

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

Chapter 3

He had signed off on it that quickly?

A sharp ache pierced her chest. He must have been waiting for the perfect excuse to get rid of her.-

"Who gave you permission to come back to New York?" Julian demanded, his voice slicing through the tension.

It was the same ruthlessly aloof tone he always used with her.

This was the Julian she knew.

"I told you on the phone yesterday," Willow replied, forcing herself to look away so his freezing glare wouldn't shatter her resolve.

"And did I agree to it?"

"I told you, my mother is severely ill."

"And?" He stared at her with zero empathy. "Is the firm supposed to bankroll your personal emotional crises?"

He looked at her as if she were completely insignificant, stripping her down to nothing. "Report to the office and accept your disciplinary penalty."

A penalty?

She almost wanted to laugh. What point was there in disciplining her when she had just resigned? But arguing would only waste time, and she had far more pressing issues.

"I'll handle the HR paperwork later, but that's not why I'm here."

"Whatever it is, tell the housekeeper." Julian checked his Rolex, clearly done with the conversation.

Seeing him turn away, Willow abandoned all pretense. "I need money."

Julian paused, a deep frown marring his perfect features. "How much?"

His question sparked a desperate glimmer of hope inside her. Her tense shoulders dropped a fraction. "Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

Afraid he might misunderstand, she quickly elaborated. "My mother is hospitalized. After draining my accounts, I'm still short by two hundred and fifty grand."

She stared up at him pleadingly—this man who was supposedly her husband.

He had to say yes, right? Beyond their professional ties, they were legally married.

They had known each other since college, and he had been the one to propose. Surely, there was a tiny part of him that cared for her. She had loved him so purely and devotedly for the past three years; he had to have felt it. Besides, a couple of hundred grand was pocket change to a billionaire like him. He probably spent that much on custom suits in a season.

But instead of agreeing, he let out a harsh scoff, dripping with mockery. "You're asking me for a handout, Willow? On what grounds?"

The rejection hit her like a vicious slap across the face, shattering her fragile illusions.

She was left reeling.

On what grounds?

How about the fact that she was his wife? Or that she had generated millions in profit for Sinclair Group? Or that she technically had a legal claim to half his assets? Weren't those reasons enough?

Yet, staring into Julian's derisive, uncaring eyes, the words caught in her throat. Saying them aloud would only subject her to further humiliation.

"Just treat it as a loan. Please?"

"A loan? How exactly do you plan to pay it back?"

She had already humbled herself, but he was still backing her into a corner. Panic clawed at her chest. "Then let me take an advance on my salary and my yearly bonus. Surely that covers it."

"You know your own salary structure better than I do. You'll never cover that amount," Julian dismissed, his expression entirely bored.

Hot tears threatened to spill over. "Julian, do you really have to be this cruel?"

"Cruel?" He looked down at her as if she were a panhandling stranger on the street. "You simply fail to understand the reality of our relationship."

Relationship? What relationship? Weren't they bound by law? Or were they worse than strangers now?