

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1281

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Even when Toby kept his back facing her when he asked the question, Lynette knew he was referring to her, and her legs froze instantly, no longer daring to retreat.

Then, the next second, she found Toby turning around with Sonia's hand in his.

"Toby..." The young woman tried to pull a smile and greet him, but when she saw his expressionless face and sub-zero stare, her words got stuck in her throat.

Toby's looking at me like he's looking at some dead animal!

The notion hurt and scared her worse than being ignored.

At the very least, being ignored meant that Toby just made light of her, but him gazing at her like she was a dead animal meant that he would feel nothing even when she died. In fact, he might be wishing she was dead.

"You sank your nails into her arm, didn't you?!" Toby reiterated, more like a definite statement rather than a question.

Lynette parted her lips and reflexively wanted to lie and deny the truth. However, Toby bore into her like he could see the deepest part of her soul, making her feel bare naked. "I... I didn't mean to do it... I just... just—" she stuttered, unable to lie at all.

"Then, what were you about to do just now?" Toby didn't care about her explanation, nor did he want to hear it, even. The only thing that mattered was if she did it, and whether it was an accident was beside the point. Hence, he interjected very quickly.

Sonia, on the other hand, smirked and quietly watched the scene unfold in his arms, for she knew her beloved was about to get back at Lynette now.

Since he wanted to avenge her, she'd just play the damsel in distress with peace of mind. Also, she had to be honest; it felt really good to have someone defending her, and even greater when it was against her beloved's admirer.

At that, she took a gander at Lynette and smiled delightfully.

Naturally, the smile aggravated Lynette; in the young woman's eyes, Sonia was challenging her.

If it weren't for the fact that Toby was standing right there, she wanted to pounce on Sonia and tear her face to shreds.

Seeing that Lynette remained silent, Toby bellowed, "Answer me! What were you about to do?!"

Lynette jolted in response, then looked fearfully toward Toby. "I... I..."

She gazed at Toby, who looked as handsome as ever, no different from when she left Caruna seven years ago, except for one thing—the man from seven years ago was forever pallid and sickly, looking weakly ravishing.

However, Toby no longer looked like that. Sure, he was still fair, but it was a healthy kind of glow, and he no longer looked weak like he always seemed seven years ago.

Not only was Toby far healthier now, but his personality had changed entirely.

The man from seven years ago was gentle and would always smile tenderly, looking like the boy next door. But now, he was on the opposite end of the spectrum, no longer gentle, and his tender smile was gone, replaced by impassiveness and aloofness. His gaze was intimidating to the point it suffocated others.

It could be said that the Toby from seven years ago was a noble yet gentle Alaskan, but the Toby now was a domineering alpha wolf, dangerous.

What happened to Toby?

Lynette had a hard time accepting such a dramatic change in Toby.

Though her grandfather had long told her the Toby now was very different from the one she had known seven years ago, she never took it seriously, for she believed no one could change so drastically even if they did change. As such, the Toby now would still be the same one that she knew in her memories.

Seven years later, she finally got to see Toby again. Though he was still as handsome as she had remembered, he now felt very foreign. She couldn't find a sliver of familiarity in him, and it frightened her deeply.

Can I still interact with this Toby that I know nothing of like I used to? More importantly, do all the likes and preferences I've learned of him in the past still stand today?

Lynette's mind was all over the place, and her lip was nearly bruised from being bitten down aggressively. As her grievances overpoured, her tears streamed down like a never-ending waterfall too.

"You're not Toby!" Lynette bawled as she looked devastatingly at Toby as though he was some heartbreaker who had betrayed her. "Toby wouldn't treat me like this. He wouldn't be so impassive to me or question me like I'm some criminal. You're not my Toby! You're not!"

The scene changed so abruptly that even Sonia was nonplussed, and the corner of her lips twitched involuntarily.

What the... Does she think she's in some melodramatic drama, crying so suddenly like Toby's some heartbreaker?!

Not only was Sonia inexplicably speechless, but Toby was baffled by the suddenness too. I swear this woman's a lunatic!

At that, he locked his brows into a deep furrow and looked aversively at Lynette. "Don't try to change the subject, Lynette Lore. Were you going to shove her? Answer me!"

Lynette didn't know how to feel anymore when she saw that Toby didn't feel the slightest bit nervous, let alone have the urge to comfort her, in the face of her dejection.

How can this be?! How can Toby do this to me?! The young woman was rendered shell-shocked.

Sonia couldn't hold it in any longer and burst into a chuckle. "I'm sorry, Miss Lore, but it seems that your beloved Toby doesn't buy your goody-two-shoes trick."

"You!" Lynette glared daggers at her in response.

Meanwhile, Toby narrowed his eyes and pulled Sonia closer into his arms, and he even covered her eyes. "Don't look. It's hideous."

His beloved Sonia would have nightmares if she looked at such a hideous face.

Sonia, on the other hand, beamed and nodded as she got his implication. "Alright, you're the boss. I won't look."

At that, Toby ruffled her hair affectionately, then turned to Lynette with an impassive gaze, shaking the young woman out of recollection.

She thought Toby had returned to being the gentleman that he used to be seven years ago when he smiled affectionately at Sonia. However, he tucked the affection away the second he looked at her, and it was only then she realized the old Toby never came back.

He was still the Toby who treated her with nothing but impassiveness.

“Toby.” She looked aggrievedly at him, who was not only indifferent but looked even more averse. “Lynette Lore, if I remember correctly, I was your grandfather’s student and your father’s peer, which also means I’m your senior. As such, it should be Mr. Toby for you. What? Do you make nothing of your father and want to be his sister, seeing that you refuse to address me with an honorific?”

“Pfft, hahaha!” Sonia failed to hold back once again and guffawed in his arms.

Be her father’s sister?! Ha, this will become my favorite joke!

Read Novel Boss Your Wife’s Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1282

Boss Your Wife’s Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1282

Sonia had always known that Toby had a b*tchy heart hidden beneath his cool, handsome face. However, because he always played the sweet, gentle boyfriend in front of her, she barely ever saw this side of him.

But Lynette had probably crossed his line, so he fired at the young woman without caring if she was there anymore.

That said, she felt great seeing how her beloved belabored Lynette, and she wanted nothing more than to laugh, especially when she saw a frozen Lynette reeling in bewilderment.

On the other hand, helplessness and affection enveloped Toby’s gaze when he saw the woman in his arms shuddering in laughter.

Was what I said really that funny? But since she’s getting such a cackle out of it, so be it.

At that, he ruffled her hair tenderly.

On the other hand, Lynette flew into a rage out of humiliation, for she couldn’t believe Toby said she wanted to be her father’s sister!

How could something so humiliating be applied to her?!

“Toby, how... how can you paint me like this?!” she bewailed in a shaky voice while looking dejectedly at him.

“Why not?” Toby had returned to looking impassive at this point. “Weren’t you asking for it? I’m your father’s peer in the first place, yet you insist on regarding me as your

brother. Thus, isn't it that you make nothing of your father and want to be his sister instead of a daughter?"

To that, Sonia repeatedly nodded in agreement.

Come to think of it, she had also initially felt super baffled that Toby allowed Lynette to be on a first-name basis with him.

After all, he was Harry's student, while Lynette was Harry's granddaughter.

It was evident that Toby was a generation senior to Lynette. However, the latter kept addressing Toby as just 'Toby', and it sounded awry.

But she had assumed the two were only addressing each other according to how they saw fit. Thus, she didn't make much of it.

It was only after Toby brought it up that she realized they hadn't been addressing each other how they saw fit, but it was all just Lynette's wishful thinking.

Toby didn't agree to it at all.

As for why Lynette did so, Sonia had a good guess. Despite not being biologically related, Toby was still an uncle figure to Lynette, and once Lynette acknowledged that fact, the world would certainly criticize her for being with Toby.

The young woman probably refused to regard Toby as her uncle and instead as a brother because she didn't want something like that to happen, did she?

At least, it was easier for the world to accept a romance between siblings rather than uncle and niece.

As sad as Lynette was at the fact that Toby now disapproved of her behavior to regard him as her brother, she was angry as well, for it had undoubtedly severed her possibility of ever getting closer to him.

At the same time, she refused to acknowledge him as her uncle as well. How would the world think of her if she did that?! Would the world call her out for hitting on her uncle after they started dating?!

For a moment, the young woman's expression changed multitudes, looking grimly colorful.

Toby, on the other hand, didn't want to waste any more time arguing with her as he wanted to rush back home to treat Sonia's bruised arm. Thus, Toby sounded even more impatient as he said, "Lynette, I don't care what you were planning to do to Sonia just now, but I've noted it down, and I'll pay it back along with the other things you've done.

Don't think for one second this is over. Now, go back to the room. Whatever issues you have, I will discuss them thoroughly with you and your grandfather later. If you disobey, don't blame me for chucking you out."

"Toby—" She felt aggrieved at being criticized so unforgivingly by the man she loved so deeply, and she had wanted to continue being on a first-name basis with Toby. However, his emotionless gaze was like a large palm choking her, forcing her words back down. "How can you do this to me, Mr. Toby? How can you side with her?!" she said in a raspy voice as she pointed toward Sonia with jealousy. "I admit that I wanted to push her, but I had your best interests at heart! How can you side with her and attack me?! Have you forgotten who's family?!"

Her words were so ridiculous that Toby was livid with amusement. "You call attempting to murder my beloved having my best interests at heart?! Are you even sane, Lore?"

And you tell me I've forgotten who my family is?! I'm very much conscious, thank you very much. Did she expect me to help her and pretend that I didn't see her wanting to attack Sonia? Now that's forgetting who my family is! No, that's called an ungrateful b*stard!

When it came to family, Sonia was his partner for life. As for Lynette, she was barely even worthy of being an acquaintance.

The word 'beloved' was like hundreds and thousands of needles pierced deeply into Lynette's heart, aggravating her, and her eyes were enveloped with incredulity as she stared at the hugging couple.

Beloved? Toby called Reed his beloved?! Has he fallen in love with Sonia? No! No, that's impossible!

Lynette bit down on her lip and only released it sometime later. However, a deep bite mark was left on her bruised lip, and anybody could tell it hurt just by looking at it.

That said, neither Toby nor Sonia would care about her. After all, who would give two hoots about someone they hated?

"Of course, I have your best interests at heart! This woman blackmailed you into marrying her six years ago, and six years later, she still blackmailed you into getting back with her and even doing something so humiliating at other people's banquet, disregarding your wishes and thoughts entirely. That's why I'm here; I want to help you reclaim the leverage and escape her control. It's she who doesn't want to hand the leverage over. I've done everything I could, but she just refuses to give it up. As such, I have no choice but to get physical. But T—Mr. Toby, instead of helping me, you even stopped me and criticized me. Not only do you not get me, but you're even siding with her! You're the insane one here, Mr. Toby! We're supposed to be a team, and she's supposed to be the enemy!"

At that, Sonia looked up and gazed teasingly at the man hugging her. "My, Toby, what shall you do? I sound like a bad guy. Miss Lore sounds very righteous, and you sound so miserable, being threatened by me like that. It sounds like I'm some villain, and you're my captive. Miss Lore, on the other hand, is the brave hero that wants to save you even if it means that you'll misunderstand and hate her. My, I'm truly touched. Are you not, Toby?"

"Alright, that's enough." Toby ruffled her hair with amusement.

Following that, she looked toward Lynette, whom he had deeply hurt, and asked with a frown while holding back his disgust, "You're saying Sonia blackmailed me into marrying her and also getting back with her?"

"Yes." The young woman nodded. "Otherwise, how else could you have possibly married her?"

Sonia, too, nodded in affirmation. "I swear that's what she said to me before you came. She said I was threatening you to be with me with the leverage I have over you. Why would I want to do that if I'm that capable, though? Why don't I just force you to give me Fuller Group? With it, I'll be the new CEO. What for would I need a man after that?!"

In other words, a man was nothing compared to Fuller Group.

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1283

Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1283

This was by no means unjustified. After all, she would be betrayed by men, but not her career. Therefore, a sensible person would know which was more important.

Of course, Toby knew the reasonings behind her decision, but he was still agitated by it. He lifted Sonia's chin and looked at her with gloomy eyes. "Do you want to be a female boss?"

Sonia blinked at him dazedly.

Toby asked again, "Do you not want me anymore?"

She blinked again, not daring to say a word. She was worried that he would do something drastic if she reflexively blurted a "Yes".

However, her strategy failed, which meant that her silence didn't help in this situation.

He snorted as he glared at her with a sullen gaze. "You don't want me, huh? Don't even think about it. Since you initially wanted to be with me, you can only think about dumping me in your dreams. Also, don't even think I'll let your words go unpunished tonight."

With that, he released her chin with a displeased huff.

She rubbed her chin and pouted helplessly. Damn. I shouldn't have provoked him earlier. I've just given him more reasons to pester me now!

They were whispering, so Lynette, who sat across from them, couldn't hear what they were saying, but jealousy still burned brightly in her eyes as she watched them being naturally intimate with each other. She glared at Sonia with the resentment of a thousand suns as if she wished she could kill her with her scorching gaze.

Toby happened to see her looking at Sonia with a malicious gaze. At that moment, he wished he could snap her neck right there and then.

"Tob... No, Mr. Toby, you..." Lynette shivered involuntarily as she sensed the killing intent exuding from him. When she met his eyes, she was so frightened that she felt a chill down her spine.

Toby pulled Sonia back protectively so that she stood directly behind him, using his body to block Lynette's vicious glare on Sonia. Then, he looked at Lynette and hissed coldly, "Lynette, listen very carefully. Little Leaf doesn't have my dirty laundry, and she has not threatened me. I married her because I love her, which is the same reason I got back together with her. It's as simple as that, so you'd better keep your ridiculous thoughts to yourself if you know what's good for you."

He loves her... This statement completely shattered Lynette's crumbling persistence.

She had arrived at this conclusion for quite some time, but she refused to believe and accept it. Hence, she kept convincing herself that Sonia threatened him and forced him to marry her. By doing so, she could persuade herself that her assumption was wrong. That way, she could console herself and feel better about her situation.

But now, Toby bluntly said that he had never been threatened in the slightest. On the contrary, he married Sonia because he sincerely loved her and wanted to be with her till death did they part.

"No, I don't believe you!" Lynette abruptly shrieked in despair. "This couldn't be true. How can you love her?!" Tears rolled down her cheeks. She glanced at Toby with utmost sorrow and pointed at Sonia behind him, who had received the love that was rightfully Lynette's.

“Toby, please tell me that these are all lies! You’re lying, right? You don’t love her. You got back together with her and married her because she threatened you! Tell me! Tell me!” She was wholly worked up at this moment. She even lunged forward, wanting to grab Toby’s hand and plead with him. She wanted to convince herself that all of this was not true.

However, he would never give her a chance to harm them. Instead, his face was painted with a disgusted grimace as he embraced Sonia and retreated for fear that Lynette would hurt her. The moment Lynette’s teary eyes saw him shunning her as if she was a piece of trash, her heart utterly shattered into a million pieces.

“It’s true. I love her.” Toby took Sonia’s hand, lowered his head to drop a tender kiss on her fingertips, and said gently, “Why would I marry her and get back together with her if I didn’t love her? Just because of some stupid threat? Hah, how ridiculous!”

Toby held Sonia’s hand in his firm grasp. Then, when he looked at Lynette again, his expression turned aloof and dispassionate. The 180° in his attitude was so apparent that Lynette could feel the lies she had been telling herself unravel. “Who do you think I am? I’m Toby Fuller! Who do you think would have any blackmail on me and use it to threaten me? Indeed, considering my status, many have tried to threaten me, but these people either collapsed miserably or were exiled and never allowed to return without exception. None of them could successfully force me to do their bidding unless I allowed them to do so. So, why would you think that I am a person who would succumb to some nonsense threat?”

“B-Because... Because...” Lynette parted her lips and stammered, but she couldn’t complete her sentence.

Toby narrowed his eyes. “Because you’re looking for a reason to justify to yourself as to why I want to be with her, a reason to make you believe that I do not love her. That I’m choosing to be with her because of other reasons instead of love.”

She felt utterly exposed and seen through once he unveiled her motive. Nevertheless, she found her momentum, stomped her feet, and rebuked, “Yeah, I am searching for an excuse, but you can’t say that I’m wrong. You said that you wanted to get back together with her because you love her, fine. You have known each other for six years, so you probably have some feelings for her, but what about the marriage? Did you marry her because you loved her? You didn’t even know her six years ago! How do you explain why you guys suddenly got married? It was because she threatened you, right? Don’t tell me that you fell in love with her at first sight, okay?! At that time, you loved Tina!”

When Sonia heard her mentioning Tina, she rolled her eyes and then pinched Toby’s waist indignantly.

Toby grunted lightly. He knew that Sonia was angry, so he hurriedly grabbed her hand and gently squeezed it to reassure her. At the same time, he glared at Lynette with anger for bringing this up.

He did not love Tina and had never loved her. He had always loved Sonia but thought Tina was Sonia and couldn't recognize the real Sonia due to hypnosis. Because of this, everyone thought that he loved Tina instead of knowing whom he really loved.

Although they had long revealed the truth, they chose not to talk about this past ever again. Both knew that this matter had separated them for six years, and Sonia had suffered a lot during these six years.

He understood that bringing it up would only remind Sonia of the unhappiness in the past and also his ridiculous actions after being hypnotized. Therefore, they only discussed this matter if they had to.

Yet, Lynette had the gall to bring it up, which was akin to tap dancing on their minefield.

"I've never loved Tina." Toby held Sonia's hand, looked at Lynette, and affirmed sternly, "I've always loved Sonia."

At this moment, he did not address Sonia by her nickname but by her first name. That was because when one addressed another by their name instead of their nickname on important occasions, it indicated their genuine sincerity in their confessions.

Although Sonia glared at him as she stood behind him after hearing his confession, she felt sweet and warm inside.

Lynette was utterly riled up at this point. She didn't feel the slightest joy as annoyance and disbelief overwhelmed her.

"What?! You never loved Tina?!" Her eyes widened in shock. "Impossible! How could you not love Tina? You looked so intimate and lovely together! How could you have never loved her?!"

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1284

Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1284

Lynette did not believe what Toby said because she witnessed everything with her own eyes.

Seven years ago, she was the only woman by Toby's side besides Rose and Jean.

Rose was his grandmother, and Jean was his mother. She was the only one who was not related to him but could stay by his side. She was very proud of it too. Moreover, those women in the social circle who liked Toby envied her, and she felt even more triumphant because of this.

In fact, she bragged that she was Toby's future wife, and the ladies in the social circle accepted her boasting as fact. So, she was the most respected person in the circle.

Until one day, Tina's arrival came out of nowhere and crashed all her perceptions and dreams. That day, Toby personally brought Tina to her and told her that she was his lover.

When that happened, she felt that the world was crumbling before her. Impossible! She grew up with Toby, but she had never seen any woman in his life! So, where is this lover from?!

Furthermore, she knew Tina since they were in the same social circle, but she had never heard that Tina was even in contact with Toby. Based on the Gray Family's status back then, Tina didn't even have the chance to meet Toby, let alone know him. So, how could she suddenly become Toby's lover?

Lynette suspected that there must be something amiss here, and there was something afoot. However, the way Toby looked at Tina was so genuine and loving, and it didn't look fake at all. From then on, she believed that Toby indeed had feelings for Tina. Although they had never known each other before, they probably fell in love at first sight.

Despite her reluctance to accept this fact, she had no choice but to do so, as she was inferior to that terrifying woman.

Yet now, Toby told her that he had never loved Tina and that it was Sonia he loved. What was going on here? Although it was true that Lynette held a deep affection for him, she wasn't that blind. On the contrary, she couldn't help but feel wholly bewildered as she questioned her intelligence.

Toby had no intention of explaining anything to clarify her confused state. Instead, he merely continued faintly, "The thing between Tina and me is just a misunderstanding. No one should take it seriously. Sonia is the one and only woman for me."

He caressed Sonia's face affectionately and proclaimed, "As for the details... Well, that's our business. All you have to know is that Sonia is the only one I love, so the so-called threats and blackmail are sheer nonsense. You claimed that all the harm you did to Sonia was for my good, but from my point of view, you were hurting the person I love to satisfy your selfish desire. So, do you think I'll let you off the hook?"

Blood drained from Lynette's face in the face of his threat. Her knees went weak, and she staggered back uneasily. She stared blankly ahead and stammered, "Impossible... Impossible..."

Toby genuinely cared for Sonia and would avenge Sonia, so there was no doubt he would punish her for all the deeds she had done under the banner of love. However, it was because she was the mastermind who instigated all those negative comments against Sonia on the Internet with baseless scandals. She did all those things to tarnish Sonia's reputation and cause them to break up.

He loved Sonia and would not break up with her, so Lynette's actions were akin to poking the sleeping dragon. Moreover, he caught her red-handed as she tried to push Sonia. Her actions only enraged him further and made him despise her.

Because of this, he would certainly make her pay for everything she did.

The more she thought about it, the more terrified she became. Finally, a sheen of cold sweat appeared on her forehead as she begged, "Toby..."

"Stop calling me with that tone! It's disgusting!" Toby snapped in irritation.

Sonia nodded along, feeling equally disgusted as well. Lynette was an adult now, yet she spoke with a childlike demeanor. Not only did it sound far from adorable, but it made them feel awful.

Lynette was horrified when she noticed Toby's grimace as he glared at her. She couldn't apprehend how things had gotten to such a stage. She knew that Toby did not love her, but he did not hate her either. Yet now, it looked as if he only felt utter revulsion and disgust for her.

If Toby loathed her, could she still win his heart?

At this moment, Lynette began to doubt the possibility and did not feel confident about her chances. But soon, she suppressed the doubt and lack of confidence.

No, I can do it! I can win his heart and make him like me! I believe in myself! I will succeed as long as I persist!

At the thought of this, Lynette regained her composure. She clenched her fists and was about to say something when she heard a few footsteps behind her and reflexively turned to look back.

She saw Tom arriving with two bodyguards, and her heart skipped a beat as she came to an epiphany. But then, her expression changed radically, and she turned her head back in disbelief. "Toby, did you call your men to arrest me?"

“You came out of the suite and attempted to hurt my lover. Do you think I’ll let you get off scot-free?” Toby glared at her coldly. She should count her blessings that he did not break her neck right there and then.

Earlier, he was worried when Sonia didn’t come to the rest area after a long time, so he headed out to look for her. Fortunately, he was right to trust his hunch because as soon as he came over, he happened to witness Lynette extending her arms toward Sonia and trying to push her.

What if he had been late? What if he hadn’t stopped her in time, and Lynette had managed to push Sonia? What would have happened to Sonia, then? Disfigurement? She might have even lost her life today!

No matter the outcome, it was not something he wanted to see, nor something he could accept.

Thus, Lynette had completely infuriated him by attempting such a malicious move. Plus, her actions could even be considered attempted murder. He certainly would not let Lynette off the hook just because she failed to murder Sonia this time. Should he wait for her success next time? Dream on!

“You should be glad that this happened at someone else’s party. I don’t want to make a fuss and disrupt the party, so I wouldn’t do anything to you for the time being. Otherwise, I’d make you pay right there and then. Guys, take her back to the suit and keep her under strict watch. After the party is over, get rid of her along with those two chicks,” Toby ordered Tom in an austere tone.

Tom nodded and urged the bodyguards to apprehend Lynette.

Lynette was confused and bewildered by the sudden turntables. She couldn’t even be bothered by the bodyguards who grabbed her arms. After a long while, she opened her mouth and stammered, “T-The two chicks... Who are they?” Is he talking about those two idiots?

When Sonia noticed Lynette’s constantly dodging gaze, she curled her red lips into a smirk. “Yup, it’s the two you’re thinking of, Miss Lore.”

Lynette’s eyes widened in disbelief. What the hell?! Is it really them?! Did Toby catch those two idiots?

No wonder she didn’t get any replies from them after she arrived at the hotel and asked them about the progress of their operation.

At first, she thought that those two idiots were too busy replying to her as they flirted around with the men at the party. Only now did she realize that they had been caught

since the start. Judging from Sonia's words, she assumed they already knew those two idiots had been in contact with her for quite some time.

Did they betray me? Did they tell Toby everything I did?! If so, I will definitely have to face Toby's wrath!

After all, she now knew that he was with Sonia because he loved her instead of being threatened. Therefore, she wouldn't be graced with a mere slap of the wrist. She couldn't even imagine the consequences that she would be forced to face after this party was over!

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1285

Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1285

When Lynette recalled the previous two incidents, even she, with all her experience, did not know how Toby would punish her.

She shivered unconsciously, feeling an eerie chill right down her bones, and the mixture of hatred and frustration surged within her.

She was angry at those two useless idiots who were caught so easily. Not only that, but they even snitched on her! They couldn't keep their mouths shut, could they?!

Lynette's eyes were burning with rage as she screamed inwardly, Just you wait! When I survive this, I'll make those idiots pay for what they did to me!

"Take her away," Toby instructed with a wave of his hand.

The bodyguards grabbed her arms and took her away in the other direction.

She didn't beg for mercy, hoping that Toby could forgive her because she knew it wouldn't work. She didn't have Toby's love, but she knew Toby like the back of her hand. Once he made up his mind, no one could stop him, and he would not have a change of heart because of some pleas or persuasion. Begging for mercy would only irritate him further. Right now, she needed to keep her head down.

Therefore, she might as well be taken away quietly. After all, Toby only asked the bodyguards to send her back to the suite instead of punishing her. Then, when she was back in the suite, she could seek Harry's advice on what to do next.

Hence, Lynette left without any protest.

Sonia was befuddled by her lack of reaction and wanted to ask Toby what Lynette was planning.

Although this was the first time that she met Lynette, she could tell what kind of person Lynette was. She was a stubbornly persistent person and would not compromise and surrender so easily. Thus, she shouldn't be acting so meekly when Toby had ordered his men to take her away.

Perhaps he could read Sonia's mind as he ruffled her hair and explained, "Harry is in the suite."

Once those words registered in her mind, it finally dawned on her what Lynette was hoping for. "I almost forgot about that! No wonder she was so quiet. I bet she wants to return to the room as soon as possible to ask for Harry's help."

"Don't worry. I'll let them have a taste of their own medicine." Toby's gaze was entirely threatening as he glared in the direction Lynette left.

Lynette had crossed the line by attempting to harm Sonia and even kill her. Hence, he would avenge Sonia and make Lynette pay dearly.

"Alright, I believe you." Sonia nodded.

Then, Toby pouted and glanced at her with a frown. His glance brought goosebumps all over her body, and she shrank her neck unconsciously, feeling uneasy by his sudden change of emotions. "What's the matter?"

"I said that I would keep you company and walk to the restroom with you, but you said no. See, someone tried to hurt you." His heartbroken eyes swept across the nail marks on her arm.

She gave him a guilty smile as she hurriedly tried to salvage the situation. "I didn't expect Lynette would try anything."

"And you got hurt." Toby held her arm with undisguised heartache in his eyes. "She would have killed you too if I hadn't arrived in time."

Sonia couldn't say anything in response to that. Indeed, she would have been on her way to the hospital instead of being here in his arms if he hadn't arrived in time.

At the thought of this, Sonia felt the lingering fear inside her and bit her lip in fright. "I didn't know she would be so bold as to try to kill me." She frowned in dismay.

Toby flicked her forehead. This time, he exerted a little force, and her forehead turned red in an instant. "Ouch! Hey! What are you doing?" She complained in pain and glared at him while covering her forehead.

“To teach you a lesson and ensure that you remember it this time.” Toby pursed his lips and warned firmly, “I want you always to remember to watch out and be vigilant, especially toward those who have tried to hurt you. Not only that, but you can never show your vulnerable side to others, or you’ll be digging your own grave. Do you understand?”

“Yes.” She lowered her head. “I hear you.”

It was indeed her fault this time, and she was still far too naive.

She knew that Lynette resented her, but she let her guard down since they were in a hotel, and she assumed that Lynette would not be so bold to do anything harmful to her. But now, she knew that an evil person would do anything they wanted to do no matter where they were.

This was indeed a lesson learned.

Once Toby was sure that she had learned her lesson, he heaved a sigh of relief. He held her hand and walked toward the lounge. “Let’s go and take care of those nail marks on your arm.”

Sonia nodded and obediently went along with him.

Meanwhile, the guards rudely shoved Lynette into the suit, and she almost fell to her knees due to their manhandling.

Harry was drinking coffee. When he saw her being treated harshly, he hastily placed down the coffee cup, stood up, and went to help her up. “Lynette.”

“Grandpa.” Lynette held Harry’s hand with a sad pout. “Look at them! They pushed me!”

Harry glared at the two bodyguards and Tom, who stood beside the guards. “Don’t worry. I’ll take care of this.”

Tom, who heard this, couldn’t help rolling his eyes. Take care of this? Who the hell does he think he is?

Just as he was disparaging the old man, Harry turned to him and rebuked, “Mr. Brown, don’t you think you’re a little rude? I know that the relationship between my family and Toby is a bit ambiguous now, but I’m still his teacher, right? In that case, I’m your boss’ teacher. Toby has to treat me respectfully even if he is irritated by me, let alone you guys! But look at what you did! How can you treat Lynette so rudely?! What would you do if you hurt her?!” He reprimanded Tom using his status as an elder.

Tom rolled his eyes again.

Harry always bossed him around and treated him like a servant instead of Toby's assistant in the past. So, of course, he had nothing kind to say about that old coot.

He endured all of this due to Toby's respect and admiration toward Harry, but it was all in the past.

Now, Toby was sure to cut off all relations with the Lores, and he definitely hated them after Lynette attempted to kill Sonia. Therefore, there was no way he would roll over like a puppy after this.

Thus, he found Harry's arrogance and superiority amusing as he bossed him around and questioned him like before.

Does this old man think that I will still treat him with the same regard as before? Tom smirked and thought, In your dreams, old man! I've had enough of you!

At this thought, Tom pursed his lips and drawled, "Mr. Lore, what's with the temper? I treated your darling granddaughter like this because Mr. Fuller gave me the right to do so. You do know that I work for Mr. Fuller, right? I simply treat Miss Lore the way Mr. Fuller treats her. So, Mr. Lore, you don't have to tell me this. It'll only fall on deaf ears. If I hurt Miss Lore in any way, please rest assured that Mr. Fuller can afford her medical bills. I'm sure you know that he's rich, right?"

Tom's sarcastic retort irritated Harry so that his face flushed red in anger. His chest heaved as he tried to come up with something equally insulting. "You... You..."

"Grandpa." Lynette freaked out when she saw Harry so enraged, so she quickly supported him and patted his back to comfort him. She was worried that he would have a heart attack or something since he was no longer in his prime.

She didn't like her parents, but she genuinely loved Harry. She also knew that she could live a carefree and ignorant life because of him. Finally, she knew she would be left with nothing when Harry passed away.

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1286

Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1286

Harry was the mainstay of the Lore Family because neither Lynette nor Grayson could manage the company successfully. Harry was the reason why they could still live a luxurious life with nary a worry. However, once Harry fell, it was only a matter of time before the family collapsed.

At that time, Lynette would lose her status as the young lady of a wealthy family and be poor. How could she fight with Sonia if she didn't have anything? How could she win Toby's heart, then? In fact, there was a high possibility that she might lose the chance to even see Toby!

Therefore, she would not let anything happen to Harry no matter what.

"Grandpa!" Lynette shouted his name anxiously, and tears streamed down her cheeks. Harry leaned against her for support; he slightly rolled his eyes back as he kept huffing and puffing as if he felt suffocated and would die at any given minute. Naturally, the two bodyguards were dumbfounded by such a scene as they both staggered backward hastily and waved their hands, indicating that they had nothing to do with Harry being like this.

Tom regarded them with blatant contempt. Tom looked nonchalant and composed compared to the two bodyguards' frantic expressions. He merely stood there like a silent statue as he quietly looked at Harry without the slightest change in expression, nor did he have the intention to call the doctor over. It was simply because he had seen such a scene far too many times and had long been desensitized.

Frankly, he could tell at a glance whether Harry was really having trouble breathing or simply faking it. For example, at this moment, he knew that Harry was faking it, or at the very least, he was not in any serious medical condition. After all, Harry was extraordinarily skillful when it came to using his 'illness' as a tool.

There were several times in the past when Harry would go to Toby, hoping to get something from the latter. Once he realized that Toby would not budge, he would begin to put on an act of being sick, precisely like this. Regardless, once Toby agreed to his request, he would 'recover' immediately.

Tom bet that if Toby were here, he would also be equally calm and indifferent.

Just as Tom imagined Toby witnessing this scenario, Lynette suddenly shouted at him urgently, "Tom, what are you doing?! Can't you see that my grandfather is not feeling well?! Hurry up and send him to the hospital, or at least call a doctor! I'll make you pay if anything happens to him! Toby will not let you off the hook too!"

Tom pushed his glasses calmly and quipped, "Miss Lore, that's such a serious accusation you have there. I'm not even going to bother to ask you if you can make me pay. Even Mr. Fuller won't punish me for my actions. Can you please tell me what your relationship with Mr. Fuller is? Now, everyone knows that Mr. Fuller wants to cut all ties with your family, so they are watching on the sidelines, waiting for Mr. Fuller's official statement. Anyway, to tell you the truth, our company's PR department has prepared the statement and is waiting for the right time to publish it, but it will happen sooner or later. When that happens, you and Mr. Lore will have nothing to do with Mr. Fuller. So, tell me, will Mr. Fuller punish me for my indifference?"

“What did you say?!” Lynette was so startled by his remarks that she froze, and her voice turned shrill and ear-piercing. “Has Toby already drawn up a statement to break off ties with us?”

Even Harry couldn't be bothered to play his patient persona at this moment. He was panting earlier, but now, his breathing returned to a smoother cadence. It was the effect of Tom's words.

Tom sneered in disdain when he saw Harry behaving like this.

Harry felt a little embarrassed when he noticed Tom's derisive expression, knowing that Tom was mocking him for feigning illness. Still, he was even more devastated and preoccupied with Tom's remarks.

“Is Toby going to issue a statement about cutting ties with us?” Harry asked in a gloomy tone, his hands shaking violently all the while.

Tom crossed his arms in front of his chest as he mused, “Do you think it's fake news? What do I have to gain by lying to you about this?”

That's right. Tom had nothing to gain from this. Therefore, it meant that Tom had no reason to lie to them, which meant that everything he stated was pure facts!

Harry felt as if a bomb had exploded in his brain. His mind went blank, and he could not believe it. “No! Toby won't do that!” Harry was so agitated that his originally 'pallid' face turned red, and his entire body trembled in disbelief. “I'm his teacher! I can even call myself his father! How dare he cut off ties with me?! This is sheer impudence! Isn't he worried that he would end up being ridiculed and reprimanded by the people?”

Harry could not accept that Toby would be so cruel as to kick him to the curb. Even though he had heard of the rumors circulating out there, saying that Toby wanted to cut ties with him and his family, he never truly placed any stock in them. Indeed, he was worried and perplexed by the rumors, but he was confident that they were just that, rumors. Such a thing could never happen as he knew that Toby was not such an ungrateful person.

This explains why Harry didn't do anything after what Lynette had done thus far. Other than asking Grayson to apologize to Sonia, he had no intention of allowing Lynette to apologize to Sonia in person. In other words, he had treated Sonia as a harlot who had somehow bewitched Toby for the time being.

Hence, in his eyes, Sonia did not deserve such a privilege at all!

First of all, Lynette was an elegant lady and Harry's precious treasure. Therefore, in his opinion, she was way out of Sonia's league. When he heard that Sonia had the cheek to demand Lynette to apologize to her personally, he could still recall his scorn toward that

woman. Moreover, Harry did not think that Toby loved Sonia and that he would cut ties with them just because none of them apologized to Sonia sincerely.

Therefore, Harry didn't bother going to Sonia and went straight to Toby to convince him that Lynette was still too young to know any better and promised she would not do it again. He believed that Toby was just temporarily frustrated and would forgive them with time, just as he always had.

Yet, a few days had passed, but Toby never gave them an inkling that he would visit them, nor could they get in touch with him.

Hence, to contact Toby and meet with him in person, they planned to hold a party for Lynette to celebrate her return and sent Toby an invitation, but he returned it utterly unopened. It was clear that Toby had no intention of attending the party, which slightly annoyed them.

From their perspective, they felt that they were trying to contact him to ease his mood and hoped that he would let bygones be bygones. Nonetheless, they didn't expect him to be so enraged that he would not give them a chance whatsoever.

Anyway, there was nothing they could do despite feeling snubbed by his rejection. Since Toby refused to attend their party, they had no choice but to cancel it and come to this banquet, hoping to meet him.

Alas, they couldn't even manage a private audience with Toby; instead, they were greeted with the announcement that he was about to release a statement that he would completely cut off all ties with the Lores. Harry was up in arms the longer he thought about it. "I'm his teacher! How can he do this to me because of a woman? He... He..."

This time Harry genuinely began to feel a little suffocated.

Lynette, who was holding Harry at the side, glared at Tom, feeling enraged and sad.

Toby really wants to break off ties with us! Does he know how much it breaks my heart for him to do this? Does he know what it means for him to do so? Unfortunately, the outcome is the same as the death of Grandpa! It means that I will have nothing left!

Tom didn't know what Lynette was thinking, nor did he pay any mind to that woman. He merely glanced at Harry with a mocking gaze. "Mr. Lore, don't be so surprised. 'Because of a woman'? Do you think that she is just some random woman? You're talking about the woman Mr. Fuller loves. She is the most important woman beside Old Mrs. Fuller! Everyone around Mr. Fuller knows how much he loves Miss Reed! We know what he has done to win her heart! For Mr. Fuller, she is her Achilles' heel. He won't allow anyone to hurt her, but you've done so time and time again. You chose to hurt Miss Reed, which provoked Mr. Fuller's wrath in return, so you only have yourself to blame for landing in such a pathetic situation."

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1287

Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1287

Harry's eyes widened in utter disbelief. They deserved it?! Did Tom just say that?!

It was as if Tom could not notice Harry's rage and his resentful glare. He curled his lips into a mocking smirk and continued, "Well, initially, you wouldn't have ended up in such a state. Actually, Mr. Fuller and Miss Reed gave you a chance, but you never cherished it. After all, you are his mentor. He would forgive you for the sake of your relationship. Also, Miss Reed would forgive you, too, because you are Mr. Fuller's mentor. It's just a shame that none of you appreciated the chance you were given."

Tom spread his arms helplessly. "Mr. Fuller has been enabling you all these years, causing you to become greedy, vicious, and arrogant. You all become so cocky and bossy. Mr. Fuller would clean up your mess without hesitation and wouldn't warn you no matter what you did. So, this time, after what Lynette did, instead of punishing her for her mistakes, taking the initiative to explain the truth of the matter, or apologizing to Miss Reed, you sent those idiots to make things worse. No one can help you after all the mess you've made!"

He clicked his tongue and shook his head. "To tell you the truth, according to Mr. Fuller's unconditional feelings for Miss Reed, he would have immediately punished Miss Lynette and your family after he knew what Miss Lynette did, but he didn't. Why? It's for the sake of the mentor-mentee relationship between the both of you, so he gave you a chance to repent your sins. You should have apologized to Miss Reed or done whatever you could to make up for Miss Lynette's mistakes. Third, you should have handled the matter better. You should have punished Miss Lynette, told her that she should stop being delusional, and cease her ill intentions toward Miss Reed. Finally, she should have sincerely apologized to Miss Reed. Perhaps Mr. Fuller would not have done anything to you if you had done all those things. But did you? No, you did nothing. So, you have no one to blame but yourself."

Lynette was dismayed by Tom's merciless tongue-lashing.

Should I have stopped being delusional? I should not have ill intentions toward Sonia?! I love Toby! Was it wrong for me to fight for the man I love?!

Also, it is ridiculous for them to think that I have ill intentions toward Sonia! I did what I did to remove any competition for Toby's heart. Even at this moment, Lynette did not feel that she was in the wrong. On the contrary, she raised her chin proudly, wholly unrepentant.

Well, she wasn't the only one since even Harry was also unconvinced by Tom's remarks as he hotly retorted, "We did apologize to Sonia. We—"

"You call that an apology?" Tom interjected without a single shred of hesitation. "You went to Miss Reed without bearing gifts and even behaved so arrogantly. There would have been very few conflicts in this world if you called such an act an apology, and Miss Reed would have long forgiven you."

Tom's sarcastic remarks rendered Tom speechless.

Tom added with a cold sneer, "Mr. Fuller has not stated cutting ties with you during this time because he is giving you a chance. As long as you apologize to Miss Reed, he will instantly cancel any plans on releasing the statement. Miss Reed knows Mr. Fuller very well, so she had never forced him to release such a thing. I told you, didn't I? Miss Reed had also given you a chance for the sake of Mr. Fuller. Why else do you think that she never once discussed with Mr. Fuller regarding the statement? Judging from how much Mr. Fuller loves her, she can demand him to do whatever she wants him to do, and he would do anything in his power to satisfy her. Yet, she had never once taken advantage of this. Despite her benevolence toward you, you took this as a reason to look down on her. Well, that's too bad, isn't it?"

Tom had seen cocky and arrogant people before, but these people had an excellent instinct for playing it safe and protecting themselves. These people often got into trouble and provoked some people they shouldn't. Still, when they realized their mistakes, they would immediately turn humble and apologize as sincerely as possible, hoping the other party would grant them mercy.

However, this was the first time he saw such idiotic people like the Lores. Even after they had made such grave mistakes, which irritated Toby, they never once showed a single note of self-awareness. Although they knew that Toby planned to cut ties with them, they did not try to fix the problem right at the source and beg for Toby's and Sonia's forgiveness. Instead, they continued to take Toby's and Sonia's tolerance for granted.

"By the way, there's something I forgot to say," Tom smirked as he looked at Harry, who had difficulty breathing. "Actually, Mr. Fuller did not plan to release the statement at the end of the banquet today, but you guys just had to dig your own grave and once again test his limit. So, he decided against it. After all, it will only be a waste of effort to forgive someone so stupid and stubborn. You guys think that Mr. Fuller reconciled with Miss Reed because she had some blackmail and threatened him to be with her! Oh gosh, how foolish of you. You even asked two idiots to destroy his door."

At this point, Tom couldn't even hide the amusement and ridicule spreading across his face. He had never seen some people eagerly digging their graves until now.

After Harry listened to Tom's barbed words, he could feel his face draining of all color. He knew that he had a nasty expression, but he didn't see the point in masking it as a well of complicated feelings surged inside him. Of course, he felt embarrassed, but not because of what they had done. He still thought that they didn't do anything wrong. In his opinion, it was all on Toby.

Toby was his mentee, so he should tolerate them unconditionally and forgive them no matter what they did.

Moreover, they did all this for their own good! They wanted to help him because they thought that he was under duress.

It never crossed their minds that Toby and Sonia loved each other! How could this be?!

Harry's facial muscles trembled, and he looked wholly befuddled. "Did you say that Toby loved that woman?"

Tom rolled his eyes in disgust. Damn, of all the things, this old coot only cares about Mr. Fuller's and Miss Reed's relationship instead of all the sh*tty things they did tonight!

"Yes! Why else would Mr. Fuller be with Miss Reed?" Tom snorted.

Harry knew that Tom would not lie to him, and he had no reason to lie about this matter. However, he still couldn't bring himself to believe it. His mind was buzzing, and he muttered in a daze, "No way... No, Toby can't love that woman."

"Why not?" Tom grimaced in irritation. "Why can't Mr. Fuller love Miss Reed?"

Harry huffed in dismay. He looked at Lynette, and the meaning in his gaze was apparent. Isn't that obvious?! My darling granddaughter is the best!

Toby should fall in love with Lynette instead of Sonia! Sonia is nothing compared to her!

Not only Harry but Lynette also had an inexplicably confident attitude about this. She felt that Toby should love her instead of Sonia.

Unfortunately, the fact was exactly the opposite, which was why they were in a state of total disbelief. Nevertheless, their thoughts on the matter were very apparent as it was right on their faces, which made it impossible for Tom to dismiss them.

He genuinely thought the Lores were a truly ridiculous bunch, and his expression turned colder. "Well, Mr. Fuller planned to release the statement after the banquet tonight, but Miss Lynette couldn't behave herself! She attempted to push Miss Reed and kill her, and Mr. Fuller saw everything with his own two eyes. He was completely pissed and disgusted with all of you, so he released the statement earlier. The statement is now out

there for all to see, and everyone knows he has cut ties with you. Mr. Lore, I think you should be able to guess what you and your family will face next, right?"

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Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1288

After Tom dropped the bomb on Harry and Lynette, he swept his mocking gaze across them and donned a gloating smirk as he watched the radical changes in their expressions. Then, he closed the suite door and went out with the two bodyguards.

"Guard this room, and don't let anyone get in or out of it, including the waiters. If they want anything, ask the other teammates to prepare it, and make sure the item is sent in by one of us," Tom sternly instructed the two bodyguards.

The two bodyguards knew that Toby severely punished their seniors because they allowed the waiter in earlier, so they knew how essential and crucial their task was. Thus, they did not dare to slack off even the slightest. Otherwise, they would face severe punishment, just like their poor seniors.

"Got it, Mr. Brown. Don't worry. We won't let you and Mr. Fuller down," the two bodyguards assured him.

Tom graced them with a pleased nod, turned around, and left. He still had matters to report to Toby. Ah, the work of the secretary never ends.

Meanwhile, in the suite, Harry and Lynette gradually came to their senses after Tom's departure. Finally, Harry glared at Lynette in dismay. "Did you push Sonia?"

"No, Grandpa!" Lynette shook her head violently. "I didn't push her."

"Why did Tom say those things if you didn't push her?" Harry did not believe her words.

He raised her, so how could he not know her like the back of his hand? He knew that she was a scheming and ruthless liar.

He enabled her in the past because he thought that by behaving like this, she could protect herself, achieve her goals, and benefit the family. Hence, he never thought there was anything wrong with her acting like this. However, now he had a change of heart.

Due to her nasty behavior, she successfully forced him and the family to a dead end. Therefore, he didn't think it was right for her to do such things. In fact, he was frustrated that she had fibbed to him.

Lynette could tell that he was angry judging from the undisguised sullen expression on Harry's face, and her heart skipped a beat. Despite her fearless demeanor, she was genuinely afraid of Toby and Harry.

It was just that Harry had always donned the genial grandparent persona when it came to her and rarely glared at her with such a scary look. So, she had always been carefree and bold whenever she was with Harry.

But she felt jittery and uneasy once she saw that Harry was upset because of her. "Grandpa..." she mumbled timidly and swallowed her saliva nervously.

Harry snapped indignantly, "Didn't you say you were meeting Toby and would execute our plan for tonight when you left the room? So, why did you have to go and mess with that woman again? We said that our only target tonight was Toby, not that chick. So, just ignore her and don't do anything silly. Now, look at what you've done! Not only were you unable to persuade Toby, but you even went to push that woman! Just look at the mess you've made!"

They did not have their phones with them. Thus, when they were locked inside the room, Tom searched their bodies and confiscated their phones, so they could not contact anyone or surf the Internet to see what was happening.

Although Harry rarely surfed the Internet, he knew how the Internet worked. After all, networking was one of their business ventures.

Tom said that Fuller Group had released a statement denouncing the Lore Family and cutting off all ties with them. Harry bet that the news must have spread like wildfire on the Internet, yet they could not do anything to stop it or initiate measures to curb the damages that this blow would deal since they were locked in the room without their phones. Although he couldn't see it happen in real time, he could very well imagine what kind of trouble was heading toward them at full speed.

Their purpose of coming to the banquet tonight to fix the relationship with Toby failed miserably. To make matters worse, their situation only worsened before the night was over.

At this moment, Harry felt dejected and dismayed. His life had always been smooth and tranquil for decades. But as he grew older, challenges came his way from various directions. He could not understand how things had turned out this way.

Lynette couldn't read Harry's mind, but she knew that her grandfather and family were in trouble because of her. Thus, her resentment for Sonia grew, and she also despised Toby for her misfortune.

She felt that it was all because of Sonia that she had arrived at this miserable point, yet Toby still chose to take Sonia's side.

“Grandpa, I didn’t mean it. When I went out, I planned to spike Toby’s drink so I could have sex with him. As long as that happened, he couldn’t dump me, and he would have to marry me. But I didn’t have the chance to spike his drink. He came prepared. He sat in a corner and would not allow anyone to approach him. He even drank the liquor he prepared himself and refused to drink anything that the waiter brought him, so I couldn’t spike his drink. I couldn’t even get close to him. He might be able to recognize me instantly and catch me, so I had to retreat and think of other ways. It was then that I thought of making a move on Sonia.”

When Lynette spoke her side of the story, her face gradually filled with resentment. “I figured that since I couldn’t get close to Toby, I’d let Sonia do it. She had blackmailed Toby, and he would never reject her approach, so all I had to do was trick her into spiking his drink. After that, I would send her away and have sex with him. Even if he tried to investigate the whole matter when the dust settled, he would only find out that Sonia was the one who spiked his drink. He might hate her even more or even eliminate her, regardless of her threats. By then, I would be the innocent victim. Perhaps Toby would even feel guilty toward me because I had been implicated.”

Finally, she looked at Harry and pouted pitifully. “Once my plans come to fruition, Toby would not only reconcile with our family but also be with me and make up for his mistakes.”

“Yeah, that sounds like a good plan, alright.” Harry narrowed his eyes and grumbled in disdain, “But you failed.”

Lynette gritted her teeth as she hissed, “It was all because of that deceitful b*tch! I couldn’t find a chance to make a move, and she even had the cheek to insult me! I was so pissed at that time that I couldn’t think straight, so I thought of killing her. Her death would be a good thing even if I couldn’t have sex with Toby tonight. At the very least, Toby would no longer be threatened by her. He might be grateful for what I did, and I could win his heart in one fell swoop. But he came out of nowhere and stopped me when I wanted to make my move. He even told me that he got back together with Sonia, not because she threatened him but because he was in love with her. But, most importantly, can you guess what else Toby said?!”

Lynette got so worked up and tugged at Harry’s sleeves. “He said that he always had feelings for Sonia. He never loved Tina at all. Sonia was the only one he loved all along!”

“What did you say?! He never loved Tina?” Harry was dumbstruck. “Impossible. What happened between him and Tina back then?!”

“I don’t know.” She shook her head in confusion. “Toby didn’t tell me why, but that’s not important. What’s important is that Toby got back together with Sonia because he loves her. There’s no threat or blackmail behind this. This is why he is so angry with me and why he’s attacking our family.”

Read Novel Boss Your Wife's Asking For A Divorce Again Chapter 1289

Boss Your Wife's Asking for A Divorce Again Chapter 1289

"In that case, why didn't you control your temper then?" Harry rebuked.

Lynette pouted aggrievedly. "It never dawned upon me that Toby loved that woman. I simply thought that they..." She stomped her foot in frustration. "He would not treat me like this no matter what I did if he didn't love her. None of us expected that Toby actually loved her. That b*tch was so arrogant and cocky. I was so pissed."

Harry sighed dejectedly as he replied, "Yeah, none of us expected that Toby actually loved that woman. This is our biggest mistake. Now, these things you have done have made Toby utterly disappointed in us. He despises us now. We've made the worst move possible tonight."

They shouldn't have come tonight. They should have held back and waited.

Just like Tom said, Toby didn't plan to release the statement today, but Lynette sent her two subordinates and made Toby upset. It was only after the incident today did he decide to release the news after the banquet.

To make matters worse, Lynette messed up again, which changed Toby's mind yet again, and he decided to release the statement now.

Therefore, they made the wrong move by executing those two ill-thought-out plans tonight.

They should have held back and done nothing for now. At least, they would have a slight chance to get back on their feet. Alas, they were forced to a dead end.

"Grandpa, what should we do now?" Lynette was anxious and panicked the longer she dwelled upon their failure. Although she wasn't experienced in the business world, she knew what would happen to her family once Toby released his statement.

It wouldn't take very long before their company went bankrupt, and she would lose her status as the dignified Miss Lore. Once that happened, she would lose everything.

She did not want any of these to happen, so she couldn't help but regret her impulsiveness.

Harry didn't say anything and merely rewarded her with a sullen glare. There was none of the usual affection in his eyes as they were now filled with indifference and loathing.

He was a realistic man. Before Lynette brought trouble to him and their family, he could pamper her and spoil her rotten.

After all, unlike the foolish and laughable Grayson, Lynette was as intelligent and cunning as he was. Thus, he favored her more than all his other children and grandchildren.

However, his adoration was conditional. He would unconditionally protect her and spoil her as long as she listened to him and brought benefits to the family. But once she failed to do so and brought trouble instead, he would immediately discard her.

After all, he would not take a fancy to a useless pawn.

Lynette could feel Harry's noticeable change of attitude toward her. Her heart sank, and she muttered uneasily, "G-Grandpa..."

Harry did not say anything in return. Instead, he stared at her gloomily for a while before retracting his gaze and slumping back in his chair. He lowered his head slightly and pondered about something.

Meanwhile, Lynette became more frightened and agitated despite Harry's lack of reprimand.

Harry's scolding indicated that he still held high hopes for her, but when he did nothing, it indicated that he was ready to give up on her and began to weigh the last remaining value he could gain from her.

Of course, Toby and Sonia had no idea that Harry and Lynette were about to turn against each other.

After Toby cautiously applied ointment on Sonia's arm, he kept the ointment away and advised, "Next time, when you meet these people again, call me immediately or call for help. Don't handle it yourself, or you'll get hurt again."

Sonia giggled in amusement when she saw his scrunched-up brows and listened to his advice. "Alright, I got it, Mr. Butler. You've been saying the same thing repeatedly. Stop it, will you? I've never thought that you would be one to nag."

"I'm not nagging." He pursed his lips and replied seriously, "I'm reminding you so that you know what to do next time when you land in the same situation as this one."

She wrapped her arms around his and consoled him, "Alright, I know, and I remember every word you say. I won't face the situation alone again. Are you happy now?"

She even held up three fingers and swore a vow. Toby could only mess up her hair as he smiled at her antics.

“Mr. Fuller.” Tom suddenly knocked on the open door of the lounge and stood outside, waiting for Toby’s permission to enter.

Sonia immediately released Toby’s arm and sat properly next to him. She felt pretty embarrassed to act so intimately with him when there was an audience.

Nonetheless, Toby did not feel the same way. He had always loved flaunting his affection toward her in public. So, he was a little upset when Sonia withdrew away from him.

He was even more displeased with Tom, who came over just when the atmosphere was pleasant. It was because of his arrival that she moved away from him.

Toby pursed his thin lips, glared at Tom discontentedly, and snapped grumpily, “What is it?”

Tom naturally heard the displeasure in Toby’s tone, but he didn’t know what was going on, and he stood awkwardly in the doorway. What the heck? What did I do? I didn’t upset him, did I?

Sonia covered her lips and giggled when she darted her gaze between the grumpy Toby and bewildered Tom. “It’s okay, Tom. Come in.”

“Okay, Miss Reed.” Tom walked in and smiled at Sonia gratefully, albeit a little confused. Then, he stood about three meters before Toby and spruced up. “Mr. Fuller, I have the news about the Acrees you asked me to keep an eye on.”

Sonia sat upright and inquired, “Are they here?” She was highly concerned about this matter.

Toby narrowed his eyes and stared at Tom, who shook his head. “No, they did not come to the banquet.”

“Oh?” Toby raised his eyebrows. Sonia was equally surprised. “No? They didn’t come?”

“They didn’t.”

“Why not?” She blurted in disbelief. “They tried so desperately to get in touch with Toby and wanted to marry off their daughter to him. They even bent over backward to get the invitation to tonight’s banquet to meet him to achieve their goal. So, why didn’t they come? How could they miss such a good chance?”

Toby looked in askance at her. “You make me sound like I’m a piece of meat that everyone wants to get their hands on.”

Sonia giggled as she retorted, "To those people, you are a piece of meat, a fine-quality one, to boot. They can get all the benefits they want after getting their greedy little paws on you."

Tom nodded in agreement while Toby shook his head with a resigned smile. Oh, what can I do? As long as she's happy.

"Miss Reed, actually, they didn't want to squander this chance. It was not in their cards to miss the banquet. According to my investigation, they had prepared to come to the banquet and even bribed some staff, but something happened to them on their way here, so they couldn't come," Tom reported professionally.

"Oh? Something happened to them?" Sonia was intrigued. "What a coincidence. What happened that stopped them from coming?"

"No, it's not a coincidence." Tom shook his head. "Someone ruined their plan on purpose. On their way here, the Acrees got into a car accident. Their car collided with another vehicle, and the accident destroyed both beyond recognition."

His remarks shocked everyone in the room. Toby frowned as he tried to wrap his head around this accident and who stood to gain the most out of this. Whereas Sonia was so aghast, she jerked to her feet and exclaimed, "What?! A car accident?!"

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"Yes." Tom nodded with a serious expression.

"How did that happen?" Sonia frowned tightly and asked curiously, "What about the casualties?"

He sighed and replied, "There were four people in the Acrees' car, the three family members and the driver, while there was only one driver in the other car. Two cars collided not far from the Acrees' house. Because the Acrees' car is more expensive, it has better anti-collision measures. Although the car was damaged beyond repair, the four people in the car were alive. The driver and Mr. Acree sustained severe injuries because they sat in the front. They are still in the hospital, receiving emergency treatment as we speak. Mrs. Acree and Miss Acree sat in the back, so their injuries weren't as bad, and they did not suffer a great impact from the accident, but they still suffered some serious injuries. I heard that her leg might need to be amputated. I can only get the specific information once we receive the results of their diagnosis and treatment."

After a beat, he glanced at Toby before continuing, "The driver in the other car was not as lucky. He drove an ordinary car, and its quality couldn't be compared with the Acrees' vehicle, so not only was the car damaged, but the driver also died on the spot."

"He died?!" She inhaled sharply in shock.

Toby narrowed his sharp eyes. "You said that the car accident was man-made."

"Yes." Tom nodded. "The men we sent to keep an eye on the Acrees rushed to the scene immediately when they saw the accident. According to the police's investigation, they heard that the brake of the Acrees' car was tampered with, including the steering wheel. As a result, the turning sensitivity was out of control, and the car could only drive forward in a straight line."

"The brake was out of order; the car could not turn and could only drive forward. It meant that whoever did this wanted the Acrees to crush straight into the other cars!" Sonia gasped in fright.

"You're right, Miss Reed." Tom gave her an admiring glance. "The mastermind intended to do so. The Acrees did not realize the problem earlier because the journey from the villa area where the Acrees live to the highway is in a straight line. Therefore, they did not need to turn at all, so they would not be able to find out about the faulty functions in advance."

"In that case, there's definitely something fishy about the car that hit them." Sonia rubbed her chin skeptically. "No matter how desperate the Acrees are, they can afford a luxurious car or two, let alone the rich families who live in the same area. The other families do not suffer any financial crisis like the Acrees, so they have better and more expensive cars than the Acrees. None of them will have an ordinary car in their possession. Even their servants drive expensive cars. These rich people are snobbish and proud. They will only prepare expensive cars for their servants because they do not want to be looked down upon by others. They will feel humiliated when their servants drive an ordinary car worth a hundred thousand while the servants of the other families drive a car worth a million or so. Thus, an ordinary car can't appear in that area."

"Your analysis is right on the money, Miss Reed." Tom approved of Sonia's speculation. "Just like the Acrees, the residents of the villa area are nouveau riche, so they are motivated by vanity. They are so proud that they will prepare nice cars for their servants. The Acrees allowed their servants to drive a Porsche worth one million and eight hundred thousand. So, no one in the villa area owns a car that is worth only a few hundred thousand. Naturally, the driver who drove to the villa area is indeed suspect," he asserted.

Toby rubbed his temples impatiently. "Just tell me who the driver is."

Tom cleared his throat and cut straight to the chase when he heard Toby's agitated urging. "The driver was not the owner of the villa area, nor the servant, but a small captain of one of the Acrees' fishing fleets. Three months ago, a moderate typhoon broke out in the outer sea. According to the law and local fishing regulations, fishermen are not allowed to go out under such weather. But at that time, the Acrees received an order from a hotel that required the valuable yellow croakers. They would make a lot of money as long as they delivered the goods on time, and the delivery time was within a month. But according to the weather forecast, the typhoon lasted about two weeks."

"It means the fleet must wait two weeks for the typhoon to pass before they can go to sea." Sonia sat back down next to Toby.

"Yes." Tom nodded. "But yellow croakers are extremely rare and hard to come by. They needed more time if they wanted to reach the number that the hotel required, which was a thousand. If they were lucky and stumbled upon a school of fish, they could reach their target within a month or so. But if they were unlucky, they would not be able to complete the order in three months. The time the hotel gave them, which was a month, was already pushing it, to begin with. They might not be able to get anything and would lose the business opportunity if they had to delay for another two weeks. But the Acrees insisted on taking this job."

"So, they forced the fleet to go to sea regardless of the local regulations and the danger of typhoons?" Sonia frowned in displeasure as she could deduce what happened next.

"Yes." Tom sighed wearily. "The fleet went out to sea and drifted for a month. Not only did they not succeed in fishing for yellow croakers, but they also lost several crew members, including the driver's wife."

"So, was the motive behind the car accident revenge?" Toby intoned deeply.

"Yes." Tom nodded in affirmative. "After the police verified the driver's identity at the scene, they immediately asked the butler, who rushed over, whether the driver knew the Acrees. The butler had seen the driver, so he told the police officers about the incident. Our men heard it and reported it back to me."

"Wait a minute." A thought suddenly flashed in Sonia's mind. She looked at Tom and asked, "So many people died in the disaster. Did they not receive any compensation? Or were they not fairly compensated? Was that why the driver sought revenge?"

The driver would not have retaliated against the Acrees had proper compensation been made.

"They do not have the money to pay for compensation." This time, it was Toby who answered her question.

“Why not?” Sonia immediately turned to him. “How do you know? Their business was affected recently, not back then.”

Toby smiled faintly. “The investment in the marine business is usually in the fishing fleets and seafood. If they could not catch a reasonable amount of seafood, not only would they not make any money out of it, but they would have to pay more in terms of fuel and salaries. So, they have little to no liquidity and often earn money after completing an order. This was the reason why the Acrees took the risk of letting the fleet out to sea. Unfortunately, so many people died, and they did not get anything in return. The compensation for the deceased is at least a million or so. The Acrees could not afford to pay, and they wouldn’t pay even if they could afford it.”

“Mr. Fuller is right. The Acrees compensated the deceased’s families, but it was far less than what they deserved. The driver came to see Mr. Acree several times, hoping they would pay the compensation according to the regulations, but to no avail.” When Tom spoke about this, he couldn’t help but release a dejected sigh.