

TMBA 131

## CHAPTER 131 WHO IS SHE TO YOU

Debbie hadn't seen Hayden for more than two years. She had thought she had forgotten him, or that she wouldn't be emotional when she saw him again.

She was wrong.

After all, she had loved him once. It was impossible for her to feel nothing at all. You never quite stop caring for the other person, even if the other person turns out to be not who you thought they were. Something always lingers, always tugs at you. No matter how thin the thread that holds you, love is always the tie that binds.

There was a dull pain in her heart. That was all.

When Debbie remained silent, Hayden just smiled wider. "It's been a long time, Deb. You're looking hotter than ever." He'd been watching her ever since she walked in.

She had changed so much he could hardly believe this was the same girl that he'd been with for two years.

This meeting had brought memories of the old days rushing back into her head. Debbie fell into deep thought. Two years, it was a long time to be together, even if it didn't feel long while you were in the midst of it. And the memories it left—they last a lifetime. And when it's over, all the things you used to do, places you used to go, the feelings attached to those things linger. Debbie was lost in her head. It was not until Jared nudged her that she came to her senses. Back in the present, she turned Hayden down quietly. "Thank you, Hayden. But I wasn't going to pay them anything."

The gentle smile on his face turned to a grim one at her response. How she could be so haughty was beyond him. She was only married to a secretary, after all. And she was even bold enough to offend so many powerful families.

"Deb, don't be like this..."

At this moment, Curtis and Colleen were at her side. Carlos insisted they show up. They were sharing a moment in the car earlier when he called.

The man had just straightened his suit. But his tie was still slightly crooked, his normally perfect hair a bit mussed. Not to mention his slightly flushed cheeks and the goofy smile on his face.

"Debbie, what's the matter?" he asked.

Before Debbie could say anything, the old lady of the Hue family saw Curtis and regarded him with a sour face. "Let me guess, Curtis. You'll take responsibility for her too?"

Curtis smiled and answered politely, "Yes, Mrs. Hue. Debbie is young and made a mistake. I apologize for any trouble she's caused."

Hearing this, Emmett tugged at his sleeve and reminded him, "Remember Curtis, Carlos didn't call because he wanted you to apologize."

Having anticipated what Curtis might do, Carlos had asked Emmett to remind him at the right moment. That was Carlos, always at least one step ahead, and usually three. That was why he was successful at business and at Go.

Curtis knew how Carlos usually took care of things, but that was not his style. He preferred to solve problems the mild way. But if that didn't work and things got out of hand, heads would roll for that.

The others couldn't hear what Emmett was whispering to Curtis. They all thought that he was begging Curtis to help "his wife" Debbie out. Hayden was convinced that Debbie was Emmett's wife.

Mrs. Hue had always been pompous. Even in Hayden's and Curtis' presence, she was hostile. "I want her to apologize! And pay for the dresses! No—I want three times their worth. For emotional distress!"

"Right!" the crowd echoed.

Curtis didn't get angry. His mood remained steady. He looked at Debbie with a smile and asked, "Debbie, you bad girl, you. You okay?" He sounded slightly reproachful, but there was no trace of blame in his eyes at all.

Mrs. Eveque cut in, "Curtis, it was our daughters who fell, not her."

Curtis turned to her. "I know you want her to apologize, but shouldn't we find out what happened first?"

Gail couldn't hold her tongue anymore. She pointed at Debbie angrily and shouted, "Mr. Loftus, she poured red wine on us and pushed us! Everyone saw it! That's the truth! What else do you need to know?" "Why? Why are so many wonderful men protecting this... this... tomboy? It's not fair!"

Lucinda was so mad at Gail's behavior she almost fainted. Her face was beet red now. "Shut up, Gail!" she reprimanded harshly.

Told off in front of so many people, Gail stomped her feet angrily, her cheeks burning, nearly as red as her mother's.

Ignoring her mom, she looked at Curtis with a smoldering gaze and demanded, "Mr. Loftus, why are you taking Debbie's side? Who is she to you?" As soon as the question was out, all eyes were on Curtis. So many people had been dying to know the answer.

Curtis looked at Debbie and answered calmly, "I'm Debbie's principal. Of course, I can't sit idly when my student is in trouble. I'd be concerned too, if it were you." Of course, he wouldn't promise to do the same thing he did now.

The reason he had given sounded solid, sending everyone into silence. No one was going to question an august presence like him, and they knew the reason now anyway.

"Jared, I should have known you were at the heart of this!" a devil-may-care voice shouted suddenly. All heads turned back. A group of people walked in. Or rather, sauntered. Damon was in front, a herd of bodyguards in tow.

Curtis noticed that Damon's buttons were cattywampus, some buttons were in the wrong holes, others simply not buttoned at all. He couldn't help but smirk. 'He must have been with some woman too when Carlos called, ' he thought.

Jared was confused to see Damon here. 'Why's he here? What does he mean?' he reflected. After some consideration, he retorted, "Hey, they started it. What are you blaming me for? Debbie tried to ignore them, but they barked and bit like rabid dogs."

The daughters and parents were furious

at his insulting remarks. They glared at him, wishing that they could just go up there and snap his neck. They wouldn't get very far. Damon's bodyguards would see to that.

The willful youngest daughter of the Hue family couldn't stand such an insult. She pointed a finger at Jared and threatened, "Who are you calling a dog? One more word and I'll cut your tongue out!"

With a sneer, Jared put the back of his hand to his forehead, assuming a dramatic tone. "Oh my God! Oh my God! I'm so scared. What should I do?"

Furious, the daughter of the Hue family started dashing towards him. Luckily, someone stopped her and grabbed her arms. Otherwise, Jared's face would have been covered with scratches.

Well, Jared might have dodged a bullet from the girl, but there was a second one. While he was riding high, Damon walked over to the flippant boy and kicked him in the leg. "Dude! Shut up! You got a mouth on you. Want me to take it from you?" he said.

Even a blind person could tell that that kick was just for show. It didn't hurt at all. Clearly, Damon and Curtis were protecting Jared and Debbie. And they weren't going to let anything happen to the pair. Looking at them, the parents and their daughters trembled with rage.

By now, Hayden thought Emmett had called Curtis and Damon to back him up. Of course, as Carlos' secretary, he was totally capable of that.

With that thought in mind, he turned to his assistant and said, "Quinn Moore, cut every young lady a check for three times the price of their dress."

"Yes, sir." Quinn took out the checkbook, and began to draft the requested amount.

But Debbie put a hand on the assistant's pen. She took a deep breath and said, "Thanks, Hayden. But I don't need this. It's my fault."

As more and more people got involved, Debbie felt bad. She turned to face the parents and their daughters, ready to apologize. Knowing what she was trying to do, Damon beat her to the punch. "Someone told me what happened. It's not Debbie's fault. There were more than ten of you. Bullying a girl like that, hardly fair," he scolded. Carlos had found out the truth and told him about it. Damon wasn't afraid to offend any of those so-called important families.

'What just happened? A few simple words from Damon and Debbie isn't responsible at all? He even made her sound like a victim,' the crowd wondered. 'Can I leave now?' Debbie mused. She just wanted this night to be over.

#### CHAPTER 132 A SLAP FOR A KISS

Without giving anyone a chance to retort, Curtis pushed his glasses up and echoed gently, "Is that so? Debbie, you may leave now since the truth is out. We'll take care of the issue."

His words triggered the crowd to look at him, stunned.

On the other hand, Debbie turned to Curtis and hesitantly whispered, "Mr. Loftus..."

She was aware that the whole thing had started because of her. Thus, she felt responsible.

Just then, Damon's phone rang. He looked at the screen and muttered, "Why is Carlos calling now?"

Hearing Carlos' name turned everyone's attention to Damon's phone.

Then as expected, Damon answered the call. "Hi, Carlos."

No one knew what Carlos said on the other end, but they saw Damon wave his hand while saying, "There's no need to send Wesley for such a trifle. It will be fixed right away. On the other side are daughters of the Moran family, the Hue family, the Eveque family... Wait. What? Wesley is already on his way? Okay then."

Damon gazed at Curtis after hanging the phone up and said, "Carlos asked Wesley to send some special force here. They're on their way."

Carlos' name alone was frightening enough. More so, knowing that Wesley was rushing here with some special force... Gosh! No one dared to stand up for their daughter again.

The air inside the room was suddenly heavy with fear. Discarding the questions in his head, Sebastian told Debbie, "Debbie, Gail was wrong earlier. I apologize for what she did. I'm taking her home now."

Warmth filled Debbie's heart as she shook her head. "Uncle, I'm sorry for troubling you."

"Debbie, come home for dinner sometime," intervened Lucinda as she patted Debbie's hands tenderly. It was now clear to her that Debbie's husband was not Hayden. But she was sure Debbie was connected with Carlos somehow.

Afraid of Carlos, many parents thought that it was wise to get out of that place before the situation got uglier. They followed Sebastian's example and apologized to Debbie for their daughters.

However, Blanche was an exception.

She looked at her son and said with a sullen face, "Let's go home, Hayden."

Then she gave Debbie a resentful glare and thought, 'This girl was unlikable two years ago. I can't believe that she still is! So many parents were on the brink of irritating Damon and Curtis because of her.

Wesley and Carlos may come down on us like a ton of bricks if we stay here any longer.'

"Mom, I have something to deal with. You and Portia go home first," refused Hayden, with his hands in his pockets.

Feeling that it would be very inconvenient to say anything more before these people, Blanche took Portia and left. Her face was livid as she walked away. Her rage was evident with how loud her heels were making tapping sounds against the floor.

A relieved sigh escaped Debbie's chest upon seeing the last pair of parent and daughter had left that place. She muttered, "Thank you, Mr. Loftus and Damon."

As a reaction, Curtis cast a meaningful look at her and then gazed at Hayden. He then looked back at Debbie and said, "No problem. Go home early."

"Okay," she replied obediently.

Damon waved at Debbie. He then started walking towards the door while dragging Jared by the ear. "I'm going home, Debbie. Call me if you need me."

After a short confusion, Debbie nodded and answered, "Oh, okay. Thank you, Damon."

It was then that Jared suddenly kicked Damon's leg without any warning as he screamed, "Goodness, Debbie! What did you thank him for? Get your hand off me, Damon!"

Getting fired up, Damon began kicking back against his brother.

The brothers were still fighting like little kids when they left, leaving Emmett, Debbie, and Hayden at the party venue.

Despite all the drama, Debbie remembered how Hayden stood behind her amidst the trouble.

On the other hand, Emmett knew his place so well that he turned to Debbie and said, "Debbie, I'll wait for you outside."

Debbie hated to hear what Emmet said. Nonetheless, she remained quiet. She didn't want to be left alone with Hayden.

Hayden's eyebrows furrowed as he watched Emmett leave. He wondered, 'Psh! What kind of husband would leave his wife alone with another man?'

"See you." It was Debbie's voice that cut through Hayden's thoughts. She then turned away as she had nothing to say to Hayden anyway.

She was already about to leave when Hayden suddenly grabbed her hand and dragged her towards the hotel door.

"Hayden, what are you doing? Let me go!"

shouted Debbie. However, Hayden just completely ignored her protest and kept on. Maddock, who was seeing the guests off at the door of the hotel, just watched them with a subtle look in his eyes and then said his farewell to them. He knew better than to get involved in those influential people's personal affairs.

Hayden found an empty spot at the parking lot where no one was around. It was only then that he released her.

Debbie was already on the brink of losing her temper when

Hayden embraced her tightly without any further ado.

She struggled to get off his hold, but the man had been firm on holding her close. Despite her pushes and kicks, Hayden said painfully, "Deb, don't reject me. I know you're married. I'm sorry for coming back too late. Do you even have any clue of how much I missed you in the past two years?"

Debbie was stunned upon hearing how broken his voice was with emotions. The pain in his voice instantly rendered her powerless. Her hands involuntarily stopped pushing him away.

"I know my mistake. Really. There wasn't a single day that I didn't regret treating you badly. Deb, can you forgive me?" confessed Hayden affectionately. He then swiftly scooped her cheeks with his warm hands. He couldn't believe how beautiful she was now, even more beautiful than before.

Debbie's eyes turned a little red as she tried to hold her emotions. A faint smile cracked her beautiful lips before she said, "Too little too late." She had already fallen in love with Carlos and couldn't even consider anyone else other than that bossy and tender man himself.

However, Hayden was unwilling to take her answer and shook his head. "Divorce your husband and then marry me. If you divorce him tomorrow, I'll marry you the day after tomorrow."

"Impossible! We cannot and will never go back, Hayden! I have moved on. Just—"

She wasn't able to finish her words when Hayden suddenly grabbed the back of her head and kissed her.

As soon as his lips touched hers, Debbie instantly wrenched herself free and gave the man a crisp smack.

Hayden's head turned because of the forceful slap. Through the way her fingers ached, she could imagine how hard it impacted his cheek. Disgusted, Debbie wiped her lips hard with the back of her hand. 'How dare he kiss me!

How am I going to face Carlos?' she thought angrily.

Taking a deep breath, she said firmly, "I'm married. I'll hate you for the rest of my life if you do this again!"

Then she turned around and left.

"Debbie, I won't give up!" Hayden shouted behind her.

His miserable voice echoed throughout the parking lot, but Debbie wouldn't give much care about it anymore. She just paused for a second and walked on.

It was Emmett who drove the car on their way back. Debbie rested her aching head against the car window the whole time. The view outside was just like merging colors as they were passing by. She was too dejected to enjoy it.

She missed Carlos so much.

Sensing that something was wrong, Emmett kept silent as he thought that she might need a moment alone. He called Carlos as soon as they reached the villa. "Carlos, Debbie is back home," he reported.

"Good," Carlos responded shortly.

Debbie felt queasy at the thought of that kiss. She brushed her teeth repeatedly inside the bathroom.

She couldn't stop. Her gum was already bleeding but she just kept on.

It was only when her phone rang that she put the toothbrush down and gargled quickly. Mixed feelings surged inside her the second she saw the caller ID on the phone screen. "Hi." Her voice came out sweet as she answered the phone.

"Hi, what are you doing?" asked the tender voice from the other end.

#### CHAPTER 133 MISS YOU

Tears welled up in Debbie's eyes as soon as she heard her husband's voice. She missed him a lot. "I'm at home brushing my teeth and getting ready for bed," she said.

"Was everything okay at the party?" Carlos asked.

Debbie hesitated a little before giving him an honest answer. "I stirred up some trouble. I fought with your woman, Olga. I also enraged the Gomez family, the Hue family, and other families. I'm sorry, Carlos."

"Olga is not my woman."

"But everyone is saying that she is," Debbie complained sadly.

Carlos furrowed his eyebrows. "Do you want me to announce that we're married?"

"Oh, no, not yet. It doesn't matter. You're a wonderful person, so women naturally adore you. I'm okay with it as long as you don't like them."

"Of course I don't like them. I love you," he assured her.

Debbie smiled. "I'm relieved. I'm worried that someday when I tell them that I'm your wife, one of them will retort, 'I'm Carlos' woman. The whole world knows.' That would be embarrassing." She giggled thinking about the scene.

"That won't happen. I'll take care of the matter with Olga."

"Okay," she replied. It bugged her that other women had greedy eyes on her husband. But if Carlos said that he would take care of it, he would. Debbie trusted him.

"Deb, do whatever you want. You're my woman. No one is allowed to bully you. I'm your rock. Even if you tore down the entire city, I would clean up the mess for you. But you can't chicken out, ever."

Curtis had told him what had happened at the party. Unwilling to let the situation get worse, Debbie had



intended to apologize to everyone in the end.

That wasn't the Debbie that Carlos knew. She used to have a devil-may-care attitude and never held back. For example, she had challenged him repeatedly despite knowing that there would be consequences.

But nowadays, she would cave in just to spare everyone the trouble. Seeing this change in her attitude made Carlos sad.

"Er... You already know everything, don't you?" asked Debbie, burying her face in the covers.

"Yeah. You did a great job winning the fight! Keep it up. Remember, even if you blew up the sky, I would fill the hole," Carlos declared proudly.

"Bull! How would you do that?" Debbie couldn't help but laugh at his ridiculous words. Her annoyance at Hayden had disappeared.

"Just leave the worries to me. All you need to do is be yourself," Carlos said firmly.

Debbie understood him perfectly. Comforted by his words, she felt warmth spread through her body.

"Carlos..." "Call me what?" That was not the form of address Carlos desired. On this serene night, his magnetic voice sounded like a beautiful piece of music that soothed her nerves and took her into a wonderland.

"Honey..." she called.

"Sweetie."

"I miss you."

More than 2,000 km away, Carlos listened to Debbie pour out her longing for him.

His eyes shifted to the outside of the window. The night sky was littered with stars twinkling here and there, as if they were winking mischievously at the people looking up at them. Under the stars, the lights coming from the buildings formed all sorts of shapes. Together, they looked like another star-studded sky, only more colorful and dazzling. It was a perfect night. "I miss you, too," he said with a smile.

He wished he could hug her at the moment.

Debbie rolled happily on her bed. "Go to bed early. Don't stay up late."

Carlos always worked late. Debbie was worried about his health.

"Noted. Wait for me to come home."

"Okay," she replied.

After hanging up the phone, she texted Carlos for a while before going back to the bathroom to resume her routine.

The next morning at school, when she was walking towards the classroom, a boy stopped her in her tracks. He looked her up and down and then asked contemptuously, "Are you Debbie?"

Debbie flipped her phone close. "What can I do for you, Gus?"

"You know my name?" The boy frowned. He had always thought that he kept a low profile.

Debbie rolled her eyes. "You're Gus, Mr. Loftus' younger brother, the fifth child of the Loftus family..." '...and it is said that you're gay.' Debbie left that part unsaid.

"You fought well last night. Are you trying to get in between my brother and Colleen?"

It turned out that Gus had witnessed the fight at the party last night. After noticing how much his brother cared about Debbie, he was worried about the relationship between Curtis and Colleen.

Debbie forced a smile, then side-stepped him and continued walking. "Aren't you the best brother in the world? I think they should give you an award."

"Debbie! Stop right there!" Gus shouted. Gus had heard a lot about Debbie. To him, she was an odd girl. Now, he was seeing it firsthand. Everyone else on campus fawned over him, as if even his farts smelled great. But Debbie was different. She talked tough and left him hanging.

Of course, Debbie didn't feel threatened by the boy.

She turned her head and made a face at him. "Catch me if you can." After that, she ran away, because her class was about to begin.

Gus stood there, sulking.

Running was one of Debbie's strong suits. How could he possibly catch up with her?

Getting angrier and angrier, he called his brother to settle the matter once and for all. "Curtis, why did you help Debbie? She's annoying."

Curtis was surprised by his question. "I told you to be nice to her, not to confront her. She's short-tempered. Be patient with her."

"Patient? Huh! Curtis, be honest. Do you have a foot in both camps? You know, you're too old for Debbie. Does Colleen know about this?"

Curtis was speechless at Gus' words. He thought that maybe he should get Debbie to beat some sense into Gus. Not wanting to explain, he simply said, "She knows."

Hearing this, Gus said disdainfully, "You're a shame to men and to the Loftus family. You're a pig!"

The call was disconnected abruptly. Curtis guessed that Gus was frustrated with Debbie.

Meanwhile, Debbie was sitting in the classroom and counting down the days. Carlos had been away for three days and there were four more days to go before he came back. Life was boring without him.

Kasie walked into the classroom just as the bell rang. She ran toward Debbie as soon as she saw her. "Debbie, you've gone viral!"

"Viral for what?" Debbie was puzzled.

"Last night when I got home, my parents were talking about you. They said that there had been a fight between you and a dozen rich girls, and that Mr. Loftus, Damon, and Hayden all protected you, so you didn't apologize to those girls in the end. In fact, they apologized to you! You rock, girl!"

Debbie hadn't expected the news to travel so fast. Kasie prattled on about the incident.

"You've become famous among the upper classes now. Since those three amazing men came together to protect you, all those socialite divas see you as a rival in love. If I were you, I would be more careful. You'd better ask your husband to hire a bodyguard for you."

Kasie wasn't exaggerating. The men that had protected Debbie last night were among the best in the upper class. It was said that Wesley and Carlos had almost come to her aid too.

Those men were the embodiment of power and wealth, every woman's dream men. However, Debbie seemed to have gotten the attention of every one of them. It was no wonder that the incident at the party was creating such a sensation. But what would be waiting for her next?

#### CHAPTER 134 HE'S WALKING THE DOG

Kasie went on talking without even stopping for breath. "They all think that Megan's best days are behind her because the four most wonderful men in Alorith protect you instead now. Carlos has also clarified his relationship with Megan and declared to everyone that she is just his niece. She didn't even go to the party last night. There were too many rumors."

"Don't they have a life? Why do they have so much time to gossip?" Debbie was annoyed. No wonder so many of her schoolmates had looked at her differently this morning.

They'd looked at her like they wanted to get close to her but they were also afraid of her.

Kasie waved her hand. "People think you have the support of Curtis, Damon, and Hayden, but they don't know that you have the support of someone even more powerful. Wait till they find out that you're Mrs. Hilton. Tsk tsk! Alorith is going to be turned upside down."

In Alorith, the most powerful thing wasn't money or status, but the name "Carlos". However, when people found out that he was married, they might admire and respect Mrs. Hilton even more, because she had managed to capture the heart of the mighty Carlos.

Debbie only half believed what Kasie said, considering that she had a tendency to exaggerate things sometimes, just like Jared.

After class in the afternoon, Debbie got a call from Hayden. "I'm not busy today. Can we grab a meal together?" he asked.

"No, thanks, Hayden. I have class tonight." Debbie turned him down.

"Deb, we have known each other for a long time. Do you have to treat me like a stranger?" Hayden asked, sounding depressed.

"Yes. I'm married. I don't want my husband to misunderstand. I have to go. Bye, Hayden."

Debbie didn't understand why Hayden was holding onto something hopeless.

When she and Kasie reached the gate of the university, they noticed a sapphire Porsche parked at the roadside, drawing attention from all sides. Hayden was leaning against the car and talking on the phone.

When he saw Debbie, he hung up and walked toward her.

Kasie nudged Debbie. "Your ex is here for you."

Debbie had seen him, but she decided to cut him dead. Arm in arm, the two girls walked on without looking at the man. However, he quickened his pace and stopped them in their tracks.

Once again, Debbie became the hot topic on campus. Everyone who was watching the scene started whispering excitedly among themselves.

"Sorry, Kasie, I need to talk to Debbie alone. How about I have my driver take you home?" Hayden said.

Fully aware of what he meant, Kasie didn't respond. She looked at Debbie, who was expressionless.

"Hayden, we have nothing to talk about. Besides, I don't have that kind of time," Debbie said resignedly.

But her words didn't affect the persistent man. "Deb, I know you're still upset, but can you please give me a chance to apologize?"

Debbie took a deep breath and turned to Kasie. "Kasie, it's okay. Go home. I'll see you tomorrow."

Kasie gave Hayden a pointed look. "Hayden, Debbie has a husband. I hope you won't cross the line," she warned.

Hayden just smiled in response.

After Kasie left, Debbie got into Hayden's car. Both of them sat next to each other in the back seat.

After a while, they reached Saint-Raphael Restaurant, one of the best French restaurants in Alorith.

Looking at the extravagant decor of the place, Debbie smiled sarcastically. It seemed Hayden had changed too.

He had never taken her to such a fancy place before when they had been together.

The manager received them and led them inside. Hayden was a true gentleman and let his arm linger near Debbie's the whole time, just in case.

They were led to a table by the window. But before they could sit down, Debbie caught a glimpse of two people she knew and her face fell. They seemed to have just gotten here too. Along with them was a teenage boy.

Debbie's heart broke when she heard the words that the girl she was looking at said next.

"This is my boyfriend, Carlos," Megan said to the teenage boy.

The boy's face turned pale. He trembled like a leaf. "Let's sit," he finally managed to say.

Hayden saw Megan and Carlos too, but he didn't notice the expression on Debbie's face. "I just saw an acquaintance. Let's say hi before sitting down," he said quietly.

Before Debbie could say anything, Hayden took her to Megan and Carlos, who were just about to take their seats. "Carlos, what a coincidence!" Hayden said.

Carlos turned around. When he saw Hayden, he maintained a poker face, but when he saw the woman next to him, there was a noticeable change in his expression.

He fixed his eyes on Debbie. "Hayden, what a coincidence," he responded flatly.

Megan was surprised to see Debbie and Hayden.

When she met Debbie's eyes, she quickly looked away, as if she didn't know her, and then intimately took Carlos's arm. Standing beside Carlos, Megan looked like a sweet teenage girlfriend. She even nodded to Hayden politely.

Debbie glanced at Megan's hand coldly. What pissed her off was that Carlos wasn't saying or doing anything.

Hayden had seen Carlos several times before, but Carlos had never talked to him. Hayden had wondered for a long time if Carlos had a problem with him. But now, he realized that he'd just been imagining things.

Oblivious to the tense atmosphere around him, Hayden continued, "Carlos, I heard that you went to Deplua for a bid for a contract. Why are you back so soon?"

Everyone in the business circle knew about the open tender. Since it was a big investment, many companies were interested.

'Why am I back so soon?' Carlos thought to himself, glancing at the angry woman next to Hayden. 'It's all because of her. She said she missed me.'

Before Carlos could respond to Hayden, Debbie tugged at Hayden's sleeve and said, "Can't you see how intimate Carlos and his girlfriend are? There's no doubt he came back for her. The manager's waiting. Let's go and eat."

Hayden knew that Debbie was being impatient, so he ended his conversation with Carlos. "Carlos, enjoy your meal. We're sitting at the next table."

Carlos nodded silently.

Debbie turned around and sat in the seat that the manager had arranged for her. After they placed their orders, Debbie started sipping her tea absentmindedly. "Where's your husband? Why didn't he pick you up after class?" asked Hayden.

Debbie thought about it for a moment and then said in a raised voice, "Oh, my husband? He's walking the dog right now."

At the next table, the teenage boy exclaimed, "Megan, are you okay?"

Hayden was confused by Debbie's reply. "A dog? He left you at school alone because of a dog?" he asked.

CHAPTER 135 I LOVE HIM

"Yes, a bitch. Opposite sexes attract each other after all, not to mention the fact that it's a good-looking bitch. So my husband likes her a lot," Debbie said as she drew circles on the table with her index finger. The two at the next table heard every word of hers, loud and clear.

Unaware of what she actually meant, Hayden commented with a smile, "No matter how much he likes her, it's just a dog. Are you saying that you are not even as important as a dog in his heart?"

"I'm wondering the same thing." Debbie smiled bitterly.

When she heard Debbie's first words, Megan accidentally poured hot water on her hand. Carlos asked the waiter to get some ointment for her, but that was it. He didn't do anything else.

As Debbie's words turned harsher, Megan stared at the man next to her, a wronged expression on her face. Since he was within earshot, she believed he had heard every single word Debbie had said. However, there was no response from him. His face remained blank. Silently, Megan worked on her emotion. Soon, a single tear rolled down her cheek.

Carlos didn't notice it, though. The boy did. He was talking about something, but stopped immediately and asked, "Megan, what's wrong? Why are you crying? Is it something I said? I'm so sorry."

In a fluster, Megan grabbed a tissue from the table and wiped her eyes carefully. "No, it's not. It's nothing. I'm fine," she said.

It was only then that Carlos realized that Megan was crying. He frowned and handed her a napkin. "Don't bother her again!" he said to the boy sternly.

The boy was the same age as Megan and he was visibly terrified of Carlos from the very beginning. Carlos' order made his forehead sweat. He nodded and then nodded some more. "I... Megan, I'm s-sorry for bothering you. Bye."

As soon as he managed to stutter those words, the poor boy fled.

Left alone with Carlos, Megan asked in a low voice, "Uncle Carlos, does Aunt Debbie have a problem with me? She seems to dislike me. Last time, she got mad at Jake when I brought him to the villa. Now she is calling me a... Uncle Carlos, I..."

Megan sounded sadder and more desperate as she spoke. She started to pant for breath.

Debbie could hear her crying. When she turned to look at her, she saw Carlos comforting the girl, holding her in his arms. She heard him say, "Don't cry. You're in poor health. Crying will only make it worse."

Debbie was shocked by his actions. She used to think that his tenderness was meant only for her. But now, she knew that she was just being naive.

It turned out that Megan was way more important to Carlos than she had thought.

All the dishes had been served at their table. Debbie and Hayden started eating. Meanwhile, the pair from the neighboring table stood up and approached them. Hands in his pockets, Carlos said indifferently, "Hayden, enjoy your meal. I've already taken care of the bill. We're leaving."

His attention was entirely focused on the woman who was silently eating her food with her head hung low. Debbie never looked up, pretending like he wasn't even there.

Hayden stood up to shake hands with Carlos. "Thank you, Carlos. I hope we can have dinner together next time."

Carlos nodded and hoped to take Megan out of there as soon as possible.

However, Megan didn't move. She looked at Debbie with her reddened eyes and said in a low, gentle voice, "Debbie, please don't misunderstand us. Tonight is just about..."

Debbie put her fork down and interrupted her in a calm tone, "Don't bother explaining. I know my husband."

Megan gnawed at her lower lip and kept her mouth shut.

After giving Debbie a long look, Carlos left with Megan.

Hayden picked up his wine glass and clinked it against hers. Debbie picked up her glass resignedly.

"You know Carlos' girlfriend?" he asked with a raised eyebrow.

She nodded and sipped her wine. The delicacies on the table had lost their appeal. "Hayden, I only came here tonight to tell you this one last time. I'm married. You and I will never happen. I hope we never see each other again."

Debbie stood up to leave, but Hayden grabbed her hand firmly.

When she turned her head to face him, he was smiling. "Fine. Then, let's be friends. Can you finish this meal with me as an old friend?"

She rolled her eyes at his efforts. Hayden could tell that she was getting impatient.

He laughed, "You're as impatient as ever. Deb, let's not waste food. Don't worry. I will drive you home right after dinner."

Debbie sat back in her seat reluctantly. She finished her meal like she was assigned some tough task.



Just as he had promised, Hayden got up to drive her home after dinner.

His driver brought the car to the entrance of the restaurant. But before Debbie could get in, a Bentley pulled up next to them. Debbie's heart skipped a beat when she saw the license plate. It was Carlos' car.

Emmett got out and walked over to her quickly. "Debbie, Carlos asked me to pick you up."

Hayden, who had just walked around to the other side of the car, didn't hear what Emmett had said. He was about to approach them when Debbie said, "No, thanks. Hayden is driving me home."

Debbie got into the Porsche without another word. Hayden looked at Emmett and thought that the couple was having a fight.

That was what he had been dreaming of. Hiding his excitement, he walked over to Emmett and patted him on the shoulder before getting in the car.

Emmett watched the car pull away from the restaurant helplessly and called Carlos.

Knowing that Debbie was in a bad mood, Hayden didn't talk much in the car. "Where do you live?" he asked finally.

His Porsche had just left the parking lot. "Just pull over here. I can go home by myself," Debbie said.

They remained silent for a moment. Light music from the stereo filled the awkward silence.

Hayden sighed, "Debbie. You don't love him, do you?" He couldn't see any sign of affection in her eyes when she looked at Emmett.

Debbie smiled sadly. "Yes, I do. I love him very much."

Hayden read her response as an effort to pretend to be strong in front of him. "Okay, okay. You love him." He drew closer to her to let her see how sincere he was. "I don't mind being a backup. If you're ever unhappy with him, come back to me, all right?"

The genuine look in his eyes confused Debbie. "Hayden, if you really like me, then why did you choose another girl over me in the first place?"

Hayden bowed his head in shame. After a moment, he looked up and pulled her into his arms. "Deb, I regret that decision every day. Only after you left me did I realize how important you are to me."

CHAPTER 136 SEEK SOLACE IN DRINK

Debbie would have been thrilled if Hayden had told her this before.

But things had changed and she had already moved on. She was not used to the new cologne he was wearing, and the man before her was, for all intents and purposes, a stranger. True, she hadn't seen him in awhile, but the man whose arms she was in now was so alien, so changed from whom he once was when they had first met. Although she was in his arms, she felt there was a huge chasm between them. And that chasm was indeed hard to bridge.

Time does change everything.

Debbie pushed Hayden away from her and told the driver, "Stop the car!"

The driver looked at Hayden through the interior rear-view mirror, hoping to get some indication of whether or not he should do this. But Hayden was silent, and gave no cues, verbal or otherwise, that he should obey the girl's orders. He wouldn't do as Debbie asked without Hayden's say-so.

Instantly, Debbie figured it out. She fumed with rage and shouted at Hayden, "I said, stop the car!"

Hayden was not angry at her behavior. Instead, he coaxed her, "It's freezing outside. Let me send you home." There was a time and place to be angry, and now was not the time.

However, Debbie didn't buy it at all. She yelled at the top of her lungs, "No! I'm not going home. Let me out!" She put her hand on the door handle, ready to unlock the door and open it. "I'm not kidding. I'll jump!"

Besides, she was at the end of her rope. Her already frayed nerves had snapped. She had seen Megan and Carlos together, when he should have been away on business. Her heart hit rock bottom. What was worse, Megan had told the boy that Carlos was her boyfriend. And before Megan and Carlos had left the restaurant, he hadn't even cast a single glance at Debbie. Debbie was so mad she could explode at any time.

Sighing in defeat, Hayden told the driver to pull over. Debbie pushed the door open and left without even turning her head.

Hayden watched as the stubborn girl walked off. He rubbed his aching temples and wondered, 'What can I do to make her come back to me?'

Debbie trotted along the road, and then started to run.

Finally, she arrived at Jared's housing community and rang him on the phone. "Hey, Jared. Where are you? I really need a drink—and a friend."

"Tomboy? Drink? No, no, no! Your husband will beat me to a pulp if he finds out."

"Dammit Jared! Do this for me! Forget him; he's not worth worrying about!"

Jared could tell from her tone that Debbie was mad right now. "Tell you what, I'm at a friend's birthday party right now. Give me some time to say my goodbyes and we'll go to Orchid Private Club, okay?"

'Orchid Private Club? Okay, anywhere that I can get a stiff, tall one, ' Debbie thought. "Okay! Meet you there."

Then Debbie hung up the phone.

Following the phone call, Debbie hailed a taxi that just happened to be traveling on the outer perimeter of the housing development. It wasn't the most luxurious ride she had, just an electric BYD e5, but it was comfortable and clean. Naturally, she gave the driver instructions to take her to Orchid Private Club. Carlos called her several times on the way, but she dismissed all of his calls. She didn't think that talking to him was a very good idea right now.

When the taxi arrived, her phone rang again and she accidentally answered it. She remained silent.

Trying to suppress his emotions, Carlos asked in a low voice, "Where are you?"

"Hanging with my friends." She paid the fare and got out, walking towards the gates to the Orchid Private Club.

"Give me the address and I'll pick you up."

"I..."

Debbie was about to tell him, "I'm not going back home now." But a cheerful voice interrupted her. "Uncle Carlos, the noodles are ready. Come and eat."

'Seriously?

He's still with Megan? Go to hell, you two!'

Blazing anger burned in Debbie's heart. She really needed that drink now. Without saying a word, she hung up on him.

Looking at his phone, Carlos was stunned, not knowing what happened. 'Why did she hang up? I need to get to the bottom of this, ' he thought.

At the gates of the club, Debbie put her phone back into her pocket. Before she could calm herself down, two men in suits and leather shoes trotted over to her.

"Boss, welcome to the club!" one said.

"Good evening, Boss!" chirped the other.

Staring at the two managers, Debbie forced a smile and said, "Hi. I need a private booth. My friend will be here any minute."

"Of course. We've gotten Room 888 all ready for you. It's Carlos' exclusive booth." Since Carlos had transferred the club's ownership to Debbie, that meant they must be somehow related. The managers believed that they could let their new boss use Carlos' private booth.

Debbie felt uncomfortable being addressed as "Boss". Sighing with profound resignation, Debbie looked at them and said in a serious manner, "Don't call me 'Boss'. You know what happened that evening. And you know Carlos. I might not be your boss for long. Just call me... er... Miss Debbie."

Upon hearing that, the managers looked at each other in confusion. Rhys Howard, one of them, said with a smile, "As you wish, Boss...er, I mean Miss Debbie. Your wish is our command. We'll try to remember how to refer to you from now on."

"Thank you. Now, the booth, please?"

Carlos was indeed a person who enjoyed life. Room 888 was the most luxurious booth of the club, with an area of more than 300 square meters. Not only that, but the seat cushions were just the right height to sit on, and were designed for hours of use. If you wanted to, you could even lie down and nap there. It also had HVAC climate control settings, and controls for a flatscreen TV that rose from the middle of the table and receded when it wasn't needed. Apart from that, there was also a tea room, a jukebox, an auto mahjong table, and even a fitness area. It even had a large liquor cabinet against the wall, stocked with the finest vintages. Most people didn't even have houses this big. Not even in the U.S.

Debbie hesitated a long time in front of the liquor cabinet. What did she want? Maotai? No. Erguotou? Not her thing. Maybe some cheap, ordinary Tsingtao beer? She thought of something hard, but then decided against it.

She took two reds from the cabinet and asked Rhys to open them. While he was pouring the wine, Debbie ate fruit from a plate and called Jared.

"You here yet? I'm in Room 888," said Debbie.

Jared was still driving. His purple Ferrari flew like a bat out of hell toward the club. "Really?! Room 888? Isn't that Carlos... Never mind. Wait for me. I'll be there in two minutes."

Carlos' exclusive booth had a strong appeal to Jared, who shortened the five minutes' drive to two. Punctuated with the screech of brakes, the Ferrari came to a halt before the Orchid Private Club. Jared was pretty eager to grab that booth. It was meant for the rich and famous, and now he'd at least have a taste of the good life.

Jared entered Room 888 before Debbie was able to take a sip. "You're so fast!" she exclaimed.

He nodded and had a look around. He'd never been here before. "Your husband is so rich! Look at this! It's a porcelain vase from ancient times. I heard some rich dude bid 200 million for it at auction. I'm guessing that's Carlos. And now he just hides it here! What a waste! Oh, look at that! The painting is called...er...I can't think of it right now. But this guy was a famous painter. It must have cost Carlos a pretty penny..."

Debbie rolled her eyes and poured a glass of wine for him. "Dude, come on. Your family is by no means poor. So why are you playing the broke card?"

Jared took a sip of the wine, and his eyes went wide. He took the bottle on the table and checked it carefully. "Oh my God! This wine is from a private winery in Bordeaux!" Debbie was getting a little tipsy now. "So?" she asked. "So, if you look at where it was made, when the grapes were picked and made into wine, etc, it's more expensive than Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1982. It costs at least \$500, 000."

"What?!" Upon hearing the price, Debbie coughed and almost choked on the wine. While Jared was looking around, she had gulped down three glasses of wine. She had filled the glass with the expensive wine, and gulped it down in one go!

'I almost drank half the bottle, so that means I just drank \$250, 000! Oh my God!' Debbie was at a loss for words.

"Hey, why is there only half a bottle left?! How long have you been here?" Jared asked in disbelief.

With an embarrassed smile, Debbie stammered, "Er... I've been here... more than ten minutes. But I didn't start til you got here."

#### CHAPTER 137 LET'S GET DRUNK

Jared was stunned by Debbie's words. 'You drank this expensive wine like water?' "Tomboy, it's such a waste! If your husband found out, you'd break his heart. By the way, he's on that business trip, right? Let's get some of the hard stuff. I mean, did you see his liquor cabinet? Vodka, whiskey, brandy, Maotai...He has the best stuff. Tomboy, how about a bottle of limited-edition brandy? This isn't that expensive, I think," he said, grabbing a bottle and examining it.

Lured by the alcohol, he completely forgot about Carlos' warning.

'Limited-edition brandy?' Debbie blinked and wondered. 'This is all my husband's liquor. No big deal to drink a bottle or two. Besides, he's with Megan now...'

When Megan popped into her mind, Debbie slammed another glass of wine, snapped her fingers and told Jared, "Sure, why not? Besides, I'm not letting you leave. You haven't drunk enough."

Jared clapped his hands, cheerful at her assent. "Awesome!"

He took the bottle from the cabinet, removed the lid and poured her a glass, then himself. The smell of alcohol filled the room.

They clinked glasses and drank the brandy. They were feeling pretty good now, the two of them. The room was warm, the lights making the place somewhat indistinct, and their cares were largely forgotten. It was a good time, just these two friends, and in some ways just like old times.

After two glasses of brandy, Debbie's mind was a blank—no more Carlos, no more Megan. She felt great at that moment. And that was the whole point of this little rendezvous.

Jared was a heavy drinker. He was still playing on his phone—it was the latest version made by Carlos' company. After the upgrade, a whole world of games opened to him. And so he was busy downloading one while playing another.

They polished off the bottle of brandy and were about to find something else to drink when Jared's phone rang. He showed Debbie the caller ID and said, "It's Kasie."

With a red face, Debbie stammered, "W-Why is she...calling you now?"

"Not a clue. Maybe she's in trouble." Jared and Kasie were good friends, but he and Debbie had a better relationship. He'd known Debbie longer, and she was just more fun to be around. Still, he cared about Kasie.

When he answered the call, his face changed dramatically. He jumped to his feet and yelled at his phone, "Where are you? Debbie and I... Okay, got it!"

His face became a mask of solemnity. Debbie shook her dizzy head and asked, "Jared, what happened?"

"Something happened to Kasie. She asked me to bring some people along to help. Let's go."

Once she heard that, Debbie sobered up a little. She guzzled some more wine and put on her coat before the two of them left the Orchid Private Club. Kasie was in trouble.

Jared's Ferrari was parked not far from the gates. He managed to make his way into the driver's seat, but Debbie dragged him out and snapped, "Get out! You're too drunk to drive."

"You kidding? I can hold my liquor." Jared's face was a little redder than usual, but he was fully awake now.

Debbie shook her head. "No! What part of 'no' don't you understand? You'll lose your license and rot in jail. I don't think you'd look good in prison grey. Let's just get a taxi. Or call for a driving service."

Although Debbie was drunk, she always kept that in mind. According to the law, if a drunk gets behind the wheel, he'll be held by the Traffic Administration Department until he sobers up, and his driver's license shall be automatically revoked. He'll face criminal charges, and lose his license for 5 years.

"Driving service?" Jared looked at the two-seat sports car. "You want to stay in the trunk?"

Debbie rolled her eyes and snapped, "Forget it. Just call a taxi."

Sighing in defeat, Jared gave his car keys to a security guard at the club and told him, "Call the driving service for me, and ask the driver to follow our taxi."

"Yes, Mr. Hampton."

At the Merja Karaoke

When Jared and Debbie entered the private booth where Kasie was, they saw many young boys and girls having fun.

The room was very bright. The lyrics of a love song were displayed on the screen, but it was in quiet mode.

People came up to Jared and welcomed him to the little soiree. "Jared, what brings you here?"

"I haven't seen you in a long time. Your girl looks familiar."

"She looks pretty. Your new girlfriend?"

Coming from a well-off family, Jared was popular in upper class circles.

Most of the guys in the room were from rich families as well, and were Jared's friends. Jared couldn't be bothered to introduce them to Debbie. He greeted them back and pointed to Kasie, who was surrounded by several people. "She's my friend."

"I get it. She called you." A girl's soft voice sounded. Both Jared and Debbie knew her.

And Debbie hated her—she was Portia, Hayden's sister.

Brown beret, beige knit dress, black boots, haughty expression. That was Portia. Her brown long coat was folded and draped over the couch.

She was rich, and looked the part.

'How did Kasie piss off Portia?' both Debbie and Jared mused.

Hands in pockets, Jared walked up to Kasie and then flung his arm around her shoulders. With a broad smile, he turned to Portia and said, "Yeah, she called me. She's my best friend."

Portia cast a scornful glance at Debbie, who was leaning against the wall, trying to look detached. Then she turned to Jared. "Jared, why are you even friends with this woman? You know she's a mistress, right?"

Portia stressed the word "mistress", which enraged Kasie. She shouted, "Don't throw shade at me! Dammit, I didn't know he was your boyfriend. He told me he was single."

Disdain was obvious in Portia's eyes. She told Jared in a mocking tone, "You need to be more careful next time you want to make friends with someone. Look at you. You have a ho and a tomboy as friends. Good thing you guys are just friends. If you were dating one of them, you'd probably be tearing your hair out by now."

Everyone realized that she was calling Debbie "tomboy". They turned to look at Debbie and whispered to one another.

Debbie was still drunk and you could smell the alcohol on her.

Jared's face soured at Portia's words. The only person he couldn't afford to offend was Carlos. As for people from the Gomez family, he didn't give a damn about them. He pointed to Portia and snapped, "Who do you think you are? You don't even deserve to be mentioned in the same breath as my friends. Come on, Kasie, let's go."

The boys around Kasie immediately blocked Jared's way.

Jared fumed with rage. "Get the hell out of my way!"

These boys were all young and rich. They didn't like what Jared said. One of them shouted, "Shut up! Did Portia say you could go?"

"Why do I need her permission?" Jared's eyes swept over the boys around Portia. "Why do you guys all bow down to her? What do you get out of it? It's not like you need the money...I've got it! You guys fucked her once, and now you're hoping she'll put out some more, right?"

It was quite normal for these rich boys to have threesomes. As for rich girls like Portia, only a few of them would agree to it.

## CHAPTER 138 CLEAN MY SHOES

Many rich boys had had threesomes and foursomes before, but it was something that upper-class people talked about only behind closed doors.

Most people in the private booth were enraged by Jared's bluntness, especially Portia. Her face turned



pale, and then livid. She pointed at Jared and yelled, "Jared, you're so shameless! Don't you dare think that we're as dirty as you are."

'How dare Jared insult Portia?!' The boy standing nearest to Jared fumed with rage. He grabbed Jared's collar with one hand and got ready to punch him in the face with the other. "Fuck you, Jared! You're really asking for it!"

Just as his fist was about to land on Jared's face, Kasie grabbed his arm and pulled it back. "Don't start a fight!"

Debbie staggered to the boy and patted him on his shoulder. "Hey, dude."

The boy turned to the drunk girl. Irritated by the smell of alcohol coming from her, he shouted, "Fuck off!"

Instead of getting angry, Debbie gave him a big sweet smile that caught him off guard.

The very next moment, she threw her fist toward his face. It was too late for the boy to dodge; he got a hard punch in the face.

"Ouch!" His hands flew up to hold his face in pain.

Debbie blew on her fist. It had been a long time since she had fought with anyone, so she was a little rusty now. Her hand was hurting so much that she wanted to cry.

Now that Debbie had started a fight, the room was in chaos. The boys gathered around Debbie and Jared in an attempt to avenge their dream girl, Portia.

Kasie didn't know how to fight, so Jared pushed her aside to protect her.

The room was in a mess.

Several of Portia's girlfriends ran toward Kasie, planning to teach her a lesson. Although Kasie didn't know how to fight like Debbie, she wasn't a doormat. She grabbed an empty bottle, smashed it onto the table, and pointed the broken half at the girls. The girls immediately stopped in their tracks in fear.

Some of the people in the room couldn't afford to offend either party, so they tried to stop the fight but to no avail.

One of the boys tried to catch Debbie off guard, but she gave him a spin kick, sending him flying backward. He rolled back and forth on the floor, wailing in pain.

Debbie belched loudly and murmured, "Jared, I don't want to fight anymore. I want to sleep."

With a sigh of resignation, Jared said, "I'll take you home after I beat these guys... Aaaaargh! That hurts!"

While Jared was talking to Debbie, a boy hit him in the eye.

All Debbie wanted to do was sleep. She went over to Jared and knocked the boys around him onto the floor effortlessly.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Portia standing there as if the whole scene had nothing to do with her. She kicked the table beside Portia, causing it to move a few centimeters. The wine bottle on the table fell onto its side and the wine poured out. Portia wasn't fast enough to dodge it, so the wine stained her expensive boots.

"Debbie!" she cried hysterically.

Debbie had destroyed her night dress a couple of days ago and now she had stained her limited-edition boots. 'Damn bitch!' Portia cursed inwardly.

Debbie shook her head in a bid to sober up and asked, "You called me? What for?"

Realizing that Debbie was drunk, Portia took a deep breath to calm down, then raised her left leg and put her foot down on the chair. "Clean my boots!" she ordered. Obviously, she wanted to insult Debbie.

Debbie nodded, "Sure."

She grabbed a piece of red dragon fruit from the fruit platter and spread it onto Portia's boot. "Actually, black boots don't suit you. Red ones look better. See?" Debbie sounded satisfied.

The black boot was covered with the juice and flesh of the red dragon fruit.

Portia couldn't believe her eyes. Unable to maintain her elegant demeanor anymore, she yelled, "Debbie! These boots cost me \$130, 000. Do you think you can afford to compensate?"

Debbie shook her head honestly. "I can't afford to compensate. I have no money." All the money she used was from Carlos.

Hearing that Debbie didn't have any money made Portia feel much better. She was pleased that Debbie was living a hard life. With a mocking smile, she said, "I don't care whether you have money or not, you must compensate for my boots. Oh, and the night dress as well. Otherwise, I will teach you a lesson."

At that moment, a boy tried to hit Debbie on Portia's behalf, but Debbie knocked him down.

Just then, the door to the private booth was opened from the outside. Several policemen entered and shouted, "Don't move!"

Meanwhile, in a new three-story villa, Megan propped up her chin with her hands and fixed her eyes on Carlos, who was sitting opposite her and eating noodles. "Uncle Carlos, there's something I want to tell you..."

"Go on." Although Carlos looked calm and composed, his thoughts were all on Debbie.

Megan hesitated for a long time, as if she was struggling for words. Finally, she said in a low voice, "I saw a man kissing Aunt Debbie in an underground car park the other day."

Carlos froze for a moment, and then said, "Okay. I already know that." Then, he continued eating the noodles as if what Megan had just said wasn't a big deal.

Silence befell the dining room. With an embarrassed smile, Megan tried to defend herself by saying, "You know, I'm not a girl who speaks ill of other people behind their backs. But... Uncle Carlos, you need to understand that I'm only saying this for your sake. To be honest, a woman like Debbie doesn't deserve..."

"Megan!" Carlos interrupted her in a stern voice.

Tears welled up in Megan's eyes as she continued stubbornly, "Uncle Carlos, you never used to scold me for anything. But ever since Debbie popped up from nowhere... If she behaved herself, I'd be willing to call her my aunt. But you've seen it with your own eyes. She has a close relationship with Jared and even dated another man while you were away."

Carlos put down the chopsticks, picked up a tissue to clean his mouth, and said with an emotionless face, "Megan, you've misunderstood her. She and Jared have been good friends for many years. Do not say such things ever again, okay? Go to bed early."

Then, he stood up from his seat, adjusted his suit, and walked toward the gates of the villa.

Megan jumped to her feet, trotted after him and held his waist as he changed his shoes. She pressed her cheek against his back and pleaded, "Uncle Carlos, please don't be angry at me. I just want you to be happy."

Carlos was not pleased with how she was acting. He shifted away from her and said in a cold voice, "I know what you meant to say, but you're overreacting. It's very late. You need to sleep now."

Sensing that he was in a bad mood, Megan took a step back and said obediently, "I'm glad you know that, Uncle Carlos. I'll go to bed now. Have a safe drive."

Megan knew how to manipulate Carlos' mood. As expected, his face softened at her words. He nodded and left the villa.

Inside his Emperor car, Carlos leaned back against his seat with his eyes shut.

Emmett, the driver, stole a glance at his boss and then, carefully choosing his words, said, "Carlos, we have to attend the open tender in the nearby city tomorrow morning. When are we leaving for the city?"

#### CHAPTER 139 YOUR HUSBAND SEEMS TO BE HERE

The open tender was very important to the Hilton Group and it was why Carlos had gone out of town in the first place. But after hearing Debbie say that she missed him, he'd squeezed out some time in his schedule and rushed back to Alorith.

Silence befell the car. Emmett could tell that Carlos was in a bad mood. Since Carlos didn't respond, Emmett didn't pursue the topic again.

Just then, Emmett's phone rang. With one hand on the wheel, he answered it. "Hello, this is... What?! When? Okay, got it. Thank you. Bye!"

After hanging up, he cast a careful glance at his boss sitting in the back seat, then cleared his throat and said, "Er... Carlos, something has happened to Debbie."

Carlos' eyes flew open, and his piercing gaze sent a chill running down Emmett's spine. Emmett wanted nothing more than to hit the brakes and ditch the car to get as far away from his boss as possible.

Meanwhile, the local police station was overflowing with young boys and girls, even though it was usually calm and quiet at this hour.

The boys were behaving as arrogantly as ever, as if they feared nothing and no one. The girls, however, looked completely different from half an hour ago. Now, they were sitting quietly in the cell with their heads lowered.

One of the policemen was interrogating Jared, whose face was black and blue. "Why did you start the fight?"

Jared raised his chin and pointed at another boy. With innocent eyes, he said, "Sir, you should ask him. I don't know why they hit me. I'm confused too."

The policeman knew how unruly these rich second generation kids could be. He banged the table and said in a serious tone, "If you refuse to answer, you'll have to celebrate New Year behind bars."

New Year was just half a month away.

While Jared was being questioned, Debbie was sound asleep with her head resting on Kasie's shoulder. No matter who spoke to her, she kept her eyes closed. Finally, when one of the policemen pressed her too hard, she yelled, "Why didn't you bring that woman here as well? She's the one who started the fight!" The woman she was referring to was none other than Portia. Portia had made a phone call to

Hayden as soon as the policemen arrived at the private booth. As a result, she hadn't been taken to the police station.

Debbie wanted to leave too, but she didn't dare to call Carlos. Besides, she was still mad at him. There was no way she would call him for help.

Anyway, she wasn't worried about herself because she believed that Jared would help her out.

Debbie's stubbornness gave the policeman a headache. He shifted his attention to Kasie instead.

Unfortunately for him, Kasie wasn't a well-behaved girl either and had been brought to the police station before. Like Debbie, she kept insisting that she was innocent and that Portia was the one who had started the fight.

The policeman knew these people were all from prominent families, so he didn't want to waste his time on them anymore. "Just ask one of your family members to come here. You can leave after we get their signature."

Upon hearing that, Debbie instantly sobered up. Her eyes were red because of sleepiness. She cast a warning glance at Jared and firmly said, "Don't call your brother." If Damon found out about this, so would Carlos.

Initially, Jared had been planning to call Damon. He was afraid that his father would beat him up if he found out about this.

But now that Debbie was asking him not to call his brother, his mother was the only person he could call.

Kasie took the telephone receiver away from Jared and said, "This is all my fault. I'll call my dad."

"Don't. It's no big deal." Jared snatched it back.

While the two were arguing about who should make the call, a man walked into the station—it was Emmett. As soon as Debbie saw him, she grabbed her two friends and used them to shield herself from Emmett's line of vision.

Kasie recognized Emmett immediately.

Jared, however, was too preoccupied with his own thoughts to notice Emmett. Shaken out of his thoughts by Debbie's sudden push, he asked in a loud voice, "Tomboy, what are you doing?"

'Shoot! He's such an idiot!' Debbie cursed inwardly and kicked him hard in the shin.

She then stole a glance at the entrance of the station, only to see Emmett approaching her.

"Debbie, I'm here to bring you home."

'No! It seems that he already knows about what happened. I'm done.' Debbie wanted to cry.

'Now that Emmett knows, then Carlos must know about it as well.'

Swallowing hard to calm herself down, she turned around and asked, "Does your boss know about it?"

A friendly smile crossed Emmett's face. "Yes."

'I'm screwed!' Debbie thought.

After signing some papers, Emmett took Debbie, Jared, and Kasie out of the police station.

Jared had to carry Debbie on his back. After realizing that Carlos knew about the whole mess, Debbie was so nervous that she could barely stand.

At the sight of the Emperor car parked across the street, Jared whispered to Debbie, "Your husband seems to be here as well."

Debbie froze immediately and tightened her grip on his neck. "Take me to your house."

"Please! Please let me go!" Jared pleaded.

"If you don't do as I say, we won't be friends anymore," she threatened.

"I'd rather break off relations with you than offend your husband."

Debbie was left speechless.

Emmett, who was closely following behind, almost burst into laughter.

He trotted toward the car and opened the back door for Debbie. Jared carefully helped Debbie into the back seat. Even after settling down into the back seat, however, Debbie refused to loosen her grip on Jared's neck.

Jared felt like he was suffocating. "Tomboy, your husband's here. Let go of me!" he said through gritted teeth.

"What? My husband?" murmured Debbie, trying to play innocent. Her eyes swept around the car and met Carlos' cold gaze. She shivered in fear and released her arms.

Finally able to breathe again, Jared straightened up, closed the car door, and ran away. He didn't even

dare to take one last look behind him.

Through the car window, Debbie watched as Jared ran away from the Emperor car as fast as he could. Fear and disappointment flooded her. 'He's such an ungrateful ass! How could he leave me alone to face a tyrant?' she cried in her mind.

"Er... Bye, Jared. Bye, Kasie. Wow, I'm so sleepy. I need to take a rest," Debbie murmured as if she was talking to herself.

Then, she leaned against the seat and closed her eyes.

She dozed off quickly. When cold wind blew in through the car door and woke her up, she opened her eyes in confusion.

Then, she found herself in familiar arms.

It took her a second to remember everything that had happened. But in order to avoid being punished by Carlos, she decided to play dumb.

"Carlos, it's you... Who am I? Where am I?"

Carlos remained silent.

Her heart sank; her tricks didn't seem to be working. In a fit of desperation, she started to sing. "Twinkle twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are. Up above the world so high..." But before she could finish singing the song, she had an urge to vomit. She ran toward a tree and started vomiting.

She felt much better after she was done. A bottle of water was handed to her. Without raising her head to see who it was from, she rinsed her mouth with the water.

Now that her head was clearer, she could feel the cold gust of wind blowing past. She shook her head to clear her vision and found a man staring at her with piercing eyes. She was so frightened that she threw the bottle away. Her legs were shaking. She reached out a hand to steady herself against the tree and stammered, "Carlos..." 'No! Maybe I can calm him down by seducing him.' She put on a sweet smile and said, "Honey, here you are. I missed you so much."

"Are you sober now?" His voice was still cold. Obviously, her plan didn't work. Anger was written all over his face.

'What can I do? God, help me!' But Debbie maintained the smile on her face and said, "Yes, I am. Honey, it's late and freezing outside. Let's go home and go to bed."

CHAPTER 140 BURY ME IN THE EARTH

Debbie raised her left leg to walk, but her right leg went soft. She was about to fall to the ground when Carlos steadied her and pulled her into his arms.

"You are as drunk as a lord. How are you planning to get to the villa?" Carlos taunted.

Debbie covered her face with both hands in shame. "Honey, let's get going." She tried to act in a pettishly charming manner, but she felt like she was going to throw up again.

However, Carlos didn't buy it this time. He stared at her red lips, and became engrossed in his own thoughts.

"Honey, why not bury me in the earth? That way, many Debbies will spring up next year. I know that you don't like this short-tempered Debbie. If you're lucky, you might be able to harvest an obedient Debbie and you'll love her."

'Many Debbies? I can hardly deal with one Debbie.' Carlos' head throbbed at the thought. He rubbed his arched brow and said in a cold tone, "After this semester, I'm sending you to study abroad."

According to him, her unruly character had much to do with the environment she was living in. He thought that her friends, Jared and Kasie, were a bad influence on her.

'Study abroad? NO!' Instantly, Debbie fumed. "You're sending me abroad? Oh, I guess you want to send me as far away as you can, so that you can date women like Olga and Megan..."

Carlos' lips were reduced to a thin line, but he remained silent.

Debbie raised her voice. "Why are you not responding? Say something! You are feeling guilty because I'm right, aren't you?"

"You don't want to leave because you want to get back together with Hayden. Isn't that right?" His voice was as cold as ice.

Debbie was stunned by his words. 'Hayden? What does this have to do with him?' "You're judging me by the standards of your own vile mind! I got nothing to do with him!" she snapped back.

'Me? Vile?' Too impatient to argue with her anymore, Carlos grabbed her wrist and dragged her to the villa.

Debbie staggered because of his sudden movement. She struggled hard to break free from his grip, but to no avail. "Let go of me, you bastard! Let me go! Yeah, I drank! So what? I drank from your best collections. I will drink all your limited-edition wine next time. And then, you will have nothing left to drink."

Unable to control herself, Debbie droned on and on. "I'll mix the wine with Sprite and beer...and cola..."



Bang! Carlos locked the bedroom door behind him and threw her onto the bed. "Mixing liquor with Sprite and cola will harm your intestines and stomach; mixing wine with Sprite and cola will harm your heart and cause diabetes," he said in a calm voice.

He threw his tie on the couch and began to strip himself. "Mixing liquor with beer might cause duodenitis and gastric bleeding; mixing wine with beer might cause chronic alcoholism."

Lying on the bed, Debbie watched Carlos as he threw his white shirt onto the floor. He then began to take off his pants. She swallowed hard and mumbled, "Er... Wh-What are you doing?" 'Wow...His strong chest and tight abdomen...' Debbie drooled over her husband's sexy body. "P-Put on your clothes," she stammered.

'Put on my clothes? I came all the way here to fuck you, ' Carlos snorted inwardly.

Ignoring her pleas, he pressed her against the bed with his body and asked, "You want to die, don't you?"

"What?!" Debbie didn't understand.

"If you want to die so badly, you don't need to down all this alcohol. I'll do you a favor. I'll fuck you to death."

"What?! Aaaaargh! Carlos is trying to murder me! Mmm..." Her voice was muffled by deep kisses.

The next moment, she was stripped down mercilessly. She really, really regretted provoking this angry man. And now, she was going to pay the price. In his anger, he showed no mercy. He had rough sex with Debbie all night.

Debbie quaked like a leaf in the wind. Uncontrollable moans filled the room. As he came, he called out her name, thrusting hard, then stilling as he emptied himself into her.

She wanted to cry and yell at him. 'You monster! You old goat!' But she was too exhausted to utter a single word. She decided to let him go for now.

She felt him slipping something onto her finger, but she was too sleepy to open her eyes and look at it. She dozed off soon after.

It was already noon when Debbie woke up the next day. Her eyes swept around the empty room. As far as she knew, Carlos had arrived in the nearby city in the morning.

How did she know that? She had Emmett, and she could find out Carlos' whereabouts any time she needed to know it.

'So he squeezed out the time and came all the way here just to serve as Megan's boyfriend? Or just to have sex with me?' Debbie thought to herself, confused.

She raised her hands to rub her aching temples, and that was when she saw it. The diamond ring on her finger! She gasped.

'Where did this come from? Did Carlos put it on? When did he...? Oh my God!

Oh no! My head is killing me now!

At Economics and Management School

Debbie slouched around on the campus, one hand on her chest. She had a necklace around her neck with the huge diamond ring as the pendant.

The diamond was almost the size of a pigeon egg. She was afraid that she might be kidnapped if someone saw it.

She could even see the shape of the diamond through her thick sweater. Luckily, it was winter, and she was wearing a down jacket and a scarf. It would be highly difficult to spot the rock.

But, she was sure that the ring was probably worth at least tens of millions of dollars. It was the most expensive gift she had ever received. Mixed emotions flooded her. She was drowned in her own thoughts when she heard someone calling out her name.

"Hey! Tomboy!" a familiar voice shouted behind her.

Turning around, she saw Jared limping over to her. He had a dark circle around his eye as a result of the punch from a boy yesterday.

"You didn't hurt your leg yesterday. What happened?" Debbie asked, scowling.

Frustrated, Jared shook his head and explained, "That bastard, Damon, kicked me when I got home. I swear he'll pay for this. Why didn't you attend Prof. He's class this morning? Was it because your husband punished you last night?"

"He didn't punish me! I-I had something else to do in the morning. Why did Damon kick you?" Debbie changed the topic as her face turned red at the word "punish."

But Jared was too careless to notice the blush. At the mention of Damon, he said through gritted teeth, "He thought that he needed to teach me a lesson so that I wouldn't get into fights again. Damn him! He really thinks he's my brother! I don't give a damn about that. I'll get even with him next time!"

Debbie rolled her eyes and snapped, "Why do you hate him? He did it for your own good." Debbie

thought of Damon as a good brother to Jared.

Jared snapped back, "Oh really? And I think Carlos does everything for your own good. But you hate him as well."

"I don't hate him at all!" Debbie defended herself, frowning at him. 'I love him, ' she said to herself. Although she was still mad at Carlos, that didn't mean she didn't love him.

"I clearly remember you calling him a scum when we were drinking yesterday. You were saying that he dated Olga, Megan..." Jared had apparently heard Debbie grumble last night at the club.

Slapping her hand over his mouth, Debbie yelled, "Stop talking nonsense! You obviously misheard me!"