

A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

c 21-30

Borrowed textbooks 21

Grandfather Asher

The television screen dimmed the replay of Amber's interview fading into silence.

Grandfather Asher remained seated, cane resting beneath his palm, expression unreadable.

His assistant approached quietly.

"Sir."

He did not look up.

"The private line."

That made him glance over.

The assistant held out the discreet black phone – the one reserved for very few names.

On the screen, a contact flickered:

The Joker.

A slow smile formed.

"Well," Grandfather Asher murmured. "It took you long enough."

He accepted the call.

Before the other side could speak, he drawled,

“How much longer were you planning to leave me in the dark that my only granddaughter had married into your family, Sun?”

A burst of laughter answered him deep, unrestrained, familiar.

“You’re the one accusing me of secrecy?” the voice shot back warmly. “You hid that firecracker of a granddaughter under my nose for years.”

On the other end was Mr. Sun.

Old colleague.

Old rival.

Older friend.

They had built empires side by side in their youth – before competition divided territories but never quite severed respect.

“You knew,” Grandfather Asher said.

“I suspected,” Mr. Sun replied. “Jason has had that look about him for months.”

“And you said nothing.” 1

“You dissolved the betrothal,” Mr. Sun reminded him. “I assumed you had your reasons.”

A pause.

They both remembered.

Years ago.

Two ambitious men in their prime, sitting over tea and drafting what they believed would be the perfect union – Asher stability and Sun expansion.

+15 Bonus

They had dreamed of it.

Spoken of grandchildren who would inherit both empires seamlessly.

Then the children grew.

Temperaments clashed.

Advisors interfered.

And caution won over instinct.

“You know,” Mr. Sun said lightly, “we were fools.”

Grandfather Asher exhaled through his nose.

“We were cautious.”

“We were afraid they would burn the world down together.”

A short silence.

“And now?” Mr. Asher asked.

“Now,” Mr. Sun chuckled, “I think they might build one.”

The assistant wisely retreated farther away.

“Does your wife know?” Grandfather Asher asked.

A brief pause.

“No.”

That answer carried weight.

“She believes this developed recently,” Mr. Sun continued. “She does not know about our... original intentions.”

“And you prefer to keep it that way.”

“For now.”

Grandfather Asher nodded slowly.

“Mrs. Sun would not appreciate discovering that her son’s marriage was once sketched out like a merger agreement.” ¹

Mr. Sun laughed again.

“She would appreciate the outcome. Not the method.”

A comfortable silence settled between them. ¹

“You always said,” Mr. Sun added thoughtfully, “that our families would be unstoppable united.”

“I still believe it.”

“And yet we are here because two stubborn children did what we hesitated to finalize.”

Grandfather Asher’s lips curved faintly.

“Perhaps that is the difference between our generation and theirs.”

“They do not ask permission.”

214

Grandto

“No.” Mr. Asher agreed. “They choose.”

A softer note entered Mr. Sun’s voice.

“She kept her surname.”

“Yes.”

“You’re pleased.”

“I am.”

A hum of approval came from the other end.

“Jason expected that,” Mr. Sun admitted. “He told me she would not give up her name.”

“And you?”

“I told him if he expected her to, he didn’t deserve her.”

That made Grandfather Asher laugh genuinely this time.

“Well. At least one of us raised our grandson correctly.” 1

“You’re implying I did?”

“I’m implying you finally did something right.”

Their laughter blended – two aging titans momentarily young again.

Then Mr. Sun's tone shifted, slightly more serious.

"Is she steady?"

"She is stronger than we anticipated," Grandfather Asher said. "And more strategic."

"Good."

A pause.

"We always wanted this alliance," Mr. Sun said quietly. "Not for leverage. For legacy."

"I know."

"And now it's happened without contracts, negotiations, or signatures.

"Which may make it stronger," Mr. Asher replied.

Another thoughtful silence.

"For now," Mr. Sun said at last, "let's allow them to believe this was entirely their idea."

Grandfather Asher smiled.

"Agreed."

"And if trouble comes?"

"It will," Mr. Asher said calmly.

A dry chuckle answered him.

"Then we stand behind them."

1

+15 Bonus

Grandfather Ter

Not in front.

Not controlling.

Behind.

“As we should have from the beginning,” Mr. Sun added.

The line quieted.

“Old friend,” Mr. Sun said, voice warm again, “we may have lost ten years.”

“Yes.”

“But we gained the right pair.”

Grandfather Asher looked toward the darkened screen where Amber had sat with such quiet power.

“Yes,” he said softly. “We did.”

The call ended.

He handed the phone back to his assistant.

“Well?” the assistant asked carefully.

Grandfather Asher rose slowly.

“It appears,” he said with dry satisfaction, “that fate has better negotiation skills than we ever did.”

And somewhere across the city-

Two old men who once drafted a future with ink

realized their grandchildren had signed it in choice instead.

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The children

The doors opened quietly this time.

Jason stepped in first, one hand resting lightly on Alex's shoulder. Alice followed-and the moment she saw me, she ran.

The flashes began instantly.

She wrapped herself around my legs as if I were the only solid thing in the room.

I knelt without thinking, brushing her hair away from her face.

"Hey, darling," I whispered. "Aren't you supposed to be at school?" 1,

She only pressed closer.

Jason reached us in seconds, composed but alert, his gaze sweeping the reporters before softening when it landed on us.

“They said they weren’t feeling well,” he said calmly. “The school sent them home.”

Alex stood slightly behind him, cap low over his bandage, watching everything.

Watching the cameras.

Watching me.

And suddenly, beneath the composure I had held all morning, a crack formed.

I had chosen this.

I had walked into this fire willingly.

They had not.

The flashes intensified, drawn to the image – the perfect, devastating family portrait.

I rose slowly and instinctively shifted, trying to place myself between the children and the cameras. My hand moved to guide Alice closer to my side, angling her face toward my shoulder.

I didn't want those lenses capturing her fear.

Didn't want tomorrow's headlines dissecting the expression of a little girl.

Alex noticed.

Of course he did.

He stepped closer – not behind Jason. 1

Beside me.

And then, quietly, he slipped his hand into mine.

Not because he needed protection.

Because he was offering steadiness.

I looked down at him, surprised.

His fingers tightened just slightly, grounding.

My soul felt heavy.

The Chan

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Their presence would help undeniably. The public would see unity, stability, warmth.

But it would also expose them

To commentary.

To strangers' opinions.

To dissected screenshots and online cruelty.

To being reduced to props in a story they didn't write.

A reporter's voice cut through the moment.

"Mr. Sun, do you feel guilty for taking your stepbrother's fiancée away from him?"

Jason shifted half a step forward, subtly placing himself between the press and s.

"I didn't take anything from my brother," he said evenly.

“My brother was quite occupied with his own wife.”

The murmurs started immediately.

“And I would appreciate that you respect the truth of the timeline,” he continued. “We did not begin a relationship while she was engaged. That engagement had already ended.”

Another push.

“So you feel no guilt?”

“I feel responsible for the woman I married,” Jason replied calmly. “Not for decisions my brother made in his own marriage.”

His hand brushed my back briefly.

Steady.

But my thoughts were elsewhere.

On the small hand holding mine.

On Alice pressing into my side.

On whether I was strong enough to carry the consequences of this choice for more than just myself.

A chair shifted.

Grandmother Sun rose.

Mrs. Sun did not raise her voice, yet the room quieted instantly.

“Let us be clear,” she said smoothly.

“Even if they share a father, they belong to different families.”

A deliberate pause.

“The Sun family and the White family have different interests.”

The separation was public now.

Official

The children

+15 Bonus

“As for Oscar,” she added with composed courtesy, “we wish him the very best in his new marriage.”

A dismissal wrapped in grace

The line was drawn.

But I barely heard the end of it.

Because Alex's thumb had shifted slightly against my band — a small, reassuring motion.

As if he sensed the weight pressing down on me.

As if he were telling me:

It's okay.

I squeezed back gently.

And in that moment, beneath the flashes and declarations and political maneuvering —

The only thing that truly mattered was whether I could become someone worthy of the trust in that small hand.

As the interview wrapped up and the reporters were escorted out, my phone vibrated.

That ringtone meant only one person.

“Molly.”

“That was impressive,” she said. “If I didn’t know you, I’d believe you were nothing but an innocent victim. Not the brilliant, calculating woman I grew up with.”

I huffed out a quiet breath. “Careful. I can be innocent.”

She laughed softly.

“I wasn’t acting,” I continued, my voice lowering. “I just didn’t hide it this time. Pain doesn’t disappear because you learn how to carry it. I’ve just... gotten good at not letting it show.”

For a moment, neither of us spoke.

“Well,” Molly continued, her tone shifting slightly, “you should know that Marcus released the vows.”

My fingers tightened around the phone.

“I follow him on social media. The second the marriage question came up during the interview, the wedding vows were posted.”

Of course he did.

“I have to admit,” she added, almost impressed, “the editing was clever. He timed it perfectly. And somehow... he even managed to make Jason sound romantic.”

I let out a slow breath.

“Jason doesn’t need editing to sound romantic,” I said quietly. “He just doesn’t waste words.”

“I actually appreciate the way he speaks,” I continued. “When Jason says something, he means it. Every word carries weight. He doesn’t throw around empty phrases or make promises he has no intention of keeping.”

I paused, a faint warmth rising in my chest.

“He chooses his words carefully... and when he gives one, he keeps it.”

“I actually appreciate the way he speaks,” I said, a little more firmly than I intended.
“When Jason says something, he means it.

Every word carries weight.” 2

I shifted slightly, turning away from the window.

“He doesn’t waste time on empty declarations or dramatic promises. That’s not who he is.”

A brief pause.

“And I prefer that,” I added, quieter now. “At least with him, you don’t have to wonder which parts are real.”

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We drifted into lighter topics after that – Molly's upcoming clothing line debut, fabric choices, venue rumors, guest lists. It felt almost normal.

Almost.

Then another call came through.

Grandfather.

“Molly, I'm sorry – I have to take this. I'll call you back.”

Her teasing hum was the last thing I heard before I switched the line.

The moment I answered, my grandfather's booming voice filled my ear.

"Amber, I just watched the interview."

Of course he had.

"You are required to attend lunch today," he continued without pause, "with your new husband and the children."

A deliberate beat.

"It is not optional."

Alice, still seated beside me, brightened instantly at the invitation. She had clearly heard enough of the call.

"We're going to eat with Amber today!" she said excitedly, turning to Alex and speaking so fast the words nearly collided. "Did you hear that? We're invited. She's not leaving us."

Grandfather chuckled on the other end of the line.

“She reminds me of you when you were a little girl,” he said warmly. “Whatever happened to your happiness?”

The words slipped out before I could stop them.

“It was beaten out of me by the sitters you hired.”

Silence.

For a fraction of a second, I almost regretted it.

Almost.

Before he could respond, I shifted the tone.

“We’ll be there,” I said evenly, and ended the call.

The room felt heavier afterward.

I turned to Jason.

“Ready to meet my grandfather?”

He gave a half-smile- calm, steady.

“The least I can do,” he replied, “after the way my family received you yesterday is pay my respects to the man who raised you.”

We all walked toward Jason’s wing together.

Alice was still buzzing with excitement from the invitation, her small hand wrapped around mine as if afraid I might disappear

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+15 Bonus

between rooms. Alex followed beside Jason, quieter as always, observing everything.

“Let’s get you changed, “Hold Alice softly.

Inside my dressing room, I helped her choose between two dresses. She picked the pale blue one without hesitation.

“This one,” she declared. “It matches your eyes.”

I smiled despite myself and knelt to smooth the fabric over her shoulders. For a brief moment, it felt absurdly domestic. Normal.

Across the hall, Jason was helping Alex. I caught a glimpse of them – Jason adjusting the boy’s collar, Alex standing still and patient. There was something steady about them together. Solid.

Less than ten minutes later, we were on our way.

The Asher estate rose into view sooner than I was ready for.

It was larger than the Sun estate – far larger. Expansive stone walls, manicured gardens stretching endlessly, fountains placed with deliberate symmetry. And yet, for all its size, only one Asher lived there.

My grandfather. 1

The gates opened before we even stopped.

Mrs. Rin was already waiting at the entrance.

The moment she saw me, her face softened in a way it never had for anyone else.

And when she saw the children, she lit up entirely.

“Oh, look at you,” she fussed gently, ushering Jason, Alice, and Alex inside as if they had always belonged there. “It has been far too long since this house had little footsteps in it.”

If there was any motherly warmth in my childhood, it had come from her.

Not the sitters.

Not the estate.

Her.

We moved into the living room, where my grandfather stood waiting.

He did not look angry.

That surprised me.

I had expected fury. Disappointment. Cold reprimand.

Instead, he looked... conflicted.

Older.

He greeted Jason first, measured but respectful. Then he bent slightly toward Alice and Alex, speaking to them with a gentleness few people ever saw.

Lunch was formal but not tense.

Jason and my grandfather spoke at length about business, expansion, overseas travel. Their conversation was controlled – two powerful men circling each other politely, assessing without clashing.

I watched them both carefully.

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Starzy

+15 Bonus

Testing

Measuring.

When dessert was cleared, my grandfather folded his hands.

“This estate is too large for one man,” he said evenly. “You should all move here. There is more than enough room. It would be ... appropriate.”

Silence fell over the table.

I hadn’t expected that.

Not so soon.

Not like this.

I opened my mouth to respond

But Alex spoke first.

“We can stay,” he said calmly.

Every head turned toward him.

He didn't look uncertain.

He looked decided. 1

And in that moment, I realized this lunch had shifted into something far bigger than an invitation.

I turned toward Alex.

"Why do you want to stay?"

He didn't hesitate. He looked straight into my eyes steady, unflinching.

"Because here," he said quietly, "I won't be locked inside a closet. And no one will try to hurt me. Or my sister. Or my dad. Or you."

The words landed like stones.

Jason went still beside me.

“Alex...” His voice was tight, controlled. “If you don’t feel safe at home, I need to know that. I’m sorry I failed to protect you and Alice. I promise you, nothing like that will ever happen again.”

My grandfather’s posture sharpened instantly.

“What happened?” he asked, his tone no longer warm.

Alice answered before anyone else could.

“Our nanny was mean,” she said, her small hands curling into her dress. “She hit me and pushed me down. She locked Alex inside a closet and hurt him.”

Her voice wavered slightly.

“But Amber saved us.”

The room felt colder

My grandfather’s gaze shifted to me.

STO

“And you saw this?”

“Part of it,” I replied evenly “The rest, I believed when she told ine.”

He studied my face- not casually, Not dismissively.

He truly looked at me.

“She was not lying,” he said after a long moment.

But I knew that look.

It wasn’t only about Alice.

It was about the past.

About a little girl who had once tried to tell him things – and had not been believed.

“She wasn’t,” I said quietly.

And this time, I wasn’t talking about Alice.

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My grandfather sighed.

It wasn't irritation.

It was pain.

Regret.

"I'm sorry, darling," he said quietly. "Truly sorry."

Then he turned to Alex.

"You may stay here whenever you wish. You are welcome at any time. Everyone in this house will believe you – I will make sure

of it."

His voice hardened slightly.

"You will be safe."

Something shifted in the room at that declaration.

Then his gaze returned to me.

"Amber, can we speak?"

Jason subtly moved, as if ready to intervene, but I gave a small shake of my head.

It was time.

"Yes," I said evenly. "I think it's about time."

The walk to his study felt longer than it should have.

I could see the butler and Mrs. Rin watching from the staircase, their expressions carefully neutral but their eyes heavy with

curiosity and concern.

The moment the study door closed behind us, my grandfather pulled me into his arms.

For a second, I froze.

Then I felt it.

His shoulders shaking.

Tears.

“I’m sorry I failed you,” he said against my hair. “More than once. But that ends now.”

I swallowed.

He pulled back just enough to look at me.

“It is time you take your place as my heir. Officially. If nothing else, it will give you the backing you should have always had.”

The words were heavy.

Not just an apology.

A correction

Thugged him back, slower this time.

+15 Bonus

“I appreciate the support,” I said carefully. “And I will gladly make it public.”

I met his eyes steadily.

“After I retrieve my properties.

“And when will that be?” my grandfather asked immediately.

His tone had changed. No longer regretful.

Focused.

“Do you need lawyers? Public backing? Government support?” he continued. “You ask, and I will make it happen.”

I held his gaze.

“You made a fine choice with Jason Sun,” he added after a moment. “I approve.”

The weight of that approval was not small.

For my grandfather to say that meant Jason had made an impression – a significant one.

“Tomorrow,” I said calmly. “Tomorrow I will go with Jason to the company. They have a shareholders’ meeting scheduled.”

I paused deliberately.

“With Marcus Hess.” 1

His eyes sharpened.

“And how do you know Marcus Hess?”

A faint smile curved my lips.

“Funnily enough,” I replied, “he’s Jason’s best friend.”

Silence settled between us again – but this time it wasn’t heavy.

It was calculating.

My grandfather leaned back slightly, reassessing.

“So this is coordinated.”

“It’s strategic,” I corrected gently.

His expression shifted not displeased.

Impressed.

My grandfather took a slow, measured breath.

“Amber, child... what exactly happened with Oscar?”

I folded my arms loosely, more to steady myself than to defend.

“He took me for granted,” I said quietly. “At least, that’s how it feels.”

The words tasted bitter but clean.

“He decided to chase someone who made him feel necessary. My assistant Amelie. He was the one who hired her. So I believe they met before that.”

Retro

+15 Bonus

My grandfather’s jaw tightened visibly.

Across the room, Jason’s gaze found mine-sharp, protective, silently asking if needed him to step in.

I gave the smallest shake of my head.

I had this.

Grandfather’s voice lowered.

“You know,” he said carefully, “Oscar knew I was remodeling your space.”

My brows drew together.

“I believe he assumed I meant your parents’ house. That was when I realized... you had not told him the truth.”

The truth.

“He thought you were simply part of the Asher family,” my grandfather continued. “But not the main line, didn’t he?”

I let out a quiet breath.

“He never asked.”

I met his eyes steadily.

“Everyone knows you act as a grandfather to the second and third branches. You attend their ceremonies. You sponsor their ventures.”

I paused.

“When I introduced you as my grandfather, he smiled politely.”

Nothing more.

No curiosity.

No calculation.

No verification.

My grandfather's expression shifted
not just anger.

Disappointment.

"He assumed," he murmured.

"Yes," I replied. "He assumed."

And in this world, assumption was negligence.

"And you never corrected him?" my grandfather asked. 1

"I didn't," I admitted.

My voice lowered despite myself.

"I think... even then, his resistance to marriage hurt more than I was willing to admit."

There it was.

Not pride.

Ragrat

+15 Bonus

Not strategy.

Just truth.

Silence stretched between us.

"It was actually Jason who asked," I continued "I assumed he had told Oscar. I thought perhaps that was why Oscar suddenly became attentive." 1

A humorless smile touched my lips.

"But later I learned he hadn't."

My grandfather's gaze sharpened.

“When I asked Jason why,” I said softly, “he just shook his head.”

I could still see it – the calm certainty in his expression.

“He told me Oscar wasn’t worthy of the information.” 1

The words hung in the air.

Not dramatic.

Not angry.

Just definitive.

My grandfather exhaled slowly. 1

“Interesting,” he murmured.

Because Jason hadn’t been protecting a secret.

He had been protecting me.

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Someone like you

Grandfather told me to take a moment.

Only then did I notice my hands were trembling slightly.

He turned to Jason with composed ease and announced he would show the children the pool house – and the go-kart racing track. Alice gasped in delight. Alex tried to remain composed, but I saw the spark in his eyes.

Within seconds, they were gone.

The door closed softly behind them.

Silence settled.

I moved to sit beside Jason.

“What’s wrong?” he asked quietly.

I looked at him carefully.

“Why did you keep the fact that I’m from the main Asher line from Oscar? And from Mr. White?” 1

He didn’t answer immediately.

He drew in a slow breath and held my gaze steadily.

“Because they didn’t deserve to know.” 1

There was no hesitation in his voice.

“Even then,” he continued, “you were working yourself to the bone. I would pass your office on my way to mine, and you’d still be there on calls, in meetings, drafting reports.”

His jaw tightened slightly.

“And Oscar?” he added. “He would be spinning in his chair half the afternoon. My father would pat him on the back and say he did well securing you into the family.”

The words felt heavier than they should have.

“Securing me?” I repeated softly.

Jason’s expression hardened.

“He used to tell me I should find someone like you,” he said. “He thought you were... useful.”

A quiet pause.

“I think they both took you for granted,” he finished. “They never looked deeper. Never asked who you really were. They only saw what you could do for them.”

His hand shifted, resting lightly over mine.

“I saw you,” he said.

Not dramatic.

Not loud

Just certain.

And for the first time that evening, my hands stopped shaking.

Someone T VOU

+15 Bonus

I grabbed his hand.

Not gently.

Firmly.

I needed something solid before I said what came next.

“I think... I knew I was useful,” I admitted slowly. “For me, that’s how I express love.”

I let out a quiet breath.

“Or maybe... in hindsight... that’s how I thought I had to be in order to be worthy of love.”

The words felt fragile.

“I know that’s not true,” I continued. “I understand it logically. But there’s a difference between knowing something... and feeling it.”

Jason didn’t interrupt.

He just held my hand tighter.

“I think I was only with Oscar out of habit,” I said softly. “Not love. It was comfortable. Familiar. Expected.”

I swallowed.

“When Amelie was forced on me as my assistant, I knew it was over. I just thought I had more time to untangle everything before it exploded.”

A faint, bitter smile crossed my lips.

“I was wrong.”

Silence stretched between us, but it wasn’t uncomfortable.

It was honest.

“But Jason...” I lifted my eyes to his. “I see you too.”

His expression shifted – not surprised, but attentive.

“That’s why marrying you was an easy decision,” I said quietly. “You give freely what I’ve always craved. I saw it at every family event. The way you stood back. The way you watched. The way you protected without announcing it.”

I hesitated.

“I actually felt guilty,” I admitted. “For noticing you more than I noticed Oscar. Even then.”

The confession settled between us.

Not scandalous.

Not reckless.

Just true.

Jason turned fully toward me.

Not halfway

Not casually

Someone YOU

-

+15 Bonus

Fully

“You have to know something,” he said quietly. “I actually like you.”

The corner of his mouth lifted slightly, but his eyes were serious.

“You’ve always impressed me. Now more than ever.”

Something warm moved through my chest, steady and unexpected.

“I can only imagine my father’s face when he heard we were married,” he continued, a faint trace of dry humor in his voice. “He always told me I should find someone like you.”

He paused, studying me carefully.

“I suppose I took his advice a little too literally.”

I couldn't help the small laugh that escaped me..

But there was something else beneath his tone.

Not just amusement.

Choice.

He hadn't married me to spite his father.

He had chosen me.

And that was very different.

He stood and offered me his hand.

Not casually.

Intentionally.

I looked at it for a fraction of a second before placing mine in his.

The choice felt heavier than our marriage certificate. 1

That had been strategic.

This felt... personal.

As we walked toward the stairs, our fingers intertwined, I realized something quietly profound.

This was the real beginning.

Not the vows.

Not the press conference.

This.

When we descended the staircase, we were met with a sight I never expected.

My grandfather was standing beside Mr. and Mrs. Sun. 1

And they were speaking like old friends.

Not rivals.

Someone

+15 Bonu!

Not wary allies.

Old friends.

They turned at the sound of our footsteps.

Their eyes dropped immediately to our joined hands. 1

I felt Jason's grip tighten slightly- not possessive, but steady.

My grandfather's expression shifted first.

Not surprise.

Approval.

Mr. Sun's lips curved faintly, calculating as ever. Mrs. Sun's gaze lingered a second longer, assessing, perhaps measuring something unspoken.

For the first time since this began, it didn't feel like two families negotiating a scandal.

It felt like something aligning.

And for once, I wasn't standing alone in the center of it.

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Heading

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Jason informed his grandparents that we would be staying at the Asher estate for the time being

They were visibly surprised.

Mrs. Sun raised an elegant brow. Mr. Sun simply observed, calculating as always.

But neither objected. a

After a brief pause, they both agreed.

“Well,” Mrs. Sun said lightly, glancing between my grandfather and her husband, “if the men in this family had used their heads properly, they would have paired you two years ago.”

Grandfather huffed.

Mr. Sun pretended not to hear.

Then Mrs. Sun's sharp gaze settled on me.

"Why," she asked smoothly, "did you never reveal you were the Asher heir?"

The question wasn't accusatory.

It was strategic.

I answered just as calmly.

"If I can't survive a situation without using my family name," I said, "then I'm not worthy of carrying it."

Silence followed.

Not disagreement.

Assessment.

Mrs. Sun's lips curved faintly.

"Fair," she said. 1

A week passed.

And something unexpected happened.

Life... settled.

Jason and I fell into a routine with the children — breakfasts together, school drop-offs coordinated between estates, evenings that felt strangely domestic despite the political undercurrents surrounding us.

Jason worked from the Asher study more often than not. I began preparing for the legal proceedings to reclaim my properties.

The shareholders' meeting was postponed.

Then postponed again.

And again.

Each time citing “logistical adjustments.”

But I knew better.

Oscar didn’t know what to present without me.

+15 Bonus

For years, I had organized the financial structures, prepared the projections, aligned the departments. I had built the narratives he repeated in boardrooms,

Without me, there was no script.

And he had never learned how to write his own.

The bubble burst on a Tuesday morning.

The headline hit like a detonation.

White Company Standing on Stolen Property.

I read the article once.

Then again.

It detailed, with brutal precision, how much the company would owe me in compensation for the unauthorized use of my properties over the past several years. It broke down projected profits. Operational expansions. Development leverage.

All built on land still legally registered under my name.

They had operated without proper sign-off.

Without final transfer.

Without ownership.

And then came the real blow.

A formal government statement was attached.

It notified White Company that their development contracts were being terminated immediately due to failure to provide a structured construction plan for the newly acquired lands- lands still under my legal ownership. 2

The statement concluded by confirming that officials would be contacting me directly to determine whether I wished to proceed with the project independently.

It was clean.

Precise.

Devastating.

Within minutes, my phone began vibrating relentlessly.

The board of investors.

Mr. White.

Oscar.

Even Amelie.

Call after call after call.

I watched the screen light up.

And let every single one of them go to voicemail.

For years, I had answered immediately.

Clarified.

+15 Bonus

Fixed

Structured.

This time, they could wait.

The next call didn't come to me.

It came to Jason.

I knew something was wrong the moment his expression changed.

"The school," he said quietly, already standing.

My stomach dropped.

“They said Oscar attempted to sign the children out.”

For a second, everything went cold.

“He doesn’t have authorization,” Jason added, already reaching for his keys. “They refused. They called me immediately.”

It was the last day of school before summer.

They should have been thinking about vacations.

Not custody breaches.

We drove in silence.

Controlled.

Focused.

By the time we arrived, the children were waiting in the administrative office – unaware of the undercurrent.

Alice ran to us first.

“Are we leaving early?” she asked brightly.

“Yes,” I said smoothly, kneeling to her level. “We are.”

Alex watched us more carefully.

He didn’t ask questions.

He didn’t need to.

We signed them out properly.

Legally.

And took them home.

Marcus was waiting when we arrived at the Asher estate.

He stood near the entrance, jacket off, sleeves rolled up, phone in hand.

He didn't look surprised to see us.

He looked ready.

"We need to go," he said without preamble.

244

+15 Bonus

"To the company. Now."

ason's posture shifted instantly.

'For what?' I asked calmly.

Marcus looked at me directly.

'To reclaim what's yours.'

His voice was steady.

"The board is panicking. The government notice hit harder than expected. If you walk in today with documentation – you lon't just demand compensation."

He paused.

'You take control.'

The weight of the moment settled in my chest.

Oscar had tried to reach for the children.

Now we would reach for the company.

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all the board

We didn't warn them.

We simply arrived.

ason walked at my side. The children stayed close, Marcus just behind us – calm, immovable, inevitable 2

The moment we entered the company lobby, the air

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

Phones were lowered. 1

Eyes widened.

‘Call the board,’ I instructed the receptionist evenly. “Tell them I’m requesting an immediate audience. All of them.”

No one argued.

Within twenty minutes, we were inside the executive conference room.

Every board member.

Mr. White.

Oscar.

And the company's legal counsel – Susan.

Their faces told the story before they spoke.

Shock.

Calculation.

Fear.

I didn't sit.

Instead, I gestured lightly toward Marcus.

"This," I said, my voice steady, "is my legal representative."

Recognition hit instantly.

Marcus wasn't just any attorney.

He was the most feared corporate litigator in the country — the man companies hired when billions were at stake.

The color drained from Susan's face.

Oscar stiffened.

Marcus placed a leather portfolio on the table, calm as ever.

“We’ll keep this efficient,” he said smoothly.

Susan attempted to recover first. “We were unaware that Miss Asher-”

“Stop,” Marcus interrupted gently.

He opened the folder.

+15 Bonus

+15 Bonus

copies of documents slid across the table.

Enlarged.

Highlighted.

Marked.

‘Over the last several years,” he continued, “this company has presented multiple development assets as corporate property.”

le tapped one page.

‘Assets that remain legally registered under Miss Asher’s name.”

Silence.

Then another document.

‘More concerning, falsified authorization documents have surfaced – bearing a replicated company stamp and forged ignature.”

My signature. 1

My seal.

Used to claim ownership of my buildings.

Susan's composure cracked.

'That is a serious accusation," she said tightly.

Marcus slid forward the originals.

Not copies.

The originals.

'With authentication certificates," he added. "Including time-stamped registry confirmations and forensic verification of ignature discrepancies." 1

The room went still.

Oscar looked at Susan.

Susan looked at the table.

Mr. White closed his eyes briefly.

“In cooperation with Mr. Oscar White,” Marcus finished calmly, “Counsel Susan drafted and submitted falsified documents in an attempt to reassign ownership of Miss Asher’s properties.”

There it was.

Said plainly.

No theatrics.

Just fact.

I stepped forward.

“You built expansion reports on land you never owned,” I said quietly. “You leveraged assets that were never yours. You profited from structures legally registered to me.”

215

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

“I am demanding full compensation for unauthorized use, projected profit displacement, and reputational damages.”

Marcus named the number.

It wasn’t small.

It wasn’t negotiable.

And everyone in that room knew it was correct.

The problem was obvious.

Mr. White cleared his throat.

“The company,” he began carefully, “does not currently have the liquidity to cover that amount.”

Of course they didn’t.

They had leveraged my properties to secure funding.

Without them, their valuation dropped overnight. 1

Oscar finally spoke.

“You’re trying to bankrupt us.”

I met his eyes.

“No,” I said calmly.

“You did that yourselves.”

“No,” I said calmly. “You did that yourselves.” 2

The silence that followed was suffocating. 2

Then Mr. White straightened in his seat, his composure snapping back into place like armor. 2

“My son,” he said firmly, “would never do something so foolish.”

His gaze swept the table as if daring anyone to contradict him.

“Oscar was handling operations under legal advisement. If there are discrepancies, they are procedural errors intent.”

Oscar seized the opening immediately.

“Yes,” he said quickly. “I relied on counsel. Susan handled the documentation. I never forged anything.”

Susan’s chair scraped sharply against the floor as she stood.

not criminal

“You relied on counsel?” she repeated, incredulous. “You told me Miss Asher was unavailable to sign at the moment but had given you full consent to proceed.”

Her eyes were blazing now.

“You said she had verbally authorized you to execute on her behalf.”

I didn’t move.

I didn’t blink.

Marcus remained still beside me.

+15 Bonus

Susan turned fully toward Oscar. “You told me she was traveling and unreachable. That timing was critical. That delays would cost the company millions.”

Oscar’s jaw tightened. “You’re the lawyer. You drafted the documents.”

“At your instruction!” she shot back.

The board members shifted uncomfortably.

I finally spoke.

“When,” I asked evenly, “did this alleged call take place?” 1

Susan hesitated only briefly. “April 12th. Late afternoon.”

Marcus glanced at me.

I didn’t need to check.

I remembered that day perfectly.

April 12th.

The day I was dismissed.

The day security escorted me out of my own office.

I looked at Oscar.

“What time?”

Susan swallowed. “Approximately four hours after your termination was processed.”

The room froze.

I tilted my head slightly.

“So let me understand this,” I said quietly. “Four hours after I was fired – after my access was revoked, after I was removed from the building, I supposedly called to grant verbal authorization for my assets to be transferred?”

No one answered.

Oscar’s silence was louder than any defense.

Marcus stepped forward smoothly.

“We have phone records,” he said. “Miss Asher made no outgoing calls to Mr. White or counsel that day. Nor were any incoming calls registered.”

He placed another document on the table.

“Additionally, building security footage confirms Miss Asher left the premises at 10:14 a.m. The alleged authorization occurred at approximately 2:37 p.m.”

Susan’s face drained of color. 1

She slowly turned toward Oscar again.

“You told me,” she said, her voice trembling now, “that she had just spoken to you.”

Oscar’s composure finally fractured.

“I assumed she would agree,” he snapped. “It was standard practice. She never objected before.”

The audacity of it almost made ine laugh.

“Standard practice?” I repeated softly.

“You mean stealing my properties?”

Mr. White stood abruptly.

“This is being blown out of proportion.”

Marcus didn’t even raise his voice.

“Forgery. Fraud. Misrepresentation of assets to investors. Government contract violations.”

He looked directly at Mr. White. 1

“This is not proportion. This is exposure.”

The board members were no longer defensive.

They were afraid.

Because this was no longer about internal politics.

This was criminal.

And undeniable.

I folded my hands in front of me. 2

“You don’t have the liquidity to pay me,” I said evenly. “But you do have assets.”

Their attention snapped back to me.

“And I’m done being generous.”

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Borrowed textbooks 29

5 Bonus

This is fraud

Mr. White's gaze shifted.

From Marcus.

From the board.

From me.

To Jason.

"Jason," he said, softening his tone, appealing now instead of commanding. "You're family."

Jason didn't respond immediately.

Mr. White continued, "Step in. Help us stabilize this. Make Amber see reason. There's no need to escalate matters beyond repair."

I didn't look at Jason.

I didn't need to. 1

Mr. White pressed on. "We can settle this internally. We are businessmen. We can negotiate."

A quiet sound broke the tension.

Jason chuckled.

Low.

Unhurried.

Almost amused.

Every eye in the room turned to him.

He finally stepped forward, sliding one hand casually into his pocket.

“With respect,” he said calmly, “you’re mistaken about something.”

His gaze moved to his father. 1

“Amber doesn’t need me to make her see reason.”

The room felt smaller.

“She is the reason.”

The words landed heavier than shouting ever could. Y

Mr. White’s expression hardened. “Jason, think carefully. This affects the entire family.” 1

Jason’s jaw shifted slightly- not angry.

Certain.

“Any decision my wife makes,” he said evenly, “I will support fully.”

The board members exchanged looks.

Oscar’s face paled further.

+15 Bonu

Jason’s tone cooled

“Unless,” he added, almost conversationally, that decision involves not reporting Oscar’s crimes to the authorities.”

A ripple went through the room.

“In that case,” he continued, his voice sharpening just slightly, “I’ll be the one calling the police myself.”

The silence that followed was absolute. 2

Mr. White stared at his son as if he didn’t recognize him.

Oscar looked betrayed.

But Jason didn't waver.

He didn't look at them again.

He looked at me.

Steady.

Unquestioning.

Aligned.

And in that moment, the board understood something fundamental.

This wasn't a marital disagreement they could exploit. 1

It wasn't a family fracture they could manipulate.

Jason wasn't here to control me.

He was here to stand beside me.

And that made me unstoppable.

The silence still hung heavy when Mr. White spoke again.

His voice had changed.

Less authoritative.

More calculating.

"When I saw the two of you in Jason's conference room that day," he said slowly, "I assumed you were signing the property

transfer documents."

His eyes moved between us.

"I thought the assets were being formally reassigned to the company."

Understanding flickered across several board members' faces.

They had believed the same thing.

That the meeting behind closed doors had been business.

Strategic. 1

Corporate.

I fell Jason Shift slightly beside me.

We looked at each other.

And for the first time since walking into that room, something almost resembling amusement surfaced.

“We were,” Jason said calmly, “signing documents.”

Mr. White leaned forward.

“Yes,” he pressed. “Exactly.”

I met his gaze.

“Our marriage certificate.”

The words dropped into the room like a final verdict.

Confusion.

Then realization.

Oscar’s head snapped toward us.

Mr. White stared, as if he hadn’t heard correctly.

“You...” he began.

Jason didn’t let him finish.

“We got married that morning,” he said evenly. “The conference room was private. Convenient.”

A murmur spread around the table.

Every assumption they had built their defense on collapsed in seconds.

They had constructed an entire narrative around a scene they never understood.

They had mistaken a marriage for a merger.

And in doing so, exposed their own desperation.

Mr. White sat back slowly. 1

“So the properties were never discussed,” he said faintly.

“Not that day,” I replied.

Oscar’s composure cracked completely.

“You expect us to believe this is a coincidence?” he demanded.

I looked at him steadily.

“You expect us to believe you fabricated my signature based on an assumption?”

That ended it.

There was no recovery from that.

Because the truth was embarrassingly simple.

They had acted without confirmation.

+15 Bonus

This straw

Without consent:

Without ownership.

All because they believed what they wanted to believe.

Jason’s hand brushed mine lightly.

A quiet anchor. 1

They thought they had witnessed a business transaction.

Instead, they had witnessed the moment I secured something far more powerful.

An alliance.

Susan’s voice was shaking, but she forced herself upright.

“I heard the call,” she insisted. “It was a woman’s voice. She confirmed authorization.”

Oscar clung to that statement like a lifeline.

“You see?” he said quickly. “She approved it.”

Marcus remained composed.

“Pull the internal call log from April 12th,” he instructed. “Route it to the screen.”

The monitor flickered to life.

2:36 p.m. Incoming call.

Transferred to Legal.

“That’s the one,” Susan whispered.

“Play it.”

The recording filled the boardroom.

A woman’s voice – controlled, deliberate.

“Yes, Oscar has my full verbal authorization to proceed. I’ll sign formally when I return.”

I felt nothing.

No shock.

No confusion.

Just recognition.

Marcus signaled again.

“Now play Miss Asher’s archived board recording.”

My voice echoed through the room – measured, grounded, unmistakably mine.

Then the April 12th call replayed.

Side by side.

The difference was clear.

+15 Bonus

A16

Even to those who didn't want to see it.

"That's not lie," a board member muttered.

Marcus nodded slightly.

"Would anyone like to explain why the originating number for that call belongs to Amelie White?"

The screen updated.

Registered line: Amelie White.

The room went silent.

Amelie.

My former assistant.

The woman who stepped into my office the same day I was escorted out.

The woman who married Oscar hours later.

Susan's lips trembled. "She identified herself as Amber."

Of course she had.

Amelie had worked under me.

She had sat in meetings.

Taken notes.

Listened.

Watched.

And the moment I walked out of that building, she walked into my office.

By evening, she was Mrs. White.

I spoke calmly.

“I was terminated at 10:14, a.m.,” I said. “Amelie was appointed as my replacement before noon.”

The timeline was displayed.

Official internal memo.

Promotion notice. 1

Then the call.

2:36 p.m.

“She wasn’t fired,” Marcus clarified smoothly. “She was elevated.”

A murmur rippled through the board.

Oscar’s jaw tightened.

“It was a transitional authorization,” he snapped. “Operational continuity.” 1

“You mean impersonation,” Marcus corrected.

+15 Bonus

This fraud

One of the senior board members – a longtime investor and personal friend of the governor – stood abruptly.

“This is fraud,” he said sharply. “Identity misrepresentation. Asset falsification. Government contract violations.”

Mr. White attempted to intervene. “We can resolve this privately.” 2

“No,” the board member cut in. “This is no longer a private matter.”

He stepped away and made the call.

Clear. 1

Direct. 1

Reporting the matter to the authorities.

Oscar finally looked at me.

There was no arrogance left now.

Only realization.

“You’re destroying everything,” he said quietly. 1

I held his gaze.

“No,” I replied.

“You replaced me. Married her. And built an empire on assets that were never yours.”

I paused. 1

“You destroyed it the moment you thought I wouldn’t fight back.”

Jason’s hand closed around mine again.

Steady.

Unshaken.

Outside that boardroom, the company’s value was already plummeting.

Inside it, the consequences had just become irreversible.

D

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A Woman Worth Billions, Dated the Wrong Brother

she still controlled everything

They called her in.

No delay.

No warning.

The door opened ten minutes later.

Amelie walked in looking immaculate – refreshed, polished, perfectly styled. Not a trace of nerves in her posture.

At least not until her eyes landed on me.

For a fraction of a second, the color drained from her face.

Then she recovered.

Too quickly.

She was instructed to sit.

She did.

Claudia – one of the sharpest members of the board and not known for wasting time – leaned forward immediately.

Without introduction.

Without courtesy.

She pressed a button.

The recording filled the room again.

Amelie's voice echoed off the walls.

“Yes, Oscar has my full verbal authorization to proceed.”

The playback ended.

Claudia folded her hands calmly.

“Why,” she asked evenly, “did you make that call?”

Amelie didn’t look at me.

She looked at Oscar.

He didn’t move.

Didn’t speak.

Didn’t save her.

She swallowed.

“Oscar gave the order,” she said.

The room shifted.

“He told me to call at that exact time. To say those words.”

Claudia didn’t blink. “And why would you impersonate Miss Asher?”

+15 Bonus

Pe

+15 Bonus

Amelie finally looked at me.

There was something ugly behind her gaze now.

Resentment.

“He said those properties belonged to him,” she said. “That Amber took them for herself when they broke off their engagement.” 2

A faint murmur moved through the room.

“She was being petty,” Amelie continued, her tone gaining sharpness. “She refused to transfer what was rightfully his. So he said we were correcting an injustice.”

I felt Jason stiffen beside me.

I didn’t.

I remained still.

“Correcting an injustice,” Claudia repeated coolly. “By committing fraud?”

Amelie’s composure cracked slightly.

“Oscar said it was temporary. That once the paperwork was processed, it wouldn’t matter.”

Marcus stepped in smoothly.

“And you believed that assets legally registered under Miss Asher’s name – purchased with her capital – belonged to Mr. White?”

Amelie hesitated.

“They were engaged,” she said weakly.

Engaged. 1

As if that erased ownership.

As if proximity equaled entitlement.

I finally spoke.

“Those properties were acquired two years before the engagement,” I said calmly. “With my private investment portfolio.

Amelie’s jaw tightened.

“You always acted like everything was yours,” she snapped.

“It was,” I replied evenly.

The silence that followed was brutal.

Because beneath the bitterness, beneath the jealousy, beneath the ambition

There was no legal defense.

Just entitlement. 1

Claudia turned to the rest of the board.

“So to summarize,” she said crisply, “Mr. White ordered impersonation. Mrs. White executed it. Legal counsel processed it. And company assets were misrepresented to investors and the government.”

+15 Bonus

No one argued.-

Because there was nothing left to argue.

Amelie finally looked at Oscar again.

He still hadn't spoken.

For the first time since she entered, she looked nervous.

And for the first time since this began, I saw the truth clearly reflected in her eyes.

She hadn't married power. 1

She had married recklessness.

And now it was sinking.

Marcus did not move.

He did not react to the emotional undercurrent in the room.

He simply adjusted his cufflinks and looked at Amelie.

“Mrs. White,” he said evenly, “was anything promised to you in exchange for making that call?” 1

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