked back but saw that no one was chasing her. Only then did she breathe a sigh of

relief.

Just as she turned around, she collided forcefully with a solid chest.

Sage was both startled and in pain. She instinctively covered her nose with a hiss.

“Are

you okay?” Ian asked while attempting to inspect her nose for any injuries.

Cautiously, Sage took a step back.

2

+15 BONUS

Ian had probably had a bit to drink, as his handsome face was slightly flushed. His dark eyes glinted. They looked oddly alluring in the dimly lit night.

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Besides, Ian had removed his suit jacket, and a few buttons on his shirt were

undone. With his sleeves rolled up, his fair skin and well-defined arm muscles

were exposed.

Sage promptly stopped herself from staring. She couldn't afford to be infatuated with his attractiveness again.

Shooting him a cold look, she grumbled, "What are you standing here for? You gave me a fright!"

Ian wasn't angry. Instead, his tone was gentle as he replied, "Weren't you seeing Grandma off? Why did you come here? I've looked everywhere for you..."

Based on his words and expression, Sage confirmed that Ian had had a bit too

much to drink.

His usual image was one of swift decisiveness, even in situations like this where he seemed a bit slow in reacting. Moreover, he wouldn't normally say something as silly as having looked for her everywhere.

There was once in her previous life that Ian had gotten drunk as well. However, he had only slept it off upon getting home instead of making such a fuss.

At the thought of this, Sage eased up a bit. But just to be sure, she called Terry to help arrange for someone to pick them up.

"Alright, Mrs. Holcomb," Terry responded before hanging up.

"You still haven't told me why you're here." Ian held her arm and insisted on an

answer.

Tiana had warned Sage about how scary people could become when drunk. So, she didn't argue with Ian in that state and simply said, "I was just bored and took



a walk.”

“Why are you bored?” Ian’s slightly intoxicated gaze was fixed on her, and his

expression was serious.

Sage thought that if she recorded Ian’s silly and cute behavior right now, she

could probably extort a billion from him.

At her silence, Ian unexpectedly reached out and pulled her into an embrace.” Why aren’t you talking?”

“Ian, let me go!” Sage demanded as she tried to break free.

But Ian held her tighter. He felt displeased. “You’re being rude. How come you’re not calling me ‘Tany’ now? Let me hear it.”

Sage was momentarily stunned, then found it somewhat funny and poignant at the same time.

Eventually, she lost her temper. “Tan, do you think it’s fun to act crazy after drinking?”

Sage forcefully pushed him away and added, “Or do you feel uneasy because I haven’t been chasing after you every day lately?”

Call him “lany”? Like hell! He never cared when she used to call him that all the time. In fact, he would frown so deeply as if he found it incredibly distasteful!

So how dare he ask her to call him that now?

Ian stumbled back a few steps as Sage pushed him. His eyes cleared slightly, but

there was still a hint of drunkenness.

Seeing Sage's angry expression, Ian felt more annoyed.

He wasn't completely drunk, but he was definitely not sober either. He couldn't believe he had actually listened to Calvin's terrible advice.

According to Calvin, the best way to deal with girls was to pamper them as they would become cuter and more charming. When pampering, he must speak softly,

be gentle, and hold their hands or touch their shoulders occasionally. Ultimately, any girl who liked him wouldn't be able to resist!

And so, Ian had softened his tone, acted extra gentle, and even wrapped his arms

around Sage's waist despite her resistance. Yet, it was completely useless.

Conversely, Sage was even angrier than before!

Ian's head was starting to ache. He rubbed his temples and tried to stay upright

IS BONUS

as he stepped forward.

After a few steps, he looked back at Sage. He said slowly and indifferently, "Are you planning to stand there all night?"

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When Sage realized that Ian had reverted to his usual demeanor and tone, she became even more certain that he had only pretended to be drunk to fool her.

Infuriated, she briskly walked ahead and left Ian behind.

A faint perfume lingered as Sage's silhouette faded into the distance.

Jan sent a text to Calvin. "I'm rejecting the letter of intent to collaborate with Luther Enterprise's gulf project."

Then, without waiting for Calvin's response, he switched off his phone.

Concerned that Ian might be too drunk, Terry tagged along with the driver to the restaurant to pick them up. He let the driver wait before approaching the private

room.

Inside, Ian sat on a bench while supporting his forehead with one hand. His eyebrows were slightly furrowed, and he looked uncomfortable.

Terry was about to call out to him when Sage, holding a towel in one hand, discreetly walked over to Ian from the dining table. Her other hand was hidden

beneath the towel.

Terry wisely kept silent. He watched as Sage gently dabbed Ian's forehead with the towel. Before he could appreciate Sage's tender care, however, he watched as she "accidentally" tossed something she was holding into Ian's shirt collar.

As soon as the object touched Ian's skin, he jolted.

The noise he made was loud enough to attract the attention of others in the room.

“Ilan, are you okay?” One of the relatives gasped in concern, “Oh, your shirt has a few wet spots. And your pants...”

Her exclamation drew everyone’s eyes to Ian’s shirt and pants. There were indeed a few damp spots on his blue shirt, while his pants were stained in an awkward spot.

\$15 BONUS

Although everyone found it absurd and unbelievable, they tacitly chose to stay silent.

Jan also noticed the issue with his pants. His face darkened as he glared at Sage.

With a worried and nervous expression, Sage stammered, “Y–You drank too much that you couldn’t even... hold it in?”

She intentionally avoided the awkward wording.

“But it’s okay; you don’t need to feel embarrassed!” Sage spoke as though she was very considerate of Ian’s feelings. “Everyone here is family. No one will make fun of you. Right, guys?”

“Yes, yes!” One relative nodded repeatedly and said, “It’s quite normal.

Sometimes when you drink too much, you think you’re in a dream, and then... Well..”

Unable to listen any longer, Jan immediately stormed out of the door.

Terry quickly suppressed the smile on his face and respectfully said, “Mr. Holcomb, the car is outside. Do you need my assistance?”

Ian cast him a cold glance before striding out with long steps. Terry followed.

Meanwhile, Sage grabbed her handbag and apologized to everyone, "Sorry for the trouble, everyone. But please forget that this ever happened. Thank you!"

She even bowed sincerely to the crowd before leaving the private room.

Everyone exchanged glances, and an elderly man sighed. "I thought Jan was better than this. How could—Oh, forget it. Everyone, let's not bring this up next time!"

After getting into the car, Sage couldn't control her laughter.

"Sage!" With an icy expression, Ian seethed, "How dare you throw ice cubes into my shirt!"

"You played me. Payback's a bitch!"

"You!"

+15 BONUS

As Ian sat upright, Sage burst into laughter again when she saw his stained pants.

The driver looked puzzled. Meanwhile, Terry was mentally recalling the tragedies of his life and trying not to burst into laughter as well.

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"Stop laughing!" Furious and mortified, Ian viciously grabbed Sage's wrist.

Sage winced as he held her hand tightly. Seeing the fierce glint in Ian's eyes, she knew he was genuinely angry, and she should stop laughing.

However, when she thought of the incredulous faces back in the private room and how speechless everyone was, Sage guffawed louder instead. She even had to bend over to hold her belly.

When Terry saw Sage's reaction, he was anxious about her recklessness. He was sweating. To avoid getting dragged into it, he prudently raised the partition.

Ian watched Sage laugh uncontrollably despite his threat. Her eyes were curved into crescents while tears flowed out of them.

On her flushed face, there was no trace of resentment, indifference, hysteria, or disdain. Only a carefree and radiant smile adorned her features.

He was still gripping her delicate wrist, and her fragrance enveloped his senses.

Strangely, Ian felt the anger within him dissipate. Instead, a mix of thirst and heat replaced it, and he needed to quench that thirst.

With eyes locked on Sage's cherry lips, he pulled her into his arms and leaned down to kiss her. His other hand went around her lower back to press her against

his chest. He prevented her from breaking free.

The sudden kiss left Sage stunned and infuriated. However, she couldn't escape as Ian's arms were like iron shackles that were holding her in place.

Feeling dissatisfied with their position, Ian shifted her entire body onto his lap while continuing to explore her lips. The ambiguous and intimate seating arrangement angered Sage even more, and she bit out a low growl.

Although Sage was desperate to slap Ian, she found herself unmatched by his strength, especially when he had been drinking.

Ian caught her flailing hands and pressed her against the back of the seat.

Terry, sensing a disturbance, could guess the “fight” in the back had started to escalate. He could only pretend to be calm and urge the driver to speed up.

After all, dragging out the journey might lead them to be stuck in an awkward

situation.

Terry cursed himself internally and questioned his decision to tag along. It would have been more relaxing to stay home and play with his chubby orange cat

instead!

In the backseat, Sage was completely defenseless against Ian. Even breathing became a struggle.

The vast difference in size and strength left her with no choice but to allow Ian’s antics without resistance.

“Ring, ring! Cutie, your phone is ringing~”

At that moment, Sage’s phone rang. Ian finally stopped kissing her. Perhaps he was disturbed by the noise, or maybe a trace of his sanity returned.

Sage now lacked the strength to confront him. She could only gasp for air and whisper, “I need to take the call.”

In Ian’s drunken eyes, a hint of desire flickered. He looked at Sage, whose body now felt soft and limp, and huskily said, “Beg like you mean it.”

Sage looked at him with teary eyes. She was puzzled.

The desire in Ian's eyes intensified. "We'll continue if you don't—"

"I'm begging you!" Sage shouted in fear.

"For what?"

Clamping down on her anger, she mumbled, "To let me answer the call."

"Who are you begging?"

Sage thought he must be insane. Nevertheless, she gritted her teeth and said, Please, Ian."

"Wrong."

Earlier, Ian had accompanied the elders for a few more drinks in the private room. Perhaps he was truly intoxicated this time, as his eyes were glazed over, and his voice carried a hint of devilish charm.

"You know what I want to hear."

Sage forced out, "Iany."

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Ian was unwilling to let her go yet. "Beg me properly one more time."



Sage was both frustrated and confused. She was wondering why she hadn't noticed so many annoying traits in Ian before. What sort of weird hobby was this?

Just then, Sage's phone stopped ringing.

Ian was about to pull her even closer. He said, "Perfect. Now, you don't have to-

At the same time, Sage was ready to use violence when the partition suddenly lowered.

Terry kept his eyes down as he informed in a business-like tone, "Mr. Holcomb, Ms. Shekdotter says her calls aren't getting through to you. She needs to speak with you."

Ian furrowed his brows slightly and took Terry's phone.

Annoyed, Sage pushed Ian away and sat back in her seat. She grabbed her own

phone. It turned out that she had missed Ivy's phone call as well.

Ivy seemed to be well aware of Ian's whereabouts, considering that she had looked for Sage directly.

1

"What's the matter?" Ian loosened his collar and asked in a husky voice.

"What's with your voice? Are you drunk?"

Ignoring her concern, Ian asked again, "What did you want to talk about?"

Ivy said, "Can you come over now? Let's talk in person. Or I can come to you. It's quite urgent, and I can't explain it over the phone."

Ian glanced at Sage, who had now resumed a cold and distant demeanor. "I'll

"

come over. 1

After he hung up, Sage said impatiently, "Pull over. I'll take a taxi home."

Ian, however, grabbed her hand. His breath still smelled like alcohol as he uttered, "Let the driver send you home. Terry and I will take a taxi."

+15 BONUS

Sage frowned and shook off his hand. Ian's gaze darkened, but eventually, he ordered the driver to pull over.

Once Ian and Terry got out of the car, Sage sent a message to Shane. She informed him about seeing Benjamin at the restaurant and requested him to investigate Benjamin's private life thoroughly.

Considering he was the manager of Mimosa, any personal issues could affect the upcoming initial public offering.

Shane was rather cooperative on matters related to the investment, and he

replied with an affirmative emoji.

Back at Solaris Estate, Sage vigorously wiped her lips with a towel.

Ian, the lunatic, had gone crazy after drinking too much!

In her previous life, he would simply come home and doze off after getting drunk. He had even been completely unaware of her sneaking up next to him, where she secretly listened to his heartbeat.

Was it that Ian's level of intoxication was different this time, or had he already slept with Ivy last time to get it out of his system?

Sage felt nauseous at the thought of him going to Ivy's place after eating the corn chowder the other day and possibly kissing her with the same mouth that had touched Ivy's. She wiped her lips even more vigorously.

After rinsing her mouth several times and taking a bath, Sage began to feel a bit better. She lay on the bed and was about to sleep when she noticed an unread message on WhatsApp and a notification from Venmo.

Opening it, she found she had received five thousand dollars. On WhatsApp, someone with an unfamiliar profile picture had sent her a message. "Miss, I got my salary. I've paid back five thousand dollars first."

Sage realized that the sender was Michael, whom she had added to her contacts previously but didn't get a chance to talk to.

She replied, "No rush. Pay me back when you have the money."

"Accept it. It puts my mind at ease," Michael insisted.

15 BONUS

Just as Sage wanted to refuse again, she was interrupted by another notification from Telegram.

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It was a message from Delilah.

Sage hadn't contacted Delilah since she went to Ivy's place. She had blocked Delilah's messages on WhatsApp as well.

Now that Delilah had sent her a photo on Telegram, it was probably not good news. Sage immediately deleted the message and blocked her number.

"Please, you must accept it," Michael sent another message after the money

transfer.

To maintain his dignity, Sage decided to accept the payment.

Michael then asked, "Are you very busy? I haven't seen you at the sports complex.

For the past few days, Sage had been occupied with drafting the investment plan. Thus, she didn't have the time to attend the lessons she had applied for. She replied, "I'm busy with work matters."

Following that, Michael sent her a bunch of encouraging cute gifs. Sage found them amusing, so she saved a few.

She then checked Michael's social media feed and found that his life was rich and full of positivity. Apart from part-time work updates, there were posts about music bands, which portrayed him as a cheerful and optimistic young man.

Sage felt a bit envious. She realized that it had been a long time since she experienced the feelings of youth and enthusiasm.

As Sage was browsing through the feed, she received a notification which indicated she had been tagged in a WhatsApp group chat.

It was a group chat created by Delilah and some classmates. Delilah had sent a photo to the group and tagged Sage.

Sage glanced at the image, which featured an appetizing bowl of pasta on the coffee table and a cup of passion fruit juice.

+15 BONUS

Though there were no people in the photo, an arm in a blue sleeve draped over the couch was in the frame. Sage couldn't tell if the photographer intended it, but it was a garment she recognized all too well- the one Ian had worn earlier.

The background in the photo was also familiar to Sage as it was Ivy's residence.

A while later, Sage received a phone call from an unknown number. It was Delilah, who sounded displeased. "Sage, what's going on? You blocked me on WhatsApp, and now, you've blocked my number too?"

"Did Ian blame you for last time?" Delilah added, "I told you to tell him it was my idea alone. If he didn't listen, you could have discussed a countermeasure with me. Why are you sulking?"

Sage didn't bother responding. She waited for her to continue.

Sure enough, Delilah said, "The photo I sent you was the one I—bitch posted on her social media feed not long ago with a disgusting caption. I left a nasty

comment, and she deleted the post!

"But I saved the photo before it was gone. How is that called taking care of a drunk friend? There's clearly something going on between them. It's disgusting!"

Delilah rambled on without getting a response from Sage. “Why aren’t you saying anything? Are you angry? Should we go to her place again?”

Sage chuckled and said, “You care a lot more about them than I do. I unfollowed Ivy’s social media long ago. If you really consider me a friend, do the same. Don’t do stupid things in my name again.”

“What do you mean, Sage?” Delilah was getting angry. “I did it for you! I was standing up for you. Yet instead of thanking me, you’re calling me stupid?”

Sage calmly replied, “I don’t know if you’re stupid, but don’t take me for a fool.”

“Fine! Sage, if you can’t win Ian over, don’t come crying to me. I won’t help you anymore!” After that, Delilah hung up in frustration.

Sage saved the image from the WhatsApp group as she considered it potential evidence for future divorce proceedings.

After anxiously waiting for a day, Sage finally received news from Shane late at night.

He said, “Benjamin’s situation is a bit complicated. Let’s meet up and talk”

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Sage responded, “Okay, send me the address.”

The location Shane provided turned out to be a bar. It seemed like private clubs or bars were his regular hangouts.

If Sage hadn’t known from her past life that he had a business mindset and performed reasonably well, she might have thought of him as an idle playboy.

Sage drove to the bar and located Shane in a secluded corner on the second floor.

The bar played soft music, and with no one else on the second floor, the noise was well-contained in the soundproofed booth. It created an unexpectedly tranquil atmosphere.

Shane was lounging with his legs propped on the coffee table. He retained his usual carefree demeanor. However, this time he was without the company of

beautiful women. Instead, he was engrossed in a phone call.

On the table were beverages and snacks. Sage decided not to disturb him and settled on the couch. She casually picked up a piece of apple and popped it into

her mouth.

“Alright, that’s settled. Let me know as soon as there’s any news.” Shane hung up quickly.

Sage went straight to the point and asked, “What did you find out about Benjamin?”

Wordlessly, Shane tossed a file over to Sage. In addition to the facts they already had, it contained more detailed personal information about Benjamin and the events of the night before.

Although Benjamin came from a humble background, he displayed exceptional intelligence. He entered his father-in-law’s company with a self-learned wine formula. After marrying Priscilla, he gradually expanded his influence while being backed by his in-laws’ wealth.

To build a positive image, Benjamin frequently donated to charities and welfare

organizations such as Sunshine Orphanage. This earned him a good reputation. However, the group of girls who were forced to drink with him last night were from the orphanage.

“What a scumbag!” Sage couldn’t help but curse upon learning this.

To cloak such immoral actions in the guise of charity was utterly despicable.

“Hold off on the scolding. Keep reading,” Shane cryptically reminded her.

As Sage continued flipping through the file, she stumbled upon photos of Benjamin with a girl at a hotel. The girl was the one Sage had noticed the night before. She had the most attractive figure.

“Are these photos taken from last night? Why didn’t your men stop him?”

Shane chuckled with a hint of amusement. “Ms. Joyner, consensual matters aren’t easy to prevent. Besides, these photos weren’t taken by my men.”

When Shane’s team arrived to investigate last night, Benjamin had already left the hotel.

With recent rumors of Mimosa’s financing and listing, many were eyeing Benjamin to find something incriminating. These photos were snapped by someone with ulterior motives.

“What happened afterward? Have you reported this to the police?” Sage inquired.

With a smile, Shane shook his head. “The person who took the photos has some ulterior motives. Both sides are still negotiating for benefits.”

Sage stared at Shane, and a sudden realization hit her. “You’re planning to help Benjamin resolve this trouble, aren’t you? That’s what you meant on the phone just now!”

While casually toying with his phone, Shane sat back nonchalantly and didn’t deny the accusation.



Sage erupted in anger and growled, "How could you do that? Weren't we

supposed to discuss it together?"

Shane chuckled in response. "Ms. Joyner, this is a golden opportunity. Settling his troubles for him means securing Mimosa."

"But his character is questionable, and his behavior is reprehensible. It's a massive risk for the investment bank. If his scandal is exposed before the public listing, there would be no money for you to make."

Shane was unfazed as he said, "Benjamin is usually cautious. Otherwise, someone would have uncovered his background. As long as we conceal this matter, he won't dare to make any more reckless moves in the short term. It

doesn't count as a massive risk."

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"Even if there are risks, one must seek fortune amidst danger. In our line of work, aren't some risks worth taking?"

Seeing Shane's nonchalant smirk, Sage chuckled. "So, you never considered seeking my opinion."

Shane adjusted himself into a more comfortable position and said, "Ms. Joyner, you've got it wrong. I informed you of the outcome. I'm showing considerable respect, I'd say."

Sage observed Shane's relaxed and playful expression. She knew that the matter was already decided.

Since she proposed the partnership, Shane seemed more interested in her actions than the collaboration itself.

Now that he could secure Mimosa on his own, her presence was even less meaningful.

“Well then, let’s just pretend my proposal never existed,” Sage said.

“I thought, despite being a businessman, you wouldn’t blindly blur the lines

between right and wrong just for money. But turns out, you’re just as immoral. In that case, we don’t need to work together!”

With that, Sage stood up to leave.

However, Shane stopped her. “Ms. Joyner, wait a moment.”

Sage looked at him indifferently.

Shane then asked with a wicked smile, “Are you really willing to give up this opportunity? If you don’t join Farsight Investment, how do you plan to compete with Ivy, Ian’s beloved?”

Sage wasn’t surprised that Shane had investigated her and knew her intentions. Nonetheless, he only knew one side of the story.

Sage replied in a clipped tone, “You need not concern yourself with this matter,

Mr. Morrison. As long as I have a goal, I’ll find a way regardless of the circumstances.”

Just when Shane wanted to say more, his phone rang. Sage knew it was a call from his subordinates, so when Shane unlocked the screen, she left without waiting.

“What?!” Shane’s voice suddenly rose behind her.

“Stop right there!” Shane called after her. This time, his attitude was evidently hostile, and his usually affectionate eyes now held a menacing glint.

Sage raised an eyebrow. “What happened? Why are you looking at me like that?”

Shane sneered and said, “Mrs. Holcomb, you and Ian are quite adept at

coordinating. One deliberately leaked information to buy time, while the other silently resolved Benjamin’s matter!”

Sage was dumbfounded. She thought, “Ian has received the news too? And he acted so swiftly?”

“Don’t discuss morality with me so earnestly. You’re just putting on a show. If

you want, I can introduce you to the acting industry.”

Sage chuckled at that. “Mr. Morrison, let me offer a piece of advice. When you’re not as good as others, just admit defeat gracefully. Don’t blame your failures on others, as that only makes you look more incompetent.

“Don’t assume I’m as despicable as you claim. Even if Ian and I plotted against you, you brought it upon yourself!”

Fortunately, she hadn’t actually worked with someone as abominable as Shane to help Benjamin cover up a scandal for the sake of profit!

Shane was stumped by her words. His face turned furious. “Don’t think I won’t do anything to you just because you’re Ian’s wife! I’ve never been played by a woman. You aren’t going anywhere!”

With a wave of his hand, his hidden bodyguard suddenly appeared. "Yes, Mr.

Morrison?"

Shane's voice turned icy as he ordered, "Tie her up. Take photos and send them to Ian. Tell him his wife is in our hands!"

"You've lost your mind!" Sage exclaimed as she stepped back in horror. "Don't you know kidnapping is a crime?"

## Chapter 50

Shane's laughter was cold and malicious. "You had the guts to mess with me. I'll teach you a lesson, even if it means breaking the law!"

When she saw Shane's fearless attitude and the approaching bodyguard, Sage felt

a tinge of regret. She had been too presumptuous. She had thought that her knowledge from her past life could be leveraged to negotiate with Shane.

She never considered investigating what kind of person he was.

Now, with him turning hostile, she wouldn't be able to escape if he decided to tie her up.

With Ian's apparent dislike toward her, she doubted he would intervene. Even if he did, she didn't want to owe him any favors.

"Hide if you can. Let's see where you can escape to!" Shane stalked toward her. His voice was menacing.

The second floor seemed to have been cleared by Shane, and there was no one around to help. Sage's scream for help was rendered useless.

Sage contemplated whether it would be more effective to smash a wine bottle and threaten to hurt herself or take a gamble by doing the same to Shane.

"Who dares to lay a hand on her?"

Amid her thoughts, an angry voice suddenly echoed from behind.

It was Ian! 1

In what seemed like a trick of the light, Ian's eyes flashed with a hint of concern when he looked at Sage.

"Hey, Mr. Holcomb, you came just in time. I haven't even sent you a message yet, and here you are!" Shane said mockingly.

Ian ignored him and strode toward Sage. He frowned as he asked, "Are you hurt?"

Sage shook her head.

"Let's go." Ian didn't say much. He gestured for Sage to follow him.

However, Shane's bodyguard blocked their way.

"You plan to leave without giving an explanation?" Shane's playful expression carried a hint of chill.

Ian looked at him coldly. "I was waiting for an explanation from you. Why did you try to bind my wife?"

While speaking, two burly men clad in black came up to Shane. In terms of numbers and strength, Shane's lone bodyguard seemed at a disadvantage.

Sage hadn't expected Ian to come, let alone bring bodyguards.

"Looks like you have come prepared." Shane's lips curled into a mysterious smile. "Do you know who the owner of this bar is?"

Sage suddenly felt uneasy. If this bar belonged to Shane, Ian's two bodyguards might not be enough to contend with him.

Thinking about their last intense car collision, Sage couldn't help but worry. If a fight broke out, where would she find safety?

Ian seemed to misunderstand Sage's concern. He took her hand. Her fingers were enclosed in his warm palm. Though she felt uncomfortable, Sage didn't pull away

because now wasn't the time for trivialities.

"The Morrisons' empire is vast. Having a few bars is nothing out of the ordinary,

Ian calmly stated.

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"Then, do you think you can leave here so easily?" Shane provocatively asked.

Ian revealed a composed, thin smile as he uttered, "You can go downstairs and

see for yourself."

At his words, Shane's face fell. He quickly walked to the edge and looked down.

The bustling hall, which had plenty of guests a while ago, was now empty. The bar staff stood in a line, and the bouncers were bound and kneeling on the floor.

Meanwhile, standing in the hall was a group of trained bodyguards dressed in

black. They exuded both authority and precision.

"Ian, you've got guts! How dare you bring so many people to mess up my place!" Shane roared.

Ian gazed at him indifferently and said, "If you dare to target my wife again, I'm afraid I won't just mess up your establishment."

With that, Ian led Sage away.

1

"Ian, I'll let you off this time. This isn't over!" Shane

bellowed from behind.