

## Chapter 3 Stay With Me

Madeline answered the phone, "Hello."

"Did you receive the gift? Do you like it?"

"Yeah, I love it. Thank you."

"You look good in red; it brings out your complexion." After a pause, Jeremy added, "I won't come home tonight."

Suddenly, Joanna Bartley's soft voice sounded on the other side. "Jeremy, did you tell her? Come on, the candlelight dinner is..."

"Take care of yourself." Jeremy uttered one last sentence and hastily hung up.

"I will."

Although he hung up very hastily, Madeline still heard Joanna's voice, clear as day.

She heard the distinct words "candlelight dinner."

On their anniversary, her husband was having a candlelight dinner with another woman. It felt bitterly ironic.

Joanna had indeed come back!

Although Madeline didn't want to believe it, this was the harsh reality.

At this moment, Madeline was grateful that she hadn't told him the truth. Otherwise, it would have been a self-inflicted humiliation.

After shedding tears and releasing pent-up emotions, Madeline regained much of her composure.

Given that he had made up his mind, she chose to accept it with equanimity.

Just as she was about to drift into sleep, she received a call from Jeremy's friend, Wayne Lawrence. "Jeremy is drunk and is causing a scene. Come and take him home."

Madeline was perplexed. Wasn't he supposed to be spending the night with Joanna?

Suppressing her discomfort, Madeline rose from the bed, changed into fresh clothes, and had the driver take her to the club that Jeremy frequented.

She arrived at the club, only to find the private room surprisingly quiet.

Jeremy was deeply intoxicated. With a neat suit and appearance as handsome as ever, he sprawled on the sofa, legs crossed.

She turned to Wayne and asked, "How did he get so drunk? Wasn't he with Joanna?"

"Oh, you know that?" Wayne looked at her, his sarcasm undisguised. "Your husband is spending the night with another woman, and you have no objection?"

Madeline tightly clenched her fists, took a deep breath, and then slowly released them.

What right did she have to meddle his business? Soon, she would no longer be his wife.

She responded in a calm tone, "We've already agreed on a divorce. We just haven't got the legal papers, but he's already free. I don't have the right to restrain him anymore."

Wayne looked at her with a sneer. "You're kinda open-minded."

After a pause, he continued to say, "Madeline, do you have any conscience? How has Jeremy treated you all these years? He gave you meticulous care and did everything a husband is supposed to do. He asked for a divorce, but why didn't you even try to stop him?"

Madeline, somewhat bewildered, looked at him. "I remember you strongly opposed him to marry me back then. Now that we're about to divorce, shouldn't you be the biggest supporter? Why are you more indignant than me?"

He paused, suggesting meaningfully, "You are more suitable for him than Joanna."

Madeline called the driver. With his help, they managed to get Jeremy into the car.

After arriving home, getting Jeremy upstairs, and running a bath, she emerged from the bathroom to find Jeremy already asleep on the floor.

Madeline sighed, realizing she had to help him undress.

After finally finishing his bath and getting him into bed, Madeline thought she could take a break.

However, Jeremy suddenly turned around, his hands holding her waist, and murmured, "Don't go. Stay with me!"

A warm feeling surged in Madeline's chest, and her heart uncontrollably raced.

It felt like the first time she encountered him. Her heart was almost thumping out of her throat, while her mind was filled with a sweet and warm feeling.

Usually, he was labeled as decisive, calm, and reserved. Madeline had never seen him talking to her like this before.

Her heart softened, and she couldn't bear to push him away.

Fine, it was their last night together.

After the divorce, they wouldn't share a bed again.

"Okay," replied Madeline in a mild tone.

She then laid down beside him and covered both of them with a blanket.

Before sleeping, her fingers lightly traced over his eyebrows, his nose, and his lips.

Finally, they rested on his hand, interlocking with his fingers tighter than ever.

These were things she dared to do only when he was deeply asleep.

The next morning, Madeline was awakened by the vibration of the phone.

Still a bit sleepy, she picked up the phone and placed it near her ear, saying, "Hello."

"Are you... Madeline?" A surprised voice came from the other end of the line.

It was Joanna's voice.

Only then did Madeline realize that she had picked up Jeremy's phone.

She was startled and immediately sat up.

Casting a quick glance at the screen, she handed the phone to Jeremy. "Joanna is calling you."