

Second Marriage to Mr. Rich

Read Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

“Before Ingrid gets here, let me ask you one more time, Ned Fletcher. With how you’re treating Angie right now, aren’t you worried that you’re going to regret it when you finally regain your memories in the future?”

Hearing this, Angeline Emmerson’s hand froze at the door handle. She had just been about to enter the room.

“Angeline is nothing but a fucking bitch who happens to be my ex. It’s none of my business if you want to keep protecting that disgusting bitch, but if you still want to be my friend, you had better not bring her up again with me or Ingrid. Gross!”

Zachary Stone’s voice got louder when he heard Ned calling Angeline all sorts of names. “You were the one who insisted on marrying her before! And if it wasn’t for her trying to protect you when you both met with that accident on the way back from the courthouse, she wouldn’t have slipped into a coma for two whole years!

“At the very least, she’s your life savior. She’s also your lawfully wedded wife! How could you post so many indecent photos of her all over Oceanford College? How is she supposed to hold her head high in society anymore?”

Ned spoke nonchalantly, saying, “If you want to put it that way, then if it hadn’t been for me bringing her out of the country to live with us, she would have been tortured to death by the Emmersons. So, her protecting me during the accident was nothing but returning me that favor!

“Also, why are you still holding me hostage with morals and principles and shit? She was the one who spiked my drink and fucked me against my will. I was just warning her by pasting her nude photos all over college. If Ingrid hadn’t asked me to stop, I’d have gone even further!”

Angeline could picture Ned’s impatient frown with a hint of disdain showing in his eyes, just from hearing his voice coming from behind the door.

She used to be treated ever so lovingly by this same man in the past. He'd loved her and protected her back then, so she knew that he had already gone easy on her with what he did.

Otherwise, as Oceanford's biggest jerk, he would have done worse things to her, an ex-girlfriend who supposedly drugged him and forced him to have sex with her to spite his current girlfriend.

Angeline felt her eyes reddening and filling with tears.

The Ned she used to know wouldn't even frown at her. He would have trusted her and never accused her of spiking his drink. He would also have never hurt her by spreading her nude photos everywhere.

However, the Ned she knew had died in the car accident that happened four years ago.

Ned's other friends in the room saw that Ned was getting angrier. They raised their glasses and clinked them with Zachary's before reminding him, saying, "Ned's father has dealt with the matter. People will forget about it eventually, so it won't harm Angeline too much.

"Besides, it's Ned's birthday today. Let's not keep bringing Angeline up. Can't you see it's making him unhappy?"

Some of Ned's other friends also felt bad for Ned. "But honestly, Angeline's the one who overstepped her boundaries! She indeed had a past with Ned; so what? Ned loves Ingrid now. If Angeline really loved Ned, then she should release him and let him be happy with Ingrid! She shouldn't hang on to the past and continue bugging Ned like this!"

"We'll go back and try to talk some sense into her. She and Ned should get divorced as soon as possible. It's for her own good too."

"It's useless! Everyone here has talked to her about it, but don't you remember how she replied? She said she would only leave if Ned finally remembered the past but still chose Ingrid over her. She didn't even stop to think if her lowly background was worthy of the heir to Fletcher Corp.!"

"Ned was the one who told his parents he wouldn't marry anyone else but her, so there was nothing else they could do since he was an only child. But can't she see how much Ned loves Ingrid now?"

The few people talking used to be mutual friends with both Ned and Angeline. However, her friends were now taking Ingrid's side.

From the time Angeline woke up from her coma until now, they had been telling her to let go of the past and divorce Ned so that he could be with Ingrid.

Angeline even overheard conversations wishing she'd never woken up from her coma. Everything would have been perfect, then.

It was undeniable that Angeline had been replaced, whether it was with Ned or her friends. Everything had changed within those two short years she'd spent unconscious.

Angeline inhaled deeply. She stood a little straighter and fixed her hair, feeling like a soldier preparing for war. Then, she pushed the door open.

Ned looked up and saw Angeline entering. He rolled his eyes and scoffed, not even bothering to hide his annoyance with her. He then asked Zachary coldly, "Did you bring her here?"

"Angie? What are you doing here?" Zachary asked in concern. He got up and went over to her. He never thought that she would show up unannounced.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

The room went silent. It was so quiet, one could hear a pin drop.

Angeline had a slim and petite figure. Even the winter jacket of the smallest size seemed too big for her. Her pale and sickly face was hidden by a long white scarf tied around her neck. Because she was so slim, her eyes looked huge.

She stared at Ned and said, "I've already made a police report regarding your spiked drink at the event and your spreading of my nudes for revenge."

Hearing this, everyone's reactions differed from one another.

The couple sitting in the farthest corner with a wine glass in each of their hands exchanged glances. Panic was written in their eyes.

The woman put down her glass and walked toward Angeline. She slinked her hands around Angeline's arm and said, "Angie, Ned only spread your photos because he was too angry. Don't you think making a police report is making a mountain out of a molehill? It's going to affect Ned's future!

"Also, Ned's father has already managed to suppress the news. Don't hold it against him anymore."

Angeline didn't respond to the woman. She continued saying, "Ned Fletcher, it's true that I wanted to try rekindling our relationship, but I would never have stooped so low as to spike your drink and force you to have sex with me. And with your authority, you know very well that finding out the truth is as easy as snapping your fingers."

However, he still wholly believed that Angeline was the one behind his drugging incident.

He believed it despite knowing the fact that Angeline was traumatized by sex because of what happened when she was still very young.

"I didn't want to let go of this relationship because I was worried that the Ned I knew would return someday and blame me for giving up on him so easily," Angeline said, carefully shaking herself free from the woman's grip.

She then placed the divorce agreement she'd been hugging onto the table. "I tried my best, but I'm tired now. Ned Fletcher, I'm giving up on you. I don't want you anymore."

Ned's eyes traveled from the divorce agreement to Angeline's face. There was a hint of surprise in his cold eyes.

"Let's finalize the divorce after the police have cleared my name and you have publicly apologized to me."

It was painful for her to give up on their relationship. It felt as if Angeline was losing a huge part of herself. It hurt so much that she felt like death.

After all, ever since she was born, Ned was the one who had shown her what happiness truly was. Giving up on him felt like giving up her entire world.

Angeline picked up a wine glass on the table and raised it toward Ned. Despite the tears swirling in her eyes, she bit back the bitterness in her mouth and said, "Happy 26th birthday!"

Under everyone's surprised gazes, Angeline finished the glass of wine in one go. Then, she set down the wine glass and left without looking at Ned again.

"Angie!" Zachary cried, grabbing his coat and running after her.

After Zachary left, the room started to get lively again.

"Did Angie just agree to divorce Ned?" .

Someone picked up the divorce papers Angeline left behind and showed them to Ned. "Ned, look! Angie said she isn't taking a single penny with her. She even said she'd pay back all of the hospital bills she'd incurred for those two years!"

“Oh my god, is that true? Congratulations, Ned!”

“This must be the best birthday present ever for Ned!”

“Are you sure she’s not just pretending to leave so he’d run after her?”

“I think that’s definitely the case. I bet she’ll come running back to Ned after three days, max!”

Someone even said to Ned, “I think you should strike while the metal’s still hot and get the divorce finalized as soon as possible. How about tomorrow?”

Ned frowned. He looked at Angeline’s signature at the bottom of the divorce agreement under the dim lighting and drew his lips in a thin line.

This wasn’t the agreement he’d sent to Angeline. He’d given Angeline her fair share of money and some properties in the agreement that he drafted up. Meanwhile, the one Angeline signed stated that she wouldn’t take a single penny from him.

Ever since realizing Angeline was the person coming between him and Ingrid, Ned had always dreamed about the day he would finally be free from her.

However, now that he had the divorce agreement in his hands, he realized that he wasn’t as happy as he thought he would be.

As everyone around him continued congratulating him, Ned’s phone vibrated. The screen lit up, indicating a call from Ingrid.

Immediately, all of Ned’s worries were forgotten. He answered the call with a huge grin on his face. “Baby, you’re here! I’m coming down to get you!”

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Chapter 3

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“Angie!”

Zachary caught up with Angeline at the door of the club. He wanted to grab her arm to stop her from leaving, but just before he was about to touch Angeline’s winter jacket, he stopped himself. Instead, he took a few more huge steps forward and got in her way.

“Have you already moved out of the apartment?”

“Yeah.”

Angeline’s eyes were downcast. She hid half her face under her fluffy white scarf.

Since she’d made up her mind tht she was giving up on Ned, naturally, she would also want to leave the apartment that was filled with memories of them.

“Then, where will you be staying at for the next few days?”

Zachary didn’t give Angeline a chance to lie. Without missing a beat, he continued, “I went looking for you at Oceanford College yesterday because your roommate told me your family was waiting for you in your room. You don’t have a place to return to anymore, do you? You also didn’t come looking for us. Did you go to the Lawsons instead?”

As soon as he brought up the Lawsons, Angeline felt a prick in her heart. She looked up and stared into Zachary’s eyes, saying, “Thank you for your concern and standing up for me just now. But I know my place. We come from different worlds, only meeting because of Ned. Since I’m not with Ned anymore, Of course, I can’t go bothering his friends either, can I?”

Even Zachary felt hurt by Angeline’s curt words.

He reached out trying to grab a hold of Angeline who kept avoiding him. The coat that was tied around her waist slid to the ground, but Zachary didn’t bother picking it up for her. Instead, he firmly grabbed Angeline’s arms and asked, “Must you hurt me with your words like that?”

“If only I never woke up from my coma, none of these would have happened,” Angeline said calmly and robotically while looking at Zachary, who had a dumbfounded look on his face.

“I’m sorry,” she continued, “I shouldn’t have woken up and caused such a huge mess in your lives. I’ll leave Oceanford as soon as possible. I’m sure this is what everyone wants.”

Angeline had stayed with the Fletchers since she was ten years old. She befriended Zachary at school and grew up with him as a friend.

In the past, Angeline thought that they were all her childhood friends. She’d treated them as such.

Zachary opened his mouth to refute. His eyes were red as he said hoarsely, “Y-You heard everything? We didn’t mean it like that!”

“Zach! Angie!”

Hearing Ingrid's voice, Angeline hurriedly shook her arms free from Zachary's grip. She then bent down to grab the coat from the ground and handed it to Zachary, who'd turned his head around to greet Ingrid.

Ingrid was wearing a mask on the lower half of her face. She had long, luscious curls that fell around her waist. She held her winter coat in her arms as she'd just gotten out of her MPV. Even with half her mask obscured, Ingrid looked like a brightly-shining jewel.

This was the first time Ingrid saw Angeline since the spiking incident.

Ingrid didn't look the least bit uncomfortable to approach Angeline. In fact, she went up to her and said, "Knowing you, I'm certain that you couldn't have been the one who did it. Angie, have you thought of lodging a police report?"

Angeline thought it was rather ironic.

Ned didn't believe her. Neither did the people whom she once thought to be her friends. On the contrary, Ingrid was the one who believed her.

It didn't matter whether Ingrid meant what she said or not. She was always the first person to tell Angeline that she believed her.

"Thanks. I've already made the report," Angeline replied. She then pressed her lips together and said, "Ms. Dalton, I wish you all the best with Ned. I hope you'll both be happy forever."

A stunned expression appeared on Ingrid's face. She gripped the gift bag in her hands a little tighter. "Has Ned remembered everything?"

Angeline shook her head. "I'm the one who gave up on him."

"Baby!"

Ned's delighted voice was accompanied with his light, happy footsteps. He was happily rushing down the stairs as he ran toward Ingrid.

He hurriedly yanked Ingrid away from Angeline. His heart was drumming against his chest. He was extremely worried that Angeline might have told Ingrid something she shouldn't.

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Chapter 4

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After the spiking incident, Ingrid had refused to see Ned, crying and insisting instead that he should be responsible for Angeline if anything were to happen.

Ned didn't want to lose the love of his life. He swore to the heavens that he never had sex with Angeline that night. However, he wasn't sure whether he'd actually done it or not.

These few days, he'd been trying to separate Ingrid and Angeline, worried that Angeline would tell Ingrid about what happened that night.

Seeing that Ingrid wasn't wearing a coat, Ned chided her with a frown and took the coat from her arms before covering her shoulders with it. He then pulled her into a hug and hurried into the building. "Let's go in!"

"I'm not going in! I still have a schedule in Shangton tomorrow, so I'm on my way to the airport now. I'll be returning late tomorrow night," Ingrid said, trying to push Ned away.

She then looked at him and said, "I'm just here to give you your birthday present. Happy birthday! I hope you guys have lots of fun tonight!"

"It's my birthday today. It only comes once a year! Can't I send you to the airport early tomorrow morning instead? I've got something important on tonight. Please? I promise that no outsiders will be around. It's just our own gang of people!"

Ned didn't take the gift bag from Ingrid that she handed to him. Instead, he grabbed her wrists and continued to try sweet-talking her into staying. It was quite different from his usual nonchalant and goofy manner. He just looked like a huge puppy now.

Angeline knew at once who was the "outsider" that Ned kept referring to.

She pulled her scarf closer to her face and stuck her hands back in her pockets. Then, she lowered her gaze and continued down the steps. .

Ingrid looked at Angeline's disappearing figure and tried to comfort Ned. "I know what you're planning for tonight. They told me about it. I'm sorry, Ned, but I can't accept your proposal right now. My answer is the same as always.

"If you regain your memories and still choose me, then I will happily be with you. I just don't want you to blame me if you regain your memories with Angie only after we get married."

Ned had planned on proposing to Ingrid tonight, but one of his friend told Ingrid about it beforehand.

“Is it because Angeline bullshitted about something to you?” Ned asked, suddenly getting furious. The veins in his forehead turned visible.

Without waiting for Ingrid to respond, he rushed down toward Angeline and grabbed her roughly by the arm. Then, he shoved her down the steps with hatred in his eyes, screaming, “What the fuck did you tell Ingrid? How could you be such a fucking shameless bitch?”

“Angie!” Zachary yelled in shock.

Ned had shoved Angeline so hard that she fell past the barrier and landed smack in the middle of the club’s man-made pool decoration by the entrance. As the icy-cold water enveloped her, she also felt a sharp pain from the corner of her forehead.

“Angie!” Ingrid cried.

Ingrid and Zachary hurried over and fished Angeline out of the water, helping her up.

“Ned, what on earth were you thinking?” Ingrid exclaimed at Ned as she grabbed hold of Angeline’s arm.

Angeline was still submerged in the cold water. Her mind had gone completely blank. Blood was also dripping down her lashes.

“Ned Fletcher! You’re fucking out of your mind!”

Zachary tried to pull Angeline out of the freezing pond. Then, he said, “I’m sending her to the hospital!”

He lifted Angeline up and half-carried her out of the water. Angeline still had a dazed look on her face as she lifted her hand and gingerly touched the red, sticky liquid she saw on her lashes. She seemed to still be out of it as she moved robotically.

Ned didn’t think that pushing Angeline would end up with her being covered in blood. However, his rage grew when he saw the look in Angeline’s eyes.

“Why the fuck didn’t you just die? If you’d died, then at least I’ll never have to see your stupid, disgusting face ever again when I’m on death row!”

Chapter 5

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Angeline gradually recollected her senses and stared at Ned. The look in her eyes grew cold and hard, just like how her heart had become.

“If there’s one thing I regret the most, it’s bringing you out of Emmerson Village! You’re just a fucking rapist’s daughter, the dirtiest scum to ever exist on earth! Jodie Emmerson, it’s no surprise that the Lawsons want absolutely nothing to do with you—”

Before Ned could finish his sentence, something hard hit him on the head. He then lost his footing and fell against a tree.

Angeline, whose face was now half-covered in blood, now stood at where Ned was standing just seconds earlier. She just continued shivering as she held half a brick in her hands.

Ned was also knocked silly from the hit. He stared dumbfounded at Angeline as blood trickled down his face and entered his right eye, turning it into a bloody mess.

Zachary and Ingrid were both stunned. To say that they were both shocked was a gross understatement. Neither of them thought that Angeline would attack Ned like that.

Angeline’s face was pale and ghastly. She pretended to stay calm as she threw the brick into the pond. Then, in a hoarse voice, she said, “Ned Fletcher, we’re even now.”

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“Ned Fletcher, we’re even now.”

Blurry images started appearing in Ned’s mind.

The sunset cast a bright orange glow on the school building. Behind it, a neatly-dressed female student was trapping him against the wall with her cheeks flushed pink. She laughed and said, “Ned Fletcher, we’re even now!”

His heart started thumping against his ribcage. His nostrils were filled with the pleasant gardenia scent that was all over the female student’s body. It was blooming season after all, and the attractive white flowers against the walls were all in full bloom.

So was the female student’s bright smile.

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Ned held a hand to his heart and shook his head violently. Before he could get a better look at the female student’s face in his mind, the images disappeared completely.

“Ned, are you okay?” Ingrid asked.

Recollecting his senses, Ned touched his head and realized that it was all covered in blood too. He cursed aloud and glared at Angeline.

“Ned!” Ingrid cried, rushing forward to hug him and stopping him from retaliating.

Zachary also rushed toward Angeline and pulled her behind him, shielding her from Ned.

Angeline’s waterlogged winter jacket felt heavier than bricks. She had a frail body to begin with, and hitting Ned had taken up all of her remaining strength. So, when Zachary pulled her behind him, she couldn’t stop herself from staggering backward.

Before she could fall, however, someone with long, lithe fingers grabbed her from the back and steadied her.

Angeline turned around, meaning to thank the person, when she caught sight of the person who saved her. At once, her voice died in her throat.

The bloodied Ned also froze in shock when he was who the newcomer was. Then, he begrudgingly greeted the person. “Hi, Mr. Sean.” .

The person who caught Angeline and stopped her from falling had just turned 30 years old. His brows were knitted in a deep frown. He was wearing a pair of gold-rimmed glasses on his perfectly sculpted nose.

His facial features were prominent, and he was wearing a black blazer over a tailored gray shirt underneath. He was tall and had a perfectly proportionate body ratio.

He was only four years older than Ned, but Sean Lawson emitted a calm, restrained aura that felt quite compelling to others. He gave off a completely different vibe from Ned’s playfulness. Sean was the epitome of maturity.

Also, he somewhat looked slightly similar to Angeline.

Sean looked at the wound on Angeline’s head and pressed his lips together. He quickly undid his tie with one hand, wrapped it around his palm, and pressed the makeshift gauze to her head to stop the bleeding.

His dark eyes swept across Ned as Sean picked Angeline up and turned around. “To the hospital, now!” he said in a cold voice. His assistant hurriedly ran over to the car and opened the door for them.

Ned watched as Sean tried to stop Angeline’s bleeding and bundled her into his car. Ned then ran after him and yelled, “Mr. Sean!”

Sean was just getting into his seat when he stopped and looked at Ned through his gold-rimmed glasses. If looks could kill, Ned would have been dead by now.

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Angeline and Ned were both sent to the emergency ward one after another. They had their wounds treated separately as well.

The nurse put on her disposable gloves and got ready to clean Angeline's wound. She then noticed that Angeline was still wearing her bloodied and sopping wet scarf and winter jacket. "Let's take off the wet scarf and jacket for now, alright?" she asked.

Angeline was stunned. She then asked politely, "Do they affect the cleaning and dressing process?"

"They don't, but don't you find it a little uncomfortable to still be wearing them?" the nurse responded as she pulled her cart of medical supplies toward her. "Let's take them off."

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Chapter 6

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Angeline frowned and tugged the scarf before covering her nose and mouth. She said in a muffled voice, "If it doesn't affect the process, then I'd like to keep them on."

Sean had his hands in his pockets as he leaned against the doorframe, watching the nurse tending to Angeline. He frowned and looked at Angeline when he heard her say that. He said in a firm tone that left no room for argument, "Take off your scarf and jacket."

Angeline went silent for a while. Then, she slowly unzipped her jacket and untied the scarf around her neck.

Just as the nurse got up to draw the curtains, Ned and Ingrid walked out of the opposite room after he was done being bandaged up.

It was only for a fraction of a second, but Ned caught sight of the dark bruises on Angeline's chin and neck.

How could a slight push from him cause such serious injuries to her?

However, the blue curtains got in the way. He couldn't see anything past them. Ned looked at Sean's figure and felt a sudden wave of fear washing over him.

He recalled Angeline's relationship with Sean. He also saw the look Sean gave him when he helped Angeline into his car. Ned knew that he had to explain things to Sean today, by hook or by crook.

Even if Sean was just the adoptive son of the Lawsons in Krontos, he was now the main person in charge of Lawson Global. There were plenty of projects in Fletcher Corp. that still relied on Lawson Global's help.

Ned called out in a low voice, "Mr. Sean ..."

Sean turned around slowly when he heard his name being called.

The bright hospital lights hanging overhead shone on Sean's handsome face. He stood tall at six feet two and came across as unapproachable. He didn't even need to speak to make the people around him feel oppressed.

Ned frowned and started explaining himself. "I didn't expect her to fall into the manmade pool."

Sean's eyes were dark and deep. "When you were 16, you got sent to the hospital because you were trying to protect her. Now that you're 26, you got sent back to the hospital because you were fighting with her for the sake of an outsider."

Ingrid knew that Sean was referring to her as the "outsider." She shivered slightly.

Ned gripped Ingrid's hand a little harder and pulled her behind him. He made it clear that he was going to protect Ingrid no matter what.

"It was all my fault. It had nothing to do with anyone else, outsider or not."

Ingrid had explained everything to him on the way to the hospital earlier. Angeline hadn't said anything out of the ordinary to her.

"It seems like your parents never told you the actual reason why I've been helping Fletcher Corps. All these years," Sean said, his eyes flitting over nonchalantly to Ingrid.

He then stared down at Ned, who was hanging his head in guilt. Sean took off his glasses and cleaned them, asking, "Who gave you the guts to lay your hand on her?"

Ned gritted his teeth in shame.

When Sean saw Zachary returning with clean, new clothes and shoes for Ned and Angeline, he didn't say anything more. He just put his glasses back on his face.

Ingrid was wary of Sean whenever he looked cold and emotionless like now. She didn't dare to stay a minute longer with them. So, she told Ned and Zachary, "I still have a flight to catch, so I'll be taking my leave for now. Please tell Angie for me too."

"Let me send you there," Ned said, longingly holding on to Ingrid's hand.

"You should go back too," Sean said to Zachary, who also looked like he was reluctant to leave. "Don't make your sister worry about you. I'm here to look after Angie."

Zachary nodded as he thought of his pregnant elder sister. He then passed the bag of new clothes to Sean's assistant.

Angeline ended up with six stitches on her head. She had to stay overnight at the hospital like Ned for further observation.

After putting on the patient's robe, Angeline came back out of the bathroom and saw that Sean still hadn't left yet. He'd taken off his outer coat and was lying on the couch, in the middle of a phone call.

Maybe it was rather warm in the ward, which was why Sean started unbuttoning the first two buttons on his shirt. His sleeves were rolled up as well, exposing his forearms. Sean also wore a dark brown leather watch on his wrist.

Catching sight of Angeline with the gauze on her head, Sean quickly ended the call with an "I'll be back next Monday," before hanging up.

His dark gaze then traveled to the huge bruises on Angeline's chin. He said, "Come here and have a seat."

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Chapter 7

Chapter 7

Angeline brought a chair over to the couch and sat down opposite Sean, with the coffee table

between them.

Sean treated Ned and Ingrid coldly and with hostility, but he was a whole different person when talking to Angeline. He sounded a lot more gentler with her. "What's with the injuries on your body?"

“Ned pushed me. I then banged my head against the fake hill ...”

“I’m not talking about the injuries on your head,” Sean interrupted.

Ned had just sent Ingrid off and was on his way back to his ward when he overheard Sean asking the question. He stepped back and peered through the crack in the door to Angeline’s

ward.

Angeline had a reserved expression on her face. She spoke calmly as if she was just reciting someone else’s story. “The Emmersons said it was time for Benjamin to get married, so they wanted me to buy him a car and a house. That’s why we fought at the college gates.”

Angeline wasn’t lying. However, she only told him part of the full story.

The Emmersons didn’t come to Oceanford just to look for her. They were also looking for Jessica Lawson, who was Angeline’s and Benjamin’s birth mother.

They couldn’t find her. When they also realized that Angeline was still studying in college instead of working and giving them her wages, the Emmersons were enraged.

George Emmerson then demanded that the college refund all of Angeline’s tuition fees to him simply because he was Angeline’s biological father. He kept bugging the dean and even made a huge fuss at the dean’s office.

Seeing that they weren’t able to get any money from Angeline, George demanded that Angeline return with him to Emmerson Village so that he would be able to sell her off to the highest bidder back home. Then, he would use that money to pay for Benjamin’s wedding. It was then that Angeline got into a huge fight with the Emmersons.

Sean rubbed his hand against his knees as he stared at the bruises on Angeline’s chin and

neck.

Since Angeline didn’t want to go into details, then he wasn’t going to press any further. Sean straightened his legs and leaned forward, looking at her seriously. “What I told you eight

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years ago still counts. **If** you’re willing to give up on Ned, I can always send **you** abroad anytime.”

Angeline looked up and stared into Sean's eyes, feeling his calm gaze piercing into her. She

clenched and unclenched her hands on her knees.

"I know the reason behind the Fletchers taking me under their wing and bringing me up in Oceanford. It's so that the Lawsons will continue investing in them and supporting them whenever they need it.

"I'm sure that the reason you talked to me eight years ago was because the Fletchers didn't want their only son to get into a relationship with me, but they didn't want to say it outright. They then conveyed their wishes to the Lawsons, which is why you want to send me abroad so that I'd cut all connections with Ned."

Angeline then frowned. There was confusion in her eyes. "But now, Ned has forgotten me and loves another. I don't think the Lawsons are going to benefit even if they insisted on sending me abroad now."

"You're a smart kid," Sean said, still trying to convince Angeline otherwise. "But aside from the benefits you mentioned, it's also because you're related to the Lawsons."

Angeline tensed when she heard him say that.

She then said in a determined voice, "No, I have absolutely nothing to do with the Lawsons. The fact that I'm alive is living proof of the hell that she went through. I hope that she or I have nothing more to do with the Lawsons for the rest of our lives!"

"But with your predicament now, you're facing a lot of troubles alone. Even so, are you still reluctant to let the Lawsons help you?"

"I'm thankful to the Lawsons and the Fletchers for bringing me out of Emmerson Village and giving me a chance to further my studies. Even if we're blood-related, I think that the Lawsons have done more than enough for me. I don't want to owe them any more favors." Sean remembered the first time he met Angeline. Her grandparents once told him that she was a cold and indifferent person.

However, he knew that Angeline's indifference was because of her kindness, high morals, and deep love for her mother.

Angeline suppressed her emotions and longing for kinship. Instead, she turned herself into an "orphan" so that the Lawsons would feel less guilty about her. She chose to live with the Fletchers so that the Lawsons would be able to continue living with their conscience.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8

Angeline fitted the Lawsons' bill even better than Sean because she was able to control her emotions, withdraw herself, and do everything as she was told.

Sean pushed his glasses further up his nose and spoke calmly. "The business industry isn't a small one, but it's also not that huge either. Whatever happened between you and the Fletchers' youngest heir will eventually reach the Lawsons' ears in Krontos."

"It's the same with Ned. I won't have anything more to do with him after this," Angeline said, tugging at the hem of her shirt. "As soon as the police can prove my innocence, I'll

finalize the divorce with him and leave Oceanford."

She wasn't about to tell Sean where she was going.

"You won't have anything more to do with him after this?"

Sean's eyes turned dark and deep. He looked like he didn't believe her at all as he leaned back on the couch. "Back then, you were also seated opposite me like this, telling me determinedly that Ned was more important than your life."

"Not anymore," Angeline said curtly without hesitation.

Sean quietly stared at the calm and indifferent Angeline. There was a hint of a smile in Sean's eyes. The corners of his lips also lifted very slightly.

Ned, still listening at the door, stuck his hands inside his pockets and walked away frown.

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Angeline had better mean it when she said she didn't want to have anything to do with him anymore. He didn't want her to start giving him excuses when it was time to finalize their divorce.

Ned returned to his bed and lay down, feeling conflicted.

Sometime around midnight, Ned's mind started wandering off. He saw a sunset-tinted wall, he smelled the scent of gardenias, and he saw the beautiful face smiling at him with a wall of blooming roses behind her. .

He suddenly jerked awake. He couldn't stop his heart from thumping loudly in his chest. Ned held his heart as he sat up. His forehead was covered in a layer of sweat.

Angeline had told him about their past. At first, her friends had also told him about their relationship. However, Ned refused to listen to them.

+16 BONUS

To him, the past didn't matter anymore. What was important was that he only wanted to spend his future with Ingrid.

Ned grabbed a bottle of water, twisted it open, and took a large swig of the drink. He was forcing himself to calm down.

"Let's finalize the divorce after the police have cleared my name and you have publicly apologized to me."

Ned massaged his temples as he remembered what Angeline told him at the club the other day.

He just wanted to get it over with and have nothing else to do with Angeline anymore. He didn't want to wait any longer.

Early the next morning, Ned was getting ready to enter Angeline's ward next door to talk about their divorce and the public apology. However, when he reached her door, he heard Miles Locke's voice coming from the inside.

"Lory has been friends with you since young. Do you really want her to have a criminal record? She's been supporting you and Ned all along. That was why she drugged Ned's drink. She was doing it for you!

"She was just giving you an opportunity! It was all for your own good. Otherwise, why would she ever think of doing such a thing that wouldn't even benefit her?" 1

Angeline looked at Miles in disbelief when she heard what he said. Her brain was starting to pound. "How could she do such a thing and then say it was 'for my own good'?"

"How could she meddle in my life and my affairs without even consulting me? Look at the mess she got me into! I need to ask her why on earth would she ever do such a brainless and harmful thing to anyone instead!"

Miles realized that Angeline had a strong point. He responded in a low voice, "She said she was worried that you'd disagree with her if she told you. That's why she went ahead and did it anyway. Ned was already planning to propose to Ingrid back then. She was in a hurry to help you!

“She also never thought that Ned would react so outrageously and post your nudes all over college. Last night, Mallory wanted to explain everything to Ned, but you both ended up in the hospital after all,” Miles said in a tired voice.

“Angie, if you withdraw your report, I’ll go and explain everything to Ned with Mallory

Chapter 9

Chapter 9

Miles and Mallory were siblings who grew up with Ned. They were also close friends with Angeline, in a way.

And just as Miles said, Mallory was one of the very few people who still supported Angeline’s and Ned’s relationship after Angeline woke up from her coma.

Angeline gripped her covers tightly and shut her eyes, trying to suppress the anger rising in her. Her face went deathly pale. “Why didn’t she explain things to me herself?”

“Lory knows she made a grave mistake. She’s too ashamed to see you,” Miles said, drawing his lips in a thin line. He dragged up a chair and sat down next to Angeline’s hospital bed.

“I know what you’re worried about. You’re worried that Ned would think Lory was just covering up for you even if she tried explaining things to him.”

“What Ned thinks... doesn’t really matter anymore,” Angeline said in a faint voice. “I don’t care.”

When Angeline was still in love with Ned, naturally, she would care about what Ned thought of her. But now that she no longer cared about Ned, she also didn’t care about opinion anymore.

She didn’t care if he thought she was lowly or disgusting. None of it mattered anymore.

Ned’s hands clenched into fists without him realizing it. He didn’t know if the anger he felt was because Angeline said he wasn’t important to her anymore or because she didn’t care about him anymore.

He stood outside the ward, no longer meaning to enter.

Miles thought that Angeline made the police report because she wanted to prove her innocence to Ned. When he heard that she didn’t really care, he sighed in relief. He then tried to continue reasoning with her.

“Since you

don’t care about Ned’s opinion anymore, will you please withdraw the case?”

“I don’t care what Ned thinks of me, but it’s still not an excuse for Mallory to do such dirty-handed things in the name of it being for my own good. Which college or university would want to accept me with this scandal tacked onto my back?”

“That’s the main reason why I need the public apology from Ned,” Angeline said as she closed **her** eyes and spoke weakly. “Miles Locke, since I’m still alive, that means life still has

+15 BONUS

to go on for me. How am I going to survive in society if I don’t even have a college diploma? How would I live my life?”

With such a huge fuss made over the scandal, Angeline knew that no college would ever want to accept her even if she got the highest scores in the entrance exams.

And if she couldn’t get accepted into a college, she wouldn’t be able to complete her diploma or her degree. How was she supposed to get a job after that, then?

She wasn’t born into a wealthy family who had a family business she could fall back onto. She was just another regular person on earth.

And on this earth, she had no parents, no relatives, and no friends. She didn’t have anyone else to rely on besides herself.

Miles understood what she meant. He was going to have to pick up after the mess his little sister made.

“Angie, I’ll compensate you. Would that be alright?” Miles asked. “You can work for my family’s business. I’ll let you sign a lifelong employment contract if you want. You can work at whichever branch in the world that you want—Jermeiny, Rippan, the whole of Yurope ... and you’ll get to determine your salary.

“Of course, this is just my suggestion. Whether or not you decide to take me up on my offer or dismiss the case against Mallory, I’ll still get her to explain everything to Ned. We’ll clear up the misunderstanding between you both!”

“I don’t care if Ned misunderstood me. I also don’t need you to compensate me by planning out my life for me! I just want to finish my degree and get that public apology from Ned. I’ll dismiss the case if he agrees to the public apology ...”

Before Angeline could finish her sentence, Ned opened the door and entered with a frown on his face.

Angeline turned her head toward the door.

She was wearing a hospital gown on her weak, frail body. Her long hair fell around her shoulders and on the pillow propping her up from behind. Without the turtleneck shirt and scarf covering her neck, the wounds on Angeline's forehead, chin, and neck were plain and obvious for all to see.

And because she was suppressing her anger, Angeline looked a lot paler and worse than she did yesterday.

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Chapter 10

Chapter 10 .

+15 BONUS

When Angeline caught sight of Ned at the door, her eyes and emotions turned cold.

Ned was angry. When he saw how Angeline grew cold as soon as she saw him, he got even angrier.

"If we can finalize the divorce today, you had better get as far away from me and Ingrid as possible. I will arrange for the public apology tomorrow!"

"Ned!"

Miles didn't think that Ned would come looking for Angeline on his own. He stood up in shock and tried explaining himself. "Uh, I'm here to find Angie to explain the drug incident to her. Lory wanted to explain things to you during your party last night, because it had nothing to do with Angie, but—"

"Aren't you tired of playing along with Angeline's lies? Both you and your sister?" Ned was furious as he projected all of his anger toward Miles. "You're all just worried that the police would prove that Angeline did it so you thought up a lame excuse to try to cover for her. You'd think I wouldn't know whether she gave me the wine that night?" 1

Angeline felt as if her heart was stung by a poisonous wasp.

She knew that Ned no longer trusted her. But, to get rid of her as quickly as possible, Ned would even go as far as to agree to openly apologize to someone he thought of as a bitch like her. It was obvious that Ned still believed Angeline drugged him and wanted her to leave as soon as she could.

Angeline released the blankets she once clutched tightly in her hands.

She had to go through the divorce anyway. She could also do everything he said.

Meanwhile, Miles was worried that Ned's words would trigger Angeline, making her insist on getting the police involved to prove her innocence. He hurriedly explained, "Lory was the one who did this. She-" "When do you want to go to the courthouse to finalize the divorce? I can go today with you."

Before Miles could finish his sentence, Angeline interrupted him with a calm tone. She didn't sound like she was forced or upset. In fact, there was barely any emotion in her words. Everything was said indifferently.

Nobody thought that Angeline would agree to the divorce so quickly. A sudden silence filled

+15 BONUS

the room.

Seeing that Ned didn't answer her, Angeline asked again. "What time are we going? I'm fine with whenever."

Angeline's emotionless attitude made the weird feeling in Ned's chest spread like wildfire despite the calm look in his eyes. Frustrated, he yelled, "Now, immediately, this instant!"

"Okay. You'll have to wait for me for a bit. I'll get changed out of this gown." Angeline pushed the covers aside and got down from the hospital bed. "Miles, you can go back now I'll withdraw the case." Miles never thought that everything would be so easily resolved in the end. He was a little caught off guard. He'd even prepared a speech and the whole nine yards, but he didn't even get to use all of them. "Don't leave. I don't have my car with me now. Bring me and her to the courthouse. You can also be our witness," Ned said, stopping Miles from leaving. "Just in case she has any other tricks up her sleeves." Angeline said nothing. She changed into the clothes Zachary gave her last night and came out of her ward.

"Ned went to change," Miles said.

Angeline tied the scarf around her neck to hide the bruises on her chin and neck. "Before we go to the courthouse, I need to go home for a bit to get my ID. Tell Ned that

I'll meet him at the courthouse." Ned happened to come out of his ward just then. He narrowed his eyes at Angeline and laughed coldly. "Ha! You can't even think up new excuses anymore?"

He slowly adjusted his clothes and said, "The longer you drag this out, the higher the chance of you going back on your word. Miles and I will come with you to get your ID." Angeline just nodded in agreement.

Ned didn't think that Angeline would be living in a place like this.

The road leading to her place was dark, dirty, and narrow. There were also many stalls and peddlers on both sides of the road, making it inaccessible for Miles' car to pass through.