

Are Mine 1361

[Chapter 1361 Sleeping Pills](#)

Emmeline's body tilted as the slap landed firmly on her neck. Instantly, several red marks appeared on her fair neck.

"Are you crazy? Who are you?" Emmeline pushed her chair back and stood up. "Why did you hit me?"

"Ysabel, you shameless sl't, seducing my man! I'll tear you apart today!"

"Get it straight. I'm not the person you're looking for!"

"You're still pretending? You look like a vixen. You're telling me you're not Ysabel Hemmings?!"

The large woman shouted and lunged again. This time, Emmeline was prepared. She lifted her leg and kicked the woman squarely in her chubby belly.

The woman stumbled, unable to stop herself, and plopped onto the ground, wailing loudly. "She hit me! A teacher hit me! Ysabel Hemmings hit me!"

The teacher's lounge quickly filled with onlookers, both teachers and students.

"Hey, hey! Lady, you've got the wrong person!" the PE teacher said.

"You're protecting her?!" the large woman accused.

"Why would we lie to you? If you don't believe it, just ask around!"

"It's really not her! You've mistaken her for someone else, the music teacher explained.

The large woman sized Emmeline up. "Well, she doesn't seem to be Ysabel. Ysabel should be a woman in her thirties. This one is a young lady."

"Well, thank you for slapping me before finding out the facts, Emmeline grumbled.

"Well, you kicked me too!" the large woman retorted, getting up.

"You deserved it!" Emmeline, with a lioness-like attitude, looked like she wanted to kick the woman again.

"I'm going to find Ysabel!" The woman, realizing she was wrong, hastily left the teacher's lounge.

"Who's that woman?" the music teacher asked.

"She's the administration head's wife, the PE teacher replied.

"Shh!" the music teacher cautioned. "Don't make a fuss!"

"Why not? Oh, so we can't talk about it even if they dare to do it?" the PE teacher said with a disdainful expression.

"Perhaps you should consider your future in the context of the current staff reassignment," the music teacher suggested. "Unless you don't want to work at this school anymore."

When Emmeline returned home from work at noon, her father was busy in the kitchen.

“Mom and I agreed to have taquitos for lunch, Dad. Why are you cooking?” Emmeline asked.

“Your mom just woke up from a nap, and I didn’t want her to exert herself,” Maxwell replied. “It’s a little late to make taquitos, so I’m preparing a meal for you.”

“Sure,” Emmeline said happily. “I haven’t had your cooking in a long time.”

While she was speaking, she put down her handbag and went to the master bedroom to check on her mother, who was lying on the bed, staring at the ceiling, silent and expressionless.

“Mom, are you feeling any better?” Emmeline crouched by the bed.

“I fell asleep. We agreed to make taquitos.”

“It’s okay, Mom. Have a good rest. I’m happier that you’re well-rested than eating taquitos, Emmeline said with a slightly choked-up voice.

Then, she noticed a medicine packet on the bedside table. She opened it and found small white pills.

“Mom, did you take sleeping pills?” Emmeline exclaimed. “How many did you take?”

“I took three pills. One or two didn’t work.”

“But, Mom, this is not good!” Emmeline grew increasingly anxious.

“It’s fine. The doctor said two or three pills are okay. He only gave me ten in total.”

“These pills can be harmful to your health!”

“Emma, I just want a good night’s sleep. My mind is exhausted,” Kimberly replied calmly.

“Abel mentioned that he would inquire about traditional medicine for us to help with your condition.”

“The holistic doctor Abel found last time was pretty good. Those who share my condition said his medicine worked perfectly for them, but it didn’t work on me at all. I can’t tolerate medication.”

“Different body types can have different effects: Let’s try a different doctor, Emmeline suggested. “I’ll ask Abe this afternoon if he found one.”

“Abel is ambitious and very busy. Emma, don’t always take up his energy.”

“He’s my only brother. Who else should I turn to?” Emmeline pouted.

“Oh,” Kimberly sighed. “Abel is a wonderful kid. We owe a lot to him over the years.”

“Make sure to take good care of him, both you and Dad.”

“Of course, our home is Abel’s home,” Kimberly said as she sat up.

At half-past five in the afternoon, Abel called Emmeline as they had planned.

Emmeline explained her mother’s situation to him.

I've found a retired senior holistic doctor from City Hospital," Abel said. "We can go to his private clinic on Sunday."

"That's great. I'll let my mom know," Emmeline replied. But, Abel..."

"Yes? What's up?"

"I had a really strange dream."

[Chapter 1362 Antiques](#)

"What dream? Tell it to me." Abel's voice sounded somewhat nervous.

"I dreamt that I was beneath a deep cliff, unable to find you, and when I called you, the call wouldn't go through."

Abel fell silent for a moment before asking, "What does that mean?"

"How should I know?" Emmeline said: "But, Abel, does it mean that one day, I won't be able to find you?"

"That won't happen, Emma. I'm here, and I'll always be here."

Emmeline only had one lesson the following day, so she took half a day off and boarded the bus to the city.

Paul's words had been lingering in her mind. She pondered that starting a clothing business might be good idea.

She went to the department store and explored a newly established commercial pedestrian street.

The city's department store had once been so magnificent, but now it was desolate and quiet, and the once haughty salespeople were now gathered in small groups, snacking and chatting.

In their conversations, she could tell they were discussing the topic of employees voluntarily renting stalls and starting their own businesses.

On the pillars at the department store's entrance were advertisements for external renting.

Emmeline checked it twice; the contact person was surnamed Chester, and she noted down the phone number.

On both sides of the pedestrian street, shops lined up in a row. Clothing, shoes, bags, cosmetics-all kinds of businesses were thriving.

Emmeline walked and observed, entering a few clothing stores, pretending to haggle, and studying the market conditions.

After half a day, she began to have some ideas in her mind..

Further down the pedestrian street, the crowd was bustling, and traffic was congested. It was the city's long-distance bus station. A large group of people had gathered at the corner of the intersection, and it seemed like they were in the midst of a fight, with shouts and arguments emanating from the crowd.

“Just smash it! Can’t believe he’s trying to scam people!

“Smash it!”

“Pay up! If you don’t pay, we’ll smash it to pieces!”

“Sir, we discussed this face-to-face that day. I’ve collected these antiques from antique markets all over the country. Whether they’re real or fake, I don’t even know rasped an elderly man.

“Scam is scam! Stop making excuses!”

“Sir, I’m not trying to scam anyone. It’s broad daylight we should speak with a clear conscience. I can’t authenticate whether these antiques are real or fake. We’re doing a cash-on-delivery deal. If I sell it at a loss, I’ll admit it, and if you buy it at a loss, you should admit it too. Moreover, if you can buy a genuine antique for sixty bucks and later sell it for 1.8 million, would you come back to give me my money? That’s how the market works. One is willing to buy, and the other is willing to sell. You should understand that.”

“Get lost! I don’t understand; all I know is I paid sixty bucks and bought two clay jars! They say you can get them for three bucks each in the wholesale market, and you’re selling them for sixty! Claiming they’re from the Early Modern Period, what a load of nonsense!”

“Smash it! Beat him!”

Crash, bang, clatter!

A series of plates, bowls, dishes, and jars breaking, accompanied by the hoarse cries of an elderly man, echoed under the scorching sun.

After the frenzied smashing and beating, the instigators quickly dispersed, leaving only a few onlookers scattered around. The elderly man selling antiques sat on the ground, sobbing pitifully, his face and arms. scraped.

Most of the exquisite items on the tarp were now damaged. It was a heart-wrenching scene, and the crowd sighed in sympathy.

“How much are these things worth?” a middle-aged man crouched down, examining the fragments of porcelain and pottery.

“It’s hard to say. The cost was around two to three thousand, but whether they’re valuable or not, who knows if there are real antiques among them? I’m relatively new to this industry, with little experience and poor appraisal skills. Just trying to make a living.”

“This industry is booming in the south now. People like you, who quietly scavenge for treasures, can become hidden millionaires.”

“It’s not that easy. I’ve invested my life savings in this. I have to beg for food to go back home,” the old man cried again.

The middle-aged man took out several hundred bills from his wallet and handed them to the old man.

“I work at the department store at the other end of the street. Chester. If you need help, come find me.”

The old man got up and nodded vigorously, then hurriedly picked up a few copper coins from the scattered fragments and handed them to him. "I don't have much else, but here, consider it a token of appreciation and a keepsake."

The man accepted the copper coins, smiled, and nodded. "Alright, I'll keep it as a keepsake."

[Chapter 1363 Jade Figurine](#)

Emmeline squeezed her way into the crowd and crouched down, noticing a small object among the fragments.

It was a little jade figurine, about two and a half inches tall.

One side was a vivid green, the other half was pale green with a hint of red, and it was in a kneeling position, extraordinarily lifelike.

In the jade figure's arms, it held something that looked like a cross between a mouse and a toad, with two round, lively little eyes.

There was a coiled bun on the jade figure's head and a ribbon-like ornament curved up from the back of its head.

Emmeline picked up the little jade figurine.

"This is an exquisite jade that is likely from the Western Roman Empire or the Roman Republic," said the old man. "But I can't say for sure if it's genuine. Nonetheless, it's a nice piece for collecting."

"How much are you selling this for?" Emmeline instantly fell in love with this little jade figurine. Its craftsmanship was rough, with a hint of Roman style.

"I got this for two hundred while scavenging in Tarrin, the old man said. "If you like it, you can have it at that price."

This statement didn't help Emmeline determine how much to pay, and she was unsure how to respond.

The old man then rummaged through the broken pottery and porcelain and pulled out two more small items: a delicate jade cicada and a jade thumb ring with a somewhat plain appearance.

"Miss, would 260 be acceptable for these three items? If I were to sell them normally, they would least four hundred."

Emmeline examined the items; the jade cicada was charming, carved from white jade with simple yet graceful lines, and the jade thumb ring appeared to be made of nephrite jade, showing signs of earthy markings, though she wasn't sure if it was authentic.

In any case, these items were chosen based on personal preference, and in terms of judging their authenticity, even experienced collectors could be mistaken.

"I'm just getting them because they're interesting." Emmeline smiled. "Whether they're genuine or not doesn't matter to me."

She took out her wallet and handed four hundred to the old man.

The old man exclaimed, "That's too much!" and attempted to return some of the money.

Emmeline said, "Consider it a good deal since you've run into trouble. You don't need to give me any change."

As she stood up, she noticed that the middle-aged man earlier, surnamed Chester, hadn't left; he was still standing behind her. Their eyes met, and they exchanged polite smiles.

The four hundred bill, to be honest, was something Emmeline cherished, but she couldn't resist her love for the treasures she had just acquired during this "scavenging" expedition. Moreover, she had also helped the elderly man in distress. She liked all the items she had bought.

As for the jade thumb ring, she planned to clean it up and give it to Abel later. In ancient times, such an accessory was something heroes would wear when they wielded their bows and shot their arrows.

Upon arriving at the bus station, Emmeline realized that her wallet was missing. It was a bittersweet feeling.

The pickpocket sure could pick his aim. After spending that four hundred bucks, I barely have ten left in my wallet.

Then again, she didn't have money for the bus fare either.

"Abel!" Emmeline dialed Abel's number.

"Emma?"

"I didn't want to bother you, but I'm really stuck."

"Cut your fake panic and get to the point!" Abel said dotingly over the phone.

"I'm in the city, and my wallet got stolen. I can't get back."

"You're in luck," Abel said. "I just got back from Pinemount."

"Could you come pick me up? We can go home together."

"Where are you?"

Emmeline spun around to figure out her exact location, only to see someone with a crutch on the opposite side of the road.

It was Tony, the person Abel had rescued.

When they had taken him to the hospital, Abel had been overwhelmed. It was Emmeline who had handled the admission procedures, greatly moving Tony.

He had promised that once his leg was better and he could drink, he would host a thank-you party for the siblings.

Behind Tony was a brand-new three-story storefront. Upstairs, a prominent sign hung with gilded letters that read, 'Altney RetroWave Advertisements.

"Emma, are you still there? Where are you?" Abel sounded somewhat anxious.

“Yeah, I’m still on the phone. I’m about... two to three hundred yards south of the new bus station, the bus stop on the west.”

“Alright, wait for me, don’t go anywhere, I’ll be there in about ten minutes.”

Emmeline replied with a “Hmm” and sat on a bench below the platform, gazing at RetroWave Advertisements’ across the street.

Now, many businesses were renting storefronts, and everyone was installing their signs. –

“RetroWave Advertisements’ seemed to be doing well, with several triangular irons and square pipes piled up in front of their entrance.

Welders were busy at work, sparks flying everywhere.

“Emma!” Unnoticed by Emmeline, Abel’s car had arrived.

He rolled down the car window and called out, “Get in, kiddo. Private cars aren’t allowed to park here!”

[Chapter 1364 Economic Reform](#)

Emmeline hurriedly ran over and opened the car door, taking the front passenger seat. Abel leaned over to fasten her seatbelt, and Emmeline took the opportunity to kiss his cheek as a thank-you.

A car behind them honked impatiently, prompting Abel to grab Emmeline’s hand and quickly return a kiss to the back of her hand.

The car accelerated and merged into the traffic.

“Why did you come out? Shouldn’t you be in school?” Abel asked her.

“Market research, Emmeline replied, her face proud as she raised her eyebrows at him.

“Market research?” Abel glanced at her and chuckled. “You? In which industry? What market trends?”

“The fashion industry, of course! Have you forgotten what Mr. Murphy mentioned last time?” Emmeline pouted in frustration.

“Oh, right. I’ll give you credit for being ambitious,” Abel added. “Did you also lose your wallet?”

“There was no money in it. It was practically empty. Besides, the wallet itself isn’t valuable,” said Emmeline and looked mischievously at him. “You could buy me a nice one later.”

“Well, I don’t see you going on a shopping spree.” Abel deliberately put on a serious face. “Where’s the money? Don’t tell me you left home without cash and are trying to scam me.”

“Don’t act like I’m trying to scam you. The items are right here.” Emmeline opened her handbag and proudly displayed the three small items in front of Abel.

Abel burst into laughter. “What are these? They look so rustic. Did you dig them up from a grave or something?”

“You know nothing. These are antiques!” Emmeline retorted. “I studied them in the university library. There are stories behind these. I’ll tell you when we get home.”

“How much did they cost?”

“Four hundred.”

Abel smirked. “Well, someone’s got money to spare!”

Emmeline playfully slapped his arm. “You take that back, and I’ve just lost half a month’s salary

“You should pray to the god of money when you get home. For all we know, you might have just bought yourself a gold mine!” Abel teased.

“Could you be a bit more serious? Emmeline pouted. I wanted to give you that jade thumb ring, but if you’re going to be like this, forget it!”

Just as the traffic light turned red, Abel leaned in quickly and planted a kiss on Emmeline’s cheek.

Emmeline’s face instantly turned red, and her heart skipped a beat Abel had always been quite restrained. and this was the first time he had kissed her on the face.

“I just saw Tony,” Emmeline said.

“Where?”

“Right across from the bus stop where you picked me up. He’s opened an advertising company called RetroWave Advertisements.”

“It looks like he’s ventured out on his own.”

“Business seems to be doing well. Many stores are installing storefront signs.”

“He has seized this opportunity. There aren’t many people who are conscious of the potential in the advertising field.”

“Yes, if I hadn’t come out today to take a look, I wouldn’t have realized it.”

“All industries are booming, and everyone is enthusiastic about opening storefronts,” Abel said. “One store means one sign and a large shopping mall requires significant advertising decor. This is a huge opportunity.”

“By your logic, Tony’s future market potential is immeasurable, and he could make a lot of money.” Emmeline’s eyes widened.

“There’s always a visionary who becomes the industry leader,” Abel said.

“Abel, you were considering taking over a factory. Emmeline looked at him. “How’s that going?”

“It’s still in the planning stages, Abel said. “But I think it’s feasible.”

“What’s your plan then?”

“Paul’s advice opened up my thinking,” Abel said. “Having orders will lead to development. I’ll be looking for production manufacturers across the country to find a way in the production of product components.”

“What about factories around here?”

“If there’s a way in sales, we won’t be afraid of production problems.” Abel kept his eyes on the road.

“Our technology is up to par, but we need to bring in advanced technical personnel to handle the details and keep our products up-to-date with market demands.”

“That sounds like a well-thought-out plan.” Emmeline blinked. “How can I help you with it?”

[Chapter 1365 Don't Let Anything Happen to Mom](#)

“Focus on your work.” Abel chuckled. “I’m also taking risks here; I might end up back in the pre-liberation cra.”

“I have mixed feelings. Emmeline furrowed her brow. It’s really frustrating.”

“Don’t worry about me,” Abel said. “You being okay is enough to reassure me.”

When they returned home, Kimberly was still busy in the kitchen, and Maxwell had also returned.

“Is it me or have you lost some weight?” Maxwell asked Abel, and they exchanged a pack of cigarettes.

“I’m constantly out in the market, no time to rest,” Abel said.

“How are the results?” Dad inquired again.

“Dad,” Emmeline chimed in. “Abel is planning to make a big change and become a big boss!”

“What do you mean?” Maxwell furrowed his brow.

“Abel plans to take over a factory and start a parts company.”

Maxwell’s frown deepened. “Abel, I brought you out when you were in your teens. For you to achieve your current level isn’t easy. You can’t mess around!”

“Don’t worry, Uncle Maxwell. I know what I’m doing.”

“What you’re doing now is good enough,” Maxwell said. Find a wife in the coming year and have a child; live a good life, and I’ll be reassured.”

Find a wife and have a child... Abel thought. Should my goal be that simple?

“Abel, why didn’t you tell us you were coming home?” Kimberly came out. “I would have made taquitos for you!”

“I’ll come home when I feel like having taquitos,” Abel replied. “Is the medicine prescribed by the doctor at City Hospital working well for you, Aunt Kimberly?”

“It helps a bit; I can get some intermittent sleep,” she said.

Just then, the doorbell rang, and Kimberly opened the door as their neighbor, Ms. Maggie, breezed in.

“The young man from last time, Albus, is at my house right now, and he brought a bunch of gifts with him, saying he’s here to see Emma.”

“Why would he?!” Emmeline was immediately angry. “We barely met, and he thinks he can just come over?!”

“Emma, when you were out last time, I had a chat with him,” Kimberly explained. “He’s a nice guy, and his parents are actually your dad and my wedding witnesses!”

“What does that have to do with me?” Emmeline pouted. “I don’t want to see him!”

“You child. I told him he could come over for tea sometime.”

“Don’t drag me into your decisions!” Emmeline was on the verge of tears.

“Emma, please listen...” Abel felt a pang in his heart and tried to hold back his sadness.

“You’re out of your mind!” Emmeline’s tears welled up in her eyes. “If you want to see him, see him yourself!”

She opened the door and rushed out, running down the stairs with heavy steps.

“Emma!” Abel hurriedly followed, catching up to her in a few large strides and grabbing her arm.

“Let go of me!” Emmeline was furious. “You want me to meet that guy? Don’t you find it disgusting?”

“Emma, Aunt Kimberly has poor health!” Abel furrowed his brows. “Don’t upset her.”

Emmeline instantly lost her composure. She went blank momentarily, then crouched down and burst into tears. She wasn’t afraid to meet that inexplicable person, but she was genuinely afraid of her mother’s mental state.

“Listen, you should let your mom calm down first.” Abel crouched beside her, holding onto her trembling shoulders.

Emmeline looked up with teary eyes. “Tell me, what should I do?”

“First, go back home.”

“But, Abel.” Emmeline furrowed her brows. “I can’t bear to meet that guy. Can you?”

Abel fell silent.

“Abel!” Emmeline became anxious.

“Of course, I can’t!” Abel finally admitted.

“In that case, I won’t go back!”

“Emma, listen to me.” Abel looked into her eyes.

“Okay.” Emmeline nodded, sensing that something wasn’t right.

“The senior doctor at City Hospital said Mom might have schizophrenia, and she can’t handle any stress.” Abel’s gaze became somewhat melancholic.

“You’re lying to me!” Emmeline stood up abruptly. “You only said that to make me go back, didn’t you? You’re lying to me, aren’t you?”

“Emma.” Abel’s expression was earnest. “have I ever lied to you? You know my feelings. You meeting someone else feels like a stab in my heart, but right now. I’m worried about Aunt Kimberly!”

Emmeline felt a sense of unease. She nodded. “Alright, I’ll go back. I don’t want anything to happen to Mom!”

[Chapter 1366 It’s Impossible Between You Two](#)

When they arrived home, Albus happened to be coming downstairs, and they exchanged a brief greeting.

“Your mother said you still have classes in the afternoon, so I’ll head back first,” Albus said, feeling a bit awkward.

Emmeline avoided his gaze and nodded mechanically

Ms. Maggie, seeing Emmeline return with tear-streaked cheeks, sensibly stopped chattering and left the room.

“Mom, I’m sorry.” Emmeline leaned against her mother’s knee.

“You know, Emma, Albus’ parents have a long-standing friendship with your dad and me,” her mother said gently. “You shouldn’t do him bad like that.”

“Hmm,” Emmeline obediently agreed.

“If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t have become a regular worker at Altney Steel, and I wouldn’t have such good treatment now. We owe them a lot.”

“I’ve never heard you and Dad talk about this before.” Emmeline looked at her mother’s face.

“You’re just kids; what should we tell you about that?” her mother replied. “Besides, they all became high-ranking leaders at Altney Steel later on, and we gradually grew apart.”

Emmeline didn’t seem interested in what her mother was saying, feeling a heavy, oppressive weight on her heart.

“But Mom, I don’t want anyone else,” Emmeline muttered with her eyes downcast. “I just want to be with Abel.”

“Shut up!” Kimberly interrupted Emmeline and shifted her gaze toward Abel. “Abel, watch over Emma. Just because she’s not sensible doesn’t mean you, her older brother should too!”

Abel understood what Kimberly meant. He nodded in silence.

Maxwell emerged from his study, his face grim. “Abel, Emma is still young. You should provide more guidance, and don’t let her go astray.”

“This is my own business,” Emmeline protested as she stood up. “Why are you scolding Abel?!”

Abel remained silent.

After a moment, he suddenly stood up and, without any warning, knelt down in front of his uncle.
“Uncle Maxwell!”

Maxwell’s face had turned beyond grim. “Speak your mind. No need to kneel before me!”

“I watched Emma grow up.” Abel looked up at him. “But no matter who you choose for her, I won’t be at case.”

Maxwell was taken aback, but his tone remained harsh. “You and Emmeline, it’s impossible!”

“Uncle Maxwell!”

Maxwell slammed the table, his expression grave.

Abel bowed his head with a resounding thud. “Uncle Maxwell, please let us date!”

“Abel!” Emmeline was frightened and quickly pulled his arm, but Abel remained motionless.

“Abel. I’m sure you haven’t forgotten how we’re all related, have you?” Maxwell was exasperated, breathing heavily.

“I know.” Abel nodded.

“So how dare you still make such an absurd request?!”

“But...” Abel raised his head. “My father was adopted, and I have no blood relation to Emmeline. Legally, we are allowed!”

“Do you also know that your father lost his mother before he was even a year old and was raised by drinking my mother’s milk? In our family records, he’s listed as my elder brother!” Maxwell was furious.

“But, Uncle Maxwell...”

“Shut up!” Maxwell’s brows furrowed deeply. “I knew it would come to this someday!”

Abel, you don’t know how much Maxwell and I care about you,” Kimberly said. “If not for this layer of relationship, we wouldn’t think about marrying Emma to anyone else but you. But it’s not possible; our hometown would never agree. Even in death, we wouldn’t be able to rest in our ancestral grave!”

“Abel, I know that you care for Emma,” Maxwell said, “but your relationships are just forbidden. Please be more careful in your interactions from now on. Don’t meet so often anymore.”

Abel nodded heavily and quietly stood up.

“Abel!” Emmeline looked at him timidly.

“It’s okay, listen to your parents.” Abel raised his hand, wanting to touch Emmeline’s cheek, but then he withdrew it.

“Abel...”

“I’ll head back to the factory,” Abel said. “You go to your class. I won’t neglect you.”

Emmeline said nothing.

“Be a good girl. Listen to your parents,” said Abel before leaving in silence.

She chased after him, but his car was already started and running...

[Chapter 1367 Marriage Is Like Wearing Shoes](#)

Abel drove away just like that.

Emmeline arrived at school and spent the afternoon in a daze.

She didn't even know how she managed to teach her lesson. But teaching seemed to be her natural strength. Despite occasional distractions, her lesson was flawless.

For the first time, she looked forward to 5:30 p.m.

She suddenly thought that Abel's daily routine phone call was as important as life itself.

She even feared that she might never receive a call from Abel at 5:30 p.m. again.

She was waiting.

Just then, it started raining outside.

The rainy season had come, and Emmeline despised this kind of weather.

5:30 p.m.

5:32 p.m.

5:34 p.m.

Emmeline's heart was suffocating, bit by bit.

Just then, her phone rang. It was Abel!

Instantly, Emmeline burst into tears. “Abel!”

“What's wrong, Emma?”

“Abel, you can't stop calling me, you can't!”

“I never said I wouldn't call. I've been driving, just passed a red light intersection.”

“Will I still be able to see you?”

“Silly girl, Uncle Maxwell said we should reduce our contact, not that we can't see each other.”

“But I'm really scared. I don't want it to be like this. I've gotten used to having you.”

“I understand, Emma, be good, it's okay.”

“When will you be back?”

“Hadn't I just left at noon? It's only been half a day.”

“But it feels like it's been days.”

Abel smiled, a mix of heartache and helplessness.

“Emma, how can I focus on my work with you like this?”

“I just want to be with you! I don’t care about anything else.”

“I’m conflicted too. I’ll think about how to handle this. Trust me, no matter what happens, I won’t neglect you.”

“I don’t want anything else. I just want you to come back.”

Abel said nothing. A few seconds of silence, a suffocating atmosphere.

“Emma, be good,” Abel finally said before hanging up the phone.

Emmeline, who couldn’t see it, couldn’t witness Abel, who had parked his car on the side of the road, leaning on the steering wheel for dozens of minutes. It wasn’t until the pain in his heart reached a bearable level that he started the car and drove away.

Ysabel, who sat across from Emmeline’s desk, had returned after finishing a meeting while Emmeline was on the phone.

“Ms. Louise, are you in love?” Ysabel said. “Sounds like you’re in a tough relationship. Look at you, crying.”

Emmeline wiped away her tears and smiled bitterly.

“What is love in this world that makes people willing to live and die together?” Ysabel sighed.

“Bringing poetry into this, eh?” Emmeline commented with a smile, tears still glistening in her eyes.

“Crying so dramatically, your partner must be a handsome hunk,” Ysabel said.

“He is indeed a handsome hunk!” Emmeline didn’t mince words. “But our social statuses don’t match.”

“Social status?” Ysabel said. “What is he, a prince or something?”

“His father is my grandmother’s adoptive son. Emmeline explained. “And he was raised by my father, so we have a kind of sibling relationship.”

“That sounds really complicated, but you don’t share any blood relations. That’s allowed by law.”

“But my grandmother and the people from our hometown would absolutely not agree, so my parents are going crazy trying to stop us.”

Ysabel sighed. “Emmeline, as someone who’s been through it, let me tell you, if you can endure it, then endure it. True love is hard to come by.”

At that, an image of Ysabel and Joseph came to Emmeline’s mind. Are they true love?

“To be honest, I don’t believe in marriage anymore. Some people’s true colors can be really scary.”

“Most marriages are fine, aren’t they?” Emmeline was puzzled.

“Who hasn’t had their share of ups and downs? Marriage is like wearing shoes. Whether they pinch or fit, your own feet know. Many people just endure it.”

Emmeline sighed at this point.

It was just like her parents.

In the eyes of them kids, over the years, they rarely quarreled, and the family seemed harmonious and stable. However, her mother suffered from depression, which was evidence of serious neglect by her father.

They were simply busy with their respective work, without communication, empathy, or even time to argue.

Emmeline wondered if her mother’s heart was also barren.

Suddenly, Ysabel walked over to Emmeline and rolled up her sleeve.

There, Emmeline saw two glaring bloodstains on the inside of her arm.

[Chapter 1368 The Real-Life Rhett Butler](#)

“How did this happen, Ysabel?” Emmeline looked shocked.

“My husband did this to me with a whip.”

“Why would he treat you like this?” Emmeline widened her eyes. This is domestic violence!

“He ignores his work, doesn’t take responsibility, and can’t stand criticism. Living with a man like him is exhausting.

“For the sake of my child. I have to worry about everything, work non-stop, support the family, raise the child, and even support him.”

Emmeline took a deep breath and stood up involuntarily. “Why are you still with him?”

Im preparing for a divorce. I’ve had enough. If this continues, I’ll have to sacrifice my whole life for him.”

At that, Ysabel whispered in Emmeline’s ear, “I’m going to marry Mr. Sayer. I want to find my own happiness!”

Her eyes suddenly lit up, filled with anticipation of getting Emmeline’s blessing.

Emmeline remained silent, feeling that Ysabel’s actions were destroying someone else’s family. But Ysabel,

driven by love, seemed oblivious to the consequences.

A few days later, Emmeline returned home from work in the afternoon and heard the sound of a puppy.

To her surprise, there was a white little Bichon Frise on the sofa.

Emmeline had always loved animals and immediately put down her handbag to pick up the little puppy and cradled it in her arms. The warm, fluffy sensation made her heart melt instantly.

“Mom, where did this puppy come from? It’s so cute!”

“Abel sent it.”

“Oh? When did he do that?”

“About half an hour ago.”

“Why didn’t he stay for dinner?”

“I asked him the same thing, but he said there was still work to be done at the factory, so he left.”

Emmeline buried her head in the puppy’s fur and murmured, “Tell me, why didn’t Abel wait for me? Doesn’t he know that I miss him?”

Little did she know that after putting down the puppy, Abel had driven to the corner of the elementary school.

At 5:25 p.m., after making the prearranged phone call to Emmeline, he didn’t leave. Instead, he waited for her, watching her as she left the school and boarded the bus. He followed her in his car, watching her get off the bus, walk through the community garden, and return home step by step. Only then did he drive away.

Emmeline had no idea that almost every afternoon, Abel would rehearse this process.

Love, yet keeping a safe distance, the heart-wrenching feeling was something only he knew.

Monday morning, Joseph’s wife paid another visit to the school.

This time, Ysabel couldn’t escape her wrath. She was pinned down by the woman’s large body and received dozens of hard slaps.

Joseph arrived and pulled his wife away, delivering a resounding slap to her face.

Even with a woman weighing nearly 200 pounds, it didn’t stop her from spinning in place. She fell to the ground with a screeching howl.

Students and teachers crowded the hallway, observing the commotion.

Joseph lifted Ysabel off the ground, and in full view of everyone, they pushed through the crowd and left.

There was a mix of sympathy and commentary from the onlookers.

“Another real-life Rhett Butler.”

“At least he’s a man who’s willing to take responsibility

“Doesn’t Joseph know that his wife’s uncle works in the education department? He might be sabotaging himself.

“This doesn’t seem like the seven-year itch but more like a 200-pound dilemma.”

“Hahaha!”

Joseph's wife continued to shout from the ground, Joseph Sayer, you b*stard! I won't let you get away with this!"

In fact, within a couple of days, the school principal had a meeting with Joseph and Ysabel.

For the time being, Joseph was still allowed to work, while Ysabel was granted an extended leave.

With just a few more days until the summer break, the school was bustling with preparations, including renovating the playground and planning to lay green synthetic turf on the running track.

Teachers and students were busy with final exams, and Joseph's incident slowly faded into the background.

The little Bichon Frise that Abel sent grew significantly in just a week, becoming chubby and adorable.

Emmeline named it "Seal."

Her mother asked, "Why would you name such a tiny dog 'Seal'?"

Emmeline replied, "You just haven't noticed. Look at those round, gleaming eyes, the small black nose, and that expression. Doesn't it resemble a seal?"

After a closer look, her mother agreed.

Seal's presence not only comforted Emmeline's heart but also intensified her longing for Abel.

Several times, she held Seal in her arms, and tears would well up in her eyes.

"Abel, Abel!" Emmeline's yearning for him had become overwhelming.

[Chapter 1369 Deep-Seated Longing](#)

In the afternoon, the school announced the start of summer vacation.

After leaving school, it was still early, so Emmeline took a bus to Altney.

It was just a little after 5:20 p.m. when she got off the bus at the bus stop, and Abel's call came in.

"Hey, Abel," Emmeline sat on the bench at the bus stop.

"Hey, has school been dismissed?" Abel asked.

Technically, summer break has begun."

Abel heard the noisy sounds of car horns and chatter coming from her phone and asked, "Emma, where are you?" I'm at the bus stop."

"Why are you there?"

"I wanted to come and see you."

Listen, go back home right away, don't go anywhere else, it's going to rain."

"But..."

“Be a good girl...” Abel said and disconnected the call right away, leaving Emmeline to the busy signal.

“Abel...” She softly called out his name still.

In actuality, Abel was at the corner of the elementary school right then.

When he heard Emmeline say she was at the bus stop, he immediately started his car.

In just four or five minutes, he arrived at the intersection near the bus stop.

From a distance, he saw that the bus stop was empty, with no sign of the little figure he longed for.

“Emma has already gone home,” he muttered to himself.

At that, he slowly drove the car to the side of the platform, killed the engine, and lit a cigarette.

The rain started to fall, with large raindrops hitting the car’s windshield.

“Did you bring an umbrella, Emma? Will you get soaked?” Abel looked around in confusion, trying to figure out which intersection was Emma’s way back home.

After taking a few deep drags of his cigarette, he started the car and drove along the first intersection.

He drove all the way to the entrance of the community, estimating that it would take Emma several minutes to walk from the bus stop to this place.

Then, he turned the car around and drove along the second road, but still couldn’t find any trace of Emmeline.

At that, he turned into the third road and drove to the bottom of the building where they lived, but still, there was no sign of her.

Abel returned to the roadside bus station and parked the car.

He closed his eyes, and tears slid from the corners of his eyes.

I’m such an idiot, Emma. You’ve already arrived home, haven’t you? I didn’t see you.

“Abel. I’m already here; why won’t you let me come find you?” Emmeline sat blankly on the bench under the platform.

It was raining, and the vehicles and pedestrians gradually decreased, leaving the road soaked.

“Abel, it’s raining so heavily. Where should I go? The last bus has already left. Are you no longer concerned about me?”

Abel took out his phone, looked at Emmeline’s number, and thought about pressing it but then withdrew his finger, repeating this three times.

He was afraid that his uncle and aunt were nearby and they would scold his beloved Emma.

He started the car, ignited the engine, and drove away.

The rain was too heavy, and the wind intensified it, soaking Emmeline’s clothes. Tears streamed down her face.

Kimberly called, "Emma, why haven't you come back yet?"

"I'm at a friend's house, having dinner together. It's raining, so I'll stay over. I won't be back tonight," Emmeline muttered.

Before Emmeline knew it, she grew drowsy, leaning against the platform's railing.

Across the road, a person with a large black umbrella trudged through the pouring rain toward this side.

His face was not visible; all she could see was his tall figure under the black umbrella.

The person reached the platform.

The platform's canopy was no longer effective in the heavy wind and rain, and Emmeline was already soaked.

She lifted her head, and their eyes met.

"Emmeline?"

"Benjamin!"

"Oh my God! How is it you? What are you doing here?"

Emmeline's soaked appearance and pitiful expression caught Benjamin off guard.

"I saw someone sitting over here from afar and knew they were stuck in the heavy rain, but I never expected it to be you!"

Emmeline remembered that not far from the bus stop was Tony's 'RetroWave Advertisements. Benjamin must have been there.

"Come with me to Tony's office, Benjamin helped Emmeline up.

The rain was too heavy, and the large black umbrella couldn't cover both of them. Benjamin put his arm around Emmeline's shoulders, sheltering her entirely under the umbrella, and they entered RetroWave Advertisements.

"I'll call your brother to come pick you up," Tony said with surprise when he saw Emmeline. "You'll catch a cold in this condition."

"No, please," Emmeline hurriedly replied. "Don't let Abel know!"

"Why?" Tony couldn't understand. "Why don't you want him to know?"

[Chapter 1370 Business Plan](#)

"I just don't." Emmeline furrowed her eyebrows lightly.

"But you can't stay like this either," Benjamin said. "It's getting dark."

"Either way, don't tell Abel. Please," Emmeline pleaded with teary eyes..

Tony and Benjamin exchanged glances, not fully understanding the situation, but decided not to press further.

“Benjamin, you take Emmeline to the guesthouse and find some clothes for her to change into,” Tony said. Benjamin drove his inspection vehicle and brought Emmeline to the nearby Transport Guesthouse.

In the lobby, they encountered a tall, slender girl dressed in a Transport uniform. Her hair was tied up, and she had a pretty face with delicate features.

“Who’s this, Captain York? Who did you bring here?” The girl’s tone was clearly unfriendly.

“Janie, don’t be nosy,” Benjamin said. “She’s a friend’s younger sister, and I need you to look after her.”

“So, she’s your sister?” Janie Eastwood quirked a brow. You seem to have a lot of sisters. Am I one of them?”

“Enough yapping. Will you help or not?”

“I’ll help! I’m just teasing you.” Janie rolled her eyes. “I didn’t say I won’t help, did I? Look at how pitiful she seems.

“Get a room for her, let her take a hot bath, and change into your uniform.”

“Alright! If it’s Captain York’s orders, I’ll do it!” Janie showed a lot of respect for this formidable inspection team captain.

Janie led Emmeline to the innermost room in the hallway, then said courteously, “There’s hot water in the bathroom; you can take a shower first. I’ll fetch a fresh uniform for you, and you can change later.”

“Alright, thank you,” Emmeline replied with a faint smile.

Janie also smiled, revealing her two sweet dimples. D

Emmeline took a hot shower and changed into the Transport uniform that Janie had brought her.

Although the uniform pants were a bit long and the short-sleeved shirt was somewhat oversized, the comfort and warmth it provided made Emmeline feel much better.

Meanwhile, Benjamin was still waiting in the lobby.

When Emmeline came out in her new clothes, he said, “Tony has prepared dinner in his office. Let’s go over for a meal.”

“Is this not too much trouble?” Emmeline felt a bit embarrassed.

“We’re all friends; there’s no trouble at all. Your brother even saved Tony once,” Benjamin reassured her.

As they were about to leave, Janie called out, “Benjamin.”

He turned around.

“Is she really your friend’s sister?”

“Yes.”

“Not your girlfriend?”

“No.”

Finally, the young woman’s complexion changed for the better.

They drove back to RetroWave Advertisements, and indeed, Tony had set up a table full of food and drinks.

The rain outside had seemingly lessened a bit, and it was already around 8 p.m.

Tony couldn’t help but express his gratitude once again for Abel’s help last time.

Emmeline asked him, “How’s your injury? Is it better now?”

“It’s all good now,” Tony said. “I had a follow-up X-ray a few days ago, and the bones have healed well. But the doctor did advise me not to put too much weight on it for a while and to use crutches for some time.”

“Tony said, when he’s finally crutches-free, he wants to find a nice hotel and properly thank you and Abel,” Benjamin said.

“It’s all in the past. You don’t have to go that far.” Emmeline smiled.

“But Emmeline, how did you end up at the bus stop today? Were you stuck because of the rain?” Tony asked.

Emmeline’s nose tingled, and tears almost welled up in her eyes. She lowered her head and remained silent.

“What about Abel? Doesn’t he know you’re here?” Benjamin pressed on, leading Tony to kick him under the table.

“It’s alright, Emmeline. Abel’s sister is also my sister!” Tony pronounced. “If your brother can’t make it, I’ll take care of you.”

Emmeline nodded and smiled politely, pressing her lips together.

A paper covered in writing was blown by the fan and fell by her feet. Emmeline picked it up, and it read: Proposal for the Advertising Renovation of the Department Store.

Emmeline quickly skimmed through the contents and then said softly. “The proposal should highlight the objectives, suggest methods, summarize the benefits, list the materials, and calculate the budget.”

Emmeline, you understand proposal writing?” Tony looked surprised.

“I took a course in advertising during any college years as part of my business management major.” Emmeline replied.

Tony looked pleasantly surprised. “You’re like a godsend! The storm brought me Lady Luck!” Emmeline laughed. “What are you talking about, Tony? I don’t understand.”