

Ex-Husband Who Has Gone Mad After Abusing His Wife

Chapter 31 -

Chapter 31 You Disgust Me

Chapter 31

Liam used his fork and picked up the meatball from the table. “Open your mouth,” he ordered.

I did not open my mouth.

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He used to ignore me, and I always looked at him with rose-tinted glasses. I never knew he was so domineering and annoying.

I did not attempt to hide the anger on my face.

Liam narrowed his gaze and clenched my lower jaw.

I tried to keep my mouth shut, but he only clenched harder and harder. The increasing pain forced me to open my mouth.

He shoved the meatball into my mouth and ordered, “Chew!”

I did not want to chew.

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What could he do to make me chew?

Liam was silent for a while, and he let go of my jaw.

I quickly turned my head and prepared to spit the meatball out.

As soon as I opened my mouth, he blocked it with his tongue.

It took me a long time before I realized what happened.

He was... chewing the meatball for me!

He was too forceful, and there was no use struggling. I had to swallow the meat.

Liam moved away and licked the grease on his lips. "Tastes not bad."

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"Tell me now," he said coldly, "Are you going to eat yourself, or should I help you?"

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I was about to open my mouth when he suddenly clenched my chin. "I used to think you're stupid and loose. Somehow, you made me want to dominate you."

He smirked mockingly. "Congratulations, you finally know how to win my heart."

I pushed his hand away and said, "I'll eat myself."

Liam clenched my arm instead. "What should you call me?"

I closed my eyes to hide my annoyance. "I'm not eating anymore."

He narrowed his gaze and seemed angry. "You are my wife, Vivienne."

"I'm not!" I glared at him. "I'm stupid and loose, and I'm not worthy to be your

wife, Mr. Mendez!”

Liam did not say anything. He glared at me sullenly.

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I felt intense pain in my arm. He tightened his grip.

That was the final straw that made me lose my temper. “Do you know why I kept throwing up yesterday?” I asked.

He did not reply.

4/10

“It’s because you disgust me. I thought I’d call you what you want because I’m afraid you might hit me, but I couldn’t bring myself to do it. The mere thought of me uttering your name disgusts me, and I want to throw up whenever I see your face...”

I said it because I knew it would hurt his ego, and I guessed he left home in a huff yesterday because of that.

He abruptly clenched my neck.

Even though I was prepared for the abuse, I could not help but tear up from the pain.

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My vision was blurred, and I could only hear Liam’s voice next to my ear. “I

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disgust you? No one in this world can be more disgusting than you, Vivienne Nyra.”

I disgust him?

What have I done other than give all my love to him?

Did I force him to marry me?

I wanted to argue with him, but I could not make a sound. He continued to speak with increasing hostility, "You've been trying to get my attention for the past three years, and now you're playing hard to get? Don't think I don't know what you're thinking, and don't think you can run away from me!"

He shoved me onto the dining table.

I was weak from the lack of oxygen, and the only thing I could do was gasp for air.

dinner now, Ms. Olsen. You should wait in the lounge..."

they're having

Liam let go of me as soon as he heard that, and I came to my senses when the door slammed loudly.

I wiped my tears and straightened my clothes. Thank goodness he did not rip them apart, so it did not take much effort for me to look like nothing had happened.

There was a gentle knock at the door. I looked in that direction and saw Liam standing there.

I hastily sat up straight; I did not even get to observe his expression.

When the door opened, Rina chirped happily, "I'm here, Liam! Sorry I'm late. I had so much to pack!"

I glanced at the wall clock. It was eleven o'clock.

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Liam smiled gently. "It's okay. Come in and sit down."

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Liam sat opposite me, while Rina pulled a chair close to Liam, sat down next to him, and hugged his arm. "We meet again, Vivi dear!"

"Good evening," I said.

I would have suffered more at Liam's hand if not for Rina's timely intervention.

As much as I know she did not want to save me, I was grateful to her.

Auntie Sidney brought a glass for Rina, and Rina grinned mischievously at her. "You're still having your dinner, Vivi dear..."

She glanced at the dishes on the table. "There's meatballs? Dr. Norman just told me that Vivi dear loves meatballs the most!"

Liam looked at me.

I was wondering how Chris knew. Did I show it on my face when I placed the order at the restaurant earlier?

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8/10

It seemed that I would gain nothing from the conversation, so I stood up and said, "I'm going to my room to rest. I shouldn't disturb you two."

Liam stared at me and said, "Sit down and finish your food."

"That's right," Rina said, pretending to look concerned. "Dr. Norman said you

caught a serious cold, and you haven't been eating well. You need to eat more so you won't become ugly, then you won't have any advantage over me."

"I don't feel like eating," I said while looking at Liam. "I want to go to my room and rest."

I walked toward the door, and I heard Liam's voice behind me. "From today on, Rina will be staying here."

I stopped walking and turned my head. Liam was looking at me impassively. "Make arrangements for her."

"Pick whichever room you like, Ms. Olsen," I said.

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Rina looked delighted. She said to Liam, "Then I want Vivi's room!"

Liam patted her head and smiled at her indulgently. "You shouldn't. That's her..."

"Sure. I'll get someone to clean up now," I said.

Liam turned to look at me.

I averted his gaze and continued walking to the door.

"Thank you, Vivi dear!" Rina said.

I did not reply and twisted the doorknob.

While pulling the door, a hand slammed it shut.

I did not move, and my gaze was fixed on the door. I could tell from corner of my eye that Liam was standing next to me.

9/10

Chapter 31 You Disgust Me

I could feel his gaze on me. Would he hit me next? I could not tell.

The standoff continued.

Suddenly, I heard Rina's footsteps. She walked up to Liam and said, "Liam, if it's so much trouble, I can sleep in the guest room..."

"Sleep in my room, Rina," Liam said.

I breathed a sigh of relief.

I did not care if Rina had made out with him before, but now that they were going to sleep together, I was sure Rina could make something happen.

If he could focus his attention on Rina, he would stop disturbing me.

10/10

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Chapter **32** Who Do You Love

Chapter 32

"Really? But I don't think I should... Vivi won't be happy about it..." Rina said. She

sounded overjoyed.

"It's not up to her," Liam said. He removed his hand from the door and

returned to the dining table.

I opened the door and went up the stairs.

I was exhausted after the pointless episode. I took my phone as I lay on my bed, planning to call the hospital for an update on my father's condition, but I noticed a message in my inbox. It was from Chris.

It read, "I'm sorry that I was cold to you after Ms. Olsen came into the room. I think she has an ulterior motive, and I shouldn't be so friendly to you when she's around. I hope you're not angry."

"P/S: Thank you for dinner tonight. I appreciate it."

Tue,

Chapter 32 Who Do You Love

I thought for a while and replied, "It's okay. I didn't mind it."

Chris did not reply.

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I deleted Chris' message. Right after that, Auntie Sidney came into the room with some food.

I was not full yet, so I sat down at the table and continued eating.

Auntie Sidney did not leave. She stood next to me, and she looked like she had something to say.

"Do you want to tell me something?" I said.

"It's like this," Auntie Sidney said nervously, "I was worried when I didn't see you

in the garden, so I gave Mr. Mendez a call. He was about to board the plane.”

I looked at Auntie Sidney.

“He immediately returned and looked for you,” Auntie Sidney said carefully.

17:57 Tue, 4 Ju

Chapter **32** Who Do You Love

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“Before you returned, he asked me if your fever had subsided, and if you were wearing warm clothes when you went outside. He cared for you.”

“Are you going to tell stories to make me like him again? He’s letting Ms. Olsen

sleep in his room,” I said.

Auntie Sidney sighed. She was about to speak when her walkie–talkie buzzed.

She spoke briefly into her walkie–talkie and said, “Mr. Mendez is summoning

1. me. It sounds urgent.”

“Don’t worry about me. I’ll be sleeping after I finish eating,” I said.

After I ate, I called the hospital and found that my father was fine. Anna visited him in the morning. Mr. Cailan visited him in the afternoon and stationed two bodyguards there.

I wanted to browse for travel inspirations on my phone, but fatigue overcame me, and I lost consciousness.

Chapter 32 Who Do You Love

I slept very soundly, though the room was stuffy.

I dreamed that I was abducted, and my hands and feet were tied. When I woke up, my limbs felt numb.

It took me some time before I came to my senses, though I thought there was something amiss about my room.

I went to open the closet, and...

Men's clothes? Did I go to the wrong room?

Outside the window was the rose garden. Liam's room should be facing the lake.

I stood there in a daze until a door opened behind me.

4/10

I turned my head and saw that the bathroom door was open, and Liam stepped out wrapped in a towel. He stopped walking and stood there silently when he saw me.

Chapter **32** Who Do You Love

I came to my senses after a few seconds. "I'm... I'm sorry, I was too tired last night, and I..."

I must have entered the wrong room.

But where's Ring then?

I was not in the mood to think of an answer, so I went out of the door.

I met Auntie Sidney in the corridor. She was holding a tray in her hands, and on the tray was a pink tracksuit.

She smiled when she saw me, and she hurriedly walked toward me. "You're

awake, Mrs. Mendez. Did you sleep well?”

“Not bad,” I replied. “Why didn’t you tell me last night?”

I had entered the wrong room, and Auntie Sidney was there. I was surprised she did not tell me I was in the wrong room even though she obviously knew that was the case.

5/10

Chapter 32 Who Do You Love

“Mr. Mendez **told** me not to disturb you,” Auntie Sidney deliberately spoke softly. “When I went into Mr. Mendez’s room last night, Ms. Olsen had just stepped out from the shower dressed very sparingly. She almost burst into tears when she heard Mr. Mendez was moving to your room.”

What’s the point of crying? Do your best to flirt with him!

Can’t you do anything other than sow discord?

6/10

Auntie Sidney continued, “Mrs. Mendez, do you want to know what Mr. Mendez

said to her?”

Even though she looked eager to tell me, I did not feel like giving her the pleasure. “I’m sorry, Auntie Sidney, I don’t want to know.”

Auntie Sidney pressed her lips together in embarrassment.

I explained myself, “I know you mean well, and you probably want to cheer me up. That would have been true in the past, but I don’t really care now.”

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Auntie Sidney seemed disappointed. “You love him so much. Shouldn’t you be

happy to know that he cares about you?”

I shook my head. “He doesn’t care about me, and I no longer lo...”

Before I could finish, Auntie Sidney interrupted me, “Good morning, Mr. Mendez!”

I shuddered instinctively and turned around.

Lim was standing at the door behind me with his arms crossed. He had probably stood there for a long time. He lifted his chin slightly when he saw me looking at him. “Go on.”

I did not speak. Instead, I quickly went down the stairs.

I had only taken four steps when someone grabbed my arm. I shrieked and tried to struggle, but he pinned me on the banister.

He leaned close to me, and his arms held my limbs together.

Chapter 32 Who Do You Love

Fear seized me, and I forgot to breathe as I stared at his face.

What did I do wrong? Is it because I badmouthed him in front of Auntie Sidney? I only said he didn’t love me. Was that badmouthing?

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The silence lasted a few seconds before Liam spoke, his voice brimming with

hostility, "Why did you run away?"

I turned my head away and said nothing.

"Go on. You were saying something earlier." He lowered his head slightly. His warm breath carrying his unique scent tickled my face, but his tone remained cold.

"I'm sorry, I shouldn't tell Auntie Sidney about what's going on between us...." The Was the only reason I could think of that made him angry. Maybe he wanted it to be a secret between us.

Liam remained hostile. "Lift your *head* and look at me when you're speaking."

Chapter 32 Who Do You Love

I rubbed my sweaty palms and lifted my head. "Sorry, I won't..."

"Are **you** an idiot?" he spoke viciously, "I told you to go on!"

Go on?

That was a weird request. I said with a trembling voice, "He doesn't care about me, and I no longer love him."

Liam did not speak.

My heart was in my throat as I waited for his reply, and my breathing became faster.

I did not know how long the standoff lasted.

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ally, Liam spoke. "Who do you love?" His voice remained cold, though it

was not as hostile.

Chapter 39 Who Do You den

“Is it that doctor? Or are you slooping with other men?” he said mockingly.

How absurd.

“Why do you insist on cuckolding yourself?”

Liam pressed his lips together tightly.

I turned my head away to avert his hostile gaze, and I noticed his knuckles that were clenching the banister turning white.

I probably would not die if he tossed over the banister, but I would be badly hurt.

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Chapter 33 This Must Be a Dream

Chapter 33

Thinking of that, I began to regret speaking so impulsively. “There’s no one else,” I said softly.

“Look at me when you speak,” Liam ordered.

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I lifted my head and looked him in the eye. “There isn’t another man. I happen not to love you anymore.”

He remained displeased, so I continued, “What happened that night was my

first time. If I'm seeing another man, I wouldn't have saved my first time for you."

That was supposed to be one of the most precious moments of my life, but he only hurt me violently.

It was so absurd that I had to prove my "loyalty" to him.

What happened next was even more absurd. As soon as I finished, he

Chapter **33** This Must Be a Dream

chuckled. "Your first time?"

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He clenched my cheeks so hard that tears began to flow freely. "It's your first time after you fixed it, right? How can you be so shameless to admit to that, Vivienne?" he said.

I stared at him in shock.

I... fixed it?

What kind of a sick joke was that?

I wanted to retort, but the pain was so great that I could not make a sound.

Liam continued to speak in a low voice, "Your love isn't worth anything, but let me warn you, if you keep on repeating that, I'll make sure you regret it!"

He I go of me and went down the stairs.

I stared at his back as I rubbed my face.

Chapter **33** This Must Be a Dream

I tried my best to convince myself.

Don't be rash. It's not worth it.

But I was too angry.

I met Liam when I was 20 years old. Before that, many better men pursued

1. me.

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I never accepted their advances because I knew very well that I did not love them.

I wanted to live the rest of my life with the man I truly loved, which was why I chose Liam.

This was the first time he accused me of sleeping with other men and insulted me with filthy language. Today, he even twisted the truth!

I knew I should not add fuel to the fire, but I could not help myself. "Liam Mendez!"

Chapter **33** This Must Be a Dream

Liam stopped walking but did not turn around.

I raised my voice. "If you've already found out, I might as well come clean to you!"

Liam slightly turned his head around but did not look at me directly.

4/10

I was not thinking straight, and I only wanted to get back at him. "Not only have I gotten it fixed, but I've been sleeping with men every other day for the past three years! After all, what's the difference between marrying you and

marrying a mannequin? You don't deserve any respect from me at all!"

Liam turned around.

He was only two steps away from the lower floor. From that distance, the top half of his face was obscured by shadows, and I could only see his lips tightly pressed together and his clenched fists.

Anyone would have been afraid when they saw him like this. Moreover, he was not going to hesitate to be violent with me.

Chapter **33** This Must Be a Dream

I stopped talking.

Liam stood there for a few seconds before he began to walk up the stairs again.

It took me some time to come to my senses. I quickly ran toward my room, but someone grabbed my hand when I touched the door.

I shrieked in surprise. When I saw that it was Rina, I began to struggle.

However, she was stronger than me, and she pinned my hands behind my back.

I writhed to no avail. I could hear the footsteps coming closer, and Auntie Sidney was calling out, "My. Mendez, Mrs. Mendez isn't like that! She didn't.... Ow!"

It seemed like she was hit.

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I stopped struggling and turned my head. Before I could locate Auntie Sidney,

I felt intense pain on my scalp.

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Chapter **33** This Must Be a Dream

It was Liam. He grabbed my hair.

I could not struggle, so I let him drag me into my room and toss me on the floor like a loaded sack.

He crouched in front of me and clenched my cheeks.

That was when I saw his face clearly. His face was pale as a corpse, and his bloodshot eyes glared at me like daggers.

My limbs went weak, and I held my breath.

A long time later, Liam said coldly, "You like to sleep with other men, right?"

I could only stare at his resentful face. Fear had rendered me speechless.

"I'll le

Du enjoy it to your heart's content today."

6/10

He tossed me aside and ordered Auntie Sidney and the other servants at the door. "Get everyone male in the house here," he said and gritted his teeth.

17.58 Tue, 4 Ju

Chapter 33 This Must Be a Dream

"Including the dogs!"

"You can't do that, Mr. Mendez!" Auntie Sidney cried in shock.

Rina went over and slapped her. "Do what you're told!" She said to the other

servants, “Drag her away. Anyone who protests will be fired!”

“You can’t do that!” Auntie Sidney fell on her knees. “You can’t treat your wife like that, Mr. Mendez...”

Her voice soon disappeared.

I looked at the door, then at Liam.

He was already sitting on the sofa and was lighting up a cigarette. “Go and get me two million dollars,” he told Rina.

Rina’s expression remained innocent. She nodded and went to the other bedroom.

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Soon, she returned with four briefcases. The stacks of cash covered the entire coffee table.

Looking at the table full of cash was a surreal experience.

Am I... dreaming?

Very soon, the men came.

There were 26 male servants in the house in total. Most of them were young and strong men working menial labor in the garden. There were eight male dogs; one was a puppy, another was a husky, and the rest were German

shepherds.

After all the men arrived in the room, Liam stubbed out his cigarette, walked around the coffee table, and stood in front of me.

“The first ten get 200,000 dollars each.” While he said that, he grabbed my collar and tore my shirt away. “Have your way with her.”

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He left the room without looking back.

As I watched him leave, I subconsciously covered myself with my tattered clothes.

This must be a dream...

The male servants looked at each other. Some were confused, while some gawked at the cash on the table and my body.

“Well, what are you waiting for?” Rina walked around the room and patted one of the men’s filthy shirt. “You can go first. Go on, do it while she’s still clean.”

The man’s name was Thomas, and he was in charge of taking out the trash.

He was always dirty and reeking.

Thomas had a meek personality. Whenever he met me, he would usually keep his distance and greet me.

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Chapter 33 This Must Be a Dream

When Rina patted him, he shuddered and looked at me.

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I was so afraid that I forgot to breathe.

“Not a bad deal, right?” Rina urged him. “Go on, she’s all yours.”

Thomas came to his senses and gawked at Rina. “If I make out with her... I’ll get 200,000 dollars, right? There won’t be consequences, right?”

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Rina did not reply. She took a few stacks of money from the coffee table and threw them at him.

Thomas caught the money in his hands. He seemed excited.

Rina smirked. “You look like you’ve never seen money before.”

Thomas chuckled, and the people in the crowd began to murmur to each other.

“The master of the house has already spoken. Her family is bankrupt, and Liam doesn’t want her anymore. I will be the future Mrs. Mendez.” Rina turned her head and glared at Thomas. “You’d better be quick, or I’ll pick someone else.”

Thomas looked at the money in his hands, then at me. His facial muscles began to contort.

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It was then I realized I was not dreaming!

This was reality!

I quickly got to my feet and ran to a corner. At the same time, Thomas charged toward me.

I had never feared so much for my life before.

I hastily looked around me and noticed a porcelain vase on the table. I grabbed it, smashed it on the wall, and pointed the sharp edge at Thomas.

“One more step closer and I’ll kill you!”

No one in the room spoke, and Thomas stopped.

I waved the weapon in my hand and ordered, “Get out!”

Thomas *did* not move. He turned his head and looked at Rina.

She began to walk toward me composedly.

2/10

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My heart was in my throat. I yelled, “Stop!”

“Stop?” Rina smirked. She reached out and grabbed my wrist.

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She was so fast that I could not react. Suddenly, I felt excruciating pain in my

arm, and I could not move it anymore.

Rina took the broken vase from my hand, tossed it aside, and delivered a swift knee to my stomach.

I instinctively doubled over and fell on the floor.

Rina kicked me again before turning around to address the crowd with a smile. "Let's begin! Remember, first come, first served!"

If everyone got 200,000 dollars, two million was not enough to be divided among 26 people.

As soon as Rina finished, two people pounced at me.

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4/10

They were gardeners, and they reeked of soil and manure, I could not move, but I was not going to go down without a fight. I weakly raised my left arm in a last-ditch attempt to defend myself.

One of the men grabbed my hair and slammed my head to the floor.

I was instantly overcome by intense pain and dizziness, and my vision blurred.

My surroundings did not look real anymore.

This isn't real... I'm definitely dreaming.

I had always been kind to other people. The only time I got physical with someone else was when I slapped Rina.

I never hurt anyone else.

”

I did not think I did anything wrong to Liam. I loved him, and I was willing to lower myself and give him my all.

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How have I hurt him?

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Even if he did not like me, and even if I should not say those words to him and hurt his ego, why must he...

Why must he...

Bang!

The door slammed loudly amid the chaos.

I was pulled back from my dreams, and when I tried my best to open my eyes, I saw a figure in white and black.

The figure looked familiar, but my vision was blurred, so I could not tell who it was.

Who could it be?

He must be one of the male servants...

”

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I watched him as he came closer and closer to me.

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6/10

When he hugged me, I could smell that familiar scent of musk and tobacco.

I heard Rina speak, "We haven't even started yet, Liam. You..."

"Get out," Liam said, "All of you."

"Don't tell me you..." Rina said.

"Get out!" Liam roared and interrupted her.

I heard footsteps shuffling away, and the room was quiet once more.

Liam hugged me tightly. I could not hold it back and moaned softly.

He released me from his embrace and looked at me.

I averted his gaze. My heart was thumping wildly from fear.

The pain from my injured arm had spread throughout my body. I would not

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make a sound if not that I could not hold it back any longer.

A long silence later, Liam suddenly reached out and held my injured arm.

I recoiled in shock.

"Don't move," he said gently. "It's dislocated."

I heard a crack in my shoulder, and the pain was greatly relieved.

Liam held out his palm. "Take my hand," he said.

I turned away, sat on the floor, and stretched my fingers.

My hand was as good as new.

No one spoke for some time.

I did not know why he remained in the room, but I dared not speak, move, or look at him.

7/10

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Suddenly, Liam raised his hand.

He looked like he was going to grab my hair again.

I shifted backward and said, “I’m sorry...”

His hand froze in mid-air.

I lowered my head because I dared not look at him. “I’m sorry...” I mumbled.

What have I done wrong?

I don’t know, but I must’ve done something wrong.

“I’m sorry...” I repeated.

I must be at fault. It’s my fault for falling in love with him.

I’ll admit to everything. It’s all my fault.

“I’m sorry...” I repeated like a broken toy.

8/10

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Liam was silent at first. My voice must have annoyed him. He grabbed my shoulders and pinned me on the floor.

I did not resist even the slightest bit.

He leaned dangerously close, and the tip of his nose touched mine.

9/10

I could feel his warm breath on my face. He looked like a ferocious wild beast that could snap my neck at any moment.

I did not resist.

It's all the same anyway. At least he's my husband. I thought.

His gaze was cold and distant, as though he was looking at a stranger.

I kneaded my sweaty palms, and I found it hard to breathe.

Suddenly, he lifted his hand and touched my cheek.

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His fingers traveled down to my chin, lingered there for a moment, and slid down to my neck.

He did not use any force, but I held my breath because of fear.

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"I wish I could strangle you, just like that." My eyes were filled with tears, and I could not see his face. His voice was lazy and gentle. "After you die, you and I won't have anything more to worry about."

He lowered his head and kissed me.

I did not know how I left that nightmare of a room later.

All I remembered was that I had a good dream that night.

In the dream, I went to the Nyra headquarters and met Liam in the lounge.

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1/10

He extended his hand toward me and smiled like a gentleman. "Nice to meet you, Ms. Nyra. I'm Liam Mendez."

I smiled at him and said, "We're done here, Mr. Mendez. The Nyra has no intention of collaborating with you."

Then, I left the lounge.

I also walked out of his life.

I stayed in the first-floor guest room for the next few days.

I did not see Liam in the house after that. Auntie Sidney said he went on his business trip abroad and brought Rina with him.

She also told me Liam fired all the male servants in the house. It was difficult to find female workers to perform heavy labor, so a batch of gardening

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robots was brought in from L.M.

Even though L.M. was a young company, it was one of the top technology companies in the region.

Auntie Sidney also told me, "The robots look pretty cute, and they can do

anything. Don't you want to look at them? I thought you were interested in robots."

I shook my head.

That was the third day after the incident. I had not left my room.

Even though all the male servants were gone, there were other female servants.

Everyone in the mansion would have known about what happened. I could not bear to face any of them.

Also, I felt safer in my room, even though no one should be able to harm me.

2/10

Chapter 35 No Pressure

Auntie Sidney sighed. "I'll get some food for you."

She left the room.

I lay on the bed and pulled the blanket up to my shoulders. The room was warm, but I would rather be covered.

No one would be able to see my body that way.

3/10

Auntie Sidney bought me a bowl of macaroni, of which I took only a few bites.

She said, "You're not eating enough. Do you want something else? Just let me

know what you want, and I'll make it for you in the kitchen."

I shook my head and said, "I want to nap for a bit."

I lay on the bed again after Auntie Sidney left.

I shut my eyes and dozed off. Some time later, I felt someone pat my body. I shuddered and opened my eyes.

Chapter 35 No Pressure

4/10

It was early afternoon, but the blackout curtains made the room completely dark.

I held my breath. Not a sound could be heard.

When I was younger, my mother told me sleep paralysis was caused by stress, and I need not fear it.

I was not afraid because I trusted her.

Don't be afraid, I told myself.

Suddenly, there was a flash of blue light on the bedside cabinet.

I shuddered for a while before realizing it was my phone.

I hesitated for a moment before I answered it.

"It's me." Liam's voice was as cold as ever. "Auntie Sidney said you haven't left the room, and you're not eating your meals."

17:59 Tue,

Chapter 35 No Pressure

I did not reply.

"Your father's cook will come over soon," he said. "Eat something."

I still did not reply.

I was not throwing a tantrum. Instead, I thought if I said nothing, I would not offend him.

Liam was also silent for some time. Then, he said, "I'll be flying back on Saturday..."

"Liam!" Rina's cloying voice was heard. She sounded like she was clinging to his shoulders. "What are you doing? Come with me, I've been waiting for you..."

5/10

I put the phone back where it was, curled up on the bed, and closed my eyes.

Just let me sleep. I don't need any pressure.

Chapter 35 No Pressure

The cook arrived in the evening. Accompanying her was Anna.

6/10

She looked flamboyant as usual. As soon as she came into the door, she said

to me, "Your husband always finds new ways to pamper you. To make you eat, he paid Mrs. Crawford five times her salary to cook for you. Sigh, I'm so envious!"

She sat down on my bed and took my hand. "You lost a lot of weight. You must be very afraid."

"What?" I asked her.

"Auntie Sidney told me the male servants bullied you, and you couldn't bring yourself to go up the stairs," Anna said. "That's why Liam fired all of them."

I said nothing.

"Why is he going on business trips now though? He should be staying at home with you," Anna said unhappily. "I didn't know L.M. has business dealings in Europe."

Chapter 35 No Pressure

"Anna, are you here only to accompany the cook?" I asked.

7/10

"It's not just that." Anna suddenly seemed awkward. "I need a favor from you."

"Don't look so nervous. It's nothing serious," Anna said with a smile. "It's about Harvey. Two days ago, he wanted to make out with me, and you know I can't do it now. He probably suspected something, so he went through my

handbag and found the receipt."

"So you need me to corroborate your story?" I asked.

"Maybe," Anna said warily. "Won't you help your elder sister?"

I nodded. "Mm."

I expected that to happen when I first agreed to help her.

Anna seemed visibly relieved. "That's good to hear."

Chapter 35 No Pressure

8/10

"But... are you planning to live the rest of your life like this? Can't you find some other way?" I asked.

Anna's husband was named Harvey Bosworth. He ran a funeral service, a niche business with massive profits. He was very, very rich.

When I was nine years old, my father arranged my sister's marriage to Harvey to finance the Nyra, which was facing a crisis. That year, Anna was 18, and Harvey was 32.

The night before she married, Anna was crying to me. "Vivi, I don't think I'll find any happiness in my life anymore."

I never forgot what she said. At the same time, I wondered often if Liam thought the same.

After the marriage, the Nyra was lifted out of the crisis, and Anna began to look for other men. She adored handsome and bookish college students, and she gave them the money Harvey gave her.

7

Chapter 35 No Pressure

Unlike me, she knew how to behave in front of Harvey.

At least Harvey had a claim over her body.

Before Anna left, she told me, "I'm actually very happy with my life, Vivi. *You* don't have to feel sorry for me."

As I looked at the brilliant smile on her face, I nodded.

She put on her wide-brimmed felt hat and walked into the snow.

9/10

Mrs. Crawford was my parents' chef. She had worked for them for most of her life. The first supplementary food I ate was the carrot purée she made. To me, Mrs. Crawford's cooking was the taste of home.

That night, Mrs. Crawford made all my favorite food.

I did not want to waste the food, but to me... it was tasteless. I did not have any appetite at all.

Chapter 35 No Pressure

I went back to the room and lay on the bed.

10/10

While I was half asleep, I felt a hand on my body.

I was suffering from sleep paralysis again.

I did not open my eyes, though I felt a pair of arms encircle my body.

It was said that sleep paralysis was caused by demons.

Even a demon was gentler than Liam.

I forced myself to continue sleeping, but I did not stay asleep for very long.

I smelled that familiar scent of musk and tobacco again...