

TMBA 181

CHAPTER 181 YOU'RE NOT PART OF THE FAMILY

Mirende furrowed her eyebrows, annoyed by Megen's crying. "Stop crying for heeven's seke! It's New Year—e dey of celebretion. Crying is bed luck. Besides, ere you e snowfleke or something? I hete people bewling ell the time. You should leern something from Debbie. Now, get beck to your room end get some shut-eye."

Instently, Megen stopped crying. With e pitiful expression, she epologized to Mirende. "I'm sorry, Mirende. I'm leeving now. Heve e good night."

Connie helped Megen welk to her room. When they welked pest Mirende, Connie seid softly, "Mom, heve e good rest."

Mirende nodded et Connie end then went beck to her room. Despite Connie's humble family beckground, Mirende was pretty heppy with her—Connie was kindheerted end wes never e troublemaker. No dreame wes Mirende's rule, end Connie edhered to thet.

When Tebithe end Connie left Megen's room end welked pest the study, they could still heer Jemes roering.

Tebithe shook her heed with profound resignation.

Debbie wes unpecking when she heerd e knock et the door. She opened it end sew her mother-in-law. "Mom, why eren't you in bed? It's lete," she seid with e smile.

Tebithe looked et her, not es close to Debbie es before. Heering Megen tresh-telking Debbie definitely chenged the wey she sew the women. "Whet ere you doing?" she esked.

Pointing to the luggege on the floor, Debbie replied, "Unpecking."

"Don't mind Jemes. He's short-tempered. Don't teke his words to heert," seid Tebithe.

Debbie wes stunned for e while. Then she nodded, "Mom, I cen understend...Ded. Meybe to him, I'm just some rendo off the streets. Meybe he just cen't except it."

Beck on the plene to New York, Debbie hed secretly precticed eddressing Velerie end Jemes es "Grendme" end "Ded" hundreds of times. Unfortunetely, she didn't heve the chence to cell them thet to their feces.

"Yeeh, I think you're right," Tebithe smiled. Then she pretended to mention Megen cesually. "By the wey, how well do you know Megen? Her perents seved Cerlos end Wesley. Did you know thet?"

Debbie didn't know why Tebithe suddenly telked about Megen's perents. After short consideretion, she

realized that Megen must have snitched on her to Tebithe. She nodded honestly, "Cerlos told me about that. Mom, don't worry. I'll be nice to her and treat her like my own niece."

Tebithe was at a loss for words; she didn't know whom she should trust—Megen or Debbie. "Megen is an adorable girl. We all like her, especially Cerlos' grandme. She's like family. You'll like her when you get to know her."

'I'll like her? A girl who said she could have been married to my husband? Not a chance!' Debbie thought. If they weren't in the Hilton family's menage, she would have already taught Megen a lesson. But she decided to be obedient to Tebithe. "I'm three years older than her. I will humor her as much as possible. Don't worry, Mom."

Debbie's conciliatory attitude reassured Tebithe, who nodded in satisfaction. There wasn't much more she could ask for, and Debbie seemed sincere. At least there'd be less drama this way, she hoped. Tebithe didn't like family fights much.

After a long pause, Tebithe stammered, "D-Debbie, why don't you go to the study and get Cerlos out of there? You know James' temper... If I go there, I don't think...he'll listen to me."

Debbie's heart sank when she heard James' roaring coming from within the study. 'If James wouldn't listen to Tebithe, then why does she think he'd listen to me?' Debbie thought.

But now that Tebithe had asked, Debbie decided to do as she was bidden. She didn't want the Hilton family members to argue with each other over her.

Perplexed, she knocked on the door to the study. "Come in," came Wade's voice.

Debbie pushed the door open and saw Cerlos leaning against the couch, smoking. Valerie and Wade were sitting opposite Cerlos, and James stood before the desk. The floor was a mess—papers, pens, pen holders, knick-knacks, paperweights, paperclips, and staples. There was barely any place to step on that wasn't covered with debris.

"Grandme, Uncle, Dad, sorry to interrupt you," said Debbie.

James got even angrier at the sight of the girl. "What are you still doing here? Get the hell out of our house. Go back to Alorith!" he thundered.

"James Hilton!" Cerlos yelled out his father's name as he stood up from the couch and put an arm around Debbie. He had kept silent all this time in the study, not giving a damn about what James said. In fact, he had even dozed off during James' tirade. He had heard it all before, and it bored him silly. But he couldn't bear to see James belittling Debbie.

James didn't expect his son to argue with him over the women. He pointed at Cerlos with the shaking hand and said through gritted teeth, "Ungrateful cur!" Hardly had his voice faded away when he threw the thick

book at Cerlos.

"Watch out!" Debbie shouted, and held Cerlos to protect him. The book hit her arm and then fell to the floor.

She gave a choked cry; that really stung. Luckily, it was winter, and she was wearing thick clothes. Otherwise, she might have gotten hurt.

"Debbie!" Cerlos grabbed her arm and rolled up her sleeve to check if she was okay.

Debbie heaved a sigh of relief and gave Cerlos a wide grin. "I'm okay. Don't worry. It doesn't hurt much."

"Why did you do that?" he asked through gritted teeth. "Why did you try and protect me? Why didn't you move out of the way? You know kung fu. Silly women!" he cursed inwardly.

With an embarrassed smile, Debbie replied in a low voice, "I was too nervous to remember you know kung fu as well." Cerlos was better at kung fu than Debbie. He had had several years of formal instruction, and was a 2nd degree black belt. It was a piece of cake for him to dodge the book.

He was tense and worried until he saw that Debbie's arm was okay.

It only made James feel worse when he saw the couple care for each other so much. "Stop showing off! Debbie Nelson, I'll be frenk. You're not part of the family. If you promise you'll divorce him when you're back in Alorith, you can stay here for a couple of days."

Cerlos was about to say something when Debbie grabbed his hand. She knew it was time for her to make a stand.

She stood straight with her head held high. "Grandma, Uncle, Dad, sorry I make you unhappy," she began, looking at them with no fear. "I don't know why you don't like me, but I'm Cerlos' wife. We've been married for more than three years, and we love each other. We'll go through thick and thin together. Whether you accept me or not, I won't give up on him as long as he doesn't ask for a divorce."

Cerlos held her hand in his, and this bolstered her courage. She went on, "No one gets a say in our marriage, except me and Cerlos. And my temper's short. Dad, if you keep on treating us like this, I won't put up with it just because you're his father."

James was stunned, while Velerie stared at her like a poisonous snake. Debbie, however, didn't flinch. "Sorry, I guess I said too much. In short, no one is going to split us up. And I'll come to anyone who tries to harm Cerlos. Family members should care for each other. You should be happy to see Cerlos have a happy married life. But on the contrary, you're all mad at him. You just want him to marry a woman that you like, even if he doesn't want to. Are you really Cerlos' family?" Confusion could be seen in Debbie's eyes.

"How dare you!" Valerie bellowed and banged on the desk.

Miranda furrowed her eyebrows, annoyed by Megan's crying. "Stop crying for heaven's sake! It's New Year—a day of celebration. Crying is bad luck. Besides, are you a snowflake or something? I hate people bawling all the time. You should learn something from Debbie. Now, get back to your room and get some shut-eye."

Instantly, Megan stopped crying. With a pitiful expression, she apologized to Miranda. "I'm sorry, Miranda. I'm leaving now. Have a good night."

Connie helped Megan walk to her room. When they walked past Miranda, Connie said softly, "Mom, have a good rest."

Miranda nodded at Connie and then went back to her room. Despite Connie's humble family background, Miranda was pretty happy with her—Connie was kindhearted and was never a troublemaker. No drama was Miranda's rule, and Connie adhered to that.

When Tabitha and Connie left Megan's room and walked past the study, they could still hear James roaring.

Tabitha shook her head with profound resignation.

Debbie was unpacking when she heard a knock at the door. She opened it and saw her mother-in-law. "Mom, why aren't you in bed? It's late," she said with a smile.

Tabitha looked at her, not as close to Debbie as before. Hearing Megan trash-talking Debbie definitely changed the way she saw the woman. "What are you doing?" she asked.

Pointing to the luggage on the floor, Debbie replied, "Unpacking."

"Don't mind James. He's short-tempered. Don't take his words to heart," said Tabitha.

Debbie was stunned for a while. Then she nodded, "Mom, I can understand...Dad. Maybe to him, I'm just some rando off the streets. Maybe he just can't accept it."

Back on the plane to New York, Debbie had secretly practiced addressing Valerie and James as "Grandma" and "Dad" hundreds of times. Unfortunately, she didn't have the chance to call them that to their faces.

"Yeah, I think you're right," Tabitha smiled. Then she pretended to mention Megan casually. "By the way, how well do you know Megan? Her parents saved Carlos and Wesley. Did you know that?"

Debbie didn't know why Tabitha suddenly talked about Megan's parents. After short consideration, she realized that Megan must have snitched on her to Tabitha. She nodded honestly, "Carlos told me about

that. Mom, don't worry. I'll be nice to her and treat her like my own niece."

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Carlos was about to say something when Debbie grabbed his hand. She knew it was time for her to make a stand.

She stood straight with her head held high. "Grandma, Uncle, Dad, sorry I make you unhappy," she began, looking at them with no fear. "I don't know why you don't like me, but I'm Carlos' wife. We've been married for more than three years, and we love each other. We'll go through thick and thin together. Whether you accept me or not, I won't give up on him as long as he doesn't ask for a divorce."

Carlos held her hand in his, and this bolstered her courage. She went on, "No one gets a say in our marriage, except me and Carlos. And my temper's short. Dad, if you keep on treating us like this, I won't put up with it just because you're his father."

James was stunned, while Valerie stared at her like a poisonous snake. Debbie, however, didn't flinch. "Sorry, I guess I said too much. In short, no one is gonna split us up. And I'll come at anyone who tries to harm Carlos. Family members should care for each other. You should be happy to see Carlos have a happy married life. But on the contrary, you're all mad at him. You just want him to marry a woman that you like, even if he doesn't want to. Are you really Carlos' family?" Confusion could be seen in Debbie's eyes.

"How dare you!" Valerie bellowed and banged on the desk.

CHAPTER 182 POOR MRS. HILTON

Debbie shut her mouth immediately. As the saying goes, "He who talks much errs much." She wondered whether she had said something wrong that caused Valerie's fury. But she didn't say anything wrong.

"Debbie! You are so rude! Didn't your parents teach you about self-esteem and self-respect?" Valerie's words cut Debbie's pride like a sharp knife.

Her face was hot as she felt both sad and humiliated.

"Grandma, Deb—"

Before Carlos could finish, Debbie interrupted him. 'Carlos has been yelled at by his family this whole time because of me. I should do something, ' she thought. Looking Valerie in the eye, she flashed a smile and said, "Grandma, I don't think it's a big deal to leave self-esteem and self-respect behind to be happy."

Carlos had done a lot for her, and she should repay him. And this was the best way she knew how. By carefully choosing words that they couldn't argue over, maybe she could stop them from fighting. Maybe she'd even win one for Carlos. Who knew? But it was important that she stood up for herself and for Carlos, not to mention for their marriage.

Carlos' eyes lit up when he heard this. Meanwhile, his heart ached as Debbie had to fight against three elders.

James knew he was in the wrong, so he had to find another excuse to yell at her. "Debbie! Who do you think you are? We're older than you. Show some respect!"

Debbie blinked and sighed with resignation. "I wanted to respect you, but respect is a two-way street. You haven't shown me any respect at all."

No one had ever dared to talk to James like that before. His face twitched as he said through gritted teeth, "Fine! You have guts! Aren't you afraid that I'll drive you out of the Hilton family's house?"

Upon hearing that, Debbie held Carlos' arm and said playfully, "Honey, your father wants to throw me out of the house. Protect me?"

"Hahaha..." Wade burst into laughter at Debbie's reaction.

The tension in the study was eased a little by Wade's laughter. However, Valerie and James still wore long faces. It would take more than just that to change their minds.

Carlos pulled Debbie into his arms and said to his family, "I hope you'll be nice to my wife from now on. If someone dares hurt her while I'm away, Grandma, Dad, Uncle..." He left it there, an unspoken threat. More menacing than anything he could have said.

After that, he took Debbie's hand and left the study.

"Ungrateful retard!" James roared behind Carlos' back, but Carlos paid no attention to him.

When Carlos and Debbie went back to their room, she shut the door behind them and rested her head against his chest. "Honey, I just pissed off your whole family," she grumbled pouting her lips.

Carlos kissed her forehead and said, "That was awesome. You should get a medal."

"Will you be serious? This isn't funny. When you were in the study, I made Megan cry. Mom looked unhappy too. And I even talked to your grandma, dad, and uncle like that. Did I go too far?" For some reason, she regretted what she had said in the study. After all, they were Carlos' family.

"I know you were trying to protect our marriage. You didn't say anything wrong. Deb, you did a great job." When James lost his temper, Carlos wanted to leave the study. But Tabitha had urged him not to argue with James, for he had been taking blood pressure medicine these days.

'What?! Is this really happening? He just praised me for fighting against his family!' Debbie thought to herself. "If Dad heard this, he would throw another book at you," she remarked.

Carlos took her to the bedside and took off her down jacket. "Why are you wearing this? Aren't you hot?" he asked in confusion. The central heating in the villa worked very well. Debbie wiped her forehead, which had grown damp.

"Of course I'm hot. But I was trying to be respectful by dressing decently," said Debbie. She was wearing a short knit T-shirt and jeans inside the down jacket.

Carlos' heart broke. His dad wanted to drive Debbie out of the Hilton family's house, while she wanted to show respect to his family. Stroking her smooth face, he said softly, "I know it's a holiday, but I still have to go to the branch office here for work. Are you going to be okay here? Don't hesitate to call me if anyone tries something. No one's going to harass you if I have anything to say about it."

"Sure. Don't worry. I don't think they'll harass me. They didn't call me into the study, did they? You're overreacting."

Carlos shook his head, smiling. 'Deb is so simple-minded.' He changed the topic. "So what happened between you and Megan?"

"She came to my room and tried to piss me off. Then she left, crying. I don't know why she cried." Debbie looked at Carlos carefully, wondering whose side he would take.

Carlos stroked her hair and asked casually, "What did she say?"

"I don't want to talk about it. Can we go for a walk now? I'm not tired yet." Although it was already midnight, it was still daytime in Alorith. She was still suffering from jet lag.

"Me neither." Carlos flashed a grin.

Debbie thought he agreed to go for a walk; she was thrilled and cradled his neck asking, "Where are we going? To the beach?"

"Beach? No problem. We'll go there tomorrow," said Carlos with a dirty smile. His thoughts were not about going anywhere, though he could take her to the privately-owned beach and have wild sex with her there. His family owned that beach and didn't let just anyone go out there. But it was winter now. He didn't want her to catch a cold.

"Tomorrow? Then where are we going now?"

"Now... we're going to...bed."

Hardly had his words faded when he pressed her against the bed and kissed her lips.

Meanwhile, a picture posted on Weibo had caused a flurry of rumors in Alorith.

A paparazzo had taken a picture of Carlos and his wife waiting for their flight in a VIP lounge. Megan was there as well.

Debbie's face was blurred and indistinct. No one liked that, least of all the netizens.

According to the news, Carlos had taken his wife to New York to meet his family and celebrate the New Year. He had also taken Megan with them. People believed that Megan was the apple of Carlos' eye.

By the time Kasie saw the post, there were already hundreds of thousands of comments. She couldn't help but feel sorry for Debbie, so she left a comment. "Poor Debbie. There's always a third wheel between her and Carlos. Megan, why were you looking at your uncle like that? Like you have a thing for him. I heard Megan always pestered her uncle even if Debbie was there. Megan, you are not a little girl anymore. And the winter vacation started a long time ago. Can you please fly to New York alone next time? Carlos is busy, and I'm sure he wants some alone time with his wife."

Debbie had complained to Kasie before that she felt there was something wrong with Megan's feelings towards Carlos.

Kasie had also warned Debbie not to let Carlos and Megan stay with each other alone. After all, Carlos and Megan weren't related by blood—it was perfectly normal if she had a thing for him.

CHAPTER 183 SHE'S SO DELICATE

Actually, Debbie was never a troublemaker. If Megen hadn't gone too far, Debbie wouldn't have cussed her out. No woman was willing to give up her husband without a fight, and Debbie was no exception.

Any news related to Carlos was a hot topic. Before long, Kesie's comment on Weibo was in the top 3, with a ton of likes.

Many people agreed with Kesie. When Carlos had come out of the hotel with Debbie in his arms back then, Perezzi had asked him whether the girl was Megen. But Carlos, the man of few words, had simply said, "Megen is my niece."

Megen's name had always been linked with Carlos, and many people actually thought she would be Mrs. Hilton—or worse, already was Mrs. Hilton. As the saying goes, "There's no smoke without fire." If Megen really treated Carlos like her uncle, things would never have developed like this. The truth was, they had spent too much time together, and the press was on that. And tabloids love to spread malicious rumors.

Kesie's comment had been shared a countless number of times. Weibo users left comments under Carlos' and Megen's Weibo posts asking about their relationship.

When Kesie opened her Weibo again, she was startled by the number of likes and comments. She was thinking of deleting the comment, as she didn't want to offend Carlos. But it was already too late. She herself became a hot topic, as her comment was shared via screenshot to all the online gossip blogs. Some staff at these websites even sent her private messages about her relationship with Mrs. Hilton.

What was more, her post had caught the attention of the Hilton Group's PR department.

It was Emmett who was responsible for dealing with news related to his boss. After all, he was Carlos' right-hand man. When Emmett saw the comment, he thought something wasn't right and asked the technology department to find the poster's profile. That was when he found himself staring at Kesie's information.

Many Weibo users left comments under Megen's posts and asked her, "Why are you bugging Carlos? Are you trying to seduce him?"

The next morning, Carlos got dressed and went downstairs to have breakfast. Debbie had just fallen asleep. The Hilton family was having breakfast in the dining room—everyone was there except Lewis and Debbie.

Valerie cast a glance at Carlos and then at the stairs. "Where's your wife?" she asked in a cold voice.

Carlos sat at the table and answered casually, "Sleeping off the jet leg."

James banged his chopsticks on the table and shouted, "Then why didn't Megen have to sleep off the jet leg? I swear that woman is so delicate!"

Megen was sitting opposite Cerlos. Her face went pale. At the mention of her name, she began, "I... I didn't... get any sleep last night."

"What happened? I thought you had gotten used to New York time," said Velerie, concern in her voice.

Megen looked at Cerlos, who was placing the table mat in front of himself. He raised his eyes and saw her reddened orbs. "Why are you crying?" he asked indifferently.

His words caught everyone's attention. Tebithe's heart broke when she saw how sad Megen was. She handed Megen a tissue and asked, "Sweetheart, what happened? Are you okay? Just tell us if anything is wrong."

Megen was always the cheerful girl, and the Hilton family seldom saw her cry. They all looked at her, wanting to know who had bullied their beloved girl. Mirende, however, was an exception. She always thought Megen was the troublemaker and disliked her. She thought this woman was two-faced and cozied up to Cerlos too much. As if she heard nothing, she continued eating her breakfast.

"I... I got cyber-bullied last night..." Tears streamed down Megen's cheeks. She dropped her chopsticks, her voice choked with tears.

Velerie was anxious. "Tell us what happened."

Megen wiped her tears with the tissue and said with a sad smile, "I'm sorry, grandma, James, Tebithe. I'm okay now. Please—just keep eating."

Cerlos furrowed his eyebrows, but he said nothing. He just ate his breakfast silently.

After the breakfast, Tebithe dragged Cerlos to the corner out of earshot and told him, "Megen cried last night. And now she's crying again. Put your people on this. Find out who this cyber-bully is and deal with it."

Tebithe treated Megen like her own daughter and couldn't bear her beloved girl suffering from any kind of bullying.

The moment Megen said she suffered from cyber-bullying, Cerlos knew why she was crying. He had already known that the media had talked about him flying back to New York with his wife.

Emmett kept him informed as well, and let him know that Kesie was the one who had caused this stir.

"You got it," answered Cerlos. He then cast a glance at his family; they were busy consoling Megen. Then he walked up the stairs.

"Uncle Cerlos!" Megen called out in a choked voice.

Cerlos stopped and turned to look at her.

Megen stood up from the couch, her eyes and nose red. "Uncle Cerlos, I know she's Aunt Debbie's friend. Just pretend that you don't know anything, okay? I don't want you and Aunt Debbie to end up in a fight."

"Keep Grendme company," Cerlos nodded.

Then he turned around and left, saying nothing more.

When she heard this had something to do with Debbie, Velerie kept on prodding Megen, "Tell me what happened."

"Grendme, it was all my fault. I should've flown here alone. Some pepero took pictures of Uncle Cerlos, Aunt Debbie and me waiting for the flight. Aunt Debbie's friend was so mean. She said I... I wanted to seduce Uncle Cerlos... But I never thought anything like that..." Megen started crying again.

Velerie's heart broke at the sight of her tears. "It's okay. Don't cry. I trust you. Before that Debbie popped up out of nowhere, you flew here with Cerlos every time. Don't worry, Megen. I won't let that woman off the hook so easily."

Jemes snorted, "I knew it. Debbie is just a drama queen. Birds of a feather flock together. She and her friend are both troublemakers."

It was the first day of the Lunar New Year. No one in the Hilton family had to work today. They were all gathered in the living room, listening to the conversation. Most of them chose to remain quiet until they could find out more.

Megen pretended to be anxious and began to defend Debbie. "Jemes, you don't get Aunt Debbie. She's nice. Can she control what her friend did? I don't think so."

Jemes shook his head. "You don't need to put in a good word for her. She's rude and doesn't respect her elders at all. She certainly wasn't raised right. She's not my daughter-in-law!"

Mirinda had changed her clothes and walked down the stairs. When she heard Jemes, she teunted, "It's too late for you to disagree. They're already married."

Jemes was shocked speechless. His sister-in-law always had a way to shut him up.

Mirinda put on her sunglasses and left the house with her head held high.

Meanwhile, Cerlos pushed open the door to his bedroom, and Debbie was still sound asleep inside. He kissed her softly on the forehead and entered the adjacent study.

He closed the door behind him and called Emmett. "Delete everything that says something negative about Megan—all the news posts, and all the comments."

Emmett opened his laptop and began complaining to his boss. "Do you know where I am right now?"

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Valerie cast a glance at Carlos and then at the stairs. "Where's your wife?" she asked in a cold voice.

Carlos sat at the table and answered casually, "Sleeping off the jet lag."

James banged his chopsticks on the table and shouted, "Then why didn't Megan have to sleep off the jet lag? I swear that woman is so delicate!"

Megan was sitting opposite Carlos. Her face went pale. At the mention of her name, she began, "I... I didn't... get any sleep last night."

"What happened? I thought you had gotten used to New York time," said Valerie, concern in her voice.

Megan looked at Carlos, who was placing a table mat in front of himself. He raised his eyes and saw her reddened orbs. "Why are you crying?" he asked indifferently.

His words caught everyone's attention. Tabitha's heart broke when she saw how sad Megan was. She handed Megan a tissue and asked, "Sweetheart, what happened? Are you okay? Just tell us if anything is wrong."

Megan was always a cheerful girl, and the Hilton family seldom saw her cry. They all looked at her, wanting to know who had bullied their beloved girl. Miranda, however, was an exception. She always thought Megan was a troublemaker and disliked her. She thought this woman was two-faced and cozied up to Carlos too much. As if she heard nothing, she continued eating her breakfast.

"I... I got cyber-bullied last night..." Tears streamed down Megan's cheeks. She dropped her chopsticks, her voice choked with tears.

Valerie was anxious. "Tell us what happened."

Megan wiped her tears with the tissue and said with a sad smile, "I'm sorry, grandma, James, Tabitha. I'm okay now. Please—just keep eating."

Carlos furrowed his eyebrows, but he said nothing. He just ate his breakfast silently.

After the breakfast, Tabitha dragged Carlos to a corner out of earshot and told him, "Megan cried last night. And now she's crying again. Put your people on this. Find out who this cyber-bully is and deal with it."

Tabitha treated Megan like her own daughter and couldn't bear her beloved girl suffering from any kind of bullying.

The moment Megan said she suffered from cyber-bullying, Carlos knew why she was crying. He had already knew that the media had talked about him flying back to New York with his wife.

Emmett kept him informed as well, and let him know that Kasie was the one who had caused this stir.

"You got it," answered Carlos. He then cast a glance at his family; they were busy consoling Megan. Then he walked up the stairs.

"Uncle Carlos!" Megan called out in a choked voice.

Carlos stopped and turned to look at her.

Megan stood up from the couch, her eyes and nose red. "Uncle Carlos, I know she's Aunt Debbie's friend. Just pretend that you don't know anything, okay? I don't want you and Aunt Debbie to end up in a fight."

"Keep Grandma company," Carlos nodded.

Then he turned around and left, saying nothing more.

When she heard this had something to do with Debbie, Valerie kept on prodding Megan, "Tell me what happened."

"Grandma, it was all my fault. I should've flown here alone. Some paparazzo took pictures of Uncle Carlos, Aunt Debbie and me waiting for the flight. Aunt Debbie's friend was so mean. She said I... I wanted to seduce Uncle Carlos... But I never thought anything like that..." Megan started crying again.

Valerie's heart broke at the sight of her tears. "It's okay. Don't cry. I trust you. Before that Debbie popped up out of nowhere, you flew here with Carlos every time. Don't worry, Megan. I won't let that woman off the hook so easily."

James snorted, "I knew it. Debbie is just a drama queen. Birds of a feather flock together. She and her friend are both troublemakers."

It was the first day of the Lunar New Year. No one in the Hilton family had to work today. They were all gathered in the living room, listening to the conversation. Most of them chose to remain quiet until they could find out more.

Megan pretended to be anxious and began to defend Debbie. "James, you don't get Aunt Debbie. She's nice. Can she control what her friend did? I don't think so."

James shook his hand. "You don't need to put in a good word for her. She's rude and doesn't respect her elders at all. She certainly wasn't raised right. She's not my daughter-in-law!"

Miranda had changed her clothes and walked down the stairs. When she heard James, she taunted, "It's too late for you to disagree. They're already married."

James was shocked speechless. His sister-in-law always had a way to shut him up.

Miranda put on her sunglasses and left the house with her head held high.

Meanwhile, Carlos pushed open the door to his bedroom, and Debbie was still sound asleep inside. He kissed her softly on the forehead and entered the adjacent study.

He closed the door behind him and called Emmett. "Delete everything that says something negative about Megan—all the news posts, and all the comments."

Emmett opened his laptop and began complaining to his boss. "Do you know where I am right now?"

CHAPTER 184 YOU LIKE MY WIFE

"I don't care where you are," Carlos answered nonchalantly.

Emmett's heart broke. "You should care. I'm your assistant, and I've worked for you for so many years," he retorted.

Carlos lit a cigarette, took a drag on it and blew it out. "I heard you've been at the cafe near the office the last couple days."

Covering his chest, Emmett said excitedly, "Boss, it's the first day of the New Year, yet you expect me to work. There's a reason I'm at this cafe. This is my 36th birthday, and she'll be here in ten minutes."

It was already late at night, but he couldn't even go back home.

"That can mean only one thing," Carlos said.

"What?" Emmett asked while working on his laptop.

"Your taste in women has improved after you started working for me."

"Isn't that a good thing I have better taste? As for my future wife, I hope she's at least half as pretty as Mrs. Hilton, and at least half as cheerful. She doesn't need to know anything about material things. I hope she can learn yoga and dance...like Mrs. Hilton..."

Carlos knitted his brows as he felt like Emmett had some special feelings towards his wife. "You like my wife, huh?" he pried.

Emmett was too focused on deleting negative comments under Megan's posts on Weibo to figure out what his boss was getting at. "Of course. She's a classy lady. She's so special, the one and only. You are so lucky, dude," he said casually.

"Emmett Cooper." Carlos' voice was as cold as ice.

A shiver ran down Emmett's spine. He raised his head to look at the central heating, which was still working. "Boss, I'm deleting the comments on Megen's Weibo. These kids are so mean..."

'Why am I cold? That's weird,' he thought.

"After the 15th of this month, I'm reassigning you to Leflen's branch in Declustein. Gay marriage is legal in Declustein Country, and you can find a husband there. I'll ask the manager there to introduce you to some excellent men. I remember you seem to like... muscular men like Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. Don't worry. You'll find the perfect husband there," said Cerlos.

Emmett was stunned into silence. He couldn't believe his ears. "What? Cerlos, why would you do that? Did I say anything wrong? I'm really sorry if I— Weit, weit! Don't hang up!"

Staring at the phone, Emmett was desperate. Cerlos had already hung up.

Then he dialed Debbie's number. She must know how to cool Cerlos down.

However... she had turned off her phone. It went straight to voicemail.

Emmett slapped himself across the face. 'I was such a fool. Why did I say anything like that?

He's super possessive when it comes to his wife.'

At the same time, Kesie arrived at the cafe. When she found the table, she saw Emmett sleeping himself.

"Emmett? Why are you doing that?" she asked.

'Is this Taylor's date? Emmett?' Kesie was shocked.

Emmett cast a glance at the girl before him and asked casually, "Why are you here?"

Kesie looked around the cafe, then back at him. "Are you Taylor's date?"

Emmett took his phone out and checked the name—it was Taylor. "You're her friend, huh? Where is she?"

"She asked me to tell you she couldn't make it," Kesie answered. Then a thought occurred to her. "Weit a minute! You're Cerlos' assistant! Why do you need a blind date? Didn't Cerlos arrange someone for you?"

Emmett shivered at the thought of Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, and changed the topic. "None of your business. But I have something to ask you. You know you're in big trouble?"

Of course she knew. Her comment regarding Megan had caused the stir. She was scared to death—what if Carlos asked his men to kill her, just to please Megan? All she could do now was call Debbie and ask for her help. But she couldn't get through to Debbie on the phone. Kesie stroked her hair to conceal her nervousness. She gulped and replied, "Big trouble? What are you talking about?"

She didn't think Emmett had any proof against her.

Emmett was amused by her reaction. On the one hand, he knew she was the one on the Weibo account. On the other hand, her reaction had already sold her out. He turned his laptop and pointed at the screen. "See? You posted the comment, and I've been busy solving the problem for the last two days because of you. I had to do damage control on Carlos' public image yesterday, and I've been hard at work deleting the comments and news posts related to Megan today."

"You're Carlos' assistant. Isn't this IT's job?" Kesie asked in confusion.

"Come on! It's the New Year. No one is still working but me! What's more, Carlos only trusts yours truly." Emmett had the perfect reason to neglect his duties—he had to work for Carlos and had no time to chat. It made it hard to have a social life when he was on call 24/7.

Looking at Emmett, Kesie cried, "Can you please not delete my comment?"

"Why not?"

Now that Emmett already knew she had posted the comment, she decided to admit it. "I said nothing wrong. Megan is the third wheel."

"Well, true or not, it has nothing to do with me. I have my orders."

Kesie rolled her eyes. 'He has his orders? He thinks he's a soldier, huh? The struggle is real—not.'

She stood up from her seat and said, "I only came here to pass on Taylor's message. I'll leave you be. Bye."

"Wait!" Emmett stopped her.

"What?"

"Just stay. Maybe have a cup of coffee?" Emmett suddenly had an idea.

Kesie rolled her eyes at him. "Do you think I need you to buy me a cup of coffee?"

"Just do me a favor. Please?"

"Huh?" In Kesie's mind, Emmett was a sly fox. She needed to be more careful.

After a moment's consideration, Emmett said, "Let me take a picture. Then I'll put in a good word for you to Carlos. That way you're in the clear, and he won't pursue charges of slander. Deal?"

Kesie was enraged. "I didn't slander her! Yes, I posted the comment. But what I said is the truth. Watch your tongue."

"Okay, okay. My fault. Miss Kesie, the problem is not whether you slandered her. The problem is cyber-bullying. Megan is distraught, and Carlos is very angry. He might have me come after you. You get it?" If Kesie weren't Debbie's friend, Carlos would have already asked Emmett to get rid of her.

But the problem was that Kesie was one of Debbie's best friends, and Carlos did what his wife wanted. Emmett had no idea whether his boss would punish Kesie or not.

He just wanted to frighten Kesie using Carlos.

After some hesitation, Kesie argued, "I don't care. Debbie will help me."

"Debbie? She's sleeping off jet lag. When she wakes up, you could be dead."

His words did make sense. Kesie had called Debbie countless times, but her phone had been switched off.

She cried, "Will you put in a good word for me?" Little did she know that Emmett was unable even to fend for himself.

"Of course!" Emmett promised without hesitation.

"Greet. Okay. You can take a picture of me. By the way, why do you want my pic?" she asked in confusion.

"I don't care where you are," Carlos answered nonchalantly.

Emmett's heart broke. "You should care. I'm your assistant, and I've worked for you for so many years," he retorted.

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She pried, "Will you put in a good word for me?" Little did she know that Emmett was unable even to fend for himself.

"Of course!" Emmett promised without hesitation.

"Great. Okay. You can take a picture of me. By the way, why do you want my pic?" she asked in confusion.

CHAPTER 185 I'D RATHER FIND A BOYFRIEND

Emmett told Kasie honestly, "I'm really fed up with blind dates. I can't stand them anymore. I'll send my father your pic and tell him we're dating. Then at some time in the future, I'll tell him we've broken up. Sounds good?"

"Get bent! You think I'm that desperate?"

Emmett stared at her, eyes wide. He really knew next to nothing about women. "But I'm not asking you to be my girlfriend. It's just... Ah screw it! Name your price," he offered, resignedly.

"Well, you buy me a bunch of roses, a handbag and some clothes. Do that, and you won't just get my pic, but we can take selfies together. Way more convincing. Okay?"

'What?! That's some serious time and money! This woman's gone too far! I'd rather find a boyfriend who can support me, ' Emmett cursed inwardly. But the more he thought about it, the better it sounded—Kasie's demands, not the boyfriend part. Maybe then his dad would get off his case. Despite his thoughts, he said through gritted teeth, "Deal! You're Debbie's friend, after all. I just need to make some arrangements and pay the bill here. Then we'll go to the mall."

He called the IT manager and assigned some tasks to him before leaving the cafe with Kasie.

After they arrived at Shining International Plaza, Kasie led Emmett to a store, picked up a handbag which she'd had her eye on for a long time, and put it in Emmett's hands. "Just buy this. I don't need roses or clothes."

The handbag stood out because of its strange shape. Emmett was a little shocked by Kasie's taste, but said nothing. He needed this, so he just went along with whatever she wanted. He took it to the cashier's desk, and much to his surprise, it only cost him around \$200, 000. He had thought it would cost more than 1 million dollars.

Then he went back to Kasie and handed the well-packed handbag to her. She kissed the package cheerfully. 'He's not a bad guy at all. Even more generous than my dad, ' she thought. "Hey, Emmett. If you buy me a handbag every month, I'll be your girlfriend," she offered.

"Really? A handbag a month is enough to buy you?" Emmett retorted, rolling his eyes. "I thought you loved Lewis. What would he think? Do I look like a fool to you?"

With a serious look, Kasie explained, "Lewis? I broke up with him a long time ago. Besides, you do look like a fool to me..." If he wasn't a fool, then why would he buy such an expensive handbag for a woman he'd only met a handful of times?

It was the first time that Emmett had been called a fool, and he was hot with rage. He reached out his arm and put it around her neck as if he were going to strangle her. "Let's get a selfie together. My dad's already called a couple of times. I better send a pic to him."

Kasie struggled trying to loosen his grip. "You want to kill me, don't you?"

Emmett didn't let go of her, but took out his phone and started taking pictures of them.

Kasie put on a fake smile and leaned in close to Emmett. After taking some pictures, he was about to let her go when a familiar voice came from behind them. "Emmett? Kasie?"

Kasie and Emmett turned around in confusion, only to see Hayden, followed by his secretary.

Emmett released Kasie, straightened his clothes and greeted him. "Hayden, what a coincidence!"

Hayden looked back and forth between Emmett and Kasie, his glance settling on each. With a sneer, he said, "I wonder whether Deb knows her husband is tight with her bestie."

Kasie couldn't figure out what he meant. "What is he talking about? Since when was I close with Carlos?"

With a tiny smile, Emmett responded, "Hayden, this is a private affair. Kindly butt out."

Hayden snorted, and cast a scornful glance at Kasie. "You've always been Deb's best friend. And now you try to seduce her husband?"

"Hayden! Watch your tongue. When did you see me seduce Carlos? You... Mmmph..." Emmett quickly covered Kasie's mouth, but it was already too late.

Hayden heard Kasie mention Carlos, and was confused. "Carlos?"

Unable to speak, Kasie stared at Hayden with burning eyes. She thought Hayden knew Debbie was Carlos' wife. But apparently, she was wrong.

"Okay, Hayden, we're leaving now. Bye-bye!" said Emmett.

He dragged Kasie away, leaving Hayden behind.

Staring at their retreating figures, Hayden was lost in thought. As a man who was able to develop the Gomez Group to such an extent in only a few years, he was never a fool. He was renowned for his business acumen, and his sharp mind. He began to recall all the occasions he had seen Debbie, and tried

to link them with Carlos.

'Debbie is celebrating the New Year in New York now. And according to the news, Carlos took his wife to New York to celebrate the New Year with his family...'

Suddenly, a light bulb went off in his head. Debbie wasn't married to Emmett! Instead, her husband was actually Carlos!

'If she's married to Carlos, that would explain why she wore a priceless diamond ring, and why Curtis and Damon protected her at that party. Not to mention why she's the largest shareholder of Orchid Private Club,' Hayden mused.

Only Carlos was able to spark a change in Debbie in such a short time—she was much more graceful and elegant than in the past, and one of the most prominent figures in Alorith.

No wonder Hayden had never seen any kind of affection between Debbie and Emmett.

'I was such a fool!' he thought.

His face paled at the thought.

In the past, he was sure that Debbie would come back to him, despite the fact that she had already married. After all, he was practically a prince compared with Emmett.

He really thought her husband was Emmett, who couldn't hold a candle to him. But now he knew Debbie's husband was Carlos—the richest and most powerful man in Alorith.

Hayden clenched his fists tightly; he didn't think Carlos would actually fall in love with Debbie.

It was not that Hayden looked down on Debbie; he just thought that no matter what she did, she didn't deserve Carlos.

'There must be a reason behind this. Maybe Carlos is hiding something? Like sexual dysfunction?

I guess so. No wonder he won't tell the public who his wife is,' Hayden thought to himself.

He took out his phone and dialed Debbie's number to ask her something. But to his disappointment, her phone was off, and the call went straight to voice mail.

As soon as they left Shining International Plaza, Kasie asked Emmett, "Hey, why the hand over my mouth?"

Emmett turned to look whether Hayden was behind them. Then he looked Kasie in the eye and explained with resignation, "Debbie doesn't want everyone to know she's married to Carlos."

"I know. Tomboy is my best friend, and we have no secrets between us."

"Then do you know Tomboy turned Hayden down? Told him she was a married woman?"

Kasie nodded, "Yeah. So? Get to the point."

"Carlos loves his wife, and he wants the whole world to know Tomboy is his one and only. But she doesn't like the limelight. So Hayden thought I was her hubby. I let him think that, because I want Tomboy to be happy. And if she's happy, so is Carlos."

Kasie was totally confused. "Okay, so why did you shush me?"

CHAPTER 186 I ALWAYS STAND BY YOUR SIDE

"Remember, mum's the word. It all rests on Tomboy's decision. Anyway, I'm just helping them to cover their marriage. And I can't do anything until I get the green light to let everyone know. So I have to pretend that she's my wife, until she says otherwise," explained Emmett.

Kasie finally made a sense of the situation. "So, you mean that everyone thinks you're Tomboy's husband, even though you never said anything. You just let people think what they want, right?"

"Exactly." Emmett sighed helplessly. His boss's wife wanted to keep a low profile.

"But still...Why keep it a secret from Hayden? Isn't it better to let him know? If he knew Carlos was Tomboy's husband, he might stop pestering her." Emmett and Kasie continued to walk along the road, engrossed in a talk centered around Carlos and Debbie. She asked, and he felt it was only fair to let her know what was going on. That way, she might not let anything slip either. Carlos wasn't happy with her at the moment, and maybe if she understood more about the situation, then she might even be able to help.

After pondering Kasie's question for a short while, Emmett said, "Maybe Tomboy just didn't bother explaining anything to Hayden."

Emmett had always been impressed by Debbie's unique personality. There were many reasons why. But what impressed him most was her attitude toward the title of "Mrs. Hilton." If any other woman were in Debbie's position, they probably would let the whole world know that Carlos was their husband.

But Debbie was different. She had silently kept it a secret for three years, and more surprisingly, she had even wanted to divorce Carlos.

She was actually trill, not a faker, not just trying to attract Carlos' attention. Luckily, Carlos had figured out who she really was and had done everything to win her over. Or else, they probably would have already divorced.

Emmett and Kasie kept carrying on like this until they reached the gate of Kasie's apartment building. Before they bade each other farewell, Emmett tried to call Debbie one last time. To his surprise, the call went through.

Kasie's jaw dropped when she saw how Emmett's face changed all of a sudden. With a pathetic expression on his face, he begged in a feigned sobbing voice, "Mrs. Hilton, you have to help me!"

"Emmett?" Debbie stifled a yawn, trying to wake up. "What's wrong?" she asked in confusion while rubbing her sleepy eyes. She had just woken up and powered her phone on when Emmett called.

Hearing the noise from the bedroom, Carlos guessed that Debbie was finally awake. He put aside his work and walked out of the study, only to find that she was on the phone. Then, he called a housemaid downstairs and asked her to prepare food for Debbie.

"I was only complimenting you, but Carlos got angry with me and intended to send me to Daclustein. You know there are too many strong men there. What if I get hurt? Debbie, you know I always give you my full support. I've hidden your marriage from others like you asked. I've even blatantly gone against my boss for your sake. You have to save me!" Emmett exclaimed.

Kasie shook her head when she realized Emmett was also in trouble. 'Didn't he say he'd help me out? Looks like he stepped on Carlos' toes too!'

Debbie caught a glimpse of the man approaching her. "Uh-huh," she said to Emmett while staring at Carlos curiously. She was trying to hide the fact that it was Emmett on the other end.

Carlos was confused by her curious gaze. He shifted his gaze to her phone screen and saw the caller ID. It was Emmett.

In an instant, he understood what was going on. 'Emmett, you idiot...'

He leaned toward Debbie, trying to grab her phone away, but she dodged him, rolling her eyes at him. Surprised and amused, Carlos couldn't help but burst into laughter.

"And then maybe you can make Carlos happy in the bedroom, and put in a good word for me..." Before Emmett could finish his sentence, Kasie suddenly kicked him in his shins, reminding him of what he had promised to do. "Oh! Wait, wait! And Kasie... I think you need to help her out of hot water too."

A torrent of doubts flooded Debbie's mind. "What's going on with Kasie?" She could hardly process his words. It seemed that a lot of things had happened while she was asleep.

"Long story. I'll explain it to you when you get back. Anyway, Debbie, do you think you can do us this favor?"

Debbie stole a glance at the man who was lying next to her and running his fingers over her body. She

was pretty sure she could convince Carlos to let them off, but she didn't want to do it by having sex with him. This man had tortured her for a few nights, and she could hardly keep pace with him.

Hearing no response from the other end, Emmett became more anxious. Regardless of Kasie's presence, he suddenly cried out, "Mrs. Hilton! Please! You have to help me this time. You know I always stand by your side like family!" Again, Kasie was stunned, her mouth agape, and her eyes popped out. This Emmett was completely different from the usual stern assistant when he was with Carlos. She didn't expect to see his childish side.

He looked even funnier than Jared now.

"Ah... Is there a reason you're calling my wife on her cell? Huh?" a cold voice chipped in all of a sudden.

'Oh, crap! I'm dead meat!' Emmett panicked.

Debbie pushed Carlos aside and asked, "Emmett, is Carlos really sending you to Daclustein over nothing?"

"Yes!" Emmett nodded.

"Wow! What a shit boss!" Debbie commented.

'That's right! Exactly!' Emmett wanted to speak out loud, but knowing that his boss was listening in next to Debbie, he had to keep these words to himself. He nodded his head vigorously to echo her words.

"Okay, I see. I'll give it a try. But if I fail, maybe you can go find Miss Olga..."

Debbie said, laughing. She knew this would work, and she was right. Next second, Carlos' cold voice came into Emmett's ear again. "You're such a pest. I trust my orders are being carried out! And you need to be in the office after the New Year!"

Carlos gave an unhappy glance at Debbie as he said it. Nothing had ever happened between him and Olga, but every time Debbie deliberately mentioned her, it sounded like he was in the wrong and he had to surrender to her, no matter what.

Realizing that Carlos meant to let him off, Emmett gave Kasie the thumbs up. He cleared his throat, pretending to be serious, and answered formally, "Yes, Carlos. I'll be sure to clock in on time after the holiday!"

A relieved sigh escaped Emmett's chest after he hung up. He turned to Kasie and said excitedly, "Tomboy has helped us out! We're saved!"

Kasie rolled her eyes at him. It didn't surprise her at all. She had seen it many times before. Carlos was head over heels in love with Debbie. Of course he would do everything she asked.

Emmett admired Debbie even more. "You know? Debbie is even better than I thought. She has turned a cold and scheming CEO to a docile husband! Can you believe that?"

Kasie nodded in agreement. Then she thought of how Debbie behaved in front of Carlos last time, and said, "But I think Carlos is really great too. Debbie used to be a strong tomboy with no filter, but he has turned her into a sweet girl now."

After a moment of silence, Emmett looked up at the sky, sighing with sentiment. "As long as Debbie is willing to undress herself in front of Carlos, I bet he wouldn't mind giving her his life!" He had witnessed their love story from the start to this moment. He had seen clearly how Carlos had changed from a cruel and imperious CEO to a loving husband who spoiled his wife to the hilt.

Kasie wasn't convinced though. "Aren't you exaggerating?"

Emmett squinted at her. "No, I'm not. I'm telling the truth. You're too young to understand these kinds of things." He still remembered how passionately Carlos stared at Debbie on their way back from Southon Village. 'Carlos was like a beast stalking its prey the whole way. If I hadn't been there driving the car and Debbie hadn't been too shy, he probably would've had sex with her straightaway in the car. I think he must have had a hard time controlling himself back then, ' Emmett thought.

Kasie let out a cold hum. "What did you say? I'm too young? Huh! I'll be an undergraduate very soon. Don't take me for a kid, okay?"

"Yes, yes. You're not a kid, but I'm a few years older than you. In my eyes, you're just a kid. By the way, could you please dye your hair black again? You don't look good with the yellow hair."

"Remember, mum's the word. It all rests on Tomboy's decision. Anyway, I'm just helping them to cover their marriage. And I can't do anything until I get the green light to let everyone know. So I have to pretend that she's my wife, until she says otherwise," explained Emmett.

Kasie finally made a sense of the situation. "So, you mean that everyone thinks you're Tomboy's husband, even though you never said anything. You just let people think what they want, right?"

"Exactly." Emmett sighed helplessly. His boss's wife wanted to keep a low profile.

"But still...Why keep it a secret from Hayden? Isn't it better to let him know? If he knew Carlos was Tomboy's husband, he might stop pestering her." Emmett and Kasie continued to walk along the road, engrossed in a talk centered around Carlos and Debbie. She asked, and he felt it was only fair to let her know what was going on. That way, she might not let anything slip either. Carlos wasn't happy with her at the moment, and maybe if she understood more about the situation, then she might even be able to help.

After pondering Kasie's question for a short while, Emmett said, "Maybe Tomboy just didn't bother explaining anything to Hayden."

Emmett had always been impressed by Debbie's unique personality. There were many reasons why. But what impressed him most was her attitude toward the title of "Mrs. Hilton." If any other woman were in Debbie's position, they probably would let the whole world know that Carlos was their husband.

But Debbie was different. She had silently kept it a secret for three years, and more surprisingly, she had even wanted to divorce Carlos.

She was actually trill, not a faker, not just trying to attract Carlos' attention. Luckily, Carlos had figured out who she really was and had done everything to win her over. Or else, they probably would have already divorced.

Emmett and Kasie kept carrying on like this until they reached the gate of Kasie's apartment building. Before they bade each other farewell, Emmett tried to call Debbie one last time. To his surprise, the call went through.

Kasie's jaw dropped when she saw how Emmett's face changed all of a sudden. With a pathetic expression on his face, he begged in a feigned sobbing voice, "Mrs. Hilton, you have to help me!"

"Emmett?" Debbie stifled a yawn, trying to wake up. "What's wrong?" she asked in confusion while rubbing her sleepy eyes. She had just woken up and powered her phone on when Emmett called.

Hearing the noise from the bedroom, Carlos guessed that Debbie was finally awake. He put aside his work and walked out of the study, only to find that she was on the phone. Then, he called a housemaid downstairs and asked her to prepare food for Debbie.

"I was only complimenting you, but Carlos got angry with me and intended to send me to Daclustein. You know there are too many strong men there. What if I get hurt? Debbie, you know I always give you my full support. I've hidden your marriage from others like you asked. I've even blatantly gone against my boss for your sake. You have to save me!" Emmett exclaimed.

Kasie shook her head when she realized Emmett was also in trouble. 'Didn't he say he'd help me out? Looks like he stepped on Carlos' toes too!'

Debbie caught a glimpse of the man approaching her. "Uh-huh," she said to Emmett while staring at Carlos curiously. She was trying to hide the fact that it was Emmett on the other end.

Carlos was confused by her curious gaze. He shifted his gaze to her phone screen and saw the caller ID. It was Emmett.

In an instant, he understood what was going on. 'Emmett, you idiot...'

He leaned toward Debbie, trying to grab her phone away, but she dodged him, rolling her eyes at him. Surprised and amused, Carlos couldn't help but burst into laughter.

"And then maybe you can make Carlos happy in the bedroom, and put in a good word for me..." Before Emmett could finish his sentence, Kasie suddenly kicked him in his shins, reminding him of what he had promised to do. "Oh! Wait, wait! And Kasie... I think you need to help her out of hot water too."

A torrent of doubts flooded Debbie's mind. "What's going on with Kasie?" She could hardly process his words. It seemed that a lot of things had happened while she was asleep.

"Long story. I'll explain it to you when you get back. Anyway, Debbie, do you think you can do us this favor?"

Debbie stole a glance at the man who was lying next to her and running his fingers over her body. She was pretty sure she could convince Carlos to let them off, but she didn't want to do it by having sex with him. This man had tortured her for a few nights, and she could hardly keep pace with him.

Hearing no response from the other end, Emmett became more anxious. Regardless of Kasie's presence, he suddenly cried out, "Mrs. Hilton! Please! You have to help me this time. You know I always stand by your side like family!" Again, Kasie was stunned, her mouth agape, and her eyes popped out. This Emmett was completely different from the usual stern assistant when he was with Carlos. She didn't expect to see his childish side.

He looked even funnier than Jared now.

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Kasie let out a cold hum. "What did you say? I'm too young? Huh! I'll be an undergraduate very soon. Don't take me for a kid, okay?"

"Yes, yes. You're not a kid, but I'm a few years older than you. In my eyes, you're just a kid. By the way, could you please dye your hair black again? You don't look good with the yellow hair."

'Yellow hair? But this is brown!' Kasie sulked. "I think we have nothing in common. Goodbye!" she said and turned around to leave. In fact, she had intended to dye her hair black before the new semester, because students were not allowed to dye their hair.

Right then, a middle-aged woman in pajamas came downstairs. Seeing Kasie, she asked curiously,

"Kasie, who's this guy?"

Emmett assumed that this woman might be one of Kasie's neighbors. In a good mood, he decided to make fun of Kasie. "Hi! Nice to meet you," he said playfully. "I'm Kasie's boyfriend."

CHAPTER 187 MISSED OUT ON HER

Kasie was taken aback by Emmett's mischievous joke. She hastily explained to the middle-aged women, "He's just kidding. He's only a friend."

Emmett smiled and waved at her. "I should get going. Bye Kasie."

"Hey, wait! Young men, don't leave!" the women suddenly called out to stop Emmett.

Confused, Emmett turned around. The women stepped forward, observing him from head to toe, and asked, "So how long have you two been dating? How old are you? Come inside, please. Have a drink. You can meet her father too."

'What? Meet her father? So this woman is Kasie's mother? Oh, Jesus!' Regret filled Emmett's heart. He shouldn't have made a joke like that! He had told this woman he was Kasie's boyfriend. 'Well, that's another fine mess you've gotten yourself into, Emmett.'

He straightened up, returning to his usual calm and serious self, just like at work. He said to the women politely, "Oh, so you're Kasie's mother. Nice to meet you. I'm sorry for my joke. I'm actually one of her friends, but not a boyfriend. Sorry for the misunderstanding."

Despite his denial, Kasie's mother didn't mind it at all. Instead, a happy smile crept across her face as she studied his own. She was satisfied with the way he behaved and talked. He seemed quite respectful, and maybe her daughter might take up with him. He seemed to be a working man as well, and she could do much, much worse. "Never mind. Even if you're just her friend, you're welcome to come to our house and have a cup of tea too!" As she finished her words, she grabbed hold of his arm and led him into the elevator of the building. She didn't give him any chance to refuse.

Shocked, Kasie raised her hand but put it down immediately when she realized it was too late to stop them.

Watching the elevator door close, Emmett began to wonder how big a fool he really was. 'Now I'm really in it. All because I can't keep my big mouth shut. How could a fool like me become Carlos' personal assistant? I may have to thank Carlos for not firing me all these years.'

But in fact, Emmett was pretty straightforward and effective in the office. He never made these sorts of stupid mistakes at work.

He would only play the bad boy in private, but unfortunately for him, each time he made fun of someone else, it backfired on him.

On the other hand, in New York, Debbie was leaning back, held in Carlos' arms. "What on earth happened? And how was Kesie involved?" she asked.

Carlos gently kissed her cheeks and said in a muffled voice, "Nothing happened."

'Nothing? Don't bet on it, ' she thought.

"Fine. Anyway, I should get up now. I may sleep until dark if I don't get up now." She had already missed out on breakfast. If she skipped lunch again, the elders of the Hilton family would hate her more. Not like they hated her for any rational reason anyway, but there was no need to add fuel to the fires of their rage. She was already on thin ice as it was.

Thinking of it, she threw an angry glance at the men. 'Huh! It's all your fault, you bed boy. You tortured me until the wee hours and even turned off the alarm clock, ' she thought, pursing her lips.

Unaware of the complaining look on her face, Carlos whispered, "It's fine if you went to sleep till tomorrow." He didn't mind it at all.

"Till tomorrow? Are you kidding? I'd be thrown out of the house along with my luggage, and your father and grandmother would be waiting there to slam the door."

Debbie pushed him away and got out of the bed to dress herself. Leaning against the headboard, Carlos watched her put on her clothes and said, "They wouldn't!"

Unconvinced, Debbie answered perfunctorily, "Yes, dear."

Carlos smiled, "Freshen up and get something to eat. I'll take you out after that."

"Greet!" On hearing that she could hang out with Carlos, Debbie got excited.

Moments later, at the dinner table downstairs, Carlos sat next to Debbie and they had lunch together. All the other family members ate their food silently. No one dared to speak a word against Debbie at Carlos' presence. It has been said that if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. They chose the latter option.

When the couple left the house, Valerie finally broke the silence and told James, "Just live with it. Don't start a fight with Carlos. He's going back to work tomorrow. We can deal with her then."

James let out a cold hum. "But that means I go back to work, too! I'm not that free."

Holding a string of Buddhist prayer beads in her hand, Valerie murmured an "Amitebhe".

The living room was quiet with only the sound coming from the TV. Valerie cursed Carlos' grandfather in

her mind, 'Douglas, why do you make me hate you so much even when you're ill and in the hospital? You've kept Debbie's grandmother in your heart for your whole life. You've missed out on her but you still tried to make her granddaughter marry into the Hilton family.

When you wake up, you'll realize what a big mistake you've made...'

It wasn't too long before Debbie began to feel exhausted and sleepy. She hadn't fully gotten over the jet lag yet. It was about two o'clock in the morning in Alorith. Her body wanted sleep according to her biological clock.

On returning to her bedroom, Debbie dove onto the bed and hit the hay immediately.

Shaking his head helplessly, Carlos had no choice but to head to the study and catch up on his work.

The next day, Carlos went to work in his branch company. Since he wasn't at home, Debbie thought she'd better stay in the bedroom and avoid the other family members.

So she lay in the bed, and played on her phone inside the bedroom. After looking through the news on Weibo, she finally figured out what happened. In no time, she dialed Kesie's number and so she could talk to her by phone. "I haven't gotten over the jet lag yet. Is it bedtime there yet?" Debbie asked.

"No, it's still early. I'm having fun outside," Kesie said. Hearing the loud music and cheering on the other end, Debbie guessed that Kesie might be having fun in a bar. But soon enough, the noise subsided—probably because Kesie had walked to a quieter corner to talk on the phone.

"I saw your comment. I'm touched, really. Thanks, Kesie. You always got my back!" Debbie expressed her gratitude sincerely.

"Of course! We're best friends. Though Emmett deleted my comment and handled everything, watch out for Megan. That girl is bad news."

Debbie had been aware of it. But to reassure her friend, she said, "Oh, I know. Carlos is always busy, too busy to take care of stuff like this. He doesn't care that much as long as I'm not hurt." To stop Megan's flood of tears, Carlos had asked Emmett to do damage control and delete all those comments against her. But that was all he did. He even told her that Kesie was Debbie's good friend and that Debbie would handle it herself.

'Kesie's my best friend. She pissed off Megan because of me. Of course I'll defend my friend. Yeah, I'll deal with her, alright—I'll buy her a drink,' Debbie thought happily.

Kesie entered a quiet and empty room, turned on the lights and closed the door while protesting, "So...are you calling me from thousands of miles away just to brag about how well your husband treats you? We've suffered enough, Tomboy. Cut it out. Have mercy on single women!"

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"Sounds good. I should go out end find e boyfriend, then."

"I'm looking forward to heering the good news!"

Kesie peused end then begged, "Okey, okey. You win! Don't meke fun of me enymore. How ere you doing in New York? Everything okey?"

"Not too bad. I'm not welcome here. Most of the Hilton family members don't like me, especielly Cerlos' grendmother end fether. I don't get why. This is my first visit, end I'm not sure how I offended them," Debbie seid gloomily es she rolled to end fro in the bed.

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"I'm looking forward to hearing the good news!"

Kasie paused and then begged, "Okay, okay. You win! Don't make fun of me anymore. How are you doing in New York? Everything okay?"

"Not too bad. I'm not welcome here. Most of the Hilton family members don't like me, especially Carlos' grandmother and father. I don't get why. This is my first visit, and I'm not sure how I offended them," Debbie said gloomily as she rolled to and fro in the bed.

"Eh? Really? Doesn't Carlos' mother like you?" Kasie asked, confusion in her voice.

"Yeah, but it doesn't help. She just keeps quiet. And she seems to be scared of her husband. It's too complicated for me to understand."

"Is it? I'm sorry, dear. Oh, let me tell you one thing—Emmett bought me a handbag yesterday..."

Debbie wasn't sure she heard her right. Confused, she asked, "Emmett bought you a handbag? Why?" She couldn't understand how all these things came together. 'Jeez! I go nap for a bit, and the world turns upside down.'

Then, Kasie told her everything that happened yesterday. She summed it all up by saying, "you weren't there to see this. My parents treated Emmett like their son-in-law. They're really happy with him. I was close to fainting from embarrassment!"

'Emmett and Kasie? Is there anything romantic going between them?' Excited, Debbie sat up and suggested, "I think Emmett is way better than Lewis. Carlos said that he had an annual income of at least a million dollars. And he just can't seem to find a girlfriend. How about you give it a try and date him?"

CHAPTER 188 IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE AN ITEM

"No way. We're not a good match. Emmett is a weird guy when he's not working. What's more, I enjoy being single. I don't need a man. It's my parents. They want me to find a nice guy," Kasie said on the other end.

Debbie pursed her lips and defended Emmett, "So why did you accept the expensive handbag he bought?"

"For the selfies. Those are worth more than the price of a handbag. We took some cute pics to convince his parents we're dating."

Debbie sighed helplessly. "Fine, as long as you guys are okay with it."

"Yeah. Oh! Can you guess who we bumped into at Shining International Plaza?"

"Who?"

"Hayden. By the way, why haven't you told him who your real husband is? He thought you were married to Emmett."

Debbie knew Hayden had mistaken Emmett for her husband. Yet she wasn't interested in explaining anything to him, and he likely wouldn't even believe it. "I don't need to explain anything to him. Anyway, it's not like we're an item," Debbie replied firmly.

"Sounds about right. I'm looking forward to the day Portia finds out you're Mrs. Hilton. I can see the look on her face. Aha...ha..." Kasie leaned against the sofa, bursting into wild laughter.

Right then, the door of the empty VIP room was pushed open. A group of businessmen walked in as a man said politely, "Emmett, this is the room we reserved..."

The group of neatly dressed businessmen were shocked to see a woman lying casually on the sofa. When she spotted them, Kasie hastily stood up from the sofa and tidied her clothes.

Emmett asked curiously, "Kasie? Why are you here?"

Kasie swung her phone in front of him. "Too noisy out there, so I wanted a quiet spot to talk on the phone. I'm leaving now," she explained briefly.

Emmett nodded and moved aside to let her out. But the next second, he remembered something and stopped in her tracks. After pulling her out of the room, he said, "Hey, my dad invited you to have a meal at my house."

Kasie widened her eyes in shock. "What did you say? A meal with your parents?"

He nodded casually, confirming her words. "Yeah. I have no choice. Relax, this is a paid gig. When you have some free time, I can buy you a handbag, cosmetics, whatever you want."

'What?' Kasie felt weird. All sorts of thoughts were going through her head right now, none of them good. He was paying her to go out with him? Wouldn't that be like a prostitute? If the comparison was valid, then did that make her a whore? And what did that do to her image? What if someone found out? And was that all she was to him? A paid escort? He seemed friendly enough, but his offer of "a paid gig" just set her on edge.

As Debbie was still on the phone, she could hear Emmett's voice coming from the other end, so she spoke loudly to get Kasie's attention. "Hello, Kasie? Kasie? Put Emmett on the phone. I need to talk to him."

When Emmett took the phone from Kasie's hand, he noticed that the caller ID was "Tomboy" and that they had already been on the phone for 18 minutes. Realizing this, he grinned broadly and said playfully, "Hi, Mrs. Hilton. Emmett here. Miss me yet?"

Kasie rolled her eyes at him. "Oh please. What would Carlos think if he heard you?"

Debbie had wanted to get on his case too. Now, hearing Kasie's remark, she couldn't help but burst into laughter. She fought the urge and stopped laughing. She needed to know. "So, what do you think of her?"

He thought carefully. This was her best friend Kasie, after all. "My parents are happy with her after seeing the photo," he answered in an official tone.

Debbie chuckled. "Very polite. But what about turning this lie into reality?"

Emmett paused, shifting his gaze to the girl casually leaning against the wall. "I'd like to give it a shot. But she loves Lewis..."

His sentence was interrupted abruptly by Kasie's angry shout. "Hey, who loves Lewis? You mean me? Bullshit! I was done with him a long time ago. Cut it out!"

Emmett thrust his arms forward, palms out. "Okay, okay. Mea culpa." Getting back on the phone, he said, "Debbie, I have a meeting. I'll call Kasie later to talk about her visit to my house, okay?"

"Wow! So soon?" Debbie exclaimed. She was taken aback. 'Seeing parents? Are they talking marriage?'

After returning the phone to Kasie, Emmett drew close to her and whispered in a mysterious voice, "The contract tonight is important to the company. If I can't seal the deal, half of my bonus goes bye-bye. I'll call you when I'm done."

His closeness made Kasie nervous. With a stiff smile on her face, she stuttered, "I-it's... none of my business."

He tried to get her on board by saying, "There will be a lot of new and fashionable products at the plaza after the New Year. I'll buy you two things and you come to my house to have a meal, okay? Just one meal. That's it!"

'I get two things and I get fed...' Kasie hesitated. This was tempting because her mother had tightened her purse strings recently. 'Fine, just one meal. I'm not marrying him. There's nothing to worry about.' With that thought in mind, she nodded, "Deal!"

Emmett smiled happily, showing his white teeth. Before entering the room, he patted her on her shoulder and promised, "If I get this contract, I'll buy you dinner."

Kasie wondered, 'Buy me dinner? Since when did we get so close? Why would he buy me things, invite me to his home and treat me to a meal?'

Lost in deep thought for a moment, she finally came back to her senses, realizing that the call was still connected. "Tomboy, hear me?"

"Yeah. I heard everything. Look, Emmett's a nice guy. Think about it, okay?" Debbie persuaded.

Kasie paused. After a while, she said, "I... Let me think about it."

As Debbie was chatting fervently with Kasie over the phone, a knock at the door interrupted her. It was a housemaid, informing her that Carlos' grandmother wanted to see her. The old lady was waiting for her downstairs. It seemed that Debbie had been too naive. She thought that as long as she stayed in her

room, nobody would mess with her.

'What does she want?' she thought. Ending the call quickly, she asked the housemaid curiously, "Did she say why she wanted to see me?"

"Sorry Mrs. Hilton. But Mrs. Valerie didn't tell me," the housemaid replied.

Despite her reluctance, she had no choice but to follow the housemaid downstairs. It would be impolite for her to keep an elder waiting.

In the living room, Valerie and Megan sat on the sofa while a few housemaids were busy with housework.

Valerie was sulking silently. Seeing Debbie come downstairs, Megan asked, "Aunt Debbie, have you seen a string of Buddhist prayer beads made of lobular red sandalwood?" The main feature of lobular red sandalwood was the wood grain which looked like stars on each bead.

'A string of Buddhist prayer beads?' Debbie frowned. "No, I haven't seen it. I've been in my room the whole time. Why do you ask?"

Megan gave Debbie a meaningful glance before answering in a regretful voice, "Grandma's string of Buddhist prayer beads is gone. It was here yesterday, but we can't find it now. We've been looking for it for a while."

Debbie nodded and comforted Valerie, "Grandma, please take it easy. In my experience, the more you try to look for something, the less likely it is you'll find it. But if you stop worrying about it, it will show up one day, out of the blue!"

Valerie sneered and gave her a cold glance. "Did you mean to say I shouldn't look for it?"

Under Valerie's cold glare, Debbie felt utterly speechless. 'Fine! Everything I say is wrong. Better zip my mouth.'

A loud yawn broke the awkward silence in the living room. Debbie turned around and saw Lewis coming downstairs.

Lewis' eyes lit up with excitement at the sight of Debbie. He picked up his pace and ran up to her. "Debbie, you're home today?"

"Yeah." The contempt was obvious in her voice.

But Lewis didn't care a bit even if he had sensed it. Instead, he tried to butter her up. "I can show you the hottest spots in town. How about I take you out for a drive? Or do you want to go shopping? I can buy you anything you want."

'Doesn't he know I'm his cousin's wife? How can he be so blatantly obvious?' "No way!" Debbie refused bluntly.

"Now wait. Don't be so quick to turn me down. You know I'm a hottie, right?" Lewis said as he ran his fingers through his hair. A confident smile appeared on his bratty face.

CHAPTER 189 THE IDIO

Debbie shifted her gaze toward Valerie and Megan, who were both pretending to ignore Lewis. Frowning, she wondered why they paid no attention to his lewd behavior.

Lewis put a hand in front of her eyes, blocking her view, and asked, "Debbie, why are you looking at them? Eyes on me, okay? I'm hot, right?"

Debbie rolled her eyes and turned around to go upstairs. "Want me to lie or tell the truth?" she asked, walking past him.

Catching up with her, Lewis said, "Lie to me, then."

"You're not hot," she replied purposefully.

Lewis tittered. 'That's a lie, so she means I'm a good looking guy!' But he didn't want her to beat around the bush to praise him. He wanted to hear it from her lips directly. "And the truth?" he asked expectantly.

Debbie turned around and looked into his eyes. "The truth is—you're so ugly that when you walk into a bank, they turn off the cameras."

Lewis was stumped by her words.

Seeing the frustrated look on Lewis' face, a few housemaids in the living room giggled under their breaths. Even Megan couldn't help but cover her mouth to stifle her laughter.

As Debbie continued to walk toward the staircase, she was shocked to spot a woman standing on the landing of the staircase.

It was Miranda, who was dressed neatly. It seemed like she was going out.

Embarrassed, Debbie forced a smile and greeted, "Hello, Aunt Miranda."

Oblivious to Debbie's greeting, Miranda fixed her eyes on her son, who was ready to run away, and reproached in a cold voice, "Lewis, you idiot!"

Scolded by his mother in front of others, Lewis lowered his head in shame. He walked to the sofa, sat

down next to Valerie and asked, "Grandma, what did you need?"

Valerie kept silent while Megan answered instead, "Grandma lost her string of Buddhist prayer beads. No one can find it. Have you seen it?"

"Nope. I couldn't care less about things like that. Why would I take it?" Lewis replied nonchalantly as he stroked his messy hair. Seeing Miranda finally leave the living room, he quickly stood up and rushed upstairs.

Debbie had just closed her bedroom door when she heard a knock. She opened it, but in a split second, flung the door to close it.

However, Lewis reacted so fast that he had already squeezed part of his body in before she could close the door. Wearing a lewd smile on his face, he said, "Hey, wait. Debbie—ugh! Don't close the door. Let me in!"

No one knew how much Debbie wanted to kick this guy out of her room. Gritting her teeth, she swallowed her anger and flung the door open straightaway. "What do you want now?" she yelled.

"My cousin left you here alone. You must be lonely, so I just want to keep you company. I'm so considerate, aren't I? Don't bother to thank me," he said, winking at her.

Debbie had never known anyone more shameless than him. He actually thought he was a great guy. When really, he was a creep. "Thanks. Please go. I need to be alone."

With an even more obscene smile, he teased, "Please don't kick me out. I heard you're a very naughty girl. C'mon sis-in-law, let's have some fun!"

Anger was written all over her face. She wanted to say, "tell that to your brother's wife." But on second thought, she remembered that his brother's wife was actually a nice person, so she swallowed those words. Instead, she threatened, "Get out! Go downstairs! Or I'll send you there the hard way!"

'His parents seem to be well-educated, but how did they raise such an asshole?' she thought to herself.

Knowing that Debbie was skilled in martial arts, Lewis finally restrained himself and retreated from the room. Standing at the doorway, he still tried to get in her pants. "Come on! You have to admit my cousin is a cold guy. What's so good about being his wife? Cut him loose and marry me. I promise I'll stay with you every minute. Never leave you alone!"

To avoid misunderstanding, Debbie had no choice but to walk out to the corridor, since Lewis hadn't stopped his pestering. In a cold voice, she ridiculed, "You want to marry me? Look at your thin, weak body. And that fat chin. Find a gym."

"Why?" Lewis asked.

"Why? Because you need exercise. If you're gonna be like that, at least be manly enough to take the punches you're asking for!" As she spoke, she dropped into a fighting stance, and cracked her neck, getting ready to teach this bastard a lesson.

Sensing danger emanating from Debbie, Lewis stepped backwards and leaned against the wall. "Debbie, this is the Hilton family's house. I wouldn't try anything if I were you. Remember, you're not exactly popular here," he said in a trembling voice.

Debbie snorted, "Even if I stayed quiet, they still wouldn't change their minds. This is going to be fun!" Then, without saying anything more, she darted toward him.

In a panic, Lewis quickly ran toward his own bedroom, following a wave of screams. Eventually, he managed to shut the door behind him, putting his back into it. He quickly locked it before she could get at him. Leaning against the door, he gasped for air.

His heart was racing fast as if it could stop beating any time. 'She's such a hard woman. I can't understand how Carlos can keep her under control.

But...a woman like that has to be great in bed. Damn! I really want some of that action!' He couldn't help but swallow a little saliva as he fantasized about having sex with Debbie.

After frightening Lewis away, Debbie returned to her bedroom. These people were all so different from each other. It had to make life difficult.

For instance, Valerie was strict; James was ill-tempered; Tabitha was docile; Carlos was cold; Lewis was frivolous and Miranda was arrogant...

At dinnertime, the ambience of the dining room was as odd as usual. Everyone sitting at the dinner table was immersed in his or her own thoughts.

But for Debbie, it was lucky that James wasn't having dinner at home, thanks to work.

As usual, Megan took any chances to stir up trouble during meal time. "Uncle Carlos, I want to eat that dumpling, but I can't reach it," she said with a pitiful look on her face.

Debbie discreetly rolled her eyes. Megan always wanted to eat the food in front of Carlos! Obviously, the food wasn't the point. If Carlos gave in to her and helped her dish up food, then she could pretend she was his girlfriend.

Debbie wasn't the only one who got it, but everyone else could see through her too. However, no one dared to make a comment because each time, Valerie would look at Megan affectionately and nod approvingly.

Carlos was eating soup when Megan spoke to him. On hearing her, he put down his spoon, took up his chopsticks and reached for a dumpling.

As he was about to pick up the dumpling, Debbie suddenly stretched out her chopsticks, picked it up and put it in her mouth.

Carlos didn't think anything of this and moved his chopsticks toward another dumpling.

However this time, Debbie thrust her chopsticks forward and snatched the dumpling from his own.

Then, the couple began the "pick-and-snatch" game. Debbie had stuffed nearly an entire plate of dumplings into her mouth. Fortunately for her, the chef had made each of the dumplings fairly small, so it wasn't a problem for her to fill her mouth with one after another.

On the other hand, Valerie and Megan had been watching the couple the whole time, their faces deadpan. Lewis tried so hard to stifle his laughter that his face went red.

Tabitha remained silent, but just asked a housemaid to fetch Debbie a bowl of soup.

In the end, Carlos stopped trying to pick up any dumplings. He was afraid Debbie would choke to death.

He placed the whole dish of dumplings in front of Debbie and looked at Megan. "Megan, your aunt Debbie likes eating dumplings. Maybe try another dish," he requested.

Debbie stared lovingly at Carlos, her eyes glittering. She felt her heart melt. Her husband looked extremely handsome in her eyes whenever he tried to protect her.

Megan inhaled deeply, trying to keep the smile on her face. "Never mind. Since Aunt Debbie likes dumplings, just let her enjoy them. Uncle Carlos, please have a bite of this meat," Megan said as she picked up a slice of roasted meat and put it on a clean plate. Then, she asked the housemaid to carry it to Carlos.

Debbie felt gloomy. 'Can't you just eat quietly? Why all the drama? Maybe Carlos should enroll you in a drama academy since you're so talented at acting. You'll surely be an A-list actress, Megan!' she thought angrily.

CHAPTER 190 HIS WIFE IS PREGNAN

As soon as the housemaid put the plate in front of Carlos, Debbie thrust her chopsticks in to pick up the slice of roasted meat. Shaking the meat in front of the angry Megan, she said in a naughty tone, "Oh, I'm sorry. You know, your uncle Carlos is a germophobe. You touched the meat with your chopsticks, so he won't eat it. I'd better eat it instead."

Before stuffing the meat into her mouth, she looked at the meat while adding, "But...do you have... Are

you healthy?" She managed to swallow the words "infectious disease" before she said them out loud. That would have been blatant, and Debbie was too clever for that. She wanted her attack to be well-planned, well-timed, and well-executed, and being too brazen would have knocked all that off kilter. She tried not to smile while chewing her food. That would have given her away.

Exasperated, Megan began to breathe faster. Short of breath, she stuttered, "Aunt Debbie, what are you... talking about... I... I..."

It seemed to Debbie that Megan's asthma attack always came at the best times. Debbie's plan had hit a snag, instead of staking her claim to what was rightfully hers—Carlos himself. But yet again, it looked as though Debbie was bullying a patient.

"Enough! Why are you being so noisy at the dinner table?" Seeing Megan struggling for breath, Valerie immediately gestured to a housemaid, instructing her to take care of Megan. In the meantime, she cast a stern glance at Debbie. Of course, Debbie wasn't about to take that lying down.

'I'm being noisy? But who started it?' Unconvinced, Debbie pursed her lips and focused on eating her food.

Carlos put down his chopsticks and called in the steward. When the steward came into the dining room, he ordered, "Tomorrow, swap this table out for a rotating table."

"Yes, Carlos," the steward answered and left.

Carlos put a piece of cabbage in Debbie's bowl and looked at Valerie. "Grandma, Debbie's part of this family too. If you play favorites, you'll hurt Debbie's heart. As time goes by, she may develop psychological problems. If that happens, you might find it harder to be a great-grandmother."

'A great-grandmother?'

Valerie looked toward Debbie with hatred, while the latter blinked her innocent eyes at her. Debbie didn't expect Carlos to mention having a child all of a sudden.

"Just eat your food," Carlos ordered her in a hushed voice. He moved more food to her plate before eating his own.

On the other side of the table, Valerie heaved a sigh of relief when Megan's breathing had improved. It seemed like her asthma attack was going away. Debbie saw it too, and glared at her briefly. She believed that Megan used it to get attention, and might even be faking to the whole ordeal. Quite the accusation!

After dinner, Valerie excused herself, and asked both Carlos and Megan to come into her room. She wanted to talk with them privately.

Obviously knowing that Debbie was watching, Megan cheerfully closed the door.

Left outside, Debbie made a face at the closed door. 'Huh! I don't give a damn what you will talk about,' she thought, gritting her teeth.

When she turned around, she saw an emotionless Miranda standing right behind her. In an instant, the grimace on her face was replaced by a polite smile. "Aunt Miranda," she greeted, sounding courteous.

The reason why Debbie showed so much respect to the arrogant Miranda was not because Debbie was scared of her. It was just that Miranda was an elder. And besides, she hadn't done anything overt to Debbie, nor did she seem to side with the other family members whenever they got mad at her.

Miranda gave her a cold glance and said slowly, "I'd like you to come with me to visit Carlos' grandpa in the hospital. Today or tomorrow."

'What?' Shocked, Debbie raised her head and looked at Miranda with disbelief in her eyes.

Her reaction made Miranda unhappy. She queried in a cold voice, "Is that a no?"

Shaking her head vigorously, Debbie promised, "No. I didn't expect to be asked. It would be an honor to go with you." It was just that she hadn't ever imagined that Miranda would invite her to tag along when she visited Carlos' grandfather.

Without responding to Debbie, Miranda turned around and returned to her own bedroom, leaving Debbie alone with her thoughts. Why did she do that? Was this a way to reach out, maybe an olive branch? She didn't have long to think about it, though.

A bit later, Carlos went back to their bedroom too after listening to Valerie's lecture. Debbie had given up thinking about the invitation, and had been chatting happily on WeChat with her friends. Jared suddenly complained, "Damon's getting married. His wife-to-be is pregnant. My dad is busy preparing the betrothal gifts. Maybe I should get hitched. Otherwise, my dad might break the bank buying gifts for Damon and his wife. If he did that, I would have to start eating air for breakfast."

Debbie wrote, "Ha! Think your brother cares about your dad's money?"

Jared replied with a zipper-mouth face emoji. But she was right, Damon was rich enough himself, so he wouldn't care about his dad's fortune a bit. Then he asked Debbie, "Do you remember Oscar? The man you had a fight with at the Orchid Private Club."

Debbie sent a nodding-head emoji.

"I've told you something about him last time, but you were too drunk to listen. I'm not sure you heard anything I said. So... I heard Damon say he sent Oscar to the police station at your husband's request. And in the end, the court gave Oscar a life sentence."

Debbie was taken aback. "Seriously? Life-imprisonment? But it wasn't that serious..."

Jared wrote, "Yeah, no shit. But he deserved it. The guy was a punk. He committed crimes like kids eat candy. Any one of these would have dumped him in jail for the rest of his life. He's lucky he didn't get the death penalty."

Debbie didn't text back.

She lay prone on the bed, deep in thought. When Carlos walked into the room, this was what he saw—a meditating Debbie. He climbed onto the bed, pressed on her back and asked, "What are you doing?" He kissed her long hair.

Putting her phone aside, she struggled to roll over and looked into his eyes. They were in a rather sexy position now.

But she was so deep in thought and had so many doubts that she didn't even have time to care about it. "Is it true? Did Oscar get life in prison?" she asked outright.

'Oscar?' Carlos slightly frowned, racking his brain to recall who this guy was. But he failed. "Who's Oscar?" he asked in confusion.

"Last time at the Orchid Private Club, I got in a fight with a guy and a woman. The guy was Oscar."

After her reminder, two blurry faces popped into his brain. Yet, he didn't give it much thought and shook it off quickly. He wouldn't bother dealing with a guy like that personally. "I told Damon about it. I don't know the rest. If you want, I can ask Damon now."

Debbie shook her head. After a moment of meditation, she pinched the handsy man's ear and asked, "He got the sentence because of his past, not because of me, right?"

It seemed like this woman wouldn't let it go. After giving her a quick kiss, Carlos pulled out his phone and called Damon.

The call went through in no time. Damon's voice was clearly heard in the quiet bedroom. "Carlos? You finally remember that I exist. You've been a hermit since you fell for Debbie."

Oblivious to his complaint, Carlos got straight to the point. "How did you deal with the guy I handed to you last time?"

"Which one?"

"The man who offended my wife at the Orchid Private Club!"

"Well, that guy. O...Oscar, right? He's just a scumbag. I just called a friend of mine, a cop, and got him

arrested. They found outstanding warrants and the rest was history."

Carlos hung up the phone as soon as he made sure that Debbie had an answer. Putting his phone aside, he asked, "Happy now?"

"Hmm," Debbie nodded. So Jared was right. It was reasonable to lock Oscar in jail for his entire life, regarding the tons of crimes he had committed.

Carlos pulled her into his arms and whispered, "If they mess with you, I won't let them off the hook."

Debbie planted a kiss on his forehead. "Hmm. Honey, thank you!" she beamed at him.

"Thank you? Why so formal?"

"Me?"

"Yes!" He raised his eyebrows.

Debbie smiled and wrapped her arms around his neck, asking, "By the way, what did Grandma talk to you about? Did she try to talk you into divorcing me again?"

"Hmm." He didn't hide it. "I'm not giving you up, no matter what."

Wearing a sweet smile on her face, Debbie pretended to be angry and grabbed him by his collar. She rested one leg on top of him and threatened in a condescending manner, "Promise me...or else."

Carlos put his hands under his head on the pillow and looked at her, a tender smile adorning his handsome face. Finally, a single word left his lips. "Promise." For the first time in his life, he had willingly allowed himself to be weak. Most willingly.

"I'm happy!" Debbie blew him a kiss, and then tried to push him into the study.

But he shook his head. "I'm not working tonight. Let's go out for fun instead."