

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Novel

Chapter 41

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Chapter 41 +25 Bonus Chapter 41 Had the man she'd loved for so many years and the marriage she'd guarded through every humiliation finally become tainted ? " You didn't think I'd call ? " Vance glanced at Desmond and gritted his teeth . " I'm your husband . Who else would call you , if not me ? " Rebecca shook her head and stood up slowly , relying on the barre for support . " Who knows ? I don't have any ex - boyfriends , after all . " His expression darkened immediately , his brows knitting together in irritation . " Rebecca ...

" From the floor , she picked up a pack of wet wipes and , despite her limp , walked calmly over to him . She drew out a single wipe , gently dabbed his neck to remove the traces of lipstick , and then stuffed the stained wipe into his shirt pocket . " Josette made coq au vin . It smells amazing . Time for dinner . " She turned away , then glanced back over her shoulder and added , " You might want to change that shirt or at least wash it before coming inside , so she won't ask . Of course , if you don't care about explaining anything at all , that's entirely up to you .

" She had imagined that Vance might eventually become intimate with Catherine , but she had never anticipated that when the day actually arrived , she would feel a strange , calm ache pressing upon her . She had to press her hand firmly against her chest , fearing that the pain would surge like a tidal wave and overwhelm her . If that happened , she could no longer pretend that everything was fine or maintain the façade of happiness . " Desmond , dinner's ready , " she called out as she exited the room . The tension between the two men was palpable .

They glared at each other like predators ready to pounce , but she wasn't worried about Vance being hurt . She planned to tell Josette about the divorce later , hoping to shield Josette from the chaotic and tumultuous aspects of her life . " What makes you think you can eat here ? " Vance said bluntly , abandoning any pretense . Desmond was unfazed . " Have you ever seen Rebecca dance ? " Vance froze in place , caught off guard . Even with all his experience navigating the cutthroat world of business , he couldn't decipher the meaning behind Desmond's words .

Desmond chuckled , following Rebecca to the main house . Five minutes later , Vance entered the room as well , his shirt collar now damp , suggesting he had quickly washed it . He greeted Josette politely , and the latter gave a warm smile . " Vance , you're here . Take a seat . I'll grab a plate and utensils for you . " " It's fine . I'll get them myself . " He

glanced pointedly at Desmond , then added , " I'm not a guest here , after all . " He walked into the kitchen , grabbing a plate , utensils , and a spoon .

Acting every bit the host of the house , he ladled soup for Josette , Rebecca , and even Desmond . Desmond declined the offer , but Vance insisted on it . The two men ended up in a back - and - forth standoff that dragged on for what felt like an eternity . Finally , Rebecca intervened by grabbing another bowl for Desmond . " He likes that particular bowl , so just let him have it . You can use this one instead . " Vance glared at her , unable to counter . Finally , Josette spoke up . " Vance , go ahead and eat . We can all serve ourselves .

" Perhaps it was because Josette's kind and genuine personality stood in such stark contrast to the character of Rebecca's parents , 1/2 Chapter 41 +25 Bonus but Vance had always treated her with a notable level of respect . Moreover , he genuinely enjoyed Josette's cooking , although today's dishes clearly lacked the spicy kick he preferred . " I didn't know you were coming , so I didn't prepare anything with spicy flavors , " Josette explained apologetically . " Next time , I'll make sure to whip up something special and flavorful just for you . " Vance blinked in surprise .

" So , you don't eat spicy food when I'm not around ? " " Oh , no , " Josette chuckled . " I prefer milder , clearer flavors myself , and Rebecca has been dancing since she was a little girl , so she tends to favor lighter diets as well . " " Then ... " Vance turned to look at Rebecca . Just then , Rebecca's phone , which she had only plugged in to charge earlier , powered on automatically on a nearby table . Vance's gaze landed on it during the boot - up process , and he noticed the incoming messages that popped up immediately after .

He reached over and picked up the phone , waving it briefly in front of Rebecca to unlock it via facial recognition . Before she could attempt to stop him , he had already opened the video that Desmond had sent her . In the video , the two were performing Butterfly Lovers , with Desmond lifting her effortlessly as they moved in perfect harmony , embodying the image of lovers flying together . " Have you ever seen Rebecca dance ? " Those words echoed persistently in Vance's mind , and he directed a gloomy , shadowed gaze toward Rebecca .

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Chapter 42

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Without a word , Vance handed the phone back to Rebecca , then lowered his head to focus on eating . Even though the dishes didn't suit his taste , he ended up eating quite a bit . Josette looked at him with a mix of surprise and concern . " Vance , how long has it been since you last had a proper meal ? " Rebecca glanced at him sidelong , already knowing the likely reason . He must have been so preoccupied with Catherine being ill

that he had been unable to eat or sleep properly since the previous evening , so now anything tasted good .

" Your cooking is just that delicious , " he replied with a smile . " You two are always so busy , " Josette said , her smile warm and inviting . " Come over more often , and I'll make meals for you both . " " Josette , " Vance said , still holding his plate like he wasn't quite done , " some owners in our residential complex are looking to sell their units . How about we buy one for you there ? " Josette waved it off . " There's no need for that . I'm perfectly content living here , surrounded by all my familiar neighbors .

Plus , in the countryside , it's so convenient to grow melons , fruits , and vegetables . I can even ship them to you when they're ready . " This wasn't the first time Vance had suggested such an idea . Back when Josette had fallen and injured herself , he had suggested buying her an apartment in the same complex , but she had firmly declined , stating that she was accustomed to life in the rural area . However , in private , Josette had confided in Rebecca that she shouldn't demand too much just because she was married to Vance .

His wealth was the result of hard work , not something that came effortlessly or by chance . " Fair enough . " Vance finished the last of his soup and hiccupped . " This soup is even fresher and tastier than what Nancy makes at home . Do you have some secret technique ? " " You silly child , " Josette laughed , amused by his compliment . Rebecca reflected that , in the world , Josette was likely the only person who dared to call Vance silly without any repercussions , and remarkably , he didn't seem to mind it at all .

If there was anyone who had truly served as a supportive force in her marriage , it was undoubtedly Josette . Josette treated Vance with genuine kindness , not because she held him in particularly high regard , but because she believed in reciprocity . By being good to him , she hoped he would , in turn , be good to Rebecca . After dinner , Josette began clearing the dishes , and Desmond stood up to assist her .

Unexpectedly , Vance also jumped in to help , and in the end , he managed to take over the task completely , carrying the stack of dishes into the kitchen and swiftly claiming the sink . He reiterated his earlier statement . " I'm not a guest . " This left Josette feeling somewhat embarrassed and at a loss . Rebecca gently held her back . " It's fine ; let him do it . " At this stage , she had reached a point of indifference , almost resignation . He could wash the dishes or mop the floor as he liked . Extracting the last bit of value from him now seemed reasonable .

She even contemplated agreeing to the idea of buying Josette an apartment in their complex . After all , Josette wasn't like Rebecca's greedy , insatiable parents ; she truly deserved it . Seeing Josette's helpless expression , Rebecca couldn't express her true thoughts aloud , so she simply said , " Don't worry about it . He's not some pampered rich kid who's never lifted a finger . He's capable of doing all sorts of things . " This was the truth . Although he came from a wealthy family , his parents had never spoiled him .

Otherwise , they wouldn't have 1/2 Chapter 4 +25 Bonus attended the same public high school together . Back then , everyone boarded at the school , including him , with no luxury cars to pick him up and no nannies to handle his laundry . He managed everything on his own , which explained why he had been so eager to start his own business at a young age . After finishing the dishes , Vance was ready to take Rebecca home . Before that , he went out to his car and returned carrying a pile of expensive gifts , along with a thick stack of cash .

By estimation , it was at least 100 thousand dollars . Yet he called it pocket money , which startled Josette considerably . Rebecca , on the other hand , quickly figured out what was going on . He was flaunting his wealth right in front of Desmond . Josette refused to accept it , but Vance insisted , placing it directly into her drawer . " This is a token of filial piety from Rebecca and me . " His gaze , though , was aimed at Desmond . Afterward , he wrapped his arm around Rebecca's waist , picked up her bag , and said , " Rebecca and I are heading back now .

We'll come to visit you again another day . " Desmond , who was staying in the village that night for his duties , waved goodbye with a cheerful smile . " Bye , Rebecca . I'll hit you up when I'm back in the city . " Vance's hand tightened around Rebecca's waist . Once they stepped out the door , his pace quickened significantly . Rebecca , with her injured leg , couldn't keep up at all . It felt as though she was being dragged along forcefully . When they reached the spot where he had parked , he opened the car door , shoved her inside , and dashed to the driver's seat .

The doors locked with a click , and his expression rapidly darkened . His voice carried a tone of threat mixed with suppressed anger . " You're really something . " Rebecca's mind flashed back to the lipstick marks on his neck and shirt , and she let out a cold laugh . " Thanks , but you're even better . " " Who exactly is he ? I don't want to waste my time investigating it personally , " he said , his hands resting on the steering wheel . A glaring ring adorned his left ring finger . His wedding ring had been removed right after the ceremony , so what was he wearing now ?

She smiled faintly and held out her hand . On her ring finger was a jade ring with a modest design , suitable for everyday wear . This was the wedding ring she had chosen for them . She had opted against a large diamond or an extravagant jade piece because she wanted to wear it constantly , and something smaller was more practical for daily life . His matching ring was also jade . It took considerable effort to remove the ring , as she had worn it continuously for five years without ever taking it off . It was snug . Vance watched her actions and subconsciously withdrew his left hand .

She placed the ring on the dashboard , still wearing that faint smile . " Care to explain when your ring changed ? "

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The ring Vance was now wearing was a simple silver band . " It's just something I put on for fun . There's no need to make a big deal out of it , " he said nonchalantly , making no move to remove it . Rebecca snorted , choosing not to dwell on it . She remembered vividly the moment he had taken off his wedding ring , claiming that the company had business to discuss and that wearing a ring didn't convey sufficient seriousness . Was there really any business deal in the world that couldn't be closed because of wedding rings ? Or was it the other way around ? She knew the answer now .

But back then , before she endured the harsh blows of marriage , she had still harbored illusions and hopes . Perhaps the mention of the ring stirred guilt in him , as he shifted from his earlier accusatory tone to a much softer one . " I'm doing this for you . I can confidently say that no other man in this world would treat you as well as I do , " he said . " Sure , I have my flaws and shortcomings , but I am sincere with you . No games . No walls . All my assets could have your name on them . With other people , it's hard to say what their true intentions might be .

" His words inevitably brought that classic , infamous line back to the forefront of her mind . " She lives in your house , and I live in your heart . " To avoid being wounded by its implications once again , she put her earbuds in and cut off the conversation . Vance appeared as though he had more to say , but ultimately , he held back and started driving . Rebecca didn't play any music through the earbuds . When emotions were running high , music could drag her even deeper into the abyss . Any song could easily bring her to tears .

So , she refrained from listening and instead scrolled through her phone . She had already set her preferences to avoid seeing notes related to Catherine , but somehow , one still slipped into her feed . It showed two intertwined hands , with rings on both ring fingers . The man's hand bore a simple band , while Catherine's hand featured a massive diamond solitaire . The caption read : [I give you silver , and you give me a diamond . Isn't the ROI insane ?] A line followed : [Almost 30 and still afraid of bitterness , unwilling to take medicine ? Your coaxing is the sweetest sugar .

] Unlike the previous note about sitting in a shopping cart at the supermarket , the comment section this time was filled with envy and admiration . Rebecca didn't know what illness Catherine was suffering from , but she remembered her own injury . The pain had been excruciating , as if she were teetering between life and death . The one who had coaxed and comforted her through it had been Josette . Vance had visited her , but each time it felt like he was enduring some form of punishment . The car came to a halt at the intersection , the red light illuminating the scene .

Vance's gaze flicked to Rebecca , who hadn't said a word , her phone screen in plain view . " What are you looking at ? " He frowned , reaching out to grab the phone . Rebecca pocketed it quickly . " Nothing . I was just thinking . You said all your assets could have my name on them , right ? " She removed her earbuds , continuing , " Does that include the money you spent on buying that diamond ? " His eyes narrowed instantly . " I've

always thought you were understanding and reasonable . Didn't expect you to be so mercenary . " 1/2 Chapter 43 +25 Bonus It was ironic , really .

He betrayed her and called her unreasonable . " But weren't you the one who said it ? All assets , " she pressed . She had only taken his words as a joke anyway and had never coveted his wealth . Even with all of Catherine's notes , she hadn't bothered to screenshot or preserve any as evidence . If she were a more formidable wife , she would have filed a lawsuit to reclaim all the marital property . The light turned green , and he restarted the car , driving while adopting a reprimanding tone . " It's okay to feel a bit jealous , but don't take it too far .

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Chapter 44

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Chapter 44 Since Vance persistently believed she was merely acting out of jealousy , Rebecca put her earbuds back in once more instead of explaining further . Half an hour later , the car pulled into the underground garage at home . Her ring remained on the dashboard , and she got out without taking it with her . When one person desperately clung to and valued something while the other treated it as worthless , it felt completely pointless . Her limp limited her pace , and he caught up with her effortlessly . The two of them rode the elevator home together in silence .

Vance hadn't changed his clothes in two days , which must have been quite uncomfortable for him , so as soon as they arrived home , he went straight into the bedroom to take a shower . Meanwhile , Rebecca grabbed a set of clean pajamas and headed to the guest room's bathroom . When she finished her shower and stepped out , Vance had already washed up and was now sitting in the guest room . He held a book in his hands , lounging comfortably on the armchair by the window with his legs propped up on a stool . He seemed deeply engrossed in his reading .

She meant to ignore him , but then she realized the book was a French proficiency exam workbook . Panic surged through her instantly , and she rushed over to snatch the book away . However , with her unsteady balance due to her leg , when he raised his hand high , she couldn't reach it , and in her attempt , she lost her footing and tumbled directly into his lap . They rarely shared such intimate moments , but at that instant , her anxiety over the book overshadowed the discomfort of sitting in his lap . The higher he held the book , the more desperately she tried to grab it .

Finally , he stopped teasing her and lowered his hand , opening the book in front of her . She glanced at it and sighed in relief . Fortunately , it was the one she had done for fun three years ago , with a 70 % error rate and pages crammed with notes . Relaxing , she finally became aware of another issue . She was still sitting in his lap , and his arms ,

which were flipping through the pages , were essentially encircling her . They had never been this intimate before . However , he seemed entirely unaware of the situation , focused solely on examining her incorrect answers .

She struggled , but he tightened his hold on her instead , his brows furrowing in confusion . " How could you get this question wrong ? It's so obvious ; the answer is right there in the first paragraph . You could've matched words one by one and not missed them . " She tuned him out since this was just a practice set from three years ago . She had long since progressed far beyond that level . He finished his critique , then squinted at her . " Why did you suddenly decide to study French ? " She shrugged . " Just out of boredom . " He studied her face for a while , then nodded .

" Learning something is good . Keeps you from overthinking things . " He continued flipping through the book , his brows furrowing once more . " Your foundation is really quite weak . Don't know these words ? Or this one ? Half the words in this passage are new to you ? " Rebecca rolled her eyes , letting him say whatever he liked . She had passed that exam and was ready to leave . Catching her expression , he paused and backpedaled . " Right , you were an arts student . I forgot about that . " That was his bias against arts students . He paused , recalling something .

" You once asked me for help with homework back in 1/2 Cutter 44 high school , right ? " Comments Support Share +25

Chapter 45

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Chapter 45 There might have been such an instance . Back in high school, Rebecca had secretly harbored a crush on Vance , but she lacked the courage to approach him to ask about homework . If she had done so , it must have been under some specific , unavoidable circumstance . He seemed to find the memory quite intriguing . " Do you remember what the situation was when you came to ask me ? I recall that you didn't talk much back then . You were very quiet and reserved . " She didn't see any value in reminiscing about it . " I don't remember .

" With their marriage having deteriorated to this point , what was the point of recalling those youthful days now ? If he was into nostalgia , wasn't Catherine enough for him to pine over already ? " How about I teach you ? " He shook the workbook in his hand . " Although I've set aside textbooks for a long time , I can still manage to tutor you . " As he flipped the pages , Rebecca noticed that the silver ring on his left ring finger was gone . As for whether he could teach her now ? That was highly doubtful ! " No need . I'm just killing time , anyway .

Helps with watching original shows , " she said , pushing his hands away . " True , you don't get out much . " He shrugged , putting the book aside . Finally , he noticed their odd

position and her squirming to get free . His brows furrowed , and he grabbed her hands . " What are you doing ? It's late . I want to sleep , " she protested , struggling . Vance held her with one hand while using the other to fish out a ring from his pajama pocket , forcefully sliding it back onto her finger . It was the jade wedding ring she had removed earlier in the car .

His expression was unreadable - not happy , anyway . " Don't overthink things . Catherine and I aren't what you imagine , " he muttered . " I've told you countless times that no one can take your place . I just hug you a little , and you freak out . Yet that dance guy could lift and spin you around . " " Don't use your filthy thoughts to interpret us ! " she shot back . " Us ? You and him ? " he sulked . " Don't forget who your husband is ! " " I don't even know whose husband you are ! " she countered . It turned out he hated that word , too . Then what about when he and Catherine used it ?

She struggled to stand up, and her still wet hair swung , slapping him across the face . He winced in pain . " Your hair is still damp . How can you sleep like that ? Call Nancy to come and blow - dry it for you . " Nancy arrived , but he didn't leave . Instead , he picked up the workbook once again and continued to read it without turning a page , lost in whatever he was looking at Eventually , he lifted his head and watched Rebecca in the dressing mirror as Nancy carefully blow - dried her hair bit by bit .

Nancy probably fell uncomfortable in such an atmosphere as well , once she was done , she hurried out and closed the door behind her " Time to sleep Are you sleeping here ? " Vance asked , standing up . Rebecca lay down directly . " Yeah , whatever " 1/2 Chop 45 +25 Bonus Her hair , just blow - dried , felt warm and comfortable , and because she had used the shampoo brought from Josette's home today , it carried a special fragrance . This shampoo wasn't available in stores ; it was handmade by Josette and the villagers using something called tea seed cake as the main ingredient .

It made the hair exceptionally smooth after washing , so she always brought some back with her . Vance lay down as well . Rebecca recalled that a few days ago , he had insisted she return to the master bedroom , or he would sleep there too . She closed her eyes and decided to sleep , too lazy to make a fuss anymore . Besides , the master bedroom contained more than just one French workbook . If he flipped through and found the recent ones or her score report , that would cause even bigger trouble .

Chapter 46

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Chapter 46 The recent weather pattern had been consistent . Rain always seemed to fall at night . Not long after Rebecca lay down , she heard the pattering sound of raindrops hitting the windows . The air was filled with the fragrance of the shampoo , making it feel as though she were back at Josette's home , peaceful and soothing . She slept amazingly

well , awakened by her alarm clock the next day . Groggy at first , she thought she was still at Josette's .

The temperature under the covers was moderate and comfortable , with the air still carrying the scent of tea seed , and she was holding someone . She snapped fully awake in an instant . How could she be holding Josette ? She had already returned home yesterday . Opening her eyes , she saw the collar of deep blue pajamas , and looking upward , there was an Adam's apple and faint stubble . Her mind buzzed loudly , and she quickly rolled over , pulling away from Vance's embrace . How had this happened ?

Her mind raced for a while before she calmed down , concluding that the master bedroom was simply better . The guest bed was too small . They needed a distance wide enough for three people between them to ensure safety . Vance stirred , as if awakened by her movement . " The weather lately always brings rain at night , but by morning , the skies clear up , " he murmured as he got out of bed and drew back the curtains . " The sound of the rain makes it hard to sleep well at night . " Before his words could sink in , he added , " I'm heading to the company now .

I might be back a bit late tonight . " He quickly washed up and headed out . She had no interest in when he would return . Soon , she began a major cleanup , gathering all her workbooks . She kept only the early ones with high error rates and packed the rest away . Then she asked Nancy to call a recycler to take them . As for the ring on her hand , she ultimately decided to remove it again and cash in . And since she was selling , she might as well sell the pair together . She searched everywhere but couldn't find the other one .

Suddenly , she remembered there was a safe in the house containing Vance's items , which she had never considered opening before . Her heart stirred with curiosity as she looked at the safe , not knowing the password . She tried Vance's birthday , but it was incorrect . Of course , it couldn't be her birthday . She thought for a moment ; the home's door lock password was a sequence of numbers that seemed random and unfamiliar to her . She tried the last four digits , and surprisingly , it opened .

Inside the safe were stacks of property deeds , piles of gold bars , and various items that were presumably important to him . She easily found the jewelry box she was looking for . It was the same brand as hers , but there was another box sitting on top of a notebook . She opened it and saw the silver ring from yesterday . Her hand rested on the notebook , her inner conflict intensifying should she look or not ?

In the end , the urge not to look prevailed , but as she withdrew her hand , the notebook slipped out and fell to the floor , a photo sliding out from inside . It was a picture of him and Catherine from their college days . Not surprising . He had an ex - girlfriend . That was something she had known long ago . Since she married him , at least at the wedding , she hadn't minded his past . She sighed and picked up the photo , determined to protect her already shattered heart . If it broke any further , she might not survive .

She planned to clip the photo back and close the safe , but when she opened the notebook , she was stunned . Comments U Support +2 Share

Chapter 47

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The first page of the notebook was titled : [100 Little Things About Cathy] . And the first item was her birthday - May 16th . Rebecca's hand loosened , and the notebook dropped to the floor . The code for their front door was 52516 , and the safe's combination was 0516. So , for five years , she had been living in Vance and Catherine's home . Suddenly , the air in the room seemed to become thin and suffocating . She pressed her hand against her chest , gasping for breath , but it wouldn't come easily . " Ma'am ? " Nancy called out from outside , snapping her back . " What's up ?

" She crouched down to pick up the notebook and spotted the second line : [Have one or more houses she loves , with the password set to her birthday .] She no longer wanted to read further and shoved the notebook back into the safe , restoring everything to its original state . Nancy waited at the bedroom door . " Mr. Bradford had the driver drop off some fresh crabs . How would you like them prepared ? " " Make them spicy , " Rebecca said offhandedly , her chest tight and her mind elsewhere . " Ma'am , these are king ...

" Nancy started to point out that they were king crabs and that making them spicy might be a waste . But Rebecca wasn't listening anymore . She grabbed her things , brushed past Nancy , and headed out . Countdown to leaving Vance Bradford , Day 26 : [He remembers 100 little things about Catherine , and I'm going to sell our wedding rings .] Rebecca arrived at the second - hand luxury store on time for her appointment with Vivian and showed the pair of rings . While appraising the items , Vivian enthusiastically poured Rebecca a cup of tea and asked her to sit for a while .

But she suddenly felt uncomfortable , with a gush between her legs . It was her period arriving early . She stood up immediately and asked for sanitary pads . " Yes , they're in the cabinet in the bathroom . You'll see them as soon as you go in . " Vivian pointed to the location of the bathroom at the back . After Rebecca handled it and came out , she heard voices conversing in the store . One of the voices sounded very familiar . She peeked and saw it was Catherine . Talk about running into the woman everywhere ...

As she debated whether to step out , another person appeared at the store entrance . It was morning , the prime time for company meetings , yet Vance seemed to have plenty of free time . " Vance , look ! This store has so many models of this watch , and there's even a limited - edition Zodiac version , made just for the locals it's out of stock everywhere . " Catherine pointed to a watch inside the display case . Rebecca silently watched from afar . If she wasn't mistaken , it was one of the watches she had sold off . Vivian took out the watch . " You've got a great eye , Miss .

This watch was indeed recently acquired , and it's no longer available on the market . " Vance eyed the watch , frowning " Are there really so few of these watches ? " " Yes , I remember it was a limited edition released three years ago the zodiac version , much more expensive than the regular model " Vivian nodded . " Sollaridge only released about ten of them . " Catherine held it in her hands , enamored and skeptical . " It couldn't be fake , right ? Counterfeits these days are incredibly 1/2 hapter 4 +25 Bonus sophisticated . Even certificates can be faked .

" " No , we only sell authentic items , " Vivian declared . " This batch comes with certificates , anti - counterfeit tags , and even the original invoices . " " You acquired all ten at the same time ? " Vance pressed . " Yes , " Vivian confirmed . " They were consigned by the same client . " " Show me the invoices ! " Vance demanded . " Sure thing . " Vivian found him a bit overbearing , but she retrieved the invoices anyway , showing them to him . 212

Chapter 48

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Chapter 48 Vance flipped through the invoices and suddenly let out a cold laugh . " Sir ? " Vivian paused , unsure what the problem was . " It's nothing . Pull out all ten , " Vance said gruffly . " Vance ? " Catherine murmured , sensing the shift in his mood . Vivian caught sight of Rebecca slowly emerging from the back and asked with concern , " How are you feeling ? " Vance and Catherine both turned , spotting her at the same time . Rebecca didn't know if it was her imagination , but Vance's eyes seemed to be blazing with fire .

Vivian attended to her and said , " Please sit for a moment , okay ? I'll finish showing them the watches , and then I'll appraise your rings . " " What rings ? " Vance asked warily , his gaze landing on the two jade rings in the display case . " These two ? " His finger tapped against the counter glass , his tone carrying even more pressure . Vivian couldn't understand why he was asking or how to respond , but these items were consigned by Rebecca , having nothing to do with him . Rebecca didn't want Vivian to be stuck in the middle , so she spoke up . " Yes , it's these two .

" The anger in Vance's eyes intensified . " You've really outdone yourself . " This was not a compliment , but Rebecca remained cool . " Thank you , I'm flattered . " " Come over here ! " he exploded . She sat down and stayed put , defying him . He stormed over , towering in front of her . Perhaps because they were in public , he tried to suppress his anger as much as possible , but his words were laced with heavy sarcasm . "I never realized a thief was in my house . It could have been emptied , and I wouldn't even know it . " Rebecca stayed silent , but he pressed on .

" Are you that hard up for cash ? The money I give you is not enough ? " " Not really . " She shrugged . " I've just been decluttering lately - getting rid of things I don't need

anymore . " " Things you don't need ? " He fumed , pointing at the rings in the case . " You don't need our wedding rings anymore ? " She met his eyes calmly . "What else ? If they were useful , would you have worn yours ? " He lost his tongue , mortified . " One day , you might even sell me off ! " She sneered , looking past him at Catherine . " You interested ? I'm selling Mr. Bradford here .

Second - hand with a discount . " Catherine was totally lost , but Vance was pissed , turning to her . " Cathy , head on back . " She was reluctant . " Vance ... " " We'll talk about the watches later . Go for now , " he insisted , dead serious . Among his circle of friends , he held considerable authority . When he was serious , no one dared to defy him , not even Catherine . Despite being spoiled and arrogant , she knew how to gauge the situation . With him truly mad , she didn't dare test it . Instead , she softened her tone . " Okay , I'll head back . Just don't get mad at Rebecca .

She must have her reasons . " Chapter 48 Even then , she didn't forget to slip in a little dig . Once she left , Vance confronted Rebecca . " What are you up to , huh ? " " I already told you , " she said evenly . " Decluttering ... including you . " Comments Support Share +25 Bonus Chapter 49 +25 Bonus Chapter 49

Chapter 49

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+25 Bonus Chapter 49 Vance's face darkened . " You serious ? " " Yeah " Rebecca wasn't joking , jealous , or throwing a fit . " Fine ! " he huffed . " Don't come crying later ! " He returned to the counter and pointed at the watches . " I'll take them all ! " By then , Vivian had pieced it together that Rebecca was this guy's wife and that the pretentious woman earlier was the side piece . She closed the display case door . " I'm sorry , sir , but they're not for sale . " Vance never expected to be rebuffed by a store clerk . For the first time , he asserted his status .

" Believe it or not , I could buy this whole shop out from under you right now . " " Oh , I'd rather go bankrupt than sell . I may be insignificant , but I don't want anything from my store to end up with a homewrecker , " she said defiantly . Vance was infuriated . Lest things get out of hand , Rebecca stepped in . " You're being silly . Sell them to him ... at a high price . Scumbags like him have money to burn anyway . Feel free to rip him off . " Vance clenched his teeth . " Screwing me over as always , huh ? " Ignoring him , Rebecca winked at Vivian to jack up the price .

Catching the hint , the latter quickly pulled out all ten watches and quoted double the market value . It was a highway robbery , but with Rebecca looking askance at him , he couldn't back down . " I'll take them ! " he declared , tapping on the counter . " And the rings ! " Vivian looked at Rebecca , who nodded in agreement . This time , Vivian didn't hesitate and directly quoted double the price . Vance paid up without blinking . Vivian

packed everything and handed it over to him . Vance grabbed it and turned to Rebecca . " And you ... get in the car !

" Rebecca didn't fight it , but as soon as she got in , her phone buzzed with a bank alert for incoming funds . It was Vivian transferring money to her with a note : This is from the rings - all yours . I don't want a cut . Hang in there , girl . Don't let it get you down .] Rebecca replied with a smiley . Down ? The worst part was already behind her . Vance saw her fiddling with her phone and figured it out . " Was it fun ? " She put away her phone , not responding " You mailed me the dolls and sold off all the gifts . Now the wedding rings , too . Next , you will be selling the house ?

" he scoffed . She thought about it . If selling the house didn't require his signature , she really would have sold it . " If you're short on money , just tell me . How much do you need ? You have your own credit card , and I gave you a supplementary card . Aren't those enough for you to spend ? " he rambled on . " Your family is trying to buy a house . Pick one , and I'll cover it . Teaming up with outsiders to screw me over is not tuu . I think you're just too idle . " Her phone pinged again .

This time , it was from the embassy , notifying her of her fingerprinting appointment Simultaneously , Lauren's message came through , forwarding the embassy's notice and instructing her to go to Arelmoor for +25 Bonus fingerprinting , scheduled for the day after tomorrow . Rebecca racked her brains , trying to find a good excuse Vance noticed her silence and prodded . " I'm talking to you . What's on your mind ? " Rebecca snapped back to reality . " Oh , just thinking about how stuff holds value . You see , I can sell them second - hand and turn them into cash . But a husband ? No takers .

" The red light flicked on ahead , and Vance slammed on the brakes . +25

Chapter 50

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Chapter 50 Vance's eyes flashed with anger . " You've been pushing my buttons non - stop lately ! " Rebecca was unfazed , figuring his temper had also been quite volatile recently . His old stability was gone , all thanks to Catherine's remarkable influence . " Guess I had you pegged wrong , " he continued . " I thought you were gentle and sensible Now ? You're a real handful Look at Cathy ... " " I don't wanna look . You do it for me , and make it count . " She cut him off , unwilling to hear the rest of his praise for how wonderful Catherine was He got irked after a few jabs like that .

" Fine , I'll go look . Just don't regret it ! " She popped in her earbuds , ending the conversation . He dropped her at the complex entrance . " I've got a meeting to attend . Tonight ... " She got out of the car and slammed the door shut , uninterested in hearing whatever he planned to do . In the evening , Nancy prepared spicy crabs , but Rebecca didn't have a bite . She only had some vegetables , then returned to her room to check

flights and book a ticket to Arelmoor . She decided to go straight there without notifying Vance . Around nine , she got the form notice .

Things were moving fast . Her heart surged with joy as she carefully checked each item , filling them out one by one while verifying what else she might be missing . At eleven , the door clicked . Vance was home . She shut her laptop and lay on the bed , pretending to scroll through her phone . Outside , he was talking to Nancy . " I told you to make these crabs per her taste , " he said . " Why spicy again ? " Nancy fidgeted . " Mrs. Bradford told me to make them spicy . " " And she didn't have a bite ? " " No. " " Set the table .

" A few minutes later , Vance entered the room with his tie already loosened . The top button of his shirt was undone ; his sleeves were unbuttoned and rolled up to his forearms . " Not coming out to eat with me ? " he asked , sounding as if the afternoon's anger had dissipated . For five years , he always returned home late sometimes not eating at home at all . But most times , even if he came back late , he would still have something to eat . For her , those moments felt like holidays .

She'd buzz around him like a bee , serving food and ladling soup , almost to the point of feeding it directly into his mouth . But no matter how attentive she was , what did it achieve ? Perhaps it only annoyed him further . " What did you have for dinner ? From now on , there is no need to cater to my tastes . Tell Nancy to make what you like , " he added . Clearly , he believed her instructing Nancy to make spicy crabs was an attempt to please him . He pulled up a chair and sat down by the bed . " Rebecca ...

" +25 Bonus She frowned , silently watching as he took out his phone and tapped away in front of her . Soon , her phone chimed with the bank alert of another big transfer . He declared , " Cathy loves those rings . Since you already sold them off , I gave them to her . Take the money and buy yourself some jewelry you actually like . " So , that was what this was all about . It explained why he had suddenly come in front of her with such a friendly attitude to talk . With her back to him , she hummed , " Sure .

" Countdown to leaving Vance Bradford , Day 25 : [He gave our wedding rings to someone else . But hey , I don't even want him anymore . Why bother about them ? " So agreeable today ? " His voice softened . " I was gonna buy something for you , but clearly , you don't like the stuff I pick . " " Yeah , no biggie , " she responded nonchalantly . " Well then . " He relaxed . " Cathy likes posting pictures . It's just a girly thing . Don't let it bug you .

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