

You More than Anything in the World Chapter 91

Oscar suddenly stood up. Apprehensively, Amelia asked, “Mr. Clinton, are you leaving?”

Oscar walked over. He leaned over Amelia, almost pinning her onto the bed. The tips of their noses brushed against each other.

Enthralled, Amelia had no way of reining in her wildly beating heart. Her eyes darted from side to side, desperately avoiding Oscar’s intent gaze.

“What do you feel like eating? I’ll go and get it,” he said.

That was the last thing Amelia had expected to hear from Oscar at that moment.

“Now that you’re having a baby, you should eat a little more than usual. Tell me what you’re craving; I’ll buy it for you.” Oscar’s cool tone belied his apparent discomfort.

Amelia couldn’t believe her ears. This was Oscar’s first time showing concern for her baby.

“Mr. Clinton, are you actually concerned about me?” Amelia asked in disbelief.

“Enough of that. Tell me, quickly, what you want to eat,” Oscar insisted.

Amelia found the situation hilarious. Oscar seemed a lot more human now in comparison to the guarded, defensive man he usually was.

“Since you’ve offered, I can’t possibly say no. All right then. On account of Mr. Clinton’s generosity, I’d like to order a pasta arrabbiata, stewed beef, and mango sorbet to top it all off... I’m spoilt for choice! How can I decide?” Amelia asked in exaggerated despair.

Seeing that Oscar had let her off the hook for the matter with the photographs, the sudden feeling of liberation dared Amelia to joke with Oscar, something she seldom did.

Oscar only glared at her. “Amelia, don’t go overboard.”

“Don’t be so petty, Mr. Clinton. Can’t you even bear to buy these for me?” Amelia wheedled, pouting.

Oscar realized that he rather liked seeing this feminine side of Amelia.

“Wait and see; I’ll buy it all for you. Anything else?” he queried.

“I want you. Can I have that?” Amelia asked playfully.

Oscar’s face once again assumed a sober look. “You’re only allowed to say such things to me in the future. I forbid you from flirting with any other man like that.”

Flirting?

Amelia thought she had merely been casually teasing Oscar. She was rather distressed that it had been seen as flirtatious. It seemed that everyone perceived things rather differently indeed.

“Since you object, Mr. Clinton, I won’t say things like that anymore,” Amelia said, sulking.

Oscar grit his teeth in frustration. “You...”

Amelia held her belly and opened her eyes wide, beseeching Oscar in a cutesy tone, “Mr. Clinton, I’m hungry.”

“All right, hang on. I’ll go and buy it for you now,” Oscar replied as he headed towards the door.

“Mr. Clinton,” Amelia’s cry stopped Oscar in his tracks.

Turning around, he asked, “What is it?”

“Mr. Clinton, I’m bored. I didn’t bring my phone with me to the hospital. Can I borrow yours to play with?” Amelia pleaded.

Oscar hesitated for a moment, then handed his phone to Amelia. “The password’s your birthdate.”

Surprised, Amelia looked at him. She refused to believe that that was his chosen password.

Oscar cleared his throat awkwardly, then said, “There are a couple of games inside. You can take a look if you’re bored. I’ll be off, then.” He turned quickly on his heels and left the room.

Amelia was still looking at his phone in shock. She muttered to herself, “Oscar, if you truly didn’t care for me, then why did you use my birthdate as your password? Don’t you know what kind of hope that raises in me? What if I can’t bear to let you go when it’s time for the divorce?”

Amelia’s emotions were in complete turmoil. On the one hand, she didn’t want to get a divorce. On the other, Amelia was afraid that they eventually would, and Oscar would take her baby away regardless of what he had promised her.

Oscar, I think I’ve really fallen for you. If I could, I would want to depend on you for the rest of my life. I want a real relationship with you, not just a transactional one.

Amelia gingerly looked at Oscar’s phone, then opened his photo album. As she scrolled through it, she realized to her surprise that it contained many photos of her, most of them taken when she was sleeping. In a few, a single blanket covered her bare body; in others, she had fallen asleep fully clothed. The photos of Amelia numbered more than a thousand in sheer variety. It was completely unlike the Oscar she knew to have so many photos of Amelia.

Amelia took to examining them. Oscar had taken some from behind her as she walked ahead. Amelia could barely even recall when these moments had taken place, let alone presented any opportunities in which Oscar had taken such flattering photographs of her.

Amelia's eyes grew moist. She'd always believed that Oscar liked her solely for her body. If he had absolutely no other feelings for her, however, then what could explain this stash of Amelia's photos?

Amelia was willing to bet anything she had that a man who had no affection whatsoever for her would not possess so many photos of her. It was like a carefully curated gallery of art.

As Amelia went through each photo, she realized with a start that there were barely ten photos of Cassie. Besides a few snapshots of scenery scattered here and there, the rest of Oscar's photo album was practically a shrine to Amelia.

Amelia felt incredibly perturbed. As she weighed Oscar's phone in her hand, she mumbled, "Oscar, all the photos you have are of me. Doesn't that mean that you don't hate me too much? Why can't we spend the rest of our lives together, then?"

Just then, an incoming call jolted Amelia out of her brief reverie.

Cassie's name flashed across the screen. Upon seeing it, Amelia's heart immediately plummeted.

She hesitated for a while, then picked up. Cassie's excited chatter floated across the line. "Oz, I went for a check-up with your secretary today. The doctor said that the baby's very healthy." A note of betrayal crept into her voice. "You promised that you'd come with me, but you're always so occupied with work! I said that I'd be a model wife so I won't blame you this time. Oz, the baby and I both miss you so much! Will you be coming over tonight?"

Amelia's hand clutched the blanket. She bit her lip with such fury that it almost drew blood. With what strength she could muster, Amelia said evenly, "Sorry, Ms. Yard, it's Amelia. Oz, as you call him, has gone out to buy food for me. I'm afraid he just missed your entire speech."

Cassie was silent for a moment. Then she retorted, "Why are you answering my call, Amelia? Where's Oz?"

"He went to buy food for me," Amelia answered sweetly.

"Amelia, you have no shame at all! After your blatant cheating affair at your company, which was even documented in a few photographs, how can you be so shameless as to stay with Oz?" Cassie said disdainfully.

Amelia paled. Shakily, she asked, "How did you know about the photos?"

Cassie sniggered. "How do you think I got to know about it? Of course, Oz was the one who told me. Oz said you are, by far, the most filthy and disgusting woman he's met. It's not for me to judge a gold-digger, but going for two men at the same time? That's remarkably greedy, even by your standards."

Amelia grew even paler. Her grip on the blanket tightened. "Ms. Yard, I don't think it's your place to comment on the kind of woman I am. Even if I'm cheating on Oscar, it's up to him to decide if he wants to divorce me. You're nothing more than an outsider."

Cassie snickered. "Keep lying to yourself, Amelia. I'll be Oz's wife soon. No matter what, you're the one who'll eventually be the outsider here."

Despite herself, Amelia stood her ground valiantly. "So what? At least I'm still Oscar's wife now. You're the mistress he's ashamed of. When word gets out, I don't think the Yards will be too proud of you."

Cassie snorted and said, "Don't be too pleased with yourself either, Amelia. Do you know what Oscar told me this morning? He said that

you were filthy and made him sick, and he hasn't divorced you only because you're pregnant. He didn't think you'd be bold enough to have an affair in your condition. Cheating was a real low move from you."

Amelia clenched her jaw. "Ms. Yard, if you have nothing else to say to me, I'll be hanging up."

Without waiting for a reply, Amelia immediately ended the call.

When Oscar returned with a few bags full of food, Amelia was facing away from the door with the blanket over her. He didn't know if she was asleep.

Still holding on to his bags, Oscar approached Amelia only to be greeted by her tear-stained face. Taken aback, Oscar hurriedly set down his bags and pulled a chair over. He sat down and reached over to dab the tears from her cheeks. "Why are you crying?" he asked tenderly.

Amelia sat up, brushing aside Oscar's gesture of intimacy. She then asked, "Mr. Clinton, have you bought the food yet? I'm hungry."

Oscar frowned, feeling as if a gulf had once again opened between himself and Amelia. However, he pushed aside the nagging feeling that something was amiss and starting laying out the food on the table. "Everything you listed is right here. Eat up."

Amelia picked up a spoon and focused entirely on the spread that lay before her. She refused to even glance at Oscar, much less playfully feed him as she used to do.

The frown deepened on Oscar's brow. Looking at Amelia, he announced, "I'm hungry."

Amelia raised her head and looked at him questioningly. "You're hungry too? There's another set of utensils here. Help yourself."

Oscar stared at her. He asked in slight frustration, “Aren’t you going to feed me?”

If this had happened before that fateful conversation with Cassie, Amelia would have immediately played along with the greatest zest. However, Amelia wasn’t in the mood at present. She only replied dully, “Please help yourself, Mr. Clinton.”

Oscar looked at her, probing. “Are you upset?”

Amelia’s smile didn’t quite reach her eyes. “I’m perfectly happy, Mr. Clinton.”

Oscar fumed. “Don’t smile if you don’t want to. You look hideous.”

The smile on Amelia’s face vanished. She resumed eating but found that she had lost her appetite completely.

Oscar put down his utensils. “What in the world is wrong with you?”

Wordlessly, Amelia brought another spoonful of rice to her mouth. However, Oscar stopped her by grabbing her wrist. “Don’t eat if you don’t want to,” he said roughly.

Amelia looked at him in bewilderment. Her eyes slowly brimmed with tears. They spilled over, seemingly without her realizing.

Ever since she had gotten pregnant, Amelia felt as if she had become a lot weaker. She cried a lot more, and often.

Oscar’s heart was wrung at this sight. He reached forward and wiped her tears, then took her into his arms all at once. In a low voice, he asked, “Why are you crying?”

Amelia wrapped her arms tightly around Oscar’s waist. At that moment, Oscar seemed to be her only refuge in the world. Amelia permitted her

sorrow to course unrestrained through her, emerging as tears that ran onto Oscar's shirt.

After letting Amelia cry for a minute or so, Oscar turned her to face him. Once again, he wiped away the tears on her face and repeated, "Why are you crying?"

Amelia looked at him with swollen eyes. "Mr. Clinton, do you really think of me as a filthy woman?"

Oscar's eyes grew dark. He tilted her jaw, forcing Amelia to look him in the eye while demanding, "Did anyone say anything of that sort to you?"

Amelia looked away and mumbled, "No."

"Don't you lie to me."

Amelia shook her head, once again directing her interest towards the food. "Mr. Clinton, let's eat. I'm hungry."

Oscar's eyes remained steadfastly fixed on Amelia.

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Amelia tried to change the subject. "Mr. Clinton, if you aren't hungry, I'll just pack all this food up."

"What's wrong with you?" Oscar asked, gripping her hand.

With a sigh, Amelia placed her silverware down. "Do you wish there was something wrong with me?"

"Don't lie to me. No one will dare bully you while I'm here."

"The only one who bullies me around here is you, Mr. Clinton."

Oscar fell silent.

“I’m fine, really.” Amelia sighed again. “I got a call from a friend earlier who told me one of his relatives had passed away. I had spoken to that same relative only a few days ago, and now he’s gone.”

Oscar looked at her sharply. “How did he contact you if your phone’s at home?”

Amelia froze, her mouth agape. In her hurry to come up with an excuse, she had completely forgotten about her phone. And Oscar saw through her immediately.

The corners of Oscar’s mouth turned up slightly as he playfully pinched her cheek. “That’s it. No more lies in the future. Always remember to think before you speak.”

Amelia bit her lip and said nothing.

Seeing her so subdued, Oscar felt a little sorry for her. “You’re not filthy. My words yesterday were unnecessarily harsh. Mom said you shouldn’t get riled up while pregnant. It wouldn’t be good for the baby.”

A look of disappointment flashed across Amelia’s face. After a while, she finally asked, “Mr. Clinton, are you forgiving me only because your mom made you do so?”

It was Oscar’s turn to avoid the subject as he gestured at the food in front of them. “Didn’t you say you were hungry? Eat up before the food gets cold.”

Amelia beamed a brilliant smile at Oscar. “Regardless of your reason, I’m very grateful and glad that you’ve forgiven me. So thank you, Mr. Clinton. I shall continue to put in my best efforts in our very complicated marriage.”

“Let’s eat.”

Amelia started to dig into the food. She stopped mid-way to scoop a spoonful of it and brought it to Oscar's lips. "How about this, Mr. Clinton? If you eat this, we'll agree to let bygones be bygones. We won't bring up the photos again either."

Oscar glanced at her before accepting the food.

Happy moments like these were rare for them. After the meal, Oscar called his mother to tell her not to come over that night. He reassured her that he would take good care of Amelia.

Olivia was more than happy at the sound of that. But as all mothers do, she re-emphasized the need for Amelia to be well taken care of before she hung up.

"Did the doctor say when you can be discharged?" Oscar asked while peeling an orange for Amelia.

"Tomorrow, I guess."

The two of them were chatting like good friends. It was a moment where they could set aside talks of love and affairs. This was another rare moment that Amelia deeply cherished.

It had been almost five years since they got married, but this was the first time she felt like she had truly gotten closer to Oscar.

Oscar nodded.

After a brief hesitation, Amelia asked, "Mr. Clinton, earlier Ms. Yard called looking for you. You should probably call her back."

"Did Cassie say something to you?" Oscar replied. He finally understood why Amelia had been feeling low. She had been mulling over her call with Cassie.

“She didn’t say much. She only wanted me to pass on the message that she had gone for her checkup with your secretary and that the baby is healthy.” Amelia put on a forced smile. “She also mentioned that the two of you will be getting married soon. Congratulations, Mr. Clinton. As for the wedding, I’m afraid I won’t be attending it. After all, it’d be highly inappropriate for the ex-wife to be there, wouldn’t it?”

Oscar looked Amelia in her eyes. “Pay no heed to Cassie’s words. Even if we do get the divorce, I will still take good care of you and our child. No women or children of mine will need to worry about anything in life.”

As she lay in bed, Amelia couldn’t help but reach out for Oscar’s hand. “Mr. Clinton, no matter what happens to us, I just want to let you know how grateful I am for you,” Amelia said earnestly. “You lent a helping hand when I needed it the most. Even though I married you for money, at the end of the day, you’re still my savior.”

Oscar held her gaze as he listened on.

Resting in bed with no makeup on, Amelia looked incredibly frail and pitiful. Oscar felt especially moved after having heard her words and realized he was feeling increasingly sympathetic towards her.

He held his hand up and caressed Amelia’s face tenderly. “Are you tired?”

“Mr. Clinton, can you stay with me? Our child and I both need you,” Amelia pleaded as she nuzzled into his hand.

Oscar moved his hand over her eyes. “Go to bed. I’ll stay with you and send you home tomorrow.”

Amelia smiled contentedly and patted the bed. “Why don’t you join me in bed, Mr. Clinton?”

Oscar was about to comply when his phone rang. Talk about bad timing.

His expression changed when he looked at his phone, but he quickly recovered. "Let me answer this call. I'll be right back."

It wasn't difficult for Amelia to guess who had made that call, and the thought of it upset her. A call from Cassie and Oscar would no longer be able to stay overnight with her.

Every time it felt like her relationship with Oscar was making progress, Cassie would undoubtedly butt in to remind her she was nothing more than just a substitute.

Amelia pulled the covers up and did not reply him.

Oscar glanced at her before walking out with his phone to answer it.

"Cassie, how was the checkup?"

"Oz, the doctor said our baby's developing very well! I'm a little upset that you've stood me up twice today. How are you going to make it up to me?" Cassie asked suggestively.

Oscar kept his cool as he replied patiently, "I'm glad the checkup went well. It's late now, so you should go to bed soon. I'll see you first thing in the morning."

"What? You aren't coming over now?" Cassie whined.

"No, I've still got work to do. Be good and sleep early. It'd be good for both you and the baby."

Oscar was met with silence on the other end. After a while, he heard Cassie's muffled sobs. "Oz, why have you been so cold to me these days?"

Oscar tried his best to keep his voice even. "Cassie, be good. My love for you has never changed. Work has been so busy that I haven't had time to spend with you."

“I’m a woman, Oz. Women tend to be more suspicious and sensitive, especially when it concerns the men they love. It was wrong of me to break off our wedding in the past and leave without caring about your feelings. But now I’ve put everything aside just to come back and be with you. Can you feel how much I love you?”

“Cassie, I’ve just been really busy with work. I’m sorry I’ve neglected you. Once I’m less busy, I’ll take you overseas for a vacation so you’ll stop imagining the worst.”

Cassie no longer saw the need to put on a front and continued her tirade. “When will that be, Oz? Give me a date. I may be understanding, but you’ve stood me up so many times I can’t help but worry. Your attitude towards me has changed so fast overnight, and I don’t feel good about it.”

Oscar furrowed his brows. He was a male chauvinist at heart and expected women to be at his beck and call. He could put up with the occasional willfulness from the women he loved, but he still expected them to generally be obedient. However, Cassie was right about his change in attitude towards her. He had been feeling less tolerant of her behavior. Even his desire for her had started to wane.

Perhaps he refused to give up on Cassie because he had failed to win her over in the past? Men always craved for the things that were out of their reach. It was only after they had gotten their hands on them that they gradually lose their appeal.

“Cassie, be good. Like I’ve said, when I’m less busy at work, we’ll go on a vacation,” Oscar reassured her.

Cassie began sobbing loudly over the phone. “Oz, you’re always asking me to be good, and I do just that. But being good doesn’t mean I can allow you to neglect me. I’m from a respectable family, and I do well in my studies and work. But I’m willing to put up with being called a

mistress, just so I can be with you. I'm even carrying your child now, for crying out loud. I just want your promise. Is that really so difficult?"

Oscar softened his voice as he replied, "Cassie, I know you've become more sensitive since getting pregnant. I promise I will marry you. It's just that Amelia is also pregnant, and my mom would never approve of me leaving her during this period. I'll wait till she has given birth before I get the divorce. Till then, please be good for me."

Cassie didn't mince her words now. "Oz, I don't want my baby to be seen as an illegitimate child. You shouldn't have hit on me if you didn't have strong feelings for me. And now, in just a few short months, you're treating me with such indifference. If your love for me has changed, tell me, and I'll stop pestering you. But that also means I may no longer want this child."

Oscar pulled his hair in frustration. "Stop this, Cassie. Even if I did get my divorce now, I wouldn't be able to marry you immediately. You should have anticipated this blowback when you broke off our wedding previously. My mom used to love you so much, but now she has no desire to want you as her daughter-in-law. As long as you can't get my mom's approval, she wouldn't care even if you had the baby. In her eyes, he'd still be an illegitimate child. If you really want to go ahead with an abortion, be my guest. I don't like dealing with aggressive women."

Cassie remained silent for a moment, only to burst into tears again. Oscar was annoyed by it, but he also started to feel bad.

Even though his feelings for her have become less intense, Cassie was still the woman he had loved for years. Now that she was pregnant with his child and bawling over the phone, he didn't have the heart to continue staying mad at her.

"Cassie, be good. Stop crying."

“Oz, I just wanted to know if you still care about me. But judging by the way you’ve been treating me, could it be that you don’t love me anymore? I didn’t mean it when I said I didn’t want the baby. I only said it in a fit of anger so I could get your attention,” Cassie whimpered.

Oscar listened in silence.

“Oz, come over, please? I’m so scared now. I’m scared that you might no longer want me, I’m scared that our child won’t be delivered safely, I’m so scared of everything. Please? Can you come over?” Cassie begged between sobs.

Oscar heaved a deep sigh. “Alright, I’ll be right over.”

“Okay, I’ll be waiting for you. Oz, don’t stand me up this time.”

Oscar hung up the phone wordlessly.

He stood outside Amelia’s ward for a long time before going back in hesitantly. She was already tucked in and sound asleep. She didn’t even stir when he nudged her.

Oscar whispered in her ear, “Amelia, wake up.”

Amelia opened her eyes to see Oscar right beside her. “Done with the call?”

“Go back to sleep. I’ll be here,” Oscar said as he patted her head.

“Mr. Clinton, you can leave if there’s something you need to tend to. I’ll be fine alone here.”

After giving it some thought, Oscar agreed to it. “Alright, I’ll head out for a bit. I’ll be back in two hours.”

“Mr. Clinton, you don’t have to come back if you’re busy. I’ll return to the company after getting discharged tomorrow,” Amelia said, closing her eyes.

“Are you angry?”

Amelia shook her head. “Get on with your work Mr. Clinton. You don’t have to shuffle to and fro,” she mumbled, her voice devoid of any emotion.

“You really are angry, aren’t you?”

Amelia swatted away Oscar’s hand. “Mr. Clinton, do I have the right to be angry? Our marriage may be nothing more than a contract, but that doesn’t mean I don’t deserve some basic respect.”

Oscar looked at her quizzically. “What’s wrong now? I thought you were fine earlier.”

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Amelia once again shook her head. “Mr. Clinton, please leave if there’s something you need to do. After I get discharged tomorrow, I will head over to Carter’s to turn in my resignation. Our relationship is purely contractual, so it’s only right that I follow the rules. And since you don’t like me hanging around other men, I’ll make it a point to keep my distance from them.”

Oscar took a long, hard look at Amelia while he contemplated the situation. “Are you throwing a tantrum because of the phone call I just had?”

The more he probed, the more annoyed Amelia felt. Is there any point in dragging this further?

“Your lover would be the one throwing the tantrum if you don’t leave now,” she snapped.

Oscar was still gazing at her when he suddenly placed his hand on the back of her head and pulled her in for a kiss. The kiss was intense, and they were momentarily lost in each other.

Amelia was left in a daze when they finally pulled away, her cheeks flushed from their kiss.

“Still angry with me?” Oscar asked, his forehead resting gently against hers.

Amelia looked at him in bewilderment. “Mr. Clinton, why are you doing this? Am I just a pet to you? One that you play with when you’re happy but gets tossed aside when you aren’t?”

“Go to sleep. I’ll leave now and come back in two hours,” Oscar said while patting her head.

Amelia was silent as she lay back in bed and hid under the covers.

Oscar watched over her for the longest time. But once he realized she had no intention of coming out from under the covers, he left.

When the door closed behind him, Amelia finally pulled the covers back down. She stared at the ceiling, crestfallen. “Oscar Clinton,” she muttered. “Is there still a future for us?”

The silence in the ward was deafening.

Oscar got in his car after having taken the elevator down and smacked the steering wheel before driving off.

The drive to Cassie’s took almost thirty minutes. The door opened almost immediately after he rang the bell, and Cassie threw herself into his arms. Oscar caught her and had to half-drag her back into the house.

Cassie snuggled against Oscar’s chest and whimpered, “Oz, I thought you weren’t going to come.”

Oscar remained stoic as he let her hug him.

Cassie felt the reluctance in him and looked up. “Oz, are you not happy to see me?”

Oscar reassured her with a hug. “Stop imagining things. I wouldn’t be here if I weren’t happy about it.”

Cassie buried her face into his chest. “Oz, I know I threw a tantrum at you earlier, but I hope you won’t be angry with me,” she said softly. “You know how it is with pregnant women. We just become so much more sensitive about everything. The doctor told me this was prenatal depression, but as long as you spend more time with me, my mood will definitely improve.”

Oscar only held her in his arms as he coaxed her. “Don’t think too much about it. I’ll spend more time with you in the future, now be good and go to bed.”

Cassie clung to him like a koala bear with no intention of letting go. “Oz, I’m not sleepy yet. Why don’t you chat with me? We haven’t had a chat like this for a while now,” she pleaded.

“Sure.”

Cassie gently rubbed his chest like a cat kneading away. “Do you still remember where we had our first kiss?”

Oscar was taken aback by her question. He genuinely couldn’t remember where they had first kissed. Even though he claimed that he loved Cassie, the memories he had with her were few and far between.

Cassie pouted her lips and stared at Oscar angrily. “Oz, do you not remember at all?”

Oscar planted a brief kiss on her lips before turning on his charm. “The past is history. From now on, just remember that I’ll be showering you with kisses every minute and every second.”

Disappointment flashed in Cassie’s eyes. “Oz, can you promise to kiss me and only me from now?” she asked as she touched his lips.

Oscar moved her hand away. “Has the baby been behaving well today?” he asked gently, changing the subject.

Cassie stared at him while her heart began to race. “Why did you change the subject, Oz?” she asked, panic-stricken. “Have you fallen for Amelia? Even after those compromising photos of her, you still refuse to leave her?”

Oscar’s eyes flashed with annoyance. He was starting to lose his patience with Cassie. “Cassie, I took precious time out to be with you, and here you are, interrogating me?”

“Oz, I’m not interrogating you.” Cassie snapped. “You used to be so warm and tender towards me. But recently, you’ve been acting hot and cold, and I can’t help but wonder if you still love me. I’m a woman, and it’s only normal that I get worried. I worry that you’re back with Amelia. I know I’ve been badgering you, but I only did it so that you won’t forget me. Is that so wrong?”

Oscar lowered his gaze at her. “Cassie, you never used to be this unreasonable.”

Cassie angrily wriggled out of his embrace. “As you said, that was all in the past. The old you pampered me with love. Whenever I had a problem, you’d put everything down and come to my rescue. But now? No matter how much I plead or beg, you still might not show up. How can I not be angry?” she retorted. “The man I love has had a change of heart. If I still don’t do anything to change that, I’d be the biggest idiot in the world!”

Oscar stood up suddenly, his face darkened. “Cassie, you’re being emotional right now, so I won’t argue with you. We’ll talk again when you’re feeling better. Have a good rest. I’ll be leaving now.”

Cassie ran up to him and hugged him from the back. There was a note of panic in her voice as she pleaded, “Oz, don’t go. I really love you! If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have come back. Please don’t leave me.”

Oscar stood his ground, not saying anything.

Cassie continued sobbing. “Oz, don’t go. I really love you. I’m even carrying your child now. I’d go mad if you no longer want me.”

At that moment, Oscar felt sorry for her. He turned around and hugged her tight. “There, there, stop crying. Let’s not ruin that pretty face of yours,” he said softly, wiping her tears away.

“It’s all your fault. I wouldn’t be crying if it weren’t for you,” Cassie whined as she lightly hit his chest. “I want you to make it up to me by staying here tonight. If you don’t, I’ll abort the baby. Since you aren’t going to marry me, it’d be difficult for me to remarry in the future if I had a child in tow.”

Oscar’s face fell again.

“Cassie, if you’re only joking about the abortion, I can overlook that. But if you’re serious about it, I’m going to be furious.”

Cassie caressed his face, a glint in her eyes. “Oz, do you really care about my baby?”

“He’s my child, why wouldn’t I care about him?”

“Then do you prefer our child or Amelia’s child?”

“Stop it, Cassie. They’re both my children, and I love them equally. Stop asking these unreasonable questions.”

Eyes downcast, Cassie replied, “Oz, I’m just jealous. I was the one who knew you first, so that makes me the bona fide girlfriend. But you so quickly married another, and now I’ve become the mistress. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t upset, especially now that I’m pregnant. Every night I have the fear that you’d leave me for Amelia. Tell me, Oz, what should I do? I’m so afraid of losing you.”

Oscar swept her up wordlessly, carried her into the bedroom, and laid her down in bed. “Sleep. I’ll be here with you.”

Cassie buried her head into his chest, her lips curled into a smirk.

“Oz, tell me a story. I’m in the mood for one.”

Oscar patted her head and said, “Be good and sleep.”

“No, Oz, I want to listen to a story,” Cassie whined. “From the time we dated, separated, and finally reunited, it’s been so long since you’ve told me a bedtime story. I want one, and our baby wants it too. Can’t you grant me this little request?”

Oscar gave in and started narrating, “Once upon a time, there were three little bears who lived in the forest. They were Papa Bear, Mama Bear, and Little Bear...”

Cassie interrupted before he could finish his sentence. “Oz, that’s such a childish story. Let’s have another.”

Oscar did as he was told. “Once upon a time, there was a maiden so fair...”

“Oz, your stories are boring. Can’t you come up with something more interesting? Oh, I know! Why don’t you tell me a story in Erihalese? You always look so sexy when you do, and it makes my heart flutter.”

Cassie had interrupted him again.

Oscar wasn't pleased with that. He hated it when he got interrupted mid-sentence. It was just plain rude.

Cassie noticed the change in his expression and immediately put on that saccharine voice of hers. "Oz, I really enjoy listening to you speak Erihalese. You look super cool when you do. Remember that time when I visited you at college, and you spoke it in front of your Erihalese professor? You were so charming, and everyone was smitten by your magnetic voice. Will you do it again for me? Please?"

Men loved women who knew when to put on their charms for them, and Oscar was no exception. He felt a little better after what Cassie said.

Cassie stared at him with puppy eyes as he recited a monologue in Erihalese. "You ooze so much charm when speaking Erihalese. You truly are my superhero, and I love you so much." She added, "I always wonder how I landed myself such a perfect man, and now I'm even carrying his baby. The thought of the three of us living happily ever after just overwhelms me with joy."

Even after Cassie said that, nothing stirred in Oscar's heart. He simply patted her arm and once again coaxed her to sleep.

Cassie closed her eyes and mumbled, "Oz, I want bacon for breakfast, can you make some for me?"

Oscar remained silent for a while before he said, "I will personally make you breakfast tomorrow. Now, be good and sleep."

With that said, Cassie finally drifted off to sleep.

Once she was sound asleep, Oscar crept silently out of the house and drove off.

When he got back to the hospital, Oscar paced outside Amelia's ward for a bit before he finally went in. He had thought Amelia would be

asleep, but there she was, standing alone by the window with her back towards him.

Oscar was pained at how lonely she looked. He briskly walked over and hugged her tightly from the back. Amelia, who had been in a daze, was taken aback by this sudden gesture. She yelped and started to fight back, not knowing who was behind her.

Oscar whispered into her ear, “Don’t be scared. It’s just me.”

Upon hearing his voice, Amelia started to calm down. She turned around and looked at Oscar in disbelief. “Mr. Clinton, why are you back?”

Oscar pinched her nose and pretended to be angry. “Do you not want to see me?”

Amelia shook her head. “I knew you had gone to placate your lover. Which probably meant that you wouldn’t be able to return this early. It was even possible that you wouldn’t return at all. I really didn’t expect you to make it back in two hours,” she answered, a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

“With words like that, one can’t help but smell the jealousy wafting off of you. Been jealous, haven’t you?” Oscar teased.

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Amelia pouted as she tried to leave Oscar’s embrace, only to be held even more tightly. “Don’t move. Let me hold you for a while. I feel like I haven’t done this for a long time.”

The woman obeyed and kept still.

“What are you doing by the window at this hour? It’s cold at night. You might catch a cold.”

“Would it even upset you if I caught a cold, Mr. Clinton?”

“Why wouldn’t I? You’re my woman.”

“You have plenty of women. I’m probably not the only one you’d feel upset for,” Amelia continued calmly.

“You sound so bitter. You’re actually jealous, huh?”

Amelia remained in his arms, saying nothing more.

All of a sudden, Oscar felt especially upset to see the usually cheerful and captivating Amelia Winters behave this way.

Amelia was usually so strong and independent that it seemed as though she could face everything even without a man by her side. Yet, the woman now looked so fragile. Perhaps, she was not as strong as one thought. Despite always performing well, she still needed a man’s shoulder to lean on in the face of crisis.

Oscar bent over to pick her up and placed her on the bed. “It’s late. Let’s go to sleep.”

Amelia grabbed him by the hand. “Please, Mr. Clinton. If you’re not serious about me, don’t treat me so well. If you do, I might not want to leave by the time we get divorced.”

Oscar merely stared at her.

The woman instinctively avoided his gaze. “I’m serious, Mr. Clinton. If you have no intention of marrying me, please don’t be kind to me. This is for both our sake.”

“And what if I want to?”

Amelia gazed at him in confusion.

Oscar then covered her eyes with his hand. “Sleep. Don’t think too much. As long as you remain as my woman even for another day, I’ll make sure you don’t suffer.”

But you’re the one making me suffer the most, Amelia lamented internally.

Still, she fell asleep quickly, perhaps because Oscar was by her side.

By the time Amelia woke up the next day, Oscar had already left. The woman couldn’t deny that she was disappointed, but she quickly kept her feelings away.

She walked into the bathroom and did some packing, thinking of leaving the hospital on her own. Yet, Tiffany suddenly entered and was instantly livid to find Amelia on her own. “Babe! Where is he?”

Amelia didn’t know how to respond for a moment. “Who?”

“Who else? That sh*tty husband of yours, of course! Didn’t he come over yesterday? Was he just putting on a show in front of Mrs. Clinton? Did he leave right after she did?”

Amelia shook her head and chuckled. “Stop being so biased against him. I told him to leave because I knew you were coming. I didn’t want the two of you getting into another fight. He’s such a macho that there’s no way he’d let a woman lecture him. If he really got mad and decided to get back at you, I don’t think any publisher would want to work with you anymore.”

Tiffany huffed. “Like I’d be scared of him! If my current publisher doesn’t want me, there’d be other companies waiting to work with me! That’s how popular my books are. If no one here wants to sign me, I know other cities’ publishers do. It’s not like Clinton Corporations has power over every publisher in the country, right?”

“Okay, okay. I know you’re amazing. But please stop clashing with him for my sake. Nothing good will come out of it.”

Tiffany gazed at Amelia skeptically. “Babe, be honest with me. Are you saying that because you care about me, or do you just not want me to yell at him?”

“What do you think?”

Tiffany grinned. “I know just how much you love me, Babe. Okay, then. I’ll try not to pick a fight with him for your sake. But if he ever treats you like sh*t, I won’t hesitate to cuss him out.”

Amelia couldn’t help but laugh.

After taking care of the discharge procedures, the two women got into Tiffany’s car. “Could you drop me off at work, Tiff? I have to talk to Carter personally about my resignation.”

“You’re quitting? But why? Didn’t you say you love your job? I don’t like that jinx, but if you enjoy working there, you should keep doing it.”

“I don’t want Oscar to misunderstand anything. Besides, there’s no guarantee that Jennifer won’t send those photos to everyone else in the company. If that happens, I don’t think Carter or even I will be able to live with it. I may as well end everything before other people find out.”

Tiffany smacked the steering wheel in exasperation, causing Amelia to jump in fright. “Calm down, Tiff. I don’t want to get into an accident this early in the morning.”

Tiffany cast her glance. “You underestimate me, Babe. I may not drive often, but that doesn’t mean I can’t drive at all. In fact, I’m a pretty good driver! I won’t do anything to put you and the baby’s lives in danger, so don’t worry.”

Hearing that, Amelia leaned back into her seat at peace.

“Are you really going to quit your job, Babe?”

“Don’t you hate Carter’s guts? Shouldn’t you be happy that I’m quitting?”

“Cut that out. It’s not like you ever listened to me after all the times I tried talking you out of working for him. Besides, you’re thinking of quitting just to avoid all that trouble. I don’t think Carter will let you quit, though.”

“Whether or not he agrees, I have to leave.”

“Well, it’s fine if you’ve made up your mind. But I do hope you can give it a second thought. This is about you, after all.”

Amelia nodded and said nothing more.

They soon arrived at Carter’s company building. “We’re here,” said Tiffany. “Go on, then. Do you want me to wait here?”

“It’s fine,” Amelia replied. “You can head back. I’ll be dropping by the Clintons’ after I’m done with this. I have to talk to them about the photos.”

Tiffany nodded. “Be careful, then. Remember to call me if you’re sad or upset. Don’t put up with everything on your own like an idiot.”

Amelia unbuckled her seatbelt and gave Tiffany a hug. “Thank you, Tiff,” she said earnestly. “You’ve always been by my side no matter what happens. I’m so grateful to have such a good friend like you. Having you and the child is more than I can ever ask for.”

Tiffany patted her on the back before responding, “Oh, stop being so cheesy. Get out of here and go to work! You’re giving me goosebumps.”

With a laugh, Amelia opened the car door and got down.

Upon entering the building, Amelia headed to the design department, and her coworkers immediately surrounded her. “Are you okay, Amelia?” asked Jessica. “I heard from Mr. Scott that you were hospitalized. Please be more careful, especially since you’re carrying a child now.”

The other coworkers chimed in, “She’s right, Amelia! You have to take good care of yourself now that you’re pregnant. We’ve heard about what happened. Ms. Larson’s gone too far this time. Otherwise, you wouldn’t have had to be hospitalized in the first place.”

Amelia was slightly perplexed.

Jessica continued, “Ms. Larson really shouldn’t have done all that. We’re on your side, Amelia. Mr. Scott even nearly fired Ms. Larson over what happened, but in the end, Mr. Scott’s mother intervened.”

Amelia remained confused. “My hospitalization doesn’t have much to do with Ms. Larson, so I hope you guys won’t make any wild guesses. But still, I really appreciate your concern.”

“You got walked all over because you’re too kind, Amelia. I would’ve already slapped that woman to kingdom come if I were you!” said Jessica.

“Don’t make assumptions like that, guys. My stay at the hospital really had nothing to do with Ms. Larson. Anyway, carry on with your work. I have to drop by Mr. Scott’s office.”

With that, Amelia immediately left for Carter’s office.

I probably won’t be seeing them anymore after today.

As Amelia arrived outside Carter’s office, a secretary stood up and greeted her. “Are you here to see Mr. Scott, Amelia? He’s gone to the bathroom. Why don’t you head in and wait for him?”

Amelia hesitated. “I don’t think that’s too appropriate. I guess I’ll just come back later.”

“Don’t worry about it, Amelia. Mr. Scott has said that you’re welcome to drop by his office whenever you like.”

Thus, Amelia walked into his office.

After waiting about ten minutes, the secretary’s voice rang out from outside the door. “Amelia’s waiting for you inside, Mr. Scott.”

Then, the door was pushed open from the outside.

“Amelia! Why didn’t you tell me that you were coming back to work?”

Amelia rose to her feet. “Mr. Scott, I came over to thank you for taking such good care of me, and also to let you know that I’m resigning.”

Carter’s face immediately fell, and he hastily walked over to grab Amelia by the arm. “Why are you quitting? Is it because of the photos?”

“Could you calm down a little, Mr. Scott? We won’t be able to talk things out this way.”

“I won’t allow it.”

“We’d still be friends even if I leave,” Amelia remarked helplessly. She had expected this to happen, but she didn’t think Carter would get so worked up.

The man stood in place like a stranded beast. “Don’t leave, Amelia. I’m begging you,” he growled.

Amelia jumped in shock, for she certainly didn’t expect him to behave this way.

Then, she took a deep breath and spoke slowly. “Calm down, Carter. Let’s talk about it.”

Suddenly, the man hugged her tightly. “I don’t want to talk,” he said desperately. “You have no idea how long I’ve waited to have you by my side, even if I’m your boss and you’re my employee. Just getting to see you every day at work makes me happy.”

Amelia tried to break free, but she dared not struggle too much in fear of harming her child.

“Don’t do this, Carter. I don’t want such photos of us being taken again.”

Yet, Carter continued to hold onto her, and his eyes seemed to blaze with obsession.

He then caught a whiff of the fragrance coming from Amelia’s hair. “You smell so good, Amelia. I want to keep being this close to you so I can smell you forever. Your scent drives me crazy.”

A shiver ran down Amelia’s spine, and she began to grow furious too. “Don’t make me hate you, Carter. Keep doing this, and we won’t even get to be friends anymore,” she said calmly.

Carter suddenly froze.

“Do you hate me that much, Amelia?” he asked while leaning on her shoulder, sounding slightly hurt.

“Carter, you have to understand that those photos are affecting my family and life. And as you wanted, I got into a fight with Oscar. I got so worked up that I passed out and ended up being hospitalized for a day. But still, I don’t want to divorce him, so I can’t continue working here. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t do this, Amelia,” Carter immediately responded. “I promise those photos will never appear again, and I won’t touch you in any way. Please, just stay in this company. I’ll be your fallback; you can just think of me whenever you’re not happy.”

“Please don’t say that, Carter. I don’t deserve to be treated that way. You’re such an incredible guy, and I know there are many other women out there who are worthy of you,” Amelia insisted in frustration.

“You know exactly how I feel about you, Amelia.”

Amelia took two steps back. “You promised not to give me any pressure, Carter. You can’t go back on your word.”

“I never thought about giving you any pressure. I just want you to keep working here. I’ve told you that I won’t interfere with your marriage, but I want to keep watching over you from a close distance. Can’t you grant me this little wish of mine?”

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Amelia gazed at him apologetically. “I’m sorry, but I choose family over work. I can’t stay here anymore.”

“I won’t allow that.”

“I’m really sorry, Carter, but I can’t keep working here. I’m really happy that I got to work with you for a while, and I do hope that we can work together again someday. But for now, none of this is possible. I suppose I won’t need to write you a resignation letter. I’m sorry.” After apologizing sincerely, Amelia headed toward the door.

Yet, Carter grabbed her by the hand. “Please don’t go, Amelia,” he pleaded.

Amelia’s gaze remained apologetic. “I’m really sorry I let you down, Carter. We can work together again next time.”

“I don’t know what will happen next time. All I know is that once you leave, I won’t even have a chance to be close to you anymore. So please don’t go. I’ll fire Jennifer if you stay.”

“Don’t you understand, Carter? Even if Jennifer leaves, there’d be other women who would do what she did. I don’t want anyone else sabotaging my marriage, so I can’t keep working here anymore.”

Carter stared at her in agony.

“Amelia, you left me without a word all those years ago, and now you’re leaving me again because of another man. When will you ever love me instead?”

“Don’t say that, Carter. We’re just friends,” Amelia replied in slight frustration. “I’ll be off now. I don’t want to interfere with your work.”

Carter’s tight grip remained on her hand. “Do you have to be this cruel, Amelia?” he asked drearily.

“I’m sorry, Carter.” With that, Amelia shook his hand off, opened the door to his office, and left without turning back.

Carter stood inside his office in a daze, not even noticing that the secretary had walked in. “Are you okay, Mr. Scott?” the woman asked nervously.

Carter merely glanced at her and pointed to the door. “Leave.”

“M-Mr. Scott, the president of Lumine Group is here. Do you want to—”

“Tell Mr. Freeman that I’m not feeling well and get the technical department manager to handle the project discussions,” Carter instructed after taking a deep breath.

“Yes, Mr. Scott.” With that, the secretary quickly left the office, afraid that the man would unleash his wrath on her.

Just as Carter remained in a horrible mood, a knock came on the door, followed by Jennifer's voice. "May I come in, Mr. Scott? I have some work matters to report to you about."

Carter's eyes flashed with rage and hatred as he clenched his fists tightly. "Come in."

Jennifer opened the door and walked in, brimming with confidence. She was dressed in a red suit that perfectly accentuated her figure.

"Hello, Mr. Scott."

Carter glanced at Jennifer coldly before standing up, making his way around his desk, and walking up to her. Then, he slapped the woman across the face without a word.

Jennifer was stunned into silence before clutching her cheek and staring at him in disbelief.

"Are you insane, Carter? Why did you hit me?"

"Amelia just quit her job. Are you happy now?" the man retorted with gritted teeth.

"She quit? Are you for real?" Jennifer clenched her teeth too. "And what does that have to do with me? Why are you taking your anger out on me? Are you not capable of behaving a little more like a gentleman, Carter?"

Carter's expression remained grim. "My company's too small for someone like you. You should leave."

"Are you firing me?" Jennifer asked in astonishment.

"Get your pay calculated at the finance department and leave. You're beautiful and highly capable, so I'm sure there are lots of huge companies that would hire you."

Jennifer glared at him in a fury. “I demand a reason. I won’t accept it if you’re firing me just because Amelia’s leaving. I’m going to tell Mrs. Scott about this, and I know she’ll back me up. You’d better not fire me unless you want the Scotts and Larsons to split up.”

“I’m the owner of this company. I don’t see why I can’t fire someone because I don’t like them. If you have the slightest bit of shame in you, you’d leave right after getting your pay settled.”

Instead, Jennifer sat down and crossed her arms.

“Give me a reason, or I won’t leave.”

“There isn’t a reason. I just don’t want to see you,” Carter responded without mincing his words.

“Do you hate me that much, Carter?”

“Yes.”

The hands Jennifer had placed on top of her thighs moved slightly as her eyes turned red. The woman had never come across a man who could shut her like that without a care in the world. She loved Carter so much that she had cast aside every other man who pursued her. Yet, not only did Carter not love her back, but he even treated her horribly.

“That woman chose to leave because she’s too ashamed to stay, but you’re blaming it on me. Don’t you think you’ve gone too far?” Jennifer demanded as emotions began to sweep through her. Despite her being a woman who had voluntarily chosen to pursue a man, Carter paid no heed to her, nor did he even consider her feelings at all.

At that very moment, Jennifer began to despise Carter, but not as much as she did Amelia.

Carter lowered his head. “You should leave, Jennifer. I don’t want our relationship to worsen to the point where we hate each other.”

“No. You’re the first man I’ve fallen for, and you can only be mine. As long as I’m around, you and Amelia will never be.”

Carter cast Jennifer a profound glance. “Don’t you realize how ridiculous you look, Jennifer? It’s not worth doing all this for a man like me. You may as well give up on me. I’m sure you’ll find your other half who can truly belong to you.”

“My other half has always been you. Even Mrs. Scott has acknowledged me as the Scotts’ daughter-in-law. Marrying me means marrying the entire Larson family, and when that happens, you’ll be able to expand your business anywhere in the world. I’m much better than Amelia in every way.”

Carter’s gaze remained especially calm.

“You’re a brilliant woman, Jennifer, but that doesn’t change how I feel about you. A guy who wants to spend twenty years less sloughing away might choose you, but I want to pave my career with my own hands. If that doesn’t work out, I can always return to Scott Group. I don’t think we Scotts are that far off from the Larsons, anyway.”

Jennifer glared at him in fury. “So you’re ending our relationship no matter what, Carter?”

“We’ve never even had a relationship, to begin with,” Carter remarked, adding salt to Jennifer’s wound.

“You’re the worst man I’ve ever met, Carter Scott. Fine, I’ll leave. But I’ll be back for sure,” Jennifer declared haughtily.

“Thanks for the compliment,” Carter replied while holding a pen.

With her eyes flashing with rage, the woman turned and left without looking back.

Carter gazed at the documents on his desk. About five minutes later, he took out his phone and dialed a number, only to receive no answer from the person over the line. Then, he began to compose a text message.

I'll leave your position vacant for you, Amelia. Come back whenever you want. My love for you will never change, and I'll always be there for you whenever you need me.

The man sent the message without any hesitation. Unfortunately, he never received a reply despite waiting a long while.

He sighed with a gloomy look in his eyes.

Meanwhile, Amelia sighed as she read Carter's message. Had they still been in university, she would have accepted his love without a doubt. After all, Carter was such an outstanding man who radiated charm wherever he went. He was like a Prince Charming to many women.

Unfortunately, all sorts of things had come between them, and Amelia could no longer return to her days of pure love. That was why she could only apologize to Carter now.

The two were destined to be friends, but never lovers.

Amelia deleted the text message before leaning into her seat at the back.

"Are you okay, Miss?" asked the driver. "You don't look too well."

Amelia opened her eyes. "I'm fine, Sir. I'm just a little tired," she replied cheerlessly.

"It's normal for pregnant women to feel tired easily. Judging from the size of your tummy, I'm guessing you're on your fifth or sixth month. Be careful not to bump into anything. What is your husband doing anyway, letting you take a cab on your own like this?" the cab driver remarked in disapproval.

“He’s busy with work. Well, it’s not like he can keep me company all day. If he did, I’d start worrying about how the child and I will get by.”

“You have a point there,” the driver responded with a hearty laugh. “But judging from your clothes and behavior, you must have married a wealthy man.”

Amelia merely smiled. “Well, he earns enough to fill our tummies.”

“That can’t be. I’ve had many passengers, but not many of them are as stunning and classy as you are. Only someone who comes from a prominent background would look the way you do.”

Amelia could only beam in response.

Still, the driver didn’t mind her silence. He continued to chatter away as he pleased, and Amelia began to lighten up.

“We’re here, Miss,” said the driver as they arrived at the Clinton residence.

Amelia took out a hundred and gave it to the driver. “Keep the change, Sir.”

The man took the money and responded, “No matter what happens, Miss, I hope you live every single day in happiness.”

Amelia flashed him an earnest smile. “Thank you, Sir. I hope you stay safe and happy too.”

After alighting the vehicle, Amelia walked straight into the Clinton residence, and Olivia immediately stood up in astonishment upon seeing her. “Why aren’t you at the hospital anymore, Amelia? I was thinking of cooking you a meal and dropping by! Seriously... You just can’t stop making me worry about you. You should’ve talked to me before getting yourself discharged.”

Amelia held onto Olivia's hands. "Don't worry, Mom. The doctor allowed me to leave only after making sure I was fine."

Olivia gave her daughter-in-law's hand a light pat before telling the kitchen to prepare some food. Then, she led Amelia to the couch.

"You don't look too good, Amelia. Do you still feel sick?" she asked with concern.

"I'm fine, Mom," Amelia replied with a smile. "Maybe it's because I felt a little carsick on the way here."

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"My dear child, you should have given me a call in advance," said Olivia with disapproval, "So that I could send a driver to pick you up. Wasn't Oscar keeping you company in the hospital? Where is he? Or did he leave after I left yesterday?" As she said this, displeasure shadowed over her face.

Amelia shook her head and quickly explained, "Mom, please don't misunderstand. Oscar was with me the whole night. He left for the office because his secretary called to inform him that he had to be present for a project. Besides, I feel fine; I can just come back on my own."

With that, Olivia's tense expression eased a little. "I see, then that's great. Amelia, if Oscar mistreats you, you must let me know. I will give him an earful."

Amelia's eyes watered, and she couldn't help but hug Olivia. With a slight sob in her voice, she said, "Thank you, Mom. Thank you for still believing in me with all your heart, even after the whole ordeal with the photos. Thank you for your love and care throughout all these years. No matter what happens to Oscar and me, you will always be my mom."

Olivia gave Amelia a light pat on her back and comforted her. “Silly child, why are you so sentimental all of a sudden?” she asked. “You have been my daughter-in-law for almost five years. I know very well what kind of a person you are. Sometimes pictures lie; I will only believe in what you say. So, do you have any romantic relations with the Scott heir?”

Amelia shook her head and said, “Mom, I have only ever wanted to be a good daughter for the Clinton family.” She went on to explain,

“Carter and I are merely friends who have known each other for many years. In fact, we have known each other since our university days. I don’t really know how to explain the context of these photos, but Mom, we are just ordinary friends.”

Just as Amelia finished, a mocking voice joined in their conversation. “Oh, so the adulteress is back? What she just said was so touching... I could cry.”

Amelia did not even need to raise her head to know who it was.

As Stephanie walked down from upstairs, Olivia watched her with slight annoyance and said, “Steph, stop spouting nonsense.”

Stephanie sat on the opposite sofa and rolled her eyes at Amelia. “Mom, did you think that I was just making things up?” she asked. “This woman has been having an affair with her boss, and she still had the audacity to fool you! I have never seen someone as shameless as she is! You’re the only one who thinks she’s precious. Have you seen any of our other family members being fond of her? At the very least, I find her absolutely disgusting.”

Amelia’s face fell.

Olivia’s frown deepened. “Steph, if you say one more word that is untrue, it’d be better if you’d just leave home,” she said with a stern expression.

Stephanie looked at her mom grudgingly and said, “Mom, just what do you like about her? You’d protect her to the extent of chastising your own daughter? I sometimes suspect that I am not your daughter, but she is instead.”

“Steph.”

An upset Stephanie continued, “Mom, am I wrong? Before she came to our house, I had been the apple of your eye, and you pampered me like a princess. But after she’d arrived, you changed completely! Did you keep count of how many times you have scolded me to defend her? I feel like she’s your daughter, and I’m an outsider who doesn’t belong to this family.”

“Steph, I know you don’t like me, but you shouldn’t doubt your mom’s love for you,” replied Amelia, feeling a little angry. “Her love for you is in no way inferior to any other mother. You’re making her sad with the way you’re talking to her.”

“As long as you are not a member of this family, we will be peaceful and harmonious like how we used to be,” Stephanie retorted condescendingly. “If you even have an ounce of dignity, leave this house and stop being an eyesore. After having photos like those taken... If I were you, I’d be ashamed to continue staying in this house.”

Amelia’s expression faltered even more.

She knew that Stephanie disliked her, but she had clearly underestimated the extent of that dislike.

Olivia was really angered this time. As soon as she got angry, her chest would hurt. She put a hand over her chest to keep herself steady. Amelia nervously held on to her and asked, “Mom, are you alright?”

Olivia was still holding onto her chest in pain, and Amelia tried to soothe her. “Mom, relax,” she said, “Don’t get agitated. Steph, hurry and get mom her medicine.”

Stephanie hurried upstairs in a fluster to get the medicine and scuttled back down. She quickly handed the medicine to her mother with a glass of warm water. “Mom, take your medicine first. I was wrong earlier. Please don’t get angry,” said Stephanie.

After taking her medicine, Olivia started to feel better.

“Mom, it was my fault. Please don’t be angry,” murmured Stephanie apologetically.

Olivia looked slightly better after the medication. “Steph, you are my daughter. How could I not love you?” she said helplessly. “I treat Amelia like she’s my daughter exactly because Amelia is your brother’s wife. I hope that the both of you can live together peacefully, then only our family can continue to prosper.” She went on and said, “Our family is a wealthy one, but we do not behave extravagantly like other rich families. Even though you have been pampered since you were young, you could still behave politely towards outsiders. Why couldn’t you extend that same courtesy that you show to other people to Amelia?”

Stephanie looked at Amelia briefly, contemplated for a moment, and mumbled, “Mom, I did not wish to anger you on purpose. It’s just that she’s not good enough for Oscar. An exceptional man like Oscar should have a wife who is equally outstanding in terms of lineage, academic qualifications, and ability.”

“Then tell me, what kind of woman would be good enough for your brother?”

“Mom, aren’t you asking the obvious? For me, the one who is the best for Oscar is Cassie. Her family background and looks are both top-notch.”

“Have you forgotten that she was the one who betrayed your brother? Can you guarantee that she won’t do it again?”

Stephanie was at a loss for words.

Although she could not guarantee anything, she was more than willing to have Cassie as her sister-in-law instead. They had been childhood friends, and they had a lot of common topics that they could discuss. Amelia was different. Hence, she despised Amelia from the bottom of her heart. That was why she would never approve of Amelia as her sister-in-law.

“Steph, you are a grown-up now. Very soon, you will get married and have a family of your own. You should have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong,” advised Olivia. “Amelia has treated you well ever since she joined our family. Every festive season, she would either buy you cosmetics that you liked or limited edition car models. Did you not feel her sincerity at all?”

Stephanie was silent.

Amelia gave a forced smile and said, “Mom, let’s not pressure Steph anymore. I did not do a good job. In the future, I will do my best to be a good daughter-in-law to the Clinton family. I believe one day Stephanie will accept me.”

Stephanie scoffed coldly, but she did not say anything further.

Owen came out from his study and proceeded down the stairs. Noticing Amelia, who was seated beside his wife, a complicated look flashed across his eyes. He then put on a calm expression and walked over to them.

“You’re here, Amelia,” he said monotonously.

Amelia stood up and greeted him. “Dad, I have not seen you for a few days. How are you?”

“I’m quite well. I heard from your mom that you were hospitalized yesterday. Do you feel better now?” asked Owen offhandedly.

“I am sorry to have made the both of you worry. I am fine now,” replied Amelia courteously.

Olivia glanced at her husband and said, “Quit looking at Amelia so sternly; you’ll scare her. If anything happens to my grandchild in her belly, I’ll hold you accountable for it.”

Owen just laughed softly.

The atmosphere somehow became heavy and silent.

Amelia hesitated for a while, then slowly said, “Dad, Mom, about the photographs, I am extremely sorry. However, I can explain it. Carter and I are just friends. I would not go behind Oscar’s back.”

“You really have no shame at all, Amelia,” Stephanie jeered.

Amelia’s eyes flickered, and she said, “Steph, I know you don’t like me, but I have nothing to hide. As I said, Carter and I are just friends.”

Stephanie mockingly retorted, “I heard that Mr. Carter treats you really well. He secured you a position in the design department through the back door, and he took great care of you in every aspect. Even the employees remarked that how he treated you has exceeded the boundaries of mere acquaintances.”

Amelia’s fist gradually tightened, but she relaxed her grip swiftly.

“Stephanie, have you been investigating me?” she asked faintly.

“Since you’ve already done such a deplorable deed, why can’t I investigate you?” asked Stephanie as if it was a matter of fact.

Olivia glared at Stephanie and said, “Steph, stop this nonsense.”

Stephanie pursed her lips, but being afraid that she would upset her mom again, she chose to refrain from speaking too harshly. “Mom, I am just stating the facts.”

Olivia just looked at her plainly.

Stephanie quieted down at last.

Finally, Owen spoke, “Amelia, follow me to my study for a moment. I have something to say to you.”

Amelia’s heart clenched. Olivia immediately looked to her husband and pleaded, “Amelia just got out of the hospital. Whatever you need to say to her can wait a few more days.”

Owen just gave a good-mannered smile and said, “Olivia, don’t be so sensitive. I just wanted to have a word with Amelia. Are you afraid that I’d harm her?”

Olivia was not convinced and clearly still worried. However, Amelia reassured her with a smile. “Mom, don’t worry. I think Dad just wanted to remind me about some things.”

“Darling,” said Olivia, “Amelia is pregnant. Be careful with your words, and do not scare her. If anything happens to her, I will not forgive you.”

Owen just smiled pleasantly in response.

Amelia followed him into his study.

He gestured at the chair in front of his desk and said, “Please sit.”

“Thank you,” Amelia politely responded.

After she had sat down, Mr. Clinton went straight to the point and said, “Amelia, the reason for my asking you to come up here is none other than the photographs. I am displeased at seeing these photos, and I did consider asking Oscar to divorce you previously. However, seeing as you are pregnant now, I suppose I shouldn’t be so cruel.”

Hearing that, Amelia’s mood went on a rollercoaster ride. She looked as if she was swallowing a bitter pill.

Owen didn't talk much usually, but he was definitely the most shrewd person. To be able to manage a big business like Clinton Corporations, he was definitely not softhearted. He would not beat around the bush when conveying something.

Amelia lowered her head and said, "Dad, I'm really sorry for the photographs, but I can explain it."

Owen casually waved his hand and continued, "Amelia, my purpose of asking you to come here, was to have you agree to the divorce from Oscar. This is the compensation that you will get after the divorce."

Poor Amelia's face paled considerably in an instant. Eyeing the manila envelope on the desk, she asked with trembling lips, "Dad, what do you mean?"

"Amelia, do not misunderstand. You are a good girl, but you are not cut out for our family," said Owen steadily. "You have married into our family for almost five years, and you did your best to be a good daughter-in-law. To be fair, you are better than all the other women who had married into wealthy families. However, ultimately, you lack the background and the academic credentials. Therefore... here are the company's dividends and five percent of my private properties. It will be enough for you to live out the rest of your life without worry. As for the child," he paused and continued, "You will hand over the child to us after giving birth."

With her lips still trembling, Amelia asked, "Dad, can you give me a reason for this?"

"I just feel that Oscar needs a woman who can help him in his career," said Owen.

Amelia laughed bitterly.

"Dad, if Oscar needs someone like that, I can become a woman just like that. I have been a part of this family for almost five years. I thought that

even if you didn't like me, in your heart, you would have already accepted me as your daughter-in-law."

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"You are a good girl and have been filial to Olivia and me. However, your family background is not satisfactory. Thus, I cannot accept you as my daughter-in-law wholeheartedly. If you know what is good for you, then take these and sign the divorce papers after you give birth. That would be the best arrangement possible for both Oscar and yourself. Cassie is definitely a more suitable candidate to marry Oscar. I know Olivia has her reservations about Cassie, but I'm sure she will grow to like her," Owen told Amelia.

His words pierced Amelia's heart. She thought the love and concern she showed the Clintons in the past five years would have at least earned her their acceptance, if not affection. She was wrong. Owen Clinton was a cold-hearted patriarch.

Amelia put on a smile to mask her emotional turmoil. "I get your point, Dad. However, this marriage is between Oscar and me. The decision to divorce lies with Oscar, not you, Dad. If he initiates the divorce, I will oblige. I am afraid it will not be appropriate for me to accept your offer. Oscar would be upset if I took anything valuable from you," reasoned Amelia.

Owen glanced at her and said, "Amelia, you are a smart lady. I think you should know which option will be more advantageous to you."

Amelia nodded, and with all sincerity, promised, "Dad, I know. I assure you, I will sign the papers and let go without a fuss if Oscar wants a divorce. I only have one request."

"Shoot," Owen commanded.

“I will not ask for any financial support or alimony upon divorce. I have only one wish.”

Owen was surprised. He scrutinized Amelia and finally said, “Tell me.”

“Dad, if Oscar and I divorced, I want the custody of my child. That is the only thing I ask for.”

“No.” Owen rejected the demand instantly.

“Dad, after our divorce, Oscar will marry Cassie, and she will bless you with a grandchild next year. On the other hand, all I have is only this child. It is not too much to ask for, is it?” Amelia appealed.

“No way! All Clintons stay within the family.” Owen again dismissed the idea outright.

“But Dad, don’t you think a newborn needs his mother by his side?” Amelia patiently persuaded.

“Is that emotional blackmail?”

“No, Dad. I am just stating the facts. It is tragic for such a young baby to part with his mother, don’t you agree?”

Owen fell into deep thoughts.

“I know you don’t like me, Dad. For the well-being of this Clinton baby, could you please give me his custody?” Amelia tried to appeal to his emotions.

Owen reflected on her arguments and relented. “You discuss this matter with Oscar. If he agrees, I will not object.”

“Thank you, Dad, for being so understanding.” Amelia thanked him with a deep bow.

“Now, let’s join the rest. Olivia will start wondering if she could not find us.” With that, Owen ended their discussion.

Amelia nodded, and together, they made their way out of the study. Oscar was already in the hall when they appeared.

Amelia went up to Oscar and asked, “Done with your work?”

Oscar responded with a nod and guided her to sit next to him. “Everything ok?” he whispered.

Amelia only shook her head but did not elaborate.

Olivia eyeballed Owen and asked in a hushed tone, “You did not make things difficult for Amelia, did you?”

“You dote on her. Why would I make things difficult for someone you adore?” Owen humored Olivia.

Olivia let out a relieved giggle.

Amelia and Oscar stayed on with the Clintons and left after lunch.

Once Amelia got into the car, she slumped into the passenger seat. Oscar took a look at her and asked with concern, “Tired?”

Amelia shook her head.

“Then why this indifference? Am I that unappealing?” Oscar asked in jest as he drove.

Amelia opened her eyes and quietly watched the cars go by. “Mr. Clinton, do you know why Dad called me into the study?” She finally spoke.

“What did you talk about?” Oscar turned towards her for an answer.

“He wanted me to agree to the divorce. He said I am not good enough for you,” Amelia told him truthfully. “Sometimes I really wonder — am I so inferior? So bad that everyone is rooting for me to leave.”

Oscar scowled. “Don’t let that bother you. I have told you before that only I can declare the game over for our marriage. Other people’s words don’t matter.”

“Mr. Clinton, you always said you will not divorce me for now. But actually, deep in your heart, you can’t wait to do that, right? After all, the love of your life is waiting for you. Compared to your sweetheart, I am nothing,” Amelia muttered wistfully.

Oscar tightened his grip on the steering wheel. He heard the despondence in her voice and felt for her. “Why the gloomy outlook? That is so not you, Amelia Winters.”

Amelia turned around and looked fixedly at Oscar. “Do you know the real me?”

Oscar could not honestly look her in the eye and profess he knew her well.

“In your heart, I am but a materialistic woman who will trade in her body and soul for money, right? You would not be bothered to relate to a shallow woman like me.” Amelia went on self-deprecating.

Oscar found her self-condemnation jarring. “Stop belittling yourself,” he commanded.

Amelia laughed out loud. “Mr. Clinton, those words were from you! I was only parroting what you said!”

Oscar got frustrated and hit the steering wheel. “What is wrong with you? What is with this provocative attitude?”

“Nothing is wrong. Just venting. Everyone pressured me to get a divorce, yet no one cared enough to ask me for my opinion. I will shut up if that got on your nerves.” Amelia was beaten.

Oscar found a safe spot and stopped his car. He leaned over to Amelia and inquired, “Upset?”

Amelia felt his breath in her ear, his warmth engulfing her whole body. She instinctively shunned him. She cannot let her mind wander. She needs to be rational.

Upset? Of course! Unfortunately, all these are nothing compared to the sadness and disappointment I felt. Friendship and family ties had always been my top priorities. Since I decided to marry Oscar, I considered the Clintons family. I’ve tried my best to fit into the clan and had grown to love them. Despite Stephanie’s hostility, I gave my best effort, hoping my sincerity will win them over. Oh, how wrong I had been...

Other than Olivia, who truly adored her, everyone else kept her out of their heart.

I always pretended like I did not mind Oscar’s affairs with other women. Even when Cassie showed up, pregnant with Oscar’s baby, I feigned I was ok with it. What else must I do? What else can I do? Oscar’s heart has never been with me.

Amelia leaned backward to avoid Oscar’s passionate and inquisitive gaze. “To you, I was never family, right?” she lamented gloomily.

“You are my wife,” Oscar pronounced as he leaned closer to her.

Wife? He calls me his wife, but his actions speak louder. At the most, I can be considered a plaything. I’m just something that he could cuddle up to when he felt like it and sweep aside when he’s not in the mood.

Amelia badly wanted to take his word for it, but his attitude over the past few years clearly told her otherwise.

Amelia was in turmoil. She knew Oscar would not bother to lie, but his conduct made it difficult for her to believe he really considered her as his wife.

It was ironic that, on the one hand, Amelia wished he could humor her, but on the other hand, she would rather he tell the truth than be hurt by his lies.

“I did not expect you, Mr. Clinton, to humor me.”

Oscar looked her straight in the eye and challenged, “We have been married for so many years. Can you not tell if I am speaking the truth?”

Amelia’s heart skipped a beat, and her mind went wild.

What is he trying to say? He really considered me his wife? Can I believe him? But...

The next moment, she slumped back into dejection. So what if he saw her as his wife? What difference would that make? The fact remained that he could terminate their relationship anytime.

“Alright, I believe you,” Amelia mouthed, but deep in her heart, she could not see a future between them.

“Your expression tells me otherwise.” Oscar watched her closely, not showing any intention of backing off.

“Can you really read my mind?” Amelia averted her eyes to avoid his intense gaze.

“You are my woman. Do you think I can’t tell what’s on your mind?”

“I am but one of your women.”

Oscar riveted his eyes on her and demanded, “Turn around and look me in the eye.”

Amelia hesitated. Finally, she slowly turned around, and their eyes met.

Oscar was enthralled by her beautiful but sorrowful eyes. He can see the love and confusion in them.

“Yes, Mr. Clinton?”

Oscar snapped out of his daze and faked a cough to hide his self-consciousness.

He lightly tapped her on her head and declared, “So long as we have not finalized our divorce, you are my woman. So stop messing your own mind.”

Oscar was amused by Amelia’s look of astonishment. “Is it so difficult for you to believe that I truly see you as my wife?” he laughed.

“But you are the one who kept highlighting I am just a plaything to you!” Amelia defended.

Oscar playfully flicked her nose and teased, “You are my plaything cum wife.”

“Why?” Amelia was confused. Oscar Clinton, why do you string me along, blowing hot and cold? Why do you give me false hope that we may have a future together?

“Huh? What’s that why suppose to mean?” Oscar asked.

Amelia shook her head and confessed, “I am surprised you look on me as your wife... Would you be able to promise you will be mine and mine only forever?”

“Amelia, don’t you think that is an unreasonable request?”

Amelia felt a sense of loss. Oscar could not bear to see her feeling despondent. He gave her a good-natured pat on the head and tried to

cheer her up. “Amelia Winters, you are a fighter! Ditch those gloomy thoughts!”

“Even a strong fighter will fall someday.” Amelia pushed his hand away, crestfallen.

That, tugged at Oscar’s heartstrings.

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Oscar swiftly locked his arms around Amelia and domineeringly pulled her in. Amelia was initially a little thrown off but soon fell for his amazing kissing skills.

They were both a little breathless after that exhilarating moment together. Amelia’s hazy eyes were only filled with Oscar.

Oscar leaned closer. “If you’re gonna belittle me this way, I’ll make sure you won’t be able to leave without anything happening,” he whispered into her ears.

Amelia could only feel a warm wave of breath, accompanied by an itching sensation.

She gave him a serious stare and pushed herself back. She wondered why he had to talk that way. It was an utter disgrace to use beauty traps to bewilder women.

Such a sly guy. He must be the reincarnation of a cheeky sly fox.

Was there a need to create such a tensed atmosphere?

“Could you please sit still, Mr. Clinton?”

Oscar glanced at her dearly and said, “You don’t like it? The way I just treated you?”

Amelia's cheeks became slightly blushed with embarrassment. She tried to remain composed and glared at him. "I'd bet it'll be better if you get going, Mr. Clinton. You can't stop a car in the middle of the roads," she said.

Oscar then replied, "You don't trust that I'd be serious in taking you as my wife? I'm actually also pretty interested in every single inch of your body. Do you want me to prove it to you right now on the car?"

Amelia knew Oscar meant every word he said. Looking at the cars and crowd passing by, she was worried he'd put his words to action.

"There are eyes all around, Mr. Clinton."

"I don't mind."

Amelia frowned upon hearing what Oscar just said. She gave him a stern glare and said, "Could you please not make such jokes, Mr. Clinton?"

"I don't ever make jokes."

Amelia pushed herself away, trying to distance herself from Oscar.

"Hey, am I a monster to you? I'll make sure to protect you from others even if I were to do anything. Did you really think I'll be willing to let them see?" Oscar assured.

Amelia was taken aback.

"Mr. Clinton, you really have such a glib tongue. Have you gotten so used to saying it to Ms. Yard that you now do it on reflex?"

"If I tell you I've never done that to Cassie before, would you believe me?"

Amelia was extremely surprised. She looked at Oscar in disbelief.

"You don't believe that?" Oscar laughed.

Amelia shook her head in all honesty.

“You...” Oscar was a little dumbfounded. “When Cassie and I got together, I’d spent most of my time on work. I almost had no time for her. And she was traveling a lot since she loved it back then. We had only gone for short walks when we both had time for each other, yet there were barely any sweet talks. I had only said them to you.”

Amelia’s cheeks got flushing red. She quickly turned to look out the windows.

“You still don’t believe what I’d just said?” Oscar asked while staring at her.

“Sure, I’d believe you... Mr. Clinton.”

Oscar let out a weak laugh. “I’m gonna kiss you if you don’t look at me.”

Amelia immediately turned around but hit hard on Oscar’s lips. Her eyes widened in shock.

He moved back slightly, gently caressed Amelia’s lips, and called, “Honey.”

Oscar was definitely sincere about it. He had never addressed Amelia as “Honey”, but now that he did, he realized it was not that bad after all.

Turns out having a loved one was such a good feeling.

And looking at the stupefied reaction Amelia had, he was even more contented. She looked really adorable in his eyes.

On further thoughts, he felt even more proud he had such a cute yet sexy woman as his wife.

Compared to Cassie, he realized it was more comfortable to be with Amelia.

As expected, Amelia was capable of making him feel more comfortable.

He held onto Amelia's neck gently, pushed his body, and leaned forward. He gently said, "I'll call you Honey from now on, yes?"

Amelia knew that her ears were burning red even without looking.

She knew clearly how that would affect her.

She had longed to be called "Honey". She waited for almost five years, and she had finally heard it today.

"Why are you crying?" Oscar asked while gently wiping the tears that rolled down her cheeks.

Only then, Amelia realized she was crying. She tried avoiding Oscar's attention and mumbled, "I'm not crying. It was just sand that got in my eyes."

"Sand got into your eye?"

Oscar looked at her and suddenly let out a fit of laughter so strong that he almost hunched all over.

Amelia watched in shock. Oscar always appeared reserved and mature. She had never expected that he would ever laugh so heartily.

His laughter, was it because of her?

After some time, Oscar finally managed to calm himself down. He solemnly asked, "You're crying because I called you Honey?"

Amelia appeared somewhat aggrieved but muttered in honesty, "Yeah, you've never called me Honey so sincerely before."

This silly woman!

Oscar then flirtatiously stroked the tip of her nose and said, “And you’re so easily satisfied?”

“Yes, it’s just that you’ve never tried to understand me.”

Oscar suddenly felt a pang of guilt and apologized sincerely, “I’m sorry.”

Amelia was, once again, shocked.

She had never expected Oscar to apologize, and what’s more, a sincere one.

He was a man who could be as cold as ice sometimes, yet also as warm as the sun at other times. His warmth was so impressionable that it’d left Amelia falling deeply for him and indulged herself within.

Amelia was touched. She leaned closer and left a gentle peck on Oscar’s lips. As their lips touched, she felt his soft delicate lips and the warmth of his skin. It left her craving for more.

Reciprocating her actions, Oscar pushed her down and embraced her tightly. He then pushed his tongue past her clenched teeth, gracefully gliding around hers. It was such a hot and steamy kiss scene.

Such a simple peck could lead to an intense and passionate moment, so intense they almost got to the next stage of thrill. It was no wonder they were actually very familiar with each other’s bodies.

Oscar rested his forehead gently on Amelia’s. They were both slightly out of breath.

With Oscar so close to herself, Amelia felt like she could hear his heart thumping in excitement.

Oscar looked affectionately at her face and let out a slight smile, “Your scent is truly amazing. I think it’d be quite an experience to do it in a car. Shall we?”

Amelia’s cheeks got blushing red once again. She shyly shoved him aside and replied, “Hurry, get moving, Mr. Clinton. I don’t know what you’re gonna do if the traffic police hand you a ticket later.”

“Even if I’m handed a hundred tickets, it’d still be worth it. Cause I’m having such an amazing time right now.” Oscar replied suggestively.

Now, Amelia’s cheeks grew even redder than before. She shoved him away and said, “Let’s go, Mr. Clinton.”

She figured that things might go out of hand if they stayed any longer. She knew she wouldn’t be able to restrain herself from pouncing on Oscar and embraced him.

It wasn’t only men who would get a sudden spike in sexual desires. Women could experience it too when faced with men they love. It was especially so if they’re in a suggestive atmosphere and situation.

Oscar did not listen to her request. What’s more, he leaned himself even closer and placed his arms around Amelia.

Just then, Amelia suddenly let out a deep breath. Oscar got a scare and hurriedly asked, “What’s wrong?”

Amelia looked at him innocently and exclaimed, “The little one in my belly’s moving. Do you want to come closer? Your child must’ve been missing you.”

Oscar’s gazes wavered a little, then bent down closer to Amelia’s belly. And he really heard the sounds of the fetus moving!

Oscar was relatively excited at what he just encountered. He had never had such experiences, and at that particular instance, he finally felt that

sense of responsibility. It was an extremely magical moment — a little sweet, a little exciting, but a little anxious too.

His woman, his child. That was what constituted to be called a family.

Amelia gently caressed Oscar's head and said, "Did you hear the fetal movements?"

Oscar nodded, though his feelings had not yet settled.

"This must be our kid's way of talking to you, Oscar. He's saying, 'Daddy I miss you. I want to be born sooner to meet Mommy and you. You'd love me, right, Daddy?'" Amelia mimicked the way a child would've spoken.

At that point, Oscar was feeling extremely contented. He placed his hands gently on Amelia's face and said in a serious tone, "Of course I'll love our child dearly, Honey."

Hearing that, Amelia got all teary-eyed. It was the first time Oscar gave his promise to her.

"Why are you crying again?" Oscar asked.

Amelia shook her head and replied, "Nothing, I'm just feeling happy. Thank you for being able to love our child. I hope you meant it truly, regardless if we're together or not."

Oscar replied in a deep tone, "You silly head!"

Amelia merely smiled in response.

She was indeed silly. Else, she wouldn't have poured her whole heart out. She would not have allowed her feelings to take over her sanity and let herself fall deeper into the relationship.

Amelia continued, "Let's head back, Mr. Clinton. The traffic police are really gonna be here anytime soon."

Oscar let out a smile, and finally drove the car off.

While Oscar and Amelia were having such a sweet time, Carter was doing pretty badly on the other side. He had been keeping a straight face all day long, and the workers were practically living in fear of becoming his punch bag.

The design department had also been gossiping around because of that.

“Hey guys, do you think Amelia’s resignation was the reason why Mr. Scott has been so angry?” a female staff asked.

The others only gave her an angry stare, trying to tell her that she was talking nonsense.

Jessica then added, “Our design department has become quieter without Amelia’s presence. Now that she left, we’re missing an eye candy. I bet our male colleagues would’ve definitely felt that too.”

This statement was a true reflection of all the male staff’s feelings.

“I’d say Ms. Larson was to blame! This place used to be so peaceful originally, now that she chased Amelia off and resigned too, we got so much more on our hands. Obviously, Mr. Scott could only vent his anger on us.”

“I agree, I agree.”

“Y’all have nothing to do, huh?” A sharp male voice suddenly exclaimed, giving the whole design department a huge shock.

To everyone’s horror, they saw Carter standing right at the door. They hurriedly stood into rows, not daring to make a single noise at all. It was almost as if they held onto their breath.

Everyone greeted him in a low voice.

“Since you guys are so free, the whole team shall do extra hours today. You’re all not allowed to leave before midnight.” Carter announced with a stern face.

Now, the whole design department has been reprimanded.

Ignoring their pleas and dreary cries, Carter turned and left.

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Jessica collapsed onto her seat, exclaiming, “It’s all Ms. Larson’s fault! If she hadn’t joined the company, we wouldn’t have met with this misfortune.”

The other employees in the design department had already submitted themselves to their fates.

Once Carter left the office, he immediately got into his car and drove off to a certain neighborhood. It was the one in which Tiffany stayed.

Carter parked his car. He sat inside, but the road was quiet outside. It was hard to tell if he was waiting for someone or if he had merely driven here by coincidence on a joyride.

Carter remained in this position for nearly half the night. When he finally caught sight of a woman walking towards the entrance, Carter immediately leaped into action. He got out of the car and dashed straight towards her.

The woman was none other than Tiffany, carrying a rubbish bag and dressed casually in a t-shirt and flip-flops. She waved to the security guard on duty as she walked past him. However, she had only taken a few steps when she encountered the sight of Carter racing towards her. Tiffany stopped short in her tracks.

She froze for a moment. Then she quickly recovered her wits and strode off hastily in the other direction.

Carter quickened his pace and caught up with her. Fearing that she'd slip off, he grabbed hold of her arm.

“Wait, Tiffany! I have something to ask you,” Carter had long since abandoned every thought of preserving his cool image in his great urgency.

This exchange had roused the security guard's suspicions. He ran out from his post and eyed Carter with distaste, saying, “Ms. Winters, do you need my assistance?”

Carter broke in. “She's my friend.”

Tiffany glared at Carter. However, she was unwilling to escalate the matter further. Tiffany thus replied the security guard, saying, “I'm fine, Mr. Langston. He's my friend.”

The security guard fixed his gaze on Carter as he said, “That's fine, Ms. Winters. Just give me a yell anytime you need my help.”

Tiffany nodded.

After the security guard had returned to his post, Tiffany said scornfully, “Mr. Scott, you're indeed a jinx. Even the security guard thinks that you're a bad seed.”

Carter looked thunderous.

“Tiffany, I didn't come here to be insulted. I came to explain the matter regarding Amelia.” Carter decided to get directly to the point.

“Carter, can't you get it through your head that Amelia's already married? Is there any use for you clinging onto her like this? If you still hadn't managed to succeed all those years ago, what makes you think

you'd have a better chance now?" Tiffany tried to wrench her arm from his grip, but Carter held fast. "Carter, what on earth are you trying to do? I live here. What will my neighbors think when they see you clinging onto me like this?"

Tiffany decidedly did not want to be associated with Carter. He was handsome and eligible, and much like Oscar, turned heads wherever he went. It was impossible for anyone not to notice him. Tiffany was terrified that her neighbors would mistake him for her boyfriend or one of her suitors.

"You have two choices. Either you get into my car of your own accord, or I carry you into it. Either way, you're getting on. Take your pick," Carter said firmly.

Tiffany glowered at him.

She couldn't fathom what Carter wanted of her exactly. It couldn't be out of any genuine desire to rekindle their old friendship, to be sure.

"Carter, you can say whatever you came to say right here. I don't want to get into any trouble because of you. You're a brilliant man, but you're also very much a jinx. Nothing good will come out of meeting you." It was impossible for Tiffany's perception of Carter to get any worse than it already was.

"Let's go somewhere quiet. There's something I want to tell you," Carter cajoled.

"Come with me then." Tiffany finally relented.

The two of them arrived at a quiet spot tucked away in a corner. Tiffany stood with her arms akimbo and said impatiently, "Get to the point, Carter. My time is precious, and I don't want to waste it here with you."

Carter glanced at her. "Tell me, Tiffany, was Amelia's debt paid by Oscar four years ago?"

Tiffany scoffed. “Carter, do you think it’s necessary to ask all this now? The Scotts were responsible for Amelia’s debt of a million four years ago. Where were you then? Amelia called you countless times trying to borrow money to pay her debt, but you turned off your phone and vanished into thin air all at once. If Oscar hadn’t intervened, Amelia would still be in jail right now. Oscar may not have been the best for Amelia, but he’s a real gentleman compared to you. At least he didn’t abandon her when she was at her lowest.”

Carter felt immeasurably guilty. It was a dark chapter in his past that he’d fervently hoped would never see the light of day.

Carter had truly loved Amelia. He had left Amelia behind with good reason, but the fact remained that he had deserted her in her time of need.

“I’m sorry,” Carter mumbled in a low voice.

“Carter, let’s not bring up the past. Let me remind you once again that Amelia is doing well now. If you truly care for her, don’t look for her anymore. The photos with you caused a misunderstanding between Amelia and Oscar. Amelia was so upset that she fainted dead away in my arms. The doctor said that if she experienced another one of such shocks, she might really have a miscarriage. No one knows more than me how important this child is to her. Something unfortunate happens to Amelia whenever she runs into you. So if you really love her, please don’t meet her again.”

Carter clenched his fists, looking visibly perturbed.

“I love Amelia. I’ll make it up to her in the future for all the hurt I’ve caused her. But you can’t expect me not to meet her again,” Carter said adamantly.

Tiffany merely snorted, then said, “I’ve nothing else to say to you then. Bye.”

Carter held her back. He hesitated, then asked, “How has Amelia been all this while?”

“She has a husband and now a child of her own. How do you think she’s doing? She’s living her best life. Women don’t need much; a man’s love is more than enough for us. Amelia has all she wants. I beg you, Mr. Scott, to go on and pursue whatever happiness you desire. Just don’t disrupt Amelia’s life,” Tiffany said.

Carter’s heart ached. However, he said brusquely, “Oscar is keeping another woman on the side. How can you say that Amelia is happy? Don’t you claim to be Amelia’s best friend?”

Tiffany retorted, “So what? As long as Oscar hasn’t asked to divorce her, Amelia is still part of the Clintons.”

“How can you say that?” Carter asked.

“What would you have me say, then?”

Four years ago, Amelia had entered into a contractual marriage with Oscar. She’d signed a series of rather unfair agreements, stating that even if Oscar cheated on her and had another child outside of wedlock, Amelia remained powerless to say no. She could only accept things as they were.

“Tell me honestly, Tiffany. Is Oscar and Amelia’s marriage held together by some sort of contract?” Carter suddenly inquired.

Tiffany was startled. How did he figure that out?

“What sort of contract?” She asked crossly, trying to hide her panic.

“I refuse to believe that you don’t know about it,” Carter continued.

“According to what I’ve found out, Oscar only considered Amelia after Cassie ran off. Based on the Clintons’ power and position, along with Oscar’s initial lack of interest in Amelia, it’s evident that the two of

them must have signed an agreement of sorts. As her closest friend, you'd definitely know something about it."

"Even if I knew something and told you about it, would you be able to change anything?" Tiffany challenged Carter.

Carter looked up. There was a tinge of melancholy in his voice as he said, "I only wanted to know if she was happy. I couldn't help disappearing all those years ago. Now that I have the ability to protect her, I want to..."

"Forget it. Even if Amelia were to divorce Oscar, she wouldn't choose to go with you either," Tiffany interrupted him shortly.

"Why not?"

"When Amelia liked you previously, you didn't return her affections. Now, she's married to someone else and is pregnant with his child. That door shut four years ago. Don't even think about it."

Carter stood as if struck by lightning.

What did she just say? Did Amelia like me previously? Is that true?

"Did you say that Amelia liked me?" Carter stammered with some difficulty.

Tiffany looked at him curiously. "Is it that much of a surprise to you?"

"Did Amelia really like me before?" Carter repeated.

Tiffany nodded. "Amelia liked you since you were in university. Or I should say had a crush on you, rather. I thought an intelligent guy like you would be able to tell when a woman liked you."

Carter's head spun. He remained rooted on the spot. A casual observer would not have been able to tell just how great an effect this news had on him.

Tiffany waved a hand in front of his face. “Hey, jinx, are you OK?”

Carter seized Tiffany’s hand and looked at her with a piercing gaze. “Does Amelia really like me?”

“NO!” Tiffany shot back immediately, exasperated. “I only said she liked you before, but certainly not now. You’re just a figure from her past now.”

Carter naturally interpreted this to mean that Amelia still loved him.

He was suddenly filled with endless longing and an insurmountable hope that Amelia would one day be his.

Carter continued gripping Tiffany’s arm, asking doggedly, “Tiffany, does Amelia still care about me?”

Tiffany looked at him disbelievingly. “Carter, can’t you understand what I’m saying? Amelia’s very happy now. Let me repeat. You are nothing more than a figure from her past, OK?”

“No, Amelia must still have feelings for me,” Carter asserted.

Tiffany felt utterly defeated in the face of this extreme stubbornness.

“Carter, I’ll repeat myself. You’re a bygone memory to Amelia. If you want to know the reason for that, why don’t you ask your own parents what they did to Amelia? Once you find out, I guarantee you won’t be able to even look Amelia in the face for shame.”

Carter was stupefied. What does Tiffany mean? What do my parents have to do with this?

Seeing her opportunity, Tiffany instantly shook herself free from Carter’s grip. She grabbed the rubbish bag she had been carrying and fled.

Unable to wrap his head around what she meant, Carter walked slowly back to his car and sat inside.

Having escaped from Carter's clutches, Tiffany threw away her rubbish bag in the bin and immediately took her phone out to text Amelia.

Babe, Carter just came looking for me. I accidentally let slip that you used to like him. Based on his stubborn personality, I'm afraid that he'll think you still have feelings for him now. Be careful.

She had barely sent out the text when a call came in from Amelia.

Tiffany picked up immediately. "Babe."

"Carter came to look for you?" Amelia instantly asked.

"Yes, it was pretty shocking that he did. He asked about what happened in the past and about whether you were happy being married to Oscar. I think he still hasn't given up on pursuing you. You've got to be careful," Tiffany warned.

"I'm only friends with him, nothing else," Amelia said on the other end of the line. "Don't worry about me, Tiff. I'll manage my relationship with him."

"As long as you know your limits. Now that you're pregnant, your health is of utmost importance. Don't get disturbed by these trivial matters," Tiffany chided.

"Got it. Go on back and rest. I'll hang up then."

After the call ended, Amelia fiddled with her phone distractedly.

Just then, she heard the sound of Oscar's voice. "Who are you calling?" he asked as he emerged from the bathroom, still rubbing his wet hair with a towel.

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“Tiff.” As Amelia was about to put away her phone, Oscar took it from her and opened her call logs. Indeed, the most recent one was a call from Tiffany.

He then opened her text messages. The first one on the list was from Tiffany. His expression darkened, and he gave Amelia a complicated look. “You’re still in contact with Carter?”

Amelia replied, “We can’t be lovers, but Carter and I are still friends. I’d be lying if I said I wouldn’t contact him anymore.”

A mix of emotions flashed across Oscar’s face. He ordered, “Block him. You’re not allowed to see him anymore.”

Amelia asked, “Mr. Clinton, aren’t you being a bit too controlling?”

“You’re my woman. You’re not allowed to contact any other man except me.”

“Why are you so unconfident in yourself?”

Oscar stared at her.

Amelia shook her head and laughed. She walked over and wrapped her arms around his neck, then said, “You’re outstanding and handsome. I should be the unconfident one. As long as you still want me, I’ll never leave you.”

Oscar took her by the waist and pulled Amelia in until their bodies were in full contact with each other.

He looked into her eyes calmly. “Always remember, you’re mine. You’re not allowed to contact other men without my permission. Otherwise, I’ll punish you.”

“Oh... Mr. Clinton, don't tell me you're jealous? If you admit that you are, I won't glance at any other men ever again.”

“Amelia... Sometimes you make me love and hate you all at once.”

Amelia remained silent.

Mr. Clinton, are you praising or insulting me?

“Do you mean to say that you actually love me too?”

Oscar was taken aback by this question. Do I love Amelia? He still had no answers to that question. He was confused about his feelings for her.

“I've been a good wife for five years. Don't you have any feelings for me at all?”

Oscar pinched her nose and said adoringly, “You're thinking of nonsense again, aren't you? All you need to do now is rest up and give birth to the child safely.”

Amelia's heart sank a little.

Oscar did not want to accept that he had fallen for Amelia. Perhaps the care and concern he was showing her were simply because of the child in her belly.

Although he had said that he did not want the child, it was the Clinton family's first grandchild, after all.

Oscar, are you only treating me kindly because of this child?

“If I said my only wish was to hear you tell me ‘I love you,’ would you do it?”

Oscar patted her on the head and said, “They say that pregnant women tend to overthink a lot. It looks like this mind of yours indeed thinks about too much nonsense.”

Although Amelia kept a smile on her face, the happiness in her gaze slowly disappeared.

When Oscar noticed the change in her eyes, he caressed her cheek and asked, “Are you angry?”

Amelia smiled, but it did not reach her eyes. “You provide me with such a comfortable life and treat me so gently now. How dare I get angry at you? That would be too ungrateful of me.”

Oscar tapped her on the nose and spoke in a low voice. “You can’t stop pouting. You still dare say you aren’t upset?”

Amelia slapped his hand away and replied, “I’m not as easily angered as you think.”

Oscar pulled her into a hug and whispered something in her ear. Amelia’s eyes widened and started to redden. She said with a slightly hoarse voice, “Mr. Clinton, you’ve finally said those three words.”

“Silly girl!” Oscar patted her on the head and smiled. “Stop overthinking, okay? Go to bed. You’re pregnant and should get more rest.”

“Do you have any idea what you resemble right now?” Amelia teased.

“What?”

“You’re just like an old grandma, nagging non-stop. But you’re more affable like this, and it’s cute. I love this side of you.”

Oscar did not notice that he was looking at Amelia affectionately.

While the couple was experiencing a romantic moment, Carter had driven back to the Scott residence.

Faye had always greeted him enthusiastically when he arrived home. However, this time she simply snorted and said coldly, “Wow, I can’t

believe you're finally back. I thought you'd already forgotten about this family."

Carter was still bothered by Tiffany's words, but greeted his mother patiently, "Hi, Mom."

"Don't call me Mom. I'm not worthy of being called that. You clearly don't see me as your mother anymore."

Carter knew that she was angry about the issue with Jennifer.

"Mom, you'll always be someone I respect," Carter said seriously as he took a seat on the sofa.

Faye snorted coldly.

"If you still regarded me as your mother, you'd never have treated Jennifer like that," she said angrily, "I heard that it's all because of Amelia again. You'd better realize that she's merely an obstacle between you and Jennifer. I should have made her go to jail four years ago."

Carter's expression darkened. "What do you mean?"

Faye realized that she had misspoken. However, things had long passed, so she was not afraid of speaking about it now. Carter wouldn't disown his mother just for a woman anyway.

"I only withdrew the lawsuit because I felt sorry for her. Otherwise, she'd have gone to jail long ago."

Carter glowered as he clenched his fist. He asked, "Don't you think you've gone too far?"

Faye replied, "How's that too far? That woman neither comes from good family background nor is she well-educated. She's not worthy of you. She wanted to marry into money, so I did everything that I could to ruin her. However, she was lucky to catch Oscar immediately after you left.

I'm telling you, she was definitely cheating on you. That's why she could turn to Oscar so quickly. Only a fool like you would believe that she's innocent. Do you have any idea what people are saying about her? They're all saying she's a gold digger that's willing to do anything for money. I really have no idea what you see in her."

"Mom!" Carter exclaimed in anger, "I didn't expect you to be so mean. I can't believe you're saying such things about someone you barely even know. I've been so wrong about you. I always thought that my Mom was a kind, gentle person. I didn't think... Honestly, I'm really disappointed in you."

Faye looked at Carter incredulously. "Are you seriously criticizing your own mother because of that woman?"

"I'd definitely show respect if you were right. But what you said clearly didn't reflect your social status and upbringing. You sounded completely unreasonable. I'm really disappointed in you."

Faye was both angered and upset. She pointed at Carter and said, "You unfilial brat. I've raised you for almost thirty years, but you're now going against me for that woman? Why are you still so obsessed with her after five years? You just want to piss me off, don't you? I'm probably just someone you can't wait to get rid of."

Carter replied, "Mom, I don't mean it that way. I'm just disappointed in your behavior today."

Faye breathed heavily and panted as she said, "You're all grown up now, aren't you? You even dare criticize your elders now. One day I'll die from anger because of you."

"I'm not purposely trying to attack you, but don't you think that you've gone too far?"

She took a deep breath. "Amelia's already a thing of the past. She's married into another rich family now. Even if you still have feelings for

her, she doesn't belong to you anymore. Just get rid of your feelings for her and treat Jennifer well instead."

Carter replied calmly, "I don't like Jennifer. Even if she were some goddess, I wouldn't feel anything for her."

Her anger rose. "Do you seriously want to anger me to death?"

Carter remained silent.

Faye then acted as if she were wronged. "I've worked so hard to let you grow up well. Is this how you repay me? I didn't say anything when you were obsessed with that b*tch back then because you were young and naïve. But you're still acting so impulsively now and even came to question me just because of her. You're really upsetting me."

Carter sat quietly on the sofa, refusing to speak.

"Are you really opposing me just because of her?"

"I just want an answer for what happened back then," Carter said with some difficulty.

"What answer? There's only one answer for what happened back then. Amelia is a promiscuous gold digger. She's not worthy of you at all."

Carter stood up abruptly and stared at his mother condescendingly. "I don't want to fight with you anymore. Since you're not going to give me an explanation, I'll just leave."

"Stop right there!"

Carter paused in his footsteps. "Is there anything else you need?"

"Stay here tonight. Tomorrow we'll pay a visit to the Larsons. Jennifer was upset you treated her that way yesterday, and both her parents are furious. Go and apologize to her tomorrow."

“I won’t go.”

“Carter Scott!” Faye yelled.

“What’s going on?” said a husky voice from upstairs, “I can hear you guys arguing from up here.”

She took a deep breath before moving to help Abel Scott down the stairs. “Dad, why did you come downstairs?”

“I’m worried that the two of you would wreck the house. How can I just stay upstairs?” Abel glanced at her.

She smiled in embarrassment.

Abel sat down and pointed to the sofa. “Carter, sit down.”

Carter stubbornly remained standing.

“Must your granddad personally go over and invite you to sit down?”

Carter had no choice but to obey.

“So, what are the two of you arguing about this time?”

Carter remained silent as Faye complained, “It’s all because of Amelia. He started to question me about her the moment he came home.”

Not her again.

Abel had not heard her name in a long time. Now that he heard it again, was their family going to be in chaos once more because of this woman?

“Didn’t she marry someone?” Abel asked, “I remember it was the Clintons’ eldest son. People even talked about her marrying into money back then.”

Carter’s face was set in a grim expression.

“Carter, did you fight with your Mom because of her?”

Carter clenched his fist and said in a low voice, “Granddad, I didn’t fight with her. I just wanted an answer. She’s the one who overreacted.”

Abel looked at him and replied, “It’s already been so long. Is it really that important whether or not you get an answer now?”

How is it not important?

If you guys hadn’t broken us up back then, Amelia and I would still be together. We would be the perfect couple with our own children and living happily together. I wouldn’t be the single, lonely man that I am right now, that has to watch her be someone else’s wife and carry his child. Mom, Granddad, have you ever thought about how painful it is to see the woman I love marry another man?

“Granddad, I’ve only ever loved Amelia. She’s the only woman I’ll accept as part of my life. I’ll never marry anyone else.”

“You b*stard!”

Abel scoffed. “You’re my favorite grandchild. Since young, I’ve always spent the most energy on you and pampered you the most. You’re smart and doing well at work, but you’re now acting as if you’ll die for this woman. Is this how I raised you?”

Carter stood his ground and replied, “Granddad, she’s my source of strength. I’ve worked so hard all these years just to be able to protect her as best as I can. But because of you guys, I couldn’t be by her side when she needed me the most. Do you know how guilty I feel?”

Abel took a deep breath.

“So what? You can’t be hung up over relationships if you want to be successful. You’ll have to inherit Scott Group one day. I won’t let anyone become an obstacle to you. I indeed forced Amelia away from

you back then, but so what? Are you going to disown your own grandfather?"

Carter's eyes were reddened. He felt betrayed by his own family.

