

## Chapter 5 Confrontation of Rivals

"Madeline... I didn't mean this tone..."

Jeremy's words were cut short by a sudden braking.

Madeline was thrown into Jeremy's arms, which startled her.

Fortunately, Jeremy shielded her head with his hand. Otherwise, she might have suffered a severe injury.

The driver kept apologizing. "I'm sorry, Mr. Whitman."

"Focus on driving."

Jeremy then turned to look at Madeline. "That's not what I meant."

"But honey, you said my attitude wasn't right. Don't you like this attitude?"

Madeline continued with her stogy and soft voice.

In their two-year marriage, this was the first time she had talked to Jeremy this way.

In the past, she was afraid he wouldn't like it, so she never showed any excessive emotions before him.

Now, considering they were getting divorced anyway, she turned emboldened.

Anyway, this was the last time.

"Sit properly," Jeremy instructed Madeline.

She immediately sat upright.

"No more this from now on," he added.

"Okay..."

Jeremy seemed dissatisfied with Madeline's response. "Oh? Did you hear me or not?"

"I heard you."

"Then make sure you remember it," Jeremy emphasized.

"Also, you especially can't talk to other men like this," Jeremy added.

Damn it, Jeremy. What the hell are you doing?

Are you out of your mind? You two are getting divorced soon. She can talk to any man any way she wants.

Why do you think you have the right to control her?

Suddenly, realization dawned upon Jeremy, and he cursed himself inwardly.

He found himself absurd.

Annoyed, he loosened his tie, and finally, he felt a bit more at ease with his breath.

While applying the medicine to Madeline, Jeremy was gentle and delicate.

His fingertips lightly caressed Madeline's nape, creating an itching sensation.

His scorching breath on her earlobe evoked an irresistible utter within her heart.

Madeline couldn't help but shudder, and Jeremy's fingers followed a tremble.

His deep eyes revealed emotions that were hard to discern.

Finally, Jeremy finished applying, and Madeline sighed with relief.

At a traffic light, Jeremy suddenly said to the driver, "Turn left. Go to the mall."

Madeline asked, "Aren't you going to the company?"

"Grandpa's birthday is brought forward. We haven't prepared a gift yet."

Madeline immediately nodded. "I'll go with you."

Thus, they went directly to the jewelry section.

Just as they arrived at the store, a soft voice reached them. "Jeremy!"

Madeline turned around and was almost petrified by the scene before her. In fact, she wouldn't have believed it if she hadn't seen it with her own eyes.

It was Joanna, sitting in a wheelchair.

How could it be?

Madeline remembered Joanna was a dancer, and she had never heard anyone say that Joanna had leg problems.

She was utterly shocked and stood there in a daze for a long time.

She didn't come back to her senses until she heard Jeremy's voice. "Why are you here? The AC in the mall is strong. Don't catch a cold."

While talking, he had already taken off his coat and draped it over Joanna.

Joanna looked at Madeline with a bit of embarrassment. "I'm not cold. He's always too worried about me, afraid I might catch a cold."

This statement was clearly intended for Madeline's ears.

Madeline lowered her head, saying no word.

Joanna then looked at Jeremy. "I heard your grandpa's birthday party is brought forward. I want to pick a gift for him. Since you're here, can you help me choose one?"

Jeremy nodded with hesitation, "Sure!"

Joanna immediately revealed a joyful smile, gentle and bright.

"Narra, could you bring me my water?"

Narra Santos said apologetically, "Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am. The water in the thermos is finished. I'll have someone bring a bottle for you."

Jeremy immediately interjected, "How long would you have her wait? I'll go get it."

Then, he looked at Madeline and said, "I'll be right back."

"Okay." Madeline nodded.

After Jeremy left, Joanna sent Narra away.

Clearly, Joanna expected a private conversation with Madeline.

Madeline moved her lips, about to speak, while Joanna beat her to it. "Look, he's overly cautious. Anything related to me, no matter how trivial, he insists on personally taking care of it. I told him to leave these things to my assistant, but he said he can't trust anyone else."

Although Madeline wasn't interested in their lovey-dovey exchanges, these words managed to infiltrate her mind.

Jeremy was indeed very attentive.

In their two-year marriage, he never missed any of her birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays.

However, he always left them to Patrick. Jeremy never personally took care of anything.

Yet for Joanna, even a simple task like bringing her some water, he insisted on doing it himself.

In comparison to Joanna, Madeline felt like a joke.

She suffered a crushing defeat.

After a moment of silence, Joanna broke the ice. "Care to talk?"

"Yeah." Madeline nodded.

Observing Madeline's gaze on her legs, Joanna said, "It seems you really don't know."

Shaking her head, Madeline responded, "I've never heard about it. What happened to your legs? Jeremy didn't tell me."

"Of course, he didn't." Joanna's tone suddenly intensified.

"Back then, Jeremy's grandpa was determined to match you and Jeremy. He wanted Jeremy to marry you. But Jeremy never agreed. Neither of them compromised. However, Jeremy was young, and all the power in the Whitman family was gripped in his grandpa's hands. He used various methods to pressure Jeremy, and in the end, Jeremy submitted."

"No, you're lying."

Suddenly, Madeline started retaliating like an agitated wild cat.

She couldn't accept that her marriage was the result of behind-the-scenes pressure.

Joanna chuckled. "I'm telling you the truth. Jeremy married you only to protect me."