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Game Over, Mr. CEO: Your Wife Is Done

When Winter was eighteen, she went to Chris and asked to borrow money. All she wanted was to buy back her mother's ruby bracelet at an auction.

Chris had already been twenty-three at the time and was the acknowledged heir to the Xander Corporation. Even if he had not yet taken full control, he was already wealthy beyond imagination.

Winter thought that if she asked him, he would agree. But when he heard her request, he did not even lift his head from the documents on his desk. He simply said he would not lend it.

No matter how she pleaded, he refused. In the end, he ordered Gavin to throw her out of the study.

Right as the door closed, Chris finally looked up at her. His eyes were dark and bottomless, a depth that made her chest tighten.

"You're still so young, and all you can think about is a wedding gift for yourself? Are you that desperate to get married?"

Even after all these years, she could still hear his voice as clearly as if he had said it yesterday.

She never imagined that in the end, he had been the one who bought the bracelet.

Chris had refused to lend her money, and she accepted it. He had no obligation to help her.

He had purchased the bracelet through a public auction and she had no reason to complain.

But why, when he knew exactly what that bracelet meant to her, would he turn around and give it to Skyla?

Why Skyla of all people?

After Skyla asked where he bought the bracelet, Chris answered in a cool, detached tone. "There's only one." Winter felt the ringing in her ears worsen until she could no longer hear anything around her.

She stared at the bracelet, remembering the night her mother sold it in tears after the family went bankrupt. It was the only thing her grandmother had left her. Winter had been too young then to understand, but now she wished she could go back and wipe her mother's tears.

Without realizing it, she reached out as if trying to place the bracelet back into her mother's hands.

"Winter, are you alright?" Skyla instinctively lifted her wrist and shielded the bracelet from Winter's touch. She looked toward Chris, silently asking for help.

Behind the lenses of his glasses, Chris's eyes were completely unreadable. He called her name calmly. "Winter." In that moment, whatever illusion she had been seeing vanished. Winter stood frozen in place.

The bracelet was still there but her mother was gone.

It felt as if the entire world had thinned out until she was standing **in** it alone.

She slowly pulled her hand back. A shadow settled over her lowered eyes. "It's nothing."

Skyla hesitated before speaking. "If you really like it, I can give it to you. I am sure Chris wouldn't mind."

She reached for the clasp as if to take the bracelet off.

“No.” Winter swallowed hard, forcing back the tears that threatened to rise. It took every ounce of her strength to

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force out the words, “I don’t like it.”

She moved quickly past Skyla’s wheelchair. Melted snow had gathered in a small puddle near the shrubs, and she stepped right onto it without noticing. Her foot slipped and she hit the ground, catching herself with her hand.

The skin on her palm split open, sharp and stinging in the winter cold.

She had always been afraid of pain. When she was little and fell down, her parents would worry for hours and try every way they could to make her laugh again.

After she moved into the Xander household, she learned not to speak of her pain. She learned to endure everything on her own. Eventually, she became used to hiding her wounds where no one could see them.

But the truth was, it hurt.

Being dragged into an alley and beaten hurt.

Falling on the ice hurt.

And having her heart broken by Chris hurt worst of all.

Winter's eyes turned red almost instantly.

She sensed someone hurrying toward her. She pushed herself up from the ground, limping as she snatched the car keys from the bodyguard's hand. She climbed into the car and pulled away before anyone could stop her.

Skyla watched the car disappear down the drive. "Chris, Winter really seemed to like this bracelet. Maybe I should give it to her."

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