

Are Mine 581

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"I didn't know Ms. Louise hid the Worryfree drug in her suitcase. Had I known, I would've thrown it away."

Abel mumbled, "It's not Emma's fault. The drug is probably her best bet if I could not find my feelings for her again."

"But you said that you are smitten with Ms. Louise again, so I think Mr. Waylon's Worryfree drug might not be as effective," Sam said.

Abel replied, "That's hard to say. I remember waking up from taking the drug, feeling absolutely nothing for Emma. Otherwise, I'd have died on Adelmarr Island."

Sam looked dejected. Abel was right about it.

Luca had mentioned to Sam about Abel's situation then.

Sigh.

Sam put all the blame on Waylon.

"I can fall in love with Emma all over again. The lightning struck me, bringing back all my emotions for Emma." Abel kneaded his temples.

"Huh? A lightning strike?" Sam was surprised.

"Yeah."

"It's not like we should push Ms. Louise to get struck by lightning, Mr. Abel. It's too risky."

Abel said, "I'm only talking about a possibility. I might be wrong, but the lightning traveled through the umbrella and shocked me, and suddenly I realized I had been worried and missing Emma like crazy. I don't want to lose her. It might just be a coincidence."

Sam rejected the idea without thinking twice. "Coincidence or not, I can't let any lightning strike Ms. Louise or Master Adelmarr will kill me."

"I won't take any chances with Emma either. I will only love her and hopefully, my emotions will touch her to accept and love me again." Abel looked miserable.

"Oh, you poor lovers. It's in your hands whether your story with her will go on." Sam teared up.

"My concern is..."

Abel looked straight at Sam. "Will Emma fall in love with Benjamin? Benjamin has the advantage since he gets to hang around with her!"

"Um..." Sam could not give a straight answer.

Benjamin always had a soft spot for Emmeline.

What if Emmeline developed feelings for Benjamin while her relationship with Abel was on a break?

"Sam, do me a favor please," Abel anxiously cried.

"Don't be a stranger, Mr. Abel. Let me know how I can help."

Abel responded, "You must tell me whenever Benjamin shows up. It doesn't matter where or when. I don't want Emma to be with him."

"Don't worry, Mr. Abel. You and Ms. Louise have four children together. You got my vote." Sam nodded her head.

"That's great. Feel free to contact me anytime if and when Benjamin gets close to Emma. I will send Luca here to thank you."

Amid her surprise, a suspicious blush crept onto Sam's ears.

"Don't mention it, Mr. Abel. I don't need your thanks and Luca."

"I hope you can be my inside person."

"Relax. I will."

The following morning, Emmeline got out of bed, humming a tune; washed up, humming a tune; and entered the kitchen, humming a tune.

She made herself something rich and delicious.

It took a single night for her to stop dwelling on her emotional problems, and now she was full of life again.

Love was a powerful and all-consuming force that could lead to pain and even death.

Hahaha! She felt a burden of emotions lifted from her shoulders, and life was good.

"Ms. Louise, you look happy." Sam drew close.

"Why shouldn't I be happy?" Emmeline blinked in surprise.

Sam pouted her lips. There was a reason to be unhappy.

Abel was unhappy.

Folding his arms, Abel leaned against the kitchen door frame.

He cocked his head to look at the heartless woman. Now that she suddenly had no feelings for him, she looked as chirpy as a bird.

"Are you making breakfast, Ms. Louise? What do you fancy having? I will make it for you both." Sam rolled up her sleeves.

"Us both? Who are us?" Emmeline blinked again.

"You and Mr. Abel. I doubt Mr. Abel had his breakfast yet," Sam answered.

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"We were lucky. The rain had stopped by the time we got here," Luca answered.

Sam uttered, "Did you have breakfast? I'll make you something. Come on in and have a seat."

"Alright. Thank you, Sam," Luca was quick to reply.

The security team behind Luca said altogether, "Thank you, Sam."

Abel got dressed into the suit he left in the house the last time and walked downstairs.

He ran into Luca and the other bodyguards who were thanking Sam and elbowing into the house.

"Tell them to grab breakfast in a restaurant. There are nine of you. How much can she cook for all of you?" Abel pulled a long face.

Sam smiled. "It's okay. I can cook in batches. It won't take long."

Left with no excuse to take it out on his security team, Abel gave a nod.

He instructed Luca, "Why are you standing there? Clean up the place and run a business."

Getting the message from Abel, Luca beckoned his team. "Mop the floor, wipe the tables, arrange the chairs, and make coffee."

The bodyguards rolled up their sleeves and got down to business.

Thanks to the power in numbers, the café was sparkling clean in no time.

Luca said, "Take a seat and wait to be served. Don't just stand there. Are you trying to scare the customers?"

The bodyguards obediently sat down in order.

They put their sunglasses on the edge of the table rather uniformly.

Abel took a glance at them. Luca had some success with the bodyguards' training.

It did not take long before the first batch of breakfast was out of the oven. She brought out three plates on a tray.

Luca immediately went to take the tray from Sam. The first three bodyguards had the honor of having their breakfast before everybody else.

"Thank you, Sam. Thank you, Luca."

The three bodyguards dug in.

They each got a poached egg too.

The security team ate with great gusto.

Soon the second and third batches of breakfast were out.

The team of nine enjoyed a nice hot breakfast.

By then, Emmeline was dressed up and ready to go. She hummed a song while walking downstairs.

Emmeline frowned when she saw the situation downstairs. "Sam, are we running a breakfast diner now? Why are so many having breakfast here?"

"Ms. Louise, it's us." Luca urgently jolted up and swallowed the food in his mouth.

Emmeline finally recognized the people. "Oh. Here I was, wondering why you were all wearing the same clothes. Take your time. I'll make coffee."

"I'll do it. How many cups?" Sam asked.

Emmeline gave it a thought before replying, "Three cups."

Sam looked at Abel and commented, "Three cups? I don't drink coffee. Two cups should be enough for you and Mr. Abel."

"Mr. Abel? I wasn't going to get him a cup of coffee." Emmeline looked askance at Abel.

Abel was lost for words.

Sam pouted her luscious lips. "Why three cups?"

"A cup for me, Benjamin, and Janie. I'm going to the Adelmar Group, remember?" Emmeline answered.

Sam widened her eyes and gave Abel a sympathetic look.

"Girl, did you get dolled up to deliver coffee to Benjamin?" Abel curled his lips bewitchingly.

"None of your business. Who are you?" Emmeline stared at him in disdain.

Abel grimaced. "Who am I? I'm your husband, your man!"

"I don't have a husband. I'm not married. Don't act like you're close to me. I have no man." Emmeline pursed her lips.

"Where did your four children come from without a man? I won't allow you to get too close to Benjamin." Abel scowled.

"Why? It's not like you love me. Who are you to stop other men from showing me affection?" Emmeline rolled her eyes.

Abel had a vicious look. "Who said I don't? I said it a hundred times. I love you! I love you! My heart belongs to you! Can't you get it to your head?"

Emmeline said nothing, but her heart skipped a beat.

She was blushing too.

Luca and the security team were dumbstruck. They picked their heads up from their plates in shock and stared at their boss in disbelief.

I love you! I love you! My heart belongs to you...

Was it something that came out of Mr. Abel's mouth?

Embarrassed, Abel gave a chilling look and sternly uttered, "What are you looking at? Haven't you seen a public declaration of love before?"

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Feeling intimidated, the security team hung their heads low and buried their faces in their food.

Sam gave Emmeline a nudge. "Look, Ms. Louise. Mr. Abel is willing to do so much for you. Can't you give him a chance?"

"I didn't ask him to, so why should I?" Emmeline expressed contempt.

Sam had no words.

"He could've said it before I took the Worryfree drug. It's too late to say anything now. I don't love him anymore. I'm considering my next love life now."

Sam thought to herself. I'll just keep my mouth shut.

Abel stood before Emmeline. "No, Emma. The next guy for you will still be me. It has to be me. No need to consider it. I didn't. I never stopped loving you."

Emmeline downplayed the situation. "You can't compare your personal experience with others. I might just hit it off with the next guy. Love is strange. You can never control or force it. It happens naturally."

Abel was at a loss. Jesus Christ. What am I supposed to do now?

D*mn Waylon! Hang on, I should be blaming the Worryfree drug Waylon invented!

Worryfree was a lifesaver but a curse too.

"In any case, I won't allow you to fall in love with another man!" Abel's tyranny trait was kicking up again.

Emmeline scoffed. "Hmph. It's not something for you to decide. You said before that you'd rather love a pig than me, so my love life doesn't concern you."

Abel was speechless. He wanted to give himself a slap in the face.

Emmeline was simply quoting him.

Women were hard to please.

With three cups of coffee brewed, Sam packed them to go and put them in a coffee holder and bag before handing the bag to Emmeline.

Emmeline carried the bag and told Sam, "Don't wait up for me. I'll have lunch with Benjamin in the office building's cafeteria."

"Oh?" Sam widened her eyes and gave Abel a look of sympathy.

Come on, Mr. Abel. Say something. What are you going to do now?

Although Mr. Benjamin is a good husband material, you have children with Ms. Louise!

It's better for a family to be together than apart. Mr. Abel, you can do it!

Emmeline walked to the door, and Abel ingratiatingly held the glass door open for her.

"I'll be your chauffeur, Emma."

"You? You're not good enough." Emmeline pursed her lips and shook her head.

"...I'm not a bad choice. I look the part."

"It's not a matter of appearance."

"...But you don't have other chauffeurs."

"I don't need one. I can drive myself anywhere," Emmeline replied.

"But you're the boss of the Adelmarr Group. Someone of your stature should not be driving."

Emmeline was stumped.

"The boss is too important to drive themselves to work. Leave it to me." Abel took the bag of coffee from Emmeline.

Emmeline gave it a thought before nodding. "Alright. I'll hire your service for now."

Overjoyed, Abel reached out to hold Emmeline's hand.

Emmeline withdrew her hand and glared at him. "Do you have a chauffeur who holds your hand wherever you go?"

Abel made a pouty face. "Aren't we crossing the road? I'll hold your hand to cross the road. It's safer."

"I can handle myself. Just bring the car around," Emmeline uttered.

Abel had to drop the subject.

Once out of the café, it struck Abel that he parked the security vehicle right outside the café.

Where was the car?

Luca rushed over. "Mr. Abel, I drove the car to the parking lot with the spare key. The car had three parking tickets."

"Oh." Abel said nothing else. He carried the bag and took Emmeline's hand to cross the road.

Emmeline shook his hand off when they arrived at the parking lot.

Abel opened the back door of the Rolls Royce for Emmeline.

He got behind the wheel.

The journey to the Adelmarr Group's basement parking lot took ten minutes. Abel pulled up at a parking spot.

Luca tagged along in the back with one of the three security vehicles.

Emmeline made a beeline to the CEO's exclusive elevator and accessed it with her thumbprint.

Abel deftly squeezed into the elevator with her.

"Why are you coming along?" Emmeline's eyes popped open.

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"Coffee. I'm delivering coffee to Benjamin." Abel flashed the coffee bag.

"I won't trouble you on that." Emmeline put her hands out to grab the bag, but Abel raised his arm up high.

Emmeline could not reach it despite getting on her tiptoes.

"You're a lady boss. It's not a boss' job to deliver coffee," Abel said.

"I think you're looking for an excuse to get upstairs with you. Your job as a chauffeur is over. You can leave," Emmeline uttered.

Abel pressed the floor button, turning a deaf ear to Emmeline's reply.

The elevator was already moving up anyway, so he did not have to get off.

Emmeline scoffed and turned her face away, refusing to give him the time of the day.

However, the elevator had three-sided mirrors. She could see Abel standing tall behind her in each mirror.

It was a full-frontal view of his handsome face.

While Emmeline did not want to look at his face, he was everywhere no matter where she looked.

Emmeline picked her head up and looked to the top.

There was a mirror on the ceiling too. She could still see Abel near her.

His high nose bridge and ruggedness were in full glory.

The man was good-looking even from an aerial view.

With the elevator opening on the 88th floor, Emmeline took a step out of there.

Abel hurriedly kept up with her.

He walked behind her with a bag in hand.

Once outside the CEO's office, Joey, the secretary stopped Emmeline.

"Mr. Benjamin requested some privacy. Do you have an appointment, Ms. Louise?"

"Ahem! Ahem!" Abel cleared his throat behind Emmeline.

Recognizing the man, Joey nearly dropped her jaw to the ground.

"M-Mr. Abel? What brings you here?"

Abel showed the bag in hand. "I'm here to deliver coffee to Benjamin."

"Deliver..."

Deliver coffee to Benjamin?

Abel Ryker, the CEO of the Ryker Group, was delivering coffee to Benjamin?

Choking on her saliva, Joey hacked out loud.

Emmeline knocked on the door of the CEO's office.

"Didn't I ask not to be disturbed?" Benjamin's callous voice echoed from the other side of the door.

"Does it extend to me as well?" Emmeline sulkily asked.

After a brief silence inside, the heavy carved door was pushed open.

Benjamin excitedly said, "You're here, Emma."

"Yeah. I came to check on things around the office." Emmeline walked into the office.

Benjamin gasped, "Oh, my. When did my fair lady become interested in work? Didn't you retire early?"

He was about to close the door when a towering figure blocked the entrance.

Abel stood there with a sour face.

"Abel? Why are you here?" Benjamin was surprised.

"I'm here to deliver coffee to you and Janie," Abel answered with a deadpan look.

"Come in. Why are you delivering coffee, Mr. Abel?" Abel asked in confusion.

Abel took a glance at Emmeline. "I'm Ms. Louise's assistant. She's here to keep tabs on work, and I'll be accompanying her."

Benjamin furrowed his brows. What game was Abel playing?

Did he not have feelings for Emmeline anymore?

Why was he following Emmeline around when there were no feelings involved?

Abel was clearly here to keep an eye on Emmeline. Besides, he appeared jealous.

He did not look like he had fallen out of love with Emmeline.

"Come on in, Mr. Abel. Call Janie over," Benjamin instructed Joey.

"Sure, Mr. Benjamin."

Joey reluctantly took her eyes away from Abel and went to the secretariat office to call Janie.

It did not take long for Janie to arrive. Her arrival was announced by the clicking of her heels from afar.

Abel was sitting on the sofa. He suddenly stood up and walked out of the office.

He stopped Janie from entering the office.

Abel then shut the door behind him.

Janie exclaimed in surprise, "Mr. Abel? Isn't Emma here? Why are you stopping me from getting inside?"

Abel took her by the arm and eagerly said, "Can I have a moment with you, Ms. Eastwood?"

Seeing that Abel was acting weird, Janie took him to her office.

"What's the matter?" Janie waited until the door was closed before asking.

"Do you know about the Worryfree drug, Ms. Eastwood?" Abel cut to the chase.

"Yeah. You took the drug and stopped loving Emma. Emma was so upset. She even got the wedding gown ready. I'm not sure what she's going to do with the wedding dress."

"Of course, we'll get married..."

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"Of course, we'll get married! I've fallen in love with Emma all over again, and I love her with all my heart," Abel said.

Janie leaped with joy. "That's great. When are you getting married? This is great news!"

Abel uttered with a long face, "That's the problem. Emma took the Worryfree drug last night, so she..."

"W-What?"

Hit by waves of emotion, Janie did not know how to react. "Emma took the Worryfree drug? Does she... Does she..."

Abel grimaced. "That's right. Emma stopped loving me overnight. I'm no better than a stranger to her."

"How did this happen? Why do you always let one another slip away?" Janie flipped out.

"I can't let things spiral out of control. That's why I can't leave Emma out of my sight," Abel replied.

"What's the point of following her? You can't force a relationship," Janie answered.

Abel said, "Better safe than sorry. Emma wanted to deliver coffee to Benjamin first thing in the morning. She's having a work lunch with Benjamin later. You know Benjamin is my rival, whether in business or love."

"I know." Janie sympathetically nodded.

"Besides, you probably don't want Emma and Benjamin to get together, right?"

"Um... No one can stop that from happening if it does happen." Janie smiled dryly.

"That's what you think, but I must stop them. I can't allow Benjamin to swoop in and sweep Emma off her feet. We must be on a united front, Ms. Eastwood," Abel uttered.

“United front?”

“That’s right.”

Abel seemed to get through to Janie.

“In other words, I’ll keep an eye on Benjamin and stop him from being with Emma. Is that what you’re saying?”

“Yes. You should fight for a chance since you love Benjamin. You must get rid of all the wrong women for him.”

“Wrong women?”

Abel nodded his head. “Yeah. Emma is the wrong woman for Benjamin.”

“Oh, I get it. How should I go about it, Mr. Abel?” Janie put on a serious look.

“Try your best to cling to Benjamin. Don’t let him have a chance to be alone with Emma.”

“Um... That’s a little hard. I’m afraid it’s not up to me to decide anything for Mr. Benjamin,” Janie answered.

Abel responded, “Make use of your resources. You can play your charms by acting cute, sultry, sweet, or flirty. Benjamin won’t be able to resist you.”

“I got it.” Janie bobbed her head. Making use of her charms was up her alley.

Whether the trick would work on Benjamin was a different matter.

Janie’s phone rang. It was from Emmeline.

She picked up the call. “Emma.”

“Aren’t you supposed to join us for coffee? Why aren’t you here yet? Are you fixing your makeup?”

“I’m coming. I was busy with a client.”

“Come over since you’re done. Your coffee is getting cold.”

“Alright, Emma.”

Janie hung up and told Abel, “Let’s go. They’re alone in a room now.”

“Okay.” Abel hurried out of Janie’s office.

The pair arrived at the CEO’s office one after the other.

Under the impression that Abel had gone to the loo, Emmeline did not think much of it.

Benjamin, on the other hand, had an inkling about something weird going on.

He sent a text to Eric, his personal assistant. “I want the surveillance footage outside my office from three minutes ago.”

Eric texted back, "Sure, Mr. Benjamin."

Several minutes later, a file was sent to Benjamin's phone.

Benjamin set his phone mute and clicked on the video file. He saw Abel abduct Janie to the secretariat office.

Benjamin furrowed his brows but said nothing.

He thought something strange was going on when Emmeline showed up unannounced early in the morning, and Abel followed her around like a puppy dog.

Why did Abel kidnap Janie to the secretariat office?

"Emma, enjoy your coffee in the office with Abel. I need to attend a brief meeting," Benjamin said with a smile.

"I'll go too." Emmeline stood up.

"Why should you go? Janie can come along. Stay here with Abel," Benjamin uttered.

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"I'm going, and that's final. Career is more important than men. Plus, I don't like this guy here," Emmeline said.

Abel scowled.

Benjamin widened his eyes.

What was going on?

What had gotten into Emma?

Was she not head over heels for Abel?

Why was Emmeline saying that she did not like the man?

While Benjamin was scratching his head, Janie gave him a look.

Benjamin told Emmeline, "Be good now, Emma. Abel is a guest. You should stay with him. I'll be right back after the meeting."

"I want to go with you. I should take part in matters about Adelmar." Emmeline held Benjamin's arm.

"Leave the company affairs to Benjamin." Abel made his presence known by squeezing between Emmeline and Benjamin, forcing Emmeline to let go of Benjamin's arm.

As Emmeline tried to take hold of Benjamin again, Janie was one step ahead at hogging Benjamin's arm.

"Yeah, Emma. Enjoy your coffee with Mr. Abel. Mr. Benjamin and I will be at the meeting."

Janie dragged Benjamin out and closed the door behind them.

The pair took quick paces to the secretariat office.

"Janie, what happened? Why are the three of you acting weird?"

Janie repeated the information she got from Abel to Benjamin.

"So you should know better than to get too close to Emma. Don't let Emma fall in love with you. She shares four children with Abel. You can't tear their family apart."

Benjamin was peeved. "Why would I tear them apart? But Emma took the Worryfree drug? Where did she get the drug from?"

"Waylon must have given it to her. That's the only explanation," Janie replied.

"Waylon is doing more harm than good!"

Benjamin furiously pulled out his phone. "I'm going to ask him his purpose for giving Emma the Worryfree drug."

With the call connecting, Waylon's steady voice came on the other line. "Ben?"

"Waylon, did you give the Worryfree drug to Emma?" Benjamin angrily questioned.

Waylon answered, "Yeah. Why?"

"Why would you give the godforsaken stuff to her?"

Waylon responded, "I felt bad for Emma. Are you expecting Emma to die of a broken heart if Abel never finds his feelings for her and becomes smitten with another woman?"

Benjamin had no words because Waylon had a point.

Before that could happen, the best course of action Emmeline could take was to wipe away all the feelings she had for him.

Only then, she would be free from the pain. She could live a happy and healthy life.

"So Abel is in love with someone else? Is that why Emma took the drug?" Waylon asked.

Benjamin replied, "I would thank you if that were the case. The problem now is that Abel is mad about Emma again, but for some reason, Emma took the Worryfree drug."

"So the situation now is Abel loves Emma, but Emma doesn't care about Abel anymore?" Waylon inquired.

"Yes. What should we do now?" Benjamin responded.

"When did that happen? How is it possible that Emma has no idea about Abel's feelings for her? Why was she so dumb to take the drug?" Waylon frowned.

Benjamin was lost for words.

He had no clue about what took place or how it happened last night.

Benjamin answered, "Hang on, Waylon. I'll ask Sam for the specifics. I'll call you back in a bit."

"Alright. We'll talk when you find out what's going on. No point guessing around," Waylon remarked.

After the call with Waylon, Benjamin dialed Sam's number.

Sam started weeping.

"That's right. Mr. Abel said his heart belongs to Ms. Louise, but Ms. Louise didn't listen to him and took the Worryfree drug. There was a strong stench of paprika. I don't think I can ever forget the smell."

"Paprika? Is that the smell of the drug?" Benjamin furrowed his brows.

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"Yeah. I do most of the cooking, so that's an aroma I'm familiar with," Sam answered.

Benjamin commented, "That's eccentric of Waylon. He invented a weird drug, only to add a strange smell to it."

"Yeah. The thick smell of common seasoning reminds me of my mom."

"Alright. I'll let Waylon know. He didn't believe me when I told him," Benjamin said.

Sam gave a nod. Prior to hanging up, she uttered, "Okay. Mr. Benjamin, don't try to swoop in and take Ms. Louise away. It's indecent to do that."

Benjamin was lost for words.

It was a great opportunity.

Benjamin was confident that Emmeline would fall in love with him so long as her feelings for Abel were no more.

He was the only person in the whole of Struyria who could compete with Abel.

Sam nervously said, "Why aren't you talking, Mr. Benjamin? Don't get any ideas!"

"I know. What do you take me for? Am I that type of person?" Benjamin questioned.

Once the call ended, Benjamin rang Waylon back.

"Waylon, Abel is now in love with Emma, but Emma didn't hear him say it, so she took the Worryfree drug. Sam said it smelled like paprika. Why must you add such a weird smell for a drug?"

Waylon fell silent for a moment before bursting into laughter.

"Is this a time to laugh, Waylon? How can you make light of the situation?" Benjamin was furious.

Waylon replied, "Here's the thing. Can you ask Sam to check whether she has the smoked paprika seasoning in the kitchen? If she has none, I can mail a few bottles over."

He then gleefully terminated the call.

Benjamin held the phone with a blank expression.

Did Waylon just tell him to check with Sam whether they had smoked paprika seasoning in the kitchen?

Apparently, Waylon was happy to deliver some bottles if there were none.

What did he mean by that?

It then dawned on Benjamin.

“Hold Abel and Emma until my return. I’m taking a quick trip to Nightfall,” Benjamin told Janie.

While Janie was confused, she did as she was told.

“Oh, okay. Hurry back. I don’t know how long I can stall Emma.”

“Sure.” Without taking his jacket, Benjamin called Eric and bolted to the elevator.

Benjamin arrived at Nightfall Café in a little over ten minutes. He headed straight to the second floor.

“Mr. Benjamin, what brings you here? Didn’t Ms. Louise go to you?” Sam came over.

“I came to check whether you have the smoked paprika seasoning.”

Sam responded, “Don’t bother looking. We’re out of paprika. I’ll get some later. Are you making something with paprika?”

“Are you really out?” Benjamin came to a screeching halt at the stairwell.

Sam crashed onto Benjamin headfirst.

Benjamin helped her from falling before asking, “Where did you find Emma taking the drug?”

“In her room. The suitcase is still on the floor. The Worryfree drug was probably stashed in the suitcase,” Sam replied.

“Suitcase? Come on. Open it up for me,” Benjamin said.

“Why are you checking on Ms. Louise’s personal items? Ms. Louise will be pissed if she finds out.” Sam pouted.

“Just do it. I’ll take responsibility for it.”

“Alright then.” Sam gave a nod.

The pair entered the master bedroom, and Sam pulled out Emmeline’s suitcase from the closet.

The suitcase was not locked, so it was easy to open.

Benjamin knelt to rummage around the suitcase.

“What are you looking for, Mr. Benjamin?”

Benjamin felt a plastic bottle at the bottom and pulled it out for a look...

Sam exclaimed, “Smoked paprika? Oh, so we’re not out of seasoning. Ms. Louise kept it in her suitcase.”

She reached out to take the bottle.

Benjamin shied away.

“This is the real Worryfree drug. Emma took the smoked paprika.”

Dumbstruck at first, Sam sprung up. "So Ms. Louise is okay!"

"She's playing Abel, making him eat his words," Benjamin said.

Sam was in stitches. "Hahaha! I got to give it to you, Ms. Louise. You had Mr. Abel fooled. To think he became your personal chauffeur and bag carrier!"

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Benjamin slipped Worryfree into his pocket while Sam continued laughing and made his way downstairs.

When he returned to Adelmar, Benjamin explained the situation to Janie but didn't mention that he had retrieved Worryfree himself.

"Well, that makes things easier," Janie said. "We'll just act like we don't know anything and put on a good show to stir things up."

"Right," Benjamin said. "Just make sure you play along with me, or else the act won't be convincing."

"Don't worry," Janie said with a grin. "I'll make sure it's seamless."

The two of them then made their way back to the CEO's office.

Abel and Emmeline were sipping coffee in the lounge. Emmeline sat in a plush armchair, flipping through some reports with a serious look on her face.

"You don't understand any of this, do you?" Abel leaned in and asked. "Do you want me to explain it to you?"

"Who says I have to understand?" Emmeline glanced at him. "Can't I just look at it for fun?"

"Sure," Abel said. "If you enjoy looking at things, I can take you to the Ryker Group and show you around any department you want to see."

"I'm not interested in the Ryker Group," Emmeline continued to peruse the reports. "The Ryker Group isn't mine."

"How is it not yours?" Abel asked. "You're a Ryker family heiress, after all."

"I can't accept that title," Emmeline replied, not even lifting her eyelids. "We're not married yet, so how can I be a Ryker family heiress?"

"Our wedding is coming up soon," Abel pointed out. "Once we're married, you'll be a legitimate Ryker family heiress."

"I've already told you, I don't care about that," Emmeline pouted, looking disdainful. "I don't love you, so why would I marry you?"

"Emma, you'll fall in love with me eventually. I have faith in us," Abel said, his eyes filled with tenderness.

"I'd sooner fall in love with a pig than with you," Emmeline sneered. "Who gave you such an inflated ego to think that I'll definitely fall in love with you?"

Abel felt a sense of déjà vu. He realized that he had said those exact same words not long ago.

"Emma," Abel furrowed his brow and said, "I know you're mad at me, but it's not really my fault. If you want to blame someone, blame Waylon."

"Why would I blame Waylon? He loves me and treats me like a precious gem."

"Don't I treat you like a precious gem too?" Abel walked up to Emmeline. "You should try accepting me and let me love you the way you deserve to be loved."

"Emma doesn't need that."

Benjamin entered the room. He walked over to the armchair and wrapped his arms around Emmeline.

"Emma has me," he said softly, his face close to hers. "Isn't that right, Emma?"

Emmeline was taken aback by his sudden enthusiasm. This guy had no boundaries!

Just as she was about to push him away, Benjamin held her tightly and offered, "What do you want to eat for lunch? Why don't you come back to my villa and let me cook for you myself?"

Emmeline remained silent.

What was wrong with Benjamin?

Abel thought the same.

Is Benjamin trying to steal my girl?

Janie frowned and asked, "Benjamin, what are you doing with Emmeline?"

Benjamin continued to hold Emmeline and sneered at Janie, "What I and Emma are doing is none of your business, is it?"

"How can it be none of my business? We're in a relationship, aren't we?" Janie retorted.

Emmeline struggled out of Benjamin's embrace and said, "Yeah, Benjamin, Janie has a right to know. She likes you."

"It's her business if she likes me," Benjamin replied, "I like you, and now that you don't love Abel anymore, doesn't it make sense for us to be together? We've known each other since childhood."

"But I..."

Emmeline didn't want to be with Benjamin, not when it would hurt Janie.

And she still loved Abel, really.

But she couldn't explain that now without ruining everything.

"Don't worry, Emma," Benjamin said, smiling slyly, "this is just between us. It doesn't concern anyone else."

"Benjamin," Abel growled, "this isn't right. How can I still call you my friend?"

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"Come on, Benjamin," Janie's eyes were brimming with tears. "How could you break my heart like this? What's wrong with me?"

"This is none of your business," Benjamin pulled Emmeline close to him. "I love Emma, and she can love me back. Who are you to interfere?"

"Benjamin, you're misunderstanding!" Emmeline pushed him away and stood to the side, her face flushing. "I only see you as a brother, I won't fall in love with you."

"But that's not set in stone," Benjamin gazed at her deeply. "You don't love Abel anymore, so why not give me a chance? We're meant to be together, I don't want to be your brother."

His intense gaze left Emmeline unsure of what to say.

"Benjamin!" Abel's anger boiled over and he threw a punch.

Benjamin deftly dodged Abel's punch, feinting with a punch of his own and winking at him.

Abel was caught off guard, unsure of what Benjamin was up to.

In the moment of hesitation, Abel's next punch never landed.

"Emma," Janie spoke with a trembling voice. "Will you really agree to love Benjamin and be with him?"

Emmeline's mind was racing.

How could she possibly do that?

But what should she say now?

Suddenly, a thought occurred to her.

Was Benjamin's sudden passion just an act?

He had left with Janie for a meeting and returned so quickly. Did they have some sort of scheme?

Emmeline's mind raced with these thoughts as she leaped into Benjamin's arms, saying, "Ben, I just want to get to know you better. I was foolish to have missed my chance with you before, but now I want to be with you!"

"???" Now it was Benjamin's turn to be dumbfounded. He almost choked on his own saliva.

Was Emmeline teasing him or was she really confessing her feelings?

He had waited for years to hear those words and had longed for them day and night.

But he never dared to hope for those words.

Especially now, he knew Emmeline was probably just using reverse psychology on him.

Benjamin was at a loss for how to respond.

Janie was also stunned, realizing that her plan had backfired.

This was not going to end well.

What could Benjamin do now?

She just hoped he wasn't playing with fire!

Emmeline noticed both Benjamin and Janie were dumbfounded and smirked to herself, thinking: "Ha, you really thought you could help Abel against me? No way!"

Abel was furious and raised his voice, "Emma, how can you love Benjamin? We're family, and we have a child!"

"Why can't I love Benjamin?" Emmeline clung to Benjamin's neck, "We're both single and not doing anything illegal!"

Benjamin was caught between a rock and a hard place. What could he do in this situation?

If he admitted to playing along with Emmeline, he would offend her. But if he didn't surrender now, he would offend Abel.

Just as Benjamin was struggling to figure out what to do, the door to the CEO's office suddenly swung open and Ethan burst in, exclaiming, "Emma, you're back!"

He walked in to find his beloved sister with her arms wrapped around Benjamin's neck, while Abel stood nearby with a furious expression, ready to explode.

"What's going on here?" Ethan looked around nervously and asked, "Can someone please explain?"

Emmeline quickly let go of Benjamin and stood with her hands behind her back, smiling sweetly. "Ethan, I'm back," she said.

"It's good that you're back," Ethan replied, then gestured towards Benjamin. "But what was going on with you and Mr. Benjamin just now?"

Emmeline was at a loss for words and couldn't explain the situation to her brother.

Benjamin stayed silent, unsure of how to explain himself.

Abel's face was black with anger, thinking that the two of them were going to make him a cuckold.

Janie quickly intervened, "Mr. Ethan, Emma just came back and was just venting to Ben."

"I see," Ethan took Emmeline's hand and handed her to Abel, "If she wants to vent, she should go to Mr. Abel, not bother Mr. Benjamin."

Abel grabbed Emmeline's hand tightly, refusing to let go.

Ethan, what a true uncle he is!

A truly caring uncle!

Abel felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude towards Ethan, and all the anger on his face turned into a smile.

