

## **Marrying 971**

### Chapter 971 The Manipulative Ploy

Very well.

Sebastian elegantly dabbed away the perspiration with a tissue, discarding it into the trash can before casually regarding the middle-aged man before him. "Keep in mind your responsibilities."

"Of course, of course!" the middle-aged man replied with a reassuring smile.

With a smile, the middle-aged man pledged, "Mr. Weiss, rest assured, you can rely on me."

"My son's destiny lies within your decisions, so I'll document precisely as you dictate on the DNA report," he affirmed.

Sebastian smirked in response. "Then proceed as I've directed."

"In the section designated for the father, inscribe my name," he directed with clarity.

"And for the mother's identification..."

He paused for effect. "Simply record the name of Damien's wife, Cherise."

Though Sebastian's commands appeared straightforward, they landed like a bombshell upon the middle-aged man, igniting waves of apprehension. "This... this seems rather precarious, doesn't it?"

How many in Adania were unaware of the profound love and unwavering support Damien, the esteemed CEO, harbored for his current wife?

Even after her affair with Sebastian was exposed, Damien stood steadfastly by her side.

Sebastian's gunshot wound, a repercussion of Damien's retaliation, served as a testament to the lengths he would go to protect his family.

The Weiss family's influence and status loomed large, casting a formidable shadow, yet for him...

If Damien were to uncover any manipulation of the DNA report... the consequences would be dire indeed.

The middle-aged man couldn't fathom the repercussions he would face!

Sebastian's inquiry cut through his thoughts like a knife. "What's troubling you, Mr. Danny Parker? Feeling intimidated, perhaps?"

Sebastian nonchalantly stifled a yawn. "Have my offers of securing a permanent European green card for your son or the villa I bestowed upon him failed to entice you?"

Rest assured, Sebastian continued, fixing a menacing gaze on Danny, "You're already teetering on the brink of ruin. Even if Damien seeks retribution, what power does he truly wield over you?"

"He's made no secret of his hostility, but his anger won't extend to your son," Sebastian assured with a chilling certainty.

"Even if Damien were to remove you from the equation, your son would still lead a life of comfort and luxury abroad."

"But if you dare to defy me..."

Sebastian's eyes narrowed, the threat implicit in his tone. "If you choose to disobey me, your son's fate may not be so certain."

"Therefore, Mr. Parker, you must now decide: save yourself or witness the inevitable demise of your son?"

Though not overtly forceful, Sebastian's words cut through Danny like a knife, each syllable striking a nerve.

Danny struggled visibly, wiping sweat from his brow as he grappled with the weight of his decision. Finally, he met Sebastian's gaze head-on. "Can you guarantee... that my son will be treated well?"

"I will honor our agreement," Sebastian affirmed with a nonchalant shrug.

"I am not one to deceive."

"Consider this," Sebastian continued, his tone dripping with a twisted kind of honesty. "I've laid out the consequences of your choice, demonstrating my transparency."

"So, have you made your decision, Mr. Parker?"

Danny clenched his jaw, drawing a deep breath. "I have. If I must choose between myself and my son, I choose my son."

"Very well," Sebastian nodded in satisfaction, a sly smile playing on his lips. "Hence, the DNA report must include my name and Cherise's."

"But..." Danny hesitated. "They only requested a test for paternity with you, not Cherise..."

"That's easily remedied," Sebastian interrupted, stifling another yawn. "The hair samples provided to you surely contain more than one strand, correct?"

"Yes..." Danny confirmed.

“Cherise has been in close proximity to the child recently, so their hair strands should be

arrying the Man In the Dark

## Chapter 972 The Manipulative Scheme

“Yes, Danny confirmed.

The samples we received included one from an adult and one from a child. A comparison of the adult and child DNA confirmed a biological relationship. Furthermore, the DNA of the adult matched that in the database, belonging to Cherise.”

Sebastian finished speaking calmly, a teasing glint in his eyes as he glanced at Danny. “Considering Mr. Parker’s years of experience at the DNA identification center, one would expect a higher level of professionalism when fabricating such stories, wouldn’t you agree?”

Danny pursed his lips, diligently wiping the sweat from his brow. “Very well... We will issue the identification report in accordance with Mr. Weiss’s statement.”

“Mr. Weiss, I trust you will honor your word...” Danny reminded him earnestly.

“I understand, I understand,” the impatient man waved dismissively. “You may leave.”

“How long until we receive the identification results?” Danny inquired, still wiping away his perspiration.

“Approximately three days,” Danny replied, wiping sweat off his face.

“Excellent,” Sebastian remarked with a light smile. “Three days should suffice.”

“What are you up to again?”

Upon exiting the ward, Danny found himself in a daze, only to bump into Yolanda, who was carrying a basket of fruits.

“Ms. Weiss,” he greeted her quickly before hurrying away.

Observing Danny’s departure with concern, Yolanda placed the fruit basket beside Sebastián. “Why did he leave with red eyes?”

Sebastian accepted the fruits gracefully, beginning to eat. “He was likely moved by my words, shedding tears of gratitude.”

Yolanda rolled her eyes. “You didn’t threaten him again, did you?”

Sebastian raised his hand in a solemn gesture. “I swear, I merely looked out for his son’s well- being this time.”

Yolanda regarded him skeptically before taking a seat nearby. “Dad and I are leaving tomorrow,” she informed him.

not advantageous to anyone, Yolanda relayed, her voice tinged with resignation.

She sighed, recalling how her father had previously expressed those sentiments to her. “Dad- is rather disappointed in your lack of ambition,” she continued.

He believes that what belongs to others is rightfully theirs, and forcibly taking it will incur divine retribution.”

“Is that so?”

Sebastian’s smile widened, his expression playful and unbounded. “I simply don’t subscribe to such nonsense.”

“Since my youth, my mother instilled in me the belief that if you desire something, you must fight for it,” Sebastian explained.

“If fighting proves futile, then you steal it. And if stealing isn’t an option...”

Sebastian’s eyes narrowed, his smile taking on a more menacing edge. “If even theft fails, then you destroy it.”

He lowered his gaze, idly toying with his fingers. The smile on his lips sent shivers down one’s spine. “Destroy her so that she belongs to no one so that all that remains is a memory.”

“Then it’s only fair,” Sebastian concluded coolly.

“Since her heart isn’t with me, why should I keep her?”

On that particular day, Sebastian had no intentions of inflicting harm upon Cherise. It was merely a test.

Prior to her arrival, he had contemplated various outcomes.

If she consented, he would choose to honor her wishes, biding his time until she and Damien were entirely estranged before claiming her in a more romantic setting.

He would exert force if she resisted, compelling her to be with him using indisputable facts.

However, he hadn’t anticipated Cherise’s defiance to the bitter end.

He could discern that when he tore away her clothing, she had resigned herself to death.

This realization stoked his fury and drove him to madness.

Throughout his life, Sebastian had always achieved his desires with calculated steps, never failing to attain them.

#### Chapter 973 Unveiling Sebastian's Machinations

She consistently refused to yield, fueling his desire to obliterate her.

He even tore apart the contract intended to safeguard Cherise from harm, the agreement between himself and Gwenn.

Sebastian knew that Gwenn had kept Cherise close to witness the downfall of the Tanner Group and her parents' legacy and its transfer into her possession.

However, Sebastian was always proud and aloof. Why should he succumb to Gwenn's manipulation?

If he wanted to dismantle her plans, then he would do so without hesitation!

Yolanda instinctively took two steps back, her voice trembling. "You... you're too terrifying."

Despite their disdain for Cherise, neither she nor Gwenn had ever entertained the notion of destroying her.

But Sebastian's words and actions were no jest!

"You're only realizing this now?" Sebastian sneered, his cold gaze briefly flickering towards Yolanda.

"You've been spoiled by the old man and your mother since childhood, sheltered from the world's harsh realities."

With a slight smile, he continued, "It's alright. I'll educate you gradually."

Yolanda fled in despair.

She wanted no part in learning about such things or understanding these so-called rules!

Before departing Adania, Yolanda made her way to the research institute to meet with Mr. Whitlock.

"Ms. Weiss, what a surprise to see you here," Mr. Whitlock greeted her warmly.

"Let's not beat around the bush," Yolanda said, taking a deep breath.

"I'm aware that you had conflicts with Damien and Cherise because of our actions. Are willing to reconcile with them?"

you

With that she handed a voice recorder to Mr. Whitlock "I admit I was too stubborn in the

Mr. Whitlock was taken aback. "This is..."

It's something that could help mend your relationship with Cherise and Damien," Yolanda explained before leaving, muttering to herself, "My brother can be too intimidating..."

The voice recorder had been placed under Sebastian's bed as per

Alain's instructions.

Alain also instructed her to find someone who could contact Cherise and Damien to accept the recorder because "This could save your life in a critical moment!"



Initially reluctant, Yolanda left the voice recorder out of curiosity, eager to hear what Sebastian might reveal.

However, she never anticipated Sebastian openly expressing his thoughts and plans regarding Cherise in her presence.

After listening to the recording, Alain smiled knowingly. "You must understand, Cherise is his favorite woman. If he treats his favorite woman this way, what about you? He's never truly cared for you since childhood."

Alain's words sent a chill down Yolanda's spine.

Indeed.

Cherise remains Sebastian's favorite woman, yet he can treat her in a callous manner.

Then how would he treat her in the future?

Determined, Yolanda instructed Mr. Whitlock, "Don't delay giving it to them."

Mr. Whitlock nodded. "I'll contact Mr. Lenoir immediately!"

He retrieved his phone and began dialing the number while Yolanda observed, gradually feeling a sense of relief before departing.

However, she didn't anticipate Mr. Whitlock's unsuccessful attempts to reach Cherise.

After several failed calls, he simply placed the recorder in his office drawer.

In the evening, Cherise finally noticed Mr. Whitlock's missed call.

Frowning, she returned the call promptly.

"Mrs. Lenoir," Mr. Whitlock greeted warmly. "I've left you several messages. I hope you remember me?"

Chapter 974 Late Night Arrival

Cherise smiled awkwardly, "I remember, I remember."

Well, Mrs. Lenoir," Mr. Whitlock's voice oozed with flattery, "I have something of utmost importance to share with you urgently. This recording was given to me by Ms. Weiss, and you absolutely need to hear it!"

Furrowing her brows, Cherise inquired, "If it's truly crucial, where should we meet?"

"No need to meet, no need to meet!" Mr. Whitlock chuckled, "I've already arranged for local express delivery to bring it to you! Mrs. Lenoir, please understand that your reputation isn't

risks!" favorable at the moment, and meeting in person might pose

Cherise contemplated for a moment, acknowledging her current favorable mood.

However...

"If this is indeed significant, then... thank you."

Shortly after ending the call with Mr. Whitlock, the express delivery promptly delivered the package.

Opening it, Cherise found a recording pen inside.

She furrowed her brow, preparing to inspect it, when Mr. Whitlock called again.

“Mrs. Lenoir, I suggest you listen to this recording together with Mr. Lenoir,” Mr. Whitlock urged.

“It’s paramount that he hears and sees it. And please inform Mr. Lenoir that I was the one who sent it to you; you must!”

Cherise grasped Mr. Whitlock’s intentions and responded with a smile, “Mr. Whitlock, don’t worry. My husband will be aware that you provided me with this. Shall we wait for his return tonight and listen together?”

“Okay, okay!” Mr. Whitlock agreed eagerly. “Thank you, Mrs. Lenoir!”

After hanging up, Mr. Whitlock retrieved another recording pen from his drawer, a sly grin creeping onto his lips.

The recording pen sent to Cherise was given by Yolanda, while the one in the drawer captured the voice of his wife in an extramarital affair.

Recorded on the pen was the damning evidence of his wife’s affair with another man!

man his wife was involved with, potentially profiting from the situation.

He couldn’t help but smile smugly as he contemplated the leverage he now held and the potential outcomes of his actions.

Within a single day, he acquired something that could alter Damien’s perception of him and leverage over the man involved with his wife. He even contemplated buying a lottery ticket, feeling as though luck was on his side.

Damien returned home in the wee hours of the night, finding Cherise asleep at the dining table.

She had already tucked their children, Serafina, Soren, and Alexis, into bed.

Cherise had intended to wait up for Damien, perhaps playing cards to pass the time, but exhaustion overtook her, and she drifted off to sleep.

Upon his arrival, Damien spotted his wife resting peacefully on the dining table, a forgotten meal left untouched before her.

The Monopoly game interface displayed a long-standing failure, while a newly acquired voice recorder sat nearby, its purpose unknown.

With a slight furrow of his brow, Damien tenderly covered Cherise with a thin blanket.

Frances, their household assistant approached, and Damien signaled for her to proceed quietly. "I've already eaten," he informed her, prompting Frances to discreetly remove the cold food from the table.

Damien then approached Cherise, gently lifting her from the table. He carefully collected the phone and voice recorder before ascending the stairs with her in his arms.

Despite his careful movements, Cherise stirred awake as she felt the softness of their bed beneath her.

She groggily opened her eyes to find Damien unbuttoning the top button of her nightgown, his actions casting a sense of dazed confusion over her.

## Chapter 975 Late Night Revelation

You're home, Cherise greeted Damien as he entered.

Her eyes, still carrying traces of sleepiness but unable to hide their innate clarity and brightness, as she fixed them on him. "Did you eat?"

"I grabbed a light bite at the office," Damien replied, gently tucking her in with a thin blanket. I've told you not to wait up for me."

"It's already past ten," he remarked, noting the lateness of the hour.

\*If I hadn't come back tonight, were you planning to sleep at the dining table?" Damien queried a hint of amusement in his tone.

Feeling a twinge of embarrassment, Cherise hesitated before admitting, "I have something to discuss with you.

Furrowing his brow, Damien inquired, "Why didn't you call me if it was urgent?"

"I thought it would be better to talk in person," Cherise explained as she rose from the bed.

Damien sighed in exasperation. "If it couldn't wait, you could have asked me to come home earlier.

Cherise's lips formed a slight pout, her voice tinged with hesitation. "I was concerned that... I might disturb your work if you were busy."

After expressing her thoughts, she looked up at him with a gentle smile, her eyes reflecting. innocence and clarity. "I don't mind waiting a bit longer. I have ample time."

Damien furrowed his brow as he peered down at the petite figure seated on the bed.

The soft light filtering through the lampshade illuminated her pure and fair visage, accentuating her ethereal beauty.

A tender sensation stirred within Damien's heart.

He gently lifted her slender form without hesitation and cradled her in his arms?

"Silly girl," he murmured softly.

Damien held Cherise close, his embrace so tight that she struggled to speak.

"Please be gentler," she managed to utter, her voice barely above a whisper. "I can hardly breathe."

I apologize, he said in a deep voice, expressing his regret.

With care, he gently placed her back on the bed.

"Did you want to talk about something?"

The man perched on the edge of the bed, his gaze steady as he regarded her. "What's on your mind?"

"There's someone named Mr. Whitlock, the former director of the research institute where I used to work," Cherise explained, retrieving a voice recorder from the bedside table and passing it to Damien. "He said we should listen to this together."

"He emphasized its importance, and Yolanda arranged for him to pass it to you through me before she left Adania," she added.

Damien accepted the voice recorder, his brow furrowing in concern. "Yolanda gave this to you?"

"Yes," Cherise confirmed, her lips pursing.

“He specifically instructed that I shouldn’t listen it alone and that you must listen with me. “He specifically instructed that I shouldn’t listen Ait

Damien glanced at her with a hint of helplessness. “You stayed up just for this?”

Cherise’s nightly routine typically led her to bed by 8:30 p.m.

Since her memory loss, her life had fallen back into familiar patterns—early to bed and early to rise, waking around five in the morning.

However, tonight was different. Despite the late hour, she found herself still seated at the dining table, caught up in the mysterious matter presented by Mr. Whitlock, a task she couldn’t even remember.

Unconsciously, Damien glanced at the time.

It was nearly eleven o’clock, much later than their usual bedtime.

A sense of unease crept over him as he gently squeezed her shoulder. “It’s late. Aren’t you tired?”

Cherise remained on the bed, held by Damien’s presence.

Yet, she met his gaze with unwavering determination. I’m not tired.”

“You’re lying,” Damien teased, lightly pinching her nose. “Your bloodshot eyes betray you. Do you truly believe I wouldn’t notice?”

But... Cherise faltered, her cheeks flushing as she glanced at the voice recorder in his hand, her expression serious and steadfast.

“But this...

“Let’s discuss it tomorrow,” Damien suggested, sensing her hesitation.

## Chapter 976 Unexpected Intrigue

The man shook his head in mild bemusement, a faint smile playing on his lips. “It’s not particularly urgent.”

Cherise’s response was quick and relentless. “Still, let’s give it a listen. What if it’s truly significant?”

“Mr. Whitlock emphasized its importance when he contacted me...”

Unable to dissuade her, Damien closed the bedroom door with a resigned sigh, then proceeded to remove his coat before reclining on the bed, drawing Cherise close into his embrace.

“How about this: we listen together, and afterward, you can get some rest?”

Cherise nodded in agreement, her lips slightly pursed. “Alright.”

As Damien inhaled the scent of her hair, he pressed play on the voice recorder—

The night enveloped them in quietude as they lay intertwined.

Cherise’s expression oscillated between shock and embarrassment, while Damien’s eyes held a hint of amusement.

The room was filled with the voices emanating from the recorder.

“Your husband isn’t aware of our rendezvous, correct?”



“No, he’s oblivious, and he’ll remain so... Does your wife suspect anything?”

“That old hag, ugh!”

“Come closer, my love, come kiss me.”

“Embrace me...”

Cherise found herself speechless.

Mr. Whitlock had stressed the significance of the recording when entrusting it to her.

Yet here they were, listening to the clandestine affair of unfamiliar voices.

And why was the volume escalating and the content becoming more... intimate?

Why did the woman’s voice sound so...?

But even beneath the covers, the sounds persisted, relentlessly assaulting her ears.

In the end, Cherise cautiously peeked out from beneath the blanket. “Um... dear, perhaps you should turn it off.”

Damien arched an eyebrow, sensing her embarrassment, and decided to tease her a bit. “But isn’t this what you wanted me to hear?”

With a mischievous grin, he lifted the blanket. “Shall we listen together?”

Cherise felt at a loss for words. Gritting her teeth, she began to voice her frustration about Mr. Whitlock. “I thought... I thought Mr. Whitlock, being my former boss, wouldn’t have any ulterior motives...”

"I believed everything he said... but I never expected..."

That he would subject her to this with Damien!

What's so good about listening to this?

How mortifying!

"He meant no harm, Cherise."

Damien's calm voice carried a hint of amusement. "Didn't you mention he specifically instructed you to listen with me?"

Cherise nodded silently. "He did."

"Mm."

Damien playfully teased her, "Perhaps Yolanda and Mr. Whitlock are trying to promote the relationship between us as a married couple?"

Cherise's face flushed crimson as she tried to grab the recorder. "How does this promote anything?"

Feeling as though she'd forced Damien into this embarrassing situation, Cherise wished she could disappear.

Damien's smile remained faint. "Mrs. Lenoir, don't you know?"

"Whether it's a man or a woman, hearing such sounds elicits a reaction."

He glanced at her with his dark

eyes. “Do you have a reaction now, Mrs. Lenoir?”

Cherise was speechless.

She had no reaction at all!

Right now, she was just mortified!

Unable to answer Damien’s question, she tried to snatch the recorder from his hand.

She attacked, and he dodged.

She advanced, and he retreated.

She struck, and he defended.

Beads of sweat formed on Cherise’s forehead as the playful struggle ensued.

Chapter 977 Gentle Revelations

The stark contrast in physical strength between them rendered her attempts futile in retrieving the recorder!

As the voices on the recorder grew more intense, Cherise made a split-second decision and clambered onto Damien, using every limb at her disposal.

Observing her genuine urgency, Damien casually loosened his grip, intentionally granting her access to the recorder.

Cherise finally wrested the device from his grasp, feeling triumphant.

Hastily, she reached for the power button, but in her haste, she accidentally pressed the volume button instead.

“You’re incredible...”

The volume of the woman’s voice soared immediately!

Wide-eyed with surprise, Cherise fumbled to locate the power button amidst Damien’s amused

With a deep breath, she finally found it, and the room fell silent.

the room

“It’s finally quiet...” Cherise sighed in relief, momentarily forgetting their awkward position, her body inadvertently “riding” Damien.

However, as the tension in the air lingered, she sensed an uncomfortable shift.

Instinctively, she raised her head to meet Damien’s silent gaze, his eyes holding a depth she couldn’t quite decipher.

Flustered by his stare’s intensity, she realized their posture’s ambiguous nature.

Awkwardly attempting to disentangle herself, she rose with her hands for support.

Yet, she lost her balance in her endeavor to shift positions and tumbled back onto him.

The angle of her fall resulted in her soft cheek colliding with something unyielding.

The collision caused Cherise's face to sting, and simultaneously, a sharp intake of breath escaped Damien's throat.

As a stinging sensation spread across her face, Cherise recoiled, only to realize that she had collided with his...

Ignoring the discomfort in her own face, Cherise looked at Damien with a hint of awkwardness, concern coloring her voice, "Are you... alright?"

Though she had not experienced it herself, she understood that being hit could be quite painful, especially for men.

Observing his darkened expression, she could tell he must be in some discomfort.

She cautiously reached out to him, "You..."

"I'm fine," Damien reassured her, his furrowed brows relaxing.

A gentle smile touched his lips as he pulled her close, "Go to sleep."

Wrapped in his embrace, Cherise couldn't help but feel a pang of guilt.

How deeply did he care for her?

Evidently, he was in pain; his expression had darkened just moments ago.

Despite the pain he must have felt, he could hide it, look at her with tenderness, reassure her, and even... hold her gently and urge her to rest.

“Damien.”

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Finally lifting her head from beneath the covers,

Finally lifting her head from beneath the covers, Cherise’s eyes sparkled as she looked at

him, “Do you truly care for me this much?”

To the point where you would overlook your own discomfort, where my unintentional actions wouldn’t bother you?

“Yes,” Damien replied softly, meeting her gaze with warmth.

The man cast a faint glance at her and remarked, “Didn’t you just sense it?”

Cherise bit her lip, “I could feel it... but... you don’t have to do this.”

Damien raised an eyebrow, his eyes fixed on her.

She continued, “I believe restraining yourself like this must be exhausting.”

“We’re husband and wife. We should be open with each other. You should share your true feelings with me rather than holding them in.”

Her crimson lips seemed particularly vibrant as she said this.

Her words, spoken with conviction, emphasized her desire for honesty and openness in their

## Chapter 978 Flames of Desire

Damien's gaze sharpened, a glint of determination flashing in his eyes.

In an instant, he shifted position, hovering over her, his lips pressing firmly against hers.

Cherise recoiled, caught off guard by Damien's sudden advance.

"You said

you wanted me to cease withholding," Damien murmured, his voice low and intense. "And my deepest longing at this moment is precisely this."

Cherise found herself immobilized by Damien's unexpected kiss.

Her mind raced, unable to process the abruptness of the gesture.

This proximity was uncharted territory, particularly since her memory loss.

She lay stiffly, her thoughts scattered, unable to formulate a response.

Undeterred, Damien continued, his grip on her head tightening as he deepened the kiss, relentless in his pursuit.

Only when Cherise gasped for air, her cheeks flushed crimson, did she manage to push him away. His faint smile belied his satisfaction. "Are you content now, Mrs. Lenoir?"

Cherise's embarrassment flared, her cheeks ablaze as she met his gaze. "I explicitly asked you not to hold back, but why... why did you kiss me?"

"Because it's something I've yearned to do," Damien confessed, drawing her back into his embrace. "Cherise."

Cherise pursed her lips, her tone hesitant. "Yes?"

"You must recover your memory swiftly," Damien insisted, his voice tinged with urgency. "I can't continue to restrain myself like this."

Puzzled, Cherise furrowed her brow, struggling to comprehend his cryptic words.

His sudden gesture of pinching her nose brought clarity. "Your amnesia prohibits me from expressing my true feelings," Damien clarified. "If you were to forget me entirely, it would be a grievous error."

Cherise's lips formed a contemplative line, and in a fleeting moment, comprehension dawned upon her.

Damien's cryptic words alluded to the intimate union between a man and a woman—a realm. fraught with desires unspoken yet keenly felt.

In the haze of her amnesia, Damien had shown unwavering patience and tenderness, never imposing beyond her comfort.

Yet, beneath his composed facade, he remained a man bound by human desires!

Each night, cradling his own wife yet stifled in his yearning to fully articulate his desires, it surely inflicted a torment upon him, didn't it?

Her lips pursed in contemplation, and a sudden realization dawned upon her: Damien's dark and gloomy expression earlier likely harbored depths beyond mere physical pain, didn't it?



Could it be that... he yearned for something unattainable, yet that desire remained ever-present before him?

Empathy swelled within her, a pang of sympathy for Damien's silent struggle.

With determination etched in her expression, she met his gaze squarely. "Do you truly desire this?" she inquired earnestly.

"I can do it."

With resolve coursing through her veins, Cherise leaned in, bestowing a tender kiss upon his cheek. "Even in the absence of my memory," she murmured softly.

"Yet I can fulfill my duties as a wife," she declared.

With that, she delicately undid the buttons of her nightgown, her voice carrying a hint of uncertainty. "How... should we proceed?" she queried, her gaze searching his.

"What should we do first?" Her questions hung in the air, punctuated by a pause as she considered her following words. "Should I take a bath first?" Her voice trailed off, leaving the decision in his hands.

Her dark eyes bore into his, a mixture of seriousness and determination reflected within them. "You tell me," she implored, awaiting his guidance.

Damien found himself at a loss for words, his mind swirling with conflicting emotions.

At that moment, a line from the novels Cherise once cherished echoed in his thoughts: "Woman, you are playing with fire."

He couldn't deny the truth of those words—Cherise was indeed daringly toying with flames, igniting passions with audacity.

“Dear,” Cherise murmured, noting his hesitation. With a gentle lean, she closed the distance between them, kissing his lips tenderly. “I don’t really understand these things,” she confessed

softly, her words stirring a flame within him. “So you have to take the lead.”

Her admission sparked a fire within him, igniting a passion that consumed his heart entirely!

With a surge of resolve, he rolled over, his actions speaking louder than words.

“No regrets?” he murmured, seeking affirmation.

“Yes! No regrets!” Cherise’s response was immediate, her eyes alight with determination. “This is what I should do as a wife—”

Before she could finish her thought, he silenced her with a fervent kiss, their desires melding into one in a night of unabashed passion.

As the dawn broke, casting its gentle light upon the aftermath of their ardor, Cherise awoke to the sensation of soreness enveloping her body.

The sunlight filtering through the gap in the curtain illuminated the room, where their discarded clothes lay strewn across the floor—a silent testament to the intensity of their shared passion.

Cherise felt a warm flush creep into her cheeks as she glanced at the scattered clothes, memories of the previous night flooding her mind like a rushing tide.

Quietly, she retreated to the bathroom for a shower, the weight of the situation pressing heavily upon her. She couldn’t help but blame Mr. Whitlock for the predicament they found themselves in.

Why had he insisted on them listening to that recorder together?

In the end...

Ultimately, she found herself gravitating towards Damien of her own volition.

Yet, she couldn't shake the feeling that this entire debacle was not entirely her fault—Mr. Whitlock's meddling had set this chain of events into motion.

After her shower, Cherise's phone rang, signaling an incoming call from Mr. Whitlock.

"Mrs. Lenoir," inquired Mr. Whitlock with a tone that held a tinge of apprehension, "Have you and Mr. Lenoir had the chance to peruse the recording I provided together, as I suggested?"

With a sardonic curve gracing her lips, Cherise responded, "Indeed, we have, Mr. Whitlock."

"Mr. Whitlock," Cherise continued, her voice tinged with a knowing edge, "It appears your spouse and Mr. Samson share a rather peculiar rapport; would you not agree?"

Taken aback by the revelation, Mr. Whitlock stammered, "How did you come to learn of my wife's association with Samson..."

Before he could finish, Cherise interjected sharply, "The recording you submitted, was it not their voices that resonated within its confines? I would advise against such jests in the future, sir!"

With that admonition, Cherise swiftly terminated the conversation, leaving Mr. Whitlock in a state of bewildered contemplation.

Seated in his office, Mr. Whitlock grappled with the unsettling revelation.

Did the audio recording Cherise received feature his wife and Samson?

Then, the one he had entrusted to Samson only the day prior...

In a flurry of realization, he hastily dialed a familiar number. "Hello, Samson..."

"Good day, sir."

## Chapter 979 Unveiled Truths

But instead of Samson's voice, a woman's somber tones echoed through the receiver, laden with grief. "I am his spouse. Sammy was involved in a vehicular accident this morning he didn't survive..."

Mr. Whitlock's world crumbled around him as he slumped in his chair, the weight of his actions crashing down upon him.

It was the end in more ways than one.

After ending the call, Cherise busied herself by gathering the scattered clothes and starting the washing machine before making her way downstairs.

Frances greeted her with a warm smile.

"Madam, Sir mentioned that you were tired last night, so I prepared a nutritious breakfast for you," Frances chirped. "What would you like to have?"

Cherise furrowed her brows, glancing at the array of breakfast options spread out on the table behind Frances—Italian, Western, meat, vegetarian... it was a veritable feast.

She was taken aback by the extravagance and struggled to find her words.

"Is all of this for me?" she finally managed to ask, a hint of disbelief coloring her tone.

Wasn't this a tad extravagant?

"Yes," Frances replied, her smile unwavering. "If you want anything else, just let me know. As long as I'm capable, I'll make it for you!"

Cherise fell silent, feeling overwhelmed by the abundance of food before her.

With such an abundance of food laid before her, what more could she conceivably desire?

She took a deep breath, partaking in a modest portion before urging Frances and the other servants to help themselves. "Please, don't let it go to waste," she insisted.

Frances nodded appreciatively. "As long as you're satisfied, madam," she replied. "We, the servants, won't partake in these."

Cherise frowned, puzzled by their reluctance. "Why not?" she inquired.

"Because when you first arrived at the Lenoir Residence, a servant was dismissed for eating your food without permission," Frances explained solemnly.

Cherise was rendered speechless by the revelation.

"Was there such a thing?" she murmured in disbelief.

"Yes," Frances confirmed, her expression tinged with reminiscence.

"I remember that incident clearly. But relax, June got the boot because she disrespected and belittled you, and Mr. Lenoir had your back," Frances reassured.

Cherise was moved by Frances's words.

She nervously bit her lip before asking, "Has Damien done anything else noteworthy for me?"

Frances furrowed her brow, pondering for a moment. "There are several instances..." she began.

"Such as?" Cherise prompted eagerly.

"For example, Mr. Lenoir once had a disagreement with his family because of you," Frances revealed.

Cherise's eyes widened. "A disagreement with his family? With whom? Why?" she inquired, her curiosity piqued.

Just as Frances was about to respond, a discreet cough from the servant nearby interrupted the conversation.

Frances interpreted the subtle hint and offered a faint smile. "You'll need to address that matter with Mr. Lenoir directly," she advised.

"We're merely servants; it's not our place to reveal too many details," Frances added, maintaining a sense of propriety.

"I'd rather not find myself in a situation like June's," she concluded with a note of caution.

Cherise nodded, mindful of the cautionary tale of June. She restrained herself from pressing further, sighing softly as she settled back onto the sofa, idly watching a drama unfold before her.

Her mind was preoccupied throughout the morning.

Damien was engrossed in his duties, Mr. Hampson had his own affairs to attend to, and Frances was undoubtedly busy as well.

It seemed everyone in the household had responsibilities to fulfill.

Even Serafina, Soren, and Alexis had their commitments at kindergarten.

Yet, Cherise found herself with nothing to occupy her time.

Since losing her memory, she had also lost the ability to lead an independent life.

Each day felt like being trapped in a cage, devoid of freedom, with uncertainty clouding her thoughts.

Amidst her confusion, a scene in the drama captured her attention—a poignant reunion between the female lead and her parents, tears of joy flowing freely.

Parents, family... I should have had them too, right?

#### Chapter 980 Connection

Moved by a sudden longing, she reached for her phone and dialed the number saved under “Mom.”

A man’s voice answered, young and warm.

“Cherise? How did you manage to call Charisa’s phone?”

Surprised, Cherise hesitated, unsure how to respond to the unexpected voice on the line.

After a brief moment of uncertainty, she tentatively continued, “I noticed the number saved as ‘Mom’ in my phone... so I called to check.”

Inhaling deeply, Cherise gathered her courage. “May I ask who you are? And where is my mom?” she inquired, her voice tinged with uncertainty.

There was a prolonged silence from the other end of the line before Zachary sighed softly. "What's the matter with you?" he responded.

Feeling a bit flustered, Cherise retorted, "What do you mean, what's wrong?"

Zachary's voice held a hint of exasperation as he explained, "You wouldn't fail to recognize my voice, and you surely know that Charisa has been gone for five years. I've kept this number for business purposes."

Cherise was at a loss for words.

She pressed her lips together, realizing she couldn't keep up the facade any longer. "I have amnesia," she confessed quietly.

There was a palpable sense of sorrow in her voice as she continued, "I don't know what to do. I don't know my past. The household staff won't tell me. My husband won't let me leave the house or disclose my past to me, so..."

She trailed off, feeling the weight of her frustration and boredom settling in. "So I'm terribly bored, which is why I called," she admitted ruefully.

"Amnesia?" Zachary's voice held a mixture of surprise and concern. "So... you don't even remember me?"

Though it was awkward to admit, Cherise nodded earnestly. "I don't remember."

"I'm Zachary Miles," he introduced himself gently. "Consider me a brother or a friend. I used to have feelings for you, but now I'm married. My wife is your cousin."

After this brief introduction, Zachary took a deep breath. "If you want to learn about past memories, I can fill you in. While I may be unable to restore everything, I know everything about you from the past five years."



your

Cherise's lips pressed together as a wave of unburdening swept over her in the presence of this candid and brotherly man.