

## **Warning 101**

### [Chapter 101 The Attitude Of The Elders](#)

Scarlett's POV:

I was alone on the sofa when I woke up. But I got the sense that Charles slept next to me last night. Maybe it was a dream, but I could not be sure.

"Good morning, Mrs. Moore. Mr. Moore just went upstairs," the servant who was cleaning said to me.

I took a deep breath and nodded. I kept my face neutral, but deep inside, I felt ashamed and flustered.

"He told me to tell you as soon as you wake up to go upstairs and take a shower," the servant added.

I did not understand why Charles always had to use such ambiguous words that easily gave other people the wrong idea. As blood rushed to my cheeks, I lowered my gaze and made my way upstairs.

I ran into Charles just as he was stepping out of the bathroom. He was drying his hair with a towel. He was naked from the waist up. The muscles on his torso were well-defined, and his collarbone, for some reason, looked sexy and inviting. When he raised his head, his Adam's apple slightly bobbed.

I averted my eyes and swallowed. "Will you please put a shirt on?"

"No. It's hot." Charles put down the towel and glanced at me. "Why is your face so red?"

"It's stuffy downstairs," I snapped, feeling a bit embarrassed by how defensive I sounded.

"Why aren't you looking at me?" Charles asked, confused and a bit annoyed. He pinched my chin and forced me to look at him.

Standing close to him now, I could see that his skin was still slick, and for reasons I could never fathom, he looked a hundred times more handsome to me when he was fresh out of the shower.

We looked into each other's eyes for a long time. In the end, I lost the little staring contest and shook off his grip on my chin. I suddenly remembered that his arm had not recovered yet, so I walked past him and grabbed the hairdryer from one of the drawers in the bathroom. "Let me help you dry your hair."

Charles beamed and nodded.

"Sit down. I can't reach your head." He was way taller than I was. I could only reach up to his shoulder.

He sat on a chair obediently, and I started to blow-dry his hair, which was short and soft. It was the first time that I helped him dry his hair. It felt a little unnatural to me. From time to time, I grazed the back of his ear with my fingers, and when I did, I felt some sort of tingle. I clenched my jaw and shoved down my

emotions until I was done.

"There. You're all good," I said after making sure his hair was all dry.

Charles stood up and raised his eyebrows at me. "How should I thank you?"

"No need for gestures of gratitude. You're always welcome. We should help each other and build a harmonious future," I joked, but at the back of my mind, I wished that our relationship could be much, much simpler.

"Well, I don't want to owe you anything," Charles pressed.

Why did I get the feeling that he had used that tone with me before? I knitted my brows.

"How about I repay you with a kiss?" Charles suggested smugly.

I pushed him away, feeling repulsed by his behavior. "I said there's no need for you to thank me."

"No, I insist. I have to pay back what I owe you. That's what you do with me. And didn't you say we're strangers? A kiss shouldn't be an issue with us, should it?" he teased.

I raised my head and glared at him. I resented that he was using my own words to get me to do what he wanted.

"Relax. I'm kidding," Charles laughed after a brief pause and then looked into my eyes.

I heaved a sigh of relief, but next thing I knew, his lips were a hair's breadth away from mine, and before I could draw another breath, he was already kissing me. He sucked on my lower lip and then traced my teeth with the tip of his tongue. For once, he was not being aggressive. He was being so gentle that I considered kissing him back despite my mind's objections. Before I could completely get lost in his intoxicating kiss, I raised my hand, put it on his chest, and pushed him away. My knees threatened to buckle as he let go but put a finger under my chin and tipped my head up.

He gave me two soft pecks on the lips before flashing me a satisfied smile.

I cursed myself as my face burned. He succeeded again. I allowed him to succeed again.

"You're getting redder and redder, my dear. Maybe a shower will help get rid of some of that heat," Charles smiled and brushed his thumb over my cheek.

I backed away from him, walked into the bathroom, and shut the door, and his lingering scent greeted me. When I went upstairs, I told myself to keep my guard up and keep Charles at arm's length. I did not want to wait for a man who did not love me, so I had to end whatever was going on between me and Charles.

But it was easier said than done. Whenever I was around him, I felt like I was no longer in control of myself. My attraction to him was too strong for me to fight. Frustrated, I shook my head and took off my clothes. I decided to put all my troubles behind me for the time being. Right now, I really needed a long, hot bath. Maybe it would help me figure out my next move.

Alice had prepared quite a selection of clothes for me. After taking a bath, I dried myself off, changed into an off-shoulder light purple dress, and went downstairs.

I found the whole family sitting in the living room. Alice's eyes lit up as soon as she saw me.

"Oh, Scarlett, sweetheart, you look so beautiful in that dress! If I were a man, I would be fascinated by you right now."

Alice's compliment made me blush. I took her hand and said, "It's because you have good taste in clothes, Mom. Thank you."

"Oh, please! You make the dress look good! Don't you think so, Charles?" Alice turned her head toward Charles who was sipping his coffee silently.

"She's not that bad," Charles muttered, taking a glance at me.

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It took all my strength to keep my face neutral. I did not understand why he was being cold and distant again. What changed since he kissed me earlier?

"Well, I also had some suits made for you, dear. You can wear them to work or to important occasions in the future," Alice turned to me and said with a smile.

I got a warm feeling in my heart. Alice had always been nice to me and treated me like her own daughter. I smiled at her sweetly and said, "That's very kind of you, Mom. I really appreciate it. I love you so much. I really can't imagine my life without this family."

"You don't have to worry about life without us. You'll always be our family. You'll always be with us," Alice replied and squeezed my hand. She pulled me to sit on the sofa and then glared at Charles.

"Charles, you should be the one doing these things for your wife, you know? You should take good care of Scarlett."

I set there awkwardly and considered defending Charles. Charles turned his head toward Alice, dissatisfaction so obvious on his face. "Mom, I've bought Scarlett hundreds of clothes. She never wears them."

"I have my own clothes, Mom," I interjected.

Alice just rolled her eyes and shook her head as if she was done with the conversation about my wardrobe.

After breakfast, Charles and I prepared to leave. On our way out, Christine pulled me aside.

"Remember what you promised me, dear. If we confirm that Rite's child isn't Charles's, you won't divorce him. I don't want you to leave this family. Anyone with half a brain can see that Charles cares about you very much. You should give him a chance."

I pursed my lips and said nothing. I did not know how to respond. Charles and I's problems were not only about Rite's unborn baby.

"What are you worried about, Scarlett?" Christine asked.

"I need more time to think, Grandma. I..."

"What else do you need to think about? Charles loves you, and you love Charles. You love each other, so be together. Don't worry about Rite. I'll take care of her," Christine butted in.

I knew that she was doing this for me and Charles, so I decided not to argue anymore. So far, I had no choice but to let nature take its course.

After our short conversation, Christine let me go.

"What did Grandma say to you?" Charles fell into step beside me and asked nonchalantly.

"It's a secret between women. You don't have to know," I answered casually. As I spoke, I quickened my pace and left Charles behind. I could not help blaming him in my heart. If he had not entangled himself with Rite for so long, I would not be in such a dilemma now.

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### [Chapter 102 Confusion](#)

Scarlett's POV:

As soon as I walked out of the door, Charles grabbed my wrist. He peremptorily opened my palm, placed his hand over mine, and walked forward entwining his fingers with mine.

"What are you doing?" I tried to shake off his hand, but couldn't.

"I am just holding your hand. Can't you see? You should tightly hold your husband's hand from now on, just like this." Saying that, Charles shook our hands slightly.

I looked at him speechlessly. There were strange feelings in my heart, but since I could not get rid of him, I could only let him do what he wanted.

He took me to the private garage, where many limited-edition luxury cars were parked.

I watched him get on the driver's seat. I couldn't help but ask in confusion, "Didn't you ask the driver to take us?"

"I will drive you to work. Get in the car," Charles urged.

I got into the car slowly but I was still a little doubtful. "Can you even drive?"

I knew that he was good at driving, but I was a little worried about the injury on his arm.

"I'll prove it to you with actions and not words." Charles turned the steering wheel and drove the car out of the garage.

"If you feel any pain or discomfort in your arm, then you must tell me. Don't force yourself." Worried, I kept looking at his injured arm. Charles was racing the car so fast that I gripped the seatbelt, feeling like I was really risking my life for him.

"What? If it was really that dangerous to ride with me, then you wouldn't be here, would you?" Charles retorted, glancing at me.

"Eyes on the road!" I shouted nervously. My heart rose up to my throat when I noticed him looking at me while he was trying to overtake another vehicle on the road.

"You haven't answered my question yet," he said, slowing down the car a bit.

"Of course, I will." I pouted and continued, "After all, it's not easy to get a taxi around here."

"Well, you can shut up now." My words darkened his expression all of a sudden.

He drove me to the TV station, but he was quiet along the way. I curled my lips, thinking of how narrow-minded he was.

I unfastened the seat belt and cleared my throat before I said, "Be careful on the way."

With a long face, Charles threw a thin suit jacket at me, and said, "Put this on."

"Why?" I asked in a low voice. His behavior was really confusing. Men were indeed more unpredictable than women. Often times, I found Charles to be like an incomprehensible math problem that could make me scratch my head.

"You are not allowed to wear such strapless dresses to work anymore," Charles said, sulking. When he saw that I was not taking the jacket, he helped me put it on.

"Is that why you were so unhappy this morning?" I guessed boldly. But my heart was racing.

Charles snorted, "It's good that you are able to realize your mistake. I won't blame you this time, but from now on, you're only allowed to wear such dresses in front of me."

I tried my best to restrain my smile as I looked at him with a calm expression. "Well, that's not your call."

"Try me, then," Charles threatened, looking at me.

I knew that he could do anything he wanted, so I didn't contradict him. "Ask your lawyer to handle the case as soon as possible," I reminded him in a low voice.

With that, I got off the car. I was gradually becoming better at handling him.

"Are you really in such a hurry to divorce me?"

Charles' eyes were as cold as ice as he stared at me.

"Drive carefully." Without answering his question, I waved goodbye to him with a big smile.

He seemed to be so furious, because he drove off without even saying goodbye to me.

Once he was gone, I heaved a sigh of relief. How could I not be in a hurry to divorce? I was afraid that my heart would soften again soon if things continued to be the same way. I found myself gradually relying on him. In fact, I did not even want to leave him.

After I finished hosting the TV show that morning, I received flowers from Charles again. The card on it read, "It's not that easy to divorce me."

The vigorous handwriting on it was as domineering as his voice.

While I was staring at the card, a hand reached out and grabbed the card from me. The woman read out the words on the card loudly.

There seemed to be a hint of tease in her clear voice as she said, "I didn't expect Charles to be so loyal to you."

I helplessly looked at the woman, who had delicate makeup on. "Nina, this is not loyalty. He's just not reconciled about losing me."

Nina put down the card and winked at me. "Scarlett, you are lying to yourself! And honestly, I think that you already know of the feelings in his heart. You're just afraid of facing the facts."

"Why would I be afraid?" I smoothed my hair awkwardly.

"You are afraid of getting hurt again, and that's why you've closed the door to your heart," Nina said earnestly, sighing heavily.

I was stunned by her words as I was not expecting her to pierce through the truth with just a single pertinent remark. Actually, I was indeed a coward. I was eager for Charles' love, but I kept pushing him away because I was afraid.

"Even my father believes that it won't be easy for you to divorce him," Nina added.

I forced a smile. I was at a loss for words when I recalled what Grandma had told me the night before.

"Last night, the elders asked me to withdraw the lawsuit." After a pause, I turned and opened up the window behind me before I continued, "They wanted to investigate whether Charles is really the father of Rita's child, so they want me to wait for the result."

"I'm sorry that I can't help you in this matter," Nina said apologetically.

I turned to her, shaking my head. "It's not your fault, Nina. Now that the elders are also involved in this matter, I know that the divorce won't happen anytime soon. Thank you all the same."

"Don't be upset, Scarlett. Try to look on the bright side of things. Maybe your journey with Charles shouldn't stop here," Nina comforted when she noticed my long face.

"They are just procrastinating it," I replied with a helpless smile. Everyone had a good intention, indeed, but regardless of what the result might be, someone was bound to get hurt in the end.

"What's your plan now?" Nina asked all of a sudden.

"I plan to take things slow for now. Grandpa's birthday is coming soon, and I don't want to upset him." I felt uncertain about the future. Charles was very determined not to divorce. Would I really be able to make it?

"Honey, I think you care too much about the elders' opinions." Nina rubbed her forehead helplessly and continued, "I feel that you should think more about yourself. If you really feel unhappy about your marriage to Charles, then don't force yourself to stay."

"No, I am not forcing myself to do anything!" I replied straightforwardly. As for the elders, I knew my position very well. "They have helped me a lot and I don't want to hurt them. No matter what happens to me and Charles, I will repay them," I explained.

"As a good friend, I will support you in whatever decision you make." Nina stopped persuading me and smiled brightly. "Would you like me to accompany you to the birthday party?"

"No, thanks. I won't be staying at the party for long, anyway," I refused her kindness.

"Why?" she asked, looking at me in confusion.

I sighed as I sat back in the chair. "I think Rita will also come, even if no one invites her."

'Grandpa's birthday party must be grand.' I knew that there would be a lot of VIPs attending the party. After all, the party was not just to celebrate Grandpa's birthday, it was also an opportunity for important people to talk about business with each other.

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"How cen she heve the nerve to show up et his perty? After ell, she still hesn't merried into their family yet. Even if you consider the Lively family's stetus, they ere not quelified to ettend Mr. Micheel Moore's birthdey perty. Am I right?" Nine pouted, trying to defend me.

"I em certain thet Rite will come. She hes e speciel reletionship with Cherles, efter ell!" I seid in low spirits. The thought of seeing Rite end Cherles together et the perty mede my heert eche.

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"Whet?" Amused by her reection, I turned to her.

"You two need to sit down and have an open talk," she concluded.

"Maybe." Thinking about what she said, I realized that she was right. Charles and I had not talked peacefully because of Rite's existence. We would often give each other silent treatment or quarrel most of the time. However, the situation had gotten much better lately. Charles would kiss me as soon as he heard something that made him unhappy, completely ignoring my feelings, though.

"Why are you blushing now?" Nine interrupted my thoughts.

"It's nothing. You go on, please," I said with a wry smile as I pushed her jokingly. I couldn't let Nine know what I was thinking, or she would certainly ask me to describe how I felt when Charles kissed me.

"Let me tell you something." Nine leaned closer with a mysterious look in her eyes.

"What is it?" I asked in a daze.

"Spencer said that Charles is still a virgin." Nine's voice was barely a whisper as she said those words to me with a sly smile.

My cheeks were flushed and I stammered, "R... Really?"

"You don't believe me? Well, you can ask Charles to prove it to you when you get the chance." Nine's words were getting increasingly ridiculous.

How could such a thing be proved? I quickly covered her mouth and said, "Stop it, Nine!"

"Why are you so shy about it? Charles is such a good man. You're the one at loss for not sleeping with him. Anyway, you should find an opportunity to sleep with him before the divorce, or it would be a pity!" Nine said casually, pulling off my hand from her mouth.

She kept encouraging me.

Just then, Abner knocked on the door. When he saw Nine and I giggling and talking so secretly, he asked, raising his eyebrows, "What are you two talking about? And why are you so happy?"

"Nothing." I stopped smiling, straightened my clothes, and pretended like nothing happened.

"We were just talking about..." Nine looked at me with a snicker.

"We are just talking about work." I interrupted her, glared at her, and reminded her not to say such things. I then turned to Abner and asked, "What's up?"

"The special guest for the interview later is Spencer Patel, and he said he would like to reveal something

about Charles' marriage," Abner said to me seriously.

'Grandpa's birthday party must be grand.' I knew that there would be a lot of VIPs attending the party. After all, the party was not just to celebrate Grandpa's birthday, it was also an opportunity for important people to talk about business with each other.

A woman like Rita, who was racking her brains to marry into the Moore family, would never let go of such an opportunity to get acquainted with powerful people.

"How can she have the nerve to show up at his party? After all, she still hasn't married into their family yet. Even if you consider the Lively family's status, they are not qualified to attend Mr. Michael Moore's birthday party. Am I right?" Nina pouted, trying to defend me.

"I am certain that Rita will come. She has a special relationship with Charles, after all!" I said in low spirits. The thought of seeing Rita and Charles together at the party made my heart ache.

"Are you jealous? Have you ever considered the possibility that Charles might only be treating Rita well out of gratitude?" Nina teased as she gave me a mischievous look.

"I don't believe that's the case." I sighed and explained, "Although Charles said he just wants to repay her, his previous actions prove that his motives are not just repaying his debt to her."

"I understand, dear." Nina seemed to be enlightened all of a sudden.

"What?" Amused by her reaction, I turned to her.

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"Maybe." Thinking about what she said, I realized that she was right. Charles and I had not talked peacefully because of Rita's existence. We would often give each other silent treatment or quarrel most of the time. However, the situation had gotten much better lately. Charles would kiss me as soon as he heard something that made him unhappy, completely ignoring my feelings, though.

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### [Chapter 103 Spencer's Interview](#)

Scarlett's POV:

As Abner had said, I received the formal notice that Spencer would take part in the program this afternoon.

I was expecting that someone would take my place and interview Spencer. But in the end, I had to bite the bullet and do it myself.

While I was preparing for the interview questions, I saw that many of them were about Charles's marriage. Of course, I skipped over them and only included questions about Spencer. I could not help but wonder how gossipy the person who had prepared this interview outline was. This was Spencer's interview in the first place. Why were there so many questions about Charles?

Jokes on them, I had no intention of broadcasting my private life to the public.

The interview segment had finally commenced. I was on tenterhooks the whole time. I hoped Spencer would get my hint and not put me in the limelight.

Everything went well at the beginning of the program. I avoided talking about Charles, and Spencer had been understanding. He talked about his own experience with fervor and assurance.

But before I could be completely relieved, what I had been dreading happened. I asked about Spencer's close friends. Among all people, he specifically mentioned Charles.

"In addition to him, I believe you have other interesting friends as well," I said, averting the topic. I did not want to talk about Charles, especially when a lot of people were watching.

"I have few friends who grew up with me. Charles is one of them." Spencer made no response to my conversational gambits. "By the way, I'm sure many of our audience is curious about Charles's marriage," he added with a smirk.

Oh my God! Just when I thought that things were going well, Spencer would play by the fire.

"How about we talk about your current relationship status? Do you have a girlfriend?" I tried to change the topic again.

Spencer ignored my question and smiled ambiguously. "Compared with my relationship status, everyone is probably more interested in Charles's." He paused for a second and winked at the camera. "I've prepared a photo of Charles's partner that you've never seen before. The audience is lucky today."

I took a deep breath and bit my tongue in suspense. The crew of the program did not tell me about the photo in advance. I was so nervous that I felt that my throat became dry. Unfortunately for me, it would be rude to cut Spencer abruptly. Besides, this interview was being broadcast live.

A few seconds later, the photo Spencer was talking about was displayed on the big screen behind us. It was a photo of a little girl in a light pink princess dress. Her long hair was braided, and she looked cute. Fortunately, nobody could recognize her as she had her back to the camera.

"Scarlett, does she look familiar?" Spencer asked with a cunning smile.

How could it not look familiar? This was a photo of me when I was a child. I was at a loss for words, but I kept smiling. "Miss Lively was also very cute when she was a child," I remarked sarcastically.

Spencer smiled and did not say anything more, which I believe would leave people more room for imagination.

The program ended not long after. I went straight to the lounge, and Spencer followed suit.

"Scarlett, how's my performance? Did I leave enough suspense for the audience?" Spencer teasingly

asked.

I turned around and glared at him. "You colluded with Charles, didn't you?"

"How could you say that? I did that for the audience rating of your TV station. It wasn't that hard considering that I'm also very handsome," Spencer replied casually.

I rolled my eyes at him. "I'm not stupid. You're just cashing in on Charles's popularity."

"It doesn't matter. It's true that I'm handsome, though." Spencer smirked at me. Surely, birds of a feather flock together.

"There was no need for you to do that. Charles can come to the program and be interviewed if he wants."

Spencer nodded in agreement. "Good idea. For sure, a couple can do a much better job when they're together. Your show will probably become a sensation if that happens."

Nonsense! Had these people been bribed by Charles? They were all pushing Charles to me.

I gritted my teeth in exasperation. "I'm busy. Please see yourself off."

With that, I went back to my workstation, took my bag, and got off work.

When I got home, I found that Charles was in my apartment again.

"Why are you here?" I asked crossly while watching him work in the kitchen.

Charles turned around and raised his eyebrows at me. "Am I not allowed to come here?" My eyes fell on the blue apron he was wearing. It made him look like a family man, different from the domineering CEO he really was. I was used to his lofty and noble look that I was taken aback when I saw him dressed like this.

I lowered my gaze and mumbled discontentedly, "Whatever. As if there's something I can do about you here."

"Stop muttering. I came here because you said you wanted to eat pumpkin pie." Charles turned down the heat on the stove as he spoke.

"Don't you think you're being strange recently?" I asked. His presence made my hackles rise.

"Isn't that good?"

"Don't you have anything else to do? Can you just leave me alone? Stop showering me with you

affection. It won't work." I acted cold and indifferent in front of him in hopes that he eventually would leave me alone.

Charles snorted and walked over to me imposingly. "You sue and lie in the show, but you don't let me do anything to you." He then stared into my eyes and whispered, "Scarlett, don't you think you're being unfair?"

We were so close that I caught a whiff of the scent of pine on his body. It was intoxicating, so I took two steps back to get away from him. "Love is not fair, and it will never be."

"But you have to give me your answer, don't you?" Charles slowly approached me. I backed and did not let him get too close to me.

"Is that why you've been trying to get close to me? So you can have your revenge?" I stopped and looked at him with a resolute expression.

Charles was a vengeful man, yet I kept testing his patience again and again. It must have taken his willpower to endure me for a long time.

"Whatever you say, you have to understand one thing. I did all these because I love you." As soon as he finished speaking, Charles tapped the tip of my nose.

My ears turned red in embarrassment. His words were too straightforward for my taste.

I pushed him away and averted the topic. "What are you talking about? I don't understand what you're saying."

Charles stood straight and lowered his head to look at me. "I've asked the crew to cut off the part where you said that Miss Lively was cute when she was a child."

"That's a live broadcast. It's useless to cut that part off." I curled my lips and looked at him with furrowed brows. What he had done was completely unnecessary. Someone would catch me saying that nevertheless.

"I'm sure someone will watch the rebroadcast at some point," Charles explained impatiently.

"What about the pumpkin pie? Why are you so kind to me?" I asked, perplexed.

"I put something in it. When you finish it, I'll throw you on the bed and do as I like," Charles retorted with a smirk.

I looked at him warily and wondered if what he had said was true.

"Nah, I'm just messing with you. Go wash your hands. Let's have dinner together." As Charles saw that I

was eyeing him with suspicion, he smiled and ruffled my hair playfully. He then turned around and returned to the kitchen.

Instead of doing as he had said, I just stood there. I had a feeling that a friend of mine had betrayed me. Only Abner and Nina knew that I wanted to eat pumpkin pie. I randomly mentioned it while we were having a meal together. Could it be Nina? I would ask her later.

Charles walked out of the kitchen with a bowl of soup in his hands. When he saw that I was just staring at him, he put the soup down on the table and pulled me into the bathroom.

"I can wash my hands myself." I tried to get rid of Charles's grasp, but he was too strong for me.

"You're taking too long. The dishes will be cold soon." Regardless of my refusal, Charles helped me wash my hands, and we finished in no time.

At the dining table, he even helped me with the food. I was touched by his gestures, but I did not let him see it. I must admit that Charles's cooking skills were getting better.

While we were eating, he suddenly put down his fork and looked at me seriously. "Mom has asked us to hold Grandpa's birthday party. We have to plan for it later."

His gaze made my heart pound wildly in my chest. I gulped down the food in my mouth and recalled, "Mom used to arrange Grandpa's birthday parties herself."

"Don't eat so fast, or you'll choke," Charles cautioned with discontent. He then changed his tone and explained, "Mom assigned the task to us since you've returned. I have to warn you, though. You have to be ready to suffer."

I put down the half-eaten pumpkin pie and looked up at him. "Our relationship is complicated now. Other people will definitely talk about us."

"I don't care." Charles leaned back in his chair and added, "It seems that you're the one who doesn't understand your situation. Let me remind you again. You must be the bride of our wedding next year. Everyone, including the media, knows about it."

#### [Chapter 104 The Guest Lis](#)

Scarlett's POV:

I stood up abruptly and exclaimed, "You're horrible! Did you even consider my feelings when you decided that?" My grievances surged up in my heart. Whether it be the divorce or wedding, Charles only informed me of his decision. Not once did he bother to ask my opinion, even if the matter concerned me.

"Scarlett, if you haven't noticed, I've been making concessions. If I've never considered your feelings, I

would've already forced myself into you. Besides, do you think I would allow you to live here alone if I didn't care about what you feel?" Charles looked at me with a burning gaze, unmoved by my complaint.

"Should I thank you for being considerate?" I cried out. What kind of concession was that? If he had not been entangled with Rita, I would have just let him shower me with his affection without any guilt or shame.

Charles was taken aback when I suddenly let out a sob. His expression softened, and he asked with concern, "Why are you crying? I didn't say anything harsh."

I stifled a sob and argued, "I'm not crying. You're just being annoying."

"Yes, yes. You're not crying. I'm sorry." Charles held my hand and coaxed me, "Honey, sit down. Would you like some pumpkin pie?"

In a fit of anger, I stood up, pushed the chair away, and scoffed, "Pumpkin pie? Ha! Help yourself!" My blood boiled in anger. He never took my words seriously, and he only cared about himself.

Charles also stood up and warned, "If you leave, don't blame me for being rude."

I was so mad at him that his warning was the last thing I cared about. "Do you want a fight? Come on! I'm not scared of you!" I fired back.

Without waiting for his response, I picked up my coat on the sofa and turned around to leave. I wanted to get out of this suffocating place and get away from Charles.

But before I could take another step, he held me by the waist, kicked the door of the bedroom open, and threw me onto the bed.

"Let go of me! You are so unreasonable!" I glared at him with tearful eyes. However, he just grabbed my hands regardless of the look of resentment on my face.

I was so mad that I felt like my world was spinning around. I struggled with all my might to get out of his grasp. But, of course, I made sure not to overdo it. I might be furious at him, but I cared about him enough not to exacerbate the injury on his right arm. He must have known that I would be considerate to him, so he blatantly showed his shamelessness.

The more I thought about it, the more aggrieved I felt. I knew I would not win against him, so I eventually gave up.

"You're bullying me," I choked.

Charles stiffened for a second and then wiped my tears away. I must say, the concern in his eyes softened my heart. "How can I bear to bully you? I love you," he said in an aggrieved yet caring tone.

"Then why are you so inconsiderate? Can't you make a compromise for me from time to time?"

"If I do, you'll run away."

Charles lowered his head and moved his face close to mine.

Just as our lips touched, I turned my head away and dodged his attempt. "No," I said crossly.

Charles seemed dissatisfied with what I had done. He bit my lip hard and pulled it. I could not help but groan in pain.

"This is your punishment," he whispered. He then sucked my tongue, and it made an ambiguous sound when he licked it.

I could not breathe, not when he was being amorous. I pushed his shoulder with all my strength, but he would not budge. His eyes were with lust, and his breath came in short and heavy. He finally let go of my lips, but he started to work his way down.

"Stop..." I protested weakly as Charles kissed my neck, but he did not seem to hear me.

He kissed my collarbone, and his hands slipped under my clothes and wandered on my body. I could not help but panic when I felt something hard against my lower abdomen.

"Charles, calm down. I... I want to eat the pumpkin pie." I was panting from the intensity of the moment. But before something could happen, I cut him off, afraid that I would be unable to resist him if this went on.

"Shh. Be quiet," Charles complained in a low and hoarse voice. He kissed me again. But this time, it was deep and fervent. It went on for a long while before he finally decided to let go of me.

We returned to the dining room to eat. When we were seated at the table, I lowered my head and did not once raise my head to look at him. My face was still red after what happened, and it remained flushed for a long time. Sitting next to me, Charles just handed me another slice of the pumpkin pie casually as if nothing had just happened.

"Eat slowly. Nobody will grab it from you," he joked. His voice rang in my ears as he was sitting right next to me.

I could hardly maintain my composure. I tried my best to ignore him and finish the food on my plate so that I could go back to my room as soon as possible.

But Charles did not let me get away from him. He held my hand and forced me to finish all the food.

In the end, I ate too much more than I intended to eat. So I would not have indigestion, I volunteered to wash the dishes.

It was probably because of Charles's gaze that I could not focus on my task. Two plates accidentally slipped from my hand. Exasperated, I sighed and turned around to face him. "Don't you have work to do? If you're bored, why don't you read books instead of watching me?"

His presence was making me nervous.

"I'm keeping an eye on you." With a smile, Charles squatted down and picked up the shattered plates.

My lips curled into a pout, but I did not say anything in response. I just took a step back so that he would be able to reach the trash with ease.

Now that he had thrown the broken pieces, Charles kissed the corner of my mouth and offered, "Let me help you."

"You should have done that a while ago," I grumbled. Suddenly, something occurred to me. I looked up at him and asked, "Do you have any idea in mind for Grandpa's birthday party?"

Charles took the plate in my hand and wiped it dry. "Let's have dinner at the hotel tomorrow night and then confirm the preparations with the hotel manager afterward."

"Okay." I lowered my head and rinsed the soap in my hands. I had nothing else to say anyway.

For some reason, Charles looked rather perplexed. "Why are you so obedient?" he asked with a frown.

"Why? Are you expecting me to be nosy and unreasonable?" I retorted.

"It's not that. I just expected you to ignore me or change the topic just like you always do." Charles stroked my face as he spoke. I would not have minded it, except that his hands had bubbles from the dishwashing soap.

I wiped the bubbles off my face with the back of my hand and glared at him. "It might not be obvious, but I can be focused when it comes to important things."

"Yeah, right. Just not when it comes to me," Charles said sulkily.

"That's because you've wronged me so many times before," I snorted.

Despite what I just said, my heart softened when I saw the disappointment on his face.

Charles shrugged his shoulders helplessly. "I promise I'll make it up to you. Just don't push me away again."

I did not say anything in response. I was now used to him being shameless anyway. Whether his words were true or not, there was no guarantee that he would not push me away when he finally got tired of me.

Charles finished washing the dishes not long after. Even so, he still did not stop pestering me.

"Let's go sit on the sofa and talk." Although this sounded like an invitation, Charles held my hand and pulled me to the living room, leaving no chance for me to refuse.

I suddenly remembered what Nina had told me—we had to talk to each other without shouting and everything. At the thought of this, I heaved a heavy sigh and followed him. Charles sat down on the sofa and left a space beside him for me.

I did not sit down, though. I just stood still and looked at him. Seeing this, Charles raised his eyebrows and sarcastically asked, "What? Do you want me to make you sit down myself?"

As I did not want to sit next to him, I walked past the tea table and sat on the small sofa beside where he was sitting.

"You know, you can't stop me if I really want to do something to you," he said in an annoyed tone.

"Whatever. What do you want to talk about?" I ignored his mockery and went straight to the point.

Charles crossed his legs and looked at me with a serious expression. "First off, I would like to ask, do you eat on time every day?"

"Why do you ask?" I asked, confused. Honestly, when I saw the seriousness of his face, I expected him to talk about Rita.

Charles dipped his chin and said with a hint of jest, "Nothing. I'm just worried you'll break your bones if I throw you onto the bed again."

I rolled my eyes at him, speechless. Who would have thought that Mr. Moore, a cold and merciless CEO, was actually indecent in private?

"Am I wrong?" he asked with a straight face. As he spoke, he moved towards me while staring at me with his tantalizing gaze.

"Is there anything else you want to say?" I turned my face away and avoided his gaze. I wanted to end the conversation as soon as possible. I could not bear to be with him for another second.

"The guest list has been prepared." Charles put the guest list on the tea table.

"So soon?" I was impressed by his efficiency. No wonder he was the CEO of the Moore Group.

Charles raised his eyebrows and beckoned me to look through the list. "Check if there's anyone missing."

It had numerous names, some of which were our relatives and acquaintances. However, it perplexed me when I did not see Rita's name. I checked it again, but her name was nowhere to be found. It seemed that she and the whole Lively family were not invited.

I was elated, but I did not let my smile show. It did not matter if Charles was the one who had prepared the list or not. As long as I would not see Rita at the birthday party, I would be happy. Nobody would stop her from doing something crazy, so it was only necessary not to invite her. I did not want Grandpa's birthday to be ruined.

"What are you thinking about? You seem pretty absorbed." Charles curiously asked.

His voice brought me to my senses. Startled, I looked up at him and found that his face was only inches away from mine. As I did not want to be in a predicament, I stood up to sit on the other side of the sofa. However, Charles grabbed my waist and pulled me down to his lap.

"Let go of me." I pulled his hand away, but he tightened his grip.

"Honey..." Charles called affectionately. He then buried his head in the crook of my neck and took a deep breath. "Did you like the flowers I sent you?"

His voice, coupled with our intimate position, made my heart pound wildly in my chest. "You... Let go of me first," I pleaded.

"I heard that you kept all the flowers I had given you in your office." Charles rested his chin on my shoulder, and it gave me butterflies in my stomach.

In the past few days, he had been giving me exquisite bouquets. I must admit, his gestures made me happy. The glee I felt whenever he was sweet was like poison. It was slowly making me addicted to it. Just give it a little time, and it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to extricate myself from him.

"Honey, answer me." Charles tightened his embrace and pulled me closer to him.

I bit my lips in dilemma. Should I admit the truth? I was inches away from telling what I truly felt. But in the end, I blurted out, "Don't send me flowers anymore. They're just a waste of money."

"You're being stubborn and in denial again," Charles snorted. He did not take my words seriously yet again.

Although I had told him not to send me flowers again, I still received a bouquet as usual. He also gave me one the next day, the day after that, and every day for the rest of the week.

## Chapter 105 Prepare For The Birthday Party

Scarlett's POV:

The next few nights, I went to the hotel after work to prepare for Grandpa's birthday party. With Charles there, I did not actually need to do anything as he would arrange everything on his own. However, I still needed to confirm the process and the details.

As soon as I walked out of the office that evening, I saw the driver waiting outside the TV station as usual. But then, I saw that Charles was not in the car. And just when I was about to ask the driver about it, I got a call from Charles.

"Honey, I got tied up in a long meeting, so I won't be able to make it tonight."

Upon hearing the background noise on his end, I realized that he was in a room full of people who were arguing. It did not take me long to figure out that he must have called me from the conference room. But then, of late, he had been calling me endearingly regardless of where he was.

"Okay. I'm in the car. And I am on my way to the hotel now."

"Don't worry, honey. Mom will help you out."

"It's alright. Don't bother her. I can handle this by myself," I said in a hurry. Alice had entrusted Charles and I to plan the party. I did not want others to think that I was too dependent on Charles, or that I could not do it without his help.

"I don't want you to tire yourself too much. It's not worth it. Besides, Mom wants to see the progress of our preparations."

"All right, then. You carry on with your work."

The hotel that was owned by the Moore group was where the party was decided to be held. Although it was a weekday, it was still quite crowded. Perhaps, it was because I did not pray before I stepped out my house that morning that I stumbled upon someone that I was not looking forward to meeting as soon as I entered the lobby.

I turned around and was about to take another elevator, but it was too late.

"Scarlett." A familiar voice called out to me from behind.

Feeling the surging pain in my head, I tried to close my eyes. Rita really was everywhere. Couldn't she just leave me alone for a few days? I turned around and noticed her walking elegantly towards me in her high-heels. She was wearing a red mermaid dress with thin spaghetti straps hanging on her shoulders, which exposed her cleavage a little. I was afraid that her breasts might break free from her tight dress if she took another step forward.

"What's the matter?" I asked coldly.

"You've been very happy lately, haven't you?" she asked in a voice that was filled with sarcasm. She was wearing a thick black winged liner, which almost made her look like the evil queen from a fairy tale. I could not understand why she was suddenly changing her make-up, though. I felt that the innocent look suited her better. Did she change the way she put on her make-up because of her disappointment in love?

"You should look in the mirror when you have free time," I reminded her, unable to control myself.

"You bitch!" Rita raised her hand and was about to slap me, but Richard stopped her.

"Calm down, Rita. People are around." His voice was low as he held her wrist.

Reluctantly, Rita shook off his hand and sneered at me, "Who do you think you are to be doing these things?"

Clearly, she seemed to know that Charles and I were preparing for Grandpa's birthday party. With my hands crossed over my chest, I found her words to be quite ridiculous. "I'm still Mrs. Moore, so obviously, I should do something for my husband's grandfather. Besides, who are you to criticize me?"

"Scarlett!" Rita's face was livid with rage as she gritted her teeth, like she was going to rip me to shreds. "I'm having a hard time, and I won't let you live a good life."

I didn't take her threat seriously. After all, she was just a contemptible scoundrel. Suddenly, a woman's well-manicured hand grabbed Rita's hand, intending to push her away.

I turned around and saw that it was Alice.

In a sour mood, Alice glared at Rita, and hissed, "What are you doing here?"

Rita immediately softened her expression and said, "Auntie, it is such a pleasure to see you here. I came to attend a party."

Ignoring her, Alice turned to look at me, and said, "You must be tired after a long day's work, right? I'll treat you to a sumptuous dinner later."

I smiled and nodded at her as I said jokingly, "Alright, boss!"

Noticing that Alice ignored her, Rita offered, "Auntie, please let me know if you need any help with preparing for the birthday party. I would be happy to assist you."

"No, thanks." Alice raised her hand, signaling Rita to stop. "You're not close to our family, Miss Lively,

and I hope that you have a clear estimation of your situation. Oh, and don't come to the party. Your name is not on the guest list."

Alice's harsh words caused Rita's face to pale.

"I have always considered you as a mother to me ever since Charles and I got together, Auntie," Rita said with a look of grievance. She even looked at me for a moment as though she was trying to see a hint of disappointment in my eyes.

However, since I had long seen her tricks, I kept calm. I didn't take her words seriously at all.

"Don't push your luck, Rita! I am just being polite to you, and it is certainly not because I like you, so don't flatter yourself!" Alice was furious. Glancing at the security guards nearby, she ordered, "Get this woman out of here, please."

A group of security guards immediately approached Rita. But then, Richard stepped forward to stop them. "Rita is not in good health. So let me take her back."

"Whatever. I'm good as long as she gets out of my sight at once," Alice said mercilessly.

Rita did not want to give up, though. Right before she left, she turned to me and said with a smug smile, "Charles did not let me prepare for the party because he did not want me to overexert myself."

Upon hearing that, I was on the verge of bursting into laughter. Was she insane? Her fight was a meaningless one, and no one was taking her seriously.

"Shame on you!" Alice mumbled.

I did not let the short encounter with Rita affect my mood as I spent the rest of the day with Alice. It was almost ten o'clock at night by the time we finished our discussion.

Alice stood by the hotel entrance, insisting that she send me home first. But my place was on the other side of town from where the Moore residence was.

"Mom, I'm not a kid anymore. I can take a cab, so don't worry about me. You must be tired. Why don't you go home and rest?" I held Alice's arm, acting like a spoiled child as I tried to persuade her.

"Okay, but you have to call me once you get home safely." Alice had no choice but to compromise.

Once she left, I stood on the side of a road, trying to hail a cab.

At that moment, a black limousine stopped in front of me. The window rolled down slowly, and I saw Rita glaring at me.

'Why hasn't she left yet?' Feeling speechless, I grabbed onto my phone.

"Let me drive you home," Rita said to me arrogantly as she adjusted her large sunglasses.

'Is she crazy? Why is she wearing sunglasses at night?'

"No, thanks. I'll take a cab," I refused.

"I have something to tell you. If you're not going to get in, then I will wait outside your house for you," she threatened.

I could probably guess what she was going to say to me. She was likely to use her relationship with Charles to make me feel bad. I did not want her to go to my home, so I got in the car with her.

The strong fragrance in the car was just like Rita, completely unbearable and suffocating, so I had to roll down the window on my side to help me breathe.

"Don't attend the birthday party," she ordered me arrogantly.

Turning a deaf ear to her, I continued to sit with an indifferent look.

"Charles will be very busy that night, and I will take good care of him. Your presence won't be needed there." She was even taking things for granted now.

"You have always regarded me as a thorn in your flesh, right? Then why are you so unconfident?" I sneered, turning to look at her.

After listening to that, Rita was bewildered once again. Ignoring her, I read the message I got from Charles, "Have you gone home yet?"

I increased the brightness of my phone screen and deliberately turned it towards Rita so that she could read the message. I then urged the driver, "Please drive faster. Charles is worried that I am still outside at this hour."

I noticed Rita's face turn red with rage from the corner of my eye. She clenched her fists, but she could not do anything to me. And that made me happy.

I got off the car in a pleasant mood as soon as we arrived at the neighborhood. I even turned to Rita and said with a smile, "Goodbye, Rita."

"I will certainly get Charles back," she swore with a fierce look in her eyes.

Paying no attention to her attitude, I said, "Take care of yourself."

"You!" She was so enraged that her face was almost as white as a sheet of paper now.

Since I had no more patience to continue talking to her, I turned around and left.

### [Chapter 106 Christmas Eve](#)

Scarlett's POV:

My phone rang the moment I stepped into my apartment. It was Charles.

"Why aren't you replying to my messages?" he complained.

"For one, I was chatting with Rita, your woman, and I just got home," I answered straightforwardly.

"Rita is not mine," Charles corrected, a hint of annoyance in his voice. He then sighed heavily and changed the subject. "Anyway, I've been told in the meeting that there's something wrong with the project I'm working on. I'm leaving for Besceinga for a business trip."

"Oh. Okay," I replied flatly, not knowing what to say. But I must admit, hearing his voice made me want to see him.

"I won't be back until the birthday party. Don't worry. I'll send an assistant to help you with the preparations in the following days," Charles patiently explained.

It somehow upset me that he was leaving, but I did not show it. "When are you leaving?"

Charles paused for a moment and answered, "I'm already at the airport."

"I see. I'll... I'll hang up now." I thought I would be able to see him again before he left. I did not expect that he would leave all of a sudden.

"Wait." Charles stopped me from hanging up the call and added, "I miss you, Scarlett."

For a moment, the sound of his voice was the only thing I could hear. The house had never felt so empty, that was until now. When Charles lived here with me, despite the endless bickering, it was not lonely.

"I heard that there's a big white rose garden in Besceinga. I'll take you there sometime," Charles said, probably to make up for his absence. An inexplicable feeling surged into my heart. All I wanted right now was to be wrapped in his tight embrace.

"Charles..." I took a deep breath and continued, "Have a safe flight."

With that, I hung up the call without waiting for his response. I gazed at his number on my screen and fell into deep thought. My heart and soul left with him when he said he missed me.

I had been restless since Charles had gone on a business trip. I could not focus on my work, nor could I eat or sleep well.

Time quickly passed by. Before I knew it, it was already Christmas Eve. The company was on a holiday today. So even though I had nothing to do, I had no choice but to stay at home. I did everything to occupy myself. But I could not run away from the desolate feeling whenever I had a minute to spare.

I held my phone and debated whether I should call Charles or not. It had been a week since we last talked. He had not called nor messaged me since he left.

'It's Christmas Eve today. Should I message him first?' I bit my lips and hesitated.

Just then, a notification popped up. Charles had sent me a voice message. I clicked on it, and his pleasant voice rang into my ears.

"Honey, happy Christmas Eve. I love you."

My heart pounded wildly in my chest. I could not help but giggle and roll on the bed as I listened to his deep and sonorous voice over and over again. It was only at this moment that I felt at ease. I pondered hard on how I would reply to his sweet message. In the end, I decided to just send him a smiley emoji. I waited for his response, but none came.

In the evening, Abner and Nina came over to celebrate Christmas Eve with me. They even brought a bottle of red wine for us to drink.

That bottle did not last long, though. We drank it all up in just an hour. Meanwhile, Nina did not seem satisfied with it. She slumped on the sofa and kept asking us to go to the bar.

However, it was already deep into the night. It was already too late for us to book an appointment in the bar. All of a sudden, it occurred to me that Charles had taken home a bottle of wine. With that, I staggered to my feet and made my way towards the wine cabinet.

"Let me help you." Abner also stood up and stretched out his hand, so I would not stumble on the way.

I ignored his outstretched hand and staggered to the wine cabinet. Charles liked putting his stuff here. As a result, my home was now filled with his belongings.

There were all kinds of expensive liquors in the wine cabinet. I must have drunk too much that the world seemed to be spinning around. I shook my head to see clearly, but I still could not find the bottle of wine Charles had brought recently.

"Which one do you want? Let me get it for you," a familiar voice behind me said.

"I don't need your help, Charles," I replied crossly.

As I did not see what I was looking for, I just randomly selected a bottle and returned to the living room.

"You're drunk. Let me help you," the man offered.

Since when did Charles become a gentleman? I tried my best to open my eyes and then turned to look at him. It was only then that I realized it was Abner. Although I was moved by his kindness, I refused it. If Charles found out about this, he would be jealous again.

The thought of him made my heart ache.

I missed him so much. I could not stop thinking of him.

The alcohol was making me more emotional. Right now, Charles was all I could think about.

Dizzy, I stumbled a few steps back. For a moment, I could not even remember where I was or what I was doing. Suddenly, I lost my balance. Fortunately, just as I was about to fall, someone caught me.

"Charles, you didn't have to do that. Your arm hasn't recovered yet," I complained.

"What are you talking about? Charles isn't here. That's Abner!" Nina shouted while laughing at me.

Charles's POV:

I finished two days' worth of work in a day so that I would be able to get home earlier and surprise Scarlett. I must admit, I was a little tired. But I could no longer bear being away from the woman I loved.

At this moment, I stood in front of her door with a suitcase full of gifts.

But as I opened the door, Scarlett surprised me first.

Abner was holding her arm intimately. Even from afar, I could see that she was as drunk as a skunk. I had no idea how much she had drunk. But judging from her flushed face, it must have been a lot.

"What happened?" I asked with a scowl. It seemed that Scarlett had been fooling around while I was away.

"Eh? If Charles isn't here, why do I hear his voice?" Scarlett looked around, trying to find where my voice had come from.

I was right in front of her, and yet she could not see me! I could not help but stare daggers at her. She was so drunk that she had not realized that I had arrived.

Abner looked at me. But instead of letting Scarlett go at once, he took his time and helped Scarlett onto the sofa.

"Charles, Abner and I came here to keep Scarlett company. She's too lonely to be alone on Christmas Eve," Nina explained when she noticed my long face.

I nodded in response, not in the mood to say anything more. All I wanted right now was to teach Scarlett a lesson. Without a word, I walked over and put my gifts and the bouquet of white roses on the tea table.

"Charles, you're so romantic!" Nina exclaimed. She then picked up the bouquet and gazed at it with appreciation. Well, it was obvious she just wanted to lighten the mood.

At that moment, Scarlett leaned forward to me. Her eyes were closed, and her nostrils were flaring as though she was smelling me.

"This is Charles's smell," Scarlett mumbled.

"What smell?"

"The smell of cold blood," she answered with a chuckle.

I looked at her sourly, unable to believe how ungrateful she was. I worked so hard just to see her on Christmas Eve. But what did she do? She liquored up and even told me I was cold-blooded.

Scarlett put her hands on her hips, looked at me discontentedly. "This is my home. Why did you come in without my permission?" she asked, her lips curled into a pout.

"This is our home," I corrected. On second thought, I realized that it was futile to argue with a drunk person.

Scarlett ignored my words and instead ordered Abner, "Abner, open the bottle."

Nina seemed to be the only sensible person among them. She winked at Abner and tried to smooth things over. "Why don't we call it a day? It's getting late. I think me and Abner should now leave."

"I don't want this to happen again," I warned. My mood had now reached its lowest point.

Scarlett staggered to her feet and protested, "Charles, how dare you threaten my friends?! I still want to drink!"

I rubbed my temples in exasperation. Scarlett's stubbornness was giving me a headache. But then again, arguing with a drunk person was like talking to the wall. With that, I opened the bottle of wine on the tea table, poured three glasses, and took one. "I'll drink this on behalf of Scarlett."

"Let's end this Christmas Eve party with this glass of wine," Nina said to us with a smile.

After drinking it all up, she grabbed Abner's hand and urged him to leave. However, he seemed to have something else to say.

I raised my eyebrows at him. "Anything else?"

"You should also leave," Abner said firmly.

A sneer tugged at the corners of my mouth. "I own this house. I am Scarlett's husband, and I will soon be the father of her child," I replied with a mocking smile.

"Abner, stop it. Let's go." Nina's tugged at Abner's sleeve. "If we don't leave now, you two will fight to the death!"

Abner laughed scornfully but left in the end. Once the two were gone, I returned to the sofa and looked at Scarlett. "Didn't you see my message?"

Scarlett tilted her head and pondered for a moment. "Hmm. I saw your message."

"Then why didn't you reply?" I was getting frustrated with her. It irked me that she was treating me as if I was indispensable to her.

"What are you saying? I replied to you," Scarlett defensively said. Her words were slurring because of the alcohol. There was also a pitiful look on her face as she spoke.

"I didn't think that was a reply. A smiley? What does that even mean? So rude," I scoffed. I felt helpless. We had not talked for days, and that was the only thing she had said to me.

"Don't be mad. I'll reply to you again." Scarlett rummaged in her pocket in search of her phone.

All of a sudden, I remembered that she got drunk in front of Abner today. I could not help but feel jealous. I grabbed her hand and reminded her, "I told you not to get drunk around men. What if they take advantage of you?"

"Everything will be fine as long as it's not Rita."

I never expected that Scarlett's tongue was sharper when she was drunk. What she just said ticked me off. I lost my mind. Before I knew it, I was kissing her hard like there was no tomorrow.

However, Scarlett bit my lips hard, which made me withdraw in pain.

"You want me, don't you?" she whispered, her eyes brimmed with tears.

"Yes," I answered frankly. It was not something that should be hidden. I wanted her more than she could imagine, and it was driving me crazy.

To my surprise, tears streamed down her face, and she began undressing in front of me. "I'll make love to you, but promise me you'll disappear from my life forever after that."

### [Chapter 107 After Getting Drunk](#)

Charles's POV:

"Do you know what you're talking about?" I stared into Scarlett's eyes. If I did not come home tonight, would she stand in front of another man like this?

She hiccupped and then blushed. She squinted at me with misty eyes and pursed her red lips. She looked so sweet and innocent that I felt my blood boil with desire and rush to the sensitive parts of my body.

She was still unbuttoning her shirt. I reached out and stopped her. "Stop it, or you will regret it."

My voice was hoarse. I could not resist such a sexy Scarlett. But she kept provoking me. I took a deep, steadying breath, desperately trying to hold on to what was left of my reason.

"No," Scarlett muttered as she pushed my hand away. She took off her shirt and tossed it aside. Then, she held my face with both hands and asked, "What? Don't you want to? Didn't you always want me?"

I looked down at her painfully inviting lips as she pulled my face closer and closer to hers. I swallowed. Eventually, we were close enough to share breath. I felt hers on my face, and it faintly smelled like wine.

"I'll give you what you want, but after tonight, I want us to never see each other again," Scarlett said, suddenly taking a step back.

Since she wanted to play, I was willing to play with her. I looked at her and ordered, "To the bedroom then."

Without hesitation, Scarlett went to the bedroom and lay down on the bed.

I followed her closely. As I walked, I took off my tie and my shirt. Then, I joined her in bed and climbed on top of her. She did not say anything. Her eyes were closed, and her mouth was slightly open. She looked like a ripe fruit waiting to be tasted.

I patted her knees and said, "Since you want to do it, be proactive."

She opened her eyes, bit her lip, and bent her knees slowly. Watching her willingly submit to me, I lost

control. I parted her legs and pressed my body in between them. Then, I began kissing her fiercely.

As I enjoyed the sweet taste of her lips, I felt her defenses gradually melt down under my touch. She slipped small gasps and moans in between our hot, wild kisses, and it only made me mad with lust. I slid my hand under her lower back, and she arched her back in response. Then, she ran her fingers through my hair.

I reached down and unzipped her pants. When I was about to slip off her pants, she grabbed my hand.

"Are you sure you want to go through with this?" Her eyelashes trembled, and beads of sweat broke out of her forehead.

"My prey has willingly flitted into my snare. I'd be a fool not to indulge." After saying that, I proceeded to sink my face in between her soft breasts and kissed the delicate skin of her chest. All I could think about at the moment was making her utterly and completely mine.

Hearing what I said, Scarlett loosened her grip. I took advantage of the opportunity to pull off her pants, wrap her legs around my waist, and rub my enraged manhood against her. I kissed her lips, neck, and every other part of her body as if she was going to disappear suddenly in a puff of smoke. I wanted to mark every part of her.

However, Scarlett stopped responding to my moves. She just lay there and blankly stared at the chandelier.

I paused and then planted a soft kiss on her lips. "If you want to have a good time, you have to cooperate with me."

She did not say a word. After a few moments, tears started streaming down her face. And just like that, my raging lust was half-extinguished, and I felt like my heart had just been ripped out of my chest and then tossed into a pot of boiling oil. I gently ran my thumb over her cheek and said, "I love you, Scarlett Riley. Please don't cry."

I could never stand seeing Scarlett cry. Whenever she shed tears in front of me, I blamed myself for making her do so.

"Let's just get this over with because it will never happen again," Scarlett said stubbornly, wiping her tears.

I felt angry and distressed. I pinched her chin and asked, "Why are you being so aggrieved? Did you know how happy I was when you came on to me just now? I thought I was finally getting a favorable response from you. And now, with the way you're acting, I feel like you just dumped a bucket of cold water on me. It's extremely disappointing."

"Cut the crap. Do you want to do this or not?" Scarlett snapped and then sniffed.

"I didn't come home early today to see you sulk like this while we're trying to be intimate. I've been busy in Besceinga these days. All I want is to come home and see you and enjoy the warmth of your company. Is that too much to ask? Do you even miss me when I'm gone? Do you at least feel sorry for me?"

Looking at her unmoved face, I felt like a fool with my wishful thinking. But still, I could not help wanting her. I loved her, and she was the only woman I yearned to be with.

"I didn't ask you to come home early," Scarlett blurted out.

That statement annoyed me so much that I grabbed her hand and put it to my lips. "What on earth is your heart made of?"

She kept silent and tried to withdraw her hand.

"Wait!" I pulled her hand and examined it. "Where's the ring I put on you? Why aren't you wearing it? I didn't ask you to take it off."

"I took it off because it's not appropriate for me to wear," Scarlett said expressionlessly as if she was talking about the weather.

I let go of her hand. Did she want to disassociate herself from me this much? It was then that I realized that even if I got her body, I would not get her heart. If I forced her to sleep with me tonight, she would just hate me more and push me even further away.

I got off her and sat on the edge of the bed. I buried my face in my palms and let despair ravage my half-broken heart.

All of a sudden, Scarlett's hand flew to her mouth, and then she quickly got up and made a run for the bathroom. Soon, her retching broke the silence.

I sighed and then went to the kitchen. I took out the bottle of honey from the cupboard and poured a glass of warm water. I grabbed a spoon and mixed some honey into the water. Then, I set the glass on the dining table.

I sat at the table and waited for Scarlett to come out. I let myself get lost in my thoughts. Every encounter I had with Scarlett seemed to always end at an impasse, and it had always left me uneasy. She was like a kite that I was flying on a dangerously taut string. If I kept holding on to her like this, she would eventually snap free, and there would be nothing I could do to get her back.

Before long, Scarlett walked out of the bathroom with a pale face. She looked like she had just gone through hell, but it was the best way to teach her to drink responsibly.

"Come here and drink some water." I tapped on the table.

Scarlett stayed put and stared toward my direction in a daze. I followed her gaze and realized that she was looking at the gift I brought home for her on the table.

"It's a Christmas gift for you." I picked up the glass of water and slowly walked over to her. She would never know how much I wanted to give her the best things in the world. I supposed that was one of the reasons why she really never showed any sort of appreciation.

Scarlett picked up the bouquet and whispered, "The roses..."

"I bought the White Rose Manor in Besceinga. I haven't been able to show you yet because I've been busy. So I decided to bring you this bouquet of their roses first." I put down the glass on the tea table, held her free hand, and kissed it.

She looked at me in disbelief. "You bought the manor?"

"Yes. You love white roses, don't you? So I bought the manor. You can now go there whenever you wish." I lowered my head and twined my fingers with hers. As long as she would allow me, I would give her anything she wanted.

Scarlett just stood there in stunned silence. It seemed that she had not completely sobered up yet.

I let go of her hand and tucked a lock of her hair behind her ear. "Open the gift box."

Scarlett took the box and sat on the sofa. She set the box on her lap and then opened it. Inside was a diamond necklace. I took it out and put it on her. Her smooth, fair skin made the diamonds look more sparkly.

"I just knew it would look magnificent on you," I said with satisfaction. I could not help kissing her on the forehead. "Wear it to Grandpa's birthday party tomorrow night, okay?"

#### [Chapter 108 The Air Ticke](#)

Scarlett's POV:

Pushing Charles away, I said, "I'll be there as a guest tomorrow night."

I then took off the necklace and added, "And there is no reason for me to accept such a precious gift."

"What do you mean by that? You are my wife, and you deserve the best." Charles' face paled as he held my wrist.

"Soon, I won't be your wife. We're going to divorce, remember?" I said in a firm voice. I was forcing myself to be cold to him because I did not want him to sway my heart away. I knew that it would be more painful if I let him into my heart once again.

"Scarlett!" Charles called out my name, gritting his teeth

Although I knew that he was angry, I continued to provoke him. "Would you like to go on? Bring it on! I am ready."

Charles snorted and shook off my hand. "You are so disgusting."

I shrugged, pretending not to care. "Whatever. You don't seem to want to continue, so why don't you just leave?"

Charles sat down on the sofa and said coldly, "This is my home too and I am willing to stay right here."

I ignored his words. After what just happened, I became sober. I was finally able to sense the awful smell of alcohol on my body, and wanted to take a shower to get rid of it. I finished the hot cup of honey water before I turned around and walked to the bathroom.

"Wait! Take your gift with you. Or you won't be able to sleep tonight," Charles warned.

I did not want to be tangled with him again, so I glared at him as I picked up the gift box and the bouquet of white roses and threw them in the study room. I felt like if it was out of my sight, then I wouldn't think about it.

Only after I was done taking a shower did I completely sober up. After wiping my wet hair with a towel, I went to the living room to drink some water. To my surprise, Charles was alone there, drinking.

I curled my lips, resisted the impulse to talk to him, and passed by him without looking at him. He did not say anything to me, either. He continued to stare at the glass in his hand, looking a little lonely.

I drank a full glass of water before I returned to my room. I slammed the door behind me with a bang, feeling depressed. Why was he pretending to be so despondent? He was acting as though I was the bad guy in the relationship who lied to him about love and hurt him deeply.

As I slowly dried my hair, I sat down on the bed gloomily. However, I could not stop worrying about him. Was he still drinking? Thinking of that, I could not resist myself anymore. I got out of bed, and opened the door slightly, looking at him through the crack. The lights in the living room were off, and there was no sound.

I took off my slippers, walked to the living room stealthily, and noticed Charles fast asleep on the sofa. Next to him, there were several empty alcohol bottles.

"You should be more careful or you will die from alcohol poisoning!" I couldn't help but grumble.

Seeing that he was not taking good care of himself, I could not help but get angry. Feeling helpless, I covered him with a thin blanket.

The next morning, I woke up with a splitting headache.

Alcohol was really a bad thing, at least for me. Yawning lazily, I walked out of my room and saw that Charles had already left. However, there was breakfast on the table, and the roses that he had gotten for me the night before were neatly placed in a vase that was filled with water.

As I gently touched the flowers, I thought of what he had said to me the night before, and my heart softened.

While I was eating breakfast, Alice called me.

"Scarlett, I miss you so much. When will you get off work today? I'll ask the driver to pick you up." There was a lot of enthusiasm, and humor in her voice, just like always.

"Mom, I miss you too. But I'm not sure when I'll get off work today. Once I am done with work, I will go to the hotel on my own. Don't trouble the driver on my behalf," I said to her with a smile, influenced by her cheerful mood.

I chatted with her for a while longer before I hung up, gulped down the rest of my breakfast, and rushed to the TV station.

"Hey, Scarlett, why are you in such a hurry?"

I saw Nina walking towards me with a mug in her hand as soon as I arrived at work.

"I was caught up in a traffic jam." Sitting on the chair, I tried to catch my breath.

"Charles did not drop you off at work today?" Nina seemed to be a little surprised as she asked me that question.

I shook my head and replied, "Well, we had a fight."

Moreover, it did not seem like we would patch things up anytime soon. Although it was something that I had always wanted, for some reason, I could not help but feel depressed about getting it.

"Damn it! Things were going so well last night. How could you two fight?" Nina looked at me in disbelief. Disappointed, she put down the coffee mug and turned to me. "Nothing happened between you two?"

Thinking of what happened last night, I smiled awkwardly. "We shouted at each other. Does that count?"

"I'm speechless! Are you two stupid?" Nina held her head between her hands. I guessed that she was trying to push Charles and me to have sex.

"We are not in love," I retorted, clearing my throat awkwardly, but my response sounded feeble and weak.

"You really did not sleep with him, then?" she asked again.

Shaking my head, I wondered why she was so concerned about the progress of my relationship with Charles.

"Forget it." Nina really seemed to be disappointed with me. She took out a ticket from the folder and handed it to me as she said, "Here is the flight ticket. The plane leaves at seven tomorrow morning."

I took the ticket from her and looked at the date, without saying anything. I did not think that time would fly by so quickly. It all felt like a dream now.

"Don't think too much. Everything would have been sorted by the time you come back next year," Nina comforted me softly.

I smiled at her but did not say anything. Sometimes, time was not enough to change or prove anything. I had left for three years in the past, but my relationship with Charles only became more complicated after I returned.

"Spencer mentioned to me that Charles has been living alone for three years now." Nina carefully observed my expression before she continued, "Is it possible that Rita has deceived everyone with her pitiful look?"

I shook my head. "Is she even that smart to fool everyone? Besides, Charles' attitude towards Rita..." I paused, finding it difficult to continue. "It's obvious that he is willing to go up against his own family for her sake."

Charles' POV:

It was the day of Grandpa's birthday. I went to the company early in the morning, so that I could finish my work as soon as I could and go to the hotel earlier to get ready for the party.

Spencer came to my office in the noon to have lunch with me.

"Bro, there is a problem with your love life, and it's pretty obvious." Saying that, Spencer ate a piece of the beef, chewing it fiercely.

"Really?" I looked up at him, picked up the pepper and salt, and sprinkled it on my plate.

"Come on! Even now, you're wearing a long face." Spencer put on an exaggerated expression as he grabbed the salt and pepper from me. "Stop it, or the food will be too salty."

I put down the knife and fork irritably, pushed the plate aside, and signaled the waiter to take it away. That moment, my phone rang.

"What's up?" I asked impatiently, answering it.

"Mr. Moore, it's me."

It was the director of the TV station. He informed me that Scarlett was going to leave Los Angeles by air at seven on the following morning.

I hung up and put the phone on the table with a long face. "How dare she lie to me?"

Hearing that, Spencer looked at me in confusion. "What happened?"

"Scarlett is going abroad for a one-year training program, and she is leaving tomorrow morning," I muttered. I felt like I should not believe her words because she was trying to keep me in the dark about it the whole time.

"Do you want her to stay?" Spencer asked, wiping his mouth with a napkin.

"Of course! I'll make her mine tonight," I answered firmly. Not only did I want to make her stay, I wanted to make her stay whole-heartedly. If she wanted to fly away from me, then I would break her wings apart.

After having lunch, Spencer walked to me with a cigarette in his hand and said with a smile, "Do you really not want to have a smoke?"

"No, I quit smoking." I pushed the door open and walked out.

"You really are something. You have been a smoker for years, but you've quit for Scarlett's sake. I genuinely admire the effect she has on you." Spencer blew out some smoke rings as he quickened his pace to catch up with me.

Just when I was about to say something, a little girl bumped into me. I held her up at once and asked, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, sir." Saying that, the little girl ran back to her mother.

Looking at the back of that lovely little girl, I could not help but think of my future. "Who do you think is going to be a dad first between the two of us, Spencer?"

"Do you really want to be a father?" Spencer looked at me as though he had seen a ghost.

I nodded and looked away. "Yes, and I want my kid to look like Scarlett."

With a chuckle, Spencer patted me on the shoulder. "Bro, you are still a virgin, but I admire your ambition!"

### [Chapter 109 The Birthday Party](#)

Scarlett's POV:

As I walked out of the gate of the company, I saw Charles's car parked on the side of the road. I debated whether or not to go to him. But in the end, I decided to go to him. We were not on speaking terms these past few days. But since he was here, I might as well talk to him. That reminded me—I could mock at him now that he was the one who conceded first and came to me.

A man got out of the car while I was making my way to it. To my surprise, it was not Charles, but Spencer. I could not hide my disappointment. I thought Charles had come for me.

"Spencer, why are you here?" I asked while walking towards him.

"Charles is busy right now. He couldn't come here, so he asked me to pick you up." As soon as Spencer finished speaking, a makeup artist got out of the car with an exquisite dress in her hand.

I had no choice but to dress up. If I resisted, Spencer would mention Michael and guilt-trip me. There was nothing I could do but sit there and let them doll me up. For some reason, I felt a sinking feeling in my stomach. It was as if something bad would happen, but I had no idea what it was.

We left for the hotel after they got me ready. There I saw Alice and the others greeting the guests by the entrance. The whole hotel had been cleared since yesterday. Those who were not invited to the party were allowed to check in. Everyone here was rich and powerful. The parking lot outside seemed more like a showroom because of the luxury cars that were parked there.

"Scarlett, my dear, come!" Alice greeted enthusiastically. She seemed elated to see me.

"Go ahead." Spencer lifted the train of my gown as I walked up to Alice.

"Darling, you look stunning!" Alice remarked with a smile. She then held my hand and led me to Charles. "You stay with Charles first."

I nodded obediently stood beside him without a word. Although I felt a little helpless about Alice's arrangement, it was Michael's birthday. I did not want anyone to be disappointed because of me.

"Why didn't you protest?" Charles asked in a low voice.

I just smiled in response. It was hard to figure out what he really wanted. Whenever I was being

obedient and submissive, he was skeptical. But when I disagreed, he would pull a long face. It was very difficult, if not impossible, to please him.

"Hold my arm," Charles whispered in my ear.

His warm breath and hoarse voice tickled my ears. I covered them with my hands and stared daggers at him.

Charles looked at me from head to toe and snapped, "Hurry up. They're watching us."

It was only then that I noticed that everyone was looking at the two of us with interest. Charles and I were so close that the guests who were just passing by could not help but cast a glance at us. I cleared my throat, embarrassed as the guests were looking at me. Albeit unwillingly, I held his arm and forced myself to relax.

"Behave yourself. Don't touch me without my permission," I reminded him through gritted teeth.

"How can you still be shy when we've been married for years?" Charles muttered in a barely audible tone but loud enough for me to hear.

"Watch your words." I pinched his arm with the same sardonic smile.

At that moment, an elegantly dressed lady came over and greeted Alice. "Alice, long time no see! I missed you so much!"

Alice's face lit up upon seeing her old acquaintance. She held the lady's hand and chatted with her for a while.

The woman nudged Alice's arm and looked at me up and down as if she was guessing who I was. "Oh, wow. Who's that beautiful lady holding Charles's arm?"

"Well, that's—"

Before Alice could answer, Rita suddenly appeared.

She was wearing a long black spangly gown with a huge emerald necklace around her neck. Her make-up was exquisite, but her smokey eyes somewhat aged her.

Susan and Nate came to the party as well. What was more, a dozen bodyguards were following them. Did they come here to ruin the party?

"People who don't know the situation might think that it's her birthday party and not your grandfather's," Spencer joked.

I could not help but chuckle at his words. He was right, after all. But then, I noticed that Charles was looking at me, so I quickly straightened up. Both Spencer and Nina were good-looking and funny. They were a perfect match.

However, my good mood only lasted for a couple of seconds as I saw Rita rushing towards us. She grabbed Charles's other arm without a hint of shame.

I withdrew my hand from Charles's arm awkwardly, but he stopped me.

He held my hand tighter on one hand and shook off Rita's with the other. "Spencer, take her in," he ordered in an icy cold voice.

"No, I don't want to. I want to be by your side!" Rita pouted and acted like a spoiled brat.

Her voice might sound cute and sweet in other people's ears. But to me, it was like nails on a chalkboard. It sent shivers down my spine, and I shuddered at the sound of it. All I wanted right now was to get out of this suffocating place and away from that presumptuous woman. I tried to withdraw my hand from Charles's arm yet again. However, I immediately stopped as he cast a warning gaze at me out of the corner of his eye.

Helpless, I tugged on Charles's sleeve and suggested, "How about I go upstairs now with Spencer?"

"No." Alice walked up to us and looked at Rita with disdain. "You're the one who should go upstairs. Just to remind you, you're not invited here. But since today is my father-in-law's birthday, I'll let you stay. You should thank me. At least I have the decency not to humiliate you in front of so many people. But if you continue to misbehave, don't blame me for being rude."

Rita feared Alice, so she did not dare to make a scene after hearing the latter's warning. But before she left, she did not forget to ruffle my feathers. "I'm ill, and I can't stand up for a long time. I'm afraid you'll have to help me entertain the guests."

I did not say anything in response and just watched Spencer take her away. Rita reminded me that no matter what happened, everyone would sympathize with the weak, and in the end, I would get the short end of the stick. After all, everyone knew she was dying. People like her always got sympathy and compassion. My heart ached at this realization.

"Alice, I'm confused. Which one is your daughter-in-law?" one of Alice's acquaintances asked.

"Me too. But I like the lady over there who's standing next to your son now," another chimed in.

"I agree. The one who just went upstairs seems hard to deal with. I heard she's Mr. Lively's daughter."

The ladies kept asking Alice about us in confusion. Embarrassed, I lowered my head and twiddled with my fingers. This was what I had been dreading since the party preparations. And now, what I had feared

the most had become true.

Alice cleared her throat and explained loudly, "Of course, my daughter-in-law is the lady next to Charles. Anyway, there will be a spectacular show later. Please wait patiently." With a smile, she beckoned her friends to go upstairs to the banquet hall.

When the ladies were gone, Charles looked at me and noticed that I was in a bad mood. He stretched out his hands to hold me, but I took a step back away from him. How dare he touch me after getting me into trouble? Charles, you wish! I was so mad at him that I did not talk to him for the rest of the party and kept a safe distance from him.

Once the reception was over, Charles and I went upstairs with the elders. I must say, they were beaming with happiness. They finally saw their old friends after a long time.

Alice sighed and said, "It looks like I'll have to entertain guests again soon. But this time, it'll be Charles and Scarlett's wedding. I can't wait."

"Yes. It'll happen soon. I'm sure the ceremony will be grand and more people will come," Lawrence echoed.

"We should familiarize the guests with Scarlett then." Alice turned around and winked at me meaningfully.

Not wanting to disappoint them on such an occasion, I just smiled and said nothing.

The smile on my face faltered the moment I entered the banquet hall. A loud and distinct female voice inside echoed in our ears. It was Susan's.

"Charles is concerned about Rita. He doesn't want her to get tired. The lady he's with downstairs is just his sister. Do you still remember the Riley family? The girl is the daughter of the man who had committed suicide. The Moore family adopted her out of pity."

"Fucking hell. I'll tear that bitch's mouth apart!" Alice was infuriated with what she had heard.

Just as she was about to shut Susan up, I grabbed her hand and smiled reassuringly at her. With a sardonic smile, I walked up to Susan and loudly asked, "If I remember it right, the Livelys weren't given an invitation, were you? I never expected I'd see you three here."

### [Chapter 110 The Announcemen](#)

Scarlett's POV:

"How are you doing lately, Scarlett?" Nate came over and greeted me.

"I'm good. And you? How's business?" I replied, eyeing him carefully.

As soon as I finished my question, Nate's face darkened. The change was so obvious that it almost made me chuckle.

Hearing this, Alice burst into laughter. Nate maintained the fake smile on his face despite the palpable awkwardness that suddenly descended.

"It's not bad, thank you for asking," Nate finally answered.

I was about to say something else when somebody linked arms with me.

"Thank you for helping me entertain the guests, Scarlett." Rita flashed me her best toothy smile and gently patted my arm.

I knew that she was only acting chummy with me because she wanted to show everyone what a good person she was, which she was not. She might not be bright in aspects that matter, but she was cunning, and I respected that as much as I hated to admit it.

"It's my pleasure," I smiled back at her and slowly withdrew my arm.

"Everyone, let's have a seat and chat." Rita kept on her decent smile and greeted everyone as if she was running for local office.

I just stood there and watched her bend over backwards trying to keep everyone entertained.

Then, Charles walked up to me, snaked his arm around my waist, and ushered me toward his parents. The gesture looked so intimate that some heads turned to our direction.

"Where are your grandparents? Why aren't they here yet? I'm a little worried about them. Maybe they're having trouble finding the venue. Will you two step out and fetch them?" Alice said worriedly, glancing at the door. She looked restless and agitated.

"Okay, we'll go get them. Don't worry," I said, patting the back of her hand. Then, Charles and I headed out to find Michael and Christine.

"Charles? Where are you going?" Rita asked, hurrying over to stand in our way.

"You stay here," Charles muttered, casting a cold glance at her.

"I'm coming with you," Rita mumbled and tried to hold Charles's hand, but he dodged.

"If you don't want to get thrown out of here, don't make me repeat myself," Charles snapped and then looked at me and took my hand.

"Let's go find Grandma and Grandpa." After saying that, he towed me out of the banquet hall without looking back.

I chanced a glance at Rita. She was standing right where we left her. Her eyes screamed bloody murder at me, but through the resentment, I could see pure, undiluted pain. Despite all the trouble she had caused me, I could not help feeling sorry for her.

As soon as we walked out of the banquet hall, we ran into one of Charles's business partners.

Charles stopped and introduced us. "Hello, Mr. Thompson. I hope you're having a great evening. This is my wife, Scarlett. Scarlett, this is Mr. Thompson."

After greeting Mr. Thompson, I stood quietly beside Charles, held his arm, and listened to their conversation.

"Wow. I didn't know you were married. Why didn't you tell me about your beautiful wife before?" Mr. Thompson asked, playfully punching Charles in the chest.

"Well, I prefer to keep her to myself. By the way, she's a huge fan of the nuts your company makes," Charles responded politely.

"Is that so? Well, she has great taste. Are you sure she is your wife?"

With that, Charles and Mr. Thompson shared a good laugh. I could not help giggling at the joke, too. Then, Charles finally replied, "Yes, she is." He turned to look at me and flashed me a sincere smile. I almost choked.

"I suppose I can't blame you for not wanting to parade her around. She's ravishing, and you're one lucky young man." Then, Mr. Thompson seemed to think of something suddenly. He turned to me and said, "Mrs. Moore, I'm sure your husband has informed you that he wants to purchase my shares for you."

"And has he succeeded?" I asked Mr. Thompson with a smile.

"You know, Charles here can do anything he puts his mind to. He's such a brilliant young businessman, and it's a pleasure to work with him," Mr. Thompson answered and patted Charles on the shoulder.

I whipped my head toward Charles.

He turned to look at me affectionately. There was something about his stare that pierced through my soul and made me feel so many things at once that I had to avert my gaze and catch my breath.

I was so moved. I did not expect that he had done so much for me without me even knowing.

Charles and Mr. Thompson chatted for a while and then finally said goodbye.

"Grandma, Grandpa." As soon as we turned the corridor, I saw Michael and Christine walking toward us.

I walked up to them and gave each of them a kiss. I gently held Christine's arm and swept my eyes over her. "Oh, my gosh, Grandma, you look amazing tonight."

"Thank you, my dear," Christine flashed me a big, happy smile and squeezed my hand.

"I'm sure you'll be the belle of the ball tonight. All eyes will be on you," I said proudly and raised my chin.

"Oh, aren't you sweet? But I'm old and don't want to be the center of attention anymore. I just want to see you in the limelight," Christine replied.

"You're not that old. You're the most beautiful woman in the world," I insisted with a smile.

"Well, thank you, Scarlett. I appreciate it. Let's go inside. Your grandfather has something important to announce." Christine patted the back of my hand and stared at me dotingly.

"What is it?" I could not help asking when I saw that her expression had turned a little serious.

"You'll find out soon enough, dear," Christine smiled and proceeded to the banquet hall.

I did not ask any more questions after that and just ushered her to the party. I walked by Christine's side while Charles walked by Michael's side.

None of us stopped or talked until we made it to the banquet hall and all the guests looked in our direction.

"All right. Enjoy the party, Grandma and Grandpa." As I spoke, I stepped back and let them walk in.

Michael and Christine made their entrance arm-in-arm.

Charles took a look at me and then attempted to put his hand on the small of my back. I dodged his touch, walked away, and entered the banquet from the side door by myself.

Next thing I knew, Michael was onstage and giving a speech. The guests listened carefully. I found a corner with only a few people and walked over there.

"Thank you for coming to the party tonight. I hate to ruin the festivities, but I have to make something clear. First of all, my grandson, Charles Moore, is not romantically involved with Rita Lively. They're neither engaged nor in a relationship. All the rumors circulating about them were untrue and baseless, and I hope that from now on, none of you will be misled by those false claims. Second, my grandson has been married for three years. We have kept his marriage under wraps for the sake of my granddaughter-in-law. We didn't want her to be hurt. But we eventually realized that keeping her

identity a secret would only cause her and our family more unnecessary pain. So tonight, we would like to introduce her to all of you formally. For that, I give you Scarlett Riley, the real and legal wife of my grandson Charles Moore. I sincerely hope that this formal announcement will put an end to all the gossip surrounding my grandson's love life. Scarlett is his legal wife, and she's the only Mrs. Moore that our family recognizes. Thank you." Michael's authoritative voice rang all throughout the hall.

As soon as he finished speaking, Christine showed the crowd Charles and I's marriage certificate, permanently dispelling everyone's doubt.

The guests were so shocked that they fell silent enough for a pin drop to be heard. So was I.

"What's going on?" I looked at Charles, who was standing behind me all of a sudden, and questioned him.

Was that the announcement that Christine mentioned earlier? Charles must have known about it, but why did he not tell me?

"I'll explain later." After saying that, Charles reached out to hold my hand, but I shook him off.

"Charles, will you and Scarlett please join us here onstage? You have kept your relationship a secret for so long. It's time for both of you to step into the light and let the world know of your love and care for each other." Christine's calm voice jolted me back to reality.

Charles beamed and nodded with enthusiasm. Ignoring my struggles, he wrapped his arm around my waist and brought me onstage.