

A Farewell 151

Chapter 151

Sage didn't expect Donald to buy a gift for Ian as well. But apart from that, he intended to give it to him under her name. The old man had certainly thought it through.

Since Donald had set things up, Sage had no choice but to play along in Ian's presence. She took the box from Susan and handed it to Ian. "Here."

"What is it?" Ian asked calmly.

She responded equally calmly, "You'll know once you check it out."

Alright now, you can have a couple's talk later. For now, take a seat and have something," Susan said to them.

The staff at the revolving restaurant were busy helping customers grill the seafood they ordered.

Sage took the nearest seat, and Ian sat beside her. Susan, a lover of heavy foods, ordered a mountain of seafood and had the chefs grill them for the party. Not only that, she requested for them to add more spices and garlic seasoning.

"Aunt Susan, Ian doesn't take spicy foods," Sage blurted out, her mind still on the gift from Donald. She noticed a faint smile on Ian's lips but pretended not to

see it.

Since Ian was a picky eater, she had put in the effort to memorize the list of foods he wouldn't take. When Susan mentioned the spices, Sage reacted instinctively.

“Sage, you should order the food since you know Ian’s preferences the best!” Susan handed her the tablet used for ordering.

Sage refused to take it. “It’s fine, Aunt Susan. Just decide for us. There’s a lot of food going around anyway. He can find something else to eat if he can’t take the spices. He won’t starve tonight.”

Susan did not insist. She ordered some expensive seasonal foods for dinner. Meanwhile, Owen started discussing business with Ian. The two chatted merrily as the table slowly filled with food.

Just as Sage was thinking about Layla and wondering how to bring up the topic, she heard a crisp voice pierce the air.

“Dad! Mom!” Sage turned around and saw Layla, who was dressed fashionably, skipping over to them.

Susan explained, “Layla told me she was nearby and hadn’t had dinner, so I invited her to join us.”

Layla jogged over, a huge smile appearing on her face when she noticed Ian. “Ian, you’re here as well!”

Ian grunted in reply but said nothing else. Sage joked. “Do you not notice me at all?”

Layla glanced at Sage and reluctantly greeted her. “Hey, Sage.” Then, she took a

seat beside Ian.

He immediately protested, albeit calmly, “I’m not used to having someone sitting

to my right.”

Layla was in the midst of sitting down but froze upon hearing his comment. Sage fought the urge to laugh at his nonsensical excuse. He should have told Layla outright that he didn’t want her sitting beside him!

He gave Sage a side-eye when he sensed that she was holding back laughter. She simply responded with a glare.

Layla was already embarrassed by Ian's remark, and she grew more irritated when she noticed the quiet exchange between Ian and Sage.

She said, "Sage, I heard you're getting a divorce from Ian, no? Why are you sitting beside him then? Why don't you give your seat to others?"

Sage chuckled. "Shall I give my seat to you?"

Noticing Ian's lackluster response, Layla puffed her chest and challenged Sage. "It's just a seat. Don't tell me you're going to fuss over it."

Owen and Susan kept silent. Sage wondered if they were silently showing their support for Layla, or if they too wanted Layla to just shut up and sit down.

She scoffed. She didn't even care for the title of Mrs. Holcomb. Naturally, she wouldn't bat an eye at giving up her seat. She grabbed her phone and rose from her seat, but was met with Ian's scrutiny.

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"Where are you going?" Ian demanded.

Sage chuckled and explained, "I'm giving up my seat to Layla. Didn't you hear her earlier?"

He commanded, "Sit down." His eyes flashed with a subtle annoyance. It seemed that he wasn't interested in Layla at all.

However, Sage wasn't going to shield him. She was about to leave her seat when Susan intervened, "Layla, what are you doing? You're an adult. It's time to stop clinging to Sage and Ian. Come have a seat beside me. I ordered your favorite

seafood."

Susan and Owen had silently observed the interaction among the three. They picked up on Ian's frustration and did not want to risk humiliating Layla. Susan then added, "Who said Ian and Sage are getting a divorce? They're doing well."

"Ian, just ignore Layla's nonsense. She has liked squabbling with Sage from a young age," Owen chimed in with a smile.

Ian said nothing in response. When he noticed Sage standing, he reached out to pull her back into her seat.

Since it wasn't the right time and place to have a fallout with him, she reluctantly returned to her seat. Besides, she had other plans for that night.

After eating, Layla still wasn't over the confrontation. She turned to Sage and said, "You mentioned some earrings on the second-hand website. You must have listed them right?"

Sage looked like a wealthy woman, and she drove luxury cars and carried bags worth millions. She used a black card when making purchases. It didn't make

sense for her to be selling off her jewelry.

Layla hoped that Ian would start to detest Sage if he learned about her shameful

actions.

To Layla's surprise, Sage didn't look embarrassed by her statement at all. She

even nodded openly. Sneering, she replied, “Yes, that was me. You’re not dumb after all I guess. At least you noticed it.”

When Sage took the screenshot, she deliberately included part of the listing information in the photo. It wouldn’t take Layla long to figure out that the seller

was Sage.

That way, Layla would learn that Henry was merely fronting. Perhaps that would turn Layla off, just when she had developed some interest in him.

Despite the setback, Layla persisted in giving Sage trouble, “How much did you spend? Do you have less than ten thousand under your name? Is that why you need to sell off your jewelry?”

Sage smiled, eager to correct her. “You’re wrong. I’m just frugal. That’s why I sold off the earrings that were supposed to be in the trashcan.”

“In the trashcan?” Layla instantly felt as though her ears were filled with grime. She hurriedly rubbed the imaginary filth off her ears. To think that she had smugly shown them off yesterday!

Had Sage not mentioned the listing on the second-hand website, Layla would have already posted photos of them on Instagram. The earrings turned out to be Sage’s trash!

Something felt off. Layla thought that Sage was deliberately trying to make her feel sick. She questioned, “How would the earrings end up in the trashcan?”

“I threw them out,” Sage confessed honestly. “I consider what’s not mine as trash. But I changed my mind later, thinking that I could probably get some use out of them. I’m surprised that you regard my trash as your treasure.”

Sage’s words only fueled Layla’s rage. She had tried to irk Sage, but it ended up backfiring on her.

She fumed and hissed, “Why would you throw away such an expensive pair of earrings for no good reason? I know Ian is rich, but you shouldn’t have done that!

Layla started stirring trouble again.

“The earrings were hers. She could do anything she wanted with it,” Ian casually defended Sage. “I won’t stop her.”

Layla blushed in embarrassment as she did not expect Ian to speak up for Sage.

Meanwhile, Sage cast an astonished glance at Ian. Ian clearly knew which earrings Layla was referring to. Sage wondered why Ian was defending her when he should have been angry.

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“Layla, what’s going on this time? Why have you started rambling again? Sit up and eat your dinner like a lady,” Owen intervened angrily.

“Right, Layla. Don’t kick up a fuss. If you’re interested in the earrings, I’ll just get them for you. Why would you buy a second-hand item? It’s not like we can’t

afford new ones,” Susan remarked.

Layla couldn’t find Henry’s detestable action to her parents, so she brushed it off. “It’s nothing.”

Sage then said, “Aunt Susan, I sold off the earrings because I thought they were ugly. Layla thought they were unique though, so she bought them for her research and study. She didn’t know that I was the seller.”

Susan seemed convinced by Sage's account and even looked proud of Layla. She said, "Layla might not be the best in academics, but she's talented in design. I'm proud that she's willing to invest her time in it!"

"I agree," Sage replied. "Aunt Susan, why don't you consider sending Layla to the famous art and design schools in Padova City for two years since she's interested in design?"

"She's a young lady. I don't want her to be alone in a foreign land. There's no one to take care of her if something happens." Susan turned down the idea without

hesitation.

"Layla is an adult. She's capable of taking care of herself. Besides, she can always fly home if she's homesick. Traveling is pretty convenient nowadays. If you and Uncle Owen miss her, you can always visit her abroad," Sage suggested.

She tried to appeal to Susan. "Layla will not only learn some real skills abroad but she'll be regarded highly as a graduate when she comes home."

"Well, everyone is already holding her in high regard because she's a Joyner!"

"Mom, I like the schools in Padova City. They offer two-year programs. How about sending me there for two years?" Layla tried to persuade her mom.

However, Susan was a tough nut to crack. She was adamant about the difficulties of studying abroad and was worried.

Ian casually offered, "I have some friends in Padova City. Aunt Susan, I can introduce Layla to them if need be."

Layla's eyes lit up upon hearing that. She had always wanted to study abroad, but Susan had always been staunchly against the idea. She never expected Sage and Ian to plead with Susan on her behalf.

So, she took Susan's hand and begged, "Mom, Ian's friends must be trustworthy. Why don't you give it some thought?"

Susan didn't want to go against Ian in public, so she smiled and replied vaguely, Sure, I'll get your help if I need it."

Layla's eyes were filled with disappointment because she knew Susan had made up her mind, but simply didn't want to tell Ian no.

Sage noticed Layla's disappointment. It appeared that Layla was eager to go abroad, but she could not get Susan's approval. Sage decided to stop persuading Susan, lest she raise Susan's suspicion.

The revolving restaurant served delicious seafood dishes. Sage ate and ate until she nearly burst. In contrast, Layla, who had been eager and cheery, looked like she had lost her appetite. She simply played with her food.

When Sage was nearly done with dinner, she made a trip to the restroom. When she exited her cubicle, she ran into Layla, who was touching up her makeup in

front of the mirror.

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Layla confronted her when she noticed Sage in the toilet. "What cooking up? Why did you try to convince my mom into sending me abroad?"

Layla had always suspected that Sage had ill intentions. From a young age, she had been brainwashed by Susan into thinking that Sage would fight her over everything. She even believed that Dinlad disliked her because of Sage.

After a while, she started harboring resentment toward Sage. Moreover, she hated Sage for outshining her in everything. All she wanted was to one-up Sage

for once.

Sage laughed at Layla's accusation. "Why do I need to plot against you when Grandpa is so fond of me? Besides, your presence doesn't even matter even if I were plotting something. It's not like you

know anything about business or hold any influence in Maven Corporation." e

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"You!" Layla's face flushed with anger. "I heard from Henry that you reached out to him in private. Are you interested in him or something?"

Henry had simply mentioned it casually. But even if he hadn't, Layla had seen their chat history with her own eyes.

In retrospect, Layla realized that things were a little fishy when Sage readily agreed to Henry's invitation in the parking lot despite holding a grudge against Layla. Sage had even offered to foot the bill.

Sage was also present at the sports complex Henry routinely attended. The increasing amount of coincidences made Layla suspicious.

"Won't you listen to yourself?" Sage jeered. "Use your brain for once. Don't listen blindly to what others say. What would I gain from talking to him in private?"

Then, Sage handed her phone to Layla and urged her, "Take a good look at my chat history with Henry."

Layla's eyes multiple times. Although he acted courteously, anyone with some experience in dating would know that he was deliberating chatting her up. His reason for doing so was obvious—Sage was wealthier and more gullible than Layla.

swept past the pen and noticed that Henry had initiated contact

Still, Layla couldn't get over Sage's haughty tone. She snapped, "Well, Ian doesn't like you that much either. You're the one who pursued him, and you even threatened him with a divorce. It's not far-fetched to suspect you of flirting with

another man just to make him jealous."

Sage laughed at the absurdity of the idea. "Even if I wanted to date someone else, I would find a man richer than Ian. Can Henry even match up to Ian?"

As if that was

enough, Sage added, "One more thing: if you believe in yourself, you can go after Ian in the hopes of marrying him. Why don't you confess to

Uncle Owen and Aunt Susan that you want to marry Ian? Get them to support my divorce."

Layla was undoubtedly interested in Ian, but only out of pure adulation. Ian, a good-looking rich man, was the Mr. McDreamy of the Haldon City socialites.

Layla was happy enough to be around him, but she had never thought of replacing Sage as Mrs. Holcomb. After all, nobody could endure Ian's aloof treatment. She would need an unusual amount of courage and persistence to convince Ian to marry her.

Layla knew her limits. She put away her makeup bag and prepared to leave. As she did so, she hissed, "You'd better not smear my name. I'll never go after a man you've dumped!"

"Layla Joyner, you should fight for what you want. If Aunt Susan won't support you, you can always try to convince Uncle Owen and Grandpa. If you have their support, you stand a greater chance of success," Sage analyzed mindlessly while staring at her reflection in the mirror.

Hearing that, Layla halted in her tracks. After a moment, she continued out of the restroom. Right after she left the restroom, she ran into Ian.

“Ian-” She thought of chatting with him like before, but she realized that Ian might have overheard her conversation with Sage. So, she immediately ran away

out of embarrassment.

Sage, who was still in the restroom, heard Layla calling out to Ian. She emerged from the restroom and found Ian by the entrance, as she expected.

She wondered if he was waiting for her or just passing by. She couldn’t read his emotions, so she inquired, “Are you here for me? For what?”

“Did the money in your card yesterday come from selling the earrings?” he questioned calmly.

So he was curious about that incident after all. She thought that he couldn’t care less about it. She was curious about how he felt after he unknowingly used the money from the sale of his gift.

She deliberately beamed at him. “Yeah. Isn’t that a surprise?”

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Sage’s grin didn’t anger Ian in the slightest. It had been a while since she smiled so brightly at him. Usually, she only gave him cold smirks and an occasional gleeful laugh when she pranked him.

Sage’s smile might have been fake, but it stirred something in him. Her smile, once common, had become rarer lately. He struggled to get used to its absence.

“Don’t worry. Your card might still be with me, but it’s technically still yours,” she added in the face of his silence.

“Sage, don’t be childish,” he said with a snort. “Didn’t I say that you have the freedom to do anything with the gift I gave you? I’m only here to tell you this before I leave: Terry has taken care of the incident last night. It will not happen again.”

With that, Ian left in great strides, leaving her frozen in shock. Ian’s behavior was unusual. Why did he defend her, and why wasn’t he angered by her provocation?

She decided to put her thoughts behind her. She had never managed to read his mind anyway. Nonetheless, she felt relieved to learn that Ian had taken care of the incident last night.

A call from Priscilla came in, interrupting her thoughts, so Sage hurriedly picked up and told her the good news.

“Oh, that explains it!” Priscilla exclaimed. “Benjamin invited many guests to the opening ceremony of his winery today, but he was taken away by the police. during the ribbon-cutting.

“Everyone in the industry heard about it, and they joked that his winery was never going to do well because this happened at the opening!

“Sage, Mr. Holcomb is pretty efficient, isn’t he? He’s taken care of yesterday’s incident already! You can tell he cares about you.”

Priscilla still felt sorry about Sage’s drunken incident at the banquet last time. Although Sage had gotten drunk on purpose, Priscilla couldn’t forget how lonely she looked on the dance floor.

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Priscilla knew a thing or two about Sage’s past with Ian. Although she was

divorced, she wouldn’t persuade others to do the same. Marriage meant many things for different people.

She was neither trying to convince Sage to stay with Ian nor to break up with him by her statement. It was simply her honest opinion.

Sage smiled at the thought of Ian voluntarily carrying her on his back last night. She mused, "Maybe. Of course, there are people and stuff he cares about way more than me." The banquet was proof of that.

As she spoke to Priscilla, Susan texted her, urging her to get her back to dinner. She quickly ended the call with Priscilla and returned to the table.

Susan no longer looked friendly. She was upset. "Why were you gone for so long at a dinner? Are you really that busy?"

Sage didn't want to get into an argument. Since Ian had left, she said, "Uncle Owen, Aunt Susan, I want to make this clear: do not ask for Ian's help in your

business.

"Grandpa has already made it clear we're not as rich as the Holcombs. Did you ever consider my feelings when you asked for Ian's help?"

Susan retorted, "Of course we did. Sure, we asked for Ian's help, but it wasn't a big deal for him. Why are you making such a fuss of it now?"

She added, "Ian can turn us down if he wants to. We can't force it on him. By the way, you should consider having a child if you want to secure your place as Mrs. Holcomb. That's how you establish yourself in the family!"

Owen agreed. "Susan is right. Why aren't you pregnant yet after a year of

marriage? Have you gone for a health checkup?"

Layla sneered. "Could it be that Ian doesn't want to sleep with you?"

to knock some sense into you!”

hesitate

Sage didn’t want to get into a fight with her relatives at a restaurant. She couldn’t do much if they refused to listen. All that mattered was she made her stance clear and received Donald’s support. No one could stop her from getting a divorce.

Sage paid a visit to Mimosa in the afternoon. There, she learned that the customer who had accused Mimosa of selling fake alcohol online had admitted it was all a misunderstanding.

The individual in question had suffered from alcohol poisoning because he consumed a homemade alcoholic drink of questionable quality. After that, he wrongly pinned the blame on Mimosa’s product.

“I bet he’s panicking now that Benjamin’s been taken by the police. He wouldn’t dare make a scene now,” Priscilla mused.

Sage, who was in a good mood, remarked, “That’s one more problem down. It’s good that we have cleared up the misunderstanding. I’m waiting for you to expand your market share before we plan an IPO!” Priscilla readily agreed.

While they were happily chatting, Sage received a call from Michael Olsen, whom

she hadn’t been in touch with for days.

“Miss, we’ve passed the preliminary round. We’re entering the recording phase!” Michael happily informed her of the good news.

Sage felt happy for him. “This is just the first step. You will surely get to the finals!”

“Miss, are you free tonight?” Michael suggested, “Kai’s friend has just opened a new bar, and he invited us to celebrate. Kai and his friends wanted you to come

too.”

Sage felt energized and happy when she was around them. Since she was free in the evening, she agreed eagerly. “Sure.”

“Let’s meet there tonight then!”

Sage did not drive to the bar in case she wanted a few drinks. The bar Michael mentioned was in a busy area. Michael was waiting for her at the entrance when

she arrived.

“Miss,” he greeted her and walked over.

His hair was carefully styled, and it appeared that he had put more effort into his outfit than before. As she approached, she teased him, “Wow, how did you become more hip in just a few days?”

He scratched his hair sheepishly and explained, “All of us went for styling courses because we’re going to be in front of the cameras during the competition.

“Not bad. Appearance is important. You feel like a star now. Don’t forget me when you shoot to fame one day.”

When that day came, Mimosa would still want Michael as its ambassador. Sage

was sure of that.

Michael blushed at her compliments. "A star or not, I will never forget your help. "She didn't pick up his light attempt at flirting, so he quickly brushed it off with a smile. "Miss, let's head inside."

"Sure."

As it was a soft launch, most of the guests were friends with the owner. Many

were acquainted with Michael, and they greeted him excitedly.

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Michael explained to Sage, "We met these people when we were singing in bars."

Sage smiled. "You may be young, but you sure have plenty of experience."

When they approached the stage, Kai and the others spotted Sage and greeted her. The mood in the bar was cheery.

After some chitchat, it was time for Michael and his bandmates to perform. They took their seats onstage and started playing.

As the lead singer, Michael garnered the most attention. Dressed in a simple yet stylish black T-shirt, he had his hair up, baring his forehead. He sang in a deep and emotional voice as he gazed at the audience, looking princely.

After performing two slow numbers, the group decided to spice things up with a few drum beats. The change in energy made even Sage want to perform.

When she was ten, she picked up drumming for a few years to relieve her stress from studying. Her drum teacher praised her for being a fast learner with a good sense of rhythm.

In her freshman year, she attracted much attention with her performance at a music festival. However, she gave up on that hobby because Ian disliked things that were noisy and loud. Hence, she tried to behave and study to please Ian:

Sadly, he never took her seriously no matter how hard she tried.

“Miss, I heard you mentioned you used to drum.” Michael wandered to her side. as she was spacing out. His eyes sparkled with confidence.

She found his enthusiasm infectious and eagerly admitted, “Yes.”

“How about you perform on stage?” Sage felt tempted by the sight of the familiar drumset on stage and Michael’s encouraging expression.

Kai waved at her and yelled, “Miss, come on!”

She got on stage like a good sport and said to Kai and the others, “I haven’t played for a while though. Don’t laugh at me if I mess up.”

“Don’t worry about it! We’re here for you!”

“Yeah! It doesn’t matter if you play the wrong beat. It’s all good fun. That’s what matters!”

She was encouraged by their kind words. She accepted a pair of drumsticks and sat in front of the drumset.

She struck all of the cymbals and drums as a warm-up. Not only that, she coolly rotated the drumstick between her fingers, eliciting excited screams from the audience.

“Miss, what song would you like to perform?” asked Michael.

After giving it some thought, she replied, "Let's do 'Hotel California'." She often practiced that song in the past and was quite familiar with it.

"Of course." Michael gestured at his bandmates. This time, he did not take the stage to sing. Instead, he started recording Sage on his phone.

The music started almost immediately. Sage lifted her arm and hit the drum with her stick. Her fingers danced on the drumset, giving off an energetic vibe that flowed with the rhythm.

At the climax, she played with such vigor and passion that she lifted the spirits of the audience. At that moment, she felt as though she had traveled back to her carefree college days, which made her play to her heart's content.

When her performance ended, she was rewarded with thunderous applause. She lifted her drumstick as a thank-you before high-fiving the boys on stage.

She was smiling long after getting off the stage. Michael complimented her earnestly, "Miss, you're really good at drumming."

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Sage flicked her hair coolly. "Ain't that right? Don't I have that rizz?"

Michael was tickled by her cheeky remarks. He nodded and praised her. "Gosh, you're so sassy and smart on stage. You can even hold a candle to a professional drummer."

"You have good taste!" Sage patted him on the arm. "Come! I'll buy you some drinks."

"Miss, what about us? We want drinks too!" Michael's bandmates crowded

around her.

Feeling in her element, she generously waved them over. "Join us! I'll buy drinks. for everyone!"

The group sat around Sage in a spacious booth. They ordered a load of snacks and drinks as they showered Sage with compliments.

"I can't believe that a tiny woman like you can drum so well!"

"Right? She's so cool when she plays with the drumsticks. Miss, why don't you join our band?" Kai suggested. "You can play the drums alongside Nail. I'm sure the audience will succumb to the charisma of you two!"

"Agreed! If you join us, you'll be more popular with the fans than Michael!"

Michael chimed in with a grin, "That goes without saying. I'm no match for her."

Sage felt invigorated by the youthful energy around her. Her last passionate drumming performance dated back to a freshman party, where she had been complimented by other freshmen.

A notable music instructor appreciated her talent and even offered to take her as a student. Alas, she turned down the offer as she worried that Ian might not like a drummer girl.

After college, a few of the students under that music instructor ended up

launching successful music careers. She could have been one of them if only she hadn't turned down the opportunity..

Returning to the present, she replied, "I know you're keen to have me join your band and boost your popularity, but I'm sorry. I have other career plans, so I can't accept your invitation." She even shook her head, feigning arrogance.

The bandmates played along with her. They exclaimed, "Shucks! What a pity!"

"Yeah! A legendary drummer disappearing into the wild!"

Amid all the shouting, the guys laughed and cheered. "Come on, guys! Let's drink to our cool Miss Joyner!"

Kai and his friends raised their glasses. Sage, not wanting to be a spoilsport, lifted hers as well. "Cheers!"

After a few rounds, Michael stopped the others from pouring Sage more drinks as he was worried that she might not be able to take it.

Although they were under the influence of alcohol, the band went onstage to perform again, leaving Michael behind. He stared at Sage's flushed cheeks and inquired, "Miss, are you okay?"

"Of course!" She beamed at him. "Thanks, Michael. I had fun today."

Michael suddenly found himself avoiding her twinkling eyes. He poured her some water and said, "Miss, if you enjoy doing this, you can always drop by more often. Why not consider

Kai's suggestion? Join our band, please."

He handed a glass of water to Sage and added honestly, "You show great passion and excellent stick control. If you keep on practicing, you'll catch up with the professional drummers in no time."

She took a tiny sip and smiled. "Thanks for your trust, but I'll leave it to you guys to pursue your dreams in music. I'll just take it as a hobby."

She might have given their proposal serious consideration had she met them in college. At this point, she had become too preoccupied with worldly concerns, and she feared that she couldn't play music with such pure passion again.

Time flew by as she chatted with her friends at the bar and played rock-paper-scissors.

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"Miss, your phone's ringing!" someone told Sage as she was goofing off with Kai.

She checked her phone. It was a call from Wanda. "Wanda, what's up?" Sage asked after accepting the call.

Wanda, perhaps a little taken aback at the noise in the background, paused before cautiously asking, "Mrs. Holcomb, where are you? It's a little noisy on your end."

Sage wandered over to a quiet corner and answered, "I'm with some friends at a bar. Why did you call?"

After some hesitation, Wanda wondered aloud, "Mrs. Holcomb, it's nearly 11:00 p.m. now. When are you going to come home?"

Before Wanda went to sleep, she'd occasionally check what time Sage was coming home. Sage replied, "I don't know. Wanda, just go to sleep. Don't worry about me."

"Um, one more thing, Mrs. Holcomb," Wanda added. "Mr. Holcomb couldn't find his usual pajamas."

"Well, he can always wear other pajamas. Does he want to make me go home just to search for his pajamas?"

“But he isn’t used to the other sets. You woke up later than him this morning. Did you happen to put his usual pajamas away in another drawer?”

“I never touch his stuff. I didn’t even know if he slept last night. How on earth. would I know where his pajamas are? Wanda, you shouldn’t spoil him. Just let him be.”

“But-”

“No buts. Wanda, my friends are calling for me. I’ll hang up now.”

Just as Sage was about to hang up, she heard Ian’s frosty voice ringing out. “Sage Joyner, won’t you look at the time? How much longer will you hang out at that bar?”

It turned out that Ian was with Wanda. Had he requested Wanda to call her? How novel. In the past, she was the one who asked Ian what time he’d come home. Now, the tables had turned.

“I’m asking you a question,” he snapped.

She emulated his icy tone from the past and replied, “I don’t know. Stop

bothering me over nothing.”

Then, she hung up without giving him a chance to respond. She cheered up at the thought of him fuming at the phone. She finally had the chance to give him a taste of his own medicine!

“Miss, is it time for you to go home?” Michael approached her. “I’ll call you a cab.

She scoffed. “No! Who said I’m going home? Let’s continue playing games and drinking!”

Michael obediently played games with Sage, but he refused to let her drink anymore. Every time she lost a round, he’d volunteer to take the punishment drink for her.

One of his bandmates finally blurted out, "Michael, she's never declined drinks. You're quite the responsible knight in shining armor, aren't you?"

Although Michael blushed from their teasing, he answered earnestly, "I was the one who invited her. Of course, I have to make sure she's sober."

"Aren't you worried that you've had too much to drink? You're a lightweight, you know."

"I'll be fine after a good night's sleep. I don't want her to overdrink because it'll hurt her health." a

Sage felt touched by his concern. She declared generously, "Michael Olsen, I'm your loyal fan from now on. I'll buy anything you endorse as a real fan does—I promise!"

"Miss, are you drunk? He has no endorsements for now!" someone joked.

She replied confidently, "He'll get endorsements pretty soon!"

The bandmates laughed at me

his fan at its finest!"

Feeling dizzy, she raised her glass and grinned at Michael. "Come on. Let's drink to our 'mutual love', shall we?"

The bandmates laughed at them. "Wow, this is mutual love between an idol and his fan at its finest!"

Feeling dizzy, she raised her glass and grinned at Michael. "Come on. Let's drink to our 'mutual love', shall we?"

Chapter 160

Michael lifted his glass. Sage had toasted to him and was ready to down the

contents of her glass when someone suddenly snatched it away from her. When she turned around, she found Ian staring at her.

He was dressed in the same black suit from lunch. Standing up straight and exuding elegance, he attracted much attention from the guests in the bar.

Sage frowned. "Why are you here?"

His expression was unreadable. "I can't find my pajamas. I need your help at

home."

She looked puzzled. Although she was tipsy, she was not delirious. She knew he had shown up at the bar because he was angry that she had hung up on him.

"I am not obliged to do anything for you." She reached out for her glass. "Now give me back my wine glass!"

He stared at her with furrowed brows. "You've had too much to drink. You shouldn't drink anymore."

Most people at the bar had met Ian before. The last time, Ian had insisted on dragging Sage away. This time, they weren't about to simply watch as he harassed Sage.

"Sir, Ms. Joyner might be your wife, but you have no right to stop her from drinking."

“Yeah. You’re pretty self-centered, don’t you think?”

Hearing that, Ian calmly turned around to face those who spoke up. He had an imposing air. That, coupled with his expressionless face, exerted pressure on the people around him. The few who protested suddenly shivered under his gaze.

Bravely, Michael said, “Mr. Holcomb, Ms. Joyner isn’t drunk. We’ll send her home when she wants to leave. You can’t force her to leave.”

Ian shot a glance at Michael. His gaze traveled to the wine glass in Michael’s hand. Then, he scooped Sage into his arms, a move which made her shriek in

shock. She

He seemed satisfied by her action. Sounding courteous and aloof, he announced, “Put everyone’s bills from tonight on my tab. Take it as me saying thanks for entertaining my wife.”

He then handed a black card to the staff before leaving with Sage in his arms.

ear She struggled to escape from his grip, but he whispered a warning in her ear. “Keep moving around, and I’ll kiss you in front of everyone. Let’s see who’s going to be more embarrassed.”

He had found her Achilles heel. Knowing that he’d keep his word, she regretted not getting drunk enough to not care about embarrassment.

Ian must have been extremely attractive carrying her bridal style because many were staring at them. Feeling awkward, Sage waved goodbye to Michael before burying her face in Ian’s chest.

After leaving the bar, Ian placed her in the passenger seat of the car. As she

refused to be subjected to his interrogation, she turned toward the car window to get some shut-eye, her back facing him.

He sensed her aversion, so he held his tongue, which was rare. Silence enveloped the car. With the AC running, Sage felt sleepy. Before she knew it, she had drifted

to sleep.

When she woke up, it was daytime. Sitting up groggily in the bed, she scanned her surroundings and realized that she was back in her bedroom.

Puzzled, she recalled that Ian had placed her in his car after they left the bar last night. Did he carry her up the stairs and into her room?

She regretted drinking so much at the bar. Although she had slept like a log, she was still exhausted. As she was gathering her thoughts, her phone started ringing. She looked at the caller ID and picked up.

“Sage Tower have you seen that clin? You’re famous now!!!

shock. She reflexively wrapped her arms around his neck.

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