

TSBMMOUS 31

Chapter 31: They Were All Unscrupulous People

“Don’t go.I’ll take you out of here, away from this damned place!”

Before Ayla could say anything, Toby pulled her into his arms once again.He couldn’t bear to see his beloved woman suffer like this.

She didn’t even answer her phone after she disappeared.

It turned out that Brian had kept her strictly under house arrest.But Ayla shook her head.

She couldn’t leave at all.

If she ran away, it wouldn’t be just she who would suffer the consequences.

She should be grateful that she wasn’t sexually assaulted or beaten black and blue by Brian’s subordinates.

“Toby, you should go back.I want to stay here.Go back to Miss Smith! You’ll be happy with her!”

“I will just be a burden to you.I’ll only bring you trouble, ” she thought deep down.

Brian must have known that Toby was there that day, so he asked for her to bring wine to Toby on purpose.

“Lala!”

Toby watched as she withdrew from his grip with sorrowful eyes.

He knew that she felt completely helpless about her situation.

“Mr.Brown.”

Seeing that Toby was about to reach for Ayla again, Fred stopped him.

“You can leave now.I have something to discuss with her.”

“Do I still need to care about the consequences now?” Toby thought with determination.

Brian wasn’t planning on seeing Toby that night.He just wanted to let Toby know that he was in full control of everything.

“Lala, tell me the truth.Did he force you to do this? How could he let you do such a thing?”

Toby held her hands in his and gently caressed them.

Ayla quickly withdrew her hands, replying, “Toby, you misunderstood everything.He’s not forcing me to do this.I’m fine.”

“You think you’re fine? Look at yourself! You’ve lost so much weight and you look exhausted.Seeing you like this reminded me of the little girl who was constantly mistreated by the Woodsen family!”

Toby yelled at her.

“That little girl is gone.I’m not that person anymore.”

Ayla then smiled at him and added, “I’ve grown up.I’m a strong woman now.You know what? I lived well during those years when you were abroad.I will do just as fine in the future.”

She promised herself that she would live well from then on, even without him.

Besides, Brian would never let her die.

There was nothing he wanted more than to continue insulting and torturing her for the rest of her life.

But at this point, she felt almost satisfied with her prospects.

“Lala, can you stop being stubborn? Just come back with me, okay?”

Toby couldn’t understand why she would choose to suffer there rather than go with him.

But Ayla turned her back and walked towards the kitchen with heavy steps.

She wasn’t being stubborn about the whole thing.

She just didn’t have any other choice.

Toby left and had been gone for several days.

Ayla thought that he should be very happy with Miss Smith now.

She returned to the small room arranged for her in the entertainment club.

There was no heating inside, only a small bed and a thin quilt.

Under the dim light, she finally shrank in a corner.

Meanwhile, Toby found himself sitting on the sofa in Brian’s office.

They had been in a stalemate for half an hour and neither wanted to break the silence.

Seeing that his cup of coffee had turned cold, Toby stood up and said, “Mr.Clark, you didn’t ask me here just for coffee, right?”

“Of course not.I thought you had something to tell me, Mr.Brown.”

Brian didn’t expect that Toby would wait many days before confronting him.

He initially thought that he would question him right away as to why he treated his beloved woman that way.

“Yes, I do have something to tell you.I will take her with me.”

Toby didn’t want to beat around the bush anymore.

Besides, he thought that Brian must know his intentions.

“What made you think you can take her away from me? Do you think you can do everything you want just because you’re the Deputy CEO of the Smith Group? Would you even still be the Deputy CEO if Mr.Smith learned that you’re in a relationship with another woman?”

Brian raised his head and gave Toby a confident glare.

He clearly knew a lot about him.

Everything that Toby had was handed to him by the Smith family, and they could always take it all back.

Toby looked at Brian as he listened to his words.

It was true that Brian could see through him.

He was really a man who always took control of every situation.

“So what? Even if I were to lose everything I have now, I wouldn’t let her stoop so low as to wash the dishes.”

Toby was willing to leave the Smith family, if only to ensure that Ayla would no longer suffer like this.

“Oh, yes! Believe me, once I’ve turned you into nothing, you wouldn’t even have dishes to wash!” Brian was determined not to lose to him.

“Why do you have to be so cruel to her? She doesn’t deserve this and she has suffered enough.Why are you torturing her?”

Toby wasn’t sure how Clayton had offended Brian, but he knew that it had nothing to do with money.

For a man like Brian, money was never an issue.

“I can stop making her life miserable of course.I’ve read the plan prepared by Smith Group and I’m satisfied.If you’re willing to give away twenty percent more of your proposed profit, she will continue to be Mrs.Clark and will be treated well moving forward.What do you think, Mr.Brown?”

Brian said as he leaned against the back of his leather chair.

He stared at Toby with a smirk on his lips.

Toby hesitated.

He could easily adjust the proposal as he did prepare the agreement.

But if he gave twenty percent of the company’s profit to Brian, Smith Group’s performance this year would be worse than last year.

He wouldn’t be able to explain it to Hayden, but he had to do it for Ayla’s sake.

“Very well.I agree to your proposal.But I want to see her now.”

Toby had to make sure that Ayla was fine.

He wanted to give her a better life as soon as possible.

But Brian merely lit a cigarette and asked, "Don't you trust me, Mr. Brown? I've always been a man of my word. And I did say that she would continue to be Mrs. Clark. Won't you agree that it's inappropriate for you to meet with my wife?"

That woman was his and his alone. And he intended to keep his word.

Toby stood in front of him and said, "I don't trust you. I would never believe a man who's willing to do anything just to get what he wants!"

"What about you? Didn't you also do everything to get to where you are now? You got engaged to Miss Smith only because you wanted to be the Deputy CEO of the Smith Group. Surely, you wouldn't want to lose all of what you have now just because of a woman." Brian's words hit him hard.

Toby had sold himself for money, position, and power.

"You can leave now. Once you sign the agreement, she will live a happy life with me just as you wish."

Brian then went to the door and opened it for him.

Finally, Ayla returned to the villa again.

She had been gone for a long time, but she thought it better to live in the small room of the entertainment club than in this big villa.

"Mrs. Clark, you're back." Maria instantly walked up to her and led her into the house.

"Maria." Ayla greeted her sweetly with a smile.

"Please come in. Mr. Clark told me to let you use the guest room upstairs from now on."

She then took Ayla upstairs and showed her in an elegantly decorated room.

"Is it really reserved for me?" Ayla wondered.

Chapter 32: The Wife's Duty

"What do you think? Mrs. Clark, are you satisfied?" said a voice from behind Ayla.

It was Brian. She turned to face him. Her expression was wary.

"Mr. Clark, what do you want?"

"What do you think?" Brian said softly, moving closer to her.

He lifted her chin, tilting her face so she had no choice but to meet his eyes.

"I can return to the entertainment club. I can keep washing dishes," Ayla offered.

Brian shook his head adamantly.

"No. You don't have to go back. Your sweetheart has spent a lot of money to get you out of that place and allow you to continue being Mrs. Clark. Do you want to let him down?" She said nothing.

Brian added, "So from now on, you live here. Get used to it."

He stepped back and turned away from her, walking into his own bedroom, which was the master room on the other side of the hallway.

As soon as he closed the door behind him, Ayla walked inside her room.

She gazed at the pretty purple bed sheets, the gauzy beige curtains, and the pure white wardrobe and dresser.

It was a lovely, feminine room.

She couldn't believe she would be living here.

She felt as though she didn't deserve this.

She wandered out to the private balcony, which overlooked the lawn.

She spent the rest of the afternoon seated on a lounge chair, enjoying the sunlight and the breeze and the gorgeous view of colorful flowers strewn over the grass.

The sun was setting when she heard a knock at the door.

"Come in," she called.

Maria entered.

"Mrs.Clark, dinner is ready," she said respectfully.

Ayla took a last look at the beautiful orange sky.She smiled to herself.

"Thanks, I'll be right down."

She entered the dining room to find Brian already seated at the head of the table, reading a newspaper.

She stopped near the doorway and said, "Hello, Mr.Clark."

He gave her an impatient look.

"Well, don't just stand there.Do you need me to invite you to sit down?"

He put down the newspaper beside him and gave her a cold look.

She hurried to the table and sat down.

The atmosphere in the dining room was so tense she didn't even dare to glance at him.

"Stop being so scared," he snapped.

"You're going to have to get used to this lifestyle."

He began eating the sumptuous food prepared for them, but Ayla had lost her appetite.

She forced herself to finish the food so he wouldn't snap at her again.

After dinner, Brian went to the living room, where there was a large-screen television mounted on the wall.

Ayla peeked in and saw that he was watching a financial news program.

It was rare for him to stay at home like this, and as long as he was in there, she didn't want to enter the living room.

She picked up her plate, intending to take it to the kitchen, but Maria suddenly appeared beside her.

"Mrs. Clark, I'll clean the table. You can go and keep Mr. Clark company."

Ayla hesitated, but Maria took the empty plate from her hand and replaced it with a bowl of fruit.

"This is Mr. Clark's favorite snack. Go on, you can take it with you when you join him."

Maria was deliberately trying to create opportunities for the two of them to get to know each other.

She thought Mr. Clark must have changed his mind, which was why he'd brought Mrs. Clark back and arranged for her to live in the room on the second floor.

Ayla took a deep breath and went to the living room.

"Here, Mr. Clark," she said softly, putting down the bowl of fruit on the table in front of him.

She was not used to living like this. She had so many questions, but she was afraid of angering him.

Brian brought out a phone and handed it to her.

"Here," he said.

"Call your sweetheart and tell him how well you're doing here."

"No, I don't want to disturb his happiness," she replied.

Ayla had made up her mind not to disturb Toby.

She did not want to be the other woman between them.

Brian glanced coolly at her.

"Good. It's better this way. Keep in mind that your duty now is to live here and act as a good wife."

Her duty? What did he mean by "good wife?"

She stared at him with her lips parted in surprise.

Was it her duty to endure his overbearing attitude and satisfy his needs? She found her situation helpless and painful, and she had to force herself to be pleasant towards him.

For instance, because he said he did not like spending the whole night with anyone, she had to drag her aching body back to her own room every time they had s*x.

Her body was the price she had to pay for her luxurious living conditions.

For the rest of the week, she could barely sleep.

She stayed awake until dawn, her thoughts churning.

Toby, seated in his office, was feeling restless.

It had been a long time since he negotiated with Brian.

When he'd gone to the entertainment club, the staff members there informed him that Lala was not there anymore.

Apparently, Brian had taken her away.

He did not trust Brian at all.

He worried that Lala would suffer, but he was willing to gamble on his company's big project.

When Molly entered the office, she saw that Toby was deep in thought.

Was he thinking about that woman again? Molly frowned, wondering if the woman had left because she had fallen in love with someone else.

Or did she realize her fault? Had she decided on her own that she would no longer be a third party coming between them?

She walked towards the desk.

"Toby," she said.

When Molly called his name, he came to his senses.

"Oh, hello. You're here," he said, smiling at her.

Recently he had been ignoring her, because his mind and heart were full of thoughts of Ayla.

"I have some soup for you," she said, holding up a bag in her hand.

"You've been working so hard these past weeks. Do you need to be working overtime so much? Dad and Mom hope you'll be able to spend more time with me."

She led him to the sofa and handed him a bowl of soup.

Toby began drinking the warm soup. He said, "Don't worry. I'll come home early today."

While he couldn't stop himself from loving Lala, he couldn't forget his duties towards Molly either.

One day, while Ayla was helping to clean the villa, she considered her dream of returning to school.

She thought she wouldn't be able to, but still, she couldn't stop herself from hoping.

Afterward, she sat alone in the living room with a book in her hand.

She was getting drowsy when her mobile phone suddenly rang, jolting her awake.

She glanced at the screen.

It was an unknown number.

She lifted an eyebrow, wondering who it could be, because only a very few people knew her number.

Maria heard the ringing and poked her head into the living room.

“Mrs.Clark, aren’t you going to answer that? It might be Mr.Clark.”

Maria was worried that Mr.Clark was calling, and that he would be angry if Mrs.Clark didn’t answer.

Mr.Clark had not come home for several days now.

He must have been extremely busy.

Ayla hesitated, then tapped the screen.

“Hello?” she said tentatively.

“It’s me.”

She immediately recognized the familiar voice on the phone.

“Sister?” she asked.

Pressing her mobile phone to her ear, she rushed out past Maria and went to her room on the second floor.

“Oh, so you still remember me! I thought you’d forgotten me,” Arlene said sharply.

“You know, because you h****d up with Mr.Clark.”

“Why would you say that?” Ayla said, upset.

“Why are you calling? Where are you calling from?”

Ayla was used to Arlene’s sarcasm, but she didn’t care for it this time.

Since their childhood, she had been like Cinderella, while Arlene was the arrogant princess.

“Where I am is none of your business.I’m just calling because I need money.”

Arlene had always spent money lavishly, going to bars and nightclubs and fooling around with different men every night.

She used to be quite wealthy, but she’d gone through all her cash by now, so she decided to ask her sister for money.

Ayla sighed and said, “My sister, I don’t have money to give you.”

She’d used up all her savings to pay for tuition, and now she’d been sold to Brian by Clayton.

Although she was living in this huge villa, she couldn't go to school, nor could she work and earn money of her own.

"You don't have money? Aren't you Mrs. Clark? Dad said that you're living in a gorgeous villa, being driven around by expensive cars. How can you not have money?"

Arlene demanded incredulously.

Her voice grew angry as she added, "Or are you just looking down on me because we're not related by blood? Maybe you're just refusing to give me money because you're selfish!"

Ayla pursed her lips.

Apparently, not only did Arlene know her phone number, she also knew everything about Ayla's living conditions.

"Sister, it's not what you think," she said miserably.

Ayla didn't even have the right to go outside without permission.

What her sister imagined to be a life of limitless wealth was actually a life of entrapment and loneliness.

In truth, Ayla would rather be free and poor than live in this luxurious cage.

Chapter 33: Nothing But Contempt

"It's not what I think?" said Arlene sarcastically.

"You're unbelievable! If you don't want to give me money, just say so! I can't believe you're being so selfish and ungrateful. After all those years we spent raising you and taking care of you!"

Arlene knew her little sister very well.

While Ayla didn't get anything from the Woodsen family, she believed she was still indebted to them.

"I really don't have money," Ayla said unhappily.

Even as she spoke, however, she saw movement out of the corner of her eye.

Brian had entered the room. How long had he been standing there? How much had he overheard?

"You're back," she blurted out.

She was so surprised that her grip on the phone loosened, and it fell to the floor.

Brian frowned.

"What's wrong? Are you short of money? Who is trying to borrow money from you?"

He walked quickly forward and grabbed the phone before she could pick it up.

He looked at the number displayed on the screen.

Ayla snatched her phone back, pressing the button to end the call.

"I can't let him find out who called me" she thought anxiously.

'If he finds out, who knows how he'll react?"

"Which boy toy of yours is asking you for money?" Brian asked in a dangerous tone.

He moved closer to her, placing his hand on her neck. To Ayla, his touch felt threatening.

"Are you deaf? Answer me!" he snapped.

When she still said nothing, he said grimly, "I've been gone for only a few days, and already you're lonely?"

He moved his hands to her shoulders and pushed her backward until she sat down heavily on the sofa inside the bedroom.

"Remember who you are! Have you already forgotten your current identity?"

"Mr. Clark, please don't do this," Ayla said desperately.

"I really didn't do anything wrong, I swear."

She wanted to push him away, but he was pressing her down into the sofa, gripping her wrists tightly.

"It's not up to you what I do," he said.

His eyes were dark with anger.

She felt a wave of fear.

Her refusal was only making him more determined to have his way with her.

She didn't have any say in the matter. She clenched her fists.

The terrible feeling of having no control over the situation made her bite her lower lip so hard that it bled.

'He must truly hate me" she thought frantically.

After all, he had never bothered to treat her gently. He'd never even kissed her lips. And he wasn't nice or gentle this time, either.

Later, when Brian had left her room and the sky had turned black outside her window, Ayla crept downstairs.

All the rooms were dark except for a dim yellow light in the living room.

She went quietly to the kitchen and poured herself a drink of water, feeling dazed.

Her thoughts turned to Arlene, who had called just to ask her for money.

She knew her sister very well, too.

Ayla knew that if Arlene didn't receive any money, she would just keep calling and calling until she got her way.

It was not the first time such a thing had happened.

In the past, when Arlene couldn't get money from Clayton, she would ask Ayla instead.

Ayla had no choice but to give her the bulk of the salary she earned by working.

"What can I do?" she thought.

She was so tired she didn't even have the energy to return to her bedroom.

The next morning, when Brian went downstairs, he saw Ayla fast asleep on the table, her head buried in her arms.

He scowled.

"She's acting this way on purpose, pretending to be pitiful so I feel sorry for her" he thought irritably.

"She has a comfortable room just upstairs. There's no reason for her to sleep in the dining room."

He grabbed the empty glass on the table and put it back down with a heavy thud.

The sound roused Ayla, who sat up immediately, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

She saw the cold face looking down at her.

"Mr. Clark," she said uneasily.

She stood up, stepping away from the table.

She was unconsciously putting distance between them.

Brian saw what she was doing.

As he poured himself a glass of water, he asked, "Am I so frightening?"

"No," Ayla said quickly.

The truth was, she was indeed afraid of him.

However, she had no choice but to face him no matter how great her fear was.

"Then what are you doing?" he said, watching as she made sure not to get anywhere near him.

He deliberately sat down in the furthest chair, raising an eyebrow at her hesitant expression.

Ayla twisted her hands together.

Unexpectedly she said, "I would like to go out today. May I leave the villa?"

She wanted even the slightest bit of freedom.

But in order to go out, she had to obtain his permission.

He said, "Go ahead. I won't stop you."

Ayla couldn't believe her ears. Brian had agreed without hesitation!

"But remember what I said before," he warned.

"You can go out if you want, but you are not allowed to go out with other men." Ayla nodded.

"I won't be out for long."

She had a bankbook, and although there was not a lot of money in her account, she decided she would give the remaining balance to Arlene.

She went to her room to get ready and to tell her sister to meet her at a coffee shop.

Soon, Ayla arrived at their meeting place.

Arlene was already waiting, and she snapped, "Finally, you're here. Where's the money?"

Arlene didn't bother to waste any time on greetings or catching up with her sister.

Arlene's brown hair fell in curls over her shoulders.

She wore a gorgeous dress and tasteful makeup. She looked very beautiful.

"Arlene, how are you doing?" Ayla asked.

They hadn't seen each other for a long time.

Ayla had no idea what Arlene was up to, or why she needed money.

"It's none of your business!" said Arlene, sounding aggravated.

"Anyway, Aren't you Brian's wife now? Look at yourself! Why are you dressed in such shabby clothes? Are you pretending to be poor so I'll stop asking you for money?"

Arlene took a sip of her coffee, glancing with disdain at Ayla's simple outfit.

Ayla shook her head.

"Why do you always think the worst of me? Now that Dad is having such a big problem with his company, are you still living elsewhere?"

"I don't need you meddling in my life! What I need is for you to give me more money," Arlene said angrily, putting down her cup so hard that coffee splashed onto the table.

Wordlessly, Ayla handed her sister the bankbook.

"Is this all?" said Arlene, looking with disgust at the total amount she would receive.

"I told you, my sister, I don't have a lot of money. That's all I have," said Ayla patiently.

Although Arlene was difficult to deal with, Ayla would never turn her away, because of the gratitude she felt towards the Woodsen family for adopting her.

Otherwise, she would have been left out on the streets to starve.

Arlene suddenly said, "Is Brian treating you badly? Doesn't he give you a large allowance? If he's that kind of man, it's fortunate I didn't marry him. By the way, have you had s*x with him?"

Ayla froze, stunned and humiliated.

A lot of people had said that Brian was the devil, and now Arlene was saying the same thing but instead of telling him to his face, they avoided him.

Was this the reason why she became the substitute bride of her sister?

"I see," said Arlene, smirking at the look on Ayla's face.

"Well, don't become bitter, Ayla. In the end it's still good to have a man. Just try to enjoy yourself!"

Without saying goodbye, she stood and walked out of the coffee shop, leaving her half-empty cup of coffee on the table.

For a long time, Ayla just sat there, miserable and lost in thought.

Finally, with a heavy sigh, she decided it was time to return to the villa.

On her way out, she ran into Molly and another well-dressed, wealthy-looking woman as they were entering the coffee shop.

"Ms. Woodsen, what a coincidence! Are you here for coffee alone or waiting for someone?" asked Molly spitefully.

She glared at Ayla, recalling the words she'd said to her the last time they met.

She thought, "This woman should be embarrassed to run into me in public! But of course, she's shameless..."

"I was just leaving," Ayla said, flushing.

She thought, "Molly must be very happy now. I wonder if Toby is also doing well?"

If so, that was enough for her, Ayla decided.

"Oh? Really?" drawled Molly, wrinkling her nose.

"Are you about to go and meet some man? Or perhaps you already did."

Smiling coldly at Ayla, Molly took the arm of her mother, Miley, and guided her to a nearby seat.

Miley turned to look at Ayla's receding figure as she left.

"Molly, how did you come to know a woman like that?" she asked her daughter.

"Mom, stop," Molly groaned as they sat down.

“I have nothing but contempt for that b***h. Let’s not ruin the day by talking about her.”

Molly gestured for a waitress to come over so they could place their orders.

As long as Toby stayed with her, she wouldn’t give a d**n about that b***h.

He had been going to the villa every day to spend time with her recently.

Well, what more could she ask for? Meanwhile, Ayla headed for the nearest bus station.

But instead of catching a ride, she just stayed in the station, feeling gloomy.

It was a cloudy day, and soon, it began raining heavily.

Ayla brought out her cell phone and opened the contact list.

There was only one number saved on her phone.

She took a deep breath and thought, “I have to stop moping around. I need to face my circumstances as bravely as I can.”

Before she could dial the number, the phone rang. It was Brian.

As soon as she answered, she heard his furious voice on the other end of the line.

“Where are you? Why aren’t you back yet?”

“I...I’m at the bus station. I’m on my way back to the villa right now,” she replied.

Ayla realized that she had been outside for much longer than she’d originally intended.

But it still wasn’t enough.

Even now, she wished she could stay out here just a bit longer, so she could breathe freely.

The villa was palatial and luxurious, but she did not feel at home in that place.

It might resemble a castle, but to her, it was a prison. Inside, she was completely at Brian’s mercy.

“Which bus station?” Brian demanded.

She told him.

Soon, she caught sight of Brian’s car speeding towards her in the rain. It came to a stop beside her.

Chapter 34: I Can’t Say No

Ayla sat in the car as Brian drove her back.

Outside, the rain was getting heavier and heavier on their way to the villa.

As soon as they pulled up the driveway, Maria came out with an umbrella and greeted them, “Mr. Clark, Mrs. Clark, welcome back.”

“Thank you for driving me home,” Ayla said as she walked alongside Brian into the house.

“You can ask the driver to take you anywhere in the future,” Brian replied.

He went straight to the sofa in the living room and sat down.

“No, thanks. I won’t go out again.”

There was clear disappointment and despair in Ayla’s tone.

“Are you sure? I thought you didn’t like it here.”

Brian didn’t even look at her as he spoke and his voice sounded cold.

He could instantly tell what she was thinking, especially since Ayla could never really hide her feelings. He knew exactly what she thought and wanted to say.

“Mr. Clark?”

“What did he mean?” she wondered.

Could she finally get in and out of the estate freely?

“As I said, as long as you know perfectly well what you should and shouldn’t do outside, you can go out as you please.”

After all, Brian could easily learn wherever she was with a phone call.

With his permission, Ayla went back to school.

She even gave Brian her schedule even though she knew that he wouldn’t even read it.

The driver, Lyle, picked her up every day.

She would go to school whenever she had classes and would stay in the villa during her days off.

She seldom went to the library now.

She only went there whenever she needed to borrow some specific books and references.

“Mrs. Clark, dinner is ready.”

When Maria went upstairs, she saw Ayla sitting in front of her desk and reading a book.

Maria immediately thought, “She’s such a good girl! I don’t understand why Mr. Clark doesn’t like her? Why does he ignore her every time?”

“Thank you, Maria. I’ll be right there.”

Ayla turned off the light in her room and asked, “Won’t he come back tonight?”

“Mr. Clark is on a business trip,” Maria replied.

Apparently, Brian didn’t even inform her of his plans.

“Okay.”

Ayla sat alone at the table and looked at the empty seat that he would usually occupy.

Wasn't it better to stay in the villa without him? Why was there a sense of emptiness in her heart?

"Are you worried about Mr. Clark?" Maria asked when she saw Ayla lost in her thoughts.

"Don't worry. It's usual for Mr. Clark to go on long business trips. He'll be with Miss Anna anyway. She will take good care of him."

"Miss Anna is close to him, isn't she?"

While she wasn't allowed to stay in his room and sleep beside him, Anna could do all of these and more.

Once Brian was asleep, Ayla must always head back to her room.

She was different from Anna.

She was nothing but a plaything for him, while he treated Anna as his lover.

Why was this causing pain in her heart? Did she have feelings for him? How was that possible? She was always so scared of him.

"Mr. Clark, it's already late. Are you still going back to the villa?" Anna gave Brian a curious look.

At that point, they had been on a business trip for a week.

But although they had been together every day, Maria would always call him to report about Ms. Woodsen.

"You must be tired after spending so many days with me. Go home and have a good rest," Brian said calmly, stretching out his hand to smoothen her hair.

"Okay, good night." Anna leaned over and kissed him on the lips.

The black car drove into the villa in the dark night.

From the ground, Brian could clearly see a dim light coming from one of the rooms on the second floor.

It was late.

Why wasn't she in bed? Standing at the door of her room, Brian looked at the woman who fell asleep on her desk.

Her long hair looked soft under the gentle light.

Her lithe figure was clothed in a powder pink nightdress.

The style of the nightdress was old-fashioned, but she looked quite lovely in it.

After noticing the open book in front of her, Brian took it away and examined the notes she left on it with a pen.

Suddenly, Ayla woke up and stared at the man beside her.

“You...you’re back.”

“Were you waiting for me?”

Brian put down her book. He knew that she seldom stayed up so late.

“I didn’t know you would come back today.”

Ayla stood straight and looked at his tired face.

“Well, I...You can go and get some rest now!”

But instead of listening to her, Brian leisurely sat on the sofa and asked, “Are you driving me away? Or do you want me to stay?”

Ayla didn’t answer.

She knew that he would be unhappy no matter what she said. And after seeing his exhausted expression, she decided that it was not a good idea to provoke him.

“Why won’t you answer me?” Brian asked as he looked up at her.

“This is your villa. I have no right to say anything.” Ayla felt a little annoyed.

Why was he always pushing her around? He was so forceful.

Sure, he had not done anything cruel recently and he did allow her to go back to school.

But every time she was close to thinking well of him, he would always ruin any chances of her liking him.

“I haven’t seen you in a few days and it seems like you’re beginning to be disobedient now.”

Brian then knocked on the table beside him.

Immediately, Ayla fetched a pitcher and poured him a glass of water. If he wanted a drink, he could just say so. Why was he being a jerk on purpose?

“Bring me coffee.” Brian didn’t even look at the water in front of him.

“You can’t have coffee!”

Ayla took a look at the clock and saw that it was already past midnight.

She wondered why he still wanted to drink coffee. Didn’t he want to sleep?

“Are you ignoring my orders?” Brian reached for her hand and pulled her to sit on the sofa beside him.

“Yes, it’s not a good idea to drink coffee at this hour.”

Although Ayla had always been obedient, she wouldn’t follow him regarding this matter. She was only doing this for his own good.

A smirk appeared on Brian’s lips.

“Then what should we do now?”

“It’s very late.”

Recognizing the lustful look in his eyes, Ayla immediately shrank backwards.

“Well, what if I don’t want to go to sleep and I want you?”

She instantly understood what he meant. She was his wife and she needed to fulfill her duty as a wife.

Ayla froze.

“I can’t say no, can I?”

But before she could wait for a response, he had already held her in his arms and pressed his body against hers.

After having s*x, Ayla leaned weakly against the sofa while Brian was in the bathroom.

As he stepped out of the shower, he was only wearing a robe and he looked seductive with his damp hair.

She held her breath and gripped the thin blanket tightly as he stared at her.

“Don’t worry. I’ll eat the contraceptive pill,” she said in a weak voice.

He didn’t want a baby and neither did she.

Besides, he would never allow her to carry his child.

This was the one thing they both agreed on, and she never dared forget it.

At school, Ayla still felt pretty much alone.

She didn’t hang around in the campus and would prefer to head home directly once classes were dismissed.

But one day, just as she was walking out carrying a few books as usual, she saw Toby standing by the school gate.

Pretending not to see him, Ayla walked hurriedly towards the car on the other side.

“Lala! Lala!”

Toby immediately came over as soon as he noticed her.

He heard that she had returned to school.

Perhaps Brian had really kept his promise, but he had to confirm it with his own eyes.

He grabbed her arm, but she immediately shook him off.

“Toby, please don’t do this.”

“Are you hiding from me? Is it because of Brian? Has he forbidden you from talking to me?” Toby looked at her.

Why was she hiding from him? They were not really in a relationship now. Did she really need to avoid him?

Chapter 35: She Lost The Right To Love Him

Ayla didn't mean to hide from Toby, but she thought that seeing him and talking to him was completely unnecessary.

Meeting him again only made her sad.

She loved him so much that she couldn't easily forget her feelings for him.

It was unfortunate that he had to be with another woman.

Besides, that other woman also cared for him very much.

However, Ayla had already lost the right to love him since she was Brian's wife now.

For so many years, she thought that he was the love of her life.

Of course, it broke her heart to see him again this way.

She wanted to forget, run away, and hide because there could be no future between them.

“Lala, look at me! Why won't you look at me?”

Toby held her by the arms and shook her. Why was she avoiding him? Was it because of Brian or Molly?

“Toby, don't do this. Other people might misunderstand.”

Ayla tried to struggle and protest, but she felt helpless against him.

“Then tell me, how have you been these days? Why weren't you answering your phone? Did you change your number?”

Since Toby couldn't get in touch with her, he had been feeling anxious and worried recently.

Now he finally saw her in front of him, but she was trying to avoid him.

This made him sad.

“Toby, from now on, we can no longer talk or see each other. Just pretend that you never came back, okay? Can you do that?”

It might have sounded like she had lost all her love for him, but the truth was that she felt like she could no longer love anyone.

Perhaps if Molly weren't around, she could continue to love Toby.

Or if she only had her freedom, nothing would stand in the way of their relationship.

But at this moment, she had nothing. What right had she to love him?

“Are you in love with him, Lala? That man is a devil. He will never love you!”

Toby feared that she had already fallen in love with Brian.

He knew that his feelings for her had never changed.

But what about her? Had she given up so easily? Was she willing to spend the rest of her life with that man? Eternally humiliated and mistreated by him? Ayla knew what kind of person Brian was.

How could he love her? Brian wasn't capable of loving anyone.

He was a heartless man.

And even if he could fall in love, he was not likely to fall for someone like her.

“I know. I've always known that about him. But I still can't see you. I just can't! You have a fiancée now,”

Ayla said as she stared at him with melancholic eyes.

They had better not see each other again.

This way, she wouldn't miss him and be heartbroken anymore.

She could've easily faced her future without worry.

She was determined to brave each hardship alone.

Besides, she wouldn't want to ruin his shot at happiness.

She knew what it was like to dream of family, friendship, and affection since childhood.

Similarly, she had waited so many years for love and romance.

But in the end, she came up with nothing.

“You don't want to see me because of Molly? Is this all because of her? Did she say something to you that day?”

Toby had a feeling that Molly had said something bad to her that time.

Otherwise, she wouldn't have been in such a hurry to leave.

He was certain that Lala had loved him ever since.

If it weren't for Molly, there wouldn't be any obstacle between them.

Even if Brian tried to get in their way, he couldn't use his power to abuse Lala for the rest of her life.

“It has nothing to do with Molly or Brian. Aren't we much better apart? I have to go home now.”

Ayla couldn't risk going back late.

“Do you have to go back to him? Do you know that he keeps many women around him?”

Despite everything, Toby didn't wish for Ayla to feel like she was being cheated on.

She had already suffered so much since she was a child. Must her future be difficult as well?

"So what? It's none of your business whether or not I see other women, right?"

Both of them heard a magnetic voice from out of nowhere.

Ayla and Toby turned to look at the man standing a few steps away.

'Why did he come? What did he see? What did he hear?' Ayla was shocked.

There was no telling what Brian was thinking based on his expressionless, handsome face.

"Mr. Clark, if you don't want to care for Lala, stop mistreating her. Let her go. I can make her happy."

Toby held Ayla in his arms.

Since he couldn't be bothered with Lala, Brian should back off and leave her to him.

"Mr. Brown, the woman you are holding is my wife, at least for now. Don't you think you're going a little too far?"

It was just a sudden impulse that brought Brian to Melody Road.

He never expected that he would encounter this spectacular scene.

"But do you treat her as your wife? When you asked her to wash dishes in the club, did you treat her as your wife then? When you were hooking up with another woman, were you treating her as your wife?"

Toby had often seen Brian with another woman in the club.

Completely ignoring his words, Brian walked up to Ayla and asked, "Can I trust you, Mrs. Clark?"

He had given her freedom to leave the house and go back to school.

But it didn't mean that she was free to meet up with Toby.

Ayla pushed Toby away and moved closer to Brian.

"Will you believe me?"

"Let's go!"

Brian put his arm around her waist and escorted her towards his parked car.

Toby followed and asked, "Lala, are you really going with him?"

"Toby, you should go back now! I'm fine. You've seen it for yourself."

Ayla smiled at him as she spoke.

She wanted to let him know that she was fine without him.

In the next couple of seconds, she was inside Brian's car.

She kept her gaze on the road and dared not look behind.

Throughout the drive, she didn't say a word, fearing that the man in the driver's seat would get angry for no reason.

"Are you upset? Is it because I came and prevented you from catching up with your ex-lover?"

At this time, the couple had reached the villa.

Brian stopped Ayla just as she was about to head upstairs.

"No.Nothing happened between me and him.You saw the whole thing, didn't you?"

Ayla turned around and gave him a firm glare.

With his arms crossed over his chest, Brian slightly raised his eyes and said, "I hope that what happened today will be the first and last of its kind.If I catch you again with another man, the consequences would be dire.Do you understand?"

He was threatening her again.But she had to listen to him, hadn't she?

"Don't think that you can threaten me like this just because you have money and power!"

Ayla was so enraged that she had to retort.

"Well, you can always evade my threats.If you have the guts, that is."

Brian fished a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and lit one up, just as he was sitting down on the sofa.

Meanwhile, Ayla turned around and went upstairs.

Sitting before her desk, she propped her chin with her hands and looked out of the window.

What was she doing just now? It was true that he saw her with Toby that afternoon.

But Brian didn't yell at her nor did he stop her from going out tomorrow.

Why was she angry with him? After around ten minutes, she went downstairs and stood in a corner of the living room.

"Mr.Clark, I'm sorry.I didn't mean what I said."

"I don't want to hear apologies.I'll believe you're sorry when I see it."

Brian preferred action over words.

Ayla then took a deep breath and headed straight to the kitchen.

When she came back, she was holding a cup of coffee, which she placed in front of Brian.

"Are you doing this just because you want to keep your freedom or is it because you want to see your ex-lover again?"

It seemed that Brian wouldn't accept her peace offering.

Chapter 36: Making Decisions About Lala

Ayla stared at him unhappily.

"If you don't want me to go out, then stop me! You make all the rules, don't you? It's up to you whether I can leave or not!"

"Good," said Brian coldly.

"You understand what your situation is."

He was sure that Ayla and Toby's meeting at the school this afternoon had been the first time.

After today, Toby probably wouldn't be so blatant anymore, even if he wanted to see her again.

Meanwhile, Toby went to see Molly.

She met him at the door of the villa.

"You're back! Where have you been? I called the company and they said that you left work early today."

"I just had something to deal with," he replied evasively.

"Why? Is anything wrong?"

Molly did not want to mention Toby and Ayla's relationship.

She preferred to pretend as though nothing had ever happened between them.

"No, I just missed you," she said brightly.

"I thought you might be coming home early when I heard you left the office."

She slid her arm around his waist and led him to the living room.

They sat down together on the sofa.

Hayden was also in the living room.

He put down the newspaper he was reading and looked at the two of them.

"Molly, don't nag Toby. You know how busy he is with work. He's already canceled so many social engagements recently."

"Dad, don't call me a nag," Molly pouted.

She added, "You know I don't mind him working. I just want him home instead of socializing outside after work!"

After all, Molly was not blind, nor was she stupid.

How could she fail to notice that most of Toby's so-called social engagements required him to go out with other businessmen to flirt with women in bars and pay women in brothels? She did not like it at all.

Toby belonged to her.

If any other woman dared to touch him, Molly vowed she would make that woman pay for her mistake.

Hayden sighed.

"Toby has no choice, Molly. It's inevitable. If he refuses to participate, it will have a negative impact on his career."

Turning to look at Toby, he said, "By the way, I know you're in charge of most of the company's affairs now, and I don't want to interfere. But don't you think we've made too many concessions to Mr. Clark, just to get him to cooperate with us?"

Toby wasn't surprised to hear the question.

He had allowed the company's annual revenue to decrease for Ayla's sake.

Hayden was still the leader of the company, and when it came to business matters, he would prioritize his own interests ahead of any other concerns.

"Hyde Group in general is not easy to deal with, and Mr. Clark in particular is known to be difficult," Toby replied.

"We must pay a steep price if we want this project, but if we do well, we stand to reap great benefits from this deal."

Although Toby spoke calmly, he was not as confident as he seemed.

But he needed to find an excuse that Hayden would accept.

He was willing to make such a decision for Lala.

He was worried that Brian would bully her again because of their meeting earlier this afternoon.

He decided he needed to find time to talk to Brian.

"I understand. Very well, I will leave it up to you," Hayden answered.

He hoped Toby was handling things well.

He'd once been seriously ill before, and since then, he hadn't been able to go to the company as much as he wanted to.

He only went when there was an urgent meeting, or some matter that required his personal attention.

"Dad, you just need to trust Toby. You and Mom should just focus on preparing for our wedding," chided Molly.

She and Toby had decided to get married before the new year, and she was sure that grand preparations were ongoing for the event.

The wedding of the only daughter of the Smith family would need to be a magnificent affair.

“We are already preparing,” Hayden said, smiling.

“I suppose we will have to watch our only daughter leave our family...”

Molly immediately put a comforting hand on her father’s knee.

“You’ve always wanted me to be happy, and now I am! I’ve grown up. I have someone I love. Our marriage will be a success, just like yours. Anyway, we will still live here after we get married, so I’m definitely still part of this family.”

Only after they got married could Molly rest assured that Toby belonged to her.

Since she was a child, her parents had doted on her and given her everything she wanted. She didn’t like the feeling of losing anything.

Miley joined them in the living room.

“Dear, take a look at some of these brochures for dressmakers and s*****s, for your wedding dress and photo shoots. You should take your pre-wedding photos as soon as possible,” she said.

“Thanks, Mom!” said Molly brightly.

“Toby, let’s go up to my room and look at these materials privately, all right?”

She took Toby’s hand, and the two of them went upstairs.

When Miley was alone with Hayden in the living room, she turned to him and said pensively, “Honey, don’t you worry that Molly seems to be a little too attached to Toby?”

She appreciated the work her prospective son-in-law did for the company, but as a mother, she couldn’t help but notice that it was Molly who clung to him; Toby himself was more lukewarm towards her daughter.

Hayden, however, dismissed her concerns.

“There’s nothing to worry about,” he said reassuringly, returning to his newspaper.

“As long as Molly is happy, everything will be fine.”

Over the next few days, Ayla worried that Brian would curtail her freedom, but he didn’t set any additional limitations on her movements.

She was still able to go to school. She arrived on time every day, and stayed as long as possible without rousing Brian’s suspicions, for she was eager to spend as much time as possible away from the villa.

One evening, Maria walked into Ayla’s bedroom and saw her poring over a large stack of books on her desk.

“Mrs. Clark, I just wanted to inform you that Mr. Clark won’t be coming home today,” she said.

“Would you like to have dinner now?”

“Sure, I’ll be right down,”

Ayla replied absently, still focused on her books.

She had already missed a lot of courses, and the date for examinations was approaching fast.

She was determined to pass, or else all her efforts over the past several months would be in vain.

While Ayla was busy studying, Brian was in the entertainment club, seated in the private upstairs room of the establishment.

Jaime sat across him.

He asked, “Mr.Clark, do you really think you’re going to see her here?”

“Well, hasn’t she come yet?”

Brian asked, looking downstairs through the French window.

“She will come.She often comes recently,” Jaime replied.

That bit of information frightened Jaime, who couldn’t believe that Arlene the same girl who had been dancing in the club and hooking up with different men every night was the real beloved daughter of the Woodsen family.

Ayla, as it turned out, was only a substitute.

She had been adopted long ago by Clayton’s wife.

Unfortunately, the wife had passed away soon after the adoption was finalized, but before her death she made Clayton promise to keep the child.

Ayla had been raised as a second daughter of the Woodsen family.

Brian had suspected for a while now that the woman in his villa was not Arlene.

By all accounts, Arlene was a wanton and experienced woman who loved partying and knew how to please men.

Ayla, on the other hand, clearly had no idea how to make men happy.

He’d learned that Ayla was a substitute as soon as he started investigating, but it took him a little longer to discover where to find the real Arlene.Now that he knew the truth, of course he wanted to meet the real daughter of the Woodsen family.

“Mr.Clark, once you confirm the truth about Arlene, will you let Ayla leave?” Jaime asked.

He thought that if Ayla was just an innocent substitute, then she should not be punished for what her family had done.

“Do you think I should let her go?” Brian said, raising his eyebrows.

But it actually didn’t matter to him what Jaime thought.

He had already decided to keep Ayla.

She was so stubborn that he wanted to show her she couldn't escape him.

"Mr. Clark, she is only a substitute... Or have you developed an interest in her?" Jaime asked.

To himself he thought, "If that woman is not Arlene, shouldn't he just let her go? Unless he has feelings for her!"

Brian scowled, then forced his face to return to its usual cold and indifferent expression.

"No," he snapped.

"But if she wants to pretend to be the real daughter of the Woodsen family, then she can keep being Miss Woodsen forever."

Jaime's brows furrowed with confusion, but before he could respond, there was a knock on the door.

Brian said, "Come in."

"Mr. Clark, Miss Lene has come," said the manager of the club in a deferential tone.

"Jaime, go to her and convince her to come up here," Brian ordered.

He put down his glass and went to stand in front of the French window, gesturing for the manager to point out Arlene in the crowd.

He looked down at the enchanting woman in the beautiful red dress.

Jaime watched him, feeling more confused than ever.

Was Brian interested in Arlene, after all? In fact, if they had seen the real Arlene who would become Brian's bride back then, all of them would have disagreed to the marriage.

Jaime went down and spoke to Arlene, and she quickly agreed to come with him to the private room upstairs.

"Who wants to see me?" she asked, smiling coquettishly.

"But you should know, I don't meet anyone casually."

She looked sideways at the gentleman beside her.

His expensive, tailored suit had convinced her it might be worth her time to see what he wanted.

"You'll understand as soon as you see him," Jaime answered.

He hid his frown, thinking, "She's just after money. Who does she think she is? She's greedy and self-centered"

Chapter 37: Can't Escape From His Control

Arlene looked at the man sitting in the middle, and he immediately attracted her attention.

His handsome face and unruly temperament made her red lips curved into a charming smile.

“Sir, are you looking for me?” she asked.

As she spoke, her fair arms clung to his arm.

“Miss Arlene Woodsen?”

His voice was so cold that Arlene felt like she froze for a moment.

Her brows furrowed, wondering how did this man know her real name.

She had always used the name Lene everywhere.

Even when she went abroad and went back, she had used the same name.

If this man knew who she was, it meant that he had investigated her.

But she didn't want to confirm her real identity to him.

“Sir, my name is Lene.”

She smiled seductively and leaned over to him.

“Really? Your father mustn't have told you who I am.”

Brian pushed Arlene away.

His sharp and deep-set eyes glared at her as if he could already see through her.

“Who...who are you?” she couldn't help asking.

She had never been a curious person, but this time, he aroused the spirit of inquiry in her.

“Miss Woodsen, let me tell you this. Your father helped you escape from my control and let your so-called sister be your substitute. Have you been living a comfortable and contented life since then? Enjoying your freedom? I heard that you come here almost every day. Should I thank you?”

Brian said coldly without taking his gaze away from her.

He noticed that the expression on her beautiful face slightly changed.

Was it fear? Back then, was she so scared of him that she let someone replace her? She must be very happy after that.

“You...you are Mr. Clark?”

Arlene's face turned deathly pale, and she leaned against the sofa feebly.

For a moment, she was too shocked to move.

She knew that Brian was so powerful, so she thought that he was a bad old man.

It never occurred to her that he was young, handsome, and so mature.

If she had known, she would never have refused to take the crown as Mrs. Clark.

“So you know me. That’s good then. You must also know why I’ve asked you to come here, right?”

Brian looked at her carefully, studying her features.

Indeed, she looked a lot like Clayton.

She was like the female version of him.

While Ayla, on the other hand, didn’t have even the slightest similarity to him.

“I…actually don’t know.”

If he had really investigated her, Arlene didn’t think that he asked her to come here to make her his legitimate wife.

“You don’t know? I’ll tell you then. Since you are the real daughter of the Woodsen family, it is your responsibility to pay off your father’s debt using your body,”

Brian explained clearly, looking straight into her eyes.

“Me? Why me? That b***h Ayla is already your wife, isn’t she? Can’t she satisfy you, Mr. Clark? Well, I must not be surprised. That woman has always been lifeless since she was a child.”

Arlene snorted coldly when she suddenly remembered her mother.

She had always believed that Ayla was a jinx.

If her mother didn’t adopt Ayla and bring her back to their home, her mother wouldn’t have died of illness.

Brian’s and Jaime’s expressions changed upon hearing what she said.

It turned out that Ayla was the humblest in the Woodsen family, so they sent her to Brian and made her suffer all his humiliation.

If he hadn’t investigated, would she take Arlene’s identity for the rest of her life?

“Miss Woodsen, no, maybe I should just call you Lene. Do you think I will need a woman like you?”

Brian walked up to her and added coldly, “All I need is for you to pay back the money the Woodsen family owes me.”

“Mr. Clark, let me be honest with you. I don’t know how to make money. But if you don’t mind, I’ll serve you well tonight. I’m sure you will be satisfied. What do you think?”

Arlene caressed his handsome face flirtatiously.

“I don’t need your service. But the guests who come here every night will definitely need it,” he said coldly, shaking her hand off.

“You want me to be a bar girl?” Arlene asked incredulously.

Of course, she didn’t want to.

Although she flirted with different men, not any man could just touch her casually.

“At least you’re smart enough to know.”

Brian hated being deceived and fooled the most.

But Clayton, Arlene, and Ayla conspired to do such things to him.

“No way!”

Arlene used Ayla as her substitute before because she didn’t want to lose her freedom.

And now that she was involved again, what would happen to her? She needed to be free to enjoy her time, her youth, and everything she had.

“Well, it’s not up to you.”

Brian sat down on the sofa and looked at Arlene.

He didn’t only want to keep her, but he also wouldn’t let Ayla go. The Woodsen family caused this to happen.

He didn’t do anything wrong, so they couldn’t blame him.

He was a man who could do everything he wished and could get everything he wanted, by all means, be it unscrupulous.

“No, I won’t do it! Mr. Clark, if my father owes you money, go to him and ask him to pay you.”

Arlene would never agree to become a lowly bar girl.

She had high ambitions in life.

Her main goal was to find a rich man she liked and live a luxurious life.

Not to stay in this bar and let any random man touch her.

After all, she believed in her own charm.

“Do you think I will let go of you so easily?”

Brian had already known that she would refuse.

But for a man like him, it was impossible for her to escape.

If she was able to enter this place so easily, then she would find it difficult to go out.

Arlene turned around and ran to the door.

But when she opened it, two burly figures stood in front of her.

She turned to Brian and snapped, “Mr. Clark, what is the meaning of this? You have to let me go. Ayla can also do what you want. I’m sure she can make a lot of money for you.”

It was only then that she realized that she had offended him.

He might be good-looking on the outside, but she knew that he was not a good man.

He was someone she could not afford to offend, let alone resist.

“She is my wife now, so I can do whatever I want to her. But you are different. You are the real daughter of the Woodsen family. No one is more responsible to pay for Clayton’s debt than you.”

As he looked down at Arlene, who was now kneeling in front of him and begging for mercy, Brian’s heart didn’t soften a bit.

For him, she didn’t deserve to be pitied at all.

Right now, she was wearing designer clothes, and she looked charming and enchanting.

But although he was a normal man, he felt nothing but disdain towards her.

“Mr. Clark, please, don’t give me to them. I don’t want them to touch me.”

As she spoke, Arlene glanced at the two men walking towards her.

Their wretched faces and the obscene look in their eyes gave her goose bumps.

She couldn’t let these men insult her.

“Then you’d better stay here quietly. Before you dare to escape, think about it a million times. I assure you, the consequences are unimaginable.”

Brian then stood up from the sofa and kicked her away rudely.

Arlene couldn’t do anything but just watch Brian’s back dejectedly.

Was there really no way for her to escape? She didn’t want to be rotten in this place and be bullied by men all the time.

As the real daughter of the Woodsen family, she had a noble bloodline.

Although their family was now suffering from huge losses, it wouldn’t change that fact. She was not like Ayla, who was so humble and easy to bully. Looking at Arlene, Jaime suddenly felt sorry for Ayla.

It turned out that she was not pretending. She was really innocent

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Arlene asked.

She stood up and walked in front of Jaime.

“Do you like me? How about you being my first guest then?”

At least, the man in front of her was able to attract her attention.

He was also handsome and elegant.

But of course, since he worked for Brian, he must be a bad guy too.

However, at this moment, she didn't care whether he was a good man or a bad man.

As long as he was rich, powerful, and handsome, she would not refuse.

She was even willing to take the initiative.

"B***h!"

Jaime shook her hand off, turned around, and walked out of the room.

In the villa, Ayla dragged her exhausted body downstairs.

The living room was dark and quiet.

In such a big villa like this, she always felt empty and lonely.

Brian didn't come home often, and she also didn't ask.

He only came back whenever he wanted.

She pressed a button on the wall with her slender and fair finger, and the whole living room turned bright.

But she was utterly shocked, and she froze when she saw a figure on the sofa.

Chapter 38: He Doesn't Want A Baby

"Do you want to hide after seeing me?"

From the corner of his eye, Brian saw that Ayla turned around and was about to leave. Ayla turned around again.

"No. I just don't want to drink water all of a sudden."

If she had known that he was downstairs, she wouldn't get out even of her room.

She didn't want to see him after all.

His return meant that he wanted to have s*x with her again.

The pain that she felt every time they did it had already scared her.

"Come here,"

Brian commanded emotionlessly.

"Mr. Clark, do you need anything?"

It was so late, and there were no servants in the main villa at this hour, so she should be the one to serve him.

"Are you really used to being ordered to do things?"

Brian couldn't help wondering what kind of treatment she had received from the Woodsen family that she had become so obedient.

She could have refused to be Arlene's substitute, but she did not.

She agreed to marry him and suffered without any complaints.

Ayla gripped the corner of her shirt tightly. Did she do something to annoy him?

"Yes, Mr. Clark. So I would rather you treat me as a servant."

With the way Brian was treating her, she thought that it was better to be a servant.

She didn't mind doing the laundry, cooking meals, and cleaning the entire villa as long as she could live her life in peace, and she had freedom.

"Why? Is something wrong? I think you've been living a good life in the past few days. Have you already gotten impatient?"

He didn't like her stubbornness, provocation, modest concession, and submission.

"Although the Woodsen family has sold me to you, I still want my freedom. Can I have it back from tomorrow onwards?"

If Brian didn't say those words just now, she wouldn't have the courage to tell him how she felt.

He would get angry at her for sure.

But she'd better tell him directly than let him find out by himself.

"I want to go to work starting tomorrow. I can just give you my schedule once I know my working time,"

Ayla said in one breath after plucking up all her courage.

But as she spoke, she never dared to look at his eyes in fear that his sharp gaze would interrupt her.

She had given all her savings to Arlene, so she had to start working again.

Otherwise, she would become so penniless in the future that she wouldn't even afford a bus fare.

"You've decided to go to work before telling me? I was only away for a few days, and you've already learned to make decisions on your own?"

Actually, Brian didn't have any objections at all.

After knowing that she was Ayla and not Arlene, he wanted her to do whatever she liked.

Ayla shook her head.

"No, it's not like that. I'm not making decisions on my own. I just think that I also need to do something."

She didn't want to be a parasite, let alone to him.

And he could abandon her at any time, so she could only rely on herself.

"Well, as long as you behave yourself, I can give you freedom."

Brian pulled her closer to him and wrapped his arms around her slender waist.

She could actually just be his wife and do nothing.

He could give her everything.

There was no need for her to go to school, work, or show up in public.

However, she was different, so he didn't want to stop her.

But she must still be his woman.

"I know."

Ayla nodded. She knew that she should never cross the line because she was under his control. She lived in his house, so she had no choice.

Brian stubbed out the cigarette in his hand and held her in his arms. His sudden intimacy made her whole body stiffened.

"You seem so scared every time I hold you. Is he the only one who doesn't frighten you?"

He might not be aware of it, but his words were full of jealousy.

Ayla didn't want to waste her time explaining.

He wouldn't listen to her anyway.

Besides, she couldn't refuse him if he wanted to have s*x with her.

"Well, tell me, how did he treat you?"

Seeing that she remained silent, he leaned much closer to her.

"Not here, please."

Although she knew that there were only the two of them in the villa, she still didn't feel comfortable having s*x with him on the sofa in the living room.

Brian h****d his long arm around her neck.

"Do you want to pick a place?"

His sneer made her tremble all over.

"No, I don't. And even if I say so, you won't agree anyway."

She lowered her head, not wanting to meet his eyes.

"It's good that you know."

Brian continued to approach her wantonly until she was pinned on the sofa, leaving her no space to step back.

About an hour later, Ayla weakly dragged her sore body upstairs.

He followed behind and stood at the door, watching her take out a piece of medicine from the drawer and eat it.

“Don’t stare at me like that. I don’t want to give birth to your child at all,” she said.

He was a devil, and she didn’t want her future child to be like him.

Seeing the disdain in her eyes made Brian wonder how much resentment and hatred she had towards him.

“Whether I want to have a child with you or not is not up for you to decide. But don’t worry, I don’t want a child either.”

He had experienced something before that he didn’t want to experience again.

And it made his heart as hard as a stone that he didn’t know how to love or care about anyone or anything anymore.

It was unlikely for him to have a child.

“I understand.”

Ayla was not as cruel as him.

No matter how unwilling she was, she could never be ruthless.

Brian frowned when his gaze swept over the stack of books on the desk.

He thought inwardly, “This woman has the energy to study and work, but she has no energy to please me”

The next morning, Ayla woke up and went downstairs, but didn’t see Brian anywhere.

Maria came to her room and brought her breakfast.

“Mrs. Clark, breakfast is ready.”

“Where is Mr. Clark?” she asked at once.

Brian always got up early, so she thought that he should be downstairs at this time.

“Mr. Clark left early today,”

Maria replied while putting the tray with a bowl of porridge and other dishes on the table.

Ayla was a little surprised.

He came back so late last night, but he went out so early today.

Didn’t he get tired? Maybe she really couldn’t be compared to him.

“Mrs. Clark, Mr. Clark is always busy with his work. He can sleep for only a few hours a day. Don’t worry. You will get used to it,”

Maria said when she saw the worry in Ayla's eyes.

Later that day, after coming out of her school, Ayla took out a business card from her pocket.

It was her new part-time job.

She would be working as a photography assistant in a wedding photography studio.

This kind of part-time job paid better than working as a waitress or dishwasher in a restaurant.

"Hi! Are you Ayla? Come here."

The manager of the studio welcomed her enthusiastically.

He seemed to be full of energy.

He even gave her a tour of the studio and told her some basic information about it.

She had the same work experience before, so she got familiar with her tasks quickly.

After Ayla's shift, the manager said to her, "Ayla, you did well today. You impressed me on your first day. By the way, we have a VIP customer coming this weekend. I need you to work the whole day on Saturday, okay?"

The manager checked his schedule, and this Saturday was the most important day.

He couldn't afford to offend the Smith Group.

As a matter of fact, he had guaranteed them the best service, so he wanted to give them the most satisfying sets of pre-wedding photos.

Ayla had no objection at all.

She didn't have classes on weekends anyway.

Chapter 39: Deliberately Making Things Difficult For Her

Saturday came.

Ayla woke up early, took a shower, and changed into a set of simple casual clothes.

She also tied her hair into a ponytail and didn't put on any makeup.

"Mrs. Clark, are you going out? Today is Saturday,"

Maria asked upon seeing her downstairs.

Ayla didn't have classes on weekends, so she usually slept until she would naturally wake up.

"Maria, I have work today, remember? My manager said a VIP customer has booked us today, so as the assistant, I have to be there,"

Ayla replied with a smile.

Unlike other people, she didn't look troubled or unhappy despite having to work on a weekend.

“Oh, yes, now I remember. But you must eat something before you go. Wait a moment.”

Maria then went to the kitchen, heated up the milk, and made a cheeseburger for Ayla.

“Thank you, Maria,”

Ayla said as she took the glass of milk and the cheeseburger from Maria.

She drank up the milk and put the glass down on the table.

“I’m late. I’ll just eat this in the car,” she said, referring to the cheeseburger in her hand.

While in the car, Ayla ate her cheeseburger bit by bit.

It was a good thing that Maria was thoughtful enough to give her something to eat.

Her manager told her that they would be busy all day today, so she couldn’t go to work with an empty stomach.

Otherwise, she wouldn’t have the strength to run around taking photos.

“Mrs. Clark, water.”

Lyle, Brian’s driver, handed her a bottle of water.

“Thank you, Lyle.”

She took the bottle of imported mineral water, looked at it, and held it tightly in her hand.

For her, it was such a luxury.

“That’s Mr. Clark’s favorite mineral water, so I always keep a few bottles in the car,”

Lyle explained when he noticed her hesitation and reluctance.

Ayla nodded and looked at the bottle in her hand again.

It turned out that he had a favorite brand of drinking water too.

She thought that he only liked drinking strong black coffee.

Meanwhile, standing in front of the floor-to-ceiling French window, Toby seemed preoccupied.

He had a responsibility, and he had to face it.

There was no escape from it anymore.

Hayden had announced at the anniversary banquet that Toby was getting married to Molly and now was the right time.

“Toby, are you okay? What are you thinking about? Hurry, change your clothes now. We have to go. We can’t be late,”

Molly said while taking out a set of casual clothes for him.

Today was their appointment for their pre-wedding photo shoot, so they had to be at the wedding photography studio at this time.

When the car pulled over in front of the studio, Ayla thanked Lyle and jumped out.

“Hi, Ayla,”

Alice Jefferson, one of the staff, greeted Ayla while looking at the car outside.

She was actually surprised to see Ayla getting out of a luxury car.

“Hello, Alice,” Ayla greeted back.

“Am I late?”

She looked at the manager walking towards them.

Alice’s eyes were still fixed on the car.

Ayla had already expected that her coworkers would wonder why a mere assistant photographer like her would ride a luxury car.

But she couldn’t do anything about it.

If she didn’t allow Lyle to drive her to work, she was afraid that Brian would be unhappy.

As much as possible, she didn’t want to do something that might annoy him.

“No, you’re not late yet. Is the car outside yours?” Alice said after a while.

“Nope. Someone just gave me a free ride.”

Ayla’s reason might sound lame, but it was indeed true that the car was not hers.

However, she couldn’t tell Alice anything about her situation.

At this moment, the manager was already in front of them.

“Ladies, get ready. Mr. and Mrs. Brown will be here soon.”

Toby and Molly arrived at the studio at ten o’clock.

“Toby, let’s go inside. This wedding photography studio is the best,”

Molly said with a hint of excitement in her eyes.

“As long as you like it, I’m okay with it.”

Toby had never objected to any decision that Molly made.

“No. Not because I like it, you will be okay with it. You should like it yourself too.”

Molly wanted them to have mutual feelings in everything.

The two of them walked inside the studio, arm in arm.

As soon as the manager saw them, he immediately welcomed them with a friendly smile.

“Mr.Brown, Mrs.Brown, you’re here.This way, please.”

When they were both seated on the sofa, Ayla brought two cups of tea at once.

“Sir, ma’am, have some tea first.”

Toby seemed to hear a familiar voice, so he raised his head and looked at the woman in front of him.

And he was surprised to see the woman he had been wanting to see every day.

“Lala? What are you doing here?”

He noticed that she was wearing the staff’s uniform of the studio.

Was she working here? Shouldn’t she be with Brian? She should either be at school or in the Clark family’s villa at this moment.

“Toby?”

Ayla’s whole body froze as a trace of surprise was also written all over her face.

She didn’t expect that the VIP customer her manager was talking about was Toby.

He and Molly were getting married, so naturally, they needed to have a pre-wedding photoshoot.

But why did her heart seem to ache at the thought of it? Molly also saw Ayla, and she couldn’t help but secretly give a snort of disgust.

Of all people, why did they have to meet Ayla here? And seeing how Toby stared at Ayla, she got furious at once.

“Ayla? What a coincidence! I didn’t expect that you work here.”

She clung to Toby’s arm, raised her head, and glared at Ayla.

Indeed, it was a coincidence.

But Ayla didn’t like it at all.

Yes, she couldn’t forget Toby, and she had been wanting to see him again.

But she didn’t intend to meet him in this kind of situation.

Molly didn’t want to give Toby and Ayla a chance to talk to each other, so she asked Ayla to accompany her to choose a wedding dress for the photo shoot.

“What do you think of this one?” she casually asked, showing Ayla a white wedding dress.

Ayla shook her head.

“Miss Smith, this one is...”

“Please call me Mrs.Brown,”

Molly corrected her, throwing the wedding dress away.

“Okay, Mrs.Brown.”

Ayla was just a mere assistant while Molly was a VIP customer.

She had to be extra courteous in front of her.

“That’s better.Then what kind of wedding dress do you think will Toby like me to wear? You choose one for me.”

Molly looked at her.

“You are very much familiar with him, aren’t you? You know him well.”

Ayla didn’t say anything.

She quietly walked to another wardrobe and took out a bright red handmade strapless wedding dress from the hanger.

“Miss...Mrs.Brown, you have snow-white skin, so I think red suits you well.This will look good on you.”

She chose the wedding dress for Molly.

Toby once told her that he loved seeing her wearing red.

He even told her that he would give her a red wedding dress in the future.

His words still lingered in her mind.

However, things had changed between them.

They had to separate.

She had to marry Brian while he had to marry Molly.

“Oh, really? But I think this one is too bright and old fashioned.I still prefer white.”

Molly disgustedly shook off the wedding dress that Ayla handed to her.

Actually, she found the red wedding dress lovely too.

But since Ayla chose it for her, she pretended not to like it.

Of course, Ayla knew that Molly deliberately refused what she chose.

Although she didn’t know what kind of wedding dress Molly liked, she believed in her own taste.

It had been a long time, but Molly had not decided what to wear yet.

She declined all the wedding dresses that Ayla recommended to her.

Toby ran out of patience, and he couldn't wait any longer in the lounge, so he went to the second floor where the collection of wedding dresses was.

And his eyes widened in shock when he saw so many wedding dresses scattered on the floor.

"No! I don't like that. Don't you have good taste? I don't understand why this shop has hired you. You don't even know how to choose what wedding dress suits your client. Call someone else to serve me here. I don't want you anymore!" Molly yelled.

Toby witnessed and heard everything.

"Such an ignorant woman!"

She arrogantly stepped on the wedding dress that Ayla was about to pick up.

"Molly..."

Toby called out her name, trying to hold back his anger.

How could she treat Ayla like this? As soon as Molly heard his voice, she immediately put on a smile and turned to him.

"Toby, why are you here?"

She couldn't help feeling nervous.

Actually, she wanted to ask how long he had been there.

How much did he see and hear? However, he didn't answer her question.

Instead, he asked, "What's wrong? Don't you like any of these wedding dresses? Do you want me to choose for you?"

He was talking to her, but as he spoke, his gaze was fixed on Ayla.

Without waiting for Molly to respond, Toby took the initiative to help Ayla out.

He knew that Molly was giving Ayla a hard time purposely, and Ayla had to bear it.

It made him feel sorry for her.

Chapter 40: You Are His Legitimate Wife

When Molly heard that Toby was going to help her choose a wedding dress, her smile deepened.

She held her head up high and looked at Ayla arrogantly.

It was as if she was showing off to the other woman that he belonged to her, and Ayla was just an assistant who would be responsible for their pre-wedding photos.

She never thought that he was doing it to help Ayla.

Ayla saw how Molly held Toby's arm intimately while checking the wedding dresses one by one.

It hurt her, and she wanted to stay away from them.

But she had no other choice.

For the sake of her job, she had to stay and endure watching the scene in front of her.

“Molly, how about this one?”

Toby took a red wedding dress and showed it to Molly.

It was the same red wedding dress that Ayla chose first.

Molly’s expression turned gloomy at once.

Ayla and Toby seemed to have a tacit understanding.

Did they already talk about their wedding before? This thought made her change her mind, although she also liked the red one.

“No, I don’t like that! Didn’t you say I’m the purest? Then I should be wearing a white wedding dress.”

From now on, she hated the red wedding dress.

It seemed that Toby and Ayla both loved this color.

Feeling helpless, Toby paused and turned to look at Ayla.

However, she had lowered her head all the time, so she didn’t see him looking at her.

Still holding Toby’s hand, Molly pulled him forward in front of one wedding dress.

“How about this one?”

Her voice sounded so sweet.

“Well, it’s beautiful,”

Toby replied with a nod without even looking at it carefully.

Finally, Molly had chosen a wedding dress for herself, so Ayla accompanied her to the dressing room.

Molly took off her clothes casually as if Ayla was not watching her.

She actually did it to deliberately show the hickeys on her body to Ayla.

Of course, Ayla would immediately understand that it was Toby who left those marks on her skin.

“Toby loves me so much that he likes leaving his marks on my body. He said that my body only belongs to him as I am also exclusively his,” she said to Ayla on purpose.

Ayla wanted to pretend that she didn’t hear anything.

But when she raised her eyes and saw those clear marks of love on Molly’s body, her heart ached so much that her whole body stiffened.

But she also scolded herself for feeling that way.

Toby and Molly were already a couple, so whatever happened to them had nothing to do with her anymore.

Seeing that Ayla was standing there in a daze, Molly mocked, "Does it break your heart? I bet Toby hasn't done anything like this to you before."

She smiled smugly at Ayla.

"Well, you are his legitimate wife now. Does it still matter what he has done to me before? Do you really care?"

Ayla said with a faint smile while zipping up Molly's wedding dress.

"You're just a part of his past. Whatever he has done to you then is none of my business anymore. But you'd better stop pestering him from now on. If I find out that you are seeing him, I will definitely teach you a lesson."

After saying those words, Molly stomped off the dressing room.

Toby's gaze passed Molly and fell on Ayla, who still had a smile on her sweet small face.

"Toby, how is it? Do you think I look beautiful in this one?"

He only came back to his senses when he felt that Molly tugged his sleeve.

'Would he keep ignoring me like this every time Ayla is in front of him?' she thought unhappily.

"Yes, you look very beautiful," he replied with a nod.

"Actually, I'm still not satisfied with it. Can I try another one?"

Molly didn't like having Ayla standing beside them all the time, so she deliberately wanted to give Ayla a hard time.

She tried the wedding dresses one by one, and every time she changed in the dressing room, she would sneer at Ayla and mock her.

However, Ayla seemed not affected at all.

She just smiled as if she didn't hear anything that Molly said.

No matter how arrogant Molly was to her, Molly was still a VIP customer.

So she couldn't complain even though she knew that the other woman was deliberately being so picky.

Finally, the fitting of the wedding dresses came to an end.

It was already almost noon when they started the photo shoot outdoors.

Ayla patiently assisted Molly all the time.

She helped Molly retouch her makeup and gave Molly a glass of water to drink.

She didn't mind even if she turned into Molly's personal assistant instead of an assistant photographer of the studio.

Toby wanted to say something.

But after hesitating for a while, he decided to just shut his mouth.

He knew that Molly was deliberately making things difficult for Ayla.

But if he tried to stop her, he knew that she would only continue giving Ayla a hard time.

“Why is this so hot? Do you want to scald my tongue and mouth with it?”

Molly snapped as she returned the cup of hot water that Ayla handed to her.

“But Mrs.Brown, you said that you want to drink hot water.”

Ayla only gave Molly what she wanted, but she looked so disgusted with it.

“I don’t want to drink this anymore.Take this away!”

Molly shoved the cup to Ayla forcefully, so the hot water spilled on the back of Ayla’s hand.

Ayla hissed in pain and withdrew her hand at once.Toby immediately stood up and ran to her side.

“Lala, you’re hurt.I’ll take you to the hospital.”

She shook her head and withdrew her hand that he was about to hold.

“I’m fine.It’s nothing serious.”

But deep inside her, she was really hurt.

She just had to clench her teeth to endure the pain.

The manager of the studio also ran over to her when he saw the situation.

“What happened? Ayla, is your hand scalded?”

“I’m fine, manager.I’ll just wash it with water.”

Ayla then turned around and left.

Toby was about to follow her, but Molly stopped him.

“If you follow her, I will make you lose everything.Believe me.”

She couldn’t allow him to chase after Ayla.

Yes, she hurt Ayla on purpose, and she didn’t regret it.

After all, Ayla had always been seducing him.

As soon as Ayla walked into the bathroom, she opened the faucet and let the running cold water pour into her hand.

Alice, who followed her, asked, "Ayla, are you okay? Oh my, I think that's a serious burn that has to be treated. There's a hospital nearby. Let me take you there."

Alice didn't like Molly either.

For her, Molly had gone too far.

Just because she was rich, she was so rude and arrogant.

Ayla didn't refuse Alice's offer anymore.

The doctor immediately applied some medicine on her scald and wrapped it with gauze.

Then they returned to the shooting location to continue assisting on the photo shoot.

When Toby saw her bandaged hand, he was so worried that he wanted to approach her.

However, Molly held his arm tightly.

"Do you want to go and check on her?"

Molly was afraid that Toby would hold a grudge against her for what she did just now, so she took the initiative to urge him and walk towards Ayla.

"Ayla, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it," she apologized.

Toby gave her a surprised glance before he looked at Ayla.

"Don't force yourself to apologize if you really don't want to," Ayla said with a sneer.

The last thing she needed was Molly's hypocrisy.

"Hey, what's wrong with you? I'm already apologizing. What else do you want?"

Molly sounded aggrieved.

But she thought inwardly, 'B***h!'

If it weren't for Toby, she would never apologize to Ayla.

She did it only to please him.

Ayla didn't say a word and just looked at them embracing each other so intimately.

What did she want? She actually didn't want anything from them.

Obviously, Molly had been targeting her.

So she didn't want to say anything more.

She only wanted to do her job well.

It was lunchtime, so Molly invited them to a high-end restaurant nearby.

Ayla had no choice but to go with them since all the staff were invited.

However, she made sure that she sat very far away from the couple.

Because of the bandage in her hand, she found it difficult to hold her chopsticks.

Toby, who had been observing her all the time, noticed it, so he called a waiter.

“Give the lady over there a spoon,” he said, pointing in her direction.

Molly’s face darkened upon hearing his words.

Why was he so concerned about Ayla? He had never been this considerate to her. Ayla shook her head.

“Thanks, but no need. The chopsticks are fine. I can manage.”

She didn’t hesitate to refuse his kindness.

Molly secretly glared at Ayla and thought, “You’d better be. If you dare accept his offer, I swear, I won’t let you go”

The dishes on their table were all mouthwatering, but Ayla barely ate anything.

Seeing the care in Toby’s eyes and the fierceness in Molly’s eyes made her lose her appetite no matter how hungry she was.