

Benefits 441

Chapter 441: The Audacity

Olivia stared down at the picture in her hand and then the marriage certificate. The audacity! The sheer, brazen audacity of that man to flash a grin as though this marriage was anything a travesty. As if she hadn't been coerced into this charade by his cunningness and threats. And to add insult to injury, he had to look devilishly handsome while doing it.

She hadn't missed the way the staff at the Civil affairs bureau had been glaring at her with jealousy. Their envious stares, questioning why such a man would choose her and dote over her. How had she never known that Seb Frost could give an Oscar winning performance of a doting and caring lover.

And he'd maintained the entire facade at the hospital, charming the doctors and the nurses. He'd even asked the doctor if they could continue to have physical relationship like they did after confirming her pregnancy! Did he really think she was going to sleep with him after everything he had done? He was overly optimistic then! She should have punched him in the face right there when the doctor had laughed and given him permission to enjoy their 'married' life as long as he was careful!

And that wasn't enough for him that he had brought her here... wherever this was. Where was even this forsaken place? How could she have been so foolish to have fallen asleep when they left the hospital.

She knew of course it was not really foolishness but sheer exhaustion from the events of the day, but to not even realize that she'd been moved from a car to a helicopter, was astounding. She only woke up when the helicopter's wind hit her face as Seb carried her out.

Standing up, she walked to the window of this huge 'home'. At least she now knew they were on some island. But she'd woken up dazed. And while she had been thinking of talking to him all the time, they ended up having an argument.

Confused, she'd looked around, "Where are we? What is this place?"

"It's my vacation home. Since we are on our honeymoon, I thought we could use some time away from everything, just the two of us."

What a joke! "Hello? Seb? Just the two of us? Do you think this is a normal marriage?" she'd asked shocked. "Are you on some kind of delusion inducing drug? Have you already forgotten that you forced me into the marriage and this is not..."

"It is a normal marriage to me. And it would be better if you accept this fact at the soonest as well for the future of our unborn child."

And then, before she could argue more, he'd carted her into this large place and announced, "I have some things to finish off before we can continue our honeymoon. You can rest until then. The food has been laid out and there are clothes for you in the master bedroom on the first floor.. I'll try to return as soon as possible. If you need anything, just pick up the landline phone in the kitchen, you'll be connected to the local security. As for your things, they are being shifted to my place even now."

"No! How can you do things without my..."

Before she could have said more, he was leaning down and kissing her, taking possession of her mouth as if he owned it, owned her. And then, he was leaving, throwing the words, "Wait for me," behind his back.

Olivia shook her head. Did he really think that she was going to be a good little wife and wait for him to return for their wedding night! Oh god! it was their wedding night!

Hurriedly, she looked around the 'master' bedroom and spotted the closet, which apparently contained all the clothes she might need.

Decisively, she walked to the room's door and turned the lock! He wanted a wedding night! Well he could have one... with himself!

And then, she walked to the closet. The display inside had her frown. She knew of course that he had many girlfriends over the years. He'd probably brought them here for holidays but did he have to rub that in her face. She looked at the various garments of different designs and sizes... He did not even discriminate, it seemed. There was clothing for even curvaceous women...

The thought of wearing something that another woman had worn to make love with him, made her feel nauseous. Carefully, she looked for clothing that would be more to her taste and maybe not been worn by someone else to seduce him.

Finally, she found a t-shirt and boxer shorts and was even happier when she realized that they had their tags on. Now she could get fresh and not worry about seeing Seb again. Maybe he would realize by morning what a mistake he had made due to being blinded by his anger. Then they could get a quick divorce and handle this matter properly!

As she stepped into the bathroom, her eyes widened at the sight of the luxurious, oversized bathtub positioned in the center of the room. Its inviting allure beckoned to her, tempting her with the promise of relaxation and solitude. Feeling extremely mischievous, she rubbed her hands as she placed her clothing on the side. Goodbye shower! She would indulge herself with a bath!

Quickly, she prepared the bath and got rid of her 'wedding' dress. Beautiful though it was, she hated wearing it. It was too perfect and suited for her...as if she'd chosen it herself.

As the water began to fill the tub, she sank down into the soothing warmth, letting out a contented sigh as the fragrant bubbles enveloped her. The tension in her muscles gradually melted away, replaced by a sense of tranquility, making her feel sleepy again.

However, that was shortlived. Just as she leaned her head back against the edge of the tub, reveling in the moment of peace, she heard the unmistakable sound of the helicopter returning. Seb Frost had returned for his wedding night...

Chapter 442: The Wedding Night

Olivia felt her heart skip a beat as she heard the sound of the helicopter, getting closer. She remained still as she also heard the sound slowly come to a stop. Safe in the knowledge that she had locked him out, she wondered what he would do when he realized that his 'wife' was not waiting for his return dutifully.

She couldn't help but imagine his bewildered expression when he discovered he'd been locked out. Would he be angry or frustrated? Whatever it was, she hoped that he would suffer over having his plans disrupted by her defiance! Let him stew for the night! She would talk to him tomorrow morning. It was a small victory, but one that provided a fleeting sense of empowerment amidst the chaos that had entered her life since this morning.

A flicker of apprehension stirred within her as she wondered if he would do something extreme in the morning. Was locking him out too extreme? She knew he would never physically force her even though he had lost his sanity today and coerced her into the marriage. And yet, she trusted him, foolishly but that seemed to be the theme of her life, lately... Foolishness.

She was overthinking. If he wanted to be a grumpy bear in the morning, then so be it. He'd caught her on the backfoot today. Tomorrow they would be on equal footing.

With a determined tilt of her chin, Olivia pushed aside her doubts and focused on enjoying her brief respite. She closed her eyes, letting the warm water soothe her again. All confrontations could be done tomorrow!

But just as she began to relax once more, the sound of the bathroom door creaking open shattered the quiet. Her eyes snapped open, her heart pounding in her chest as she whipped her head around to see Seb walking in, dressed in a thick white bathrobe.

He was not wearing anything under the robe, was the first piece of information that her brain provided with. See? Foolish! Her brain should have been scanning for escape routes. She watched as he paused and looked around, his eyes pausing at where she'd thrown her clothes on the side. Was he looking at her thong? Dam* it! She should have worn those granny panties in the morning when she'd wanted to come see him.. But those thongs had always made her feel strong so she'd... foolish... There it was again.

But then he did something that had her eyes almost falling out. He started to unbelt his bathrobe!"Wh... What are you doing here?"

Seb's mouth kicked up, as he raised an eyebrow at her," What does it look like honey? You don't think I'll join you in the bath with the robe on."

"Join me?" she squeaked. Dam* it! She meant to roar those words! She cleared her throat and spoke sharply," You will not be joining me in the bath at all!"

He crossed his arms in front of his chest and looked at her smugly," You don't want me to join you? Fine. You are free to leave."

It was a challenge. She looked at her fresh clothing that was sitting next to him on the counter top and then the discarded clothing on the other side. "Just go out for a few minutes and I'll leave so that you can bathe in peace."

"I am not going anywhere, honey. You are the one who has a problem so you can make a move. I have no intention of giving you a chance to lock me out again or try something else."

Yes! She'd locked him out! "How did you get in?"

He shrugged, "I am the owner of this house, honey! Of course I have all the master keys. Now, are you going to make a move? The bubbles are obstructing my view so if you want to leave, then I'd like a better look at your delectable body..."

Her mouth fell open at his words! Could the man get more shameless? And then she realized another thing! She'd forgotten to cover herself when he came inside! Thankfully, her modesty had been preserved by the bubbles!

Quickly she moved her arms to cover herself, and pleaded, "Can you at least turn around? I'll just get that robe... and..."

"Times up, honey! I am not waiting anymore." That said, Seb dropped the bathrobe and walked towards the bathtub, making her scream as she covered her eyes.

She heard his laughter as he stepped into the bath, and then she felt his feet rub against hers as he placed his legs on each side of hers. She felt her breath catch and tried to think of a way to save herself some modesty.

"Relax, honey. I have kept my clothing on, to protect your modesty. Here, you can check it..." And then, he caught her toes under the water and placed them on his thighs, so that she would be able to feel the little piece of clothing there... but all she felt was the hardness, making her eyes snap open to look at him.

His gaze ensnared hers, his hands holding her feet above him, while he massaged the heel of her foot slowly. She felt herself heating up, reacting to his simple touch as well as what she could feel against her

heel. She hadn't even realized how tense she had been as his hands continued to massage her feet, slowly moving to her calves.

A distant part of her tried to remind her that she was being shamelessly seduced but his magically soothing hands made it difficult for her to hear the logical part of her brain. Her eyes closed as the tension melted away and she leaned back against the bath tub again, failing to realize that the bubbles had started to disappear, leaving her open to his hot gaze.

It was only as she felt him gently tug her towards him that she forced her eyes to open again, only to find herself pulled into his lap, her legs now on either side of his waist. She felt his hands, caress her bare bottom, while she felt his hotness near her core...

Chapter 443: A Father

Seb gazed down at the woman nestled in his arms, her features softened by sleep. A sigh escaped him; she looked utterly exhausted. Despite the pull of desire he felt, he knew better than to act on it.

So, their marriage had yet to be consummated. A fact that both troubled him and assured him. But he knew, of course it was only matter of time when he would have her in his bed again, moaning his name in pleasure. He needed to push her, make sure that she accepted the marriage as is before they returned to the city. Or else, things would not turn out well for them. However, the need to protect her and their unborn child kept making him stumble.

Carefully, he withdrew his arm from beneath her, tucking the blanket around her form before quietly slipping out of bed. Outside, he was met with the cool wind as he fidgeted with the cigarette in his hand before throwing it out. There was no need to turn to another habit that he'd let go of.

Leaning against the balustrade, he discarded the unlit cigarette and sighed as he stared at her. Finally, he was at peace. He did not know what the future held. How he would be able to establish a normal married relationship with her. But he knew he had to. For the future of their unborn child. But he would have to be careful of his heart. He could not involve that in this equation and make himself stumble. Now when she had proven time and again that if he gave her an inch, she would take a mile.

With a sigh, he made a call, and smiled when he heard the cursing on the other end, "Fuk you, Seb. If this is not a life and death situation, I will kill you."

"Don't be a grouch, Ian. It is a life and life situation. Get out of the bed if you want Isabella to get her beauty sleep."

Seb heard the rustle of the sheets on the other end and gently closed the door to his own balcony. He needed to make sure that Olivia had a restful sleep too.

Finally, Ian returned to the line with a sigh, "Seb. I was expecting your call somewhere around the evening... But at least you don't sound drunk... How are you holding up to this new situation?"

Seb frowned. Did Ian already guess something? Did he already know? No. How could that be. Even he had discovered things just early this morning and he'd made sure that no one would be suspicious... Carefully, he asked, "What are you talking about?"

Ian swore again. Why had he never realized that Ian had such a foul mouth? He'd have to warn him off about improving his language if he wanted to be his kids' godfather. Godfather. He was already thinking in such terms...

"You don't have to pretend, Seb. We know that Olivia's leaving would have hit you hard."

It was only then Seb realized what he was talking about. Had it only been last night when Olivia had come to bid him goodbye? While he stood still in shock, he could still hear Ian talking, "I'm just glad that you don't seem to have drowned yourself in alcohol to numb the pain. This is so much better than last time when she went away. You'd been so difficult then to handle with all the boozing and womanising."

Seb felt a pang. Of course he had been. He'd been lost when she'd left him last time. Unable to understand why the girl he loved has chosen to take the money his grandfather offered and leave him instead of fighting for their love. He'd asked her that... hoping for an answer, only to hear her indifferent reply, 'It was never love from my end, Seb. It was all you. I... liked being loved by you... but I never loved you back.'

Seb straightened. Those were words that he had probably forgotten but been reminded now. He remembered now, how desperate he'd been to get rid of her memories. And she'd ruined all that hard work with a single reappearance.

Setting his heart, he cut off Ian, "I was in a relationship then. This time, I don't see why I would have to resort to such means to torture myself." he interrupted even as his own conscience mocked him for his lie. He would have been heartbroken... No. He wouldn't think that.

"Seb... you are lying to yourself if you think that Olivia's presence or disappearance.."

"Ian! That matter is not important."

Ian paused. What could be more important for Seb than Olivia. Had the man taken something other than alcohol to numb his pain and his brain? He started to think things that Seb had probably taken...

Meanwhile, Seb, unaware that Ian had already deemed him a 'junkie', inhaled softly before sighing, "I'm going to be a father."

Ian had just taken a sip of water when Seb dropped his bombshell. The liquid went down the wrong pipe, and Ian erupted into a fit of coughing. Wheezing and spluttering, he struggled to regain his composure as Seb's words echoed in his mind.

Ian asked as he tried to make sense of the words after catching his breath. He'd definitely heard wrongly and it must be something to do with lobster..."You're going to be a lobster? No that doesn't sound right. You're going to eat a lobster?"

"Ian Frost! Why would I call you in the middle of the night to discuss my choice of food for you! I said I am going to be a father! You're going to be an uncle the second time around and a godfather for the first time! Is that clear enough?" Seb growled, even as his restlessness settled a bit as he spoke the words.

It felt good to share the news. And hear the words even if they were being said by his own self. "I'm going to be a father." He murmured to himself happily.

Chapter 444: Shock

For the first time in his life, Ian realized that he has been shocked into silence. He had no words. "A father?" he repeated, his voice barely a whisper, as if trying to convince himself he'd heard correctly this time. Thankfully, he was sitting or he would have made a fool of himself again.

"Sebastian Frost, tell me where you are at this moment! And what did you inhale?"

"I am at home, Ian. And before you come there, I mean my holiday home."

"Fine. Which is the nearest mental hospital? Is it the new place you bought that you were telling me about? Send me the location. Wait, did you hit your head or something?"

Finally, Seb could not help but chuckle. He should have expected Ian to not believe him. " Ian Frost. I am going to be a father. I am not high and have not been in an accident. I am also not pulling a prank on you. And if you doubt me one more time... I will let Lucien be the Godfather!"

That got a quick reaction from Ian," Ha! You want the little kid to suffer with Lucy as the Godfather? Of course I am going be the kiddo's godfather." And then Ian paused before carefully asking," Seb... how did this happen?"

"Really, Ian? Would you like me to give you the birds and the bees talk? At this age?"

"Sh*t up, you bast*rd! You know what I meant. I did not even know you were seeing someone!"

"I wasn't. It was a one night stand."

Seb winced as Ian swore again. "A one-night stand? Seriously, Seb? You're going to be a dad because of a one-night stand? Do you need the talk?"

"It was just once... and I got carried away.. We...uh ran out of condoms..."

"That is TMI, Seb. And I don't need to tell you there are other ways.... Its also about protecting yourself, Seb." Ian said quietly.

Seb sighed. Of course there were other ways. And he'd never had unsafe se* with anyone other than Olivia. Then and this time.

Ian sighed at Seb's silence. What was done could not be undone. Maybe it was a good thing that Olivia had gone away before Seb announced this. It would have hurt her endlessly. As for Seb, maybe he would be able to handle himself better if he had a child to focus on.

"Congratulations, Seb! I'm happy for you. The lady in question..." Ian meant to ask if the mother of the child would be kept in the equation. Usually, the women Seb slept with were models or gold diggers eager to throw themselves at his feet for some rewards. They would need to be careful if such a person was going to be the child's mother.

"Yes. She is going to be in the picture. I think she would make a good mother." Seb added seriously. Of course he had no doubt about this. He'd once hoped to have a family with her. She'd be the most amazing and patient mother.

He could hear the relief in Ian's voice as he said, "That is a good thing. Then, maybe we should plan something for the weekend for her to meet the family. I'm sure everyone would want to know her."

"Not yet, Ian. Maybe something next month. We are enjoying our honeymoon now." Seb refused.

Ian on the other hand was shocked once again. Something was fishy. Things were too calm and Seb was not being straight. He had a feeling that this was somehow related to Olivia leaving? Had Seb done something extreme?

Carefully, he probed, "Honeymoon activities are what got you into this, Seb. Maybe you could refrain for a while."

"I married her, Ian." Seb dropped another bombshell casually.

Ian looked down, wondering if his jaw had indeed fallen to the floor! Something was definitely wrong with this bastard! "You... you what?" he spluttered, "You married her?" Ian repeated, his voice tinged with disbelief. "Seb, are you serious?"

"Yes, Ian! I am very serious. I got married this afternoon. I couldn't let our child be born out of wedlock."

"But you had time... What was the hurry, Seb? Be straight with me, Seb! This has something to do with Olivia leavind, doesn't it? You've gone crazy because she left again. But Marriage is extreme. You only ever loved her and now that she is gone, you are angry, aren't you? But this is not how you can punish her. This is punishing yourself, Seb! I don't know what to say to you, Seb."

"A congratulations and well wishes would be enough for now, Ian." Seb answered quietly, not willing to talk about what Ian had said about Olivia.

"Fine. Congratulations, Seb. I hope you do not do yourself or the girl you married any injustice."

"I won't, Ian." Seb promised him.

Once again, there was silence between them until finally Ian spoke up," its a good thing Olivia has gone to have a new beginning. And doesn't know all this... Maybe by the time she knows of your marriage..."

"She knows, Ian." Seb cut in, readying to drop the final bombshell.

This time, the silence was dangerous as Ian asked carefully," What do you mean she knows? Don't tell me that you did something petty and tried to rub her nose in your happiness?"

"Do you think I am so petty, Ian?"

"When it comes to her, you're not rational, so I don't know Seb. You tell me. How does Olivia know that you are married."

Seb tapped his hands on the balustrade as he looked at the darkness beyond the balcony, before he answered," Of course Olivia had to know. I couldn't very well have her sign the marriage certificate without knowing, could I? She had to know that she was marrying me..."

Seb wondered if Ian had finally lost his words and smirked. Using the shock to his advantage, he said," Now that you know, I hope you will hold the fort while I enjoy my time with my new wife. I'll see you all after the honeymoon...Bye Ian."

As he disconnected the call, he could hear Ian shouting more curse words into the phone...

Chapter 445: Magnanimous

Olivia opened her eyes slowly, only to have the glaring sun wake her up. And sighed. She should have been on the train today. She'd planned to travel through the continent and now... She shook her head. There was no point in thinking. The truth remained that she too had not thought things through. When she discovered that she was pregnant, the only thought in her mind had been that she needed time to come to terms with everything. She should have paid attention to the consequences.

In hindsight, she could not help but wonder if that was the reason why she had gone to Seb's house. Somewhere hopeful that he would know the truth. But he'd come reeking of another woman.. She shuddered at the thought. How could he sleep with one woman the night before and then almost sleep with her last night?

'Almost' being the key word! he'd taken real pleasure in torturing her all night, first in that bathtub and then later after he'd carried her into the sleep. She'd even woken up with a scream of pleasure when he'd been fondling her when she was asleep. Buy why then did he not make love with you? a snide voice pointed out in her head. She shook her head and reminded herself that she was relieved. Their relationship was already a mess.

With a sigh, she slipped out of bed and walked outside. The sun was already high in the sky. Her stomach growled as she realized that she had not eaten anything filling since last evening. And she needed to talk to Seb.

As she stepped out of the room, she wandered around the house, wondering where he could be in this monstrosity of a house. Had he gone to work already, leaving her to her own devices? She felt a pinch of pain at the thought but that was quickly gone when she walked into the next room, to see him preparing a tray of food.

She paused. He looked different again. Different from the cold and harsh Seb that she had met yesterday. And different from the Seb that usually took great pains to avoid being in the same room with her. He looked relaxed.

He seemed to have felt her scrutiny and he looked up at that moment. Their eyes met and Olivia felt herself blush. Why was she blushing just from looking at him, she had no idea. But as he licked the honey off the plate with his finger, she was reminded of the way he had done that to her last night as well, tasted her.

She looked away and cleared her throat," Seb, we need to talk. About where we're going to go from here in the future."

Seb turned away and straightened, pushing the tray towards her," I made some millet pancakes. They are high in calcium and iron, good for the development of the baby. Have a seat."

Olivia sat down and looked at Seb carefully as he prepared his own breakfast. At least he looked normal from the madness that had gripped him.

Tentatively, she muttered, "Thanks," her gaze fixed on the food in front of her.

"Seb, about the divorce..."

His eyes flashed as he glared at her and she stopped talking. Nope. The madness was still there. "Seb, we cannot go on like this!"

Seb sighed and sat down," We've not been married a day and you are talking about the divorce, Olivia. Did you forget you signed a contract yesterday?"

"But you were angry at the time and I just..."

"You thought you'd pacify me and sign the contract? Then why not sign away your rights instead of agree to a marriage? After all, I would agree to anything once I calmed down. You're wrong, Olivia. You want to discuss the future? Fine, we will be living together like husband and wife. We will be parenting our child or children together in the future. Live like a proper family. There will be no discussion of separation until I say so."

"Children?" Olivia squeaked, still stuck there.

Seb sent her a look and explained as if she were the ridiculous one here," We're going to be a family, Olivia. So, it is natural to have atleast two children. We've been friends in the past and we can be good parents in the future."

"And what about love?" Olivia blurted out and wondered as he sent her another cold gaze.

"What about love?" Seb asked slowly.

"Love, Seb. Love between husband and wife. I don't love you and you don't love me." she spoke the words quickly.

"Do you love the child that is growing inside you, Olivia?" Seb questioned quietly.

"Of course," she answered without hesitation.

"And any future child you might have?"

"What does that have to do with all this?" Olivia asked in confusion.

"Just answer me."

"Of course I will love my child.."

"And I will love our children. People have less than that in a relationship, Olivia. So we will live together happily with what we have, with no false expectations of love."

Olivia felt a knot forming in her stomach as Seb's words settled heavily upon her. No false expectations of love? And what about the past? Could everything be forgotten so easily as he claimed?

"Then what if one of us fell in love in the future?", she asked, her heart beating against her rib cage.

"I won't love, Olivia. And if you were to fall in love... then you are welcome to leave... just forget about taking my children with you."

"You're being foolish Seb! This is madness. We cannot have a healthy relationship like this!"

"We will have to, Olivia, for the future. Forget the past. Let's start afresh. It is up to us what we make of this relationship. If you continue to refuse to accept this relationship, the only person you will be hurting is yourself. We're going to be together for the next week and you can take this time to form a foundation for the future or have these meaningless talks."

Olivia watched with narrowed eyes as he walked away and muttered, "How magnanimous of you, Seb Frost. Now that you've forced me to a corner, you think we can forget the past. I'll make sure that you divorce me before this baby is born and you realize that things don't always work your way."

Chapter 446: A Meeting

Seb sat in his study as he waited for his laptop to power on. He's set the ultimatum down in front of her yesterday and received his answer for now. It seemed she had decided to avoid him for the time being. He shrugged. She could do what she wanted until he made her come around. Divorce was not an option.

Finally, the sluggish laptop was powered on and his assistant's face appeared on the screen, "Mr Frost, there are no urgent matters for today, save one. It's Miss Emma. She is insisting I arrange a meeting with you."

Seb frowned. Who was this Miss Emma? The name seemed familiar, but he definitely did not know any such person...

The assistant, of course recognized the expression, and tentatively cleared his throat before explaining, "She's the woman you were involved with before you married Miss Olivia. The one you asked to send a 'break-up' gift to before I arranged for things at the civil affairs bureau."

Recognition dawned on Seb, followed swiftly by irritation. "Oh, her," he muttered, his frustration evident. He hadn't even slept with her and she wanted more? "What does she want now?"

The assistant hesitated for a moment before responding, "She refused to accept the gift and instead demanded a meeting with you. Since you instructed us to give her whatever she wanted, I arranged the meeting."

Seb let out a resigned sigh, running a hand through his hair. " You do know that is not what I meant. Fine, set it up. Dinner, whatever she wants. I'll deal with it."

"Yes, sir. Would you be able to make it today? For seven?"

"Fine. Arrange the pilot. I'll be there."

Olivia hurried to her room with the words resonating in her head. Dam* it! It was always bad to eaves drop and today had proven that saying. She had not meant to eavesdrop. Simply wanting to reason with him. But then she'd heard his assistant talk about arranging a dinner meeting with his ex because Seb had instructed that she be given whatever she wanted.

Olivia sank onto the edge of the bed, her mind swirling with a tumult of emotions. Betrayal, hurt, and anger coiled tightly within her chest, threatening to suffocate her. Did he really care for this other woman? For the last three days she'd been enduring silent lunches and dinners, on his insistence that they have this farce of a marriage. And yet, here he was, ready to fly away at the crook of his mistress' finger.

She stilled as she heard him knock on her door. Did he come here to tell her he was leaving? Would he now lie to her? Taking a deep breath, she cleared her throat and asked, "What is it?"

"I'm going out for dinner."

"Fine. Go! And don't come back!" Olivia muttered.

Seb paused and looked at the door, " What did you say?"

Olivia marched to her door, her anger boiling over as she flung it open. "I said, Go and don't come back! Sebastian Frost, you are a pompous, arrogant, self-absorbed jerk! A colossal nincompoop with the emotional intelligence of a teaspoon! I don't know how I never saw that in the past! But now I know, you are a class one jerk!"

Seb blinked and stood there, stunned into silence by Olivia's outburst. He hadn't expected her to react with such ferocity, and for a moment, he found himself at a loss for words. She'd been ignoring him so well that he had thought that she would be relieved to have him gone. And then she was trying to shut the door in his face...

Before Olivia could shut the door in his face, he found his voice. "What's wrong with you?" he blurted out, his tone a mixture of confusion and disbelief.

Olivia frowned, her anger simmering just beneath the surface bursting to the fore. "What's wrong with me?" she echoed incredulously. "You bring me to this isolated island, imprisoning me and wanting... no demanding a fresh start together, only to ignore my wishes for three days straight. And then, you have the audacity to go back and have dinner with your ex-girlfriend! What's wrong with me? The question is what's wrong with you?"

Seb's shock quickly gave way to disbelief, and then, unexpectedly, laughter bubbled up from within him. He couldn't help it as he realized that she was jealous. Suddenly, his heart that had been hurting for days, seemed to soften and he grinned.

"Olivia..."

"Just go, Seb! Just go. I don't know what is wrong with you. You never used to be like this. I don't want to even look at your face."

"Olivia, I..." Seb began, his voice faltering as he struggled to find the right words to soothe her...

"Olivia, there is nothing between Emma and me. Just know that. I just do not want any complications. As for my... demand... then I sincerely hope for a happy future with you, Olivia. I've always admired you and respected you. Even when you took the money from grandfather, I hated you but I understood your desire for a better life. But I don't think I can be more understanding, Olivia. I need the reassurance that I am not going to lose my child. If that feels like an imprisonment, then we can return to the city tomorrow. Just remember the contract you signed Olivia. Don't try to take my child from me. Or I don't know what I might do."

As Olivia watched him walk away, she fell to the ground. She wanted to scream at him, even as the words he spoke pierced her heart. She wanted to ask him, what about her? Did he not care for her

anymore? Was she only to be the mother of his child? Wasn't it better to not have a future together than to have the bleak one that he had described. Olivia sat down and brought her knees to her chest, wondering what was the right course of action. Should she fight for a divorce or should she fight for what her heart suddenly seemed to crave? His love...

Chapter 447: Clarity

Seb walked inside the office building with all the grace of a bull in a china shop. It was late in the night, so thankfully the halls were deserted and Seb could breathe calmly. As he entered the elevator, however, he was surprised to see the security guard standing inside.

"Why are you still here?" Seb asked, grimacing when his own voice echoed in the quiet.

The security guard glanced up from his post, his expression tired yet attentive. "Demon Frost is still in his office," he replied matter-of-factly.

Seb's eyebrows shot up in surprise at the mention of Demetri's nickname. "Really?"

However, he also felt a rush of relief. He could talk to Demetri... Quickly, he changed his initial plan to crash in the office and pressed a higher number. As he watched the numbers climb steadily, he wondered what he could say. He was still at a loss when the elevator reached Demetri's floor. Taking a deep breath, Seb marched towards Demon's office.

At the door, he hesitated. What if he couldn't explain himself to Demetri. After all, he was unable to make sense of his actions to himself. Or if he stood by Olivia and asked him to let her go... Just as he was about to retreat, "Come in, Seb" Demetri's voice called from within, the tone oddly expectant.

He slumped. Demetri had been expecting him? Without a thought, he walked inside and was surprised to see two decanters and a glass of whiskey on the table.

"You're not working. Are you expecting someone?" He asked cautiously. The whiskey couldn't be for Nora...

"Just you. Sit." Demetri answered calmly as he opened the bottle to pour some for them.

Seb ran a hand over his face and threw himself into the chair opposite Demetri. " I don't know if I should be relieved that you were waiting for me or worried."

Demetri's mouth kicked up as he watched his brother before sliding the glass towards him, " A wise man would do both, Seb. And I believe in your wisdom."

"You're quite fluent in sarcasm, Demon."

"I wasn't being sarcastic, Seb." Demetri sat down as he picked up his own glass, swirling the amber liquid in it as he continued, " Congratulations on the marriage and the impending fatherhood."

Sebastian looked up and gave his first genuine smile in days, " Thanks Demon. I never thought that I'd be the second of us to have a kid."

"You wanted to be first?" Demetri quipped.

Seb chuckled at that, " Nah! I just...I thought I'd never have a family.. I'd be doting on all the kids that all of you have."

"And you had this thought before or after Olivia?" Demetri asked slowly.

"Lets not talk about the past, Demon."

Demon sighed, " You cannot build anything substantial on a shaky foundation, Seb."

Seb rubbed his hand over his face again, " I don't need to look back at the past. It is gone, Demon. I need to look at the future. And how to make everything better. Demon, its all messed up... I forced her into marrying me. Into signing a contract with me for the child."

Demetri shrugged, " Then break the marriage and cancel the contract."

"No! I can't do that! I don't care how wrong it is. I don't care that she doesn't love me back. All I care about is that I cannot let go of them. Demon, I might not have hoped for this family after everything but this is the family I intend to have! I cannot let her go."

"Her? Did you marry her for her or for the baby?" Demon asked the question.

His answer was silence as Seb looked at him with a shocked expression. "Its a simple question Seb."

"Demon, I...She doesn't love me. And I can live with that. But what if she hates me? I've stayed away because of..."

"Seb, you are looking for answers in the wrong place. You need to ask questions to Olivia and yourself. She has made some foolish mistakes in the past and so have you. And lost a few good years because of that. Fate has given you another chance and you've already taken the step that was in your heart Seb. Finish what you started. And its not like you're not lovable.. Make her fall for you."

Seb looked at Demon and nodded as he continued to sit there silently. Yes. He could win her love in the future. And they could hopefully clear the difficulty of the past. He thought about Olivia, about the way she had looked at him, about the moments they had shared in the past, both good and bad. Despite everything, he couldn't shake the feeling that there was still a chance for them, a chance for something real.

He'd used the chance of a baby and her past to hold her to him. Demetri was right. He needed to question himself. And he already had the answer. The reason for their marriage was not the baby. He'd married her because he could not bear to let her go. And he had used the probability of the baby to tie her to him.

She hadn't loved him in the past and now that he had some sordid years between them, the possibility of that was even slimmer. But he had to try. Hmm. Time to lay everything on the table and hope for the best.

As he stepped out into the corridor, Seb felt a sense of liberation wash over him. He was going to clear everything and then they could be the happy family that he wanted. And since he'd already been despicable, he had all his life to win her love.

His mind buzzing with a plan, he quickly called the pilot to take him to Olivia and then moved on to instruct his people to make an announcement about his marriage. He would let the world know about his love for Olivia, instead of hiding it from her.

Chapter 448: Love Lost (Trigger Warning.Sorry)

"We need to talk." Olivia looked at Seb as he said the same thing as her at the same time, before grinning. She looked at the sun outside and decided it was a good day. She had feared that Seb might not return at night, choosing to stay with the woman who had summoned him but he had returned to her last night, smelling of whiskey but not of any woman's perfume.

Her own resolved last night, about winning his heart made her feel better. She just needed to tell him that she had never taken Elijah Frost's money in return for giving him up. She had not sold their love just so she could get a foreign education.

And when Seb told her that she could talk first, her eyebrows rose in surprise. He was actually willing to let her talk? Which side did the sun rise today?

"Seb. I was thinking about the future of our relationship."

Seb paused in the middle of taking a bite of his toast and she waited for him to try and take over the conversation. When he didn't, she was surprised and continued carefully, "I agree that we do not love each other but we have love for this...ahh..."

Concern washed over him as she doubled over suddenly. "Olivia, what's wrong? Are you okay?" His brows furrowed with worry as he watched her closely.

Olivia winced, her hand instinctively moving to her abdomen. "I... I'm not sure," she managed, her voice strained. The cramps were intensifying, gripping her like vice claws. She tried to steady her breathing, but the pain was becoming unbearable.

Immediately, he walked around the table to her side, holding her shoulders carefully, "Olivia."

Olivia's face paled with each passing moment as she held Seb's hand, whispering slowly, "Seb... doctor."

Urgently, Seb grabbed his phone, making the call, " Tell the medical team at the hospital to be ready. We're leaving now and reaching in five."

Carefully, he picked up Olivia from the chair, his heart racing as he glimpsed the red on the chair. Making sure that she wouldn't see anything, he raced out of the room, towards the helipad, where his security team was already preparing to leave.

Olivia clung to him, her condition seemingly worsening with each passing moment as they flew towards the mainland. Seb could only watch helplessly as she was transferred onto a stretcher, where she lay pale and still, her breaths shallow and labored.

As they would have taken her into the examination area, Olivia looked at him, as if seeking his reassurance. And he gave her, " Everything will be fine, Livia. You'll survive this."

Seb paced the waiting area, his thoughts consumed by worry for her. He couldn't bear the thought of losing her, not after everything they had been through and the decision he had come to. A part of him worried for their baby but...

No. He shook his head. He would not think about this, for now.

Moments passed like an eternity, each moment dragging on with agonizing slowness. His anxiety only grew as he waited for news of Olivia's condition. Finally, a doctor emerged from the ER, and he rushed forward to meet him.

"How is she?" he asked, his voice trembled with emotion.

The doctor offered him a small smile of reassurance. "They're both stable for now, Seb," he said. "But we need to run some tests to determine the cause of her symptoms. And you need to be careful in the future, especially considering the pregnancy was almost lost."

Seb nodded weakly, still assimilating to the fact that they had not lost their baby.

The doctor looked at Seb and continued, "For the next few months, she needs to be on complete bed rest. You need to make sure that she does not have any sort of unnecessary stimulation. And remember, stress can be particularly harmful during pregnancy. You need to ensure she remains calm and relaxed at all times until the pregnancy is more stable."

Seb absorbed the doctor's words, his mind racing with worry for Olivia and their unborn child. "Of course, doctor. I'll make sure she gets the rest she needs, no matter what," he vowed, his voice filled with determination even as a small part of him blamed himself for almost causing this.

As he slowly stepped into her room, he felt fear. Would she hate him for almost causing her to lose their baby?

Before he could say anything, he heard her broken sobs as her whole body trembling with emotion. Feeling his heart wrench, he quickly walked over to her. "Livi. Why are you crying?"

"Seb, I'm so sorry," she choked out between sobs. "I'm sorry we lost our baby. I'm sorry..."

Seb's heart shattered at her words, "No, Livi," he whispered fiercely, his voice filled with conviction. "We didn't lose our baby. It's safe. We're going to keep it safe, I promise."

Olivia looked up at him, her eyes wide with disbelief. "But the pain, Seb... I thought..."

Seb shook his head, cutting her off gently. "The doctor said they're stable for now. We just need to be careful, take things one step at a time," he reassured her, his voice unwavering.

Slowly, Olivia's sobs began to subside, replaced by a sense of relief. She buried her face in Seb's chest, clinging to him as if he were her lifeline. "Thank you," she whispered, her voice muffled against his shirt.

Seb held her close, pressing a tender kiss to the top of her head. "Don't worry, Olivia. Everything will be alright in the future." Even as she lay in his arms, Seb wiped his own tears and made a vow that he would make sure that Olivia would never have to suffer because of him again.

Once they were home, he would employ the best people to take care of her and their baby. He would make sure that she suffered for nothing. As for stress... there was only one reason for her stress and he would simply take that out of the equation.. Himself.

Chapter 449: Uncomfortable

"The doctor wants to do an ultrasound next week," Olivia said softly, her fork pushing the egg around her plate in nervous circles. Seb glanced up from his phone, his brows knitting together in concern. "Is everything okay? The doctor didn't tell me anything was wrong. So why the sudden ultrasound? Is an ultrasound even safe for babies?" he asked, setting his phone down.

"Yes, it's just a routine check to monitor the baby's growth. They usually do it between six to eight weeks but the doctor delayed it because of...you know." because they's almost lost their baby at seven weeks..."Anyway, the ultrasound is safe."

"Alright. What time is it scheduled for? I'll let Rosy know to keep my schedule clear," he said, already reaching for his phone to send the message while Olivia asked at the same time, "Will you come with me?"

Seb paused in the middle of messaging and looked at Olivia consideringly, "Unless you don't want me there?"

Olivia quickly shook her head. "No, I want you there."

Seb nodded, his tensed face breaking into a smile as he finished his orange juice and stood up, "Then I'll be there. And now, I have to go to the office before they send out a search party."

Olivia watched as he gathered his things, ready to leave and clenched her hands under the table. She wanted to ask him if he could not go. It was foolish of her but she did not want him to leave today. As she wondered what to say, he came around the table to her and leaned down to kiss her forehead, "What are you going to be doing today? I hope you're not going to crochet another condom?"

Olivia glared at him as he chuckled and leaned down to kiss her forehead, before muttering, "Livi baby, alright, don't be angry. You can make as many condoms as you like..."

Olivia scowled even more and swatted at him, "It was not a condom! I was trying to crochet a mitten! A mitten for our baby!"

Seb chuckled and ducked her hand as he laughed, "Alright, I'll believe you. But I am warning you, our baby will hate you when it grows up if you make him wear that!"

"Fine! I'll give up crocheting! Anyway, I wasn't going to do that today since Nora and Bella are coming over."

"I'm sure you'll find some different hobby alright. And I'm glad those two are coming so you won't be bored out of your mind. But really, try not to be too wild."

As Seb turned to leave, flinging his jacket over his arm, Olivia almost called out to him. She wanted to say something but before she could gather her courage, he was gone...

Olivia grimaced and slowly slid out of her chair, wondering what to do next. It had been three weeks since they had almost lost their child. A knot of unease tightened in her chest. She knew she should be grateful for his support, for his jokes that tried to lighten the heaviness that lingered between them, but there was something off, something she couldn't quite put her finger on. They seem to have settled in a routine with everything seemingly well. But it wasn't.

With a sigh, she cleared the dishes, placing them in the sink for the housekeeper to handle them later. It galled her that she couldn't even do the dishes because she had been advised against standing for long hours.

She needed to find a hobby that she would enjoy. But she had nothing. She used to bake for the cafe and otherwise but now, even the smell of something being cooked made her queasy. She'd tried to read novels as Nora suggested but she found herself crying as she read them. It was the same for Kdramas that Bella suggested. She'd finally thought of crocheting but that attempt turned out to be disastrous as well and she hated it anyway. Her fingers kept tangling the threads.

Hopefully, the doctor would allow her to move about a bit more after next week and she would be saved from this eternal and endless boredom. And maybe she could talk to Seb...though she had no idea what she wanted to talk about.

Before she could continue to think, she was suddenly enveloped in noisy hugs as Isabella and Nora came through.

She blinked, momentarily disoriented, before offering a small smile of greeting as her friends straightened. Nora and Isabella exchanged knowing glances, their smiles faltering slightly as they took in Olivia's distant expression.

Without wasting time, Nora and Isabella sat next to her, "What happened?"

Nora cocked her head, "Is it Seb? Did he do something to anger you? Come on come on. Tell me. I'll find a way to extract revenge for you."

Olivia chuckled, "I can just imagine what kind of revenge you will extract."

Nora shrugged, "Hey! I was just thinking of adding some laxatives to his coffee. Come on, tell me what did he do?"

Olivia laughed and shook her head, "He hasn't done anything. In fact, he's been as supportive as ever... maybe even too supportive and protective. He almost called an ambulance last night because I was coughed a bit."

Isabella chuckled at that and quickly mimicked Seb, "My wife is coughing. Get here now. I need an air ambulance."

The three of them laughed at Isabella's acting, before moving onto different topics to discuss. Olivia listened in awe as Nora discussed the new changes she was making to the cafe while Isabella discussed all the office gossip that was ongoing and the new project that Seb had undertaken.

Olivia sighed. She wanted to get back to work but she had nothing to do. She had sold her cafe in a hurry to go and explore the places around her... and instead...

"Holy sh*t!" Olivia swore.

Nora and Isabella exchanged glances again as they looked at Olivia, as Nora asked, "Why are you thinking about something so holy?"

"I know now! I know why I am not comfortable with the present Seb!"

Chapter 450: Mortgaged

"What is wrong with him?" Isabella asked curiously.

"You mean other than that he forced me to marry him?"

"Hey! I don't consider that too wrong, you know. Especially since the two of you are just so in love..."
Nora elbowed Isabella before she could say more as they looked at Olivia. She somehow looked stricken.

"Oli? What's up? Are you feeling unwell?"

Olivia looked up at her two friends strangely before shaking her head, "I finally know what is wrong. I... I told you that I wanted to go away for a while to think, right? But now I know why. I knew that Seb would insist on a marriage if he discovered the pregnancy! And I..."

Nora and Isabella waited, letting Olivia talk. "Oh God. I am so foolish. Seb married me but it is not him...It is not Seb I am married to."

"Huh?" Nora looked at Olivia in confusion over the statement and interrupted her slowly, "Olivia, sweetheart, Seb does not have a twin. What are you talking about?"

Olivia grimaced, "Seb is avoiding me, hiding himself away. When he married me he was angry about the past and the rest. But now, it's as if there is never anything wrong. We have not argued once and that had never happened in the past. I.. I don't know how to explain this! I am pretty sure I am making a mess of this." Olivia finished as she looked at Nora and Isabella's confused expressions.

Nora nodded sympathetically and patted her hand, "I think the baby has been draining your IQ."

Olivia giggled at that and shook her head," No. Okay let me try and give you an example. If everything was fine between me and Seb, we would be arguing over the most random of things. And there would be pranks. And he never would leave me alone. And now, though he is caring and attentive when around me, he is holding back."

"Before the baby was in danger, I was going to try and make Seb fall for me again. I... I never stopped loving him and because we were married I thought that I would have a chance to reignite the passion we had in the past. The hate he was carrying for me was once love. But now, the hate and the passion, everything is gone. Now, whenever he looks at me it is like he is checking to see if I am alright. Olivia doesn't exist, only the pregnant mother of his child!"

Finally, Olivia understood. Before she had been hospitalized, she had intended to clarify things with Seb. And then, she would have used the passion between them to win back his love. But now, nothing had been resolved and everything had been swept under the rug. There was no passion and no way to win his love back.

Isabella stared curiously at Olivia, before carefully asking, " Oli? Can I ask you something?"

Olivia looked at Isabella and nodded," Sure. What is it?"

Isabella frowned," Look, you can tell me to bu** out of your business if you don't want to answer, okay?"

Olivia grimaced and nodded," You want to ask why I accepted Elijah Frost's money in the first place to leave Seb when I loved him so much?"

Isabella breathed a sigh of relief at Olivia's straightforward question and nodded,' Yes. Duh.I mean, you are not a gold digger, I know that. So what were you thinking to sell off your love?"

Olivia closed her eyes and sighed," I never sold my love. The money I accepted was not to break off with Seb. I took it as a loan from Grandpa Frost."

As Olivia tapered off, trying to think of words, Isabella leaned forward and asked," So, it was a loan? You mortgaged your love and did not sell it?"

Olivia giggled at the description Isabella gave, and shook her head, " Yeah. I probably mortgaged Seb. You know my mother was a servant for the Frosts."

Nora protested at this. "Hey! All the Frosties considered her family."

Olivia smiled, " Yes. I know that. But she and I were not really part of the Frost family. My future included studying in a community college or going straight to work. I was never quite good at studies so it would have been bleak while Seb was already showing his prowess in public relations and marketing. I felt inferior to him."

"Before you say anything, I know I wasn't inferior. Its more something like wanting to stand by his side proudly. But I did not know what to do with that. That was when Grandpa Frost came to me with the offer. He knew I was good at baking and offered me a chance to train under the best barista of the world at the time. His offer was like a God send. The chance I was looking for. I jumped at the chance while assuring him that I would pay him back every penny that he spent."

"Wait a minute! So that old coot, gave you money as a loan and then told Seb that you had accepted the bribe to leave him?" Nora asked horrified, thinking of the money that Elijah Frost had left for her to offer as bribes. What a sneak!

Olivia laughed and shook her head, " No. It really was a loan. I was the one who asked him to keep that fact from Seb. And that is why he kept quiet. Elijah Frost never looked down on me for being poor. He simply wanted me to never feel unworthy of his grandson. He even warned me that he would have me sign a contract to return the money and I had to work hard."

"I felt like my dreams had come true. Anyway, I was so happy with the world... I raced to find Seb and share this happy news with him...but instead when I found him..."

As Nora and Isabelle heard the truth, they could only shake their heads...