

Moving On from a Cheater Chapter 21

Stanley preferred the old Iris – the Iris who loved him, obeyed him, and prioritized him above all else.

Iris scoffed. “Then what kind of tone should I use?”

Stanley stood up and approached her slowly, step by step. Iris retreated cautiously until her back was against the wall. She tried to escape to the side, but he blocked her with outstretched arms. “This room is so small. Where can you run to?”

Trapped, Iris faced him defiantly. “Why are you saying these things to me, Stanley? Don’t tell me you still like me? Even if you do, I’m sorry, I’ll never like you or love you again...”

Best gifts for your loved ones

Stanley grabbed her chin. “When did your tongue become so sharp, Iris?”

Iris forcefully pulled his hand away, losing control as she screamed, “Don’t touch me!”

Stanley was taken aback, not expecting such a strong reaction.

“Bleurgh...”

Iris rushed into the bathroom, leaning over the sink to throw up.

Ever since she heard that Stanley had slept with Wendy, she had developed a physical repulsion to him. His touch made her feel extremely disgusted!

Something cracked in Stanley’s heart. Did she despise him this much?

He pursed his lips and, after a long pause, said, “I only agreed to the divorce on impulse; it’s not a decision I made after careful consideration, so it doesn’t count.” With that, he left with large strides.

Iris bit her lip and looked at herself in the mirror. Clenching her fists, she chased after him. “Even if you bribe my mother, I’ll never reconcile with you! Not even if I die!”

His steps faltered, his body swaying slightly. He then continued walking away.

Iris sank to the ground, hugging her knees and burying her face in her legs. Her shoulders sagged as she cried for a long time, feeling the weight of her emotions. This was the first time she had cried so miserably since the divorce.

Eventually, she calmed down a little. She lifted her head and looked around at the dim room that was filled with a stifling atmosphere.

Sniffing and wiping away her tears, she composed herself and stood, supporting herself on the edge of the bed.

She packed her things and dragged her luggage downstairs to check out.

After placing her suitcase in the trunk, she headed to her newly rented apartment. The apartment was fully furnished, so she could move in right away.

In the apartment, she hung up her clothes and neatly arranged her daily necessities. She then cleaned the whole house and changed the bed sheets.

The fridge was empty, so she decided to go to the supermarket for groceries.

The supermarket was only a short walk away.

Four years of experience as a housewife had made her adept at picking the best fruits, vegetables, and meats. She purchased milk, fruits, meats, and vegetables, then slowly walked back home with the groceries.

As she entered the gate, she spotted Jason ahead of her.

“Mr. Just?” she called out.

He turned around, and his gaze focused on her eyes. “Did you cry?”

Ah!

How embarrassing!

Iris tried to change the subject. “Uh, I went grocery shopping.”

Jason remained silent, simply staring at her.

Iris’ attempt to change the subject seemed to have failed.

Running her fingers through her hair, she stammered, “I, uh... sand got in my eyes.”

He replied, “Actually, it would have been more believable if you had said you were stung by a bee.”

Iris didn’t know what to say.

Alrighty.

Iris changed the subject again, “Do you live here too, Mr. Just?”

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“Yeah,” Jason replied lightly, his gaze lingering on her face before asking, “Which building do you live in?”

Iris pointed to the highrise on her right. “Unit 2 in Building 1, a single apartment.”

“I live across from you,” he said.

Iris glanced at the opposite building, recalling that her landlord had mentioned it during her rental process.

The opposite building wasn’t an apartment building.

“Well, I’ll see you tomorrow,” she said, eager to escape. She felt embarrassed getting caught crying at her age.

“Okay,” Jason replied.

She quickly walked into the building.

As he watched her running away from him, a smile appeared on his face.

Iris opted to skip the elevator, climbing the stairs to the sixth floor instead. Panting, she opened the door and set her things on the table.

After pouring herself a glass of water and drinking it, she reflected on her earlier awkwardness. Why should she feel embarrassed? Everyone has moments of weakness; she’s human, not a god. It’s perfectly understandable to cry once in a while.

Taking a deep breath, she steadied herself and began to unpack her groceries. After that, she cooked herself pasta for dinner.

She had been staying at a small hotel in the Cloud District for the past few days. She hadn’t slept well as she couldn’t stop thinking about the case. Therefore, after showering, she went to bed early.

Although the apartment’s rent was high, it was indeed in a nice area. The quiet environment allowed her to quickly fall into a deep sleep.

For the first time since her divorce, she slept soundly through the night.

The next morning, she prepared a simple sandwich and warmed a cup of milk. After breakfast, she walked to work since the law firm was nearby.

She seemed to run into Jason a lot—perhaps it's because they lived in the same community.

As she exited the building, she saw him heading to work as well.

“Good morning, Mr. Just,” she greeted.

He turned to her. Iris smiled brightly, as if she was trying to show him that she was fine and that her tears yesterday were just an accident.

“Good morning,” he replied.

Since they were headed to the same place, they naturally walked together, with Iris trailing a few steps behind.

Today, he wore a dark blue British-style suit that accentuated his long legs and slim waist.

Iris moved to the side a little so that she wouldn't be looking at him as she walked.

At the law firm, Iris handed Jason the fee earned for the case. It was only a small civil case, so the fee was quite low—only three thousand.

Jason didn't even glance at it. “The finance department would find it a hassle to account for such a small amount. Just keep it.”

Iris was speechless.

It's not much, but it's still money.

Well, she's not embezzling funds. Her boss told her to do it. Besides, she was the one who had won the case, so she did not feel bad accepting it.

Jason then handed her a Spanish document and asked her to translate it into English. Their law firm had a high foreign language proficiency requirement because they had a lot of foreign dealings. Iris had a high Spanish proficiency.

At noon, the team usually ate at the restaurant downstairs. However, today, Iris received a call from Cassie, asking her to have lunch together.

She was reluctant, but she knew that ignoring her mother would only make the situation worse, so she agreed to meet.

Cassie was waiting for her at a restaurant. As Iris entered, Cassie remained quiet until she sat down.” Your favorite beef stew—I specifically asked for extra beef for you,” she said as she gestured for Iris to dig in.

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Iris picked up her cutlery and looked at her mother. "You should eat too, Mom."

Had her mother finally seen the light? Iris wondered. Her mother's attitude was surprisingly good.

Iris quietly let out a sigh of relief.

She continued, "Don't you worry, Mom. I'll work hard to support you and Dad from now on. I can't promise that I'll definitely be rich, but we definitely won't have to worry about surviving..."

"Eat first, Iris," Cassie replied with a smile.

Iris nodded and ate her stew. After finishing their meal, the two women exited the restaurant.

Suddenly, Cassie grabbed Iris' hand, tears streaming down her face.

Iris was taken aback. Just moments ago, everything seemed fine. "Mom, what's wrong?"

"Iris, please, go apologize to Stanley. Do it for me."

Cassie had gone to see Stanley earlier today to apologize on her daughter's behalf, but her son-in-law, who had always treated her politely, refused to see her.

She was driven away by security.

She tripped on the stairs at the entrance. She felt utterly humiliated.

In the past, whenever she went to see Stanley, everybody at the law firm treated her with respect.

The treatment was as different as night and day.

She couldn't deal with the sudden change.

Iris looked taken aback. "Mom..."

"Do you want me to get on my knees to beg you?" Cassie asked. She started to lower herself towards the ground.

Iris quickly pulled her up, her eyes stinging with tears. She felt helpless and sad.

She knew that her mother had had a hard life, constantly being bullied by her grandmother for not having a son.

However, she would rather die than apologize to Stanley.

She did not explain herself or try to persuade Cassie. She knew she couldn't change her mother's mind. Cassie dragged her toward the building where Stanley worked.

She called him, but he wouldn't answer. "See?! He would never have treated me like this before," she said, her anxiety mounting.

Iris observed her mother's panic with a cold detachment.

Cassie tried repeatedly, but each time she called, there was no response. After bombarding Stanley with over a dozen calls, Cassie's hands began to shake, and she dropped her phone.

Stanley and his mother, Renee, walked out of the building while Cassie was picking up her phone from the ground. Stanley had his hands in his pockets, and Renee was complaining beside him, "You were in the hospital for days, yet Iris didn't show up even once. What is she up to? Why did you lie to me to cover for her? Is she off fooling around?..."

Before Renee could finish, she spotted Iris at the door and sneered. "Oh, you're still alive? I thought you're dead! How could you not take care of your husband when he's in the hospital? Do you want to be kicked out?"

At the sound of her voice, Cassie looked up and immediately rushed toward Stanley, grabbing his arm. Stanley, Iris isn't really mad at you; she's just..."

"Mrs. Glover, your daughter and I are already divorced," Stanley interrupted, pushing Cassie's hand away while looking at Iris coldly the whole time.

Cassie's face went pale.

Renee was surprised at first, but that soon turned to delight. "Really? You've divorced the good-for-nothing girl?"

Stanley replied coldly, "Yes, we're divorced." His eyes remained locked on Iris.

Their gazes met, and a whirlwind of emotions passed between them.

They spent seven years together, but in this instant, their relationship felt so trivial, almost worthless.

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Renee laughed and looked at Cassie disdainfully. "Did you hear that? Your daughter and my son are divorced, so stop bothering my son."

Cassie's eyes wavered. She told Stanley, "I apologize on Iris' behalf."

Stanley let out a cold chuckle. "Even if you kneel and beg, it won't change anything. Your daughter said she would rather die than come back to me."

There was bitterness in his tone.

He admitted that Iris' words had wounded him.

He had his pride too.

He was too proud to humble himself to ask to get back together after what Iris had said.

Besides, he thought to himself, she was not the only woman in the world. There were many women who were more beautiful than she was.

"Get over here and apologize to Stanley at once!" Cassie yelled at Iris.

Iris felt a bitter taste in her throat. She grabbed her mother's arm. "Let's go, Mom."

"Now that you're divorced, stop showing up in front of my son, you hear me? I never approved of this mismatched marriage in the first place. I'm glad you're divorced," Renee continued, as mean as always. Cassie glared at her, indignant. "What's wrong with my daughter? She's beautiful and educated. Has she not taken good care of Stanley?"

Renee mocked, "Oh, she's beautiful, alright. Why else would my son like her? Because she's poor and has working-class parents?"

"Why, you!" Cassie's face flushed with anger, but Iris stepped in, her voice firm. "There's nothing wrong with being working-class. We earn an honest living, without stealing or robbing. We're far more noble than the scumbags who look down on us."

Iris' mother often made her feel emotionally exhausted; however, she could not tolerate others speaking ill of her parents.

Renee's face turned an alarming shade, alternating between fury and disbelief. "You! How dare you speak to me like that?!"

Stanley's expression hardened. "Iris, that was uncalled for."

Since they had fallen out, Iris didn't care anymore. She had had to suffer Renee's attitude for years.

“Let me make this clear, Renee Stein. I’m perfectly healthy. It’s not me who can’t have children. It’s your son who doesn’t want to. You constantly accuse me of sowing discord between him and you, but the truth is, he’s the one who doesn’t want to live with you! He wants to be free and doesn’t want to be restricted. So don’t pin everything on me. Yes, we’re divorced, but the fault lies with him. He’s the one who had an affair. I’m walking away with my head held high, guilt-free.”

With that, she pulled her mother away. This time, Cassie did not argue with her.

Renee, unwilling to let it go, said loudly, “It’s your fault you’re unable to keep your own man in check! It just shows your incompetence. Just so you know, the Just family’s daughter wants to marry my son. Now that you’re divorced, he can marry someone from a prestigious family tomorrow if he wants to!”

Family vacation packages

Stanley, clearly annoyed, asked, “Why are you bringing this up again?”

“Stanley, when you insisted on marrying Iris, I went along with it. Now that you’re divorced, it proves that she’s not the right one for you. This time, you must listen to me,” Renee insisted.

Stanley stared at Iris’ determined figure walking away. He said, “Alright, do as you wish.”

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He turned around and walked back into the building.

Renee smiled. “Okay, I’ll make the arrangements.”

Fiora Just was still unmarried. Perhaps she was still waiting for Stanley.

Cassie did not dare to say a word. She followed Iris silently.

Iris just kept walking without a clear direction.

“Iris,” Cassie cautiously tugged at her daughter’s sleeve.

“What?!” Iris snapped, startling her mother.

Today, Cassie had realized the truth: her daughter had not had an easy life in the Stein family. She didn’t know Iris had had to endure so much hardship.

Iris was her only child. Of course her heart would ache for her daughter.

"Maybe we're just destined to be poor. Whatever. So be it. I won't complain anymore, so cheer up," Cassie said.

Iris suddenly stopped and turned to face her mother.

Feeling guilty, Cassie added, "It's all my fault. I was blinded by greed..."

"Mom." Iris hugged her mother tightly as tears streamed down her face.

She couldn't hold it in any longer.

"You've had it hard," Cassie said softly, patting her back. "It's okay, it's okay. Don't feel pressured; your father and I can still work. We can support ourselves..."

"Mom." Iris wiped her tears. "You and Dad don't have to work anymore. I have enough money to take care of you for the rest of your lives. I just want you guys to be happy and healthy."

Cassie nodded know."

"And please be nicer to Dad. Stop saying that he's useless. Grandma encouraged Dad to divorce you for years because you only gave birth to a daughter, but he never listened to her. Some people laugh at him because he has no son, but he has never looked down on you or despised me because of it. He truly loves our family. Your harsh words can be very hurtful."

Cassie hung her head. "... I understand."

Iris knew that her mother had not had it easy either. In her days, society favored sons over daughters. She had had to deal with a lot of pressure too.

Iris gently touched Cassie's face. "Trust your daughter, okay? We'll be alright."

Cassie nodded.

"I'll take you home," Iris offered.

Cassie shook her head. "It's fine, I can just take the bus." She smiled at her daughter, though her eyes were red. "You should go back to work. I know this area well; I won't get lost."

Iris glanced at the time and realized she was about to be late. "Alright. I'll see you next time."

Cassie nodded. "Go."

Iris hurried off, anxious not to be late. Cassie watched her go, calling out, "Slow down, don't trip!"

Iris turned back with a smile. Her mother used to say that to her all the time when she was little.

She rushed back to the law firm, relieved to find she wasn't late,

She arrived just as Jason was leaving the office. He noticed her red eyes.

"Got sand in your eyes again?" he raised his eyebrows, teasing.

This time, Iris simply nodded without shying away.

"You need to learn how to handle pressure better, or you'll never become a top lawyer." Though he was reprimanding her, his tone wasn't harsh. It was even quite gentle.

"I will work hard to become stronger," Iris replied earnestly.

"Are you confident?" he asked.

Iris nodded firmly. "I am."

Jason smiled briefly, but that smile quickly faded from his face.