

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 151

Then, he handed the menu to Willow.

Willow was in no mood to keep arguing with him. She swatted the menu away. "Eat by yourself. I'm not playing along with your little act."

Julian Sinclair wasn't annoyed. Instead, he genuinely started ordering from the waiter standing nearby. Finally, he added, "Get the lady the exact same thing."

Willow frowned. "I don't need it."

Julian insisted, "Hers will be the same as mine."

For a moment, the waiter looked torn.

Seeing the poor guy's embarrassment, Willow decided not to say anything else and just kept her mouth shut. As for Julian, if he wanted to act like a lunatic, let him. She wasn't going to take a single bite anyway.

The food arrived shortly after. Along with the dishes came a bouquet of roses. The waiter handed it to Willow, explaining it was a complimentary gift from the restaurant for every couple that dined there.

A wave of disgust washed over Willow. Even the roses, which she usually loved, looked like an eyesore right now. She immediately refused. "I have nothing to do with him. Take the flowers away."

Perhaps noticing her harsh tone, the waiter didn't argue this time and tactfully took the bouquet away.

Throughout the entire exchange, Julian didn't say a word, nor did he force the issue. He simply ate his meal with absolute composure.

Willow couldn't even be bothered to glance at him. She looked down at her phone, figuring they could just as easily talk after he finished eating.

She opened her messages to check her inbox as usual, and suddenly saw a text from Silas Thorne. He was asking if she had any free time today to show him around New York City.

Seeing the message, Willow suddenly remembered the promise she had made him. But looking at the current situation, she probably wouldn't be able to leave anytime soon. She had no choice but to reply: "Mr. Thorne, I'm so sorry, but I don't think today will work. I'm out right now and have some other matters to handle."

Silas didn't press the issue. He had just happened to see this place and thought it looked romantic. Rumor had it that Amora Bistro was ranked number one in New York City, so he figured he would reach out and try his luck.

"No worries. Your business comes first. We'll do it another time."

"Sounds good. I'll definitely make sure to clear my schedule next time."

Ten minutes later, Willow looked up. Julian was still eating at a leisurely pace. Unable to stand it any longer, she made a move to leave. "You have ten minutes. Talk or don't talk, it's up to you."

Julian finally wiped his mouth and looked up at her. "Why did you ask for a divorce?"

Hearing this, Willow felt a mix of shock and utter disbelief. She scoffed, "Are you suffering from amnesia, Julian? Do you really not know why I want a divorce?"

"Enlighten me."

Willow hadn't planned on discussing this with him. It was a waste of time and energy, and entirely meaningless. But since they were already on the subject, she decided to stop holding back. At the very least, getting it off her chest would offer some relief.

"Why don't you think about everything you've done to me over the past three years? In my career, in my life, and in this family. You used me, you suppressed me, and you never once respected me. Don't you think any sane person would ask for a divorce?"

"Is that so?" Julian's attitude remained infuriatingly calm. He had never noticed any of that, nor did he see a problem with it. "Those reasons aren't enough to convince me."

"Convince you?" Willow sneered. She had anticipated this exact reaction, so she wasn't surprised in the slightest. "Why would I need to convince you? I'm simply informing you."

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 152

"Informing me?" Julian shot back. "You don't have the power to do that."

Willow didn't bother arguing further. Based on her understanding of him, she could roughly guess his endgame. "So, your demand is that we don't get divorced?"

Even as she said the words, she found it completely unbelievable, but all his current actions pointed to exactly that.

"You could interpret it that way," Julian said smoothly.

"That's impossible," Willow flatly denied. "Everything else is negotiable, but that is absolutely off the table."

"Why?" Julian looked genuinely confused. "Relying on Sinclair Group and relying on me, you can have everything you've ever wanted. If you lose all of that, how exactly do you plan on surviving? Have you even thought about it?"

"None of your damn business." Even though she knew his logic was absurd, Willow couldn't be bothered to explain. She rolled her eyes at him without hesitation. "I'd actually like to ask you something. You clearly don't care about this marriage at all, so why are you clinging to it and refusing to let go?"

Why indeed? Truthfully, Julian didn't have an answer to that question right now. He was used to being the center of the universe, doing whatever he pleased, and always getting exactly what he wanted.

He thought about it for a second and threw out a random excuse. "Toby needs a mother in name."

"Vivienne could easily fill that role."

"You know her relationship with the Sinclair family."

"That's your problem. Before you went ahead with this, you should have figured out how to clean up the mess if your little scheme was ever exposed."

"Not getting divorced is my solution."

Willow was too tired to talk in circles with him and cut straight to the chase. "So, I take it our negotiations have broken down?"

"Whether they break down or not depends entirely on you."

"Then there's nothing left to say." Willow stood up abruptly. "Let me make this perfectly clear. Staying married to you is absolutely impossible."

Since they couldn't reach an agreement, she would just have to find another way to solve Jade's problem.

There was always a way, but letting Julian control her felt worse than swallowing a mouthful of dirt. Besides, even if she did compromise, Jade would never approve once she found out. If she would have, Jade would have told her about the situation from the start.

Willow turned to leave, but Julian suddenly grabbed her wrist. Unable to break free, she glared at him. "Let go!"

"Come back and sit down." Julian yanked her toward the chair. Willow resisted, and in the ensuing struggle, the distance between them practically vanished.

From a distance, it was incredibly easy to mistake them for a flirting couple caught in a lover's quarrel.

Coincidentally, a tall figure was standing just under the nearby archway.

The man was impossibly tall with long legs, radiating an aura of aloof elegance. Dressed entirely in black and wearing a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, his mere presence seemed to instantly elevate the class of the entire room.

Silas Thorne had originally intended to just scope the place out. If the atmosphere was nice, he would find an excuse to bring Willow here next time. He never expected to walk in and witness such a scene.

By the window stood the silhouette he hadn't been able to get out of his head, and right beside her was the one person he least wanted to see.

From his angle, he could see their bodies pressed close together, looking exactly like an intimate embrace.

No wonder...

No wonder she had said it was inconvenient earlier and that she had other things to handle.

It turned out...

She was busy keeping someone else company.

And the worst part was, Silas couldn't even call her out on it. He didn't have the right to be jealous.

He looked down, rubbing his fingertips together, and simply stood there without taking another step forward.

The waiter could tell he was a man of high status and didn't dare rush him, choosing instead to wait quietly by his side. After a few minutes passed with no movement from the man, the waiter finally gathered the courage to ask, "Sir, would you still like to take a look around?"

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 153

"Another time," Silas said, turning on his heel to leave.

He had arrived braving the snow, and now he left into the same bitter storm. He took nothing with him but the freezing chill in the air.

At that exact moment, from a hidden corner outside the window, the rapid click of a camera shutter sounded.

The photographer was the private investigator hired by Vivienne Sinclair. When he sent the photos to Vivienne, she literally screamed in fury.

If it had only been a suspicion before, seeing the photographic proof with her own eyes made her feel like the sky was falling. She was consumed by a suffocating wave of anger and hatred.

In the pictures, Julian and Willow were standing incredibly close. He was holding her wrist, and the scene looked undeniably intimate.

Vivienne never expected that he would actually go find Willow! And to take her out to dinner at a place like this!

What the hell was the meaning of this? Was he suddenly interested in her again?

But he had explicitly promised her that he would take responsibility for her and Toby, and that she was the only woman he would ever love.

Vivienne couldn't accept it. She absolutely refused to. After pacing in circles, she firmly pinned all the blame back onto Willow.

It had to be her. That bitch must be seducing Julian.

Acting all high and mighty to her face, but shamelessly clinging to Julian behind closed doors. It seemed she had severely underestimated her.

The more Vivienne thought about it, the angrier she got. She realized she couldn't just sit there and wait for the axe to fall; she had to go on the offensive.

Back in the restaurant, Julian's grip on Willow's wrist was starting to hurt. Seeing that he had no intention of letting go, Willow aimed a vicious kick squarely at his shin.

Julian winced in pain and was forced to release her, shooting her a furious glare.

Willow glared right back without an ounce of intimidation. "You asked for it."

With that, she grabbed her purse and marched right out the door.

Once outside, she unlocked her phone, quickly scrolled to Julian's number, and blocked him yet again.

What a complete nightmare. It was clear that she couldn't use normal human logic to communicate with a psycho like him.

Julian gritted his teeth against the pain and prepared to chase after her, but his phone suddenly rang. Glancing at the screen, he saw it was Vivienne calling. Without a second thought, he declined the call.

But she was relentless, and the phone immediately started ringing again.

Annoyed, Julian answered. Just as he was about to snap, Toby's sobbing voice filled the line. "Daddy, where are you? Can you come home now?"

Julian frowned, tearing his gaze away from Willow's retreating figure in the distance. "What's wrong? Why are you crying?"

Toby didn't answer; he just kept wailing inconsolably.

Julian rubbed his temples, his irritation mounting. "Is Vivienne there? Give the phone to her."

The moment he heard that, Toby abruptly stopped crying. He shoved the phone into Vivienne's hand and bolted away as if running for his life.

Vivienne took the phone, signaling for the boy to stay perfectly quiet, before speaking. "Julian, I hope I'm not interrupting your meeting with your client?"

Julian ignored the question and fired back, "What's going on with Toby? Why was he crying?"

Vivienne paused, deliberately lowering her voice. "It's nothing. Just focus on your work."

"What the hell is going on?" Julian's temper instantly flared. He was already in a foul mood, and her evasive tone only poured gas on the fire. "Tell me what happened, right now."

"It's really not a big deal. He's just running a slight fever," Vivienne finally said.

"A fever? How did that happen? Have you called the doctor? He was perfectly fine when I left the house!"

Vivienne felt a pang of guilt. "Not yet. I don't know what happened. It just spiked out of nowhere."

Julian's voice hardened with anger. "Why didn't you tell me sooner if he had a fever?"

"I didn't want to disrupt your work, so I was afraid to call. I just took my eyes off Toby for a second, and he ended up calling you. I'm so sorry. Please, just get back to what you were doing. Don't worry about us; I'll take him to the hospital."

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 154

Hearing this, Julian's temper subsided. It was as if a bucket of ice water had been dumped over his head, snapping him instantly back to reality.

Thinking back on his intense reaction to Willow just moments ago, he realized he had been completely out of his mind. Neglecting Toby and Vivienne at home just to come out here and tangle with her—he must have lost his senses entirely.

He chalked his erratic behavior up to a momentary lapse of judgment. Because she had changed, because she was so different from before, he had found it thrilling. But if push came to shove, Toby and Vivienne obviously held a far more important place in his heart.

After all, she had given him a child.

Julian had always known about his hidden medical condition—a low sperm count that made having biological children nearly impossible. Having Toby was the greatest blessing of his life. Even his initial decision to commit to Vivienne had been largely driven by that exact fact.

Now that he had sorted out his priorities, his internal conflict vanished.

"I'm sorry, the meeting with my client got a bit tense, so I was on edge," he explained to Vivienne. "Wait for me at home. I'm heading back right now."

Vivienne didn't call him out on his lie. "It's fine, but won't leaving now affect your work? If it's a problem, just stay. I can take care of Toby by myself."

"It's not a problem. I'll be there in half an hour."

"Okay, we'll be waiting for you."

Hanging up the phone, a faint, almost imperceptible smile tugged at the corners of Vivienne's lips.

She set her phone down and walked toward Toby with a bright smile. "Toby, come here. Come to Mommy."

Toby was pressed against the corner of the wall, too terrified to move. He might have been young, but he could pick up on certain things. The way Vivienne was acting today truly frightened him.

Just like right now—she had been screaming at him just a second ago, and now she was beaming with joy. He couldn't understand why. Were all adults' emotions this unpredictable?

Or earlier—he hadn't had a fever at all, but she had forced him to chug ice water and pressed scalding hot towels against his forehead just to raise his temperature. Then she had ordered him to call his dad, deliberately pinching his arm so he would cry while on the phone.

Every single thing she was doing made the Vivienne of today feel like a complete stranger.

Toby didn't dare approach, dragging his feet and refusing to go over.

Vivienne lost her temper. She snatched him by the arm, glaring viciously. "Did you memorize everything I just taught you? Do you understand exactly what you're going to say when your dad gets home?"

Toby had grown up wrapped in luxury. Let alone being threatened, no one had ever even raised their voice at him. Seeing Vivienne act like this absolutely terrified him, and he immediately burst into tears.

Frustrated, Vivienne grabbed a handful of tissues and roughly wiped his face. "Cry, cry, cry, that's all you know how to do! What good is crying? Will it make your dad love you? Will it make him leave his fortune to you?"

Speaking to him like this did make Vivienne feel a twinge of guilt. He was her biological child, after all, and seeing him cry didn't make her feel good.

But she had no other choice. She knew the secret of Toby's parentage better than anyone. If the truth ever came out, neither of them would have a place in the Sinclair family. All she could do right now was fight tooth and nail. Fight for Julian's attention, fight for his love, and hopefully keep the secret from him until the day he died. Only then would she and Toby be truly safe.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 155

But Toby didn't understand any of that and just kept sobbing. The noise was giving Vivienne a massive headache, so she resorted to threats. "If you don't stop crying, I'm sending you straight to Willow! You know exactly how terrifying she is—she'll beat you, scream at you, and lock you in your room without dinner!"

After years of Vivienne's relentless brainwashing, Willow was practically the Big Bad Wolf in Toby's mind. He was instantly shocked into silence, his little body trembling as he stammered, "Mommy, I'll stop crying. Please don't send me away."

Vivienne's expression finally softened a fraction. "Did you remember everything I taught you?"

"I remembered." Toby pressed his tiny fists against his mouth, terrified that another sob would escape. He was genuinely petrified of being sent to live with Willow.

"Then repeat it back to me."

Toby obediently recited, "I was being greedy and snuck some ice cream, which is why I got a fever. Calling Daddy was my idea because I missed him."

"Good." Vivienne finally looked satisfied. "Good boy. That's exactly what you'll tell your dad when he gets back."

Toby gave a soft hiccup. "Can I go sit over there for a bit now?" He was truly frightened by this version of Vivienne.

"No, you have to keep the hot towel on, or your forehead won't feel warm later."

"Do I have to?" Toby whispered pleadingly. "The towel is really hot. It hurts my forehead."

In reality, it didn't just hurt; it was excruciating. He felt like his skin was being boiled alive.

"What do you think?" Vivienne snapped, glaring at him. "If you don't put this on, how is your dad supposed to believe us?"

"Okay," Toby mumbled, pressing his lips together. He didn't dare argue.

By the time Julian arrived home, Toby was lying in bed. Thanks to the relentless application of scalding towels, his forehead was radiating heat, and his cheeks were flushed a deep crimson.

Julian sat on the edge of the bed and pressed the back of his hand against the boy's forehead. His expression darkened. "Did you take his temperature? How high is it?"

"A hundred and two," Vivienne replied from the sidelines, immediately launching into her act of self-reproach. "Julian, I'm so sorry. I didn't take good care of Toby. You can blame me."

Although she was apologizing, her expression lacked any real sincerity, and her eyes remained fixed on Toby.

Catching her cue, Toby immediately sprang into action. He grabbed Julian's hand and delivered the lines Vivienne had drilled into him. "Daddy, don't blame Vivienne. It's my fault. I didn't listen and snuck some ice cream. It has nothing to do with her."

"Alright, I never said I blamed her," Julian said, soothing the boy. "Stop talking and try to get some rest. I've already called the family doctor; he'll be here shortly."

Toby was thrilled that his dad was telling him to rest, but he didn't dare close his eyes until he shot a quick glance at Vivienne. Seeing her nod in approval, he finally spoke.

"Then Daddy, promise you won't leave? Will you stay with me?"

"Yeah, I won't go anywhere. I'm staying right here with you."

Hearing that, Toby closed his eyes in pure contentment. His head was spinning, and it only took a few moments before he drifted off to sleep.

Once he was asleep, Vivienne immediately resumed her fragile, pitiful act, insisting on taking all the blame for Toby's illness, which left Julian feeling completely helpless.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 156

"If you put it that way, I'm Toby's father. Shouldn't I bear even more of the responsibility?"

That was exactly the response Vivienne had been angling for. She needed to constantly remind him of his status and his obligations, cementing them into his very bones. That way, if his mind ever started to wander, he would pull himself back from the ledge and keep his impulses in check.

"That's not what I meant," Vivienne said, squeezing out a few strategic tears. "I just feel so awful for Toby. We rarely have time to spend with him, and even when he's sick, he doesn't throw a fit. If I hadn't noticed, he probably wouldn't have even told me."

Julian felt a sudden pang of guilt. Lately, he really hadn't been paying them much attention. He pulled out a tissue and gently wiped her tears. "Alright, I understand. I'll make sure to carve out more time for you both. I'll try my best not to schedule work on the weekends, okay?"

"Really?" Even though she had achieved her goal, Vivienne kept up the charade just to be safe.

"Of course."

"That's wonderful. I'm sure Toby will be thrilled when he wakes up and hears the news."

Back on Willow's end, since the negotiations with Julian had completely fallen apart, she didn't bother lingering outside and headed straight home.

Jade Yates wasn't there. When she left early that morning, she had mentioned having a court hearing, and Willow hadn't thought much of it. Glancing at the clock, she figured Jade would be back soon and started preparing dinner.

An hour later, Jade walked through the door right on cue. Seeing the feast Willow had laid out on the dining table, her eyes widened in shock. "What's the special occasion? Why all the amazing food?"

Willow emerged from the kitchen, carrying the final dish. "No special occasion. I just wanted to say thank you."

"Thank me?" Jade looked utterly bewildered. "I haven't even done anything special lately. Just the usual daily grind and court appearances. Same old, same old."

When she mentioned going to work, her voice dipped slightly, though it was barely noticeable. She thought Willow had missed it, but when she turned around, she found her friend staring right at her. Willow's gaze was warm but piercingly clear, as if she already knew everything.

Jade felt a sudden rush of guilt. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

Willow took her coat and hung it up on the rack. "Did you really go to a hearing today?"

"Yeah, where else would I go?" Jade shifted uncomfortably, deliberately avoiding eye contact.

Willow stepped into her line of sight. "But I checked the docket for every single trial happening in New York City today, and your name wasn't on any of them."

"Why on earth would you look that up?" Jade's guilt skyrocketed. "I wasn't the lead attorney on today's case. I was just sitting in, so obviously my name wouldn't be listed."

"Jade," Willow sighed, gently pushing her down into a chair and looking at her softly. "I know everything. Julian already came to see me."

Hearing that, Jade's first reaction wasn't to worry about her own situation. Instead, she instantly fired back, "Julian came to see you? What did he want? Did he try to bully you? Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Willow reassured her. "Calm down. Forget about him for a second; he's not important. What I want to know is, why didn't you tell me something as massive as losing your job?"

Brought back to the topic, Jade instantly felt defensive, her voice dropping a few octaves. "It's just a job. People quit all the time; there was no need to mention it. Telling you would have only given you something else to stress over. Besides, I'll find a new gig in a few days."

Willow shook her head. "But this happened because of me. And worse, it's dragging your parents down too."

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 157

Jade brushed it off. "Between you and me, there's no keeping score. As for my parents' business, we'll find a way to fix it."

After saying that, a thought suddenly struck Jade, and she immediately shot back at Willow, "Wait, why exactly did Julian come to see you? Don't tell me it was about this."

"Exactly." Just mentioning it made Willow grit her teeth in anger. "He tried to use all of this to blackmail me into dropping the divorce."

Jade tensed up. "You didn't agree, did you?"

"Of course not. If I agreed to his terms, wouldn't everything you've sacrificed be for nothing?" Willow said. "Not only did I refuse, but I gave him a solid kick to the leg for good measure."

Jade laughed. "That's my girl. That's exactly how you handle a bastard like him. No talking, just straight violence."

But once the laughter faded, the harsh reality remained. Willow was still deeply worried, drowning in guilt that she was the reason her best friend had lost her career.

Jade turned the tables and tried to comfort her. "Don't stress about the job. I'll take my time, and something will turn up. It's not like I lack the skills or the resume. Hell, I might even land something better."

"Yeah," Willow nodded in agreement. "I'll keep my eyes open too and see if any new opportunities pop up."

"As for your parents' business, I'll do some more digging and see if we can find another way out of this."

"Don't worry about them," Jade insisted. "You just focus on your own mess right now. Dealing with a scumbag like him is enough of a nightmare."

"It's fine, don't worry about me," Willow emphasized again. "But if something like this ever happens again, you are not allowed to hide it from me. Even if I can't fix it, having two brains working on a problem is better than one."

"Don't worry, it won't happen again." After this whole fiasco, Jade finally understood. She had only kept it a secret because she knew Willow already had too much on her plate, and she hadn't wanted to add to her burden. But in the end, the truth had inevitably come out—and from the worst possible source.

Thank god Willow was smart enough, and knew her well enough, not to make a terrible mistake. If she had panicked and agreed to Julian's terms, the fallout would have been catastrophic. It would have been infinitely better to just tell her the truth from the start.

After finishing dinner, the two of them chatted for a bit longer before heading back to their respective rooms.

Willow sat down at her computer and started browsing the web. Like Jade had said, she was young and highly capable; finding a new job was only a matter of time. Willow honestly wasn't that worried about her career prospects.

In comparison, she was far more concerned about Jade's parents. Their business was still based in New York City, right under Julian's sphere of influence. If Julian truly decided to play hardball, Willow wasn't entirely confident she could protect them.

After scrolling through the internet for a while and finding nothing useful, Willow shut down her computer and picked up her phone. Over the years, she had built up a decent network of professional contacts. Figuring a desperate times called for desperate measures, she posted an update on her social media feed.

The message was deliberately vague. She left out all the specific details, merely stating the requirements, hoping to secure some new business partnerships for Jade's parents.

Once the post went live, she actually received quite a bit of engagement. But after evaluating the responses, almost none of them were of any real use. Perhaps it was because the industry—maritime logistics—was incredibly niche, or perhaps Julian's shadow was already looming over them. Either way, it was a dead end.

The moment Silas opened his social media app, he immediately noticed a new update pinned right at the top of his feed.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 158

Logistics, shipping, seeking partnerships... he only had to glance at it for a second to know exactly who Willow had posted this for.

After all, according to his intel, Sinclair Group also had a hand in the shipping industry and held a massive slice of the pie in New York City.

He just didn't understand why she had to be the one doing this.

A surge of utter contempt for that man rose in his chest. Actually forcing her to stick her neck out publicly to beg for business connections—what a pathetic loser. If it were him, he would never, ever let Willow lower herself to something like this.

But the brutal reality was, there was absolutely nothing he could do.

Silas took off his glasses and pinched the bridge of his nose wearily, forcing himself to calm down and stop spiraling into useless hypotheticals.

Monday rolled around, bringing the usual project status meeting. Silas attended as always.

During the meeting, even though everything went smoothly and Willow commanded the room with her usual flawless precision, Silas still caught a glimpse of deep exhaustion in her eyes. It seemed that whatever had happened was taking a heavy toll on her.

Once the meeting concluded, he explicitly requested that Willow drop by his office.

Hearing this, Willow froze in surprise. Honestly, it wasn't just her—the rest of the team was equally stunned, as everyone knew Mr. Thorne's operating style. Normally, he never casually summoned anyone to his office. If he did, it meant someone had made a catastrophic error and was about to get completely torn apart.

Best case scenario, you got chewed out; worst case, you got fired on the spot. In short, no one willingly stepped foot in his domain without a very good reason. Right now, the entire room was shooting Willow looks of profound sympathy. Of course, there were those relishing the drama—Clarence Vance's smug expression was impossible to miss.

Following Silas into his office, Willow's expression betrayed her creeping anxiety. She genuinely couldn't fathom why he had called her in. The tension only thickened when they entered the room and he didn't say a word, simply busying himself with preparing a pot of tea. Willow felt completely adrift.

She had heard people say that the higher a leader climbed the corporate ladder, the better they became at masking their emotions, especially when using psychological warfare against normal employees.

The long silences, the deliberate tea-making, the casually tending to office plants—these mundane actions were specifically designed to shatter the other person's psychological defenses.

The more Willow overthought it, the more on edge she became, nervously glancing at him every few seconds.

But while her mind was spinning wildly out of control, Silas was completely oblivious to her panic. He had merely noticed how exhausted she looked and wanted to brew her a cup of tea to help her relax.

Once the tea was ready, he held a cup out to her. Willow practically jumped out of her skin, instantly retreating several feet away from him.

Silas didn't even need to ask; he knew she was terrified of him again. He sighed helplessly. "Are you really that scared of me?"

Willow looked deeply embarrassed. "No, I'm not scared of you."

"Then come over here and drink this tea."

"Drink tea? Me?" For a second, Willow was completely dumbfounded.

"Do you see anyone else in this room?"

"That's not what I meant." She just hadn't expected Silas to personally make tea for her. "It's fine, I'm not thirsty. Could you please tell me why you called me in?"

"Drink it first, and then I'll tell you." For some inexplicable reason, Silas was stubbornly fixated on this.

Willow didn't dare refuse. She obediently took the cup and downed it.

"Have another." Silas had only poured a tiny amount. One cup was barely enough to wet her throat; to actually shake off the exhaustion, she needed at least two.

Although Willow had no idea what was going on, she dutifully followed orders again. "Can you tell me now?"

As she spoke, her long eyelashes fluttered, framing her perfectly sculpted nose. Her lips, slick and flushed a deep red from the warm tea, looked devastatingly pure and innocent. Silas couldn't help himself; his gaze lingered on her for a moment longer than was professional.

This was a Willow he had never seen before. She wasn't the invincible corporate titan who ran the boardroom, nor was she the distant, formal employee who usually kept him at arm's length. This side of her was completely transparent, unguarded, and undeniably fragile.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 159

Silas couldn't stop himself from imagining that perhaps he was the only man in the world who had ever seen this side of her.

Once the thought took root, it was impossible to kill. A reckless, pulsing heat surged through his veins, demanding more—he wanted to see so much more.

So, he deliberately dragged the conversation out, desperate to make the moment last just a little bit longer. "Why do you think I asked you to come here?"

Having given himself an excuse, he took the opportunity to unabashedly trace the flawless contours of the masterpiece standing before him.

The elegant slope of her jawline, her stunning features, her captivating amber eyes. The delicate bridge of her nose leading down to full, inviting lips. The soft curve of her mouth was so incredibly tempting—he couldn't help but wonder exactly what it would feel like to press his own against it.

His gaze drifted lower. Today, she was wearing a pale yellow V-neck sweater. Even though it hung loosely on her frame, it did little to hide the stunning curves underneath...

"Mr. Thorne? Mr. Thorne..."

The sudden voice snapped Silas out of his trance. He dragged his eyes away and cleared his throat. "Right. What did you just say?"

Willow hadn't actually said much; she was just wildly guessing. "Did you ask me here because of the project? Did something go wrong?"

"No, you've managed the project flawlessly. There are absolutely zero issues."

"Then is it because I didn't take you on that tour on Saturday?"

"Hardly. I'm not that petty." Although, in certain matters, he was incredibly petty—just not about this.

"Then what is it?" Willow was completely out of ideas, her brow furrowing in deep frustration.

It was such a tiny, instinctual gesture, but to Silas, it was the most devastatingly adorable thing he had ever seen. He couldn't bear to torture her any longer, so he gently steered her in the right direction. "Think about it. You can figure it out."

If anyone had been paying attention, they would have noticed his tone was impossibly tender, his eyes overflowing with warmth. But Willow was far too focused on cracking the puzzle to notice his sudden shift in demeanor.

"I'm sorry, I really have no idea."

"No need to apologize," Silas hinted. "It's about your social media post."

The moment he said that, it clicked. She had indeed posted an update trying to rustle up some business for Jade's parents. Did he think this was going to interfere with her work? Did Merit Biotech have a policy against this kind of thing?

And then she remembered—when she hit publish, she had completely forgotten to exclude him from her audience.

"Mr. Thorne, I'm so sorry. If Merit Biotech prohibits this, I'll delete it immediately. I swear I won't post anything like it again, and it absolutely won't affect the company's operations."

Silas looked utterly exasperated. "Are you really that convinced I brought you in here to reprimand you over a post?"

"Aren't you?" Otherwise, why would he call her into his office? If it wasn't to chew her out, Willow would be truly baffled. She simply couldn't comprehend why a man of his immense stature would pay any attention to her social media unless it was directly tied to the company's bottom line.

Silas was beyond defeated. Deciding to just cut to the chase, he asked, "So, you posted this for someone incredibly important to you?"

Jade was undoubtedly one of the most important people in her life. Without a second thought, Willow nodded. "Yes, extremely important."

"How important?" Silas refused to drop it, pushing for more.

Completely oblivious to what was actually going through his head, Willow assumed he was asking about Jade and answered with total honesty. "She's one of the most important people in my entire life. We don't keep score. Her problems are my problems."

Hearing those words, the color audibly drained from Silas's face, his expression plummeting into a terrifyingly dark scowl.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 160

He had practically begged for the answer, and now he was furious that he got it.

There was no universe where Silas wouldn't be furious. She had just declared that man to be the most important person in her life, claiming that there was no separation between them. Just hearing the words made him want to erase that man from the face of the earth immediately.

But his hands were tied, and he couldn't actually do it. After all, they were the ones legally bound together. What right did he have to interfere? Not to mention, she was clearly so hopelessly in love with him.

Silas's heart was violently torn in two. One half screamed at him to just lay all his cards on the table, to use his immense wealth and power to forcibly tear her away from her husband. If he truly wanted to do it, absolutely no one could stop him. But the other half reminded him that this wasn't how you loved someone. True love meant respecting her, understanding her, and prioritizing her happiness above all else. As for himself, he could endure being a colleague, a friend, or even a total stranger, as long as she found the happiness she deserved.

He remained silent for a long time. Willow didn't dare ask, merely watching him quietly, marveling once again at just how absurdly handsome the man in front of her was. His broad shoulders, his towering height, the devastatingly aristocratic aura he carried—especially now, cloaked in silence, his presence felt even more chillingly imposing. Even though Willow was a bit intimidated, she had to admit that in this moment, he exuded a suffocatingly intense, restrained sexual tension. It was no wonder half the young women in the office openly joked about wanting to have his babies.

She almost...

"Forget it. You can go."

Silas abruptly spoke, shattering Willow's train of thought. She blinked, confused. "Right now?"

"Yes." Silas turned his back to her, refusing to look. He was terrified that if he stared at her for even one second longer, he wouldn't be able to suppress the torrential flood of dark, possessive thoughts clawing at his mind.

"But you never told me why you asked me in here."

"It's nothing. Just a casual chat."

But they hadn't actually chatted about anything, aside from a few cryptic comments about her social media post.

Willow was genuinely stumped, but she wasn't the type to pry. So, she kept her mouth shut, gave a quick, polite nod, and promptly walked out of the office.

The second she stepped back onto the 25th Floor, a swarm of colleagues surrounded her. They had all collectively decided she had just been subjected to a brutal screaming match, so no one dared pry too deeply. They just offered a few brief, sympathetic words, telling her not to let it get to her.

There were far too many people talking over each other for Willow to even attempt an explanation, so she just opted for silence.

But watching from a distance, Clarence Vance misinterpreted the entire scene. He let out a dark sneer, growing even more convinced that Willow had just had her head bitten off and that Silas was officially tired of her.

After Willow left, Silas picked up the phone and summoned Arthur Vance to his office. The moment the assistant walked in, Silas demanded a full breakdown of Merit Biotech's maritime logistics operations.

Assuming his boss was just doing a routine operational audit, Arthur meticulously laid out every metric and performance report regarding their shipping divisions.

The revenue was staggering, and their global market share was dominant. Oddly enough, though, hearing this stellar news didn't seem to please Silas in the slightest.

Arthur panicked, assuming he had misspoken. He cautiously asked, "Mr. Thorne, what is it? Did I report something incorrectly?"

Silas cut straight to the core. "Our maritime operations don't cover New York City?"

"That's correct," Arthur replied. "Merit Biotech's shipping division primarily operates out of Seattle and international hubs. We don't have any footprint in New York City."

In truth, it wasn't just shipping. Aside from their newly launched biotech division, Merit Biotech's commercial dominance had always been anchored in Seattle and the global market. But Arthur was incredibly perceptive and instantly caught the underlying drift of his boss's question. "Are you planning to launch a Maritime Logistics Division in New York City?"

Silas didn't say a word, but the lethal glint in his eyes was all the confirmation Arthur needed.

Arthur nodded instantly. "Understood. I'll have the relevant departments run an immediate assessment and initiate the project protocols."

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 161

Silas Thorne interrupted him. "No need to go to all that trouble. I have a ready-made partner right here."

Following Silas's instructions, Arthur Vance quickly made the arrangements. It turned out Silas was right—there was indeed a company actively seeking maritime logistics contracts. However, it wasn't the Sinclair Group. It was another New York-based firm led by a man named Yates.

When Arthur reported this back, he felt a wave of apprehension, worried he might be reprimanded for a mix-up. But Mr. Thorne's reaction was entirely unexpected.

Instead of being annoyed by the discrepancy, Silas seemed gripped by a strange, thrilling excitement.

Arthur couldn't quite read him. But Silas had no intention of explaining himself. He simply ordered Arthur to push the project forward and waved him off.

The moment Arthur left, Silas couldn't contain his surging emotions. He paced his office, a triumphant smile breaking across his face. Willow's mystery man wasn't Julian Sinclair after all!

All those things she had said—about "the most important person in her life," about "sharing everything"—none of it was about Julian!

A sudden, exhilarating clarity washed over Silas. If that was the case, could he dare to guess that her relationship with Julian wasn't as solid as it seemed?

Whatever the truth was, this gave him hope.

Word traveled fast, and it didn't take long for Jade Yates to hear the news. She had been spending her days firing off resumes from home, so the moment Willow got off work, Jade practically ambushed her with the update.

"Really?" Willow's eyes lit up. "So, your dad's company is saved? We don't have to deal with Julian anymore?"

"Exactly!" Jade bounced on her toes, practically buzzing with energy. "Guess who stepped in to partner with my dad?"

"How am I supposed to guess?" Willow laughed. "There are thousands of companies in New York alone. Just tell me."

"Oh, you can definitely guess," Jade teased. "You're very familiar with this company. You have deep ties to it."

There were only two companies Willow had deep ties with. One was the Sinclair Group, which was obviously out. That left...

"Are you talking about Merit Biotech?"

"Bingo! Willow, you're a genius."

It didn't take a genius; Jade had practically handed her the answer. But Willow didn't bask in the praise. Instead, a realization began to form in her mind.

Was it really a coincidence? Silas Thorne had just asked her about her social media post, and the very next second, Merit Biotech swooped in to save Eugene Yates's company?

"Jade," Willow asked, a slight frown touching her lips, "did Merit say why they chose to partner with your dad? From what I know, Merit doesn't do much maritime logistics in New York. Most of their operations are out of Seattle and overseas."

Jade shrugged.

"You know how things are with my dad and me. I'm not going to ask him. And honestly? I don't care. As long as the problem is solved and Julian can't use it against you anymore, I'm thrilled."

"You have a point." Willow shook her head, deciding she was overthinking things. With a massive corporation like Merit Biotech stepping in, the details didn't matter.

And as for her wild theory about Silas... it was impossible. A man of his caliber, running a global empire, wouldn't base multi-million-dollar decisions on a passing comment she made.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 162

Meanwhile, Julian Sinclair had also caught wind of the development.

He knew someone had stepped in to partner with Eugene Yates's firm, but he didn't know who. He immediately dispatched his assistant to find out, furious and eager to see who in New York dared to cross him and back the Yates family.

His assistant returned quickly. Julian had been expecting some clueless, minor-league company and was already drafting a cease-and-desist order in his head. But the moment he heard the name "Merit Biotech," he froze.

"From what I understand, Merit's maritime logistics division doesn't operate in New York," Julian said, his voice dangerously low. "Why would they suddenly partner with Eugene?"

Sensing his boss's foul mood, the assistant barely dared to breathe. "I heard it's a newly launched division."

"A newly launched division?" Julian scoffed. Why would Merit launch a new division and bypass the Sinclair Group—the biggest player in the city—to partner with a second-rate firm like Eugene's? It made absolutely no sense.

Did Eugene have some sort of personal connection with Silas Thorne? Unlikely. The CEO of Merit was notoriously cold and aloof, famously dodging personal engagements and social events. Julian himself had been trying and failing to secure a meeting with the man for months.

Julian pressed for more details, but when it became clear his assistant had nothing useful to offer, he waved him away in disgust.

Alone in his office, Julian's anger boiled over. He could have crushed any other company in New York, but Merit Biotech? He didn't dare strike at them blindly. Which meant he had just lost his biggest piece of leverage over Willow. She had slipped right through his fingers.

Foul-tempered and agitated, Julian left work and dragged Seth Sterling and a few others out for drinks.

At first, Seth was firmly in Julian's corner, loudly demanding retribution. But the second he heard the name "Merit Biotech," his bravado evaporated.

Everyone in their circle knew about Merit's ruthless power and their aggressive expansion in New York.

What baffled them all was why Merit had chosen the Yates family.

"Do you think..." Seth mused, his mind racing, "the Yates family has some sort of groundbreaking tech?"

"Impossible," Julian shot down the idea instantly. "They have decent logistics, sure, but they can't hold a candle to us. The Sinclair Group holds all the patents and advanced tech."

Seth scratched his head. "Could it be a personal connection, then?"

Julian had pondered that too. "Go on."

"Think about it," Seth leaned in. "Silas Thorne is single. The Yates family has a daughter. Doesn't that strike you as suspicious? Merit has ignored the East Coast market for years, focusing on Seattle and international hubs. Suddenly, they drop millions into the New York biotech scene, and now they're partnering with the Yates family. Could it be..."

Julian cut him off with a harsh laugh. "No way. Silas Thorne can have any woman he wants." Julian had seen enough of their social circle to know how these things worked. "He snaps his fingers, and they line up. Why would he go to all this trouble, investing millions, for one girl? Plus, the guy has never had a single scandal. Nobody's ever caught his eye."

"Just because there's no scandal doesn't mean there's no action," Seth chuckled lewdly. "I've seen Jade Yates. She's not a knockout, but she's got fire. She's feisty. If Thorne wanted a little side piece to spice things up, she'd fit the bill."

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 163

Before Julian could respond, Hugo Harrington, who had been quietly nursing his drink, slammed his glass down. "Enough with the jokes," he said, his voice slicing through the noise.

The moment they brought up Jade, Hugo's mind flashed to her vibrant, defiant face. She was bright and full of life, and the thought of these men reducing her to a cheap punchline twisted something in his gut.

Seth bristled, ready to argue, but Lucas Lane quickly stepped in. "Alright, let's drop it. We're here to drink."

But Julian had completely lost interest. He had organized this outing, yet he was the most detached person in the booth. He stood up abruptly. "Keep drinking. I need the restroom."

Deep down, Julian knew exactly why he was spiraling. He didn't care about the lost business deal. There were always other deals. What burned was the humiliation, the blow to his ego, and the terrifying realization that he could no longer control Willow.

As he stalked back from the restroom, his head swimming with alcohol, a slender figure in the distance caught his eye. His drunken mind instantly superimposed Willow's face over the woman. Without thinking, he lunged forward.

He grabbed her wrist hard, his grip punishing. "What the hell are you doing here?" he growled. "Is this the kind of place you belong?"

The woman whipped around, and Julian froze. It wasn't Willow. She didn't even look like her; they just shared a vague similarity from behind.

Julian blinked, shaking off the haze, and dropped her wrist. "My apologies. I mistook you for someone else."

The woman had been ready to scream, but seeing Julian's striking, handsome face, her anger vanished. She flushed. "It's fine. If you mistook me for someone, it must be fate. Why don't we exchange numbers?"

"No." Julian turned on his heel.

"Wait, handsome—"

"Get the hell out of my face."

Julian returned to the booth in silence and proceeded to drink himself into a stupor. By the time he stumbled out of the bar, he was barely conscious.

His driver hauled him home, where Vivienne Sinclair was waiting at the door. Seeing him in such a state shocked her. To her knowledge, Julian hadn't been drunk in over a decade. He didn't need to drink for work, and he certainly didn't drink like this for fun.

Vivienne never lifted a finger for household chores. She waited until the staff had undressed Julian, washed him up, and tucked him into bed before she finally crept into his room.

"Julian? Julian..."

She whispered his name a few times, but he didn't stir. Assuming he was completely out cold, she was about to leave when he suddenly started muttering.

His voice was low, the words slurred. Vivienne leaned in close. "What did you say?"

The moment she caught the words, her blood turned to ice. He was calling Willow's name.

Vivienne's breath hitched. She leaned in closer, desperate to prove herself wrong, but the name slipped past his lips again, clear as day. A suffocating wave of fury washed over her. She snatched a glass from the nightstand and hurled it against the wall. It shattered into a hundred pieces.

Vivienne was a woman who demanded absolute devotion. Even a casual mention of Willow's name was a declaration of war, let alone him crying out for her in a drunken haze.

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 164

Blinded by rage, Vivienne snatched up the landline and dialed Willow's number.

Willow had been fielding calls all week regarding the Yates family crisis. When she saw the unknown number, she answered without hesitation, assuming it was another business contact.

Instead, Vivienne's shrill, abrasive voice pierced her ear.

"You've got some nerve, Willow. You leave the Sinclair Group, yet you still cling to Julian like a leech!"

Willow rolled her eyes. The woman was an absolute psycho, calling in the middle of the night to spew garbage. And cling to Julian? She would throw a parade the day she was finally rid of him.

"You're out of your mind," Willow said flatly, pulling the phone away to hang up.

But Vivienne wasn't finished. "You play the saint, but you dare tell me you haven't been sneaking around with him?"

Willow had, in fact, met with Julian recently, but it was purely professional—and entirely against her will. Judging by Vivienne's hysterical tone, she clearly didn't know the context. Willow decided to play along just to irritate her. "So what if I did?"

"You finally admit it!" Vivienne shrieked, her temper exploding. "What did you two talk about?"

Willow leaned back, calmly listening to the meltdown. "If you want to know so badly, why don't you ask him?"

"Don't get cocky!" Vivienne hissed, her voice dripping with venom. "If you think you can compete with me, take a good look in the mirror. I come from a better background. I'm more beautiful. I'm the lead on the Sinclair Group's biggest project—the Merit Biotech collaboration. Have you even heard of Merit? Do you have any idea what kind of power they hold, or what this partnership means?"

Vivienne rattled off her supposed triumphs, expecting Willow to cower in defeat. Instead, a soft, mocking laugh echoed down the line.

"What's so funny?" Vivienne snapped.

"Nothing," Willow replied, her tone turning glacial. "I just don't understand why you think everyone is as obsessed with trash as you are."

"Excuse me?"

"I said Julian is trash, and I don't recycle," Willow repeated coolly. "Since you're so desperate to know what we discussed, I'll tell you. I asked him for a divorce, and he refused."

"Liar!" Vivienne screeched. "He hates you. He's been trying to get rid of you for years. Why would he refuse? You must be blackmailing him!"

Willow marveled at the woman's sheer delusion. "Believe whatever you want. Ask him yourself."

"You—" Vivienne sputtered, choking on her own fury.

"Oh, and one more thing," Willow interrupted smoothly. "Instead of calling me at midnight, you should focus on your job. Like you said, Merit is a massive company. It'd be a real shame if you lost that shiny new project because you couldn't handle the workload."

It was a subtle warning. The Sinclair Group had passed the initial evaluation, but there were countless hurdles left. With Vivienne's abysmal work ethic, getting them booted from the project was entirely possible.

But Vivienne was too enraged to catch the hint. "You don't even have a job. You don't know the first thing about Merit, and you think you can lecture me?"

Three Years Forgotten, Why Go Crazy When I Say Goodbye?

Chapter 165

"Fine," Willow said effortlessly, refusing to engage further. "Good luck with that."

She hung up, cutting off the tirade.

On the other end of the line, the dial tone echoed in Vivienne's ear, sending her into a blind, shaking rage. No one had ever dismissed her like that. And to be dismissed by Willow—the woman she viewed as completely beneath her—was unbearable.

Storming back into the bedroom, she glared at Julian's unconscious form. She wanted to shake him awake, scream in his face, and force him to swear his loyalty to her.

But she stopped herself. She knew the reality of their dynamic. She appeared to hold the cards—she had Toby, and she had Julian's affection. But Julian held all the power. If he ever decided to withdraw his favor, she would be left with nothing.

She could never let that happen.

The next morning, when Julian woke, Vivienne played the perfect, doting partner, completely burying the events of the previous night.

Julian, however, felt a gnawing guilt. His drunken mind had been consumed by Willow, and he dreaded what he might have let slip. Feigning nonchalance, he asked, "Did I say anything stupid last night?"

Vivienne's smile didn't waver. "No, you were completely out. You didn't say a word."

"Good." Julian exhaled in relief. Remembering the news about Merit's partnership with the Yates family, he pivoted the conversation. "How are things with the Merit collaboration?"

"Everything is on track," Vivienne assured him. "We've been selected. We just need to launch the next phase."

"This project is critical. I need you to give it your full attention."

She already planned to. This project was her ticket to legitimacy. If she pulled this off, her reputation and network in the corporate world would skyrocket.

"I know. I'm handling it personally. I won't let a single detail slip. It's going to be our flagship achievement."

"Good. I trust you. Let me know if you need any resources."

"I don't need anything for the project right now," Vivienne said, her voice dropping into a softer, calculated cadence. "But there is something else I could use your help with."

"Name it."

"It's not a big deal, but Toby was asking if you could come home earlier. He wants to spend more time with you." Vivienne watched his face carefully. "You know he's been feeling down lately. He just wants his dad. But if you're too busy, I can explain it to him."

"It's fine," Julian replied easily. "He's my son. I should make time for him."

"Really? Toby will be thrilled," Vivienne pressed her advantage. "He also mentioned wanting to go on a trip with us."

"Plan it. Just let me know the dates."

Emboldened, Vivienne went in for the kill. "It's not just a vacation. The kindergarten is hosting a family event, and he wants both of his parents there."

This time, Julian didn't answer right away.

Vivienne quickly backpedaled. "It's just a school event. We don't have to go. I'll tell him you're busy."