

TMBA 81

CHAPTER 81 STEP BAREFOOT ON A PORCUPINE

"I agree to your first two conditions. As for the third, keep it to yourself. Now it's my turn. This is my first condition," said Carlos as he kicked open the door of the lounge, entered the room with Debbie in his arms and locked the door behind them. He passed all the other furniture in the room adroitly. They zipped past tables, chairs, and a standing liquor cabinet before Carlos stopped at the bed. The richly-appointed bed was inspired by eighteenth-century designs, and featured round ball top bed posts. It was colored a beautiful black walnut, and ornate duvets covered the sheets.

"What condition is that?" Debbie asked. Looking at the king-sized bed adorned with grey sheets, Debbie had a bad feeling all of a sudden. She was not sure what was going on, but the bed put an image in her head, and she was going to try and forestall that as long as she could.

"I'll have to show you for how many minutes you should forbid me from being alone with Megan."

As he said this, he threw Debbie onto the bed.

In an instant, he was on top of her. Her heart rate skyrocketed. Before she could respond, the man moved her arms up, and held her hands above her head with his own hand.

She struggled, but was unable to move. "Wait, wait! I'm trying to discuss something with you. I'm not here for this!" she yelled, panicked.

"We can discuss it while we do this." He pulled the zipper of her jacket down, peeled it off and threw it onto the floor. It lay there, silent witness to the actions Carlos was taking.

'What's going on?' she mused, growing more panicky. And that was the thing. She was hoping he'd say something to ease her anxiety. Instead, his actions just scared her even more.

Suddenly, he stopped, leaned forward and looked into her eyes. He said in a serious voice, "Deb, I've already given you plenty of time. We've been married for three years, and I never laid a finger on you. I don't care about the past, but from now on, I want you to be my woman, physically and mentally. Understand?"

She didn't think Carlos had it in him. He never said so many words at a time. This was the most he'd said to her in a while. Debbie, however, was focused on the sentence—"I want you to be my woman, physically and mentally."

'He's going to have sex with me?! What should I do? Should I turn him down?'

With a red face, she stammered, "I-I understand."

To be honest, she had already mentally prepared for this when they were in Jork. After all, Carlos was

her husband, and it was normal for couples to have sex. They would have done it there if it weren't for their argument—they couldn't agree on what position to use. But now, she wasn't so sure. She wanted to talk to him, not do the horizontal mambo.

And so far, Carlos had been nice to her. The only thing he did that really ticked her off was maintain a relationship with Megan. And even that could be forgiven, as long as none of them crossed the line. Problem was, she wasn't sure that they hadn't crossed that fabled line. He'd generally treated her well—he made sure she was well-taken care of financially, and sent Phillip and Julie to ensure she was okay. 'All right. Fine. I can do this. He's my husband,' Debbie consoled herself internally.

But what Carlos said next sent chills down her spine.

"Don't be so nervous. This isn't your first time. I don't care whether you were top or bottom. But me, I have to be—" SMACK!

Carlos failed to finish his sentence. The sound of a slap echoed through the lounge. After that, time seemed to stop. There were no other sounds in the room. None at all. And she lay there, watching his expression turn, and the moments seemed like millennia. She waited, nanosecond by agonizing nanosecond, as the full impact of what she'd done sank in.

Carlos' face soured as he watched the girl turn from shy to angry. He hadn't bargained for this. Not at all. She was his wife, damn it! She was his woman, and she had no right to turn him down. Not now. Not like this. Not after all he'd done for her. And now, she dared to lay her hand on him. 'She slapped me! Again?!' He couldn't hold back his anger anymore. It rose in him, threatening to explode. He balled a fist, ready to repay her actions with interest.

When Debbie heard him say "This isn't your first time," she finally got it. And that was not all. She now knew why he said "I don't care about the past." He didn't think she was a virgin.

That was when she remembered... Before he knew she was his wife, he had always believed she was a slut who dated countless boys.

'Hahaha! God, was I stupid?!' She laughed, but tears streamed down her cheeks. These were not tears of joy.

A rush of adrenaline overtook her as she pushed the man away from her, jumped out of bed and shouted, "You asshole!" That word hung in the air between them longer than either of them would like to admit. Each person believed they had been wronged, and that might change things between them.

After that, she grabbed her jacket and stormed out of his office, crying.

She opened the office door and was about to leave when suddenly she saw Tristan standing there. He had his hand raised, poised to knock. Seeing Debbie in tears, he was stunned and blurted out, "Debbie."

Debbie was in no mood to talk to anyone. She bit her lips and ran towards the lift without saying a word. She couldn't. She just couldn't right now.

Staring at her retreating figure, Tristan wondered, 'Why the tears? Did she have a fight with Carlos?'

He turned his head, his gaze shifting to the office, only to see his boss come out of the lounge with a stony face.

Carlos cast a cold glance at Tristan before he sat on the couch and lit a cigarette.

Now that Carlos had already seen him, Tristan couldn't just shut the door and leave. He swallowed hard and entered the office. He presented a file folder to Carlos and said, "Boss, I got this from our branch office, and there's an urgent—"

Before he could finish his sentence, Carlos interrupted him impatiently. "I asked you to investigate my wife. Do you know anything about her previous relationships? Who was she with? And for how long?"

"No," Tristan answered briefly, his head lowered. He knew he'd failed Carlos, and was ready to accept punishment if necessary. Carlos hadn't asked him to investigate Debbie's relationships with other boys; he didn't dare to do it without authorization. And this was what he was waiting for.

"Leave the file here and do what I told you to do," he demanded coldly.

"Yes, Carlos."

"Pay special attention to her relationship with Hayden Gomez."

"Yes, Carlos." Tristan raised his head and was on the point of leaving when he saw Carlos' face. A red mark? After a closer look, Tristan confirmed that Carlos did have a red mark on his cheek. About hand-sized. His mouth widened in shock.

'Did Debbie slap him?'

"Out!" Carlos thundered.

Frightened, Tristan ran out of Carlos' office and went back to his seat. He took a moment to slow his breathing, and patted his chest to calm himself down.

'Oh my gosh! This is the first time Carlos has been this angry. Last time he blew his top when we lost an order worth one hundred million, but he was not this angry. But now... Women will humble the mightiest of heroes,' he mused.

Now he finally understood why Carlos had exiled Emmett to the construction site. Emmett probably sided with Debbie. Even so, Tristan considered it a smart move for Emmett to build a close relationship

with Debbie, in light of how much she could influence Carlos, so he decided to do the same.

Leaving the Hilton Group, Debbie hailed a taxi and proceeded to the university. But she changed her mind halfway and told the driver, "On second thought, take me to Shining International Plaza."

Then she took out her phone, opened the WeChat app and mentioned Kasie and Kristina in their group chat. "I'll be waiting at our old haunt. You guys coming?"

"Playing hookey again, Tomboy?" Dixon asked curiously.

"Yeah.

I'm not in the mood. I need to blow off steam."

While waiting for Kasie's and Kristina's replies, Debbie posted an update in Moments. "I want..." She couldn't finish it. She was too mad. So she just left it that way. She couldn't wait to get together with her friends.

Instantly, someone going by the handle "C" commented, "What do you want?"

Initially, Debbie didn't plan to reply, for she didn't know who this person was. But she was really frustrated right now and wanted to vent her anger. So she replied, "I want Carlos to step barefoot on a porcupine."

She didn't think it was a big deal to mention Carlos in Moments. Only her close friends knew she was married to him. As for the rest of her WeChat friends, they all thought that she was cracking a joke.

C replied, "What did he do to you?"

Debbie paused. She wasn't stupid enough to tell a stranger the whole story between her and Carlos. She just said, "He didn't do anything to me. He thought his girlfriend had slept with her ex. I just can't believe he said that."

Debbie updated her Moments a couple of times, but C stopped posting.

'Maybe he's busy right now,' she thought. She really wanted to find out who this person with no profile photo was. Having no profile pic was rare, but not impossible. All he needed to do was upload a blank PNG file and it wouldn't show up on WeChat.

She clicked his dialog box and sent a message, "May I ask who you are?"

C replied very quickly, "You don't need to know who I am."

The reply rendered Debbie speechless.

Shaking it off, she decided to ignore him. 'Probably just some rando on the Internet, ' she thought. However, within two minutes, C changed the profile photo.

The new one seemed somewhat familiar, but it was a bit small to see on the phone. Debbie tapped on it to see in full-screen mode. That person used her photo as the profile pic!

She and Kasie had vacationed in Paris together and Kasie took a picture of her standing beneath the Eiffel Tower. She posted that picture in Moments.

Debbie tapped the photo to make it normal-sized again, and sent a message to C. "Why did you use my pic as your profile photo? Who the heck are you? You know me?"

C's response floored her. "You know how people put beautiful singers and actresses in their profile pics? You look hot in that pic, so I used it. I like you, and I'm going to make you mine."

CHAPTER 82 GIVE HIM A SLAP IN THE FACE

Debbie rolled her eyes at her phone screen where the nickname "C" flashed on it. She typed a message. "I'm a married woman. If you crack such jokes again, I'll definitely blacklist you!"

The guy, C, replied to her, "I want to be friends with you."

She felt bored after chatting with him, so she locked her phone and put it back into her pocket.

Debbie bent over the table and sipped her milk tea through a straw. A moment later, Kasie and Kristina walked into their old haunt, No. 99 Milk Tea. Debbie waved her hand to them lazily and called out, "Hey, I'm here."

Kasie sat down next to her and asked curiously, "I thought you weren't going to play truant again. Why did you bunk off school today?"

A few days ago, Debbie had told them that she wouldn't dare skip school again because Carlos would punish her if she did. They weren't expecting Debbie to go back on her word so soon.

Kristina was more considerate than Kasie. The moment she saw Debbie, she realized that something was wrong. "Debbie, were you crying?" she asked in a voice full of concern.

It was not until then that Kasie noticed that Debbie's eyes were red and swollen.

Debbie ordered two cups of milk tea for her friends before she cursed through gritted teeth, "Carlos is such a jerk!"

Kasie immediately covered Debbie's mouth with her hand. "Shh! Look, I know that Carlos is your husband, but keep those kinds of words to yourself. Do not curse him in public. If his fans hear you,

you're definitely screwed!"

Debbie did not care for her warning. She shoved Kasie's hand away and snapped back, "I'm cursing my own husband. What does it have to do with them?"

Kristina approached her and whispered in her ear, "They don't know that Carlos is your husband. A girl cursed him at an airport because she had failed to attract his attention. And that caught the attention of his fans. The girl ended up being beaten up and taken to the hospital."

Debbie's jaw dropped at Kristina's surprising words. She gulped hard and exclaimed in a low voice, "That's crazy! If they found out that I'm married to him, would they go insane and cut me into pieces?"

Kasie nodded and feigned a serious tone. "They would. So you better watch your language. " And she couldn't hold it anymore and burst into a fit of laughter.

Kristina tapped Kasie's arm, gesturing for her to not tease Debbie again. "Tomboy, tell us why you are in such a bad mood. Who was terrible enough to make you cry? We'll teach them not to mess with our friend."

They had known Debbie for years, and they had only seen her cry once after her father had passed away. This was the second time they had seen her cry.

"Oh forget it! You possibly couldn't teach Carlos anything. I've cried so many times because of him now. That bastard!" Although she hated to admit it, Debbie had been in tears several times since Carlos had moved back into the villa.

Kristina and Kasie shared a knowing look.

Kasie asked sighing, "Did you piss him off again?"

"Hey! He's the one who's making me cry again and again. Why won't you blame him for his behavior? He's such a jerk! A good man would never make his girl cry." Debbie was puzzled by their lack of support. Kristina and Kasie despised men who made girls cry. But why weren't they taking her side this time?

The two girls shook their heads and said in unison, "I don't dare."

Even if his crazy fans were not around, they wouldn't dare curse Carlos in Alorith. After all, this was his domain.

Debbie stared at her friends, mouth agape. 'I asked you to come here to console me. But instead, you have managed to make me more upset!' She waved her hand and dismissed them. "You guys should leave. I don't want to see you right now." She'd rather stay alone than be with people who didn't understand her.

The waitress came with their milk tea at that moment. Kasie put her cup aside and held Debbie's hand in hers. "We were just joking with you. Don't be mad. Tell us, what happened between you and him?"

After a pause, Debbie said in an angry tone, "Do you still remember how Carlos and I had a fight in Jork regarding who would be on top? I thought about it, and decided to give in to him. So I went to his office today... And just when..." She was too embarrassed to continue.

She blushed scarlet. Although she was used to discussing these things with her friends, it felt totally different when it came to her own life. She didn't know how to continue.

Seeing their excited eyes, she covered her face with her hands and stammered, "W-When we were about to begin... he...uh...thought I was not...a virgin." She peeked at them through the gap between her fingers. They were looking at her eagerly. She continued, "He said that since it was not my first time, I shouldn't be too nervous. And he also went on to say that he didn't care whether I or my ex was on top before. I was so pissed off!"

She dropped her hands and banged the table in frustration. "He's such an ass! How could he think of me like that? He had even called me a slut once before he knew that I'm his wife."

Kristina and Kasie were startled by the rattling of the table and tried to console her, "Easy, Debbie! Relax."

There were not many guests in the shop, but the employees were attracted by the loud sound. They all turned to stare at them, frowning.

Realizing what she had done, Debbie gave them an apologetic smile and then lowered her head to take a sip of her drink.

Kasie chuckled. "So, you failed to get laid again? This is hilarious!"

Debbie nodded while pouting. How could she have sex with him after being insulted like that?

Kasie sighed with profound resignation and said, "If I were you, I would've gone on with it and proved to him that I was a virgin. It would have been a tight slap in his face and then you should have forced him to kneel before you and apologize."

"Kneel before me and apologize? He would never do that." Debbie shook her head, knowing Carlos very well.

'It's Carlos. The great Mr. President. He seldom apologizes, let alone kneel before me,' Debbie mused.

"Come on, Tomboy! Why are you being so naive? It should be a run in the park for you to make him do such a small thing as kneeling." Kasie flashed a sly smile and winked at Debbie.

Kristina got her meaning instantly and giggled. Seeing Debbie's confused expression, she approached her and whispered in her ear, "Well...if you have sex with him in a regular position, then he will be kneeling before you. So..."

Her voice was very low, but Debbie heard her every word clearly and her face instantly turned bright red.

"Kristina! I thought you were an innocent girl. This is all because of Kasie! She is such a bad influence on you!"

Kasie felt wronged and retorted, "Hey Tomboy! This has nothing to do with me. I'm single, but Kristina has a boyfriend. She knows much more than I do. And although you know very little about all this right now, I'm sure that you'll be sophisticated enough once you become Carlos' woman. After all, your husband looks like he's experienced."

Annoyed, Debbie pinched her arm, and they began to fight in jest.

Kristina, however, did not agree with Kasie. "I don't think that Carlos is an experienced man in this matter. My guess is that he's still a virgin. Otherwise, why would he always piss Debbie off like this? He knows next to nothing about women, and he is emotionally unavailable. He has also failed to sleep with our Debbie even after such a long time."

After some consideration, Kasie nodded. "That makes perfect sense. Debbie, you are so lucky!"

Debbie was dumbfounded. "I'm lucky? How?"

Kasie and Kristina said nothing more, but winked at her with a cunning smile. Unable to bear them anymore, Debbie pouted and asked in fury, "Are you here to console me or to make fun of me?"

Kasie tried hard to hold back her laughter and said, "Easy, Deb. Just listen to me. Fuck him once and slap him in the face with the truth that you're a virgin."

CHAPTER 83 THE SLAP

Debbie was speechless. She had originally hoped that Kasie and Kristina would console her and give her some advice. But all they did was support Carlos and even ask her to sleep with him. "I must have been blind when I made friends with you two! You betrayed me and changed sides?" Debbie rolled her eyes.

Kristina grabbed Debbie's hand and put it on her chest. "Tomboy, trust me. I was always your best friend... But that was before I knew that Carlos is your husband. Now that I know the truth, I'm siding with him." Debbie retrieved her hand and hit her playfully. "Ouch! Hey, don't hit me. I'm just telling the truth."

The three of them made fun of each other and burst into laughter. Debbie felt more cheerful now after

talking to them.

Kristina told some dirty joke again and Debbie instantly blushed scarlet and hit her arm. Kristina caught Debbie's hand and said, "Come on, Tomboy! Don't act like a kid! You are his wife, and it's perfectly normal for a couple to get laid." Debbie covered Kristina's mouth with her hands to stop her from saying anything more, and Kristina started tickling her in return.

Debbie laughed out loud, unable to tolerate the tickling torture. She waved her arms to stop Kristina. Kasie immediately held Debbie's arms and said, "Stop, you two! Tomboy, to be honest, you should feel lucky to have a husband like Carlos. If he were not your husband, we wouldn't have gotten the VIP cards for the fifth floor of the Alioth Building. Why do you think he gave us the cards?" Kasie raised her brows at Debbie and continued after a pause, "It's as the saying goes, 'Love me, love my dog'. He wanted to treat your friends well because he cares about you! I wish you would look before you leap anymore. There must be some kind of misunderstanding between you and him. Why don't you two just sit down and talk?"

Kristina echoed, "Exactly. And that day, when we were having lunch on the fifth floor of the Alioth Building, he joined us. You two started showing off your affection for each other before us. We were so jealous of you! I still remember the way he looked at you. His eyes were full of affection. If it weren't for my dear Dixon, I would have already fallen for Carlos."

Debbie rolled her eyes at her friends and snapped back, "I can't believe that you both are smitten by him. And here I thought that I could count on you to bring him down. Oh, my heart is broken." 'Kasie and Kristina are so mean. Ever since they found out that Carlos is my husband, they seem to have forgotten what he had done to me in the past,' Debbie mused.

Since that time when Carlos had gone to Jork to rescue her, Debbie had been so touched and had forgotten the terrible things he had done to her in the past. But now, the memories came flooding back to her. 'He had his men throw me into the ocean. And he even threatened to bury me alive! The jerk!' she cursed inwardly.

"Deb, trust me. He is a good man, and you need to cherish him. I think you should be nicer to him. And tell me the truth—did you hit him this time? I really hope you didn't..." Before Kasie could finish her sentence, she was interrupted enthusiastically by Debbie.

She gave her a proud smile and said, "I did! I slapped him right across the face."

"What?!" both Kasie and Kristina blurted in unison, stunned by her confession. Kristina choked on the red beans in the milk tea and coughed violently. After she stopped coughing, she asked in disbelief, "Are you kidding me? Tomboy, did you really slap him?"

Debbie nodded nonchalantly and thought to herself, 'How dare he think so low of me! I let him off easy by only slapping him once!'

Kasie covered her face with both hands. She knew that Debbie was a short-tempered girl, but she never expected that she would slap her husband across the face. "Tomboy, why are you always so impulsive? Who do you think Carlos is? He's the richest man in Alorith! No, the richest man in the world! ! How could you lay your hands on him?!"

Debbie sat upright and told them with a straight face, "This is not the first time I've hit him. It happened once when Jared took me to a wine party. I almost turned him into a eunuch by kicking him in the crotch." She could still remember how hard she had kicked him that day.

Kasie and Kristina stared at Debbie, mouth agape.

Words had left them. Finally, Kasie found her voice. She patted Debbie on the shoulder and said, "Tomboy, he hasn't killed you after what you have done. He must love you very much. You must be nicer to him, okay?"

Kristina patted her other shoulder and echoed, "Kasie's right. Go back home and apologize to him. He will forgive you."

Debbie couldn't believe her ears. She shook her head at her two friends.

She didn't want to go home then. And she didn't want to go home that evening either.

Dixon called Kristina a while later and she bid goodbye to her friends and left soon after. Kasie and Debbie stayed there until 9 p.m. They hailed a taxi and went to the university.

When they got out of the taxi, many students were swarming into the university. The university gates closed at 10 p.m. At the entrance of the girls' dorm, many couples were hugging and kissing, unwilling to say their goodbyes for the night.

"I'm a big big girl, in a big big world; it's not a big big thing, if you leave me..." Debbie was about to enter the dorm when her phone started ringing loudly.

She took it out from her pocket and was surprised to see the name on the screen.

Kasie turned to her and asked with a frown, "Who is it? Why are you not answering?"

After some hesitation, Debbie dismissed the call instead of answering it. She held Kasie's arm and said, "Nobody. Let's go."

However, her phone kept ringing again and again, no matter how many times Debbie dismissed it. Kasie was unable to bear it any longer and pleaded, "Tomboy, just answer it, okay? I'll lose my hearing if you don't."

Before Debbie could answer it, the ringtone stopped. And a text message popped up on her phone.

Upon seeing the text, Debbie gnashed her teeth and grabbed her phone tighter.

The text said, "I'm waiting for you at the school gates. If you don't show up in five minutes, I'll come to your dorm and drag you out."

Debbie gave her stuff to Kasie and said, "I have something urgent to deal with."

Taking over Debbie's stuff, Kasie looked at her with a puzzled and worried expression. She grabbed Debbie's wrist and asked, "Tomboy, who is it? You look like you are gathering up for a fight. Do you want me to come with you?"

"It's Carlos. Are you sure you want to come with me?" Debbie teased her.

Instantly, Kasie shook her head. "Oh No! No, no! You better get going. Don't make him wait for you. Clear your misunderstandings and start being a proper couple. I'm leaving now!"

Kasie dashed into the dorm as if she was being chased by some dangerous beast.

Debbie sighed and turned around towards the school gates.

She ran at her highest speed; otherwise she wouldn't be able to make it there within five minutes. When she arrived, she saw a familiar Emperor car. Many students' attention was drawn to the luxurious car. Some girls were trying hard to figure out who was inside the car.

Debbie gasped for air as she pulled up her hoodie and covered her face. She didn't want the students to gossip about her later on. She walked to the other side of the car and got into the backseat.

Carlos was in the driver's seat. He had spotted Debbie the moment she had arrived at the gates. After she was safely in the car, he started the engine and drove away from the university gates.

He said nothing as he drove towards the Esastin Villa anymore and said, "Carlos, just tell me what you want right here. I'm not staying at the villa this evening. I'll take a taxi back to school."

Debbie was a straightforward girl—she didn't and wouldn't hide her true feelings in front of anyone. This was both her virtue and her flaw. She just wouldn't pretend to be polite and compliant. Carlos could tell from her long face and her words that she was still angry at him.

"You don't need to take a taxi anymore. I'll buy you a car," Carlos said in a calm voice.

'What the fuck?! I wasn't implying that I want a car, okay?' Debbie fumed with rage. "Thank you, Carlos. But I don't need a car. I just..." On second thought, Debbie knew that it was of no use arguing with him. She sighed and said, "Never mind. Just stop the car and let me go back."

"I already told you that you're not allowed to live in the dorm again," he said coldly.

"Yes, you did. But why do I have to follow your orders? Who do you think you are? You also want me to quit learning martial arts and take Yoga and dancing lessons. But why do I have to listen to you?" she yelled.

"Because you are Mrs. Hilton," he said calmly.

CHAPTER 84 I'M SORRY

"Mrs. Hilton? Haha! Women are lining up to be the next Mrs. Hilton. How about we get a divorce and I give someone else the privilege?" Debbie taunted.

The car screeched to a halt with a piercing sound, which startled the girl in the backseat.

She swallowed and stroked her chest to calm herself down. 'I'm such a fool! Why did I have to piss off the guy behind the wheel? "Car crash victim" isn't a good look for you, Debbie, ' she told herself.

Carlos parked the car along the roadside. A few seconds later, he unfastened his seat belt, grabbed several bags in the passenger seat and left the car.

Then he pulled open the back door and got in.

Instantly, Debbie scooted over to the next seat to stay away from him. She was frightened. What was he going to do?

Without saying a word, he set the bags in her lap. She looked down and saw the shades of lipstick he had bought for her earlier. Even the carton of lipsticks whose packaging had been opened by Megan was in one of the bags.

'Did he buy me a new set? Or did he take the old set back from Megan as I said?' she mused.

As if Carlos could read her mind, he explained, "I got those lipsticks back from Megan except the carton she already opened. To replace it, I simply went to the mall and bought the same one again."

A myriad of thoughts flooded Debbie's mind.

Words left her as she stared at the bags.

She didn't know whether she should just give in and forgive him, or persist in ignoring his gestures. After all, she was still mad at him because he said she wasn't a virgin. How could he?

Carlos suddenly moved like a pouncing cat, and ended up hovering above her. His face was so close to hers that she could feel his warm breath against her cheek. Looking her in the eye, he said sincerely, "I'm really sorry. I had no call to say that." What he said was disrespectful. No wonder she was mad at him.

He came back home with the lipsticks early this evening, but Julie was the only one there to welcome him. Julie told him Debbie moved into her dorm. Somehow, he was suddenly struck with a deep sense of loss. He never knew what he had until it was gone.

When he finally regained his composure again, he was already at the gates of her university. He called her more than ten times, but she rejected all of them. He had no other choice but to threaten her.

She had even pulled her hood up before getting into his car. 'Is it embarrassing to be with me? Why doesn't she want people to know that I'm her ride?' he wondered.

Thinking about this, he removed her hood and was much more satisfied when he saw her girlish bun. He reached out his hand to smooth some stray hair.

Debbie wasn't sure how she felt, but his sincere apology left her in a trance. 'He apologized to me? A proud man like him would apologize?'

She was too shocked to utter a single word. Carlos was amused by her reaction. It wasn't every day that he managed to shock her, but not for lack of trying.

He kissed her softly on the forehead and whispered in her ear, "I don't want to fight anymore. Let's go home."

'Fight? Does wanting a divorce count as fighting?' she thought inwardly.

When they reached the villa, Carlos got out of the car and opened the back door. He took the bags and helped Debbie out of the car.

He was so considerate and careful that Debbie felt like she was a pregnant woman.

Inside Debbie's bedroom, Carlos pulled the wrappings off a box of lipsticks and put the lipsticks on her dressing table. "Hey, old man, stop!" Debbie blurted out.

Women liked shopping, and also enjoyed undoing the wrappings. Sometimes it was a game, like how intact could I leave this if I just undid some corners? The struggle was real.

Carlos was confused when she said that. 'Why is she mad at me again?'

When he didn't stop, Debbie ran toward him and took the other lipsticks away from him. "Aren't these all mine? I want to take the wrappings off. So stop doing it!"

Carlos finally got the point and couldn't help but chuckle. He pulled her into his arms, kissed her on the forehead and said, "Alright. Have fun then. I'm going to take a bath.

"

After saying that, he let go of her and walked towards the door.

Watching Carlos leave, Debbie pouted and snapped, "Don't think I'll forgive you just because you apologized and got me a gift!"

His harsh words still stung.

Carlos turned around and his face softened. "I know," he said. He knew she was a stubborn girl and would not forgive him that easily. But he believed that she would eventually forgive him if he treated her better. Maybe someday soon her heart would yield to him and she would be back to the lovely girl he used to know, the one he fell for.

Silence blanketed the room after he left. There was nothing left to say, and no one around to say it to. Unable to resist the siren call of the lipsticks, Debbie sat in front of the dressing table and began to unpack the boxes. She took every shade out and organized the collection.

She divided them into two piles—those she liked and those she didn't.

She decided to send those she didn't like to her friends. 'Kasie prefers bright colors while Kristina loves soft ones. And auntie will love this pale mauve one! Perfect!' she thought to herself.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Carlos in a long nightshirt entering her bedroom. The plaid stripes couldn't hide the contours of his body. She put the containers of lipstick on the table and asked, "May I send these to my friends?"

Carlos' face soured at her question. "You don't like them?" he asked.

"Don't get me wrong. These particular ones just aren't me. It would be a waste of money keeping them," she explained.

His face took on a more normal expression. "That's up to you. They're yours now." He walked toward the dressing table and opened the delicate box where she used to keep her lipsticks. The ones she had kept had similar hues to those she had bought before.

Carlos could tell that she loved lipsticks with colors like red, maple-leaf red, blood red, wine red, ruby red... She also had two shades of pale mauve that she used when she didn't wear any other makeup. She was going to send those rose red, orange and purple ones to her besties.

After closing the box, Carlos suddenly remembered something. He went back to his bedroom and came back with a bag in his hand. "This is our company's latest bath and body line. Hope you like them... Never mind. Just wait for me."

After a couple minutes, Debbie entered her bathroom to find Carlos pouring some bath oil into the tub.

Her jaw dropped as she asked in utter disbelief, "Tell me, you did something wrong, right? And this is your way of saying sorry?" 'Why is he suddenly being so good to me?

He apologized to me earlier. And now Carlos, the busy CEO of a multinational corporation, is even drawing my bath!' she mused. She wondered if she were dreaming. This was absolutely unreal. It was not like she was a queen or even rich without his money; she was just Debbie. Where was this coming from?

"Yes," he answered briefly. He shouldn't have said those harsh words.

However, Debbie was now intrigued. She started to ask, "What did you do? Did you just happen to sleep with Megan when you went to her house to fetch the lipsticks?"

"Debbie!" Carlos interrupted her as his face soured. He looked hurt and outraged, and it could be heard in his voice. Well, what was done was done. She couldn't take it back now.

Debbie shut her mouth at once. As Carlos turned back to add the bath oil, she opened her mouth again. And again, she pressed him. "If you really slept with her, you don't need to feel guilty. After all, our marriage is in name only. If you two really love each other, I'll just bow out— Owwww! You...what are you doing? Let go of me!"

Debbie pulled her sweater tighter to her with both hands. Thanks to Carlos, her jacket now lay on the floor.

"If you keep nagging, I'll bathe you myself!" he threatened.

CHAPTER 85 AN INNOCENT MAN

"Alright, alright. I'll take a bath. Now get out of here, will ya?" Debbie said. As the saying goes, "Those who suit their actions to the times are wise." Debbie decided it wasn't a good idea to anger Carlos again.

He cast a cold glance at her before leaving the bathroom.

After locking the door, Debbie heaved a long sigh of relief. 'I thought he'd never leave,' she thought. 'He almost got me naked!' She pondered this as she stripped off her clothing and was about to settle into the tub. It was quite warm, almost hot, so she put in one foot at a time, letting herself get used to the temperature. But it was just right to wash away the aches and pains of the day. She finally got all in, and settled into the tub. That was when she realized something was wrong. 'I'm the one who's mad at him. Why should I listen to him?'

Getting out of the bathtub, she yawned. Then she took the body wash that Carlos gave her and foamed up. Her hands left trails of foam as she ran them over her body. 'Wow, it smells like milk. I love it!' Debbie could practically taste the shower gel.

Then she washed the foam away under the shower. Her skin was not as smooth as other young girls because she had not paid special attention to it before. But after she applied the body lotion, she could feel her skin was much smoother. She might have to make a habit of this. It felt great!

Looking at her naked body in the mirror, Debbie blushed and couldn't help touching her smooth leg.

'I need to pay more attention to my skin. Otherwise, I might age quickly.'

Shrugging on her night gown, she walked out of the bathroom with wet hair. She thought Carlos would be in the study working, but actually he was sitting on her bed, answering a phone call. What was he doing here? And why was he in here anyway?

The moment she appeared, he turned his head and fixed his eyes upon her.

Debbie sat at the dressing table, opened the tube of nighttime moisturizer and squeezed out some of the goo onto her hand. 'It wouldn't do to get all wrinkled, ' she thought as she worked the lotion onto her cheeks, around her nose, her forehead, everywhere on her face. She glanced at some of the other products and decided the anti-aging SPF 20 serum would be best in the morning. Then she reached into a drawer and found her blow dryer. Then, gadget in hand, she walked into the bathroom once more.

While she was drying her hair in the bathroom, Carlos was on the phone with his assistant. "Tristan, I need three VIP cards for the spa on the fourth floor of Alkaid Building. Yeah, yeah. It's for my wife."

'Three? Oh, one for Debbie, and two for her friends.' Tristan got Carlos' point immediately and answered, "Yes, Carlos."

"And build a lipstick research and development center in East District Manor, and prepare all the necessary materials. She's going to love designing her own lipstick.

Register a brand name 'Decar'. We might need it in the future.

Let's see, there was something else. Oh, I remember—she loves singing. So establish a music studio for her. Put a piano, a guitar, a digital audio workstation and other top notch equipment in it."

"Yes, Carlos." Tristan was secretly shocked, though. 'Since when did Carlos become a slave to his wife?'

Carlos, however, was still pondering how he could be nicer to Debbie. 'She likes martial arts, but I don't think she needs it anymore. After all, I'll protect her in the future. She doesn't need to lift a finger to do that.'

"Ah, one more thing. I need you to hand off your duties to someone else, including the tasks I just gave you. I need you to go and find me something. It is a rough diamond of pale blue. I saw it at auction once." The gem was pale blue and as clear as water. Carlos hadn't paid much attention to it back then.

If memory served him, pale blue was Debbie's favorite color.

"Yes, Carlos!" Tristan answered.

"Get it no matter how much it costs!"

"Yes, Carlos."

Having dried her hair, Debbie walked out of the bathroom and saw Carlos set his phone down on the nightstand. Standing beside the bed, she asked, "Not going back to your bedroom?"

Without answering her question, he reached out and pulled her into his arms.

The girl smelled like milk, turning him on.

He lowered his head and was about to kiss her on the lips, but she turned her head and the kiss landed on her cheek instead. He looked at her and said, "I told you before, we're a couple. I want you. Get on the bed."

"No! Listen, I agreed to sleep in the villa instead of the dorm like you wanted. Keep it in your pants."

"It's perfectly normal for a couple to sleep together."

Before she could refuse him, he picked her up and laid her on the bed. Debbie was about to struggle, but he turned off the lights and held her tight. "Sleep, now!"

"I'll only go to sleep after you leave my room. Otherwise, I can't."

"You don't want to sleep? No problem! Let's do something more fun." The next second, she felt all of his weight on top of her, pressing her back into the bed. In the dark, he kissed her full on the lips.

She thought he would continue, but he let go of her, turned around and lay beside her, panting. "Sleep," he said in a husky voice.

Early the next morning, when Debbie went down the stairs and sat at the dining room table, Carlos already finished his breakfast. He looked at Debbie and said, "We didn't get to the third condition yesterday. Mind telling me what it was?"

'What? The third condition? I totally forgot. What was it again...!' It took a while before she finally remembered what her third condition was. It was hard to concentrate, with everything going on. "Um, I haven't seen Emmett recently. Do you know where he is?" Debbie went sober when she thought of Emmett, who must be crying and alone at the construction site now.

Carlos immediately realized what she was going to say. There was a reason for Emmett's exile, and his

wife wasn't going to undo that. It wasn't any of her business anyway.

With a sullen face, he stood up from his chair and said in a cold voice, "He's busy."

Putting her chopsticks on the table, Debbie ran toward Philip and grabbed Carlos' suit coat. She then ran toward Carlos and said with a flattering smile, "Let me help you put this on. Though we're a couple in name only..."

Before she could finish her sentence, she was interrupted by an angry Carlos. "We are not a couple in name only!"

"Oops, sorry. Won't say that again." She helped him put his arm in a sleeve, and when she was about to help him with the other sleeve, she remembered she was still mad at him. She immediately let go of the coat. Luckily, Carlos grabbed the coat himself. Otherwise, it would have fallen onto the floor.

He cast a cold glance at her and shrugged on his coat without saying a word.

The smile on her face disappeared as she stated in a cold voice, "I haven't forgiven you yet. If you want me to forgive you, then don't get Emmett involved in our fight. After all, it was I who threatened him to keep my identity a secret. He had no choice."

"It has nothing to do with me," he answered indifferently.

Debbie didn't expect him to say that. Or act like that.

'What a petty man! Fine. Maybe my feminine wiles...' "Can you please let him come back?" she asked in a soft voice.

"Can you please stop being mad at me?" he asked in reply.

Reluctantly, she answered, "Okay. I'm not mad at you anymore."

"Then I'll let him come back when I'm not angry at him anymore," he offered.

Debbie jumped to her feet and snapped, "Then I won't forgive you!"

"Poor Emmett. He'll have to haul around bricks on that construction site for a long time," he sighed. He turned around and walked towards the gates.

Debbie's jaw dropped. She wanted to find a way to bargain with the man. But after he had changed his shoes, she hadn't figured it out yet. She could only run toward him and hold his arm tightly. "I'm not mad at you now. Can you just forgive Emmett this time? C'mon old man..."

Trying hard to suppress his laughter, Philip opened the gates for Carlos and wondered, 'Debbie is so

cute. She knows how to deal with Carlos. He's a sucker for sweetness, but never command him to do anything.'

"What did you just call me?" Carlos asked in a cold voice. He never liked that epithet much, and saw no reason to do anything for her when she was like that. He liked to have everything under his control.

Embarrassed, Debbie cast a glance at Philip. He immediately got her point and left the villa.

Once she was sure Philip was out of earshot, she held Carlos' arm and said "Honey" in a sweet voice.

Satisfied, Carlos smiled, but he feigned anger and asked in a stern voice, "He's that important to you? You're going to do what I want just for him?!"

CHAPTER 86 BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

"It's not what you think. There's nothing going on between Emmett and me. The day we met at Shining International Plaza, I only asked him not to tell you who I was. It's so unfair that he's being punished because of me. Can you forgive him and let him come back? Otherwise, this whole thing will weigh me down; I may not be able to lift the spoon at the dining table."

In her usual playful manner, Debbie forgot how important this was for Emmett and trailed off into a joke. Carlos pried her hand off and

left her with a terse message as he left for work—"Be attentive in your lessons."

Debbie felt frustrated. 'I begged so hard and he left me hanging? He didn't even say whether he had forgiven Emmett or not.'

After the yoga lesson, Debbie went back to school with the lipsticks. But Carlos' attitude bugged her no end.

In the dormitory, Debbie gave out the lipsticks to Kasie and Kristina.

Upon receiving those limited edition shades, Kasie held her tightly and gave her a peck on the cheek. "Tomboy, you are a goddess."

Kristina tried a magenta lip gloss. She looked great wearing that color. "Debbie, these lipsticks cost \$2,999 each and you gave me more than one. Why are you being silly? You told us you needed money. Why didn't you sell them online?"

Debbie propped her hand against her chin and answered, "I don't want to bother. Besides I don't like this color and you have been talking a lot about how you love it. So I thought it was perfect to give them to you guys."

Meanwhile, Kasie removed the fuchsia shade she had just put on and looked at Debbie mischievously.

"Have you and your husband made up?" she asked.

Debbie hesitated, not sure how to put it. "Sort of."

She had every reason to be angry, but whenever she saw Carlos, she calmed down without knowing why.

"Making up is good, Debbie. You need to give your all to each other, and that can only happen when both of you are at peace. You have our blessing for that."

"I'm a big big girl, in a big big world..." Debbie's ringtone went off, interrupting them, right then.

It was Tristan. "Hello, Tristan," she answered cheerily.

"Debbie, Carlos had some items delivered to you. Ashley Reynolds, another assistant to Carlos, has arrived at your school parking lot. Afraid that you won't take her call since you don't know her phone number, she asked me to inform you about it in advance."

"Okay, thanks, but what items?" Debbie asked as she stood up from a chair.

"You'll know when you see them. Ashley drives the company's vehicle, license plate 5566." It seemed Tristan was at the airport, as over the phone, Debbie could hear departure and arrival announcements in the background.

"Okay, on my way. Thank you, Tristan."

"My pleasure, Debbie. You can also take your friends with you if you want."

Debbie couldn't make head or tail of Tristan's words. At last, she took Kasie and Kristina with her to the school parking lot, where

at the entrance stood a white Mercedes SUV, which drew a lot of attention. Many students stopped to admire the sleek car. Some girls even fantasized about a Prince Charming behind the wheel. However, when they found out that the driver was a woman, they left with disappointment.

From a distance, Debbie saw a middle-aged woman in a black uniform lingering by the car. "Hi, are you Ashley?" Debbie asked when they got near.

Ashley pushed her glasses up and replied respectfully, "Yes, Debbie. I'm Ashley Reynolds, Carlos' assistant. I came here to deliver some items for you."

Ashley was not a gossip, but she was amazed at how beautiful and young the CEO's wife was.

After some polite remarks, she took out a bag from the car and handed it to Debbie. "Debbie, here are

three VIP cards for the biggest SPA on the fourth floor of Alkaid Building. If you have no plans tonight, why don't you and your friends go there and sample their services?"

The three girls were surprised to know what the secretary was there for.

Debbie took the bag. There were three embossed boxes. She opened one of them, in which was enclosed a gilded card from the Divana Nurture SPA.

In each card was enclosed a \$50, 000 VIP card.

Kristina could not believe what she was seeing. She covered her mouth with her hand and said, "Thank you, but I can't accept it. I'll stay by Debbie's side and take care of her for Carlos with or without the card."

Having already taken a one-million-dollar VIP card from Carlos, she felt it was too embarrassing for her to take this one too.

Thinking the same, Kasie held Debbie's arm and looked at Ashley. "Please thank Carlos for us. We feel honored to be Debbie's friends. But we can't accept these cards. Please take Kristina's card and mine back. Thank you."

Ashley returned Debbie's friends an approving look and observed, Carlos hopes that Debbie can have your company when she hits the SPA."

When the other two girls heard this, for a moment, they couldn't frame a response.

However, Kristina still thought they ought to refuse the cards. "We understand. We'll accompany Debbie when she goes to the SPA, but we don't have to accept the cards."

Kasie echoed, "Debbie, just keep your card. I'll keep you company next time you want to go to the SPA. I can ask my dad for more pocket money to afford the place on my own." She used to have some sauna and beauty salon cards, but she couldn't afford a VIP card for the fourth floor of Alkaid Building. Nonetheless, for Debbie, Kasie would ask her dad for some financial support. She assumed that her dad would help her out if she mentioned that Debbie was Carlos' wife.

Without saying a word, Ashley only smiled at the girls. "The ball is in your court," she said calmly as she waited for a final decision from Debbie herself.

Debbie understood her friends. She felt stumped. After a while, she decided to call Carlos. "Old man," she began on the phone after she had excused herself and gone a little distance from her friends and Ashley.

"Hmm? What did you just call me?" Carlos asked in a deep voice that made Debbie blush.

"Um... Ashley has brought the cards to me, but I'm afraid we can't take them. My friends and I rarely go to a SPA," she explained. What she said was the truth for her girl friends. They were young, lively ladies, whose skin didn't need much of special care. Besides, Debbie had more than enough on her plate without having unnecessary troubles about her appearance.

"A girl is supposed to have an exquisite life. Do I have to tell you that?" According to what Carlos had found out, Debbie had learned to make do with the little she had, ever since her father passed away. Such luxuries as spa treatment were things she had had to cut out completely. And she was doing just fine, until

Carlos came along. Even so, from the handsome monthly allowances he gave her, Debbie only took what was enough to cover her usual expenses. He couldn't stand her being so harsh on herself. It made his heart ache.

"This is just a beginning.

The title of Mrs. Hilton comes with a lot of duties and privileges as well. As my wife, you'll have to learn the ropes. I'd take you to various social activities and to meet friends. So you have to enhance yourself on every level. Alright?"

"But..."

"If you don't like to socialize, I won't force you. But you have to promise me something—be good to yourself. The first step of being good to yourself is to treat yourself to something nice."

Five minutes later, when they hung up the phone, Debbie was convinced. She took the cards and thanked Ashley for the delivery.

"I was just doing my job. Bye, Debbie," Ashley replied.

CHAPTER 87 WOUNDED

After Ashley had driven away, Debbie took out two embossed boxes and handed one each to her friends. "Here. I don't want to take the card either, but I guess we all have to. Besides, it's only a small sum for Carlos anyway. He said if you don't accept the cards, then that means you don't see me as your friend. So, just take it, both of you."

"But Debbie. When we were on the fifth floor of the Alioth Building the other day, we had already accepted a one-million-dollar VIP card. We really feel embarrassed to take this one as well," Kristina said.

"I don't know. It beats me how that capitalist's mind works," Debbie responded, shaking her head. She could imagine how awkward they were feeling to be forced to accept VIP cards with huge sums of money in them, especially from another woman's husband. She would probably feel the same if she were put in the same situation.

"Never mind. Since Carlos insists, let's just take it," she said to her friends.

That evening, Debbie decided to have a talk with Carlos. However, she was informed by Emmett, who had just returned, that Carlos had left on a business trip and wouldn't be back for at least a month.

With Carlos away, she was hoping to have some relief from her busy schedule. But it was not going to happen. Carlos had already organized a list of activities for her to do and bid someone to supervise her in his absence.

During the day, she had yoga and dance lessons. To make sure that she stayed busy, Carlos also arranged other various activities such as flower arrangement, tea parties, art exhibitions, bowling, women's baseball and so on. In the evening, she was expected to have either a milk bath or a rose petal bath.

Debbie was frustrated with this way of life. It was the lifestyle of an upper-class socialite diva and not hers. She wanted her own simple, easy life back. Just as she was about to go crazy, Carlos finally returned from the business trip.

He had been away for more than two months. At the start, they had texted each other on the phone. But when Debbie had complained to him about the lessons and activities that he had arranged for her, he had simply replied, "I did this for your own good." Debbie didn't contact him again after that.

Later, she found out that Carlos had put her name down for a dance program at her school's Solar New Year Gala. Debbie was so angry she gritted her teeth and felt like punching him in the face for it. But she didn't call or text him.

The day that Carlos returned happened to be when the Solar New Year Gala was held. Since the new year was on Sunday, the gala was held three days earlier.

Debbie anxiously waited on the stage dressed in a classical style azure dance costume.

When the curtains parted and the spotlight lit up the stage, the audience was stunned to see Debbie there.

She twirled and jumped, moving her body smoothly and gracefully.

Everyone was in awe and wondered when Debbie had become so elegant and charming.

When the dance finished, the audience gave her a standing ovation that echoed throughout the whole venue.

Even though her performance was a huge success, Debbie didn't feel happy within herself. She smiled and bowed politely to the audience and then left the stage. Changing back into her own clothes she

headed home.

'I won't ever speak to that dreadful man again. Even when he is not around, he still manages to torture me. He must be thrilled that the dance was such a success. It was all for him. I didn't want to do it, ' she thought angrily as she reached the villa.

She opened the front door and went in. While she was feeling around in the dark for the light switch, someone held her from behind. She jumped back startled.

But, the hug felt familiar and she knew instantly that it was him. Turning her, he silenced her scream with a kiss.

Even though it was dark, Debbie could sense that something wasn't quite right. She could smell the unusually sweet metallic scent of blood.

Alarmed, she wriggled out of his embrace and quickly turned the lights on. When she looked at Carlos, he was holding his bleeding arm.

"What happened?" she asked nervously. Carlos' face was pale and sweating from the pain.

"I'll be fine. Call this number and tell him to come quickly," he said, trying to control his excitement at seeing her again.

"Let me drive you to the hospital. It will be quicker." Debbie threw her bag onto the floor and was about to help him to the car.

But Carlos stopped her. "We need to keep this quiet, especially from the press. Can you help me upstairs? The number that I gave you to call is a doctor."

After Debbie had called the doctor, she turned to Carlos, visually upset. "I'm surprised that you still remember you had a home after being away for such a long time! Look at you! You've gotten yourself hurt like this. Somebody may think that I did this to you," she complained as she helped him climb the stairs.

Once they reached the top, Carlos stopped and turned to look at her. He touched her cheek gently. "I saw your performance tonight. You were breathtaking," he said sincerely.

On hearing that, Debbie suddenly remembered everything that she had to endure for the past two months, while he was away on his business trip. Tears welled in her eyes. "Carlos, you're such a jerk! You kept controlling my schedule even when you were gone. All the things that you made me do are for divas and socialites, not for me!"

"Okay, then don't do them anymore."

When Carlos saw the sadness in Debbie's eyes, his heart softened. He didn't want to push her anymore.

"Do you really mean it? Or are you just saying that now, because I am helping you? Do you remember what you said to me when I first complained to you about it? You said that it was for my own good. Why are you letting me quit everything now?" Debbie had complained about it to him only once. When she got his response, she was so angry that she didn't contact him anymore after that.

But what infuriated her even more was the fact that he never called or texted her either.

"I've agreed to let you stop because I don't want to see you upset." Perhaps what she said was true. The classes and activities really didn't suit her. She was wild and free-spirited. Forcing those things on her wouldn't work. He was surprised that she didn't come and find him abroad and argue the point with him face to face.

"The past two months have been unbearable for me. I thought I was going mad from all of the tedious activities that you had inflicted upon me. And now, suddenly you are being nice and trying to make everything okay. No! It just won't do."

She was sobbing slightly, but she also dramatized a little to make it all sound much worse than it really was.

Debbie helped Carlos onto the bed. Once he seemed comfortable enough, she turned to leave. But Carlos grabbed her hand. "I'm sorry for everything I made you go through. I won't do it again," he apologized.

This time, she couldn't contain her emotions anymore. Her tears spilled down her cheeks and she wept openly. She raised her fist and was about to punch him in the arm. But when she saw the injury, she aimed for his chest.

Even though Carlos was hurt, Debbie was still no match for him. He caught her hand and pulled her into his arms. "We haven't seen each other for two months. Didn't you miss me?"

"Why would I miss you? No, I didn't miss you at all." She lied. With her cheek against his chest, she felt awkward and began to fidget. Also she took care not to accidentally touch his injured arm.

"But I missed you, a lot," he confessed.

At his words, her heart began to beat faster in her chest and her cheeks flushed red hot. Stuck for a response she decided to change the subject. "How did you get hurt? Were you trying to protect some woman?" she asked casually, having a dig at him.

Carlos fell into a silence.

Debbie's heart sank at his response. She stood up and glared at him. "So I was right!"

She felt a pang in her heart.

"Do you know why Wesley and I decided to foster Megan? Because her parents both died a horrible death to cover us."

She soon realized that the woman he had tried to protect was Megan.

Debbie wasn't sure what she was feeling anymore. It was complicated. Part of her felt that Carlos had done the right thing while the rest of her felt like crying. She was so conflicted.

CHAPTER 88 FALLING IN LOVE

Carlos continued, "Megan was only twelve at the time and she watched her parents die. The horror was too much for even Wesley and me to bear, let alone for her, who was only a little girl. Stimulated by what had happened in front of her, her asthma had come back. She was taken to hospital soon enough to just save her life. It was a painful day for everyone. She could have died that day..."

Imagining the horrible scene, which was even difficult for a tough guy like Carlos to describe, Debbie immediately felt sympathetic towards Megan.

She now thought that Carlos had done the right thing by saving the girl this time, though he had gotten himself badly wounded.

Debbie banished all the negative feelings in her heart and said, "I'll go check if the doctor has come." Then she turned and walked towards the door.

Carlos didn't stop her. He slowly passed out as Debbie walked down the stairs.

A few minutes later, Debbie came back to the room with the doctor at her heels. As she saw the man lying there, motionless, his eyes closed, her body went stiff with uncontrollable fear. She ran over to the bed to check on him, and she saw that the bed was soaked with the blood from his wounds.

"Car...Carlos," she called. Tears welled up in her eyes the minute Carlos' name escaped her lips.

"Wake up! Please don't scare me like this."

She patted his face softly, trying to wake him up. "I'll be good. I'll attend all the classes you've arranged for me. I'll do everything you've asked me to do. Just wake up. Please!" she begged.

Carlos' eyes slowly fluttered open. Looking at the wailing girl by his bedside, he asked in a hoarse voice, "Really?"

Debbie stopped crying and nodded repeatedly. She sighed, relieved to hear his voice. "Yes, I promise. Just don't go passing out on me again, okay?"

The doctor got everything ready for his immediate treatment. "Carlos, I'll stop the bleeding first," he said, swiftly getting to work on Carlos' wounds.

A trace of smile appeared on Carlos' pale face when he looked at Debbie's tear-stained face. "Be a good girl now and don't cry anymore. Wait for me outside, all right?"

To get out of the doctor's way so that he could efficiently do his job without any disturbances, she left the room quietly and waited outside.

Strong feelings surged inside her which she felt she had to share. Too anxious to wait to see her friends in person, Debbie decided to talk to them on the phone right away. She typed a confession into her message box. "I think I have fallen for Carlos."

Kristina was the first to respond. "Isn't that quite normal? He's perfect! Even though I have a boyfriend, I still would love to be with Carlos."

Kristina wouldn't stop talking when it came to Carlos. However, Debbie didn't reply to her statement. There was too much going on in her mind at that moment. She had to spill it all out. She continued to type, "He has arranged a lot of classes for me. Although I don't like any of them, so far I have gone to all the classes. He always has this straight, calm face. When I think of him, I am afraid...but I also feel happy."

Kasie didn't comment, but just nodded at the phone screen. She had always hoped that sparks would fly between Debbie and her husband. It was finally happening.

"He's actually so good to me. He knows what my favorite food is and always asks Julie to cook whatever I like. He knows that I have a huge appetite, but he never complains about me eating too much or worries about me getting fat. And when we got out, he ordered so much food for me," Debbie went on.

When they dined at Alioth Building the other day, her friends could tell that Carlos treated her preciously.

"It is true that he is cold and condescending, but when we are alone, he is gentle to me."

That text came as a shock to Jared, who found it hard to connect the word 'gentle' to Carlos. 'Gentle? Carlos? What's that like?'

"He knows that Kasie and Kristina are my good friends, so when he buys VIP cards for me, he never forgets about them."

Kristina and Kasie nodded viciously at that statement. Thanks to Debbie, now each of them had more than ten VIP passes to all kinds of fancy places.

"I got so mad when another woman sat in the passenger seat of his car. I got mad when he stayed in

Megan's room for too long. I was so angry when he was good to her."

'Sounds like love to me, ' Jared thought as he read her messages.

"In Jork, he had rescued me. I didn't tell him this at the time, but I was really touched by his care for me."

Jared rolled his eyes and thought, 'Women always tend to be grateful to the person who saves them in an emergency.' In Debbie's case, that person was Carlos. There was an infinite possibility of romance between them.

"It pained me so much when I saw him wounded. All my anger vanished in an instant."

'Is Carlos wounded?' everyone wondered when they saw Debbie's message.

"He is my husband, he is handsome and he has the most perfect body. After he found out that I'm his wife, he did everything in my interest. Why am I still hesitant to be intimate with him? Is there something wrong with my head?"

Kasie couldn't hold herself anymore. She typed, "Your head is fine. Maybe you're just frigid in bed."

Debbie's wistfulness was expelled by Kasie's words. She looked at her phone and laughed.

The rest of the group posted the Rolling On The Floor Laughing emojis.

Debbie sent several Crying Face With A Hammer Over The Head emojis and mentioned Kasie in her next text, "You're the one who is frigid in bed." Every time they got down to have sex, she was as eager as he was. But the road always got bumpy. It hadn't yet happened for them, for some reason or the other.

Carlos had managed to control his urge every time things went south or when Debbie wasn't in the mood. His self-control was beyond her imagination. In fact, she was so stunned sometimes that she suspected if he had some physical problem. But since she could clearly feel his erection against her, she knew that was not the case.

Perhaps he truly respected her and didn't want to force her into it.

When she thought of all this, tears filled her eyes again. She turned to look at the closed door beyond which Carlos was lying wounded; she thought of Megan. If only she could beat the hell out of that culprit!

Megan was the reason why her husband was bleeding in bed.

Carlos had told her that Megan's parents had saved his life. So he felt like he owed that girl and was indebted to her.

"Arghhhh!!" Debbie yelled, troubled by all these contradicting thoughts. She stopped crying and pounded the wall fiercely with her fist.

Meanwhile, her friends were still talking to her in the group chat. "Debbie, has something happened to Carlos?" Dixon asked.

"Yes, but it's confidential. Keep it to yourselves, please," she said. Debbie regretted having blurted out Carlos' injury.

She was worried if it would lead to some trouble for Carlos if the news of his injury was leaked. But she also believed that her friends wouldn't betray her.

"Isn't he on a business trip?" Debbie's friends asked in unison. They all knew that Carlos had gone on a business trip two months ago.

"He came back out of the blue. And to my surprise he told me he saw my performance. I wonder how." She mused if he had gone to her school to see the performance.

Yet considering the depth of his injury, it seemed unlikely.

"Tomboy, after watching you dance, I really think that Carlos has done all this for your own good. He has turned you into such an elegant, glowing woman," Kristina said, proudly.

"What?! Elegant and glowing? Really? Are you talking about me? Come on!"

Debbie was surprised that her friends thought of her that way.

Kasie agreed gladly with Kristina on that. She said, "Kris is right. Moreover, your skin is much better now too. Your hands used to be rough and covered in calluses. But the last time I held your hand, it was soft and smooth like silk. And that time in the bathroom, I saw that your skin had become fairer and rosy. I almost drooled all over you."

Debbie blushed at her comments. "Okay, stop! Don't talk about all that stuff with the boys here. Delete it!" Debbie demanded.

Kasie immediately deleted her messages. But Jared posted a Grinning Face emoji and said, "Too late. I already saw it. Tomboy, next time we meet, let's take a bath together. I want to see how good your skin really is."

"Back off! Wait until I tell Carlos about that comment."

Jared was terrified and deleted that message immediately. "My mistake. Please forget that I even said it," he pleaded.

CHAPTER 89 SEDUCTION

The fact that Debbie was Carlos' wife alone was enough to forbid Jared from wanting anything more than friendship from her. Even if he were the bravest man on earth, he wouldn't dare to cross the threshold with Carlos' wife.

Kristina sent a Heart-Eyes emoji, followed by her fantasy. "I want to sleep in Debbie's arms."

Dixon replied right away with a Worried Face emoji, "What about me? What'll happen to me then?"

The others hooted.

Later, two of the doctor's assistants came to the villa to bring some medicine to the doctor. They walked into the room Carlos was being operated in. After that, another wait of two hours was steadily breaking Debbie's resolve. No one had come out of the room yet and Debbie was so anxious to know what was going on inside that she was on the verge of barging in.

About a half more hour later, the door of the room finally opened and the two assistants walked out. "How is my husband? Is he going to be all right?" Debbie dashed towards them as soon as they stepped out of the room.

"Both of the bullets from inside him have been removed. The surgery is almost finished. Dr. Jordan is just performing the finishing work, making sure there are no chances of future trouble," they reassured her.

Debbie was a bit relieved now. "Can I go in there?" she asked.

"A few more minutes, please. Dr. Jordan will be coming out soon."

"Okay, then."

Fifteen minutes later, the doctor came out of the room. He removed his mask, looking exhausted. "The bullets have been removed and we've managed to stop the bleeding. But I think it would be best if you took Carlos to hospital. After all, there is no proper medical apparatus in the villa," he stated.

"I see. Thank you, doctor," Debbie nodded.

Dr. Jordan didn't know exactly who this girl was, but since Carlos had kept her around especially when he was wounded, he assumed that she must be someone special to Carlos. Thinking of that, the doctor replied respectfully, "Don't mention it. Emmett and Tristan will be here in a minute. Please don't hesitate to call me if I'm needed."

"Okay, thanks. Please let me walk you out."

"I'll show myself out. You can go see Carlos now."

"All right. Thanks, doctor."

Emmett and Tristan arrived at the villa very soon. When Debbie saw them, she was shocked to notice that Tristan himself was limping. It looked like his left leg was wounded as well. Debbie was concerned, but Tristan told her not to worry; the wound had already been attended to in the hospital. It was nothing.

He also told her that it happened after he and Carlos had gotten off the plane. They left the airport and went to rescue Megan. Both he and Carlos were wounded. The fear that ensued had triggered Megan's asthma and she was being taken care of in the hospital right now.

With Emmett's and Tristan's help, Debbie moved Carlos from her bedroom to his. Her bedclothes were changed and for safety and hygienic purposes, the old blood-stained ones were destroyed.

It wasn't until the next morning that Carlos finally woke up.

He opened his eyes and the first thing that fell into his eyes was Debbie sleeping beside him. She had barely slept the night before.

Looking at her haggard face, Carlos put his good arm around her shoulders and kissed her forehead.

When Debbie woke up, Carlos was sitting on the bed perusing some files. She sat up still muddled in her sleep and remarked sleepily, "Oh, hey. You're back."

As soon as she finished the sentence, she sensed that something was wrong with it. Then she remembered Carlos coming back the day before. The bandage on his right arm reminded her that the wound wasn't a dream.

"Did you sleep well? Are you hungry?" He put the files aside and looked at her with tender eyes. She seemed totally awake now.

"It was all real. You got hurt because of Megan," Debbie muttered in a slightly horrified tone. The fact was still too hard for her to process.

Hearing her words, Carlos scooped her cheek with one hand and tried to comfort her, "Deb, you know that—"

"I know, I know," she said resignedly. After getting out of bed, she prattled on. "I'm going downstairs for breakfast. Then we're going to the hospital. Dr. Jordan said your wound needed to be treated in the hospital. Or else it is going to fall prey to inflammation or infection."

Carlos was recovering quickly. Debbie was surprised to see him able to be on his feet already. And he looked like a million bucks.

"I don't need to go to the hospital," he protested.

Debbie turned her head back and threatened, "Fine! Then you can ask Megan to come over and look after you. I don't want to take care of a stubborn patient."

Carlos was left speechless. He recalled how tender and sweet she had been when she had danced on the stage the other day. Sadly, that side of her appeared only briefly.

Debbie got dressed in her bedroom and went downstairs.

In the dining room, Julie was heating up the dishes for Debbie. She had already gotten a call from Carlos asking her to do so before Debbie could get downstairs.

After a simple breakfast, Debbie went back to Carlos' room. "Hey, are you going to the hospital or not?" she asked sullenly.

"If you're worried about me, just call the doctor in. It would be much simpler that way in any case."

"The doctor was here yesterday. He said there was no medical equipment here and you would receive better treatment at the hospital. This is the doctor's advice, not mine. Why are you fighting this?"

Debbie got exasperated and once again, Carlos was left nothing to retort.

Debbie ground her teeth, angry at the man's stubbornness. "If you plan on acting like this, then I'm leaving. I won't come back until your wound is healed."

She had hardly taken one step before Carlos took her wrist and agreed resignedly, "I'll go."

Debbie secretly chuckled and then assumed a serious look again. After prying Carlos' hand away, she said, "I'll go get your clothes."

However, when Debbie opened Carlos' closet, she was stunned at the tidiness and cleanness it was sporting. The clothes and accessories were arranged in such an order as the kind one would witness if they were being displayed in a showcase in a mall.

Since Carlos wanted to keep his injury from the press, Debbie picked out a pair of sweatpants, an extra-thick white sweatshirt, and a white baseball cap for him. She had never seen him dressed like that, so she assumed the press wouldn't be able to recognize him in this outfit. It looked low-key enough.

She put the clothes on the bed and ordered, "There. Get changed."

Carlos shifted his look from her to his right arm and then back to her again, saying, "I'm injured. You'll have to help me dress."

For a moment, Debbie didn't know how to respond. Then she said, "I'll go get help." When Carlos had come back from abroad, some servants had come back to the villa with him.

"Do you really want another woman to see your husband naked?" Carlos called out behind her.

Debbie exhaled helplessly. "Fine! I'll help you change your clothes." Carlos had gotten her there. She really didn't want another woman to see her husband's body.

Fortunately, it was not so much work, except for the teasing part. Carlos didn't behave at all when she was changing his pants.

When she was dressing him in the sweatshirt, she accidentally bumped into his chest and left him a kiss.

"Deb, you naughty girl, you're seducing me." His body instantly went stiff when her soft lips touched his skin. As if out of instincts, he wrapped his left arm around her.

Debbie's face flamed with embarrassment. She felt like it was on fire. She covered her burning face with the back of her hand and said, "It's an accident. You're too tall. I got tripped."

"How about we go to the hospital after?" he whispered in her ear in a tempting voice.

"Eh? After what?"

"After some dessert," he continued, sniffing her hair. "What are you thinking?!"

Realizing what he was implying, Debbie gave him a pinch on the waist. "Quit joking around. Hurry up." Her heart was pounding but she pushed him away. In a fluster, she grabbed his left arm hurriedly and tucked it into the sleeve.

Not giving up, Carlos continued with his seduction. "Honey, only my arm is wounded. My other parts are as good as new. If you don't believe me, why don't you go ahead and examine them yourself? Come, come."

Debbie tried to project an angry tone to cover up her nervousness. "In your dreams, smart ass! Now let's go to the hospital."

CHAPTER 90 IN THE HOSPITAL

"Okay, fine," Carlos replied resignedly. "You know, I intended to have a passionate night with you yesterday, but this injury totally ruined my plans," he confessed. He had been patient with Debbie for a long time. If he waited any longer, he was afraid that something wrong could happen to his manhood.

Debbie gave him a glare and seized the opportunity to complain, "You should have known better than to

get yourself injured. Maybe God doesn't want you to get your own way."

"If that had been the case, then my injuries wouldn't have landed on my arm. Deb, I can push myself up with one arm. How about we have a try?"

Debbie's heart was racing and she could hardly maintain her composure anymore. Carlos seemed odd to her today. He kept hitting on her and as if that wasn't enough to throw her off the mark, he was very handsy as well. Desperate for a way to contain her surging emotions, she stomped on his foot and snapped, albeit frivolously, "Keep your hands off me!"

Carlos was amused by the shy and annoyed expression on her face. He bowed his head and kissed her forehead softly before whispering, "Honey, I'll go to the hospital with you, but I think I deserve a reward for the trouble."

Hearing him call her honey again, Debbie couldn't help smiling and taunted quietly, "And what reward does this child want?"

"This, of course." He pulled her into his arms and kissed her deeply on the lips. Nothing else could be heard anymore in the room except for the heavy breathing of the two.

Some time later, Debbie walked out of Carlos' room again with burning cheeks, looking definitely ruffled. She fetched a mask from her bedroom and asked Carlos to put it on.

Just as they were about to leave, Debbie reminded him to put on a pair of sunglasses too. After that, she took a glance at him and decided that everything was finally set now. They left the villa and headed for the hospital.

Emmett had already made an appointment for them with the doctor. In the consulting room, the doctor looked at Carlos' wound carefully and changed his dressing. It took about two hours to complete the process, after which, they left the doctor's consulting room. Debbie had been under the impression that they would be heading back to the villa immediately, but to her surprise, Carlos was holding her hand and leading her to the inpatient department.

"Where are we going?" she asked in confusion.

"The inpatient department. Megan was hospitalized and is being kept under observation."

Hearing Megan's name, Debbie didn't respond and just followed him silently.

Hardly had they reached the door of the ward before they heard the sound of Megan's laughter emanating cheerfully from inside, in stark contrast to the hospital's general ambiance. At that point, Debbie noticed an evident smile on her husband's face, and secretly, made a face in disapproval.

Walking inside, they noticed that Damon and Wesley were already there. Megan was sitting on the edge

of the bed, giggling at Damon's jokes.

Her eyes brightened when she saw Carlos and Debbie. She ran towards Carlos, calling in a cheerful voice, "Ah, Uncle Carlos, Uncle Carlos, you are here. Are you okay? Does it still hurt?"

Seeing her trotting over, Carlos released Debbie's hand and spread his arms to catch the girl. "Mmm, I'm fine. But you be careful. You shouldn't do anything strenuous right now."

"I'm fine too. But Uncle Wesley won't allow me to leave the hospital," the girl complained as she buried herself in his arms.

"Now, now, no complaints. Uncle Wesley is doing that for your own good." Carlos pulled her out of his arms and rebuked her, "Aunt Debbie is here too. I didn't hear you greet her."

As if she had just seen Debbie, Megan put on an embarrassed look and apologized, "Hi, Aunt Debbie. I'm sorry. I was too worried about Uncle Carlos. He was wounded because of me and I feel so bad about it."

Debbie tried hard to suppress the discomfort in her heart. "Don't. Uncle Carlos did the right thing in protecting you. After all, your parents saved his life," she replied flatly.

"Ah, so Uncle Carlos told you about it?"

"Yes. Your uncle Carlos and I are married. Married couples don't have secrets." Debbie took Carlos' hand with a smile, interlocked fingers with him, and looked up at her man affectionately.

Carlos squeezed her hand and met her eyes. Tenderness could be seen from a mile away in his eyes.

He was a lot more than happy to hear what she had just said.

"Hey, did you guys come here to visit Megan or to torment us single people with your affections and flirting?" Damon retorted from the bed, fed up with the sweetness between the two.

Within a second, the tenderness in Carlos' eyes was all gone. It looked like he had turned into a completely different person. Casting him a cold stare, he snarled, "Well, you can just go away then."

"Shit. Carlos, we've been friends for more than a decade now. But you are not at all gentle to me. Worse than that, you asked me to go away. I guess you forget your friends when you're with your wife,"

Damon complained with a careless expression on his face, and his hands in his pockets.

"Well then, friend! Tell me, how come you never visited me after I got injured?" Carlos retorted. All his friends had visited him at the villa after the injury except Damon last night.

However, Damon didn't feel guilty at all. Instead, he confessed, "Look. In my heart, Megan is much more

important than you. It would be obvious to anyone that I would want to make sure she was okay before I came to see you."

Hearing him say that she was more important than Carlos, Megan laughed. She walked over to Damon, grabbed his sleeve, and appealed like a spoiled brat, "Uncle Damon, you're the best."

"Of course." Damon put his arm around Megan's shoulders and looked at Carlos provocatively.

Carlos ignored him. "What did the doctor say?" he asked Wesley, who had been looking out the window the entire time and seemed the least interested in their rift.

"Asthma again. But it's fine. She can be discharged from hospital tomorrow." Wesley withdrew his gaze from outside and finally turned towards them slowly.

Carlos didn't reply. He pulled Debbie closer to him and sat down on the sofa with her. Crossing his legs, he settled in comfortably and watched Megan and Damon chat and laugh together.

A moment later, the door of the ward opened again. Curtis and Colleen walked in.

"Debbie," Curtis greeted as soon as he saw Debbie.

"Hi, Mr—" Debbie was about to stand up to greet the man, but Carlos pulled her back to the sofa and wrapped his arms around her. She looked at him with a perplexed gaze.

Carlos explained his stance, though in a highly indifferent tone, "This is a hospital, not a school. You don't have to be so polite to him."

Curtis only smiled at his unfriendly remarks.

Debbie rolled her eyes at Carlos helplessly and greeted Curtis and Colleen once again. "Hi, Mr. Loftus. Hi, Colleen."

Curtis nodded and walked over to Megan.

Colleen, on the other hand, walked closer to Debbie, and asked, "How's Carlos' arm?"

Debbie was puzzled. She looked at Colleen who was smiling at her and wondered, 'Carlos is right there. Why doesn't she ask him directly? Why is she asking me?'

Before she could recollect her thoughts and respond, Colleen said in a louder voice, "Debbie, you're Carlos' wife. Why is it so embarrassing to talk about your husband's injury?"

"He...Um... I..." Debbie was confused too much by the situation to form a coherent answer.

Seeing confusion written all over her face, Colleen pulled her away from Carlos, took her arm, and whispered with a smile, "Last night, when we got to the villa, you were sleeping beside him like a piggy. You must have been really tired from taking care of Carlos."

It was only now that Debbie realized she and Curtis had dropped by the villa the night before.

It only dawned on her now that there were so many people who had watched her sleep. Debbie turned her head and rolled her eyes at Carlos. "Why didn't you wake me up when Colleen dropped by last night?"

Carlos raised his eyebrows and apologized, "Sorry. I won't do it again."

Seeing how cute the two were being together, Colleen laughed. It was only now that she remembered to ask about Megan. "Megan, when will you leave the hospital?"

Megan replied in a sweet voice, "Thank you for asking, Colleen. I'll be discharged tomorrow morning."

Curtis reminded her, "Call her Aunt Colleen."