

Warning 81

[Chapter 81 The Omnipresent Rita](#)

Scarlett's POV:

It was because of Charles' strong request that I decided to compromise for the time being. I did not know what he would do if I had not compromised.

That whole morning, I was watching a movie with him.

At first, I was worried that he might use the movie as an excuse to make a move on me, but later I found that he didn't break his promise at all. He just watched the movie with me while holding me in his arms.

We were watching the Titanic. When Leonardo DiCaprio's handsome face appeared on the screen, I couldn't help but look at Charles. Under the soft light, he was also extremely handsome, just like a movie star. Fortunately, I looked away right before he noticed the flush on my cheeks.

The peaceful time lasted till noon.

Standing in front of the wardrobe, I thought for a while before I chose my new black backless dress for that lunch appointment.

Looking at my reflection in the mirror, I was very satisfied, so I took my handbag and was about to go out to meet William.

To my surprise, just when I put on my shoes, Charles, who was sitting on the sofa scrolling through his phone, suddenly stood up, frowned at me, and said, "No, Scarlett. Your dress is too revealing. Change it."

"Too revealing? This dress only reveals half of my back. Most evening gowns reveal way more than this one, right?"

"Don't be silly, Charles. The dress is fine." I quickly put on my high heels and was about to open the door.

"No!" Charles strode over to me, grabbed my wrist, and took me to the bedroom. Before I could even react, he dragged me to the bedroom, and I did not know what he was planning to do, so I kept struggling.

Charles took me to the closet. He browsed through the clothes, chose a blue dress, took it off the hanger, and handed it to me.

"Wear this." Saying that, he continued to look at me.

"Why? I just bought this black dress and it's nice." I was still quite unwilling to make a compromise. The blue dress that he chose was a bit too formal, and I only wore it to work. Since I was just meeting a friend, I naturally wanted to dress up a little.

"If you don't change it on your own, then I will do it for you." Charles was unwilling to change his mind either as he whispered those words to me.

I glared at him, but his eyes swept over my body.

Subconsciously, I covered my chest with my hands, fearing that he might actually try to take off my clothes.

Feeling helpless, I did not want to waste time at all, so I took the blue dress from his hands and got changed. Only after seeing me wearing the blue dress did he finally let me go.

As soon as I walked out of the building, I hailed a taxi, and rushed to the restaurant where William and I had planned to meet.

And indeed, it was a high-end restaurant.

Once I arrived, the doorman escorted me to the private dining room.

I saw William as soon as I walked in. But then, before I could even greet him, I noticed someone unexpected sitting next to him, which made my eyes twitch.

It was Rita, dressed in an elegant white dress with minimal makeup, which made her look dignified.

I ignored her and greeted William as I sat down from across them.

I asked with a smile, "Long time no see, William. How have you been?"

"Thank you for your concern, Scarlett. I'm doing fine." William gave me a nod and a natural smile.

Just when I was about to say something more to him, a familiar voice came from behind, interrupting me.

"What a coincidence! Scarlett, you are here too!"

My smile froze. It was Charles!

I immediately turned around and saw him leisurely leaning against the door with a smile as he raised his eyebrows at me. He had changed his clothes in the short time that we were apart. The customized suit was a perfect fit for him, which made him look more handsome.

I was staring at him blankly, and before I could even say anything, he sat down next to me.

"Hello, William. I'm Charles Moore. It's nice to meet you..."

Before Charles could even finish speaking, Rita interrupted him, "William, Charles is the man I'm going to marry. He's very handsome, isn't he?" Although her smile seemed to be a sweet one, her words were not.

I thought that it was funny, but I did not say anything to her as I did not want to meddle in their affairs.

Without saying anything, Charles also put his arm around my shoulder and acted intimately. And immediately, I was embarrassed. What was he trying to do in front of Rita?

William also looked at us closely.

"Mr. Moore, are you really going to marry Rita?" he asked in a doubtful tone.

"That's just a rumor which has no credibility to it," Charles denied without even looking at Rita.

I glanced at her from the corner of my eye. It was obvious that his words were a big blow to her as I saw her biting her lips grimly.

"You don't seem like you like Rita, but there are obvious rumors spreading about your marriage. Moreover, you seem to be quite close to Scarlett." With a frown, William was trying to figure out the relationship between us.

His gaze made me feel embarrassed as though I was a third wheel in Charles' relationship with Rita.

"Don't misunderstand us. Charles and I are like brother and sister. We grew up together," I explained when I got a chance.

Although our marriage was a fake one, his family had indeed adopted me and we had grown up together, so I was not entirely lying.

Charles looked at me with a playful smile, but fortunately for me, he didn't deny it.

"Yes, they're like siblings," Rita said in a hurry.

There was a long depressing silent moment at the table. I put my hands on my knees, feeling like I was the one that caused all the awkwardness. It was supposed to be a pleasant meal, and now, it had turned into something awkward because of the complicated relationship between Rita, Charles, and I.

Feeling sorry for William, I tried to lighten the mood by changing the subject.

"William, how do you know Rita?" I asked casually.

But to my surprise, Rita's face paled and William frowned upon hearing my question.

"Oh well, we met because William saved me once. I... I was unconscious at that time. It was very dangerous," Rita explained in a hurry.

However, I quickly guessed that there was something fishy going on between them. When they looked at each other, one of them was doubtful while the other seemed to be quietly pleading.

I didn't say anything, but I felt that their reaction was rather strange.

[Chapter 82 Pregnancy](#)

William's POV:

The four of us sat at the table in awkward silence. Finally, I decided to chase away the tension in the air and picked up my glass.

"Scarlett, I was impressed by your professionalism and performance in the interview last time. I watched the program, and I was very satisfied with it. Here's to you."

Before Scarlett could raise her glass, Charles interjected. "Scarlett hasn't been drinking lately. But I'll drink on her behalf."

I raised my eyebrows and looked at Scarlett. Somehow, I felt that there was something off and unnatural about her today. I shrugged and emptied my wine glass.

I took a glance at Rita again. She seemed restless, and her face was pale. Feeling sorry for her, I could not help saying, "Charles, maybe you and I should exchange seats so that you could keep a closer eye on Rita."

"No."

"Yes."

Charles and Scarlett answered at the same time. It was Charles who did not agree to my suggestion. He narrowed his eyes at me as if telling me to mind my own business.

I cleared my throat, smiled awkwardly, and said nothing.

At this time, Rita raised her hand and put it over her chest. A muscle flickered in her jaw, and she furrowed her brows. The look of pain on her face was terrible to watch. I instantly got nervous. "Rita? What's wrong? Are you okay? Do you need a doctor?"

Rita pushed away my hand and bit her bloodless lip. She flashed Charles a pitiful look. "Charles, can you take me to the hospital? I don't feel well."

Seeing Rita beg like that made my heart ache. She did not have to beg anyone to take care of her. She was a wonderful person. She deserved to be taken care of.

I was extremely disappointed by Charles's attitude toward Rita, but I was in no position to tell him off about it.

Ignoring Rita's sincere request, Charles rose from his seat and stepped out to make a phone call. When he returned to the table, he started serving Scarlett food as if nothing happened.

I was confused by everyone's behavior.

Less than ten minutes later, a strong-looking, well-built man stormed in. He was panting, and beads of sweat covered his forehead. He looked like he ran all the way here. He looked more like Rita's fiance than Charles did.

Rita's facial expression changed from pained to unhappy when she saw the newcomer. She lowered her head as the man approached our table, and before he could say anything, Rita snapped, "I'm fine. You can leave now."

Then, she started to eat without even looking at him.

Suddenly, she retched. I was startled. "Rita, are you really okay? Maybe we should take you to the hospital."

Rita shook her head and retched again. Then, she rushed to the bathroom.

The brawny man followed her.

Charles, Scarlett, and I were left at the table. I refilled my glass with wine, took a sip, and carefully calculated the next words that I was going to say. I finally went with, "Rita's pregnant, isn't she?"

Not even a shadow of a reaction passed over Charles's face. I could not decide if that was impressive or wildly insensitive.

"You should go check on Rita, Charles," Scarlett urged, but she looked a little disappointed.

"Even you think the baby in Rita's belly is mine?" Charles muttered.

Lowering her head, Scarlett replied, "Isn't it yours?"

Charles scoffed and ran his fingers through his hair in frustration.

I eyed the two of them carefully for a few moments and then asked Charles, "So what's your relationship with Rita?"

"Rita and I have no relationship," Charles answered. There was a trace of anger in his tone.

Intrigued by his reaction, I prodded, "Okay. How about you and Scarlett? What are you to each other? And that man who just walked in and Rita. What's up with them? And aren't you supposed to marry Rita, Charles?"

"No," Charles said through gritted teeth.

I stared at him with wide eyes. Did he just say that he was not going to marry Rita? Then why was the news filled with stories about them being engaged?

"Charles! How could you say that? You just got Rita pregnant, and now you're not only denying that you're the father but also saying that you're not going to marry her? Are you really this heartless?" Scarlett stood up and started yelling angrily at Charles.

Charles just sat there in silence, but it was obvious that he was trying to rein in his emotions. After a few moments, he rose and walked out.

After Charles left, Scarlett slumped onto her seat and heaved a frustrated sigh. Her lips were pressed together in a thin line as if she was keeping herself from bursting into tears.

"Scarlett, are you all right?" I asked with concern, vaguely realizing the relationship between her and Charles.

"I'm fine, William, but I have to go. I'm sorry," Scarlett said by way of goodbye, forced a smile, and then left.

After she left, I went to the bathroom to find Rita. I was worried about her.

As I approached the bathroom, I overheard two people arguing.

"I will have an abortion."

I heard through the closed door. It was Rita. Her voice sounded a little strained. I was about to come in when I heard a man's voice.

"Rita, this is also my child. You can't make this decision without my agreement. If you don't want our baby, then I will raise it on my own. Just don't abort it."

Scarlett's POV:

I called Charles twice after leaving the restaurant, but he did not answer.

I did not understand why he just left me like that at the restaurant. Thinking of the way he kissed me and the fact that Rita was pregnant, I felt like my head was going to explode.

When I got home, Charles was not there. I waited and waited until I could not sit still anymore. So I went out and made my way to the tennis courts. Maybe I would find him there.

It was Sunday, and the tennis courts were teeming with people who were looking to work out. But I easily spotted Charles among the crowd. He was playing with Spencer.

"Ma'am, I'm sorry, but I can't let you in. Mr. Moore instructed me to not let anyone bother him while he was playing." One of the staff stopped me at the entrance.

"Let me in. I need to talk to him." I tried to force myself in, but the staff member stood like a brick wall in my way and fulfilled his duty.

"Charles! You and I need to talk right now!" I yelled angrily.

Spencer turned his head toward my direction, stopped playing, and walked over to me. He nodded to the staff, and then I was let in.

"Hey, Scarlett. What's wrong? You look upset."

"I need to talk to Charles, Spencer. This has to stop. I want a divorce right now," I said firmly.

"Well, not today. Charles is in a really bad mood, and you know there's just no talking to him when he's irate," Spencer replied.

"Rita's pregnant," I blurted out. Charles and Rita were having a baby, and I had no business now more than ever coming between them. It was time to wise up and leave.

"And you think it's Charles's? Have you asked him if the baby is his? Scarlett, do you even know Charles at all? Do you really think he'll betray you like that?" It was obvious that Spencer did not believe that Rita's child could be Charles's. Before I could retort, he pressed, "Charles is in love with you, and the last thing he wants to do is get Rita pregnant. He'll never hurt you like that."

I turned a deaf ear to Spencer's words because if I allowed them to settle in my mind, I would make another round of mindless decisions. Enough was enough. I needed to get divorced and leave Los Angeles forever.

"Charles's time has been divided between me and Rita. Now that Rita's pregnant, it just proves that

Charles has chosen her. It's time for me to go." I paused and took a deep breath. "If Charles doesn't agree to our divorce, I'll tell Michael and Christine that Rita is pregnant with his child."

After I tried and failed to speak to him at the tennis courts, I did not see Charles for the next few days. He was like an eel in my grasp, slipping away whenever I got my hands on him. But since I had made up my mind to divorce him, I would not give up. I would not stop until his signature was on the divorce papers.

[Chapter 83 Dispute](#)

Scarlett's POV:

I headed over to Charles's office after work, but the receptionist would not let me in and told me that I needed to schedule an appointment to meet with Charles.

I stood my ground and insisted on waiting. I might not have acquaintances or friends in Charles's company that I could sweet talk into letting me see Charles, but I refused to let that stop me. Charles might avoid me, but I would not stop following him like a shadow if that was what it took to get him to agree to the divorce.

"Please have a seat, ma'am. I'll get you a cup of coffee," the receptionist said kindly. I had been coming here for a few days, so I was no longer a stranger to them.

The hall was bustling with people, and I felt a little embarrassed to stand there in their midst, so I took a seat in the waiting area, hoping that Charles would suddenly show up.

"Scarlett? Is that you, my dear?"

I turned around and was surprised at the sight of Alice.

"Mom? What are you doing here?" I quickly got up and walked over to her.

"Oh, I came to bring Charles some food." She raised the lunch box she was holding at me and flashed me a happy smile. Then, she held my arm and asked, "Why are you sitting here by yourself? If you're here for Charles, you can go to him directly."

I mustered an awkward smile, unsure of how to respond.

Alice rubbed my arm and said, "Oh, dear. You've always been a shy one, haven't you? Come. I'll take you to Charles. He'd be very happy to see you."

I instantly imagined the dissatisfied look on Charles's face. He would be many things when he saw me, but happy was not one of them. I followed Alice into the private elevator to Charles's office.

"Did you know that Charles set the password of this elevator to the date of your wedding anniversary? Isn't that sweet?" she said and flashed me an adorable squinty smile. Then, she added, "Charles values his family and friends a lot. He's been like that since he was a little boy. He's just not used to expressing his feelings openly, but he cares a lot about those he loves, especially you, dear. In fact, all his passwords are related to you."

"Rita's pregnant with Charles's baby, Mom," I said abruptly. I could not take Alice's praises of Charles anymore. He was not the affectionate man she thought he was.

"What? Are you serious?" The happy smile on Alice's face vanished into thin air.

I swallowed the lump that lodged itself in my throat and replied in a broken voice, "Yes, Mom. I found out a few days ago."

Alice hugged me and started comforting me, "Oh, sweetie, I'm so sorry. But are you sure? Have you heard Charles's side of the story? Maybe he can explain all this."

"No need, Mom. This is it. I'm done. I want a divorce. This time, I won't let anything stop me," I told her in between small sobs. My relationship with Charles had not only hurt me in unspeakable ways but also robbed me of my pride and dignity. I did not want it anymore.

"Let's not be hasty, Scarlett. You and Charles need to talk this through," Alice sighed after hesitating for a while.

Eventually, the elevator reached Charles's office, and the doors whirled open. Charles's assistant was out in hall waiting for us. "Mr. Moore is in a meeting right now, but he sent me to usher you into his office to wait."

"No, thanks. We'll wait here. You may carry on with your work." Alice waved her hand and sent Charles's assistant away. Then, she pulled me aside and said, "Calm yourself, dear. Things may not be as bad as you think. I know my son very well. Before you make some permanent decisions, you should open a dialogue with him first. I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation for all this. I didn't raise my son to treat his wife like this."

Alice's words made me feel a bit better, so I reached out and gave her a hug. "Thank you, Mom. No matter what happens between me and Charles, you'll always be my mother."

As soon as I finished my words, Charles walked out of the meeting room. He glanced at us, pulled a long face, and walked straight into his office. Alice rushed over to him, and I followed suit.

"Is it true, Charles? Is Rita pregnant with your child?" Alice asked immediately after I closed the door behind us.

"I'm not the father of Rita's baby, Mom," Charles backfired. He sat on the sofa and crossed his legs. He

closed his eyes and kneaded the bridge of his nose. There were obvious dark circles under his eyes. He looked exhausted.

"Are you sure? You've been seeing that woman even after Scarlett came home from overseas."

"Nothing's going on between me and Rita. I'm only trying to show her some gratitude."

"Then why did you express your desire to marry Rita and divorce Scarlett? And now that Rita's pregnant, you won't take responsibility? Is that how I raised you?" Alice reprimanded.

"I'm willing to do anything to prove that Rita's child isn't mine. I've never touched her." Charles fished out his cigarette case from his jacket pocket. He was about to light up when he paused, put the cigarette back in the case, and shoved the case back into his jacket pocket.

"Are you saying that you want a paternity test? I can't believe you. When did you turn into such a coward?" I looked at him coldly.

"I'm not being a coward. Since neither of you believe me, then I need to produce some sort of proof," Charles retorted in a tone that I could tell he was desperately trying to keep neutral. I had the chance to stare at him more closely. He looked like he had lost some weight in the days that we had not seen each other.

I averted my gaze and muttered, "You got her pregnant. You don't get to walk away from the responsibility of raising your child."

"But it's not my child, so it's not my responsibility. Even if you tell me over and over that I'm the father of Rita's baby, it won't change the fact that I'm not because I never climbed into bed with her."

"And you expect me to believe that? Come on, Charles. Be a man." I looked at him with disappointment.

Alice, who had been standing there and watching us argue, suddenly exploded with emotions. "Enough! You better be right about you not being the father of Rita's unborn baby, Charles, or I swear the rest of your life will be filled with nothing but regret."

"I'm very busy right now, Mom. I don't have time for this. I've already explained myself. If you don't want to believe me, then there's nothing else I can do."

With a cold face, Charles asked his assistant to show us out.

Alice set down the lunch box on the coffee table and said, "I brought you some food. I hope your conscience doesn't bother you so much that you won't be able to enjoy it."

Before leaving, I remembered why I came to see Charles in the first place. I raised my chin, put the papers down in front of him, and said, "Let's get divorced. No more delays. I want it done as soon as

possible."

"No!"

Completely infuriated, Charles swept the papers off the coffee table and rose from his seat. He ran his fingers through his hair, and a little growl escaped his throat. His assistant walked over to me and led me out.

"You'd better leave now. Mr. Moore is in a bad mood," she said to me in a low voice.

I nodded and left with Alice.

"Is Rita really pregnant with Charles's child? What if Charles was telling the truth about him not going to bed with Rita? What if Rita is pregnant with another man's child and is using it to force Charles to marry her?" Alice wondered out loud.

"But who else could father Rita's child?" I asked in a dispirited tone. To be honest, I was hoping in my heart that Charles was indeed telling the truth. But Rita was so desperately in love with Charles. The last thing that she would do was to be unfaithful to him and sleep with another man. She would never ruin her chances of marrying him.

"I've known Charles to be an honorable young man. He doesn't lie, and he has always been responsible. If he really got Rita pregnant, he would own up to it without hesitation. Besides, he told us that he wanted to build a life and a family with you." Alice held my hand and flashed me a look at shattered my heart.

The back of my eyes instantly burned, but I bit back the tears. Sometimes, I could not comprehend how fate could be so merciless to its subjects. I once imagined a perfect life with Charles, a life that we would happily spend together surrounded by our children. But now, it did not look like it would ever turn into a reality, and it left a bitter taste in my mouth and a giant wound in my heart.

[Chapter 84 Amnesia](#)

Alice's POV:

I rushed home the moment I parted with Scarlett in Charles's company.

"Alice, slow down. Keep your elegant image." Christine advised while enjoying her tea time in the garden. She could not help but make fun of me when she saw me rushing over with a frantic expression.

"Mom, I have something important to tell you." I sat down opposite Christine, not caring about my manners.

Christine put down her cup of tea and looked at me curiously. "What happened?"

I took a deep breath and tried my best to keep a straight face. "Rita is pregnant."

After hearing what I said, Christine was no longer in the mood for tea. She waved her hand, signaling to the butler to take the tea and desserts away. She looked serious. I could not figure out what she was thinking at the moment.

"Mom, what do you think?" I asked inquisitively.

Christine pondered for a moment. "Are you sure Charles is the father?"

"I... I think so." The truth was, I was unsure. But now that I thought of it, what Scarlett had said made sense. If the father was not Charles, who else would it be? Rita had been keen on marrying into the Moore family. She would not do anything stupid, would she?

While I was in deep thought, my phone rang. I looked at the caller ID, and my face turned white as a sheet.

Christine must have noticed the look on my face that she asked, "Is it Susan?"

I nodded in response. Susan's voice then came from the other end of the line, and it was aggressive like a shrew.

"Rita is pregnant. Charles must be responsible for it."

I forced a smile and replied, "We'll be sure to take responsibility if the baby is indeed Charles's."

"Whatever. The wedding should be held as soon as possible." Susan hung up the call without even waiting for my response.

"They're definitely a family. All of them are bad-tempered." My head was throbbing because of what just happened. While I was massaging my temples, I decided to call Charles. I had to talk to him tonight. No matter who the father of Rita's child was, this matter must be solved immediately.

Charles' POV:

When I entered the yard, the butler opened his mouth to speak but stopped on second thought.

I raised my eyebrows and casually walked into the living room.

Just as I had anticipated, everyone was gathered there except the person I wanted to see the most.

"What's going on? It's so ceremonious." I asked knowingly and sat on the couch lazily with my legs crossed.

My father snorted and grumbled, "Stop playing dumb."

"Wow. The last time you were this stern was when I chose to go to law school regardless of your objection," I retorted.

"Stop changing the topic. Susan called today and asked you to marry Rita as soon as possible," he said with a straight face.

"Why does no one believe me when I say that the baby is not mine?" I was dissatisfied and helpless that nobody believed my words.

"That's not the point. Back then, you were the one who took the initiative to buy the wedding dress for Rita. Sometime later, the news of your engagement was broadcast. Everyone knows that you two are getting married. Charles, I'm telling you, you have to clean up this mess without discrediting the Moore family." Mom came straight to the point.

"I'll take care of it. Don't worry." I did not want to defend myself anymore. They would not believe me anyway. Without waiting for their response, I got up and left.

When I left the villa, I did not know where to go, so I drove around aimlessly. All I could think about at that moment was Scarlett. I missed her so much. It was driving me crazy that I could not see her. But, she must hate me now.

With nowhere to go, I decided to go to the bar with Spencer.

"Charles, stop smoking." David snatched the cigarette from my hand and looked at me worriedly. I had been smoking for quite a while now that the ashtray was filled with cigarette butts.

Spencer patted me on the shoulder. "He's right. You asked us out for a drink. How could you smoke in a corner alone?"

I forced a smile at them, but it came out bitter and unconvincing. Neither cigarette nor alcohol could dispel my dejection right now. All I wanted at the moment was to see Scarlett. I even hoped she would call me, but that would be wishful thinking. I just wished I could hear her voice right now.

David heaved a heavy sigh and tried to ease the atmosphere with his senseless monologue. "As I see you heartbroken, I now believe the theory the wise never falls in love easily."

I took a swig of alcohol and chuckled. "I'll wait for the day you eat your words."

"Charles is right. He used to be cold and heartless. But now, he's suffering because of love. In my opinion, theories are destined to be overturned." Spencer clinked his glass with mine to show solidarity with me.

But then, he shook his head and added, "Charles, you'd better make everything clear to Scarlett. I think there are too many misunderstandings between you two that it's confusing her."

"Scarlett doesn't believe me. In my eyes, I'm a scum," I replied glumly.

"Then why don't you just have sex with her? When you two have a real relationship, she won't leave you anymore."

As I did not say anything, Spencer winked at David and teasingly asked, "What the hell are you talking about? You know what kind of person Scarlett is. She's smart and rational. Don't act rashly, and make sure that the gains outweigh the losses."

"What else can we do then? How about I ask someone to send Rita abroad and make sure she never comes back?" David suggested.

"David, stop it." Spencer glared at David and then looked at me. "Charles, listen to me. The only way to solve this problem is to clearly explain to Scarlett what you truly feel."

I did not say anything, but I knew that Spencer and David were doing this for my own good. Nevertheless, there were some things that could not be explained in a few words. Anyway, all I could do at the moment was drown myself in alcohol.

Scarlett's POV:

I had been restless ever since I returned from Charles's company. Everything seemed to be off track.

I lay in the bathtub and stared at the ceiling blankly as I recalled everything that happened between Charles and me. I did not get out of the bathtub and walk out of the bathroom until the water turned unbearably cold.

Now, I lay on the bed, wide awake. I kept tossing and turning, but I still could not fall asleep. Exasperated, I picked up my phone and typed on the search bar, "How to divorce in a short time?"

Dozens of search results came out. After reading the netizen's suggestions, one answer caught my eye. I decided to sue for divorce.

I immediately called Nina and told her my plan. At first, she did not support what I was planning to do.

"Scarlett, I think you should think it over. Charles is an excellent man. It's hard to find someone like him again," Nina advised with a hint of hesitation.

"It doesn't matter how excellent of a man he is. Rita is pregnant with his child. I should stop clinging to him and do the right thing," I explained calmly.

"Wait. What did you just say? That woman is pregnant?! If that's the case, why wouldn't Charles leave you alone? What a jerk!" Nina was flabbergasted by the news and became sympathetic to me. Now that she knew the truth, she promised she would help me with the divorce process as much as she could.

At that very moment, the doorbell rang. I hung up the call at once and went to answer the door.

It was Spencer, David, and Charles. It seemed that they had been drinking as the latter was passed out drunk.

"Scarlett, let us in. Charles is so heavy," Spencer pleaded while gritting his teeth. He looked exhausted, probably from carrying Charles all the way here.

I got out of the way and let him take Charles inside. But then, something occurred to me. In the past, Spencer alone could take Charles back with ease. Why did he say he couldn't handle Charles even with David's help now?

At that moment, the two put Charles on my bed.

Spencer wiped the sweat on his forehead and helplessly said, "Charles is drunk as a skunk. David and I can't handle him anymore. We planned on sending him back to his own place, but Charles went crazy all the way and insisted on coming to your place. Anyway, he's here now. Please take care of him."

"You'd better send Charles away. It's bothersome to let him stay here." I refused disdainfully. I did not want to be entangled with Charles anymore, especially after what I had just found out.

However, Spencer just patted me on the shoulder and ignored my refusal. "Thank you, Scarlett. David, come on!" With that, he and David left my apartment.

I looked at the drunkard on the bed, at a loss for words. I poked Charles on the waist, but he made no reaction. It appeared that he was fast asleep.

Charles's usually cold face was gentle when he was asleep. Even though I was trying so hard to suppress my feelings for him, I could not stop myself from caressing his face.

I smoothed his hair and found that his forehead was red and swollen. He must have bumped it while he was out drinking. I could not deny, I was concerned about him. So, I took some ice cubes from the fridge, wrapped them in a towel, and put the compress on his forehead to reduce the swelling. I also wiped his face with a warm towel in hopes that he would feel better when he woke up.

It was already deep into the night when I finished caring for him. As he was sleeping on my bed, I went to the guestroom and slept there.

When I woke up the next morning, the sun was already shining brightly outside. I rubbed the sleep off

my eyes. For some reason, I was a little light-headed. I must have not slept well last night. It did not matter, anyway. With that, I got out of bed and sneaked into the next room.

The room was dim as the curtains were closed. To my surprise, Charles had not woken up yet. It was odd, considering that he usually woke up early in the morning. Worried that he had a hangover, I put my hand on his forehead to check his temperature. I was relieved to know that it was normal.

Just as I was about to withdraw my hand, Charles grabbed it, and his eyes fluttered open. He did not seem like he had just woken up. In fact, he looked very sober.

"You were just feigning sleep," I grumbled.

"Why is your hand so cold?" Charles frowned and pulled me closer to him.

"Does your head hurt?" I raised my head to look at him. He had small stubble already, for just not shaving for one day.

Charles lowered his gaze and solemnly said, "Scarlett, I don't remember anything except you."

My eyes widened in alarm. "What's wrong? Is it because you drank too much last night?"

"Just kidding." Charles burst into laughter. He then kissed me on the forehead and whispered in a loving voice, "You were scared, weren't you?"

[Chapter 85 Have A Fever](#)

Scarlett's POV:

When I realized that Charles had fooled me, I was very upset. Just when I was about to push him away, he raised his hand and touched my forehead as he said in a nervous voice, "Scarlett, you seem to be burning up. Do you have a fever?"

"Really? I don't know." Thinking that I was only feeling weak because Charles had scared me, I touched my forehead.

He gently put me on the bed and covered me with the blanket as he said, "Hold on a minute."

He then quickly walked to the living room, found a thermometer, and handed it to me. "Check your temperature."

Taking the thermometer from him, I pouted.

Charles glanced at me, and said, "You are an adult. Don't you know it when you are sick?"

I got up in a hurry and defended myself, "I thought that it was because of lack of sleep. I should be fine if

I just rest for a while. Besides, you scared me with your inexplicable words this morning, so it's your fault."

Seeing that I was wronged, his expression softened. He reached out and rubbed my nose with a helpless look in his eyes as he said, "It's my fault, yes. Lie down and rest like a good girl."

Five minutes later, Charles took the thermometer, and his expression darkened when he saw the reading. "It's 102 degrees, Scarlett! How can you not take care of yourself?"

I cleared my throat and hinted, "Maybe, I have been too worried lately, and that's what caused me to crack. If you want me to recover quickly, then you must cooperate with me. Like finding time to sign some documents."

"Just give it up. Since you are sick, I will take good care of you. As for the documents you want me to sign..." After a pause, Charles leaned closer and added, "Don't even think about it."

"How do you know what documents I am talking about?" I asked, looking at him innocently.

"It must be the divorce agreement, I am sure," Charles said lazily and stood up.

Frustrated, I closed my eyes, not wanting to talk to him anymore.

Charles tucked me in and seemed a little unhappy. He said to himself, "It's me who got hurt on my forehead, but no one takes care of me. On the contrary, I have to take care of you."

I slowly opened my eyes and cast a glance at him. "This is a punishment for your neglect."

"That's nonsense," Charles retorted helplessly. He then covered my eyes with his palm and continued in a soft voice, "Get some rest. I'm going to prepare breakfast."

Feeling the warmth of his hand, I said dryly, "You can go to work now. I'm fine on my own."

"Don't keep trying to drive me away. Right now, the only priority I have is to take care of my wife. Nothing is more important to me than you." There was a hint of flirtation in his voice.

"Shame on you." I could not help but blush at his words.

"I like it better when you're on me," he added, continuing to be the cheeky devil.

I pursed my lips and closed my eyes, ignoring him.

While Charles went to the kitchen, I sat up, and called Nina, asking her to come over.

I was not sure how long I waited for her to show up, and just when my eyelids started to feel heavy, I

heard the doorbell.

I got out of bed and was about to open the door for Nina, but Charles got to it before I could.

"Hi, Charles. What a surprise! You are here too." Nina gave him an awkward greeting as she was also not expecting him to be there.

Charles raised his eyebrows and glanced at me with a meaningful look in his eyes.

I gave him a stiff smile. Did he find out about my plans once again?

After entering my bedroom, Nina complained, "Scarlett, why didn't you tell me that Charles is here? If I had known, I would not have come."

"Nina, can you do me a favor? I don't want to stay alone with him in the same room, so could you please help me send him away?" I asked her expectantly.

"This is your private matter, and it won't be appropriate for me to get involved between you two. Moreover, it is not my principle to break up lovers. If only you and Charles could just admit it and be together." Nina sounded hesitant.

"Please, help me just this once, okay? I can't be with him. It is impossible! I already explained the reason to you last night, right?" I continued to plead with her and asked her to help me.

"Although your reason is indeed quite valid, I am still scared. Charles is the man who can make the whole business world shake with just a cough. How can I dare to provoke someone like him? You're probably the only one who would dare to go up against him," Nina said hesitantly.

"If you can help me, then I can arrange an interview with him for you." Using my trump card, I gave her a smile.

"If that's the case, then okay." Nina made a compromise and added, "Don't forget what you promised, though."

I gave her a nod of assurance as I pushed her out. "Hurry up! I am counting on you."

Once she stepped out of the room, I hid behind the door as I watched what was going on in the living room.

Charles had finished cooking, and he had arranged all the food on the dining table.

Surprised, Nina exclaimed, "Oh my God, Charles, you are such a good cook."

"Would you like to stay for breakfast?" he offered her.

"Sure. It would be an honor, Charles," Nina readily agreed. She was so excited that she completely forgot about the task that I had given her as she took out her phone to click some pictures of the breakfast.

I walked out of the room, intending to remind her not to forget the plan.

"Nina..." I said, winking at her.

"What's the matter, Scarlett?" Nina glanced at me for a second before she turned to focus on her phone again. "I am going to take a few photos and upload them to Instagram. I need to show off that I had the honor of tasting Charles' cooking, right?"

I understood that I could not count on her anymore, so I pulled up a chair and sat down next to her.

"Scarlett, taste the fried chicken." She handed me a piece of the fried chicken excitedly.

"Thank you." Gritting my teeth, I smiled at her, and winked again. However, she seemed to be oblivious to my hints. 'What a careless woman!'

"That's for you, Nina. Scarlett has a fever, and she can't eat that," Charles said all of a sudden as he took away the piece of fried chicken from me and pushed forward a bowl of hot chicken broth towards me.

I noticed that there were chopped onions in the soup, and frowned. "I don't want it."

Nina seemed to have suddenly remembered the task I gave her and cut in, "Scarlett doesn't want it because her appetite is very low whenever you're around."

Charles blinked his eyes but he gave me an understanding look as he said, "Since Nina is here to take care of you, I will take my leave. Don't forget to take your medicine after you eat."

I was not expecting him to leave so quickly. Looking at his back, I sort of felt sad.

After breakfast, Nina washed the dishes for me while muttering, "Charles is such a good man. Are you really going to divorce him? There are not a lot of men who are willing to cook and take care of their wives, you know? I am sure that he really loves you. There must be some kind of misunderstanding between you two."

"Charles is not faithful. He is good to me, but so is he to Rita. What I want is a dedicated lover. Shouldn't love be something that only two of us share?" I blurted out while I kept telling myself that divorcing him was really the right thing to do.

"Well... It is indeed a pity that you two can't be together, but as your friend, I will support you, no matter what you decide." Nina sighed regretfully.

After cleaning up, she left while I took the medicine and rested the whole day. The evening came, but my fever still was not down. I had no strength to get up, so I continued to sleep.

While I was in a trance, I felt a warm hand touching my forehead. I struggled to open my eyes and saw that it was Charles.

"Charles? Why are you here again?" I asked in a hoarse voice, confused.

[Chapter 86 Bitterness](#)

Charles's POV:

Looking at Scarlett's confused face, I could not help softening my voice. "I don't want to leave you alone. I'll just end up worrying about you."

However, after hearing what I said, she looked me dead in the eyes. Her eyes suddenly became sharp. She was like an angry kitten that was pretending to be a fierce lioness. "If you delay the divorce again, I will sue you," she muttered.

"I won't divorce you even if it kills me!" Looking at her pale face, I felt sorry for her. I held her in my arms and shook my head.

"But Rita's pregnant with your baby..." Scarlett whispered, sounding aggrieved.

I tried to comfort her, "The baby's not mine. It's Richard's."

Scarlett raised her head and looked at me in surprise. "How could you say that? You're really going to burden others with your responsibility? My God, Charles. I'm so disappointed in you. Get out. I don't want to see you or talk to you. You're upsetting me."

As she spoke, she pushed me away.

All I could do was take the hit. After all, it was my fault. I was the reason for her distrust. I walked out of the bedroom without looking back.

The moment I walked into the living room, I regretted leaving. Scarlett was still sick. The last thing I should do was leave her alone.

I turned around and went back to her room without hesitation.

When I entered the bedroom, I found Scarlett staring at me with wide eyes. She obviously did not expect me to return. Before she could say anything, I climbed into bed beside her and crashed my lips onto hers. She struggled against me, but I did not let go.

I slid my hand under her jaw and kissed her slowly and carefully. After a few heartbeats, she stopped resisting. It instantly got me worried that her condition was getting worse. I let go and took a look at her.

"Why did you stop? Are you okay?"

"It's pointless to fight you. I can't beat you anyway." There was no expression on her face, and she did not meet my gaze at all. I could not decide whether to feel hurt or guilty.

But when I saw the unmistakable absence of light in her eyes, I felt like she just stabbed me through the heart with a dagger.

"Has Rita really destroyed your trust in me?" I asked in a cold voice.

Scarlett darted her eyes at me and stared at me quietly for a few seconds. Then, she answered in a heartless tone I had never heard her use, "Yes."

I found myself gnashing my teeth together and shoving down the emotions that threatened to make me explode like a volcano.

Just then, my phone rang. I impatiently took it out and answered it. Soon, Rita's voice came from the other end of the line.

"Hi, Charles. I just want to let you know that I will get an abortion," Rita said. I could tell that she was trying to keep her voice steady because I was still able to hear her anxiety.

I did not say anything for fear that I would snap at her. I was fed up with all her drama and her constant efforts to keep me away from Scarlett, but I was not going to tell her off right this minute.

She said when I did not respond, "Charles? Charles, are you there? Did you hear what I just said? Say something!"

Thinking of everything she had done, I could not help feeling incredibly annoyed. Instead of talking to Rita, I raised my voice on purpose and said something ambiguous to Scarlett. "Hold me tight, Scarlett."

"Charles, who... Who are you with? Who are you talking to?" Rita became agitated right away.

I asked her, "Who else can it be? Don't bother me anymore, Rita. Scarlett doesn't like it when you call me all the time."

Then, I hung up the phone and looked at Scarlett who kept silent the entire time I was on the phone.

I lowered my head and continued to kiss her affectionately. "Be with me, Scarlett. I will give you anything—my body, my heart, my possessions, anything you want."

"I want a divorce." Her voice was as hard and cold as a stone.

"No."

As I spoke, I continued to kiss her from her lips down to her collarbone. I stared at her fondly, the woman I loved with all my heart.

She took a deep breath as her eyes glinted with tears.

"We can't go on like this, Charles," she said in a soft voice and pulled my arm. "We should just get this over with. Please, I'm begging you."

I got off her, sat up, and stared into her eyes, and the determination that I saw despite the sadness poised to burn a hole through my chest. I could not help feeling enraged. She really wanted to divorce me at all costs.

"Why don't you just sue me and let the world know about our marriage's bitter end?" I asked through gritted teeth. Damn it! I did not mean to say that, but my reason just could not stop my fury.

Scarlett gently took my hand. "No, I don't want that, Charles. Let's divorce peacefully, okay? There's no need to put ourselves and our family through such a painful ordeal."

Once again, she was begging me.

And it broke my heart beyond imagination.

I wanted to make her understand just how badly I longed to be with her, but without her trust, I could do nothing, and it just made me even angrier.

I smiled bitterly and withdrew my hand.

"I can never get you to trust me again even if I sacrifice my life or everything I have, can't I?"

After I pulled away from her grasp, she lowered her head and said nothing. Her face grew even paler, making her look like a fragile porcelain doll in the dim light.

I had made up my mind not to give Scarlett a way out, but it was only driving her further and further away from me. Maybe it was time for me to let her go so that she could take some time to figure out her true feelings. But could I really bear to let go and carry on without her? Impossible.

We were silent for a long time. I laid beside her and turned my back to her. The longer she kept quiet, the more bitter I felt in my heart. Did she really have nothing to say to me?

"Don't you have anything to say?" I could not help breaking the silence.

Scarlett did not respond. I turned around and found her asleep, but her eyes were only half-closed. I did not know whether to cry or to laugh. As it turned out, I was the only one having our fight.

I carefully took her hand and kissed it, and my heart was filled with affection. There was no need to argue with her. As long as she was happy, it was enough. As for all the other troubles, I would resolve them and prevent them from ever hurting her again.

[Chapter 87 The Call From Nate](#)

Charles's POV:

"Scarlett, I'm going to get you some soup, okay? You should have some so that you can take your medication. Then, you can go back to sleep," I whispered in her ear.

"But I want to sleep," Scarlett pouted and said in a daze.

"You can sleep after you've taken your pills."

I stroked her hair and then went to the kitchen to get her some soup. When I came back to the bedroom, Scarlett had already gotten up. She was leaning against the headboard and staring into space.

"Let me feed you," I said and carefully picked up the bowl.

She narrowed her eyes at me and retorted, "I can feed myself."

"No. You're still weak. You'll just spill this hot soup all over yourself and get hurt," I backfired and avoided her touch.

"Fine," she mumbled and finally let me feed her.

After Scarlett finished the soup, I helped her take her medication. I could not help smiling while watching her trying to down her pills. She had always hated taking any sort of medication since we were children. Apparently, she had not outgrown it.

"Are you going to sue me with the help of Nina's father?" I tried to get some useful information from her.

Scarlett took a sip of water and glanced at me with clear eyes. She pursed her lips and did not say anything. It seemed that she would never tell me anything no matter how hard I tried.

"Forget it. I'm not that curious." I heaved a sigh and then asked her, "Where do I sleep tonight?"

"You sleep here, and I will sleep in the guest room," Scarlett answered.

"Very well, but don't blame me if I sleepwalk to the guest room tonight," I chuckled, and she shot me a death glare. She looked particularly cute when she was annoyed by my little quips.

She rolled her eyes, slid out of bed, and walked to the wardrobe. She muttered, "His woman's pregnant and he wants to sleepwalk into another woman's bedroom."

"Can you speak up? I won't be mad at whatever it is you're saying."

She turned her head and squinted at me like a threatened cat. She repeated in a loud voice, "Your woman is pregnant and you want to sleepwalk into another woman's bedroom. Can you be more shameless and inconsiderate? Honestly, Charles, you've already got Rita. Why are you still pestering me?"

"Like I already told you, Rita's pregnancy has nothing to do with me. I've been denying it since it came up. Why can't you believe me?" I explained to her again. To be honest, I was getting a little tired of telling her my side of the story. It was like she had not heard anything I had been saying.

"Then who else could've gotten her pregnant? Everyone knows that you and Rita are a couple, and I'm the nuisance that's standing in the way of your dream life. Just let me go already so that you can live happily ever after with the mother of your child," Scarlett snapped, her eyes reddening with frustration.

"Well, it is possible that Rita has been sleeping with another man because I've been ignoring her. I've told you that I've never climbed into bed with her. You're the only one in my heart. Can't you see how insane I'm going because I love you so damn much? In fact, I'll come out tomorrow and announce our marriage." All the pent-up rage and frustration that I had been keeping a lid on for the past few days finally burst out of me like water out of a broken pipe.

"Enough! You're not going anywhere and announcing anything."

With a fresh pair of pajamas in hand, Scarlett flashed me a panicked look.

I approached her and reached out to touch her, but she backed away, went into the bathroom, and shut the door behind her.

I took a deep, steadying breath. I regretted scaring her. Overtaken by my emotions, I fumbled in my pocket for my cigarette case. Then, I remembered that I had given up smoking for Scarlett.

Just as the sound of running water from the bathroom filled the air, Scarlett's phone rang. I wondered who would call her at this late hour.

I walked to the bedside table and glanced at the caller ID. It was an unknown phone number. After a few moments of internal debate, I decided to answer the call. I was a little surprised to hear Nate's voice.

"Hello, Scarlett. I wasn't expecting you to pick up this late. Why are you still up? Are you lonely? Would

you like to join me for a drink?"

I held the phone tightly and did not make a sound. My eyes threatened to well up with tears as I desperately tried to shove down my rage. I remembered what Spencer told me in the past about Nate harassing Scarlett. If I could strangle the old man through the phone, I would.

"Scarlett, sweetheart? Are you there? Why aren't you saying anything? If you want, I can come over right now and satisfy you. I'll do what Charles can't."

It was then that I finally understood what was going on. What a shameless old man!

Nate continued, "And whatever Rita has, you will have, too. All you need to do is agree to my offer, and I'll make you the happiest woman in the world."

"This is Charles," I finally snapped.

Nate paused for a few seconds and then laughed awkwardly. "Oh, I'm sorry, Charles. I thought I was speaking to Scarlett."

"You dare seduce my woman?" I asked in a cold voice.

"No, of course not. This is just a misunderstanding. I didn't get my message across very well." Nate faltered over the phone. His tone drastically changed from perverted and confident to guilty and scared.

"What's there to misunderstand? You called my wife in the middle of the night to sexually harass her. Are you bored or something, Mr. Lively? Because if you are, I can give you something to be excited about and teach you a lesson at the same time." I let my voice drip with menace.

"I just want to express how much I care for the younger generation. After all, I've watched Scarlett grow up." I was a little disappointed with the excuse that he went with. I expected more from someone like Nate Lively.

"I wasn't born yesterday, Nate. I know exactly the kind of care that you want to express to my Scarlett. Since you have the guts to covet my woman, then facing the consequences shouldn't be a problem for you. It's funny that you think you can make Scarlett the happiest woman in the world by waving your money in her face. She's not like that. It's going to take more than money and worldly things to get her and keep her. She's special, she's mine, and if you want her, you can pry her off my dead fingers."

After that, I hung up, deleted the call log, and blocked Nate's number.

At this time, Scarlett came out of the bathroom. Seeing her cell phone in my hand, she was confused. "Why are you holding my phone? Did anyone call me?"

"No. I was just about to charge it for you." I did not want to tell her the truth. If I did not let her know

about Nate's disgusting call, I would have better chances of keeping that old, sleazy bastard away from her.

"You're lying. Whenever you hide something from me, you avoid my eyes. Besides, my phone's fully charged. I plugged it in before I slept." Scarlett looked at me and tilted her head to the side.

"I'm not trying to keep anything from you, okay? I'm just trying to protect you from being stressed out. You haven't fully recovered," I replied, taking two steps toward her. I still had not gotten over the fact that she did not tell me about Nate and that I had to hear it from Spencer. Nate's call just now was the confirmation I needed.

"What are you talking about? I don't understand." Scarlett looked at me in confusion.

"Never mind. Go to sleep." I did not want to say anything more. I was afraid of rousing her suspicions. She had always been a sensitive person.

"You're so weird," Scarlett muttered, turned around, and headed to the guest room. I tossed and turned in bed until the wee hours of the night. I could not fall asleep, so I poured myself a glass of red wine and sat on the balcony. I thought about all the ways I could put an end to all the miseries plaguing me and Scarlett.

[Chapter 88 Probing](#)

Scarlett's POV:

When I woke up, Charles was already gone, but he made breakfast for me and left it on the table. He seemed to be distracted by something last night, which worried me a little. Before I could get sucked into the Charles rabbit hole again, I knocked myself over the head. I had more important things to think about than him.

Los Angeles was always buzzing with life, especially in the mornings. Traffic was extra terrible today, and it actually took half an hour longer for me to reach the office.

"Scarlett, sweetie, how are you? Are you feeling better?" As soon as I entered the office, Nina walked over and gave me a big hug. She was wearing a red business suit today, and her hair was neatly rolled up behind her head. She looked bright and stunning.

"Yes, thank you. I just needed a ton of sleep," I replied and put down my bag in the lounge. I went to get myself a cup of coffee. Nina followed suit.

"My dad's home by the way. Would you like to have dinner this weekend at my house? We can talk about your divorce plans," Nina cut to the chase.

Her father was a famous lawyer in Los Angeles. Last time, I asked her to ask her father to help me sue for divorce. I did not expect that things would go so fast.

But I supposed I was thankful for the timing. Charles intended to keep me hanging, and I certainly did not want to still be married to him when Rita's baby was born. So I accepted Nina's invitation readily. Charles did not want to go about things the peaceful way. He left me no choice.

"Wow. That was quick." Nina was a little surprised.

"It's already long overdue. I want it to be over before I leave Los Angeles."

"Leave Los Angeles? Scarlett, are you sure you don't want to stay? I mean, you have a stable job here now, and things are going great for you," Nina asked.

I shook my head and handed her the cup of coffee I made for her. "I have too many bad memories here. I don't think I can start over here. I need a change of scenery and soon."

Hearing my response, Nina did not say anything more. We shook on our dinner date this weekend and then went our separate ways to work.

At noon, I went out to meet William for lunch. I was a little startled when I saw him. He looked a little haggard. It seemed that he was not used to living in Los Angeles.

"Are you all right, William? You look exhausted," I asked. After all, he was my friend, and I was worried about him.

"I'm fine. I've just been having a little difficulty sleeping, that's all." He looked distressed. His hair was a bit disheveled, and the dark circles under his eyes could almost pass for bruises.

"When I can't sleep, I drink a special kind of tea. It's very effective. I can send you some if you want," I said with concern.

"I'd love that. I hope it helps me sleep, too. Thank you so much, Scarlett. You're an angel." And just like that, the gloom on his face was chased away.

"You're welcome," I smiled and refocused on my food.

"Didn't you study in France before? Why did you return to Los Angeles?" William asked.

"Why do you ask?" I was confused by the abruptness of his question.

"I'm just curious why you didn't stay abroad. I mean, you're pretty excellent at what you do, and if you had stayed in France, you would've found better career prospects," William replied and set down his fork.

"I suppose I just have different ambitions." I did not want to tell him that I came home because my

husband asked for a divorce.

"What do you think of Rita and Charles?" William suddenly changed the subject.

"I'm not that familiar with Rita, so I can't make an evaluation of her. As for Charles..." I paused and took a breath, "He's a good man."

William raised his eyebrows and said, "But Rita told me once that you were her good friend. In fact, she mentions you a lot to me."

I almost dropped my cutlery on my plate. Since when was I her good friend? Every time our paths crossed, she always looked like she wanted to choke the life out of me.

"Well, was she telling the truth?" Since I did not say anything for a long time, William asked again.

I had no choice but to respond, "I suppose she's a good person as well. As someone who has been suffering from cancer for so many years, she's quite the fighter. I actually admire her more than I feel sorry for her."

William was shocked to hear what I just said. "Yes, Rita had cancer, but she's been in full remission for some time now. She does have some kind of heart disease, though, but it's not severe enough to interfere with her daily life."

I could not believe what I just heard. Everyone knew that Rita had cancer, and she had the medical records to prove that it was not in remission.

"No, Rita still has cancer," I protested.

"How is that possible?" William was stunned. He wiped his face and said, "You know what, forget it. I'll get back to you after I figure it out."

"You must have made a mistake, William." I smiled and dismissed the conversation about whatever was ailing Rita. Whether she had cancer or heart disease, she was still pregnant with Charles's child, and that was a fact.

"Let's talk about something else. I've been in Los Angeles for a couple of days, but I haven't gotten the chance to visit some tourist spots. Do you have time to wander around with me this afternoon?" William asked.

"Okay. I happen to have no work this afternoon."

"Do I need to pay a guide's fee or something? I don't want to cheap out on you, Miss Riley," he teased with a smile.

I could not help feeling amused. For the first time, I found that William had a humorous side.

"No need for fees. It'll be my honor to be your guide."

"You really look amazing when you smile, Scarlett. You should smile often." William suddenly looked at me seriously, "When you smile, you remind me of one of my dearest friends."

Feeling a little embarrassed under his probing gaze, I cleared my throat and said, "Really? And who might that be?"

"I'll tell you some other time," William beamed.

I could not help rolling my eyes. It was laughably typical of William to withhold such a trivial piece of information so that he could look mysterious.

After lunch, I took William sightseeing around Los Angeles. William was a perfect gentleman and an outstanding conversationalist. No matter what turn our talks took, he always steered them into something informative and interesting. He was a great friend to have, but we could not be close.

When we ran out of things to talk about, he brought up Rita and Charles once again. I sensed that he wanted to know something, but I could not figure out what. I had always felt that William and Rita had a somewhat close relationship. When I broached the subject, William digressed and started a whole new conversation.

At nightfall, I accompanied William back to his hotel.

"Thank you so much for a wonderful day, Scarlett. I had a lot of fun. Let's have dinner next time, okay?"

The lines that made him look weary were now gone, but I still could not decide whether or not it was just because of the absence of natural light.

"You're welcome," I said casually, not acknowledging his dinner invitation. Reason told me to keep my distance from him. More drama was the last thing I wanted.

When I was about to leave, I saw Charles walk into the hotel lobby. Behind him were several men in suits. It seemed that they had just finished a meeting. It suddenly occurred to me that this five-star hotel that William was staying in was also owned by Charles.

"Scarlett!" Charles shouted after me with an unhappy look on his face. He obviously was not thrilled to see me and William in the same room.

I ignored him and headed for the exit without looking back. Once again, he was in a bad mood, and I did not want to stick around so that he could take out his frustrations on me.

Before I could make it out, his hand was already around my wrist.

I curled my lips and said, "Let go of me, Charles. I want to go home."

"Let me drive you home." Ignoring my struggle, Charles towed me toward William who just watched as we approached him. "Are you interested in my wife?" Charles asked directly.

William looked at him with wide eyes. "Scarlett's your wife?"

"Yes, so stay away from her," Charles snapped, glared at William, and then dragged me away.

Before William could react, Charles already put me in his car.

[Chapter 89 Setup](#)

After sending me home, Charles returned to the company for a meeting. His schedule was hectic. I could not understand why he insisted on watching me go upstairs when he had other things to do and someplace to be.

Before I could put down my bag, the director of the TV station called and invited Nina and me to dinner. It seemed we two got the chance to study abroad, and this was probably a send-off sort of thing. I must say, I was a little surprised. The director seldom made time for these things. If there was anything he wanted to say, he would always just tell us through his assistant.

Nevertheless, I did not think too much about it. I figured he was only trying to be nice for once. With that, I changed my clothes and went to the restaurant. I was the first one to arrive at the private room. I had been waiting for a few minutes when I got a call from Nina. "Scarlett, I'm sorry. I won't be able to make it to the dinner. There's something wrong with the program, and I'm trying to fix it," she anxiously said.

Without waiting for my reply, she hung up the call. I felt a little uneasy when I realized that I would be alone with the director later.

Just as I was thinking about what I would say later, the door of the private room opened, and two men, who I did not expect to see, came in. It was Nate and Mr. Valdez.

I was stunned. Did the director also invite them? These people were evil. To think, they showed up at the same time. They must have ulterior motives.

While I was contemplating if I should leave or not, the director of the TV station called me, saying that something had come up. Since Nate and my father were old friends, he decided to ask Nate to accompany me to dinner on his behalf.

After hanging up the phone, I realized that this was a setup.

Nina was meticulous and thorough. How could something go wrong in the program? The director must have made trouble for her, so I would come here alone. My blood was boiling in anger. All I wanted at the moment was to stand up and leave.

All of a sudden, Nate put his hand on my shoulder and smiled slyly at me. "Scarlett, aren't you gonna say 'hello' to us? You used to be a polite girl. Have you forgotten all the manners your father taught you?"

I raised my head and stared daggers at him. He was a man who was not worthy of respect. What qualifications did he have to lecture me about manners?

"I'm not in the mood for bullshit," I fired back. I wanted to leave, but Nate was pressing on my shoulder, stopping me from standing up.

"Scarlett, long time no see. You haven't changed. You're still as beautiful as the last time I saw you. Since you're already here, stay for dinner, will you?" Mr. Valdez invited, acting chummy with me.

"Aren't you afraid Charles will know about this?" I asked through gritted teeth. In the past, Nate would, at least, disguise himself and keep his filthy intention hidden. But now, it seemed that he did not care anymore.

"So what if Charles finds out about this? There's nothing he can do about it anyway. Besides, your father and I are old friends. Am I not allowed to invite you to dinner and have a chat with you?" As soon as Nate said these words, he ordered the waiter to serve the wine. He did not seem to take my words seriously.

He even turned to Mr. Valdez and jokingly said, "Valdez my friend, don't covet Scarlett in the future, okay? She's my good friend's daughter."

Mr. Valdez nodded and bowed his head in agreement. "Yes, yes. I promise I won't."

The performance of these two made me sick to my stomach. I clenched my fists, and my mind went blank in anger.

"Now that Valdez has promised he would behave himself, Scarlett, I'd like to propose a toast to him. Let bygones be bygones." Nate picked up the glass and gave it to me, asking me to drink it.

"I won't drink it," I firmly said. How I wished those two would disappear from my sight this instant.

"Fine. I'll make you drink it myself." Nate held the back of my head and forcefully made me drink the wine regardless of my protests.

"Mr. Lively, behave yourself!" I shouted at the top of my lungs and shook off the wine glass in his hand at the same time. Nate was taken aback, and I took the opportunity to bolt to the door.

Nate's face was dark and gloomy as he stared at the shattered wine glass on the floor.

"Scarlett, you'd better learn to be polite when I show respect to you." Nate sounded like the devil from hell—vicious and terrifying.

However, I just ignored his threat and marched out of the door. But just as I was about to touch the doorknob, Nate pulled me back into the room. He even locked the door, so I would not escape.

I was starting to panic, but I tried my best to calm myself down. "If you hurt me, Charles won't let you go," I warned.

"Ha-ha! You silly girl, are you threatening me?" Nate slowly approached me with a smirk, which highlighted his wrinkles and made him look more repulsive than ever.

I was forced to retreat to the table. Unfortunately, I tripped over a chair, and it sent me stumbling to the floor. I happened to land on a piece of broken glass, which dug into my palm and made it bleed.

Before I could react, Nate pulled me up again, threw me aside, and stared into my eyes. "I didn't lay a finger on you for the sake of the Moore family. You'd better not do anything stupid."

My waist hit the corner of the table, and it sent a sharp pain to my side. I rubbed it to ease the pain and just turned a deaf ear to his empty threat.

"Nate, calm down. Let's have dinner first. I believe Scarlett won't do anything stupid now," Mr. Valdez urged.

"Stop pretending that you're a good man. Both of you are filthy," I said with a sneer.

"Since you keep misbehaving, I should let you know how cruel the world really is." Nate reached out his hands to me. I could see malice in his eyes, and I shuddered at the sight of it.

Unexpectedly, a knock sounded on the door. The waiter had come to serve the dishes. I breathed a sigh of relief as I saw an opportunity to escape again.

Nate must have seen through me that he pressed me down the seat and warned, "Don't you dare play any tricks, or else..."

When he opened the door, he did not once take his eyes off me. The waiter who was serving the dishes did not seem to notice anything unusual. Anxious, I tried to stand up and run away, but Nate pressed my injured hand on the table harder. The broken glass stabbed deeper into my palm. It was excruciating, but there was nothing I could do but grit my teeth and endure the pain.

The waiter left the private room once all the dishes were served.

Nate pressed me down on my seat the entire time. As a result, I did not find a chance to escape.

At that moment, he put on a concerned look on his face and asked, "Scarlett, let me see your hand," He then reached out to grab my hand, but I moved it to the other side.

"Disgusting," I muttered under my breath.

Nate's smile disappeared. He pointed at my nose and cursed at me. "You bitch, I'm not always this kind. Do you want to be beaten?"

"Sure. I'll show everyone how horrible the CEO of the Lively Group is." With a sneer, I took out my phone from my bag to do a live broadcast of the scene.

"How dare you?!" In a fit of anger, Nate yanked my phone from my hand and tossed it away. Then, he slapped me across the face. The sound of his palm hitting my face echoed across the small private room. As if it was not enough, he punched me square in the head.

My head tilted sideways, and I felt a ringing in my ears. What was more, I caught a whiff of blood at the corners of my mouth.

At that moment, my phone on the floor rang. It was Charles. I wanted to pick it up, but Nate stepped on it into pieces. A few seconds later, the phone stopped ringing, and the screen went off. Now, my last hope was extinguished, and all that was left of me was despair.

Meanwhile, Nate was fuming with anger. His eyes were bloodshot, and his expression was terrifying. Suddenly, he grabbed my neck and asked with a sneer, "Do you want to die? I can fulfill your wish."

"Let me go." I slapped his arm with all my remaining strength, but he only strangled me harder. I could not breathe, and the ringing in my ears grew even louder.

"Nate, forget it. It's not a big deal," Valdez persuaded Nate into letting me go.

"No. This bitch deserves to be punished." Nate did not heed to Mr. Valdez's persuasion and choked me harder. He looked like a blood-thirsty vampire that was about to devour his first victim for the night.

His grip on my neck was increasing by the second. I was as helpless as an animal that got caught in a hunter's trap. No matter how hard I struggled, I could not break free. My eyesight was starting to get blurry. Just as I felt that I was on the verge of death, Charles's figure appeared before my eyes. Of all times, how I wish I could see him right now.

God must have heard my pleas. I suddenly heard his voice, and I could attest it was real.

[Chapter 90 Savior](#)

Charles' POV:

I kicked the door open. What I saw next made my blood boil. Without thinking, I strode over and threw a chair at Nate. His eyes widened, and he scampered at the sight of me.

However, I grabbed his collar and kicked him many times on his vital parts, which sent him curled up in pain.

Nate stumbled to the floor and tried to stand up, but I did not let him get away. I punched him several times more and hit his head on the floor. "I have warned you before," I reminded in a cold and menacing tone.

He was in so much pain that he could not fight back, much less move. One of his teeth had fallen, and blood oozed out of the corner of his mouth. "Sp... spare me," he implored.

"This is just the beginning." I warned as I kicked him again and again.

"Charles... help me..." Scarlett called weakly.

I snapped back to reality when I heard her voice. I immediately let go of Nate, rushed to Scarlett's aid, and carried her in my arms.

Half of her face had been beaten black and blue, and there was a strangulation mark on her neck. My heart broke as I gazed at her curled up in my arms. Seeing that the woman that I loved so much was treated like this, I kicked Nate hard again on the way out.

The driver who was waiting outside the restaurant was mortified to see Scarlett like this. He immediately opened the door for us, no questions asked.

Once we were in the car, the driver turned to me and asked, "Mr. Moore, shall we go to the hospital?"

"Go to the Empire Hotel and call a female doctor," I ordered in a low voice.

I took Scarlett to the presidential suite of the hotel. She must be in excruciating pain that she kept groaning all the way.

I wanted to undress her to see if she had other injuries aside from what I had seen earlier, but she stopped me.

"Honey, let me check if you're okay," I whispered reassuringly.

Scarlett's eyes fluttered open. The instant she saw me, she shrank back and moved her hand away.

I touched her neck gently. "Why did you go out to see Nate?"

"Do you think I want to see him?" Scarlett retorted in an aggrieved tone. She then paused for a second and, all of a sudden, broke into tears. "I wanted to leave!"

For a second, I felt like boiling water was being poured over my heart, but the pain radiated to my body. It was then that I realized how helpless and terrified Scarlett must have been. I held up her face and kissed her forehead lovingly to somehow ease her distress. "This will never happen again. But Scarlett... why didn't you call me in advance?"

Speaking of which, my grievance became annoyance. Scarlett had always been stubborn and willful. She never relied on me, even if her safety was at stake.

"It was too late," Scarlett glumly replied.

"Scarlett, from now on, I want you to tell me every time you go see someone." I laid Scarlett down on the hotel bed and started unbuttoning her pants.

"No, you can't do this." Scarlett pushed my hand away and bit her lips. Her face was also red, probably from shame. "Don't look at me."

I snorted. "But you're hurt."

My eyes fell on her bruises on her waist and neck, and my heart ached yet again. With a sigh, I decided to put back her clothes. I then moved closer to her and gently asked, "Where else did you get hurt?"

Scarlett was hesitant for a moment. But in the end, she decided to show her hand. Her palm was bloody, and tiny pieces of glass were protruding from her skin.

I could not help but curse inwardly. How I wish I could go back to the restaurant and kill Nate right now.

"It seems that I owe you something again," Scarlett mumbled with a heavy sigh.

I must admit, what she had said made my hackles rise. The last thing I wanted to see was her being polite and distant to me.

Exasperated, I grasped her wrist and said through gritted teeth, "I don't want to hear that from you again. You don't owe me anything because we're a couple, and it's only right for me to take care of you. You shouldn't feel guilty."

Scarlett struggled to get out of my grasp. "Let go of me. If my wrist gets injured, I won't be able to cook for you anymore."

"I am not lacking a cook," I replied crossly.

At that moment, a knock sounded at the door. I let go of Scarlett's wrist and answered the door. Standing outside was the female doctor whom I had requested. She also had a bulky medical box in her hand. Without a word, I stood aside and let her in.

She examined Scarlett's injuries thoroughly. When she saw the wound on Scarlett's hand, she took out tweezers and gently plucked the broken glass one by one.

Cold sweat broke out of Scarlett's forehead because of the pain, but she did not say a word.

When I noticed her apprehensiveness, I could not help but shout at the doctor, "Can you be any gentler?!"

The doctor got startled. "Sorry. Yes, I will," she anxiously answered.

It took her more than ten minutes to remove all the glass fragments from Scarlett's palm.

"You can leave now. I'll do the rest." With a stone-cold expression, I took the bandage from the doctor and drove her away.

She seemed relieved that she could finally get out of here. With that, she hurriedly instructed me how to apply medicine and left the room afterward.

"You scared her," Scarlett helplessly said.

I lowered my head and wrapped her hand with a bandage. "Am I that terrifying?"

"Come on. You stood there with a long face and shouted at her while she was doing her job. I would've been scared of you too." Scarlett pouted her lips. She now looked livelier than she was a while ago.

"I was just worried you'd get hurt because of her." Once I was done bandaging her hand, I stood up and took the ointment for bruises. "Lift up your shirt."

"What... what are you going to do?" Scarlett quickly pulled the hem of her clothes and looked at me warily.

"I'm going to treat your bruises."

Regardless of her objection, I gently moved her hands away and lifted her shirt, revealing her waist. Her skin was as white as milk, and her waist was slim. She looked so fragile as if she would easily bend and break. I looked at her with dissatisfaction. "Haven't you been eating well?"

"I didn't mean to lose weight. It's just that I've been too busy recently that I sometimes forget to eat," Scarlett explained with her lips curled into a pout. Like a child reasoning out with her parents, she could not look at me in the eye as she spoke.

I paused for a second upon hearing her response. I thought that she had lost weight because she could not sleep or eat because of me. I could not help but laugh at myself for being hopelessly romantic. With a sardonic smile, I tightened my grip as if to punish her.