

A Favor 111

Chapter 111

“Leona is losing it. She won’t sign anything unless I agree to give her half of everything I have. Now she’s decided to play the victim, telling everyone I cheated while we were still together. She’s trying to make people believe I had an affair with you and that she didn’t start seeing anyone else until after we split up. My lawyers know she’s twisting everything, but her lawyers are determined to find something—anything—that lets her walk away with half of what I have,” he said, his voice rough with frustration.

I could hear how tense he was. The stress and anger weighing on him made me feel even more upset. How could that woman lie like that? I knew the truth. She was the one who cheated, not him.

“But... why? That isn’t true at all, Davidson. I’m so sorry. I feel like I’m only making this harder for you,” I blurted, guilt and worry rushing through me.

He turned sharply, his eyes locked on mine.

“No. Don’t even start with that, sweetheart. None of this is your fault. She’s doing it because she’s manipulative, selfish, and furious she isn’t getting her way. She just wants to keep controlling things so I’ll keep doing whatever she wants,” he said firmly.

“I know that’s how she is, but Davidson... what if she really twists it? What if people actually believe you and I had an affair? She could end up taking half of everything you’ve built. That isn’t right,” I said, my worry plain on my face.

He pulled me onto his lap and wrapped one arm around my waist. With the other hand, he tilted my chin up gently, guiding my eyes to his. His thumb stroked my cheek.

"Listen to me, Winona. None of this is your fault. I'll find a way to keep her from taking half of everything. I have proof she was the one cheating while we were still married. She can't prove anything because nothing happened between us back then. And even if she wins, what does it matter? Money isn't everything. I'd still have enough to start over, and maybe starting over wouldn't be so bad. Please, don't blame yourself. It's not your fault. Not now. Not ever," he explained, his voice steady and sincere.

I shook my head, managing a small smile, though I hated the thought of her lying and scheming to get what she wanted. All of it because he'd finally moved on, even though she'd changed long before their marriage ever ended.

Davidson leaned in and kissed me softly, then pulled me into his chest, holding me tight. I melted into him, letting the warmth of his arms wrap around me. I knew he needed comfort after a day like this.

"I'm not going to let her ruin what we have. Let her do whatever she wants," he whispered into my hair.

I lifted my head slowly, met his eyes, and brushed his cheek with my fingertips. I smiled, and he smiled back, the tension in his eyes easing a little.

"I'm crazy about you. You know that, right?" he murmured, his voice soft and sincere.

"Leona isn't going to come between us, Winona. It doesn't matter what she does or what she tries to take from us," he said, firm with conviction.

I leaned in and pressed my lips gently to his, kissing him for a brief, quiet moment before pulling back, keeping my face close to his.

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"I'm crazy about you too. And I want you to know I'm here for you through all of this, no matter what happens," I said.

"I know, sweetheart. You've been by my side from the beginning—even before we were really together," he murmured.

"And I'm not going anywhere until it's over. Do you hear me?" I promised him.

"Honestly, I have no idea what I would've done without you these past few months, Winona," he replied.

I kissed him again, quick and soft, and we spent some time talking, letting the conversation drift to lighter things so the stress wouldn't ruin the night.

After a while, he carefully lifted me off his lap and stretched out on the couch, leaning back and patting the spot beside him. I smiled and lay down next to him. The moment I settled in, he pulled me close, pressing my back against his chest in a tight embrace.

"Can we stay like this for a while before dinner? I just want to relax and have you close. It always makes things feel a little easier," he whispered, brushing soft kisses over my neck and shoulder.

I laced my fingers with his and looked back over my shoulder.

“Of course we can. As long as you want,” I replied with a gentle smile.

Being wrapped up in his arms made everything feel okay.

I loved moments like these—just cuddling together, sometimes watching something silly, sometimes just talking about nothing. His hand traced slow patterns over my back and down to my hip; his touch was comforting and familiar. I could feel his warm breath at my neck.

“Winona,” he murmured.

I turned so our foreheads touched, careful not to slip off the edge of the couch.

He looked at me like he wanted to say something, then stopped. Instead, he stroked my cheek with his thumb and smiled.

“It’s nothing. It doesn’t matter,” he said quietly.

“Is it really, Davidson?” I asked, my tone warning him not to brush me off.

It was obvious he wanted to say something, but something held him back. I decided not to push. He'd been through enough for one day, and I didn't want to make it harder.

"You know what? It's okay. You don't have to tell me right now," I said with a kind smile.

"I'll tell you. I promise. Just not tonight," he replied, smiling back.

His words only made me more curious, and I couldn't help raising an eyebrow. That made him laugh.

"It's too soon," he whispered.

I studied his face, searching for any hint of what he wanted to say, but he kept it all hidden. So I nodded, letting it go, and tucked my face into his chest as I wrapped my arms around him. He pulled me closer, holding me tight.

I felt his lips press softly to the top of my head, and then I heard him whisper, "I don't think you have any idea how crazy I am about you."

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He said it so quietly I almost wondered if I'd imagined it. But whatever it was he was holding back, I knew he'd tell me when he was ready.

Davidson's POV:

Somehow, Winona and I ended up falling asleep together on the couch. When I finally opened my eyes, the room was bathed in the soft glow of evening, and the clock on the wall read nearly eight. We'd slept for almost two hours, and honestly, I think we needed it.

She looked so peaceful beside me—her face relaxed, calm. I leaned in and brushed my fingertips gently over her cheek.

"Winona, I think I'm falling for you too fast. Why couldn't I have met you instead of her?" I whispered so quietly I hoped she didn't hear.

She was the one helping me heal, piecing my heart back together one piece at a time. I doubted she had any idea how much she meant to me, or how badly I wanted Leona to stop finding ways to destroy what Winona and I were building.

Sometimes I tried to convince myself Leona didn't have power over me anymore. I told myself it didn't matter—but that wasn't true. After all those years together, a part of me still remembered the life we'd shared, even when I wished I could forget it. I hated that. I hated that she still clung to a corner of my heart, no matter how much it angered me.

All I could do was hope Leona wouldn't come between us—and that I'd have the strength to leave the past behind. I ran a hand through my hair, worry gnawing at me. More than anything, I didn't want to hurt Winona or ruin what we had.

"I hope I don't ruin this for us, or hurt you," I murmured, pressing a soft kiss to the top of her head.

She didn't stir. She was still deeply asleep, except for a quiet, sleepy sound when I kissed her. It made me smile. After a moment, I decided to wake her.

I kissed the tip of her nose, then brushed my lips over her cheek before giving her a gentle kiss on the mouth. She let out a soft moan and opened her eyes slowly, her smile widening the moment she saw me. Her fingers slid into my hair as she hugged me close.

"Do you feel better?" she asked softly.

"Yeah. Like I said, having you close always makes everything feel okay," I said.

Winona blushed and let out a sweet, quiet laugh before leaning in to give me another quick kiss. Then she nestled back against my chest, breathing me in.

"Just give me ten more minutes," she murmured, pressed against me.

"Whatever you want, sweetheart," I said with a quiet laugh, pulling her a little closer.

The silence between us felt warm and easy. We stayed there for another ten minutes, soaking in the comfort of being held together, until we finally admitted it was probably time to get up and eat before it got too late.

"I have a better idea. Instead of staying in and cooking, why don't we go out tonight? A late dinner, maybe a movie—just the two of us. What do you think?" I suggested.

Lately, we hadn't spent as much time together as I wanted, and I was determined to make the most of every minute. Winona lifted her head and looked me in the eyes.

"I love that idea," she said with a smile.

I nodded and leaned in to kiss her.

"Come on. Let's shower and get ready for our date," I said, grinning.

I kept some clothes at her place now. It was easier than running home to change if I stayed over and had work the next morning. She nodded, stood, took my hand, and led me to the bathroom for a quick shower.

This time, we actually managed to shower. Most nights things got a little hotter, but tonight we took it slow. There would be time for that later.

We finished getting ready quickly, both of us eager to go out for dinner and a movie.

“What are you in the mood for tonight?” I asked.

“I think burgers and fries,” she said with a bright smile.

“How about Red’s—the grill down the street?” I suggested.

“Perfect,” she said, excitement written all over her face. Her eyes always lit up when food was involved.

We teased each other and talked the whole way there, laughter filling the car. When we arrived, I wrapped an arm around her waist and walked her inside. We found a table and settled in, placing our orders without hesitation.

While we waited, I reached for her hand and held it. Winona looked up; her eyes were so warm and bright it made my heart race.

“You really are perfect,” I said. The words slipped out before I could stop them.

“Not exactly,” she murmured, blushing as she pulled her hand back with a shy smile.

“Almost,” I whispered, smiling at her.

She turned to look at me with a softness I'd never seen before. Something different lived there—maybe tenderness, maybe something deeper I couldn't put into words. I leaned in and kissed her gently, feeling her smile against my lips.

"What do you think you're doing?" a sharp voice hissed beside us.

I knew instantly who it was—Leona.

What was she doing here? She'd never liked places like this. Bar food had always seemed beneath her. Winona and I pulled apart, and I saw her fists clenched on the table. I placed my hand over hers, hoping to ease some of the tension.

"What do you want, Leona? And since when do you eat in places like this?" I asked, keeping my voice steady.

"People change," she replied with a smile, batting her lashes.

"Nice try. That doesn't work on me. People like you don't change," I said quietly.

She rolled her eyes and shifted her gaze to Winona.

"Does it feel good making things worse for him?" she asked with disdain. "You two are making this so easy for me," she added with a smug smile as she mentioned the divorce.

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I saw Winona tense completely at that, her gaze dropping for a moment. It hurt to watch her start to absorb Leona's words. I stood, positioning myself directly in front of Leona, refusing to let her press Winona any further.

"Leona, you don't deserve my time or my energy. Winona has done nothing wrong here. You're the one trying to bleed me dry because money is the only thing you care about. You can tell your lawyers whatever you want. In the end, the truth will come out. You're the one who cheated—not me. So do us both a favor and walk away from me. Walk away from Winona, or I promise you'll end up with nothing. I have proof, and you know it," I warned, forcing my voice to stay firm.

Leona glared at me, but I wasn't going to let her rattle me any more than she already had. After a moment, she smiled like she was amused.

"This is just a phase. You'll come back to me, Davidson. Deep down, you know it," she said. Then she turned to Winona with a twisted smile. "Enjoy it while you can, because it won't last. He still loves me."

With that, she let out a cold laugh, flipped her hair back, and walked out of the restaurant.

I groaned, running my hands through my hair before turning back to Winona. She looked devastated.

"Winona, none of that is true. You know that, right?" I said, dropping to my knees in front of her.

She nodded, but her expression told me she didn't fully believe it.

"Winona, please. Have a little more faith—at least in me. I would never hurt you. I would never choose her over you, not now, not ever," I pleaded quietly, brushing her hair away from her face.

"I know. Can we go, please?" she sighed, her voice calm but tired.

I nodded, waved down the staff to cancel our order, and apologized for the inconvenience. Winona felt far from me now—her mind somewhere else, worry shining in her eyes. The drive back to her place was wrapped in a heavy silence that pressed on my chest. None of this was her fault. Leona was the one planting those seeds of doubt.

When we reached her door, I hesitated, unsure whether she wanted me to stay. I asked softly, "Do you want me to go home tonight?"

"No. Of course I don't. It's the last thing I want," she replied, grabbing my hand before I could turn away.

"Are you sure? Winona, it feels like you don't want me near you right now—not after what she said," I said, tracing slow circles over her skin with my thumb.

"Don't think that, Davidson. I always want you close. I hate when you're not with me. It's just that what she said got to me for a second, that's all. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you feel like I didn't want you." She squeezed my hand and reached up to touch my face.

Chapter 116

“Winona, listen to me. Everything Leona said is a lie. I don’t want her. I want you—only you. Don’t believe a single word she said. I want to spend every day and every night with you. It’s always been you for me. I promise,” I said, pulling her into my arms and kissing her deeply, trying to give her every ounce of certainty I had.

When we finally pulled apart, she leaned in and whispered against my ear, “Make love to me, Davidson.”

Her words sent my heart racing, a shiver sweeping through me. I didn’t hesitate. I pushed the door open, lifted her into my arms, and carried her to the bedroom. I laid her down carefully, never taking my eyes off her.

It had been so long since I’d let myself truly love someone—longer still since I’d felt this kind of need. But with her, I knew it was different. I was desperate to show her, to love her like I never had before.

Winona’s POV:

I was going to work that afternoon, just like I’d promised Davidson, after leaving a doctor’s appointment that morning.

Things between us had been wonderful over the past month, but I couldn’t shake the uncertainty about how everything would look after our next conversation.

“Is Davidson in his office?” I asked Lola at the front desk.

She looked at me with an expression I couldn’t quite read—maybe worry, maybe pity. My stomach tightened. Was there something I didn’t know?

“Winona, if I were you, I wouldn’t go in there right now,” she said gently, but firmly.

“What? Why?” I asked, growing more confused by the second.

She let out a sigh and shook her head, like she wished she didn’t have to say anything at all.

“Winona, please don’t do this—not for your own sake,” she pleaded.

Her warning only made my anxiety and confusion spike. Ignoring her, I hurried down the hallway, my heart hammering. I reached for the doorknob just as voices carried from inside—and one of them was unmistakably familiar.

Leona.

What was she doing here?

Davidson and his lawyers had made it clear she needed to keep her distance. But instead of listening, she seemed determined to make everything as difficult as possible. She was refusing to sign the divorce unless Davidson gave in to even more of her demands, or admitted to something that had never happened between us.

I was about to knock and walk in when a laugh floated through the door and froze me in place.

It sounded like Leona—light, childish. The same little giggle she used when Davidson was acting out or saying something sweet. My stomach twisted with a sick thought.

Were they flirting?

In that moment, I decided I wasn't going to knock.

Instead, I turned the handle and walked in.

She was sitting on the edge of his desk, her legs slightly parted, and he was standing between them with his hands on her thighs.

The sight hit me so hard my chest ached. It didn't just feel like my heart was breaking. It felt like it was shattering into a thousand pieces.

“What the hell is this?” I gasped.

“Shit,” I heard Davidson say.

He jerked away from her, smoothing his shirt as best he could, and rushed toward me.

“Winona, it’s not what it looks like, I swear,” he said.

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“Don’t lie to me. I saw you. You were on her, and your damn shirt is open. How could you do this?” My voice shook as a sob tore out of me.

“Winona, please. I’m sorry. I never wanted this to happen,” he said, panic in his eyes as he reached for me.

I swatted his hand away and shoved him back, then turned and ran out of his office and into the hallway toward the elevator. My vision blurred with tears, my chest burning as I struggled to breathe. I knew people were staring, watching me fall apart, but I didn’t care.

“Winona, wait, please!” I heard Davidson call behind me, his footsteps quick as he caught up.

He grabbed my hips, turned me around, and pulled me against his chest. I felt his arms trembling as he held on.

“Winona, sweetheart, please. I’m sorry. She was blackmailing me. She said if I didn’t sleep with her, she’d take everything from me—ruin me,” he said, holding me tighter, desperate.

I pushed him away as best I could, fighting the urge to collapse right there in front of him.

“Don’t you dare use that as an excuse!” I shouted. “You’re the one who told me money isn’t everything. You said it wouldn’t matter what she took—but that was just another lie, wasn’t it? Like everything you’ve ever said to me!”

“I meant it, Winona. I swear I did. Please, sweetheart, don’t let this destroy us. Can’t we get past this?” he begged, tears in his eyes.

“What does it matter, Davidson? The original plan was a setup, right?” My voice broke. “I can’t keep fighting for someone who never truly cared about me. I’m not competing with her—not when it’s always been her for you. Maybe for you it was just a game, but for me... for me, it stopped being fake a long time ago.”

I could barely get the words out. My whole body trembled.

“What? No—none of that is true. Please, Winona, I can’t lose you,” he said, his voice cracking as he sobbed.

“Too late. The damage is done,” I said, shaking my head. “Whatever we had is over, and I don’t want to cling to it anymore. I hope she’s worth it. It’s obvious you two belong together. You’re more alike than I ever wanted to believe. Deep down, I always knew it.”

I turned away and took the stairs instead of waiting for the elevator. I needed to get away from him as fast as possible. I needed to escape the stares, and Leona’s satisfied little smile in the doorway of his office.

“Winona, please, sweetheart!” I heard him call again, but I ignored him and kept running—down the stairs, out of the building.

I ran until my feet burned, until I couldn’t anymore, and only then did I stop. By the time I reached my apartment, I was shaking. I shoved the door open with my foot, and the moment I locked it behind me, my strength gave out. I sank to the floor and finally let myself break.

Chapter 118

I’d never imagined pain like this could exist. I’d never imagined heartbreak could hurt so much—like something was being ripped apart inside me. It felt like I could die.

I couldn’t understand how he could do that to me, especially with her. For a moment, I wondered if it was my fault.

I should’ve listened the first time I said there could never be anything between us because he was my boss. Maybe I should’ve held onto that and kept my distance. I didn’t know why I’d ever thought I had a chance against her.

Yes, she'd destroyed him in so many ways, but she was still his wife. She'd been the love of his life once, so I didn't know why I'd believed someone like me could replace her.

My phone started ringing, and I knew who it was without even looking. I let it ring, refusing to answer, but he kept calling—again and again—until I thought I couldn't take it anymore. I grabbed it and hit accept.

"Winona, please, can we talk? I'm not ready to give up on us. I'm not ready to give up on you. I'm sorry. Please, sweetheart, I need to see you." His voice sounded low and broken.

"No. It's over. I'm nobody's second choice. Have a nice life with her. Goodbye," I said, and hung up.

The tears came instantly—harder than before.

My whole body ached. My chest hurt so badly it felt like someone had driven a knife straight into my heart. I couldn't believe I'd let myself fall in love with him. What was I thinking? I never should've allowed any of this to begin—not even as something fake.

If I'd never let it happen, it wouldn't hurt like this.

Finally, I forced myself off the floor and stumbled into my bedroom. I undressed in a daze and crawled into bed. I curled beneath the sheets and started crying again. I slipped a hand under the blanket and rested it over my stomach.

“We’re going to be okay, sweetheart. I promise,” I whispered, rubbing my stomach in small circles.

I hadn’t expected my doctor’s appointment that morning to end with a surprise like this, though a part of me had already suspected the truth. I hadn’t been feeling well, and my period was late—that was why I’d gone in. The test confirmed it.

I was six weeks pregnant.

That was what I’d planned to talk to Davidson about.

I supposed that was another reason the pain felt so sharp. I was pregnant with his child, and on the very same day I found out, I also learned that I apparently hadn’t meant much to him after all.

I knew I would have to tell him about the baby. I wasn’t the kind of person who kept something like that from someone—not even if they’d shattered my heart. I could never do that to him, or to anyone. I just needed time to breathe and sort through the chaos in my head. Once I did, I would tell him.

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What happened after that would be his decision. If he wanted to be part of the baby’s life, we’d figure it out. The baby and I would be okay.

Deep down, though, I didn’t think he’d turn his back on his own child. He’d always said he wanted to be a father more than anything.

Then again, he'd chosen Leona—even though he knew she couldn't have children. Maybe that had been another lie, too. I didn't know.

What I did know was that, with or without him, I would do everything I could to make sure my baby was safe and loved.

I closed my eyes, tears still slipping down my face, and cried until sleep finally took me.

Davidson's POV:

"Damn it! Damn it all—everything!" How could I be so stupid?

I ran after Winona, but by the time I reached the lobby, she was gone. I couldn't believe what I'd just done.

It was true—Leona had been blackmailing me. She'd gotten photos of me with Winona and then manipulated the dates to make it look like we'd been together while I was still married. She threatened to destroy everything I had if I didn't do what she wanted. She even promised she'd ruin Winona's life, and I couldn't allow that.

But after seeing the devastation on Winona's face, I knew I'd made the wrong decision. There had to be another way—something, anything—other than doing what I nearly did before Winona walked in.

All I'd done was break the heart of the woman I loved. Her shattered expression burned behind my eyelids every time I blinked. I trudged back to my office, ignoring the stares and whispers that followed me down the hallway.

When I walked in, Leona was waiting—sprawled in my chair with a smug smile, half-dressed.

"Where were we?" she asked in a sweet voice as she sauntered toward me.

If she'd tried this months ago, I probably would've fallen for it. Now, I felt nothing but disgust. She didn't tempt me in the slightest.

"Where were we?" she repeated, her voice syrupy.

"Nowhere," I snapped. "Get out of my office. I never want to see your face again."

"Are you really sure about that, Davidson?" she laughed—a dark, bitter sound. "I warned you. I'll take everything if you don't give me what I want."

That was it. Something inside me cracked. I was tired of her controlling my life. Tired of her blaming me.

“You know what? Fine!” I shouted, my voice echoing off the walls. “Go ahead—take it all! Take the damn company! Take the house! Take all the money and the cars! I don’t care anymore!”

She stared at me, stunned—clearly thrown by my words. I’d never yelled at her. No matter what she’d done in the past, I’d always kept my anger under control. But this time, I was at my limit. She’d already ruined my life.

“I’m not playing, Davidson,” she hissed. “I’ll take everything and I won’t think twice.”

“I don’t care!” I shouted, my voice trembling with rage and desperation. “Do you hear me? None of it matters if I don’t have Winona!”

Chapter 120

Her face shifted at that. She narrowed her eyes, her lips pressing into a thin, bitter line.

“You’d lose everything for that bitch?” she sneered, dripping with contempt.

“Yes, I would.” My voice dropped, steady and hard. “I’d give it all up just to get her back. The money, the company, the house—none of it matters if I can’t be with her. So do whatever you want, Leona. I’m done with this. I’m done fighting, and I’m done with you. The truth is, I don’t even know what I saw in you to love you so blindly in the first place.”

“Are you serious?” she scoffed, rolling her eyes and looking at me like I was revolting.

“Yes, I’m serious. I love her, Leona. Why can’t you understand that? I love her more than I ever loved you. You don’t mean anything to me anymore. You broke me. You shattered my heart and made me give up on love for years. Then she came into my life, and even though she started out as just my assistant, she changed everything. She made me believe in love again, no matter how much it hurts. I’ve moved on, Leona. So take whatever you want. I don’t care anymore.”

I shook my head, done wasting any more words or energy on her.

She stayed where she was, watching me. She looked like she wanted to say something, but before she could, I turned and walked away. I heard her footsteps behind me as she followed.

“You just made the biggest mistake of your life, Davidson.”

I stopped and turned to face her.

“No,” I said quietly. “I already made the biggest mistake of my life when I married you. Winona will never be a mistake. Even if we don’t end up together—she’s everything to me. You never were. Back then, I convinced myself you were the one. But now I know it’s her. Instead of wasting your time trying to ruin other people’s lives, Leona, maybe you should build one that actually makes you happy. Maybe then you wouldn’t be so bitter and selfish. Be happy—but far away from me. I truly hope you find whatever you’re missing.”

I spoke softly because I was exhausted. I didn’t want to be angry anymore. I had nothing left to spend on her.

My mind was on Winona now.

I needed to see her. I needed to find her and talk to her.

If I'd destroyed everything between us, I wouldn't blame her if she slammed the door in my face. I wouldn't blame her if she told me she never wanted to see me again after what I'd done. The only thing I knew for certain was that I wasn't leaving without doing everything I could to earn her forgiveness.

The thought of living without her was already killing me.

I knew I needed her. She'd become everything to me, and I needed her to understand that.