

A Favor To My Boss

Chapter 11:

“Thank you. Come on—let’s have a glass of wine and start dinner,” he said, his face brightening.

I followed him into the kitchen, where everything was perfectly organized and ready to go. I sat at the counter and watched Davidson pour us each a glass of wine before getting started.

“Can I help with anything?” I offered, watching him move around the kitchen.

“No, everything’s under control. I’m a little... obsessive when it comes to cooking. Everything has to be done my way, with a touch of mystery,” he joked, his eyes sparkling. “You just relax and enjoy your wine.”

I took his advice, settling in while he worked at his own pace. I couldn’t help smiling as I watched him. He looked completely at home—calm, steady, as if this was where he truly belonged. Honestly, he seemed like he should have been a chef instead of whatever else he did to make a living.

“Have you always cooked?”

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“Yes. It’s one of my favorite things to do. Someday I plan to open my own restaurant,” he answered without hesitation, glancing over his shoulder with a smile.

“You definitely look comfortable doing it. I can cook, but I hate it. It just stresses me out,” I said with a small laugh.

“Maybe someday we can cook together. I’ll help you figure out why it stresses you out.” He laughed too, turning his attention back to the chicken.

“That would be nice. Because honestly, I swear I’m destined to be alone forever. I need to learn how not to stress out in the kitchen,” I said, smiling with a hint of amusement.

Davidson paused mid-motion and turned to face me, leaning against the counter like it was the most natural thing in the world.

“Come on, Winona. That’s ridiculous. There’s no way you’re going to be alone forever.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure. I have a boss who’s kind of an idiot and always steals my free time. So yeah, I’m starting to think it’s a real possibility,” I said, giving him a sly smile and playing along.

He caught the joke instantly, and his grin widened.

“All right, maybe it sounds a little silly. But trust me—how could a woman as beautiful and kind as you not find someone? You won’t be alone forever. The right man has to be out there, ready for you, Winona,” he said, stepping away from the counter, sincerity in his eyes.

Heat rose into my cheeks, and a blush spread across my face. His words made me shy in a way I hadn’t expected.

He chuckled, walking closer and resting his elbow on the counter, stopping only inches from where I sat.

“Are you blushing?” he teased, his smile wide and knowing.

“No. Not at all,” I replied quickly, trying to cover it with a laugh. “And you... I’m sure you get compliments all the time, Davidson.”

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Chapter 12:

“Not from my boss,” I said, my lips trembling as I fought the smile threatening to break free.

“You love it. Don’t even try to deny it.” He smiled and winked.

Then he stepped back and returned to his cooking, but the mischievous glint in his eyes lingered.

The room fell quiet after that.

And I couldn’t shake the question circling in my mind. Was Davidson flirting with me again? It seemed like he did it more and more the longer we spent together.

The truth was, I didn't even know how I felt about it.

Davidson's Point of View:

My throat tightened as I ran my tongue over my lower lip. Winona let out a soft, involuntary sigh the moment she tasted the chicken.

"Wow, this is incredible," she said, meeting my gaze.

"I appreciate that," I replied, giving her a small smile.

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Even as I spoke, my attention drifted. That lingering sound she'd made kept replaying in my mind. It held an unexpected sensuality—almost too intimate—though she probably hadn't thought anything of it. I couldn't quite explain why my mind kept turning in that direction.

For more than two years, we'd spent countless hours together at work. I'd always known she was charming and easy to be around, but I'd never felt a spark like this. Suddenly, desire took hold of me, catching me off guard. Maybe being single had made me notice things I'd ignored before. When Leona and I were together, I never looked at another woman—least of all Winona, who always kept things strictly professional.

No one else could hold my attention. My focus was entirely on Leona. No one else mattered.

“Davidson, are you okay?” she asked, pulling me back to reality.

“Sorry—could you repeat that, Winona?” I said, biting my tongue before I called her by the wrong name.

“I was just saying the food is fantastic. You’re really good in the kitchen,” she said with a smile.

I nodded, but my thoughts continued to churn.

When I started dating other people, things changed. The women I’d been with never seemed to care about what I could offer. Strangely enough, Leona even came back for more on more than one occasion. That helped restore some faith in myself. To be honest, Leona showed up a couple of times wanting to sleep with me, and it made me realize I might not have lost her entirely.

But this dinner tonight? It was the first time I’d cooked for someone since her.

“She doesn’t know what she’s talking about. You really shouldn’t let her words get to you,” Winona said, shaking her head.

“I get that now. Still, she shows up sometimes. Back then, I just accepted everything and let her get in my head,” I admitted.

“That must feel awful, right? When the person you love—someone who’s supposed to care about you—keeps making you feel like you’re never good enough,” she said softly.

Something in her voice made me wonder if she was speaking from experience.

“Has that ever happened to you?” I asked, curiosity slipping into my tone.

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Chapter 13:

“Yes. I dated someone for a year who made my life miserable. He was cruel, always putting me down, and it escalated until he hit me. That was my limit. I ended it after that and never looked back,” Winona said.

“It takes courage to leave. Guys like that are pathetic. I’m glad you got out when you did,” I told her.

“I am too, honestly. But let’s talk about something else. How did you learn to cook like this?” she asked.

“My father taught me. He was an excellent cook. Every recipe he mastered, he made sure I learned too. He died three years ago, and I still think about him every day. I still miss him,” I said, a heaviness settling in my chest.

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“My dad warned me about Leona more than once. He thought I deserved better, but he understood how much she meant to me. Maybe I should’ve listened to him, but he never tried to stop me from following my heart.”

“That’s heartbreaking. I’m so sorry for your loss,” Winona said.

“Thank you. He really was the best. But Winona, you’ve been with my company for over two years, and I barely know anything about you,” I said.

My curiosity kept tugging at me, making me want to learn more. Winona had that quiet way of making you feel heard. Opening up to her felt easy. Whenever I needed to vent or ramble to no one in particular, she always stayed and listened. Lately, the weight I carried felt different—heavier, more tangled—but she never pulled away.

“It’s not really your responsibility to know my story, Davidson. But knowing you? That is my responsibility.” A quick smile played at her lips.

“Maybe. But I’d like to truly know you. Spending time like this, away from work, feels good. Let’s finish dinner, pour a little wine, and see where the conversation takes us.” I smiled at her, hoping she’d say yes.

“Sure, if you want. I don’t have much to tell, honestly,” she said with a half shrug.

“Something tells me there’s a lot you’re not telling me, Winona,” I said, a sly smile forming on my lips.

There was something about her that hinted at a deeper story.

“If you say so. Now shut up—I’m eating.” She rolled her eyes, laughing as she stuck her tongue out at me.

“Whatever you say,” I replied, doing exactly what she asked.

She laughed again, and the mood lightened as we went back to our food.

Watching her savor each bite made me smile. But every little sound of pleasure she made was starting to drive me a little crazy.

Forcing those distracting thoughts aside, I focused on my meal. Maybe if we finished quickly, I’d have a chance to calm down and stop feeling every one of her reactions so deeply.

“That was amazing,” she exclaimed, setting her utensils aside with a satisfied sigh.

“I’m glad you enjoyed it. But fair warning—now it’s your turn to wash the dishes,” I joked, smiling at her.

“Okay.” She shot me a playful smile, gathering the dirty plates and heading to the sink.

“Winona, I was kidding,” I laughed, following her.

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Chapter 14:

“After a meal like this? Doing the dishes is the least I can do.”

“I’m not going to let you do all of them,” I said.

Winona ignored me, determined to start washing. That stubbornness was so typical of her.

Without another word, she turned on the faucet and began scrubbing. I stepped in behind her and reached for the dish towel, just to annoy her.

“Hey! Hands off!” Her hand shot out, swatting mine away.

“Winona, you know there’s a dishwasher, right?” I couldn’t hold back my laugh.

“I don’t mind. Come on, let me handle this,” she said, glancing at me over her shoulder.

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Her words made me smile.

Taking her time, she finally turned, ending up pinned between the sink and me. The space between us disappeared. She didn’t seem affected by how close we were, but I felt every inch of distance vanish, a sharp longing building inside me. She looked up at me through those long lashes.

There was a playful glint in her eyes, and it was impossible not to feel drawn in.

“If you don’t let me do this in peace, I’m going to splash you with water,” she said with a smile, daring me to test her.

“That’s cruel,” I said, bracing my hands on the counter, boxing her in.

“Honestly, I think it would be hilarious,” she giggled.

With that, I leaned closer, shrinking the space between us until only a few millimeters separated our bodies. I couldn’t say I had a plan. All I knew was that I wanted to test the waters—see if she felt the pull as strongly as I did.

“No, it really wouldn’t be.”

“Why don’t you try coming a little closer?” she murmured, her lips curving into a knowing smile as her eyes stayed locked on mine.

“I could, but I probably shouldn’t,” I said.

“Yeah, that might be going a little too far, wouldn’t it?” she said with a grin.

The way she looked at me then—there was a spark, something dangerously close to longing, though maybe I was only seeing what I wanted to see. I stopped myself before things went any further and took a step back, exhaling quietly.

She went straight back to washing the dishes, not saying a word, focused on her task. Rubbing a hand over my head, I tried to clear my thoughts.

If I wasn't careful, I was going to do something I couldn't take back.

Winona's Point of View:

I washed each dish slowly, using the running water as an excuse to drag it out.

I needed a moment to steady myself. Being close to him stirred feelings I hadn't expected—feelings I definitely shouldn't allow. I'd spent two years at his side, and he'd never gotten under my skin like this.

Was this what happened when we finally spent time together outside of work? What was wrong with me?

Maybe it was the dinner. His voice cut through my thoughts with a playful laugh.

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Chapter 15:

“I’m going to blame the food.” A laugh slipped out of me as I turned toward him.

“Let’s go to the couch,” he suggested, offering a warm smile.

He grabbed a bottle of wine and two glasses. Together we walked into the living room, and his hand rested lightly on the small of my back, sending a jolt through me. I kept my face turned away, certain one look into my eyes would give everything away.

The moment I sat down, I straightened and put a little space between us. That lasted about a second—he joined me on the couch and closed the distance again, pouring us both a glass of wine.

“Thank you,” I said with a smile, taking a small sip and leaning back.

“Winona, tell me more about you. Do you have siblings? What about your parents?” he asked, genuinely curious.

“Yes. My younger sister is in London right now, paying her way through medical school by working. She’s determined to become a cardiac surgeon. My parents are still together—still madly in love after forty years,” I said, pride threading my voice.

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“That’s incredible,” Davidson exclaimed. “Honestly, that’s my dream—to find a love that lasts like that.” His smile was sincere.

“Same. Maybe someday we’ll both get it.” I smiled.

A shadow crossed his face for a moment. I realized his thoughts had wandered—probably to Leona, and the life he once imagined with her.

Without thinking, I took his hand. Our fingers touched, and he turned to look at me.

“You’ll find the right person, Davidson. If Leona wasn’t it, then there’s someone even better out there for you,” I said softly.

“Yeah. I know you’re right. It just... hurts a little,” he admitted, sadness slipping into his voice.

“Of course it hurts. But I promise it won’t hurt forever,” I told him with a warm smile, hoping he found a little comfort.

“I hope that moment comes soon. But enough about me. Wasn’t tonight supposed to be when you shared your story?” he said, brushing it off with a laugh.

“Honestly, my story is pretty simple. Most of the time, my life has been quiet,” I replied with a shrug. “Work keeps me busy, and when I’m not there—if I have time—I go out to dinner or see a movie with friends.”

“Why don’t you let loose? Why don’t you actually have fun once in a while?” he asked.

“I do have fun sometimes. I got all my wild phase out in my teens. You wouldn’t believe some of the things I did,” I admitted with a quiet laugh.

“I knew it. You’re not as shy as you seem. Come on, Winona—confess. How wild did you get? I was cautious as a kid, so I’m probably making up for lost time now.” He laughed.

I knew exactly what he meant—boozy nights, wild parties, and more than one reckless mistake.

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Chapter 16:

“You’re not wrong,” I said, laughing. “Back then, I was a complete mess—partying every weekend, too many nights sneaking out, drinking when I shouldn’t have, always getting into some kind of trouble at school. My parents probably lost sleep for years, but they never gave up on me. By nineteen, I finally settled down,” I explained.

“See? I knew there was a wild side hiding under that calm armor.” He winked.

“I’ve calmed down a lot since then,” I said.

“Hard to imagine, honestly. Something tells me you’ve still got a little wild in you,” he said with a teasing smile.

Maybe he was right, but he didn’t need to know what actually made me reckless.

“Keep guessing, but you won’t get a direct answer out of my mouth.” My voice dropped, matching the playful gleam in his eyes.

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He caught the hint immediately.

“Never say never,” he replied.

I gave him a pointed look and raised a brow. It was clear subtlety didn’t bother him.

Whatever he was thinking, I could see it in his expression—he wanted me to cross a line I knew I shouldn't. I refused to become the cliché secretary who slept with her boss. That wasn't me.

"In your dreams," I said, laughing.

"I really hope that's true," he replied, his voice a little rougher than usual.

My throat tightened, and I deliberately leaned back. His flirting had to stop—and so did my reactions. Redirecting the conversation felt like the safest bet, so I latched onto the first neutral topic that came to mind.

Two hours later, the table was covered in empty bottles.

With wine and beer, laughter came easily and nerves faded. Davidson's teasing didn't unsettle me anymore. I felt lighter, freer, more at ease. My attraction to him didn't seem as dangerous as it had before.

"You really are impressive, Winona. How is it possible no man has made you lose your mind yet?" Davidson asked, watching me.

"Maybe I'm just waiting for someone who feels right," I replied, lightly sinking my teeth into my lower lip as I held his gaze.

A small sound escaped him—almost a groan—and I realized the lip bite had gotten to him. Davidson leaned in, his face a breath away from mine. With a gentle hand, he tucked a stray strand behind my ear, then let his palm rest against my cheek.

Trying not to show how nervous I was, I held his gaze, my heart pounding as he leaned closer. I should have pulled away. Instead, I stayed frozen in place.

His lips found mine before I had time to think it through.

A soft moan of satisfaction slipped from me as we sank into the kiss.

Any resistance I had dissolved as I gave myself over to him, drawn in by his warmth and the taste of him.

His strong hands found my hips and pulled me closer. His mouth pressed to mine sent a rush of heat through my body, sparking a fierce craving I couldn't ignore. Something deep and urgent stirred inside me as his tongue traced my lower lip, coaxing a needy sound from my throat. My mouth parted, and he slid his tongue in eagerly, turning the kiss into something wild and burning.

Then panic jolted through me. What was I doing?

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Chapter 17:

My heart raced as I broke away, springing to my feet and grabbing my purse from the couch.

“I can’t do this. I’m sorry,” I blurted, my voice tight with nerves, and hurried straight for the door.

My hand barely brushed the doorknob before he reached me, wrapping his arms around my waist and spinning me back. Trapped between his body and the door, I could hardly breathe. His eyes were dark, blazing with lust and longing, and my knees threatened to give out.

“Why are you leaving? I want you too much. You felt it too, didn’t you? There’s been fire between us all night. Why are you trying to fight it?” he asked, breathless.

“Davidson, this isn’t me. I’m not the kind of woman who sleeps with her boss. I just... I can’t,” I said, trying to hold on to some shred of control.

“We’re both adults, Winona. None of that matters to me. The only thing that matters is you,” he replied.

“I’m sorry. I really have to go.” I shoved him back, slipped out the door, and rushed through the garage, fumbling for my phone to call a taxi.

All I could think about was getting away from Davidson. I couldn’t believe I’d let things spiral like that.

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Dread settled in my stomach at the thought of seeing him again at work.

Damn it. Why did I let myself be so reckless?

The sight of the taxi's headlights brought a wave of relief as I slid into the back seat and gave the driver my address. The entire ride home, I couldn't stop thinking about how I was supposed to look him in the eye at work.

When I walked through my front door, I grabbed a bottle of water, took a couple of painkillers, and changed into my pajamas. Exhaustion hit me hard as I collapsed onto the bed. I checked my alarm on my phone. Work wasn't going to wait for me to untangle this mess.

I had three new messages—all from Davidson.

The first said: "Winona, please come back."

The next: "I'm sorry."

The last sounded more worried: "Just let me know you got home safe, okay? Please."

I sighed as I typed a brief reply: "I'm home."

I didn't bother adding anything else. I set my phone on the nightstand and pulled the blankets up to my chin. Sleep came quickly, and as I drifted off, I wished more than ever that I'd wake up and discover the night had been nothing but a nightmare.

Winona's Point of View:

A shrill beep shattered the silence.

I prayed it wasn't my alarm.

"I wish last night had been nothing but a nightmare," I whispered, almost pleading.

A groan escaped me as I grabbed my phone, silenced the alarm, and tossed it aside. I sank back into the bed and reached for painkillers before I even considered getting up.

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A Favor To My Boss

Chapter 18:

Dragging myself out of bed felt impossible. The office was the last place I wanted to be after everything that had happened, but I couldn't let that mess spill into my work life. In the end, I forced myself to move. I showered, got dressed, and choked down breakfast.

I left my car parked and chose to walk, hoping the cold air would calm my nerves and give me a moment to think before I saw Davidson. When I stopped in front of the building, I hesitated, wondering if I could really do it.

After a long pause, I made a decision.

No matter what happened, I would stay calm and pretend nothing had happened.

Taking a few deep breaths to steady myself, I walked through the doors.

"Good morning," I greeted the receptionist, offering the most convincing smile I could manage.

“Good morning, Winona. Just so you know, the boss is in a bad mood again today,” she said with a friendly smile.

“Thanks for the warning,” I replied, forcing a smile. The real reason for his mood was obvious—what had happened between us.

With slow, measured steps, I approached his office and knocked softly.

“Come in,” he answered, his voice flat and unreadable.

That cold tone was exactly what I’d been afraid of. I arranged a polite smile on my face and stepped inside.

His eyes met mine the moment I entered, carrying the same intensity I’d seen only hours before. This time, I forced myself to act like I didn’t notice.

“Would you like coffee or anything else before we start?” I asked, smiling.

On the outside, I managed to look composed, even though I felt restless inside. Every muscle in my body was tense, but I couldn’t let him see it. He watched me in silence, his expression impossible to read.

“No, I’m fine. We need to get started. My schedule is packed, and I’ll be traveling more than usual over the next few weeks,” he said with a nod. “I need you to come with me,” he added.

Wait—had I heard that right?

Usually, he left me at the office when he traveled. In all the time I’d worked for him, I could count on one hand the number of times I’d traveled at his side. He never needed me; everywhere he went, he had his own assistants.

“What? Since when have you taken me with you on these trips?” I asked, surprise slipping into my voice.

“Since when do you question what I ask of you? It’s part of your job, Winona,” he said, his expression neutral.

I could see his intentions, and I didn’t like being manipulated like that.

Technically, he was right. Supporting him was part of my job, even if it usually wasn’t necessary.

“Make sure you add yourself to every hotel reservation you’ve already made for me. I want it done before the end of the day,” he ordered, shifting his gaze to his computer as he went back to work.

“Understood, sir,” I replied, turning to leave.

“And where do you think you’re going?” he asked.

What was his problem today? I fought the urge to roll my eyes and looked back at him.

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Chapter 19:

“I’m going to update those reservations, like you asked,” I said, forcing calm into my voice.

“You can use my computer and do it here,” he said, gesturing to the laptop on his desk.

A resigned sigh slipped out of me as I crossed the room. I sat down, and he handed me his computer. I nodded and started updating the reservations, aware of his gaze fixed on me as I worked. After a moment, I paused and looked up, meeting his eyes.

“Winona, about what happened last night...” he began.

“There’s no need to dwell on it. Let’s just forget it happened and move on,” I said with a shrug.

“I owe you an apology. I shouldn’t have let things go that far. It was out of line,” he said, kindness in his eyes and a tenderness in his voice.

“Really, sir, we shouldn’t talk about it. We both drank too much, and things got out of hand.” I tried to give him a reassuring smile.

He nodded and returned his focus to his own screen.

I went back to the task and quickly added my name to all his hotel reservations. Luckily, there were still rooms available—except for the stop in Los Angeles, which turned out to be harder. There was only one room left for the three nights he needed.

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“Mr. Briggs, there’s a problem with the Los Angeles hotel. It’s completely booked. There are no rooms left,” I said, looking at him.

“There’s always the option of sharing a room with me. It’s a double room anyway,” he replied.

“And where am I supposed to sleep?” I asked, frowning in confusion.

“Right there in the bed, obviously. Where else would you go?” he said as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

He had to be joking. After last night, the last thing I wanted was to end up tangled in the same bed with him. Still, with no other options, what else could I do? Finding a new hotel at this point wasn’t realistic.

“Fine,” I said, though my tone made it clear I wasn’t happy.

“You say that like I’m the worst roommate in history,” he laughed.

“It’s not that. It’s just going to be... extremely uncomfortable.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll behave, Miss Winona. You have my word,” he said with a smile.

“Don’t even think about flirting with me. I’m serious—I can’t handle any more today,” I warned.

He didn’t answer. He just winked.

I focused on my work, doing my best to keep my mind busy, though every so often I caught him watching me with that irritatingly charming smile. Hadn’t he just said last night was a mistake? After all that talk about boundaries and regret, he still looked at me with the same desire as before.

I kept reminding myself that sleeping with my boss would be the biggest cliché imaginable. It wasn’t a path I wanted to take.

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A Favor To My Boss

Chapter 20:

And yet there was no denying it—something had shifted in the way I saw him. I’d be lying if I said this was the first time I’d felt drawn to him. Two years of stolen glances and unspoken tension were finally starting to feel impossible to ignore. My body kept betraying me, pulled toward every small thing he did, even when I knew it wasn’t right.

“Winona, are you okay? You seem like your mind is somewhere else,” Davidson said.

“Mmm,” I replied, unable to form anything more.

“Would you like to share what you’re thinking, Miss Winona?” he asked, a hint of a smile on his lips.

“It’s nothing. Really. I just need to finish this work—if you’d stop making it so difficult,” I shot back.

“That’s all the answer I need. I’m clearly in your head,” he said with a smug smile.

Instead of giving him the satisfaction of a response, I took my computer and moved to the other side of the office. His laughter followed me, but I ignored it.

Not long after, he crossed the room and stopped right in front of me. I looked up, unsure what he wanted this time.

“Do you need something?”

“I’m going to get coffee. Want one?” he asked, almost politely.

“Sure, I guess,” I said, confused.

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Making me coffee wasn’t exactly his style, so the gesture made me wonder. Maybe he was trying to make up for things, or maybe there was some angle I hadn’t figured out yet. Either way, I wasn’t likely to get an answer anytime soon. When Davidson walked away, I let out a slow breath and clung to the hope that whatever spell he’d cast over me would wear off soon.

Winona's Point of View:

When the workday finally ended, relief washed over me. The entire day had been a strange mix of chaos and unexpected calm.

Mr. Briggs had stopped flirting with me and, instead, spoke in a kind—almost tender—tone. Somehow, that new attitude unsettled me even more.

All I wanted was to leave, go home, and put everything strange that had happened behind me. I hurried toward the elevator, but a hand slid between the doors at the last second. Davidson stepped in and said, leaving no room for argument, “You’re coming home with me.”

“Wait—what? Why would I do that?” I asked, thrown off.

“I picked up a few dresses, and you need to try them all on. You have to choose what you’ll wear to the gala,” he said with a smile.

A few dresses? How many did he think I needed?

“Wait—did you buy more than one?” I asked, clearly bewildered.

“Yes. Four total. I couldn’t decide. Three are red, and one is black,” he said, still smiling.

“Can I go home first? I’m starving, and I really want to take a shower,” I said.

“Let me cook dinner for you tonight. There’s a shower at my place too—you can use it. Just tell me which dress you like most so I can return the rest,” he said, grinning.

Exhaustion wore down my resistance, so I simply nodded and let him have his way.

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