

CHOSEN 1841

Chapter 1841

At first, her hands were awkwardly suspended in the air, but eventually, they found their way to his shoulders.

His arm encircled her lower back, securing her firmly to him, as his kissing grew more intense and unrestrained. His chest pressed down upon hers, enveloping her completely.

"I love you," he murmured again and again, his voice a deep, comforting whisper in her ear.

A thick blanket of snow surrounded the two, making it seem as if they were the only people left in the world. Despite the biting cold, Rose felt as if spring had taken up residence in her heart.

Enter title...

After what felt like an eternity, Morrison rested his forehead against hers. His warm breath fanned her face, his presence infusing her with a sense of warmth. Her long eyelashes fluttered continuously.

Morrison gently tapped her nose, his affectionate gesture melting Rose's heart

like butter. If only it had always been like this, she could have been happy for

years.^{d2}

But this moment was pretty great too.

The past couldn't be changed, and maybe if it had been different, she wouldn't

feel the overwhelming happiness she felt now, a happiness and contentment

that doubled in intensity.

Rose's lips were swollen from the kiss as she looked down shyly, "In the end,

you've taken advantage of me again. Here we are now, and you've earned

yourself my confession."

Morrison chuckled softly, nuzzling her, then took her hand and placed it over his

heart, his voice low and hazy, "For this one confession of yours, I will spend a

lifetime confessing my love to you."

Rose's heart skipped a beat. She slowly lifted her head, her eyes brimming with

unshed tears that shimmered and trembled in their sockets.

“You...”

After uttering just a syllable, a wave of emotion clogged her throat, almost

bringing her to tears.

Morrison tightened his embrace slightly.

“Hmm?”

“Are you really Morrison?”

His eyes flickered with emotion, and he leaned in to capture her lips once more.

“Are you convinced now?”

Rose buried her face in the crook of his neck. “Yes. It’s just that I’ve dreamed

countless times of us being together, and I thought those dreams were enough

to make me happy to tears, but now it’s even better than a dream. This doesn’t

seem like you.”

Morrison held her tighter. “I’m sorry, Rose. It’s all my fault. Believe me, I do love

you. It’s just that before, I didn’t realize it.

“I clearly wanted you. I couldn’t control being attracted to you when I saw you. I hated it when you had close contact with other guys. I wanted to see you, even if you were always against me, singing a different tune. I wanted your gaze to always be on me. But I also felt that it was dangerous. You were dangerous, making me conflicted. I didn’t like this feeling, I couldn’t even control myself. It was awful.”

Morrison rambled on, desperate to explain, his words tumbling out almost incoherently.

Rose could feel his confusion and helplessness. Oddly enough, she understood the feelings he had back then because she had gone through a similar time. But as a girl, she had quickly recognized those feelings as love. Girls often dreamed of a beautiful romance, while boys seemed to be more detached when it came to emotions.

She couldn’t demand that Morrison respond to her with a hundred percent

certainty, or expect him to be a natural-born romantic who could instantly

recognize her feelings for him. That wasn't possible. No one was perfect.

She loved him, flaws and all. Even though he had done many things to hurt her,

she still wanted to find a reason to forgive him. Especially now, with him like this,

all she felt was happiness.

The past was painful, but she had endured it because of her love for him. If it

wasn't love, where would all the heartache come from?

She loved him, the dream of her lifetime.

Now that happiness was within her grasp, she wanted to hold on to it tightly.

That way, all her past sorrows and long waiting would have been worthwhile.

Her heart's deepest desire had been fulfilled.

Call her spineless, masochistic, silly, or stupid, but she wanted to fulfill her own

wish for happiness.

To her, the love she had longed for was right before her eyes. To let go now

instead of holding on would be foolish, truly foolish.

Chapter 1842

Rose looked up at him, standing there quietly, tears brimming in her eyes.

“Weren’t you drunk that night too?”

Morrison pressed his lips together, “Yeah, I was drunk, but not blackout drunk.”

He paused, his voice growing softer, “It was just the perfect excuse.”

Rose wiped away her tears and sniffled. “An excuse? An excuse to sleep with me without losing dignity and to shirk responsibility?”

A twitch flickered at the corners of Morrison’s mouth as he looked down at Rose, sensing something was amiss. “I... It was a big mistake.”

Rose arched an eyebrow, tears still on her cheeks, but her eyes were clear.^{d2}

Enter title...

“As much as I want to forgive you, Morrison, the things you’ve done lately make it hard for me to just let it slide. It would be like I have no backbone.”

Strike while the iron’s hot! Now that she fully understood Morrison’s feelings, it was time to settle some old scores. A little “revenge” was certainly in order.

Morrison hurriedly pulled her into his arms, "I can apologize. Anything you want, just don't bring up divorce anymore."

Divorce? Out of the question. She planned on "torturing" him for a lifetime.

She remained silent, and after a moment Morrison continued cautiously, "What can I do to make you forgive me?"

Rose pulled away, "Who said I was going to forgive you?"

Morrison frowned, "Rose..."

As he began to speak, he saw her eyes welling up with layers of hurt, glistening with tears. Snowflakes had settled on her hair, and Morrison reached out to brush them off, gently touching her cheek.

"Don't be like this. Just tell me what to do, and I'll do it. We have to get on with our lives, right?"

"How can I settle down and live with you after the way you treated me before?!

Morrison, you went too far."

As she spoke, tears began to circle her eyes before falling down, shining in the

light like the snowflakes from the sky.

Morrison's temples throbbed. He was suddenly contemplative about his future days, which seemed to be full of trials and tribulations.

"Alright, alright, let's not talk about this now. We can bring it up later, okay? Just be careful with the baby."

Rose cried harder, "Now you tell me to be careful with the baby. What about before? Morrison, tell me, weren't you too much?"

Morrison nodded, "Yes, yes, I was too much! It's all my fault."

"You don't sound sincere at all!"

Rose wiped her tears and then suddenly burst out crying again. "You really went too far..."

Morrison felt a headache coming on. Just as he was about to go and comfort her, he felt a sharp pain on his back. Then came a series of smacks.

"You were just fine, and then you turn around and got Rose upset. Ungrateful

brat.”

Unmistakably, the one smacking and scolding behind him was Megan.

Megan continued her tirade without interruption, and Molly went straight to the

weeping Rose and put an arm around her shoulders.

“Don’t cry, let Granny handle him.”

Rose dabbed at her tears and glanced at the man dodging Megan’s blows, then

looked down again.

Molly gave Morrison a helpless glance and led Rose away. “Come on, it’s

snowing so heavily, don’t catch a cold. You’re pregnant, and getting sick is

dangerous for you and the baby.”

Rose nodded and allowed Molly to lead her away. Before leaving, she turned

back for one last look at Morrison.

Morrison, seeing her leave, called out urgently, “Rose! Wait!” His tone sounded

harsh in his haste.

“You dare to be harsh with her! You never learn, do you?! You brat, if you keep

treating her like that..."

Clearly, Megan's slaps didn't bring much pain to Morrison.

The corners of Rose's mouth went up almost imperceptibly as she followed

Molly out of the hotel courtyard.

Morrison wanted to follow, but Megan called out to him. "Stop right there.

Morrison, you're quite the actor, aren't you? All that spiel at the event was a lie,

wasn't it? You got bored and started bullying Rose again. She loves you so

much, and how much has she suffered? You really have the heart..."

"I'm not bullying her!"

"Then why is she crying so hard?!"

Morrison choked, "I bullied her before."

"Hmph! You admit it. Do you even realize how bad you were back then?"

Morrison pursed his lips, mumbling an acknowledgment.

"Have you figured out how you're going to make it up to Rose?"

Morrison was silent. Treat her well, of course. But what kind of “well” would make her forgive him? That was the real headache.

Sensing his struggle, Megan huffed and walked forward with her cane. “Rose is exceptional, and there are plenty of men interested in her. She doesn’t need you. If you keep treating her like before, I suggest you let her go sooner rather than later. If you can’t give her happiness, there are others lining up to do so.”

Morrison clenched his fists as he watched them leave but didn’t follow. Standing there for a long while, he finally let out a defeated sigh and irritably ran his fingers through his hair.

“Mr. Witt?”

It was Riley’s voice from behind, and Morrison turned to look at him, his expression stiffening before returning to its usual severity.

“What is it?”

Riley shook his head, “Just wondering if you need a ride home.”

Morrison was quiet for a moment, agitated, with his hands in his pockets. “Let’s

go.”

Riley sprang into action. “Alright.”

As they walked out of the hotel, Morrison’s pace was brisk. But just as they

stepped outside, he caught a glimpse of the car carrying Rose and Molly driving

away. He started to follow but stopped.

Sliding into the car, he couldn’t resist the urge and whipped out his phone to

give Molly a call.

The call connected.

Molly’s voice came through, “What’s up?”

In the background, faint sobs from Rose could be heard, causing Morrison to

grip the phone a bit tighter. “Just drop Rose off at my place.”

Molly paused before chuckling, “Which one’s that?”

“Our marital house.”

“She’s really upset right now, probably doesn’t want to go back.”

Morrison's fist clenched and then relaxed as he took a deep breath, softening his voice.

"Mom."

Molly couldn't help but laugh, "Well, I never thought I'd see the day when my boy would call me 'Mom' so sweetly."

Rose turned her head curiously at the sound. Molly didn't hold back her amusement and switched to speakerphone.

Morrison's voice continued, "I can tell you're fond of Rose, so now's the time for you to stand with me, to help me cheer her up so she can keep being your

Chapter 1843

Morrison sounded impatient, "Spit it out."

Riley coughed awkwardly again. "It's pretty obvious that Mrs. Witt adores you."

Morrison glanced at him coldly through the mirror. "Of course, did I need you to tell me that?"

If it was so obvious, why hadn't he pointed it out before? Now, after stirring up this whole mess, did he really need Riley to state the obvious?

Riley, undeservingly scolded, stayed quiet for a moment.

Morrison shifted in his seat, fell silent, then suddenly asked irritably, “What are you trying to say?”^{d2}

Enter title...

Riley slowed the car down a bit, “Mr. Witt, it seems Mrs. Witt has returned to your place?”

Morrison leaned forward and sure enough, he could see the car heading towards the direction of their house. A flicker of brightness crossed his stony face, but it didn’t last long as he leaned back into his seat, his expression tangled.

She was home, yes, but with her fiery temper, he hadn’t quite figured out how to approach her yet. He rubbed his temples and suddenly thought that maybe, just maybe, he could take the Witt family to greater heights. Compared to dealing with Rose, striking a high-stakes deal seemed like a piece of cake.

Should he thank Rose for bringing out his hidden capabilities? This was tough.

Way too tough. He had made his bed, now he had to lie in it. If he had known it would come to this, he would have avoided doing those regrettable things in the past.

How the tables have turned.

Having worked alongside Morrison for years, Riley knew his boss had the emotional intelligence of a rock, yet there wasn't much else to fault him for.

Loyalty was a given after all these years.

"Mr. Witt, Mrs. Witt loves you so much, she won't want to see you struggle."

At this, Morrison paused, then looked up at Riley. "What do you mean by that?"

Riley continued, "She wouldn't want to see you in trouble, nor see you pitiful.

Women are actually quite easy to appease. Especially someone like Mrs. Witt who loves you, she'll be even easier to win over."

Morrison's gaze sharpened, "Go on."

"You've always been too proud, but now that you've decided to throw your pride

out the window. Um, I mean..."

Riley coughed awkwardly, catching Morrison's stern look in the rearview mirror,

and suddenly felt a chill. "What I mean is that since things have come to this,

doing something even more surprising can't hurt."

"What sort of things?"

Riley cleared his throat forcefully and after a moment of silence, he spoke, "In

the trunk, I've prepared something for you. I guarantee it's a foolproof plan. If

you're willing to do it, it will definitely work."

Morrison furrowed his brows, "You prepared it in advance?"

Riley gave a sheepish smile, "For some reason, I thought you might need it, so I

kept it in the trunk."

—

Upon arrival at the villa, Megan and Molly were just stepping out, and upon

seeing his car, they didn't approach. Instead, they stood at the entrance, clearly

waiting for him.

Riley parked the car and hastily opened the door for Morrison. Morrison had just said some embarrassing things to Molly, and now he felt a bit awkward seeing her. But compared to the past few days with Rose, this was nothing. With Rose, everything felt natural. Even his own mother didn't make him feel as comfortable as Rose did.

"Are you leaving?"

Megan glared at him, huffed, and turned away, refusing to engage.

Molly wore a schadenfreude grin, "I've brought the lady back to you, and she's still in a foul mood. You made this mess, you fix it. But if you can't smooth things over, don't come running back to us. I've given you plenty of good advice, and if you end up embarrassing us. Well, that's on you."

Morrison, hands in his pockets, mumbled a vague acknowledgment.

"He'll figure it out? With his emotional intelligence of a brick? If he can't make it right with Rose, a divorce is in order. He can pack up and leave the Witt family.

I'll adopt Rose as my granddaughter and find her a proper suitor. Anyone dares to cross her, I'll flay them alive,"

Megan ranted on, then gave Morrison a fierce look and whacked him with her cane. "Out of my way!"

Morrison stepped aside as Molly helped Megan down the steps.

As they were leaving, Morrison turned around. "Not staying with all this snow?"

"Seeing you just irks me. Staying would shave years off my life."

Morrison sighed.

As the car carrying them drove off, Morrison's gaze shifted to Riley. "What have you prepared for me?"

Riley then hurried to the car's trunk, fumbled around, and finally emerged with something in hand.

Morrison, curious, walked over and upon seeing what Riley held, his face darkened. "This is what you've had ready for me?"

Riley offered an awkward smile, "Yes... yes, it is."

"So you thought I'd inevitably need it, huh?"

Riley didn't answer this time. Even though it was true, saying it out loud was

definitely a no-go. Silence was akin to agreement.

Morrison, frustrated, gave Riley a smack on the head, "Getting bold, aren't

you?"

The hit wasn't hard, but Riley chuckled, "So, are you going to use it?"

"Get lost."

Morrison grabbed a handful of snow and tossed it at him, then turned and strode

towards the villa.

Riley looked down at the onion in his hands, shaking his head with a hint of

regret.

What a waste.

Even though he didn't catch Mr. Witt actually cutting onions, just knowing the

incident had happened was like having a juicy secret in his pocket. Sometimes,

he'd dangle it over Mr. Witt like a carrot, half-threatening to spill the beans,

which was always good for a laugh.

Just as he was wallowing in disappointment, the object he was holding was

suddenly snatched from his grasp.

Looking up, he found Morrison already turning on his heel, clutching the item

with an icy expression.

Riley stood there, dumbfounded. It wasn't until Morrison walked inside and firmly

shut the door behind him that Riley was jolted back to reality, catching a few

snowflakes that had begun to fall.

Was it really that cold outside? Even Mr. Witt's ears had turned a frosty shade of

red.

—

Inside, Morrison stared at the onion in his hands, and a muscle twitched in his

jaw. Damn Riley, he had actually prepared this for him.

The living room lights were on, but it was eerily quiet. No sound came from elsewhere on the ground floor.

Rose was probably upstairs.

Looking down at the washboard again, he felt as if he'd been stung, and quickly averted his gaze.

Ruffling his hair in frustration, he paced back and forth in the living room, clutching the washboard. After several long minutes, he finally stopped at the foot of the stairs.

He stared up towards the second floor for an eternity, his feet raising and lowering indecisively. If he went up there this time, he would be done for in front of Rose. Forever.

"Mr. Witt, since you've already thrown dignity out the window, what's one more embarrassing act?" Riley's words, though irritating, seemed to make an annoying amount of sense.

But could he really go through with it?

He remembered the times he and Rose had locked horns, both too stubborn to give in, a battle of wills. And now, here he was, on the back foot, but to cut onions in front of Rose...

He was still wrestling with the idea when his phone buzzed in his pocket. Pulling it out, he saw a message from Molly with a video attachment.

He frowned in annoyance, about to lock the screen, but then another message from Molly popped up.

[Do yourself a favor and watch it. Some things you don't see coming, and you'll regret it when it's too late.]

Hesitantly, Morrison opened the video, which started with a black screen and white text: "Treat your wife well when you're young, or else..."

Or else what? Reluctantly, he played the video, which turned out to be a cartoon.

A middle-aged man sat in a wheelchair, watching as a beautiful woman danced

in the park with another man.

They were shown having tea together, with the woman laughing and chatting

with the other man while the wheelchair-bound man slid unnoticed down a

slope.

In the last scene, the woman was pushing the wheelchair-bound man by a lake

when they encountered the same man she had danced and chatted with.

Whether by accident or design, the wheelchair rolled into the lake.

Initially baffled, Morrison finally got the message after watching the video again

from start to finish.

[Treat your wife well when you're young, or else...]

Otherwise, she might fall for someone else in her later years.

Dancing, having tea, casual encounters with another man, all while ignoring

him, treating him coldly, or even plotting his demise....

The thought of Rose with another man filled him with a choking rage. He shoved

his phone back into his pocket and, without hesitation, stomped up the stairs.

But just as he reached the bedroom door, he slammed on the brakes.

Chapter 1844

Sensing Rose's amusement, Morrison felt a wave of relief wash over him. But

the harder she laughed, the more flustered he became.

As she showed no signs of stopping, Morrison gritted his teeth, his face flushing

as he moved closer, and in one swift motion, he scooped Rose up and pinned

her down on the bed, amidst the soft bedding.

Rose's expression wavered, making sure Morrison hadn't touched her belly. She

paused for a moment, and seeing Morrison's flushed, awkward face, she

couldn't help but burst into laughter again.

"You're still laughing..."

Enter title...

Morrison's embarrassment was tangible, his voice strained and weighted with

discomfort.

Rose arched an eyebrow, "Would you prefer tears?"d2

Morrison pursed his lips, staring at her for a long while before admitting defeat,

“Then laugh it is.”

Rose couldn't help but feel that this was a side of Morrison she'd never seen, a

far cry from the man she loved.

But wasn't it adorable?

Her smile lingered as she quietly observed him. “Whose bright idea was this

anyway?”

Morrison's brow twitched, “Can't I come up with this all by myself?”

“Of course not.” Rose said decisively.

“And why not?”

“Because you just wouldn't. This isn't like you at all. You wouldn't even entertain

the thought unless someone suggested it. And even then, your first reaction

would probably have been to dismiss it entirely. Whoever did suggest this

probably got an earful from you.”

Morrison fell silent. “You know me that well?”

Rose hesitated, then turned her face away.

Now it was Rose's turn to feel the heat as Morrison's lips curled into a smirk, "If you know me so well, how come you didn't realize I was in love with you?"

Rose's eyes flickered, turning back to face him, "What gave me any reason to think you loved me? You couldn't get rid of me fast enough."

Morrison took her chin in his hand, forcing her to look at him, "I was wrong, and I apologize. Is today's gesture enough for you?"

Rose blinked, "All those times you went too far, and you think one session with an onion will flip the script? Or maybe I should give you a hard time for the next seven or eight years and then cut onions for you. Would that make us even?"

Morrison pressed his forehead against hers with more force than necessary.

"No."

"You see..."

"I don't want to spend another seven or eight years like this. We've already

missed out on so much time, and I don't want to lose any more. Besides, you

love me, and I love you. You can hold me accountable for anything from now on.

If I step out of line, you can do whatever you want to me."

Rose watched him silently.

Morrison asked, "What are you thinking?"

"I'm trying to figure out how to settle the score with you. And whether I can trust

what you're saying now. I don't want you to go back on your word when you're

angry."

"I promise." Morrison hastily raised his hand to swear, "If I ever lose my temper

with you again, I'll accept any consequences. May lightning strike me down if..."

"Morrison!" Rose interrupted.

He laughed and leaned in to kiss her lips gently. "I knew you couldn't bear it."

Rose pushed him away, "It's just that men usually make those kinds of vows as

a way to trick women into forgiving them. Who believes in 'may lightning strike

me down'?"

Morrison was speechless. What did you do when a woman was this tough to handle?

“So, what do you actually want?”

Rose pushed him off and sat up, throwing back the covers and climbing in.

“Today, Grandma and Mom spoke quite highly of you. Out of respect for them, I won’t argue with you tonight. I’m going to sleep.”

Morrison was stunned for a moment before leaning over her, “You mean you’ll start arguing with me tomorrow?”

Rose curled up in the covers, “We’ll see. It depends on my mood. Now move, I want to sleep.”

“Depends on your mood.”

Morrison watched as Rose pulled the covers around her, no longer paying him any attention. He quickly kicked the onion aside, stripped off his pants, and dove under the covers. He wrapped his arms around her tightly.

Rose glared at him, "What are you doing?"

Morrison kissed her forehead firmly, "Sleeping!"

Rose fell silent.

"Aren't you tired? Sleep, staying up is bad for you."

"Aren't you going to shower?"

"I'm clean enough."

Rose was speechless.

God, Morrison's behavior tonight was just too abnormal.

—

Meanwhile, in P City, Chloe caught a glance of Damon fresh from the shower,

her eyes sparkling with mirth.

Damon sat down beside her bed, "What's got you looking so smug?"

"Guess?"

Damon raised an eyebrow, lifted the covers, and placed his warm, well-defined

hands on her ankle, gently massaging it.

“Could it be your best friend finally turned the tables and sang her victory song?”

Chloe’s smile grew wider, “How did you know?”

As he worked his way up her leg, Damon replied, “What else could possibly

make you this excited besides her?”

Chloe batted her eyelashes, “Well, I’d be thrilled with heaps of money, too!”

Damon chuckled softly, “Then tomorrow, I’ll take you to the bank for a little tour.”

Chloe arched her brow, “For what?”

“To look at the account balances. If you’re still not happy afterward, you can stay

and play with the money.”

Playing with money? Nothing beat her man.

“What if I’m unhappy again later?”

“Mmm. We might consider taking a look at our properties.”

This man was really something. She knew if she kept it up, Damon would have

plenty more tricks up his sleeve, but the thought of this super-rich guy being her

husband made Chloe smile softly.

Damon's smile deepened. "It's great being wealthy; even my wife is easy to please."

Chloe laughed contentedly, "Lucky you're really rich."

"Lucky my wife just happens to like money."

The atmosphere between them was exceptionally harmonious, and the room's coziness soared.

Due to carrying twins, even though Chloe was over a month behind Rose, her belly was significantly larger. It was Alyssa who put it best, quipping, "That belly's changing faster than the weather—it's sprouting like a weed."

With the burgeoning belly came a heavier load for Chloe's body to bear. Nights were spent in a single, unchanging position, while a mere stroll during the day left her legs aching.

Thankfully, Damon was her steadfast companion through it all. He was like an encyclopedia, as if there was nothing he didn't understand. The do's and don'ts

of a pregnancy diet, the myriad physical reactions to expect, and quick remedies

for discomfort—he knew them all, rivaling any OBGYN.

At first, Chloe harbored some doubts about Damon’s extensive knowledge but

chose not to probe further. Instead, she heaped praise upon him, showering him

with admiration.

She stopped checking the personalized journal that Damon had dedicated

himself to—a detailed record of her pregnancy and all the things she needed to

pay attention to. She figured that by now, the journal must be nearly filled.

After all, no one was truly omniscient, not even Damon. Expertise required

focus, and knowledge didn’t just fly into one’s brain uninvited.

Some things were simple when you took a moment to think about them. Why

clouded them with misunderstandings and doubts?

Yet, some people preferred to live in a widely known lie, seeing through it

without calling it out.

—

The next morning, Rose woke to find Morrison's side of the bed empty. Her gaze

drifted to the window, where the curtains filtered the bright morning light.

Throwing off the covers, she padded barefoot to the window and drew back the

Chapter 1845

She had steeled herself, trying to give her past its due, to bring some

semblance of balance to her heart.

But now, with Morrison like this, she couldn't tell if his actions were simply

erasing his past misdeeds, or if her heart was too soft—ready to forgive him

unconditionally, just because it was Morrison.

Yes. She couldn't bear it.

This was her life now. Whatever Morrison did to her in the future was her own

doing, because she loved him.

From the start, she was a complete and utter loser.

Enter title...

Her gaze lingered on the half-eaten eggs, the remnants of oatmeal, and

sandwiches.d2

How much had he tried to taste? Was she truly “getting back” at him? Why did it feel like she was punishing herself?

She washed the dishes, dried them and put them away, then grabbed her coat from the dining room chair and slipped it on.

Morrison, buttoning up his own jacket, hurried down the stairs.

“Stay inside for a bit. I’ll go start the car and get the heater running. When you hear the horn, come out.”

Rose said nothing, and Morrison didn’t linger. He headed for the front door.

Watching his retreating figure, Rose felt an impulse to chase after him, to embrace him and compromise. She wanted to tell him she didn’t care anymore, about anything. She wanted to see his wounds and ask him to never force himself to do such things again.

The impulse grew, snowballing until she actually ran after him. As Morrison was

opening the door, he was suddenly gripped from behind in a tight hug. He

paused, a chill breeze slipping in as he quickly shut the door and turned to face

her.

“What’s wrong?”

Rose bit her lip, looking up at him, her eyes trembling. “Morrison, I give up,

really. I’ve been a complete disaster from the start, so I don’t care anymore.

“Whatever you do from here on out, whether I’m heartbroken, sad, or

disappointed, even if there are things that can’t be undone, I accept it. If that day

comes, it’ll just be my own damn fault. I accept it, because that’s my fate.

“So, Morrison, don’t force yourself to do things you don’t like, don’t get hurt, and

don’t let anything happen to you. I can’t stand to see you suffer. I love you, no

matter what the outcome, as long as you’re still you. I don’t want to see you

compromising for me.”

Her eyes reddened, her words calm yet charged with emotion.

Yes. That was just how pathetic she was. Morrison had completely undone her

resolve with just a couple of actions from last night and this morning; all her

defenses had crumbled.

She was destined to be nothing more than dust at his feet. To speak up meant

admitting total defeat.

Morrison hadn't expected this change of heart from her after last night.

"Morrison, you've won. You've won, but damn it, I love you."

Suddenly, Morrison pulled her close, pinning her against the door. He pressed

his forehead against hers, his voice husky. "No, you've won. You've won, I love

you, I never thought I'd throw away all my pride for a woman, and yet here I am,

enjoying it.

"I'm not forcing myself, you don't know how precious each of your smiles, each

satisfied look you give me when you eat what I've cooked, is to me.

"I love seeing you happy, knowing you've enjoyed the food I made. God knows

how thrilled and proud that makes me.

“Rose, you haven’t lost, I have. I owe you, and yet I find happiness and

fulfillment in trying to make amends. I must be madly in love with you, more than

you love me.

“I won’t let you be sad or let anything irreversible happen again, you’re my life,

and no one would take their own life lightly. No, they’d be scared.

“So trust me, Rose, you don’t have to worry, losing you is like losing my life.

Strange, how did I end up loving you so much. Can you tell me why?”

Moved, Rose shook her head, her eyes glistening with tears. “I don’t know, I

don’t know, just like I don’t know why I love you so.”

Morrison chuckled softly, his usually stern face now mirroring her emotion and

tenderness.

“What do we do then?”

Rose could only shake her head.

“Then we’ll spend a lifetime searching for that answer, won’t we?”

Rose wanted to cry but found herself laughing. “You’re always looking to corner

me.” Even now, he was talking about a lifetime together.

Morrison hugged her tighter, “Yes, keeping you by my side for a lifetime, that’s my ultimate goal.”

Laughing, Rose reached down and took his hand, which had been wrapped around her waist. Up close, she could see the constellation of small, red burns, and her heart ached even more.

“Let’s not go out just yet. I need to put some ointment on those burns.”

Morrison glanced down at his hand, then slipped his fingers into his sleeve and pulled out a platinum bracelet.

Rose looked puzzled.

He simply smiled, “I didn’t want to get it dirty while cooking.”

Rose paused, “How could it get dirty? It would just get some oil on it, and you could wipe it off.”

“That’s not good enough.”

Overwhelmed by his thoughtfulness, she still tugged gently at his hand, “Come on, let’s get that ointment.”

Morrison didn’t move, “It doesn’t hurt.”

Rose frowned sternly, “No you need—mmm...”

Her protest was cut off by his lips sealing hers.

“This way, it’ll heal completely.”

He paused intermittently, his husky voice whispering in her ear, his warm breath on her cheek, revealing his gentleness and affection.

She barely managed to blink before his next advance overwhelmed her. This time, Morrison clearly wasn’t planning on stopping at a mere taste.

Her hands slowly climbed his shoulders, back against the door, head tilted back as she matched his fervor with all she had.

In the vast expanse of the villa, only two souls dwelt, but the sounds of their fervent kisses and breaths mingled with affection were starkly clear in the tranquil space. The temperature was on the rise, and the atmosphere was thick

with an intimate warmth that seemed to grow by the minute.

After a while, Morrison pulled back ever so slightly, his gaze locked onto hers

with an intensity that felt like it could ignite the very air between them. Finally, he

scooped her up in his arms.

“Looks like little Moon will have to wait a bit longer,” he murmured.

Rose’s cheeks were aflame.

Gently, Morrison set her on the sofa and leaned over her with a tender look. “It

has been waiting for days already. What’s a few more hours, right?”

Rose was at a loss for words—what could she say?

Morrison watched her for a moment, his voice rough with emotion. “Rose, how

can you be so perfect? Everywhere, just stunning.”

Perhaps Rose understood his feelings at that moment because sometimes she

felt the same. “I’ve always been preparing, trying to be the best version of

myself, always ready to give myself to you.”

He paused, his body leaning in closer.

Rose could feel the tension in the air. Her face turned an even deeper shade of red, and she bit her lip, too shy to meet his gaze.

Morrison's nose brushed against her cheek, his voice almost a husky whisper.

"Just hearing you say that makes me want you even more. Can't you see how you affect me?"

"I hate to pass the blame, but there's really only you who can do this to me." he continued, his breath warm against her skin.

Rose, nervously gripping his shoulders, turned her head away, her face a portrait of blush and bashfulness.

"If I had known you were mine all along, why would I have bothered hiding and doing that sort of thing?" His voice was low, almost a murmur, but they were so close that Rose could hear every word clearly.

Driven by curiosity more than embarrassment, she turned to him with a puzzled look. "What did you just say? What were you hiding and doing?"

Though she asked, a wave of shyness washed over her. She had overheard

boys at school talk about their private matters and knew well enough what men

did when alone. So, she had a good idea of what Morrison meant.

Morrison's expression shifted to a shade of discomfort. "It's nothing."

But Rose wouldn't let it go. If they were to be embarrassed, they'd be

embarrassed together.

"So you had a girlfriend and still had to resort to giving yourself that kind of

relief?"

Morrison's face was a canvas of crimson. "Rose, are you trying to tease me?"

he asked, with a hint of annoyance in his voice.

Rose shook her head. "Why would I tease you?"

Morrison clenched his jaw. "I take back what I said. Right now, I just want to

make you cry out so loud."

Before Rose could react, he silenced all of her thoughts with a kiss.

...

Morrison moved with urgency, and once he was sure Rose was ready, he made up his mind to find release for the desire he could scarcely contain. But just as he was about to act on his intentions, they were interrupted by the persistent doorbell.

Rose's eyes, misty with discontent, blinked suddenly as Morrison let out a stifled groan, his face a storm of frustration.

He propped himself up, yet didn't leave the couch.

Sensing his reluctance, Rose flushed and gently pushed him away. "There's someone at the door."

Chapter 1846

"Have you heard?"

"Yeah, I have," Morrison was particularly unwilling, but he still answered with a reluctant tone.

Morrison cast a cold glance at Winston once again as he walked into the living room, heading toward the direction of the sofa. A hint of amusement flashed in Morrison's eyes as he embraced Rose and walked past.

Just as Winston was about to perch himself on the cushioned sofa, Morrison's

voice cut through the air, "You might want to take a chair instead."

Winston paused, turned his head to look at Morrison, and decided not to engage

in conversation with this man-child whose immaturity seemed bottomless.

Enter title...

Despite their limited interactions, it was clear to Winston that the man's childish

simplicity was glaringly obvious. He knew Morrison had more to say.

Sure enough, Morrison chuckled the next moment, "We just had a little romp on

that couch. You can sit if it doesn't bother you."d2

A twitch crept across Winston's mouth as his eyes involuntarily scanned the

sofa. Tastefully adorned with a blue slipcover, it looked neat—something he was

certain Rose had managed alone. The feminine touch, he thought, was not

something Morrison could muster, nor would he believe it otherwise.

But despite the neat appearance, the faintly raised wrinkles in the center of the

sofa were enough to make his eyes sting. And the sight of Rose, blushing and at

a loss for where to place her gaze, confirmed Morrison's juvenile insinuations were likely true.

His hand clenched and unclenched in his pocket as a stifled breath caught in his chest. He was irked by Morrison's unexpected jab, feeling a blockage in his heart.

Watching Morrison's smug satisfaction, Winston fought to regain his composure, his face slowly easing into a smile.

He made his way to a nearby armchair, sitting down with a casual cross of his legs that flaunted his carefree demeanor.

"Did I interrupt something?" he asked smoothly.

Morrison's face, still wearing a hint of a smirk, suddenly darkened. "Since you've dropped off the dog, you may leave." Morrison spat.

Winston chuckled softly, "That reaction... did I really interrupt you two?"

Rose sighed with resignation, "Winston, please stop provoking him."

Winston glanced at her, "Really, Rose? Don't tell me this man made a public confession in front of the media, showed off your love, whispered sweet words in private, and you're lost in the charm again?"

Rose was momentarily speechless. His words were sharp and painfully accurate.

"If such gestures can win you over, anything he can do, I can do better. Perhaps I should call a press conference? I'm sure the coverage on me would be far more extensive."

Rose bit her lip, sensing Morrison's mood worsening. "Publicly confessing to a married woman? Winston, do you really think you've had it too easy these past few years?"

Winston raised an eyebrow, his gaze still fixed on Rose, "Answer my question, Rose."

She hesitated, "It seems that you're not wrong."

"So you've really decided to be with him? You've forgiven everything he's done

to you? A man who can make one mistake can make more. And you're okay

with that? Do you not see the pattern with men? The easier they get something,

the less they value it. You don't have to be stuck with him, you know?"

Morrison said, "You better leave before something happens that can't be

undone. No man would talk about me like that in my presence and get away

with it."

Winston's response was calm and deliberate, "Empty promises from men are

worthless. Don't try to act the saint now, Morrison, or you might end up

contradicting yourself sooner than you think."

Morrison's temples throbbed with anger.

Rose stood by, looking chastised and without a word to say. What could she

say? Winston was right. She was fixated on Morrison, a decision lacking dignity

and backbone.

"Rose!" Winston called her name more firmly.

She blinked, looking at him with an innocent and pitiful expression, "It seems that way."

Winston's face contorted with frustration as he took a deep breath, trying to calm himself before speaking softly, "Fine. If that's your choice, I'll respect it. Even though I'm angry at your foolish decision, who am I to argue? I've always had a soft spot for your kind of foolishness."

Morrison's veins pulsed more visibly, but Rose held onto his arm tightly, preventing him from moving.

Winston, however, poured more fuel on the fire, "I've expressed my feelings for you openly many times before. It's okay, and as long as you're happy, that's all that matters. But remember, if you ever find yourself unhappy, I'll be there, ready to take you away, no matter what it takes."

As Rose felt Morrison's arm stiffen, she worried she might not be able to hold him back much longer. She made desperate eye contact with Winston, who saw her plea but chose to ignore it.

He stood up after delivering his final words and took a deep breath, making his way toward the exit, "Now that Moon is home, I'll handle the lease termination for the apartment."

As he approached Rose, he gazed down at her with a softness in his eyes, unexpectedly reaching out to cradle her forehead and gently placing a kiss there. "I wish you happiness."

Rose stood frozen, taken aback, unable to respond for a long moment.

On the other side of the room, Morrison could no longer contain himself. His arm was immobilized by Rose's embrace, so he lunged at Winston with his free hand, only to miss as Winston nimbly dodged.

"Winston, you jerk. Don't you dare leave. I'll tear you apart!" Morrison spat through clenched teeth.

Winston strode towards the door, turning back with a scoff. "Do you think I'm as foolish as you are? Why complicate matters unnecessarily when they can be so

simple?"

Morrison, still holding Rose, pointed an accusing finger at Winston. "You come here!"

Winston laughed derisively. "Why would I willingly take a beating?"

Morrison's teeth ground audibly in fury. "Coward!"

Winston raised an eyebrow, "I'd be careful if I were you. Rose isn't you. She's carrying a baby now. If you're not careful, and she gets hurt..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw Morrison's fierce expression soften suddenly as he gently released his grip on Rose and looked down at her with concern.

"Are you alright?" He checked her over, his face a mask of worry and caution.

Winston sneered, "Now who looks like the coward?"

Morrison was too preoccupied to care about Winston's departure, pulling Rose to the couch and sitting down with her.

"Are you hurt? Did I harm you?"

Rose shook her head. "No."

"Are you uncomfortable anywhere?"

She shook her head again. "No."

Only then did Morrison breathe a sigh of relief. His gaze then fell on her smooth

forehead where Winston had kissed her. His expression darkened, and he

rubbed the spot vigorously. "Damn that Winston! I'll skin him alive!"

Rose watched his furious visage bloom into a smile.

"What's so funny?" Morrison grumbled, feeling wronged.

Rose stared at him intently. "Are you jealous?"

Morrison's complexion shifted ever so slightly. "Yeah, I'm jealous."

He said, rubbing her forehead again. Finally, he took out a wet wipe and

thoroughly cleaned the spot before planting a firm kiss there.

"From now on, you need to protect yourself. Every inch of you is mine. No one

else is allowed to touch you without my permission, got it?"

The smile remained on Rose's face as she playfully poked his chest. "So possessive?"

Morrison couldn't help but reply, "I can't be happy right now. I'm angry, and I feel terrible. And stop smiling. Does his kiss make you happy?"

Rose pondered the "kiss" Winston had given her. He was indeed a good actor.

What a close-range feint; he'd fooled Morrison completely. He hadn't kissed her forehead. He had kissed his own finger. This was probably just a prank to provoke Morrison.

"You know, when I saw you with Mona back in the day, I probably felt just like you do now."

Morrison paused, staring at her.

Rose smiled, "But at least you can express it now. Back then, I had no right to be jealous. It was painful."

Morrison looked slightly uncomfortable, but Rose's gaze softened as she smiled at him. "Sorry, I keep bringing up the past. It's just that I couldn't have what I

wanted then, so I now feel twice as happy.”

Morrison pressed his forehead against hers.

Rose whispered, “Don’t apologize to me anymore. I just hope we can live

happily in the future.”

Chapter 1847

Ever since he had confessed his feelings, he’d become a hermit of sorts,

spending most of his days tinkering in the kitchen, crafting all manner of comfort

food—from hearty meatloaf to creamy mashed potatoes—eager to please her

every craving.

If he wasn’t fussing over some recipe, he’d be pacing by her side, bombarding

her with questions about everything and nothing at all. The only time he ever

seemed to detach himself was to huddle in his home office, sifting through a pile

of paperwork from the company.

Nights were another story. They were tangled in sheets, his hands wandering,

as if he were trying to memorize every inch of her. And boy, did he run hot. In

Enter title...

the chill of winter, she would often wake in a sweat, overheated from his

furnace-like body.

It didn't take long for Rose to feel smothered. He was just too clingy.

In response, she threw herself into a slew of activities. Swimming lessons,

which Morrison insisted on teaching himself, were a success, and within days

she was cutting through water with the ease of a natural. He followed her, albeit

reluctantly, to prenatal classes. They went through the motions every expectant

parent did—changing clothes, swapping diapers, bathing—a whole new world

for Morrison.

Initially, he felt embarrassed, but once he realized he was just one of many guys

there, he relaxed. Sometimes, he'd even puff his chest out in pride when he

mastered a task quicker than the others, much to Rose's bemusement. She

never thought she'd see this side of Morrison, but despite sometimes feeling

overwhelmed by his attentiveness, she couldn't help but be touched.d2

He was changing, all for her.

—

As her belly grew, so did the discomfort and mood swings. Morrison often found himself on the receiving end of her unpredictable temper, subjected to the silent treatment or an icy glare that seemed to come out of nowhere.

This passive-aggressive mastery was her weapon of choice.

Megan would swing by every so often, laden with nutritious treats for Rose and a good-natured scolding for Morrison. According to her, he could do no right, and Morrison, well, he just sucked it up and carried on.

One particular day, he made the mistake of leaving the bedroom window wide open, and boy, did he hear about it.

“Ventilation’s all good and well,” Megan lectured, “but you’re practically unhinging the window. What if Rose walks in and catches a cold from this draft? Do you have any idea how dangerous that is for a pregnant woman? Do you

think they're as robust as you, tumbling around like a bear?"

Rose glanced silently at Morrison, pursing her lips. A bear, really?

Morrison didn't argue with Megan. Instead, he glanced at Rose and excused

himself, "I've got a pot roast in the oven. Better check on it."

His expression was unreadable, perhaps a sign he'd grown accustomed to the scolding.

When Morrison left, Molly's gaze towards him still carried a hint of pity. He'd made his bed, now he had to lie in it.

Megan and Molly kept Rose company for a while, until Rose excused herself to the restroom. When she returned, she headed straight for the kitchen.

Morrison was busy tending to his culinary creation, having just sealed the lid on a steaming pot. His cooking skills had surged in recent weeks. If there was anything he set his mind to, he'd excel at it. As Rose wrapped her arms around his waist, he knew it was her. He held her hand for a moment before turning to face her, their eyes meeting in a tender gaze.

“Why are you here?” he asked, his voice soft.

She smiled and leaned in for a kiss, which he deepened, taking control. After a prolonged embrace, he released her, her cheeks flushed with warmth.

“Hmm?” He groped her waist and asked her the question he had just asked.

“I just... You’ve been catching so much flak because of me,” Rose confessed, holding onto his shirt.

“Feeling sorry for me?” Morrison raised an eyebrow.

“No, just worried you might start taking it out on me one day,” she replied, halfjoking.

He nodded solemnly, “Well, I’m keeping a tally. Once you give birth, I’ll make sure to collect on every bit of it.”

Rose’s face reddened again; the shyness in his eyes, which she didn’t even know she possessed, caught her off guard.

Morrison’s adam’s apple bobbed, and the hand on her waist tightened a bit. He leaned down to kiss her again, his voice husky. “I have to endure another three

months. This is unbearable...”

Although it’s permissible during pregnancy, he had been warned by the doctor during their last check-up not to overdo it. After an elaborate speech about the consequences, the doctor basically canceled his intimate privileges.

He deeply regretted not having acted sooner, and not taking full advantage of those two months after their marriage. It would have been best if he had kept her beneath him night and day, indulging in the ecstasy of love.

His words sent Rose’s heart pounding wildly. Her face turned an even deeper shade of red, her heart skipping a beat at his words. “You... you’re always so restless.”

“Who else but you stirs me up?” he countered, his touch sending shivers down her spine. “Maybe I should stay away from you more, then you wouldn’t be thinking about these things all the time.”

He bit her lip playfully, “I won’t allow it. Wherever you go, I go. Can’t be away from you, not even a step.”

She laughed softly, her hands unconsciously smoothing over his shirt.

“You weren’t this horny before.”

“Before, you were out of reach. Out of sight, out of mind.”

And then she had ensnared him completely, leaving him without a shred of selfcontrol. How could he resist when

she was there, in front of him, every day?

They were interrupted by the delightful aroma wafting from the pot. “What’s

cooking?” she asked, leaning closer.

“Rib stew. You’ll love it,” he assured her.

She inhaled the scent and nodded eagerly. “When will it be ready? I can hardly wait.”

“Just give it five more minutes,” he said, wrapping his arms around her as they stood together, watching the pot simmer.

Suddenly, Rose’s eyes widened in realization. “Oh no. Megan and Molly, I forgot they were still here.”

“Stay here, no need to come out. We won’t disturb your lovey-dovey time.” Molly

teased from the doorway, her voice tinged with affection.

Both of them turned around to see Megan and Molly standing at the kitchen

entrance, eyes fixed on them.

“Megan, Mom, what brings you down here?”

“Couldn’t stand being cooped up upstairs any longer. You two carry on. Just be

careful, you don’t want an accident happening at a time like this.”

Rose’s cheeks turned a fiery red.

“Did you hear that? You rascal. Keep it in your pants.” Megan, of course,

couldn’t bear to scold Rose, so she turned and gave Morrison a piece of her

mind.

Morrison pressed his lips together, feeling a shade embarrassed. “Got it.”

He really didn’t feel like arguing with them now. Once they started, there was no

end to it. He just hoped they would leave soon.

Megan seemed satisfied with his compliant attitude, “Well, it’s only three more months at most. It’ll fly by in the blink of an eye. You’ve made it through all these years, and you can handle three more months.”

Megan never missed a chance to rib Morrison. She shot him a chilly glance, her eyes filled with warning.

After seeing Megan and Molly out, Rose could finally indulge in a nutritious and delicious bowl of stew. Then she settled on the living room couch, full and content, scrolling through her phone.

Morrison finished tidying up and sat beside her, catching a glimpse of the phone screen.

The same four dudes of that game of hers again. He didn’t know how many times he’d expressed his displeasure about this, but Rose hadn’t given up.

“Don’t you love me anymore?”

“Loving you has nothing to do with them. Behave, will ya? Stop fussing.”

Look at that, how whipped did he have to be for her to say something like that?

After that comment, he couldn't very well keep complaining. And he didn't dare upset her. After all, she was his little queen. She said to stop fussing, so he would. At least she took the time to explain things to him.

He watched her play on her phone for a while, but he couldn't stand it. Those guys, so nauseatingly cheesy, didn't they have anything better to do than spew sleazy sweet nothings and flirt shamelessly?

It was downright immoral. Wasn't this fraud, messing with a woman's feelings without taking responsibility? He was going to report them.

"That voice, it could lull someone to death. Criminal." Rose murmured under her breath, her eyes glued to the screen, clearly lost in her own thoughts.

The voice?

Morrison immediately perked up his ears, and it took a while before he heard a man's voice from the phone. "No matter the past or future, I want your time to stand still just for me."

Morrison turned abruptly to look at Rose, who was still fixated on her phone. It

wasn't his imagination; her ears were indeed turning red.

With that smile of hers, she was clearly smitten.

Morrison opened his mouth to say something, but he feared upsetting Rose.

After a moment's thought, he simply lay down with his head on Rose's lap,

rolling his head over her round belly.

Rose paused, lifted her phone higher, and looked down at Morrison. "What are you doing?"

Morrison looked up at Rose, finally drawing her attention. He flipped over, pressing his ear against her swollen belly. "I'm listening to what our son is up to."

Rose's expression softened, and she set her phone aside, looking down at him as he earnestly listened to her belly. The scene touched her heart, and she smiled, gently caressing her belly. "He must be waking up from a nap. I just felt some movement."

At her words, Morrison pressed closer.

Rose chuckled, running her fingers through Morrison's hair as he intently listened for any movement inside.

Now, she could clearly feel the little one inside her. Sometimes he was quiet, while other times he frolicked restlessly in her womb. Like now, while she had been playing her game, she had felt the long-still belly suddenly stir.

Since the first flutters of movement, she'd gone from startled to accustomed in no time at all, but now that Morrison suddenly showed interest in their baby, she was overjoyed.

And just in time, it seemed the little one had woken up.

"I can hear his heartbeat," Morrison suddenly whispered, taking a few seconds before propping himself up and lifting Rose's maternity blouse.

Her taut, round belly was exposed before him.

He blinked, touched it gently, and then gave it a soft pat, "Little guy, be good in

there, okay? And hey, maybe consider coming out early to see the world.”

Rose couldn’t help but smile, but in a few seconds, her belly rippled with

movement. Like a wave, it passed swiftly.

She gasped, and Morrison immediately reached out to feel the spot. Then

another movement popped up elsewhere. It went on a few times before calming

down.

Rose was stunned, and seeing Morrison’s equally dumbfounded face, she burst

into laughter. “Maybe he’s protesting against you?”

Morrison stared at her belly for a while longer before finally looking up at her. He

was dazed for a few seconds before regaining his composure. “Protesting

against me? That little rascal, wait till he gets out, I’ll show him!”

Rose smiled, lips pursed, “But he’s your son. Can you really bear to be tough on

him?”

“A son needs to be raised right.”

“Woof, woof, woof.”

Little Moon must have wandered over at some point and started barking out of

Chapter 1848

With a smug smile, Rose arched her eyebrows and patted her rounded belly,

“We’ll just have to see how our son turns out. I just hope he doesn’t inherit your

emotional intelligence and end up driving his future wife away.”

“If that ever happens, it won’t just be about getting back at him for your sake,

we’ll be lucky if we can even keep our son around.”

As she spoke, Rose suddenly shivered.

“I have no idea if Damon will spoil his daughter. What am I thinking... Of course,

he will. I can’t even begin to imagine how far he’ll go. If our son ever crosses his

little princess, I dread to think what kind of crazed things he might do.”

Enter title...

Morrison frowned, torn between which matter to address first. Should he

comment on her dig about his emotional intelligence, or Damon’s potential for

madness?

But before he could get a word in, Rose had already taken a deep breath and continued. “Anyway, it’s their own business. If our boy really does end up hurting Little Moon’s feelings and gets a taste of his own medicine, he’ll have it coming, right?” d2

She turned her gaze to Morrison with a swift shift in tone.

Morrison’s scalp tingled, “Why do I feel like there’s a hidden message in what you’re saying?”

Rose chuckled, “Oh no, you’re just overthinking it. So, do you agree with me?”

That smile seemed eerily mischievous.

Morrison chuckled nervously, “Whatever you say is right, dear.”

Rose looked pleased, “Mm-hmm.”

—

Carrying twins was proving to be quite the challenge for Chloe. At eight months, Damon had flown in the best doctors from overseas and had Jane on a 24-hour watch by Chloe’s side.

In truth, Chloe was faring better than many other women expecting twins, but

when had Damon ever paid attention to the pregnancies of others?

He attended all of Chloe's appointments, which were private, and he had only

seen a few other expectant mothers, all with single pregnancies. Next to Chloe's

belly, they seemed to have it easy, making Damon even more cautious.

By the eighth month, walking had indeed become a struggle. Chloe graciously

accepted all the help she was given. There was no point in putting on a brave

face now.

Everyone around her was on edge, fearing any possible mishap, and to ease

their minds—and her own—she let them fuss over her.

Thankfully, she had daily visits from friends and family, so loneliness never had

a chance to set in.

Even Stanley would pop in now and then, sometimes disappearing for lengths of

time, and at other times appearing almost every day.

Damon had tried every trick in the book to keep Stanley at bay, and while occasionally successful, Stanley had started to openly engage in a battle of wits with him.

At home, Damon spent his spare moments strategizing how to handle Stanley.

At first, Chloe was concerned, but as it became apparent that their antics were harmless, she relaxed and let them have their open confrontations.

Both Damon and Stanley could tell Chloe was worried, so they kept their rivalry in check so as not to truly alarm her.

Lately, though, it seemed Damon had found an effective way to manage things.

—

Yulia arrived with Anya to visit Chloe, and as soon as they entered, Anya scampered over to hug Chloe's legs.

"Chloe, how are my little cousins doing?"

With motherhood on the horizon, Chloe saw Anya with newfound affection, almost seeing her as a daughter. "They're doing just fine, thank you for asking,

Anya,” she replied, her voice tender.

Anya’s big, round eyes fixed on Chloe’s belly, and after a moment of wonder,

she placed her chubby, delicate hand gently on it, patting softly. Then she

exclaimed with surprise, “They are my little cousins, so it’s only right for Anya to

care about them. I promise I’ll always protect them.”

Chloe smiled, “That’s very sweet of you, Anya. They might be quite

mischievous, though. Will you be okay with that?”

Anya shook her head confidently, “It’s okay. They’re little, so a bit of mischief is

forgivable. I will try my best to keep them from being too naughty.”

Her childlike voice was soft and endearing, trying so hard to sound “grown-up”.

The sight was utterly adorable. The thought of her children being pampered by

such a cute little aunt made Chloe’s heart swell with warmth.

As Yulia hung up her coat and joined them, she couldn’t help but smile at the

exchange between Anya and Chloe, though her expression was a mix of

amusement and resignation.

"Anya, be careful not to bump into Chloe, okay?"

"I am being careful," Anya replied, then turned back to Chloe's belly. "Are they

sleeping or playing now? Are they being naughty?"

Chloe chuckled, shaking her head, "They're being good. Probably sleeping."

"I see."

Anya seemed a tad disappointed, probably eager to play with them. She then

climbed onto the nearby sofa, swinging her legs as she kept her eyes on

Chloe's belly. "I'll just wait quietly for them to wake up and then we can play."

Yulia let out a resigned laugh and said to Chloe, "Ever since she saw them

move that one time, she's been obsessed with coming over."

"She's welcome anytime. I get bored at home, and Anya is such a good girl. I

really like having her around."

"Still, she's young. You never know when she might accidentally cause trouble."

Chloe smiled softly, changing the subject, "Did Nathan bring you guys over?"

Yulia's smile faded slightly, "No, he's been tied up lately."

The change in her demeanor was noticeable.

Anya, who had stopped swinging her legs, chimed in, "Yeah, Nathan's busy.

He's always going to see pretty ladies now."

Chloe's brows knitted together, noticing Yulia's discomfort, and directed her

attention to Anya. "Do you know this pretty lady?"

Anya shook her head, "I don't. But I know that each time, the pretty lady is

different."

Chloe raised an eyebrow, "Different?"

The conversation had taken an unexpected turn, one that seemed to carry the

weight of grown-up troubles, even in the innocent setting of a child's

observation.

"Mmm, yeah, I've seen them, just yesterday afternoon Nathan took me to meet

them. Uh..."

Anya clapped a hand over her mouth mid-sentence, her wide eyes darting between Yulia and Chloe, regretting her slip of the tongue.

Yulia, sensing something amiss, asked sternly, "Yesterday afternoon? Where did you guys go?"

Anya shook her head.

Yulia didn't say another word, but her face was a clear shade of angry.

Hesitating, Anya finally lowered her hand, her voice tiny, "I don't know the place, just that it was full of these really pretty ladies. Nathan and I were sitting in this room, and a bunch of them were standing in front of us, all quiet-like, wearing hardly anything."

Chloe's mind reeled. What in the world was Nathan up to?

Yulia's expression was sour, and Chloe cast a worried glance at Yulia. Though she was now Nathan's sister-in-law, she couldn't find any excuse to defend him.

Anya might be young, but her description was clear enough to hint at where they had been.

A married man still playing the field was unacceptable. And to take Anya along?

Was he out of his mind?

“Anya, what happened next?”

Chloe asked, certain that with Anya in tow, Nathan wouldn’t have done anything

reckless. Sure enough, Anya said, “After that, he got all those pretty ladies’

numbers, and then he took me out for ice cream. Nathan told me not to tell

Yulipop. He’d get mad.”

Chloe let out a sigh of relief.

Yulia’s face softened somewhat, then she instructed Anya firmly. “You are not

allowed to go places like that again, got it? Doesn’t matter who takes you.”

Anya nodded vigorously, “Won’t happen again.”

Yulia smiled and patted Anya’s head, “That’s my girl.”

Chloe looked at Yulia, “Is that all you’re upset about?”

“Hmm?”

Yulia looked puzzled for a moment, then realization dawned, "It was a bit much for him to take her there, given her age."

"So you're just upset about Nathan taking Anya to that kind of place, not that he went there himself to find women?"

Yulia paused, her smile fading a touch, "Where he goes is his business. I can't be too controlling."

"You are his wife," Chloe stated emphatically, reminding her of the fact.

Yulia locked eyes with Chloe for a moment, then let out a sigh, "Chloe, you know as well as I do, my marriage to Nathan isn't what it seems to everyone else."

Chloe went silent.

Chapter 1849

"You told me to find these girls, and I still have to be beaten up for doing my job.

Isn't that too unfair?"

Chloe's expression chilled instantly as she turned her gaze toward Damon.

Yulia, standing off to the side, stared at Damon in shock. Could he really be that

kind of guy? It didn't seem right. Even if he was having affairs, he couldn't have

called so many beautiful women to the estate when Chloe was so pregnant.

Damon's face darkened further, his grip tightening. "Who told you to drag these

people over here!?" His head was practically throbbing with irritation at Nathan's

boneheaded move, bringing all these women to the estate.

Enter title...

Trying to dodge the impending storm, Nathan cradled his head and sidestepped,

"You didn't specify where to send them. I thought... I thought you wanted them

to cheer Chloe up."

Chloe's brow twitched, her eyes scanning the group of women.d2

Cheering her up with a selection of rosy-skinned, beautifully poised women?

That would be quite unusual.

But if it were Damon's doing, it wouldn't be too surprising.

The women, upon seeing Damon, puffed out their chests and tried to look their

best, as if they were contestants in a beauty pageant, each vying for the crown.

But Nathan's words seemed to let the air out of their sails.

Cheering up a woman? What was this all about?

They turned their eyes back to Chloe, who was standing across from them with a protruding belly, and the last shreds of their confidence suddenly disappeared without a trace.

Her facial features, though calm, had an intimidating presence. Indeed she was the legendary iRonald lady.

Competing with her for a man? The thought had barely crossed their minds before being quickly dismissed.

One by one, they looked downcast, no longer daring to meet Chloe's gaze.

Chloe, however, just gave a faint smile and stepped forward, taking a closer look at them. "Do you even know why you were called here?"

The women shook their heads, one of them speaking up, "We were told we'd be attending to someone."

Chloe raised an eyebrow, "Well then, you should..."

"Better take back your words. They weren't brought here for you," Damon cut her off before she could finish. He had already moved to her side, his face a stern warning.

Chloe turned to him, "They are already here. If they are not for me, do you need them for yourself?"

Damon's complexion darkened even more, "They weren't called here by me."

Chloe replied with a laugh, "Your little brother setting you up, huh?"

Nathan was frantically shaking his head on the side, "Chloe, please spare me.

There is no way that I would dare to cross my brother."

"So what's the real story?"

"I don't know either. I just followed instructions. You gotta ask my brother for the details."

Chloe's gaze returned to Damon, who pursed his lips, glancing toward the

neighboring hill. "Maybe the guy next door is just too lonely. Thought I'd help him settle down."

Chloe's mouth opened, but for a moment, no sound came out.

The two were always at odds, but how did it get to the point where Damon was helping Stanley settle down in life?

The conversation dropped into a brief silence. It was Yulia who broke it, unable to suppress her laughter.

Chloe snapped out of it, her eyes drifting toward the neighboring hill. Finding a wife for Stanley? Why did she find this situation so unimaginable?

Knowing Stanley for years, she'd never pictured him with a woman. The mental image was awkward and bizarre. Damon was really something to come up with this idea.

She looked at Damon helplessly. Although she had long known that these women were just a misunderstanding, she really hadn't expected it to turn out this way.

“He won’t accept it.” She meant no slight to the women, but Stanley definitely wouldn’t choose a wife from among them.

With his rebellious streak, how could he possibly accept an arranged marriage, especially one from Damon.

Damon’s face grew stormy, “How can you be so sure he won’t accept it without even meeting them?”

With a sense of resignation, Chloe replied, “I know him at least a little bit.”

“Don’t you dare know him.” Damon’s voice was low and possessive as he looked at her.

Chloe paused and then laughed. “Alright, alright, I won’t mention him. You two keep up with whatever you are doing.”

“He’s the one who started it,” Damon explained, as if he’d ever stoop to bicker with that man.

Chloe just smiled, “Sure, it’s all his fault.” Sometimes, a man just needed a little

coddling.

Anya had been watching Nathan, clinging to his leg and looking up at him with

concern. "Nathan, does it hurt? Let me blow on it."

Nathan lifted her into his arms, "Here, it hurts."

Anya's little hands rubbed his face, then she blew gently on his cheek. "Better?"

Nathan smiled down at her, "One more kiss and it'll be all gone."

With a smacking kiss, Anya obliged.

Nathan nodded in satisfaction.

Yulia watched the exchange with a soft smile, her thoughts a serene mystery.

It was then that Chloe spoke up, "Nathan, be mindful of your boundaries. Going

to those places by yourself is one thing, but taking Anya along is entirely

inappropriate."

Nathan blinked, then turned his gaze to Yulia. "I'm not up to no good. And I

wouldn't teach Anya anything bad. I'm careful."

Chloe continued with a smile, "Taking her to a VIP room to pick up women?"

“I... I had Anya with me. Picking up women in the VIP room was just to carry out

my brother’s mission. I wouldn’t do anything else with Anya there.”

“So what you’re saying is, if Anya wasn’t there, you might consider doing

something else?”

Nathan’s scalp tingled with dread, “Oh come on, Chloe, don’t do this to me.”

Chloe just laughed and said no more. From the corner of her eye, Chloe

glanced over at Yulia. There didn’t seem to be much of an expression on her

face. How could she still manage to smile at a time like this?

Damon, with his arm wrapped around Chloe, said to Nathan, “Take these ladies

next door for me, will ya? Tell him I don’t mind keeping the whole lot, no returns

accepted, and he doesn’t even need to thank me.”

Nathan, holding Anya reluctantly, complained, “Why’s it always me?”

Damon turned, still holding Chloe close, “Nathan’s out of town on business.”

In other words, the assistant wasn’t around, so Nathan had to play the

workhorse.

Nathan didn't even have a chance to argue.

—

Nathan scooped up Anya and put her in the car, placing her on the space he'd

cleared between his legs. With one arm around her and the other on the

steering wheel, he drove out of the estate.

Yulia had just asked Anya to stay with her, but the little girl refused to leave

Nathan's side, so she let them be. She'd met that Stanley guy a couple of times

before. He was kind to Chloe and seemed a bit aloof, even quirky, but he looked

after anyone connected to her. She figured they'd be fine.

Chloe had Damon for company, so Yulia went to the guest room, where she

occasionally stayed over.

It was early summer, and the estate was breathtakingly beautiful. Standing at

the bedside, Yulia recalled the conversation she'd had with Chloe not so long

Chapter 1850

Nathan gritted his teeth, "Then just answer my question quickly."

Yulia chuckled, laying back on the bed, her head tilted as she gazed at Nathan.

“What answer do you want to hear?”

Nathan’s eyes narrowed, his grip on her leg tightened as he slightly pulled it

aside, the pose a tad embarrassing.

“Well? You sure you don’t want to talk?”

After a moment’s hesitation, she shifted her body slightly upward and then

smiled, saying, “If I say I don’t, what are you going to do about it?”

Nathan leaned in closer, “What do you think?”d2

Enter title...

Feeling his outline and his intense breath, Yulia’s breathing hitched, “I miss

you.”

But she didn’t mean it.

Nathan’s brow twitched, thinking he must be crazy to suddenly ask her this kind

of question, only to make things awkward for himself. Regardless, he had a

more pressing matter to attend to.

His hand moved in another direction, his voice laced with mischief, "Then I need to check just how much you're missing me."

Yulia tensed suddenly as she felt something, but then gradually sank into the rhythm of Nathan's thrusts, completely carried along by his lead. Worried that Anya might really come up, Yulia was restless. She wanted to end their tryst quickly. Nathan pulled her back down to the bed.

"Stop. Anya will really come looking. Ah..."

Yulia tried to resist, but Nathan prevailed once again. Holding her waist tightly, he didn't pause, "Stay still, didn't you say you missed me? I haven't felt just how much yet."

Yulia clenched her teeth, her voice a chaotic whisper, "I should've never said I missed you."

"Heh," Nathan chuckled, "Then you might end up a hundred times more exhausted than now."

The sudden increase in intensity made Yulia bite down hard on her lip, a frown

creasing her brow, her hands clutching him tightly. "Be gentle..."

—

Stepping out of the washroom, Yulia's expression had returned to normal, as if

the messy romance that just unfolded in the room was nothing more than a

dream.

Nathan, already presentable, watched Yulia emerge and his brow furrowed

slightly. Suddenly, he said, "Damon and Chloe are both smart."

Yulia turned her head, looking at him with confusion.

Nathan pursed his lips, "Chloe knows that even if those women are brought

home, Damon wouldn't entertain any other thoughts."

Yulia was speechless for a while before conceding, "Yes, she's smart, and

Damon isn't that kind of man."

"But Chloe still seemed pretty upset. She knows the truth, so why get angry?"

Nathan's question made Yulia frown, but she remained silent. Why indeed?

Maybe she just wanted to take the opportunity to show how much she cared for

Damon.

Caring was the only reason for such a big reaction.

True or false, it didn't matter. Wasn't that what life was about?

Everyone had lied in life. As long as the end result was ideal, and the present

moment was happy, that was enough.

Nathan was right. There was no need for her to fret over things she had no right

to worry about. Being happy was what mattered.

"I don't know, maybe it's just because she cares too much about Damon. They

say a woman in love becomes dumb. Perhaps, even if she's smart, she can be

swayed by appearances." She said, brushing her hair back with her hand,

turning to leave.

"So what are your thoughts?"

Nathan's voice rose again, causing Yulia to pause. She turned to look at him,

“What could I possibly think about their situation?”

After a second’s pause, she added, “My thought is that they really have a great relationship.”

“And you? No other thoughts about what Chloe said last?”

“What did she say again?” Yulia pondered, “That you should be careful and not take Anya to those places?”

She smiled, “I wasn’t going to say anything since you were already scolded by Chloe, but since you brought it up, I’ll add that, even though I know you wouldn’t do anything with Anya there, she still shouldn’t be in such a place. She’s young, innocent, and those aren’t the sorts of things she should be exposed to.”

Nathan’s face chilled a bit, “Is that all?”

Yulia blinked, “What else?”

“What if I hadn’t taken Anya? If I had gone to that place alone?”

Yulia stopped in her tracks, the smile freezing on her face. Nathan’s eyes bore

into her as he leaned against the window frame. "What if I went alone? What then?"

After a moment of silence, Yulia said, "I assume you had a very important reason."

Nathan's gaze intensified, and he let out a cold laugh, "You really are understanding."

Yulia just smiled and didn't reply.

Nathan's expression didn't improve as a knock came at the door, and Anya's voice filtered through. "Yulipop, Nathan. It's lunchtime, open up."

Yulia walked to the door and opened it.

Anya entered, grasping Yulia's hand, her big eyes scanning the room before settling on Nathan.

"Nathan, time to eat."

Yulia lifted Anya, "Alright, he heard you. Let's go call Damon and Chloe for lunch."

“Okay, then Nathan, you go downstairs and wait for me. I’ll come down to you soon.” Anya said.

As they descended, Nathan was already seated in the dining room, digging in.

His bowl was nearly empty which caused Anya to pout in annoyance. “Nathan’s mean, eating without waiting for me.”

Damon shot icy glares at him, too. He dared to eat before his wife?

Chloe, on the other hand, sat down with a soft smile, a bowl of soup placed beside her by the help.

In just that short time, Nathan handed his empty bowl to the servant, “Another serving, please.”

The servant hurriedly obliged.

Nathan’s appetite was well-known to everyone. Yulia showed no surprise, attending to Anya’s meal, her soft talking a gentle backdrop. The clinking of cutlery and occasional bits of conversation created a pleasant atmosphere.

Nathan had just finished his second helping when he pushed his chair back and stood up. "I'm stuffed, got a ton of work back at the office. Gotta run."

Yulia's hand paused mid-air, spoon in grip, as she dished out some apple pie to Anya.

Anya turned to Nathan, her eyes wide, "But Nathan, you said you'd hang out with me this afternoon."

"Something came up, kiddo. I'll make it up to you, I promise."

Chloe set down her fork, glancing up from her half-eaten slice of pie to catch

Nathan's retreating figure before turning her attention back to Yulia.

At that moment, Damon reached over to serve Chloe another helping of green beans. "Better eat up while it's hot."

Chloe's gaze returned to her plate.

—

Anya was in a funk all afternoon, and Yulia didn't linger at the estate, opting to take Anya home instead. No matter how Yulia tried to cheer her up, Anya couldn't muster a smile. As evening approached, Anya grew more unsettled, tears pooling in her big eyes, stubbornly held back.

“What exactly did Nathan promise to do with you? Isn’t mom enough company?”

Anya shook her head, and the tears finally spilled over, “No, mommy can’t.

Mommy doesn’t like it. It’s a secret between me and Nathan. Nathan’s a meanie...”