

# A Second Chance With My Billionaire Love

## Chapter 511:515



Alexis swiftly responded to the intercom. Her secretary informed her, “Miss Fowler, Mr. Duffy is here.”

She glanced at Leonel and instructed, “Have him wait in the reception room.”

She cut the call short, turning to Leonel with a light comment, “As you can see, I’m quite busy. I won’t be able to see you out.”

However, before she could finish, the office door burst open, revealing Colin Duffy.

He was visibly agitated and his wealthy appearance was marred by his current state of anger.

“Miss Fowler, you’re my lawyer. But why are you using those photos against me? Isn’t that a bit excessive? Threatening your own client,

Alexis leaned against her desk, her expression one of cold amusement.

“Oh? So you still remember I’m your lawyer? You pay me to work for you. So pay up and then we can go our separate ways.”

Colin was clearly reluctant to let the matter rest.

His divorce case, which threatened to divide his considerable assets, was more than he had bargained for. And now he also had to pay for the lawsuit.

He attempted to negotiate, straightening his collar.

“I’ll pay twenty million at most. If Miss Fowler agrees, I’ll have the finance department transfer it immediately.”

Unimpressed by his offer, Alexis casually picked up a pool cue from her desk, toying with it as she weighed her response to his proposition.

Her voice was soft yet laced with a stern warning.

“I have a short temper, Mr. Duffy. I strongly advise against trying to shortchange me.

I may not be the most just person, but push me, and I can become quite unpredictable, you know.”

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Colin, accustomed to his own arrogance, underestimated Alexis.

Despite knowing her fierce reputation, he dismissed her threats, believing his own age and status would protect him.

He thought, with the verdict already decided, what harm could a few photos do?

He also doubted she would do anything to tarnish her own reputation.

Feeling bold, he stepped forward and touched Alexis’ collar, suggesting, “If Miss Fowler is open to it, we could discuss this privately. Those two hundred million might still be up for negotiation.”

He had long harbored a desire for her.

Just as Leonel was about to intervene, Alexis looked down at the unwelcome hand on her collar and chuckled.

“Are you looking for some excitement?” she asked.

Before Colin could respond with his rehearsed charm, Alexis swung her pool cue at him.

He was caught off guard, stumbling several steps backward before falling to the ground.

Alexis approached him, the sound of her high heels echoing on the floor.

She swung the cue a few more times, each strike leaving a mark on his face.

Squatting down, she kicked his reddened face with her heel, causing enough pain for him to cry out.

Mockingly patting his face, she asked, “Is this exciting enough for you? Or do you want more?”

Thoroughly intimidated, Colin didn’t dare continue his earlier bravado.

Alexis prodded him with the cue.

“Write a check now, or those incriminating photos of yours will be all over the Internet in no time.”

Colin glared at her with indignation, silently cursing her.

Despite his stubbornness, he knew better than to delay further.

Hastily, he scrambled up and wrote out a check. Alexis took it with a nonchalant command for him to leave, and the man left in a huff.

She then pressed the intercom to summon her assistant.

The assistant came in.

“What can I do for you, Miss Fowler?”

Alexis handed her the check and instructed, “Contact Mrs. Duffy and deliver this to her. As for the rest, let’s not bring it up again.”

The assistant seemed puzzled.

“Why do this? Mrs. Duffy probably hates you the most right now.”

Alexis responded confidently, “I know, but nobody turns down free money. Just send it over.”

The assistant nodded in understanding and left, closing the door behind her.

Alexis then moved to the pool table and began playing snooker.

Noticing Leonel still in the room, she asked, “Hey, why are you still here?”

He approached her, removing his jacket.

“Are you always this rough in your dealings?” he queried.

Alexis smiled while taking her shot.

“For people like him, it’s the only way.”

She pocketed two balls and then turned to Leonel, patting his face playfully.

“Haven’t I always been nice to you?”

Leonel, however, grabbed her hand and pulled her to sit on the edge of the pool table, positioning himself close. His voice was low and hoarse.

“Nice? Every time I kiss you, it feels like you’re about to pull out all my hair.”

Alexis let out a light chuckle.

“still hung up on that, Mr. Douglas?” she teased.

“Don’t take things that happen just once or twice too seriously.

There’s nothing left to discuss here. You can leave now. Just send over the contract, and I’ll give it another look.”

Leonel seized the moment to suggest they have lunch together, but Alexis declined without hesitation, “I’m on a light fast these days.”

He appeared skeptical.

Alexis, though slim, clearly maintained her figure through balanced eating and regular exercise. He had a sense of her well-toned body from their past closeness.

Unconcerned with whether Leonel believed her or not, Alexis grew impatient.

She pressed the intercom, signaling her secretary to usher him out.

As she ended the call, Leonel moved to close her office door, locking it with a click.

She watched him, a question in her gaze.

Leonel turned back to her, speaking in a low tone.

“Once my company is more established, I plan to take over Exceed Group.”

Her reaction was one of slight surprise, a faint moisture in her eyes that was barely noticeable.

Yet her words remained sharp.

“How interesting! You finally remember your family business. Having a change of heart, are you? Fine, if you’re serious about taking over, my father can transfer all the shares to you.”

Leonel held her gaze, a mix of emotions playing across his face.

Alexis stood her ground, unyielding.

After a brief pause, he spoke softly.

“I thought it was your dowry.

There's no need for share transfers. I'll work for you, at your disposal, for free."

Alexis stepped down from the pool table and resumed her game, her movements graceful.

Leonel hovered close behind her, close enough to envelop her in his arms with ease and caress her as he pleased.

He was aware that Alexis enjoyed his touch, but he refrained.

He sought a response from her, a mutual desire, not just passive enjoyment.

In his mind, he fantasized about a different dynamic with Alexis, one where she held the upper hand, controlling him and his desires.

This little kink of his surfaced in his thoughts as he watched her.

Alexis landed a successful shot and quipped with a laugh, "Great!

When I get married, you can keep working for both my husband and me."

This comment seemed to strike a nerve with Leonel.

In a swift motion, he grabbed her slender waist, flipping her over and pressing her beneath him. He gently stroked her face, his voice low and tinged with frustration.

"Alexis, your words really try my patience."

Without waiting for her reply, he captured her Lips.

Alexis, in a mix of resistance and surrender, grabbed his hair and tried to push him away with her foot. He caught her leg, swiftly removing her high heels and tearing through her transparent stockings.

She emitted a muffled sound, a mix of surprise and defiance.

She looked up at Leonel, a realization dawning on her that they were both caught in a moment of shared madness.

In that moment, Alexis felt as if her body was no longer under her own control.

She wrapped her arms around his neck, swaying into his kiss.

"With skills like these, how many women have you practiced on?" she whispered teasingly.

Leonel remained silent, his focus entirely on making the experience enjoyable for her.

He nuzzled into her neck, coaxing her to relax further.

“Just tell me if you like it,” he urged softly.

Alexis did like it. She gently held his face, her voice low.

“Let’s go to the lounge.”

Leonel complied, carrying her to the lounge, their kisses unbroken.

The door slammed shut behind them.

He seemed intent on ensuring her pleasure, his attentiveness unmistakable.

Alexis responded to his efforts, her arms wrapped around his neck as they kissed deeply.

Outside, the secretary’s knock at the door went unheard by the couple, lost in their passionate embrace. They were completely absorbed in each other, their desire to possess each other almost overwhelming, a fervent wish to somehow lessen their mutual pain.

Afterwards, the atmosphere settled into a calmer state.

Alexis, wearing just a shirt, leaned against the headboard, lost in thought.

Leonel sat next to her, quietly smoking a cigarette.

After a while, he turned to her and asked softly, “Any regrets?”

Alexis offered a faint smile, her response nonchalant.

“Regret what?” she questioned.

“It’s just a fling, I haven’t lost anything.”

Alexis always acted like she didn’t care, which only served to aggravate Leonel.

She got up from the bed, intending to freshen up, but Leonel caught her hand, holding her back.

“What do you think about us?” he asked.

Alexis, touching his face gently, replied, "What do I think? It was a momentary lapse, nothing more. You can leave now, Leonel."

His frustration was evident.

"So I'm just a casual fling to you?" he retorted.

Alexis didn't bother to soften her stance.

"If that's how you want to see it, then yes."

As she quickly got dressed, Leonel's discontent grew.

"You enjoy being with me but don't want it regularly?" he questioned.

"I'm afraid it might get boring," Alexis answered.

Leonel was at a loss for words. Every time he tried to get closer, she pushed him away without hesitation.

She didn't outright reject a relationship with him, yet she steadfastly refused any deeper commitment.

Leonel knew better than to think a few more intimate encounters would change her feelings. Her heart seemed tougher than anyone else's.

His phone rang at the moment, and it was from his company.

He rose to get dressed and, after buckling his belt, he said goodbye to Alexis and left.

Alexis watched him go, leaning against the cabinet with a light chuckle.

"Take your time leaving. I won't see you out."

Leonel paused, giving her a long, meaningful look before finally exiting.

After he left, Alexis washed her face and returned to her work routine, her appetite for lunch seemingly vanished.

Leonel's visits always stirred conflicting emotions within her.

She reminded herself that their relationship had ended a long time ago.

Her mind was set against him, but her body seemed to disagree, evident from their recent encounters.

Alexis had to admit that being intimate with Leonel was quite comfortable. She wondered if he had a particular understanding of women or just an insight into her, as he consistently managed to please her.

But she sternly reminded herself, that there couldn't be a 'next time'.

Despite the physical satisfaction, she couldn't afford to let herself become entangled with him again.

Continuing down this path could only lead to complications and unwanted emotions.

Alexis was determined not to contradict her own principles and end up disappointing herself by going back on her words.

Lost in these thoughts, she was interrupted by her secretary, who entered with a Lunch box.

Alexis leaned back in her chair.

"Didn't I say I'd skip lunch?" she queried.

The secretary responded cautiously, "Mr. Douglas sent this over. He said you're worn out and you're gonna need this."

Alexis usually had a tough exterior, but the events in the lounge earlier with Leonel were clearly not lost on her secretary.

But then, she chose to ignore it.

Leonel's gesture with the lunch box seemed a deliberate attempt to unnerve her.

She opened the box to find two stir-fried dishes and a bowl of silver fungus soup, all foods known for their nourishing properties for women.

As Alexis sat there, memories of Leonel's audacious whispers during their earlier encounter flooded her mind, causing her face to heat up.

Disgusted, she had no appetite left.

She gestured to her secretary, "Okay, you can now leave."

Alone, she stared at the food, her irritation growing. Eventually, she covered it and tossed it into the trash.

Seeking a distraction, she leaned back on the sofa and pressed a button, bringing up a video wall.



The news playing was explosive, featuring Edwin.

Alexis' face hardened as she absorbed the news.

Laura's identity had been made public.

Her connections with Cathy, Mark, and Edwin had exploded across national headlines. The media showcased old campus photos of Mark and Cathy and delved into Mark's previous relationship with Cecilia.

The reports were sensationalized, casting Laura in a harsh light as a malevolent mistress' illegitimate daughter who managed to win Edwin's affection.

Without hesitation, Alexis called Edwin, her voice filled with concern.

"What's going on?"

Edwin's tense voice came through, clearly in the midst of managing the crisis. Despite the strong backgrounds of the Fowler and Evans families, such a scandal was not easily suppressed.

His voice was low and hoarse, hinting at the weight of the crisis.

"Alexis, I need to keep an eye on the Smiths."

Alexis' tone was direct and to the point.

"I'll keep an eye on the media for you. Edwin, you need to think beyond just yourself and Laura. Get your father and mine involved. Our best bet is to persuade Vanessa to publicly retract her statements and apologize.

Claiming it was all fabricated is the only way to minimize the harm to Laura."

Edwin's bitter laughter was a tacit admission of her correct assessment.

Alexis, not one to mince words, bluntly remarked, "Of course, it had to be Vanessa Smith you have made upset! But there's no use blaming you now. Just make sure Laura is comforted properly. She's such a fragile soul."

After Edwin acknowledged her advice, she ended the call and promptly assembled a formidable legal team of twelve lawyers.

They stood ready to take action against the Smiths and any media outlets that had spread the scandalous story.

Determined to mitigate the situation, Alexis reached out to Vanessa, but found her unyielding and unwilling to back down.

Lowering her voice, Alexis tried to reason with her.

“Vanessa, while Edwin bears some fault, the main responsibility is still yours. We have to think about our families’ reputations and futures. If you need to vent out your anger, confront Edwin directly. Our families won’t even intervene. But don’t take it out on Laura. She’s innocent in all of this. Why target her so viciously?”

Alexis knew the real victim in this escalating scandal was — Laura.

The reputations of the Evans and Fowler families might seem at stake, but ultimately, they wouldn’t suffer significant damage.

Vanessa’s goal seemed to be to break up Edwin and Laura so she could marry him herself, but she failed to understand Edwin’s true nature.

He cared little for public opinion, focusing only on his loved ones, which would only strengthen his resolve to protect Laura.

The influence of the Smith family was indeed considerable in Duefron, but against a united front from the Evans and Fowler families, they could still face significant opposition. The outcome hinged on the decisions of the elder family members.

After a lengthy silence, Vanessa finally responded in a low, defeated tone, “I can’t turn back now! I love him!”

And with those words, the call ended abruptly.

Sighing lightly at the complexity of the situation, Alexis went back to work and left the law firm around 8 pm, ready to head back to her apartment.

As she reached the parking area, she noticed a Lotus Evora parked nearby.

It was unmistakably Leonel’s.

Through the rolled-down window of the car, Leonel’s handsome face was visible in the early spring night.

Holding her briefcase, Alexis mused on his uninhibited behavior in bed, contrasting sharply with his more composed demeanor now.

She approached the car, tapping on its body.

“Waiting for someone, Mr. Douglas?” she inquired casually.

Leonel, with a slight tilt of his chin, simply said, "Get in."

Alexis replied with a smile, "I drove here myself. You don't need to keep showing up like this. Next time we're in the mood, we can just meet at a hotel. It's actually more discreet—"

Leonel's frustration was palpable, wishing he could silence her provocative comments. He stepped out of the car and ushered her inside.

Once settled next to him, Alexis took off her high heels, visibly exhausted.

Her day had been long and taxing- court in the morning, an intense encounter with Leonel at noon, and handling Edwin's crisis through the afternoon and evening without so much as a bite to eat.

Noticing her pale complexion at a red light, Leonel asked softly, "Not feeling well?"

Alexis, not one to neglect her well-being, directed him, "Let's go eat something."

Leonel immediately connected the dots.

"The lunch I sent today, you didn't eat it?"

Alexis let out a light snort.

"Let's not do something as childish as that again."

Leonel remained silent, his grip firm on the steering wheel. As the traffic light turned green, he drove to a nearby Mexican restaurant known for its pleasant atmosphere.

The chill in the air had thinned the crowd.

Once seated, Alexis ordered their meal, which arrived quickly. She ate mostly in silence, her focus on the food.

After partially satiating her hunger and drinking half a glass of water, she noticed Leonel hadn't touched his meal.

She asked with a faint smile, "Not to your liking?"

Leonel simply shook his head.

"No, it's fine."

He was more interested in watching her, a rare moment when she seemed to let her guard down, a contrast to her usual poised demeanor.

Their dinner continued with minimal conversation.

After a while, Leonel ventured, “all these years, haven’t you met someone you liked? Why are you still single?”

Alexis wiped her lips, leaning back with a gaze full of her familiar arrogance.

“You think I’m like you, taking home just anyone?” she retorted.

“And what about me?” Leonel followed up.

“am I the one you chose to be with after all your scrutiny?”

Alexis’ sneer was cold.

“Flawed logic. To answer your question, you mean nothing to me. We just had a couple of encounters. Stop pursuing me, I don’t have the energy for it.”

Leonel quietly resumed eating, dropping the subject.

He seemed to have learned that pushing the conversation only led to Alexis’ rebuffs.

Bored with the turn of events, Alexis stood up.

“Go get our bill. Thanks for the hospitality, both at noon and now.”

As she prepared to leave, Leonel reached out to grasp her hand.

“Let me drive you back, just to your building entrance.”

Alexis looked down at him, her expression one of haughty indifference.

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## Chapter 512:



After a short pause, Alexis spoke up with a hint of indifference.

“No need. I’ll take a taxi.”

She left without lingering, her departure casual and swift.

Leonel remained seated, his reflection visible in the crystal glass on the table. His appearance was handsome yet unkempt.

He was familiar with this restaurant.

It held memories of Waylen and Rena. They had been here that Christmas, the one when they parted ways.

Rena had dined inside with Robert, while Waylen waited outside in the snow for two hours.

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And now it was Leonel’s turn to suffer the bitterness of love.

Now, in the chill of late February, Alexis stepped outside and inhaled the brisk air.

She was about to hail a taxi when her phone rang.

It was her father. His tone was grave.

“Come back immediately! Mark and Cecilia are both here.”

“I’ll be right back!” she responded.

A taxi arrived, but just as she was about to enter, a strong hand grasped hers.

It was Leonel!

His voice was hoarse as he said, “I’ll take you back.”

Alexis stood still, their hands still joined, her eyes fixed on their clasped fingers.

The taxi driver peered out of his rolled-down window.

“Are you getting in or not? I’ve got another fare waiting!” he said impatiently.

Leonel handed him a hundred-dollar bill.

The driver’s mood lightened instantly.

“Well played, young man!” he exclaimed with a grin.

He gave a faint smile and turned to Alexis.

“Let’s get in my car,” he said gently.

They settled into his car, buckling up, before Leonel broached the subject.

“Is this about Edwin?”

Alexis leaned back, murmuring her assent.

Their drive to the Fowler villa was quiet, the conversation sparse and centered around Edwin and Laura’s situation.

“I never saw Edwin ending up with Laura,” Leonel remarked.

Alexis offered only a faint smile in response.

Half an hour later, they arrived at the villa.

As Alexis opened the car door, she hesitated, and then turned to Leonel.

“Look at Edwin and Laura. Despite everything, Edwin chose Laura and will always side with her. It makes me think about our past-“

Her voice trailed off, leaving her thought unfinished, but she knew Leonel understood.

Leonel watched her walk towards the villa, deep in thought.

Inside the living room, Waylen and Mark were engaged in a low-key conversation on the sofa.

Cecilia, usually more reserved, was involved in a discussion with Rena.

Alexis and Leonel entered one after another. Mark, attempting to lighten the mood, quipped, “There is our little Lexi!”

Alexis greeted Mark and Cecilia warmly.

Waylen’s gaze shifted from his daughter to Leonel trailing behind her, his eyes flashing with irritation.

“Why did you two return together?”

His intense eyes moved back and forth between them, filled with concern that his daughter might be facing some significant trouble.

“We just had dinner together,” Alexis replied nonchalantly.

Waylen, unconvinced, pressed on, “Just dinner?”

Growing impatient, Alexis put down her briefcase.

“Dad, I thought we were here to discuss the Smiths’ situation. Why are you fixating on these minor details?”

Waylen shot her a stern look but decided not to pursue the matter further.

“Where’s Laura?” Alexis asked, changing the subject as she glanced around.

Mark chimed in, “Peter and Lina are with her now.”

Alexis nodded.

Despite his frail health, Mark appeared visibly annoyed. Lighting a cigarette, he vented to Waylen, “Dealing with the Smith family is already tough. We can’t afford to be openly hostile! Our relatives in Czanch are also against Edwin and Laura’s marriage. It’s chaos back at home. I told them the marriage is happening, and if they object, they should take it up with my mother.”

Waylen listened, his expression faintly amused.

Mark always had a soft spot for his son.

Mark continued, deep in thought, “Edwin caused this mess. He should fix it. Whether it’s the Smith family or the elders in Czanch, he needs to handle it. If he can’t manage this small issue, he doesn’t deserve his position.”

Cecilia, however, disagreed strongly.

She glared at her husband.

“This isn’t Edwin’s fault. If it weren’t for you, he and Laura wouldn’t be in this mess.”

Clearly uncomfortable with his wife pointing out his faults, Mark frowned deeply.

While trying to apologize, he couldn’t help but add, “If it weren’t for that incident, our son might not even be with Laura now!”

Cecilia’s eyes blazed with anger.

Despite her advancing years, she still had a fiery temper.

She was cherished by her parents and loved dearly by Waylen and Rena, so sometimes she still acted like a spoiled brat when provoked.

In a huff, she stormed upstairs.

Mark called out to her, but she ignored him and quickened her pace.

He felt embarrassed but tried to maintain his composure in front of Waylen, Rena, and the younger ones.

“Don’t mind her,” he said dismissively.

“She’ll be fine after a good night’s sleep.”

Waylen, however, suggested, “Maybe you should go talk to her?”

Mark stubbed out his cigarette.

“Nah. We men don’t need to make a big deal out of it.”

Despite that, he headed upstairs the next second.

Waylen turned to Alexis and Leonel, his expression turning stern.

“Now, what’s going on with you two?”

Alexis, reclining casually, responded, “What could be going on? Dad, you’re comfortable in your life, unaware of others’ struggles. You and Mom can be lovey-dovey, but you begrudge us having a little fun?”

Waylen’s anger flared.

Rising to his feet, he pointed at her.

“Repeat that. What do you mean by ‘having a little fun’? With whom?”

Alexis stood up and silently mouthed two words— Leonel Douglas.

Marcus, lounging on the sofa, stroked his nose with amusement.

Alexis sure knew how to stir things up!

Waylen, taken aback, struggled to respond. Feeling out of his depth with his daughter, he turned his interrogation towards Leonel.

“And you? Is this a game to you?”



Leonel replied with restraint, "I expect her to take responsibility."

This answer sounded more pleasing to Waylen.

Alexis, meanwhile, headed upstairs, casually throwing over her shoulder, "Maybe in the next life!"

Waylen felt a mix of emotions. Despite Leonel's own mistakes, as Alexis' father, Waylen felt a sense of shame of how his daughter turned out to be. He believed it was partly his fault.

Marcus, idly flipping through a magazine, chimed in, "Leonel is decent and successful, actually quite a good match for my sister."

Worst case, she gets pregnant and has a kid. Won't exactly be a problem, right, Dad?"

Waylen was speechless.

He looked to Rena for support.

"Why don't you join me and discipline these children properly?"

Rena, sipping her tea, retorted, "When they were young and needed guidance, you insisted on independence! Now they're adults- what can I do?"

Waylen felt as if he'd hit a dead end. He cautioned Leonel, "Don't bring any children into this."

Leonel, with a faint smile, knew Alexis' fiery nature all too well.

If he truly intended to have a child with her, she might strangle him in his sleep!

That night, it wasn't Mark and his wife who were restless, but Waylen, lost in his thoughts and worries.

Late at night, after a refreshing shower and slipping into her pajamas, Alexis stepped out onto the balcony to enjoy the cool night air.

Her thoughts lingered on Edwin and the Smith family issue.

Despite her penchant for teasing Edwin, his happiness mattered to her.

Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed a flicker of light.

It was Leonel, clad only in a thinning black silk robe despite the chill, standing on the adjacent balcony. He was holding a can of ice cold beer, his gaze fixed on her.

He offered her a sip.

Alexis declined playfully, "I can't handle it like you. That would keep me awake all night. Did your time abroad change you that much?"

Leonel leaned casually against the railing, his demeanor more relaxed than usual, a contrast to his recent tension.

He chuckled.

"You've gotten to know quite well about what I've changed into, haven't you?"

Alexis stretched her arms, unbothered.

Leonel watched her intently, a deep look in his eyes.

Feigning indifference, she quipped, "It was just so-so!" Then she turned to head back inside.

Leonel remained, taking a long swig of his beer.

He couldn't deceive himself.

He might feel guilty about how he had treated Alexis, but the Alexis of now was a far cry from the Little girl who once followed him around. She was now untamed, even dangerous.

In his more intimate moments with her, he sometimes felt she could easily overpower him, a thrilling but unnerving sensation he just couldn't resist.

The city was enveloped in a late-night quietude.

Edwin parked beneath the Garcia residence, but he didn't rush to go up. Instead, he reclined in his seat and lit a cigarette, reflecting on the day's events.

He had been locked in a struggle with the Smith family, both sides suffering losses.

Edwin, young and impetuous, backed by powerful allies, was almost driven to crush the Smith family out of sheer frustration. Yet, plans were stalled by the elders of the Evans family in Czanch, who wanted him to marry Vanessa Smith.

He was steadfast in his refusal, determined not to yield even under immense pressure.

His commitment to Laura was unshakable, their connection transcending lifetimes.

After his cigarette, Edwin stepped out of the car.

The Garcia residence in Duefron was a spacious condo, well over 200 square meters.

It was late, but the people inside were still awake.

Lina greeted Edwin without reproach as he entered, her attitude towards him having softened.

Initially critical of his treatment of Laura, she now saw him in a different light, especially after their relationship had become official and accepted. With Vanessa's recent actions, Lina, like any parent, was inclined to support her own family over outsiders.

She approached Edwin, affectionately touching his face.

"I'll make something for you to eat. Laura's in her room; go see her," she offered warmly.

"Thank you," Edwin responded, grateful.

She headed to the kitchen. Peter, sitting on the sofa, spoke up gravely.

"You need to rest well. There are tough challenges ahead."

After exchanging a few words with him, Edwin made his way to Laura's room.

Contrary to what he had expected, Laura was calm.

She had taken a shower and was seated on a small sofa, absorbed in a book, her hair still damp.

His heart, which had been fraught with anxiety all day, found solace at the sight of her.

He fetched a hair dryer from the bathroom and stood behind her, inviting her to lean against him as he gently dried her hair. Laura glanced back at him, and then set aside her book to rest her head against his abdomen.

Edwin admired her serene demeanor.

He leaned down to kiss her, his voice hoarse with emotion.

"Don't worry. I've got this."

Laura remained silent, absorbing his reassurance.

As her hair neared dryness, she finally spoke up softly.

"Edwin, you don't have to push yourself so hard for me."

She had noticed the toll the day had taken on him.

She understood the steep price he might pay for choosing her — his hard-earned career and even his reputation.

A marriage with someone like Vanessa, from a prominent family, would make more sense. The thought of being with him once again filled her with doubt and apprehension.

Finishing her words, she almost forgot to breathe.

Edwin paused, setting the hair dryer aside. He affectionately ruffled her hair.

“You’re not thinking of breaking up, are you?”

Laura quickly shook her head, wrapping her arms around his waist and burying her face in his embrace.

Her voice was soft and vulnerable.

“I’m useless, Edwin. I fear you might come to regret this one day.”

“How could I ever regret being with you?” Edwin gently flicked her nose.

“I’d marry you right now if I could.”

A silence settled between them.

Both of them understood that marriage wasn’t an immediate possibility.

The rumors and challenges Edwin faced were too burdensome for any hasty decisions.

Laura, empathizing with his plight, pressed gently against him.

“We’re almost like a married couple already,” she whispered.

Edwin’s response was a light laugh.

He leaned close to her ear.

“So, should I stay over tonight?”

Laura knew it wasn’t right to let things go too far in her parents’ house.

Just then, Lina’s voice called out, inviting Edwin for his late-night snack.

Edwin, still close to her ear, teased in a playful tone, "You know I'm too worn out for anything else tonight."

Laura blushed at his implication, biting her lip.

"I wasn't thinking of anything."

Edwin looked at her with a smile, knowing that despite her shy exterior, Laura was quite passionate in their more intimate moments.

He casually draped his coat on a coatrack in her room before leading her out to eat.

Lina had prepared sweet glutinous rice balls for him, some filled with sesame and others multicolored.

Edwin moved comfortably into the kitchen to find a smaller bowl, dishing out two for Laura.

"I know you don't want to gain weight, so just two for you," he said, understanding her concerns.

Laura accepted his gesture with a soft murmur, her obedience clear.

Lina, watching this, laughed and turned to her husband.

"See how thoughtful Edwin is? Why can't you be more like that?" she playfully chided.

Peter was engrossed in the World Cup finals on TV when Lina's playful accusation prompted him to respond.

"If you were eighteen again, I'd be all over you," he retorted with a light harrumph.

"But at our age, too much affection just gives the young ones something to laugh at."

Lina, not missing a beat, playfully twisted his ear.

"And who's to say you haven't been showering affection on some eighteen-year-olds during your outings with Mark all those years back?"

You had your fun and kept it a secret, yet here I am, still the dutiful wife at home."

Peter quickly sought her forgiveness, his pleas light-hearted.

Even Laura, who had been feeling down, couldn't help but chuckle softly at their exchange. She glanced up at Edwin and caught him looking at her, his eyes shining with an indescribable warmth and allure.

After Peter and Lina had retired for the night, Edwin took a shower in Laura's room, settling into the house as if he were already part of the family. After shower, he found his energy renewed, and they shared a moment of intimate closeness once again.

Laura lay there for a while, lost in the aftermath of their intimacy.

Edwin, still close to her, kissed her nose gently.

"Did you enjoy that?" he asked softly.

She slowly came back to reality, a shy smile on her face.

The worries that had been momentarily forgotten during their passion returned. She wrapped her arms around his neck, murmuring her assent in a daze.

Edwin continued to kiss her tenderly, his touches gentle and loving.

They didn't go further, just basked in the closeness and warmth of each other's embrace.

Finally, as they lay there exhausted, Edwin kissed her hair, his voice low and hoarse.

"Stay home these next few days, and don't go out."

He was protective, not wanting her to be hurt by the swirling rumors.

Laura was delicate and timid, and he couldn't bear the thought of her facing any harsh words.

Laura gently shook her head, nestling against Edwin's shoulder.

"Edwin, I can't just stay indoors forever. If I'm to be with you, it's not right for me to comfortably hide behind you while you face the world on my behalf. That wouldn't be fair to our relationship.

I have my own job, my own life to live. Rumors and gossip—they can't hurt me. I need to face them, just as I stand by you," she murmured with resolve.

Edwin found it hard to accept, wanting to protect her, but he knew she was right. She couldn't live her life in hiding.

He reluctantly agreed, holding her close.

In a soft voice, he asked, "Laura, do you regret being with me?"

She shook her head firmly.

Her feelings for Edwin were genuine, and she felt no regret. In fact, the public revelation of their relationship had actually brought her a sense of relief. Her main concern had always been Cecilia.

When the news went viral, Cecilia had called and assured her, “Laura, Edwin and his father will handle everything, so don’t worry.”

Laura seemed calm now.

But that very afternoon after she hung up the phone, when she was alone, Laura had cried silently for a long while.

She felt unworthy of this love, yet deeply attached to Edwin and his family.

The next morning, Edwin was up early.

He received a call from Alexis, her voice carrying a cold edge.

“The Smith family wants to negotiate. I’ve agreed. We’ll meet at my law firm at 10 am.”

Holding his phone in one hand, Edwin buckled his belt with the other.

His response was a cool and determined smile.

“Good, I’ll be there early.”

Alexis hesitated before adding, “The Smith family is in a tight spot after Vanessa’s actions. They might propose a political marriage.

Also, the Evans shareholders from Czanch will be there. Brace yourself.”

Edwin clenched his teeth subtly.

His temperament was similar to Waylen’s, but in moments of pressure, he resembled Mark, tolerant until pushed too far.

As the Smith family increasingly pressured him, he saw no reason to back down.

The thought of marrying Vanessa was out of the question for him.

Briefly stepping downstairs, he returned holding a document – a prenuptial agreement.

He had made up his mind to marry Laura, seeking to legally make her his wife as soon as possible.

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## Chapter 513:



Edwin soon returned home.

In the kitchen, Lina was already up, quietly preparing breakfast.

“You’re awake early,” she commented.

“I’ve prepared two poached eggs and fresh milk for you. It’s important for men your age to replenish themselves,” she added, with a hint of care in her voice.

Edwin thanked her softly, “Thanks, Mom.”

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Lina was taken aback for a moment by the way he addressed her.

Feigning annoyance, she chided, “You’re quite the charmer. You and Laura aren’t even officially married yet!”

Edwin simply responded with a smile and lit a cigarette by the window.

The kitchen was bustling with the sound of Lina cooking and the aroma of breakfast, while Laura’s bedroom was quiet.

He had kept Laura up late, and she was still sleeping.

Looking at Laura’s door, Edwin felt a tenderness wash over him.

He extinguished his cigarette and quietly entered her bedroom.

The room was filled with a feminine, peaceful vibe. Laura was asleep under the quilt, her black hair peeking out.

Edwin sat on the bed’s edge, smiling gently.

He playfully pulled her hair, waking her.



Laura opened her eyes to find Edwin's kind face.

She snuggled against him, still half-asleep.

"Get dressed," Edwin said softly.

Laura, reluctant to leave the warmth of the bed, didn't move.

Edwin gently prodded her with the documents in his hand.

"You can't be this lazy. Your mom is already up."

Laura cuddled closer, resisting.

Finally, Edwin helped her into a woolen dress and carried her to the sofa.

When Laura noticed the prenuptial agreement and marriage application, she became alert.

Her voice wavered.

"Edwin, you didn't mention— Are we- Isn't this a bit sudden?"

She didn't want to pressure him, but her concern was evident in her tone.

Edwin tenderly stroked Laura's head, his voice soft and reassuring, "I've long decided to spend my life with you. Whether we sign this now or later, it doesn't really matter."

Laura's heart fluttered with excitement.

Clutching the documents, she was too overwhelmed to even notice that Edwin had transferred all his personal assets to her, along with a significant share in the Evans Group.

She now held as many shares as Olivia.

But for Laura, the material gains were secondary.

Her heart swelled with the realization that she was about to have a real home of her own, something she had yearned for since her childhood.

Being with Edwin, the man she loved so deeply, was more than she could have ever hoped for.

She sat there, overwhelmed with emotion.

Edwin playfully pinched her cheek.

“Are you so happy that you’ve lost your words?”

Laura looked at him with a mix of joy and uncertainty.

“I’m really signing this. You- won’t have any regrets, will you?”

She added, “Once I sign, I’ll be your wife. You won’t be able to marry anyone else. Are you sure about this?”

Edwin looked at her quietly, and then softly said, “I don’t want anyone else, just my Little Laura.”

Laura bit her lip gently, and then solemnly signed her name on the documents, her hand trembling slightly with the gravity of the moment.

After signing, Edwin tenderly took her hand and drew her into his arms, planting a gentle kiss on her forehead, a gesture of infinite cherishment. Just then, Lina called out from outside, reminding them about breakfast.

Laura, reluctant to leave the moment, hesitated, but Edwin had a busy day ahead.

He gently suggested, “Rest a bit longer. Don’t you have a client meeting later today?”

Edwin considered arranging someone to assist Laura since Dylan was no longer around, but she insisted she could manage.

“It’s just a regular client,” she said.

After breakfast, where Lina offered some advice as a loving parent, Laura came down, now fully dressed, to see Edwin off.

Sitting in his car, Edwin beckoned to her.

Laura leaned in for a quick kiss. Edwin whispered, “This afternoon, I’ll pick you up. We’ll have dinner at my parents’ place.”

Laura nodded in agreement.

As she was about to pull away, Edwin gently held her head, deepening their kiss, sealing their moment with affection.

After a Lingering moment, Edwin whispered in a hoarse voice, “Mrs. Evans, I’m off now.”

Laura's cheeks flushed slightly as she stepped back, watching him start the car and waving goodbye.

Her heart was filled with a sweet sense of happiness at being called Mrs. Evans.

Edwin's first stop was his lawyer's office. Within half an hour, he reached Alexis' law firm.

"Alexis!" he called out as he entered.

Alexis was engrossed in a game of snooker. Without looking up, she asked, "Do you have a plan for handling everything? Dealing with Vanessa's obsession is one thing, but the elders in Czanch will be a tougher challenge. You're practically antagonizing the entire Evans clan!"

Alexis, sinking a ball, gave Edwin a look of amused arrogance.

She then added, "A bold move for love. Not bad, Edwin."

Edwin offered a wry smile and lit a cigarette.

"I haven't worked it all out yet. But I've got a plan," he confessed.

Leaning against the snooker table, her posture elegant and poised, Alexis cast him a curious glance.

"Is your plan to get married to Laura quickly? That's a bold move.

Have you informed your parents and hers?" she inquired, her gaze fixed on Edwin.

Edwin simply smiled, neither confirming nor denying her guesses.

Alexis' demeanor turned a bit more serious as she scrutinized him.

Finally, she let out a soft snort.

"Edwin, the real Romeo of our family!"

Indeed, among them all, Edwin was the only one who had married young, while the others were still far from any romantic commitments.

Their conversation shifted to other topics before focusing on how to negotiate with the Smiths. Alexis suggested they should consider Vanessa's feelings, allowing her a dignified way out, considering the loss of face she had suffered.

Edwin, however, lacked patience for such diplomacy.

Edwin had always been the type to confront issues head-on, and he would have chosen to battle it out with the Smiths.

But now, with a family in the picture and plans to marry Laura and raise children together, he found himself seeking a more peaceful path. He wanted to avoid any conflict for the sake of his future wife and children, so he agreed with Alexis' approach.

As the negotiation began, the Evans clan elders sat in the conference room, visibly displeased.

They had little regard for Laura, seeing her as bringing nothing of value to the family.

Edwin, however, wasn't concerned with their opinions.

His priority was to get Vanessa to clear things up publicly, allowing them to move forward without further complications.

When Vanessa entered the room, she looked visibly unwell, clearly affected by recent events. Edwin acknowledged her with a brief nod, but nothing more.

Vanessa asked to speak with Edwin privately, but he refused.

"No need," he said firmly.

"Since this has become a matter of business, let's keep it that way."

The ensuing negotiations focused on the interests and benefits of both parties.

The Smiths were clearly unhappy with Edwin's terms.

Despite Vanessa being the one who had caused the initial upset, the Smiths stood united, reluctant to lose Edwin as a son-in-law.

Thomas, due to his connections with Cecilia, was somewhat friendly towards Edwin.

He suggested, "Marrying Vanessa would be a graceful exit for both of you. As for the other lady, we can ensure she's taken care of financially."

Thomas's wife added her own disparaging comment about Laura and her mother.

Upon hearing these comments, Edwin's hands clenched into fists, anger brewing within him.

Vanessa, adding to the tension, remarked, "You must realize marrying Laura would be detrimental to your reputation. She offers you nothing."

Edwin's grip relaxed as he adopted a sarcastic tone.

Addressing Thomas, he said, "No wonder my mother never took fancy to you. You and your wife are indeed well-suited for each other!"

The faces of Thomas and his wife paled at Edwin's sharp words.

Turning to Vanessa, Edwin's tone was incredulous.

"Excuse me, who are you to comment on whom I marry? Is it any of your concern? Are you trying to use the Evans family's so-called reputation to intimidate me?" He continued, his patience wearing thin, "I was tolerant of you before, considering our families' history. But let's be clear now. I, Edwin, am already married. Miss Smith, you preach about virtue and dignity, yet how can you shamelessly pursue a married man?"

Vanessa, visibly shaken, could hardly believe it.

"It can't be true! Your father would never allow it. They all favored me!" she stammered.

Edwin's response was a dismissive sneer.

"You're living in a fantasy."

At that moment, the doors burst open, and Edwin's lawyer entered confidently.

"Mr. Evans is indeed legally married. His spouse is Mrs. Laura Evans."

The room erupted into chaos. The Smiths and the senior members of the Evans clan were in disbelief.

Had Edwin really married amidst all these unresolved issues?

Did he no longer care about the future of the Evans Group and its stocks?

Edwin stood up slowly, gripping the edge of the conference table, his expression cold and defiant.

"I'll let fate decide the future of the Evans Group at this point. If I end up impoverished, at least I have my wife to support me."

Alexis raised an eyebrow at his comment.

The nerve of him, expecting Laura to provide for him!

One of the elders from the Evans clan clutched his chest in shock, quickly given a heart relief pill by someone nearby.

Edwin's gaze was fixed on Vanessa, who was visibly shaken by his actions.

She couldn't believe what was happening. It dawned on her that Edwin had never intended to marry her, that his plans to leave her had been in the works for a long time.

Edwin's expression turned scornful.

"Vanessa, there's no room for negotiation between us now. In Duefron, only one family will stand—either the Evans or the Smiths!"

With those final words, he left the room abruptly.

"Edwin!" Vanessa called out after him, but he didn't look back.

She stood frozen, completely taken aback by this unexpected turn of events. Just as she thought of following him, her uncle Weldon stood up furiously and slapped her across the face, his voice filled with anger.

"Haven't you embarrassed yourself enough? You've put your family in such a tough spot over a man. It seems my teachings were wasted on you!"

Weldon turned to leave, but Vanessa grabbed his arm, pleading, "Uncle Weldon, please, let me talk to Edwin properly!"

Weldon, consumed by disgrace, slapped her again, his voice dripping with scorn.

"I hope this slap brings you to your senses. It's not that you're unworthy of Edwin, but that he simply doesn't care for you. He chose to marry someone else over you, someone totally worthless. And if you're wondering why, it's because he's no better than her!"

Before Weldon could say more, a cup of hot tea splashed in his face.

Shocked, he stood rigid, unable to comprehend who would dare to do such a thing to him.

Alexis' glare was intense as she confronted the man.

"Mr. Smith, be careful of what you say," she said sharply.

She walked towards him, her expression cold yet composed.

"So, my Aunt Cecilia didn't want your brother, and now Edwin doesn't want your niece. Is that why you're upset? They just shared a few meals. Are you implying they should tie the knot just because of that? Maybe she can't find someone else and that's why she's desperate to cling to our family. Is there something wrong with her, or is your

family so impoverished you're waiting for us to come to your rescue?" She continued, barely concealing her disdain.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Smith, but there may be no dowry coming your way. You know what? My cousin is not known for his patience. It looks like the Smith family will be receiving a rather unique gift from him.

Enjoy it!"

Weldon was livid, his anger almost palpable.

Vanessa tried to retort but Alexis didn't give her the chance.

"Vanessa, children should not interrupt adult conversations. You're not yet in a position to speak to me!"

The bystanders were taken aback.

They had heard rumors of Waylen Fowler's daughter's fierce nature, but witnessing it firsthand was another story.

Alexis' protective stance was clear.

With Edwin's assertiveness and Alexis' uncompromising attitude, the Smiths were left with a severe headache. They quickly left the scene.

The meeting room was now left with a group of Evans men.

Alexis addressed them directly.

"Still here? Waiting for Great-uncle Mark to show you the door?"

When one of them complained about the Evans Group's stocks plummeting, Alexis gestured dismissively.

"Please, take that up with your Mr. Evans. This isn't the right place since I'm a Fowler. And remember, if you try to cause trouble, Edwin won't hesitate to act. He doesn't show the same restraint as his father."

The group of men left disgruntled, demanding a private jet back to Czanch.

Alexis watched them go, a sneer on her lips.

"Be thankful I'm not making you crawl back!"

After a long and eventful day at the company, Edwin left around five in the afternoon to pick up Laura.

Lina informed Edwin that Laura was at a nearby coffee shop, meeting a client.

He drove there and soon spotted Laura, engaged in conversation with a woman who looked quite respectable.

Just as he was about to approach, he overheard the woman's words.

"Miss Thomas, I initially admired your design, but given your background and the rumors about you, I think it's inappropriate for my daughter to wear your wedding dress. I've reconsidered and decided not to purchase it. As for any inconvenience, I suppose it's merely a bit of your time, nothing significant."

The air grew tense.

After a moment, Laura responded, her voice barely above a whisper, "That's not true."

The woman scoffed.

"Are you denying your mother's past, or that you're an illegitimate child, Miss Thomas? I don't mean to be rude, but you seem to ask for it."

Laura's complexion paled.

With a trembling voice, she said, "I didn't get to choose my parents."

Laura was naturally introverted and sensitive, having endured harsh judgments from the world. Yet, she had found strength in Edwin's support. She was determined to prove her worth, to show that she, Laura Evans, deserved to be with Edwin.

She didn't want to retreat or hide because of cruel words.

She believed she needed to stand strong to be a worthy partner for Edwin.

Speaking with a quiet resolve, Laura insisted, "You're free to cancel your order, but the cancellation fee as per our contract is 280, 000."

That amount is due."

Edwin watched silently from a distance.

He understood Laura's struggle and her desire to assert herself.

He knew she was maturing, growing stronger in her resolve.



Their future together was long, and he didn't want to clip her wings and confine her to his side forever. He would always protect her, but at the same time, he also wanted her to be brave enough to face these challenges on her own.

The woman's voice grew louder and more accusatory.

"You are indeed shameless, expecting payment for a canceled order! I refuse to pay for something I'm not taking!"

Laura maintained her composure, her face pale but resolute.

"We've signed the contract. If you do not pay the agreed amount, Mrs. Scott, I will have to pursue Legal action."

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#### Chapter 514:



In an unexpected twist, Laura, who was often reserved, found her backbone in that defining moment.

The woman fixed her gaze on Laura, and after an extended beat, she sneered.

"Normally, you're the quiet type, but today you're bringing the thunder. I've underestimated you!"

With a hint of reluctance, the woman fished a check from her purse, scribbling one for a hefty 280, 000.

"Take it and hit the road," she ordered.

Laura accepted the check, summoning a newfound boldness as she rose.

"Frankly, you're incredibly rude. I wouldn't dream of selling the wedding dress I design to someone like you."

The woman's eyes widened in disbelief.

Undeterred, Laura, realizing she was no match for the woman's physical prowess, swiftly gathered her belongings and made a hasty exit, not even catching sight of Edwin in her rush.

Edwin felt a twinge of sadness.

He knew Laura like the back of his hand.

She'd get flustered even at the hint of a raised voice.

But now she confronted malice head-on, courageously asserting herself in a way she never had before.

Edwin emerged from the shadows, a deliberate presence.

As the affluent woman finished her coffee, preparing to depart, she glanced up to find Edwin observing her with a stern expression. She mustered a forced smile and stuttered, "Mr. Evans..."

Edwin calmly picked up the coffee cup that had been Laura's.

In the next instant, he showered the woman's face with the remaining coffee.

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The cafe buzzed with onlookers, and the woman, flustered but unable to retaliate against Edwin, anxiously whispered, "What is the meaning of this? Mr. Evans, have you forgotten that my husband has business dealings with you?"

Edwin chuckled with a cold edge.

"Public humiliation doesn't feel great, does it? But I'll make amends."

With a casual demeanor, he pulled out his checkbook, wrote a check for 280, 00, and remarked as he tore it out, "I may have a packed schedule, but I've still got the energy to handle a small-timer!"

The woman stood there, utterly stunned.

Edwin smoothly stowed away the checkbook and made his exit with grace.

As he reached the door, he paused dramatically and added, "Oh, I almost forgot to mention, Laura happens to be my wife!"

His words reverberated through the cafe, sparking a round of applause, particularly from the younger onlookers who had witnessed the entire spectacle.

Right or wrong, they relished seeing the haughty woman put in her place.

Edwin swiftly made his way outside and spotted Laura in the square, perched on a bench.

Her eyes were tinged with red, giving her the appearance of a delicate, adorable rabbit in distress.

He observed her from a distance, contemplating.

Soon, Edwin's eyes fell on a nearby cotton candy stand. He approached and purchased a cotton candy, the vendor eyeing him with curiosity.

Edwin flashed a hundred dollar bill, explaining with a smile, "My wife's feeling a bit down, so I thought I'd bring her some cheer."

The cotton candy seller chuckled, his initial skepticism melting away.

Edwin gestured for him to keep the change, prompting the seller to craft a cute, fluffy rabbit-shaped cotton candy as Edwin requested.

Carrying the sweet confection, Edwin approached Laura and extended it toward her, a gesture of solace.

Laura took a moment, her red, teary eyes lifting to meet Edwin's gaze.

Edwin crouched down, delicately placing the stick of cotton candy in her hand.

His voice, remarkably tender, asked, "Want me to carry you?"

Laura looked at him and managed a smile.

Without further words, Edwin affectionately patted her head and dusted off her shoulders.

"Let's go. We're having dinner at my parents'.

Laura obediently trailed behind him.

His hand exuded warmth, and his presence became strangely comforting.

In that moment, the earlier unpleasantness seemed to fade into insignificance.

Once inside the car, she couldn't help but admire the rabbit-shaped cotton candy, hesitating to eat it.

Edwin buckled up, glancing at her with a smile.

"If you like it, I can arrange to have them specially made for you every day."

"No way! It'll make me fat!"

Edwin started the car, playing along with mock seriousness, "The little rabbit can afford to be a bit fluffier."

Laura shot him a playful glare.

Her timid facade had always been a mere veneer.

Edwin felt an unexpected tranquility wash over him, soothing the day's fatigue and anxiety. He tenderly squeezed her hand and called her by her name, "Laura."

She responded with a soft hum.

Her nose was red, whether from the cold or her recent tears, he couldn't discern.

As they paused at a red light, he retrieved something from the glove compartment and passed it to her.

Unfolding it revealed their marriage certificate, a document that told the tale of their shared journey.

Laura was entranced, her gaze lingering on the intricate details of their commitment.

Everything was just so perfectly beautiful.

Laura found herself captivated, momentarily forgetting the cotton candy in her grasp. Edwin observed her with tender eyes, radiating an indescribable warmth.

In the past, Edwin had harbored impure motives, but the moment he became serious and committed to her, an unbreakable bond formed.

He refused to surrender, and he wouldn't allow Laura to relinquish their connection either.

Acknowledging his own domineering nature, Edwin realized that Laura, his endearing girl, held onto only memories of his kindness while letting go of past wounds.

He believed such an innocent little thing was more suited to be his cherished companion, a notion reflected in the endearing term, "Mrs. Evans."

As Laura concluded her contemplation of the document, she raised her eyes to meet Edwin's gaze, shyly sitting upright and avoiding direct eye contact.

Edwin chuckled softly, the sound carrying an affectionate undertone.

Thirty minutes later, they pulled into the villa that Mark had acquired years ago.

Early spring had cast its spell on the yard, coaxing tender, green leaves from the trees.

Laura stepped out of the car, drawn to the budding leaves, unable to resist touching them. Edwin, ever playful, teased her about potential tiny worms, and she instinctively retreated into his embrace.

Lowering his head, he affectionately nuzzled her nose, jesting, "Afraid of little worms but not the big one-always eager to see it."

Having spent some time with him, Laura was gradually unraveling the complexities of relationships.

Edwin's banter took her by surprise, and her face flushed red, leaving her momentarily speechless.

At the entrance, Mark stood with arms akimbo.

Amidst his culinary preparations, he had taken a break and caught sight of his son teasing little Laura. Though he couldn't hear their conversation, it seemed less than proper.

Mark took a drag of his cigarette.

"Dinner's served! You shouldn't be out in this cold. Aren't you concerned about her health? Is that the best boyfriend act you've got?"

I thought I raised you better."

Edwin, unabashed and with his arm draped around Laura's shoulder, boldly declared, "I'm her husband! We're married now!"

Unfazed by the potential spectacle, Edwin boldly showcased their marriage certificate to his father, wearing his pride like a badge.

Mark observed the scene for a while, genuinely surprised.

Not because he disapproved of their union, but because he hadn't anticipated his son's unwavering determination and deep affection for Laura.

A thoughtful silence settled over Mark as he pondered the past.

Edwin's love for Laura echoed Mark's own feelings for Cecilia in his youth.

Yet, Mark recognized that his younger self hadn't possessed the same unwavering resolve that Edwin displayed now.

Perhaps it was the weight of his own life experiences, whereas Edwin had only ever known Laura.

Remaining in silence for an extended moment, Laura, her small hand tightly holding Edwin's, felt a nervous anticipation.

Although she didn't voice it, Edwin sensed her concern about his father's opinion and the potential for disappointment.

Breaking the quietude with a chuckle, Edwin teased, "Dad, are you so thrilled that words fail you?"

Mark playfully smacked him on the head with the marriage certificate.

"You're getting too bold!"

Then, addressing Laura with a soft sincerity, he added, "From now on, we are real family!"

A tingling sensation touched Laura's nose as the heartfelt words settled in.

Mark tentatively extended his arms, and after a brief pause, Laura approached and embraced him with gentle warmth.

A pang of regret coursed through Mark.

He wished he had been more attentive to her in her childhood, offering hugs and comfort. Now, years later, she was his daughter-in-law, and only then could he hold her close.

At least, he still had a chance to love her as a father figure.

He wished his son would also treat her right.

With a tender pat on her head, Mark suggested, "I'll have Edwin help me serve dinner; you go upstairs and check on Cecilia. She's discovered some lovely things in the cabinets for you."

Laura felt a surge of emotion, a mix of joy and melancholy, as Mark continued to pat her.

Obedying the suggestion, Laura ascended the stairs.

Meanwhile, Mark, cigarette in hand, inquired, "How are things progressing with the Smith family?"

Edwin's expression grew more serious.

He had to report to Mark, revealing softly, "We couldn't come to an agreement."

His demeanor hinted at a certain gravity.

Mark, perceptive to his son's intentions, surmised that Edwin intended to dismantle the Smith family.

"Dad, do you have any objections?" Edwin inquired.

Mark cast a glance at his son, offering a reassuring pat on his shoulder.

"You're doing the things I couldn't do years ago, and that's commendable. But, Edwin, now that you have a wife, while your career matters, don't overlook your family. I was too consumed by my professional pursuits back then and ended up separated from your Mom for those years."

Regret was a deceitful companion.

Every morning, as he noticed the emergence of silver strands in his hair, he couldn't help but ponder.

If only those years hadn't been squandered.

With a touch of melancholy, Mark headed inside.

Edwin, moved by his father's words, lingered at the entrance, quietly finishing a cigarette before stepping inside to help prepare dinner.

Upstairs, Laura entered the master bedroom.

Cecilia, engrossed in a task, greeted her without turning around, "Hi, Laura."

Laura responded with a gentle hum.

Kneeling beside Cecilia, she uttered, "There's something I want to share with you."

Cecilia paused briefly, and then turned around, wearing a warm smile.

“Did you and Edwin make it official?”

Laura hummed again, and Cecilia, without delving further into the topic, asked for assistance in moving sets of jewelry to the sofa.

She lamented, “These were all gifts from Zoey, Edwin’s grandmother, and Rena gave quite a few too! There’s no way I can wear them all at once.”

Laura, dutifully, moved one box after another under Cecilia’s watchful eye.

As she worked, Cecilia couldn’t help but feel a quiet sense of triumph.

It seemed she had gained another loyal companion.

After the moving was complete, Cecilia meticulously showcased each piece to Laura, quietly contemplating which ones suited her, which ones were more fitting for Laura, and which would be just right for Olivia.

In the end, Laura received five sets.

Among them was a delicate pink diamond set, a bridal gift from Juliette to Cecilia when she married Mark.

Cecilia, without hesitation, handed it over to Laura.

Laura hesitated, thinking such a precious gift should be reserved for Olivia.

However, Cecilia dismissed her concerns with a warm smile.

“When she gets married, we’ll find something else for her!”

Laura, swayed by Cecilia’s assurance, didn’t resist any further.

In her musings, Laura decided that when Olivia got married, she would insist on Edwin providing the absolute best, even if it meant acceding to some unreasonable demands of his.

Lost in these naughty thoughts, her face blushed a deep crimson.

Observing Laura’s sudden change in complexion, Cecilia couldn’t help but find it peculiar.

“Laura, why is your face so red?” she inquired.



Feeling a tad embarrassed, Laura swiftly shifted the subject. Cecilia, seasoned in reading between the lines, easily deduced that Laura and Edwin's relationship was thriving.

Satisfied, Laura excused herself and headed downstairs.

Seated in quiet contemplation for a while, Cecilia acknowledged that while the past wasn't entirely forgotten, she chose to let go because she was not just Mark's wife but also Edwin's mother.

Edwin truly cared for Laura, and in return, Laura's happiness radiated.

It dawned on Cecilia that Laura had the capacity to bring joy to Edwin for a lifetime. What more could she worry about?

Downstairs, Laura descended with a small box in hand. Seeing her, Edwin, who had set the table, greeted her with a smile.

"From Mom?" he guessed.

Laura nodded, requesting him to keep it safe as it held considerable value.

Edwin, busy with preparations, had removed his coat, revealing a navy blue sweater that accentuated his handsome features.

Patting Laura's head affectionately, he murmured, "You keep it. I'll install a big safe in our house, so you can store everything I give you each year. When we're old, you can pass them on to our children and their significant others."

The notion was endearingly sweet.

Laura protested, "I don't want to have that many children!"

However, Edwin, with a desire for children, suggested softly, "How about two?"

Having a sister himself, he understood the warmth of sibling relationships.

Laura, in agreement, hummed softly through her nose.

Meanwhile, Mark, witnessing their affectionate exchange, found it overwhelmingly sweet. His son had truly surpassed him.

The family gathered for a lively dinner, savoring the warmth and unity that enveloped them.

Later, Mark insisted they have some time alone and encouraged Edwin and Laura to enjoy each other's company.

Laura hesitated, feeling a twinge of guilt about leaving so soon, but Edwin, grabbing his coat, wrapped an arm around her shoulder and declared, "Then Mom, Dad, we'll be going! We'll be back for dinner this weekend!"

Mark grumbled, "If you're coming back, come early and cook for me!"

Edwin chuckled in response.

As they made their exit Edwin hugged Cecilia once again.

"Mom, we'll see you this weekend!"

Observing her son open the car door for his wife and escort her into the vehicle, Cecilia felt a wave of nostalgia.

"The kids have really grown up!" she remarked.

Mark, sensing her sentimentality, wrapped an arm around her, teasingly asking, "What, secretly calling me old again?"

Cecilia rested against Mark's shoulder, reflecting on how she could never truly see him as old.

Even at this stage of life, Mark retained his charm, and there were undoubtedly women who would find him desirable. He had taken good care of himself, ensuring Cecilia didn't miss out on any pleasures a woman could desire.

Their marriage, spanning over the years, had been a genuinely happy one.

Meanwhile, Edwin and Laura departed together.

Initially assuming he would take her home, Laura soon realized the car was heading towards their old residence where they had first moved in together.

Glancing at him, she found Edwin focused on the road in the darkness of the night, humming in confirmation.

"Yes, we're going there," he affirmed.

"Tonight is our wedding night, Laura. Let's spend it there," he suggested.

Laura felt a twinge of embarrassment, familiar with his playful excuses.

She softly protested, "You always have an excuse! When we hold the wedding someday, you'll definitely declare it's our wedding night again! And every time... Every time, you manage to conjure up a reason, and you always..."

Her sentence trailed off, and Edwin, ever the provocateur, stroked his smooth chin, goading her playfully.

"I always do what?" he teased.

Refusing to fall into his lighthearted trap, Laura maintained her playful protest.

However, Edwin erupted into laughter, making it abundantly clear, "I always bring out the wild side, don't I?"

Laura couldn't help but think he was shameless.

When she first started dating him, he seemed like such a decent and talented young man. Now, he was audaciously vocal, saying whatever pleased him. Despite this, she couldn't muster genuine anger.

Edwin, being the intuitive partner he was, understood her.

He relished in teasing her, finding amusement in the way her cheeks would flush.

The car glided smoothly on the return journey.

Seated in the parked car downstairs, both of them felt a bit dazed.

This was the very place where he had once left her, crying and waiting for him in the rain.

Yet, within half a year, he had won her back, transforming her into his very own Mrs. Edwin.

After a while, Edwin unbuckled his seatbelt and leaned over to give her a kiss.

His kiss was sincere, his lips even trembling with the heat of his emotions-a testament to the turmoil in his heart.

After the kiss, he whispered, "Laura, we're husband and wife now!"

Her arms naturally found their way around his neck.

She was usually reserved during their intimate moments, possibly due to the informal nature of their relationship. But now, he was her husband, his entire being devoted to her, and there was no need for restraint.

Laura seized the initiative, pressing her lips against his.

Inexperienced but genuine and passionate, she kissed him earnestly.

Edwin appreciated her newfound assertiveness. After a prolonged kiss, he effortlessly lifted her onto his lap, continuing to kiss her while murmuring, "Shall we go upstairs? Hmm?"

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## Chapter 515:



Laura was naturally a bit shy.

Edwin's direct approach to intimacy, including his recent declarations, was something she wasn't entirely accustomed to. This left her feeling a bit overwhelmed and unsure of how to react.

Edwin, fully understanding her, opened the car door and gently lifted her out.

He didn't even bother to put on his coat as he carried her into the elevator and up the stairs.

Wrapped in her loose white down jacket, Laura nestled into his arms, resembling a small, snug rabbit.

Inside the elevator, Edwin couldn't resist giving her a tender kiss on her little nose.

He was completely enamored with her.

Laura's nose twitched slightly as she softly called his name, "Edwin."

Edwin didn't reply with words. Instead, he just looked at her, his eyes and brows radiating warmth and affection.

As the elevator doors opened, they encountered a neighbor from across the hall who expressed surprise at seeing them.

“Mr. Evans, it’s been a while since we’ve seen you!”

Edwin, with a smile, replied, “Yes, we just returned from visiting back home. Oh, and this is my wife. We’re married now!”

The neighbor, caught off guard by the news, hurriedly offered their congratulations.

Edwin engaged in a brief conversation with the neighbor, all the while cradling Laura in his arms. She felt a mix of embarrassment and contentment in his embrace.

Edwin was handsome and sweet, and she also cherished being held by him.

Edwin used one hand to unlock the door and carried Laura inside.

The apartment was adorned with red roses everywhere, from the Living room to the bedroom. On the dark bed sheets lay a delicate box, topped with a Long-stemmed rose.

In the center of the rose was a sparkling diamond ring.

Laura’s eyes welled up with emotion. She was now Mrs. Evans, and the extent of Edwin’s love and thoughtfulness overwhelmed her.

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Edwin picked up the ring and, without a word, slid it gently onto her finger.

They shared a silent, profound moment together.

Edwin then held Laura close, starting with a soft kiss that slowly deepened.

“Edwin,” she whispered, her voice shaking with a mix of nervousness and affection.

As Edwin carefully undid her blouse, revealing the delicate silk underwear beneath, Laura felt a surge of nervous anticipation.

Edwin’s touch was tender, but his slow, deliberate movements heightened her awareness of every sensation.

His gaze was intense, full of desire and longing.

Sitting at the edge of the bed with Laura in his lap, the contrast between her skin and his trousers was striking. She softly called his name, and he hummed in response, opening a box to reveal a silk lingerie.

This was their wedding night, and Edwin wanted her in nothing but the soft fabric, which was both concealing and revealing.

As Edwin leaned in to kiss her through the silk, Laura's natural shyness took over.

She nestled her face against his shoulder, surrendering to his affections. But Edwin yearned for more-he wanted her to actively reciprocate his love.

"Edwin," Laura uttered again, her voice quivering with a blend of nervousness and excitement.

This was a night of firsts for both of them, filled with new and thrilling experiences.

Edwin's voice was rough as he said, "I'll turn off the light."

In the dimmed room, Laura's confidence grew; she was his wife now, free to express her love for him.

But then, Edwin turned the lights back on, and Laura shyly sought refuge in his embrace, chiding him playfully for not keeping the lights off as promised.

Edwin, his voice hoarse and filled with emotion, whispered to Laura, "I want to see you."

Laura, though shy, was eager to show her love for him.

She wrapped her arms around his neck, gently kissing him, her actions guided by a mix of timidity and affection. Edwin tenderly held her, their embrace growing closer as they shared intimate moments.

The night wore on, and by the time they paused, it was already 3 a.m.

Edwin, still longing for more, finally stopped when Laura, exhausted, begged for mercy.

"Shall I help you with a bath?" Edwin asked, his voice still rough.

Laura, too fatigued for more, declined and insisted on staying in his arms, asking him to talk to her.

Edwin chuckled softly, indulging her request. He held his new wife close, sharing tales from his time abroad. Amid their conversation, Laura couldn't help but feel a pang of jealousy, inquiring if he had any girlfriends overseas.

Edwin, teasing her gently, pinched her nose.

"Don't you already know the answer to that?" he asked playfully.

Laura's cheeks flushed with embarrassment.

They didn't delve further into the topic. Nestled in Edwin's arms, feeling his heartbeat, Laura felt an overwhelming sense of sweetness and security. She softly touched her wedding ring, whispering, "I am Mrs. Evans now."

Edwin's teasing continued.

"Not just a husband, but perhaps a future father too," he joked.

Laura, not quite ready for such jokes, hugged him closer, her soft form moving restlessly in his embrace. Edwin responded with soothing caresses, and soon Laura drifted off to sleep.

But Edwin lay awake, his heart filled with a mix of tumultuous emotions and peaceful contentment.

He kissed the sleeping girl in his arms, stepped out to the balcony for a cigarette to reflect on his thoughts, and then returned to the bedroom, holding Laura close as he finally fell asleep.

Edwin rose early and busied himself in the kitchen, adeptly preparing not just breakfast but also lunch for Laura.

He stored her lunch in the refrigerator so she could heat up whenever she felt hungry.

Though work at the company demanded much of his time, Edwin cherished every private moment they shared. After tidying up, he sat by the bed, gently pinching Laura's cheeks to wake her.

Laura stirred, her face pale and her black hair cascading across the pillow, a picture of sleepy beauty.

She was still shy from the memories of the previous night.

Edwin leaned down, kissing her, and softly suggested, "Sleep a bit more. Remember to eat at noon, there's food in the fridge. Just relax and watch some TV. We'll stay here for the next few days."

Edwin had a villa in the works, but it was under renovation and wouldn't be ready for another six months.

In the meantime, he wanted to stay here with Laura.

She nodded in agreement, ever obedient and without complaint.

As Edwin prepared to leave, Laura suddenly caught his hand.

“What’s wrong?” he asked, his tone tender, enveloping her in his arms.

Laura, her arm wrapped around his neck, whispered softly with a hint of worry, “Last night, you didn’t use— you know. Before, you always did.”

Edwin realized she was concerned about pregnancy.

He kissed her, offering reassurance.

“We’re married now. If you become pregnant, we’ll have the baby. Our Laura will become a mommy.”

He knew of her deep desire for a family and children.

Laura gazed at him, expressing her fear of being a burden, especially after the issues with the Smith family.

Edwin’s response was gentle yet firm.

“If it happens, we’ll have the baby. I can manage, no matter how busy I am.”

Laura nodded in understanding.

Edwin then playfully touched her face, teasing her about how she felt, asking if it was different from before. Laura blushed, too embarrassed to respond, and playfully pushed him towards the office.

But Edwin couldn’t resist being a bit mischievous, his hand wandering under her nightgown, lightly caressing as he murmured, “You feel it already? I’ll be back tonight to take care of you.”

Laura, still wrapped in the blanket, chose not to respond to Edwin’s playful advances.

He chuckled at her reaction and headed to the restroom.

Upon returning, he wrapped her up once again in the blanket, sharing a long kiss before finally departing.

Alone now, Laura emerged from under the blanket, her cheeks flushed with a sweet glow.

Reveling in the joy of marriage, she playfully rolled on the bed, admiring the ring on her finger with a sense of enchantment.

She cherished the lunch Edwin prepared, savoring every bite.



Later, around five in the afternoon, Edwin called to say he would be back later to cook for her.

Laura, concerned about his workload, offered to cook instead.

Edwin, happy to encourage her, said he looked forward to experiencing Mrs. Evans' culinary skills.

Realizing the fridge was not fully stocked, Laura decided to head to the nearby grocery store.

Not being an experienced cook, she planned to buy only simple ingredients and follow online recipes.

As she was back, her attention was drawn to a red sports car with a familiar license plate. Approaching, she recognized it as Vanessa's.

Vanessa, dressed in a white suit, appeared both elegant and exhausted.

The fallout with Edwin had affected her standing in the Smith family and her position at the company.

Now, she had to navigate a precarious situation, trying to restore her status while the family groomed a new successor for future leadership.

Vanessa needed to persuade Edwin to release his grip on the Smiths.

He was aggressively pursuing them, risking damage to both sides.

But Edwin was unreachable, ignoring her calls and refusing to meet.

Vanessa could only try to reach Laura.

She approached her, asking, "Do you have a moment to talk?" Vanessa glanced at the grocery bag in Laura's hand, seeing the pork belly and other simple items.

She felt a sense of superiority, wondering if Edwin actually preferred such mundane things.

Laura sensed Vanessa's condescending attitude and saw no need for a conversation.

However, Vanessa blocked her way.

"Laura, you took Edwin from me.

Don't I deserve an explanation?"

Laura was taken aback by Vanessa's bold accusation.

She knew Vanessa was a skilled businesswoman, but her blatant distortion of the truth was unexpected.

Calmly, Laura replied, "If you missed your chance when it was right before you, how can you blame others?"

Caught off guard by Laura's response, Vanessa struggled to retaliate.

To her surprise, Laura then suggested, "There's a cafe across the street. We can talk there."

Vanessa's intentions were clear and malicious.

"Won't you invite me into your house?"

Laura responded frankly, "You're quite beautiful. I'd rather not bring a pretty woman home to possibly tempt my husband."

Vanessa's irritation flared again.

In the cafe, Vanessa petulantly ordered a coffee for Laura with extra an extra shot, but Laura refused it, mentioning her plans for pregnancy.

Vanessa's discomfort grew as she looked at the grocery bag and then the black coffee.

When Vanessa implied that Edwin should be providing Laura with a life of luxury instead of a simple one where she had to cook herself, Laura's response was serene and pure.

Laura's eyes sparkled with an innocence that was almost disarming.

"Dad has already provided all those things for me," she stated with a gentle earnestness.

Sensing that Vanessa might not grasp the full extent of her words, she added in a soft whisper, "I'm talking about Edwin's dad, who's now also my dad. He has given me a villa and a substantial amount of money. As long as I don't squander it, I won't need to work a day in my life."

She then thought about the possibility of having children, all of whom would be well-cared for and healthy.

This display of innocence seemed to deeply affect Vanessa, whose face turned pale.

She had once believed that Mark held her in high regard, but in reality, he had never explicitly shown any favoritism towards her.

Despite having been a guest in the Evans household, the true sentiments of the family's patriarch had remained elusive to her.

Laura, noticing Vanessa's distress, asked softly, "Miss Smith, are you alright?"

In a desperate attempt to unsettle Laura, Vanessa declared, "I'm pregnant with Edwin's child!"

Expecting Laura to be devastated, she repeated, "Yes, I'm pregnant!"

But Laura simply shook her head.

"You're lying. If Edwin really cared for you and make you pregnant, he wouldn't have returned to me. Miss Smith, you pride yourself on your noble birth and criticize my background, but aren't you now behaving just as you accuse others of?"

Vanessa's hand clenched into a fist, her plan to rattle Laura having failed.

Vanessa's response was tinged with mockery.

"How long do you think you can keep Edwin, being so naive?"

She picked up the piece of pork belly with a disdainful Look.

"Edwin needs someone who can match him, not someone as simple as you."

Laura felt it would be a waste to discard the meat. Then, unexpectedly, someone took it from her.

She turned to see Edwin.

Dressed in a crisp white shirt and a gray woolen overcoat, he exuded an air of sophistication and detachment.

Edwin put the pork belly back into the bag, his gaze cold as he addressed Vanessa.

"What I Like is not your concern, Miss Smith. Even if I were to lose everything, Laura still would never have to work a day in her life."

The men of the Evans family were known for their protective nature.

Laura was free to pursue her passions, but providing for the family was his duty.

Her interest in cooking was a shared joy between them, not a matter for public scrutiny.

Vanessa watched, trembling, as Edwin deftly handled the bag of groceries and wrapped an arm around Laura, leading her towards the exit.

The sunlight cast a majestic glow around him.

Holding the bag, he presented a side contrary to the image of a man of his stature.

It dawned on Vanessa then that the Edwin she had known was not the complete picture.

The humble, down-to-earth side he showed Laura was something special, reserved only for her. As this realization hit her, tears welled up in her eyes.

Outside the cafe, Edwin took on a protective tone.

"If a stranger approaches you, don't go with them, alright?" he instructed.

Laura nodded in agreement, taking his advice to heart.

Edwin then glanced at the pork belly and remarked, "This piece is a bit too fatty. Next time you go meat shopping, just call me and I'll show you the trick, okay?"

Laura nodded again, accepting his guidance.

Edwin appeared pleased with her response.

He affectionately patted her head and said, "I'll make you pork stew with potatoes later. Make sure you eat more. It's not just for you but for our future baby too."

Laura playfully objected, "But we don't have a baby yet!"

Edwin looked at her with a half-serious, half-teasing expression.

"Are you questioning my abilities?" he asked.

Of course, she wouldn't dare challenge him on that.

Laura followed Edwin home, embodying the role of a devoted and loving wife.

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