

The Wife He Forgot to Marry (Winona and Yule)

Chapter 11

She picked it up and opened it, recognizing Tallulah's handwriting.

At the top of the page was the title: "One Hundred Things I Want to Do with Yulen."

March 2nd: For my birthday, I want to see the Northern Lights with Yulen and kiss for ten minutes straight.

May 20th: I want Yulen to light up Victoria Harbour with fireworks all night long and propose to me.

July 14th: I want to go skydiving with Yulen in New Zealand. I'll wear a wedding dress as we jump from fifteen thousand feet, making it a day he can never forget.

...

By the time Winona finished reading the list, tears were streaming down her face.

During all those days Yulen was away on "business," he had been off doing all these things with Tallulah.

After they got married, he'd rarely planned anything romantic or surprising for her. He'd even stopped buying her flowers. Whenever he saw other couples' romantic posts on social media, he would frown and say, "Winona, we're different. We don't need grand gestures to prove anything. A quiet, steady life suits us better."

It wasn't that he had forgotten how to be romantic. He was just saving his romance for another woman.

Winona shoved the journal back into the glove compartment and wiped her tears with a tissue.

When Yulen got in the car, he noticed her red-rimmed eyes. "Winona, what's wrong? Have you been crying?"

She fought to suppress the storm of emotions inside her, forcing a weak smile. "It's nothing. I just got something in my eye."

Yulen nodded without pressing further and started the car. They were only two blocks away from Helena's neighborhood when Yulen's phone rang. He answered, and the voice of their property manager came through the speaker.

"Mr. Locke, we've detected that the smoke alarm in your villa has gone off. We went to check, but no one is answering the door. We wanted to confirm if you and your family are all out."

Yulen frowned. Tallulah was still at home. He immediately pulled the car over to the curb and turned to Winona. "I'm so sorry, Winona, the smoke alarm at home is going off. Tallulah's there by herself, I have to go back and check. You go on ahead to Helena's. If everything's fine, I'll join you later."

Before Winona could even respond, Yulen had unbuckled her seatbelt and was ushering her out of the car. The car sped off, leaving her stranded on the empty road.

Winona let out a bitter laugh. The house had an induction stovetop, and all their appliances were top-of-the-line; they'd never had a single malfunction. How could Tallulah have possibly set off the smoke alarm? It was just another ploy to get Yulen to come back to her.

He had never abandoned her on the side of the road for any emergency before. But for Tallulah, he made an exception. In that moment, she finally understood just how cruel he could be to her now that his heart belonged to someone else.

She looked around, but after ten minutes, not a single taxi passed by. Helena and her husband, Matteo, could only afford a house in a remote area where cabs were scarce. With no other choice, she started walking.

Forty minutes later, she finally arrived at Helena's complex. Wiping the sweat from her forehead, she rang the doorbell. From inside, she heard a man's angry roar and a woman's sharp sobs. Her heart tightened.

Just as she was about to knock, the door flew open. Matteo stormed out, his face a mask of fury, brushing past her without a word.

She hurried inside to find Helena crying on the sofa while Nikita stood by, red-eyed, holding her niece Greta. The living room was a complete mess.

Worried someone might get hurt, Winona first cleaned up the broken items on the floor before making lunch for everyone.

After the meal, Greta and Helena went to take a nap. Nikita took Winona's hand and began to whisper, "It's Helena's fault, you know, being so headstrong. She's always busy at the hospital and is never home. That's why Matteo cheated. Now she wants a divorce and wants to leave him with nothing. He doesn't want to split, so she's making a scene."

Honestly, what's the point? If he's willing to come back, they should just work it out... Helena is just so immature. A divorced woman with a child, who would want her?"

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Chapter 12

Winona disagreed. "Grandma, Matteo is the one who did something wrong. Why are you siding with him?"

Nikita squeezed her hand, her tone sharp. "A divorce? You think it's that simple? Your cousin Greta is still in school, and her tuition is over four thousand dollars a semester. Can Helena afford that on her salary alone? They haven't even paid off the mortgage on this house. They need Matteo to help with that."

"Even so, Matteo betrayed her first. How can she be happy if she stays with him? It's better to cut her losses now."

"What man doesn't stray? Besides, Helena only gave him Greta and refuses to have another child. A family needs a son, you know. And she brought me here to live with them while Matteo's own mother stays back in their hometown. It's no wonder he's unhappy. In the end, it's my fault too. I should just go back to the countryside..."

A sudden memory of her own son, who had passed away young, brought tears to Nikita's eyes. If her son were still alive, she wouldn't have to worry about who would care for her. Living in her daughter's home just didn't feel right.

Winona knew her grandmother was bound by the traditional mindset of her era. Arguing was often pointless, but she had to try. "Grandma, it doesn't matter if it's a boy or a girl. Both can care for their parents. And it was Matteo's mother who didn't want to move here to help with Greta. That's why you came. You do all the housework and handle school pickups. You've done so much for this family. Shouldn't they be grateful? If Matteo's mother did as much as you, do you think Helena's relationship with her would be so strained?"

"What nonsense are you talking about!" Nikita said, her voice full of weary exasperation. "Winona, don't you dare pick up Helena's stubborn habits. A married woman should know how to be patient and keep her family together. Let Helena's marriage be a cautionary tale for you. You need to take care of your husband and have a son for him as soon as possible. Don't be like those silly young girls who decide to be child-free. A family is only stable with a son. That's what keeps a man's heart focused on you and the child..."

A heavy weight settled in Winona's chest. She had wanted to tell her grandmother about her own situation with Yulen, but seeing her reaction to Helena's crisis, she didn't know how to begin.

That evening, when Winona returned home, she found Yulen and Tallulah sitting on the sofa, laughing and eating together.

When Yulen saw her, he finally seemed to remember his promise. He quickly stood up and apologized. "I'm so sorry, Winona. Tallulah sprained her ankle, and I got caught up taking care of her. I completely forgot about going to your aunt's house."

Winona was exhausted and had no patience for their act. She turned to go into the master bedroom.

Suddenly, Yulen grabbed her sleeve. "Tallulah was burning some photos earlier and accidentally set the guest room curtains on fire. It's a good thing I got back in time. The room is uninhabitable now, and with her sprained ankle... the only other bedroom on the first floor is the master. How about we sleep upstairs and let her have our room?"

When he had returned earlier, he'd found Tallulah in the room, crying as she burned their photos together. His heart had ached for her. A wave of guilt washed over him for putting a pregnant woman through such emotional turmoil, and he had stayed to comfort her, forgetting all about his plans with Winona.

Winona looked back at Tallulah, disgusted by her audacity. It was bad enough that she had moved in, but now she wanted to take over the master bedroom.

She shot a sarcastic look at Yulen. "Since I'm already giving up the master bedroom, should I just give you to her as well?"

The Wife He Forgot to Marry (Winona and Yule)

Chapter 13

Yulen's expression darkened. "Winona, why are you being so sarcastic? Tallulah is like a family; we've known her since she was a kid..."

Tallulah, playing her part, pushed herself up from the sofa, her eyes red. "It's okay, Yulen. Maybe I should just leave."

Seeing her about to go, Yulen rushed to stop her. "It's so late. Where would you go by yourself with a sprained ankle?"

Tallulah just lowered her head and said nothing.

Yulen turned back to Winona, his voice edged with annoyance. "This villa was bought with my money. I think I have the right to decide who stays in the master bedroom. You have no say in it."

Winona found the situation absurd. When they first got married, he had promised her that all his assets were hers to share and control. Now, he was telling her she had no right to a single room.

She couldn't take it anymore. She walked to the entryway and started putting on her shoes.

"What are you doing?" Yulen demanded, displeased.

Winona's expression was cold, as if she were looking at a stranger. "Since you bought this villa and I have no say, I'll go stay somewhere else."

Yulen was taken aback. He hadn't seen her this defiant in a long time. After their wedding, she had become so accommodating that he'd almost forgotten the stubborn, spirited girl she used to be.

He sighed, stepping forward to placate her. "It's just one room, why are you making such a big deal? We've known Tallulah for years. Can't you show a little compassion?"

Winona was too tired to argue anymore. She turned and walked out the door.

"Winona!" Yulen started to follow, but a cry of pain came from behind him. He whipped around to see Tallulah crumpled on the floor, tears streaming down her pitiful face. In the end, his concern for her got the better of him, and he hurried back to her side.

*

Winona went back to her apartment. The moment she opened the door and stepped into a space that was entirely hers, a sense of security finally washed over her. She was now incredibly grateful that she hadn't listened to Yulen and sold this small apartment. Otherwise, she would have had nowhere to go.

Although Yulen had bought several other properties for her, they were all in his name, not her assets. She now realized that in five years of marriage, not a single one of the expensive gifts Yulen had given her was truly her own. From the moment he had tricked her into a sham marriage, he had been guarding his assets against her.

A sharp pain twisted in her stomach, and she remembered she hadn't eaten dinner. The apartment had been empty for a while, and there was no food in the fridge.

She picked up her phone and ordered takeout. She had to take care of herself. She needed the energy to fight Yulen for her share of their marital assets.

If Tallulah wanted to pick up her trash, so be it. But when it came to what was rightfully hers, Winona would not back down an inch.

After she finished eating, her phone rang. It was Yulen. She declined the call, blocked his number, then opened her social media apps and blocked him there too.

After doing all that, she finally lay down on her bed and drifted off to sleep.

*

Meanwhile, Yulen discovered that Winona had blocked him. His face turned grim.

Curled up beside him on the master bed, Tallulah felt victorious. She had wanted this for so long. She was the true mistress of this house; why should Winona be the one sleeping in the master bedroom?

Noticing Yulen's foul mood, she asked softly, "Yulen, what's wrong?"

Seeing her there, wearing Winona's pajamas, lying on their bed with Winona's favorite pillow tossed carelessly on the floor, Yulen suddenly felt that he had been too harsh today.

The Wife He Forgot to Marry (Winona and Yule)

Chapter 14

Winona was a very private person. She never even let the maids clean their bedroom, always insisting on tidying it herself. No wonder she'd had such a strong reaction to him letting Tallulah stay there.

He turned to Tallulah. "Tomorrow, I'll have someone come and clean up the guest room. You should sleep in there."

After all, Winona was the first person he had truly loved. They had history, and he needed to win her back.

Tallulah bit her lip, suppressing the jealousy she felt toward Winona. Her voice was cautious and gentle. "I know I made Winona upset again. I'll apologize to her when she comes back. But I feel bad for you, too. You work so hard so that Winona can live such a comfortable life. If I were her, I'd listen to you and never make things harder for you. But

she gives you attitude, throws a tantrum, and even runs away from home. Do you think it's because you spoil her too much? Has it made her entitled?"

Her words made Yulen pause and reflect. All of his friends who had married women from ordinary backgrounds were treated like kings. But him? He was the one who never wanted Winona to tire herself out, the one who always considered her feelings. And now she had the audacity to throw a fit at him. Maybe he really had been spoiling her.

His initial impulse to go and coax her back faded. He decided he should just let her be. Once she had time to think about who made her comfortable life possible, she would come back and apologize on her own.

*

The next morning, Winona woke up, put on makeup, and dressed in a sharp business suit, feeling refreshed and ready to go to the office. It was her first day back in the professional world after five years, and she wouldn't let Yulen and Tallulah ruin her mood.

Traffic was terrible that morning, so when she realized the office was only a short walk away, Winona paid the driver and got out.

As she walked, she saw an elderly woman suddenly collapse on the sidewalk. People stopped and stared, but no one dared to help.

Seeing the woman's pale face, Winona feared the worst and rushed forward.

A kind-hearted middle-aged woman nearby warned her, "Honey, be careful. You never know with these things. What if she tries to sue you?"

Winona ignored the murmurs of the crowd, knelt, and immediately checked the old woman's condition. She had learned traditional healing methods from her grandfather and knew how to provide first aid. After checking the woman's pulse, she took out the set of acupuncture needles she always carried and inserted them into the appropriate pressure points.

A few moments later, the old woman slowly regained consciousness.

The crowd gasped in amazement, though some still looked worried that Winona was about to be scammed.

Violet Goddard was helped to a chair outside a nearby café. After a minute, her vision cleared. When she saw Winona, her eyes lit up.

She had recently been praying at church for her grandson to find a wife. That very night, she'd had a vivid dream in which an angel told her that her grandson's soulmate was in Riverton and that this young woman would save her life.

So, Violet had slipped away from her bodyguards and, without telling a soul, came to Riverton. To find this future granddaughter-in-law, she had been wandering the streets from morning till night. She had fainted from exhaustion and skipping breakfast. But to her astonishment, her collapse had led her right to her grandson's destiny.

This girl was beautiful, even more so than a movie star!

She grabbed Winona's hand tightly. "Thank you for saving me, dear. What's your name? How old are you? Where do you live?..."

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Chapter 15

Hearing the old woman's strong voice, Winona felt a sense of relief. Still, she gave her a serious warning. "Ma'am, this seems to be a chronic condition, a kind of cardiac insufficiency that can cause you to faint. It would be best if you had a family member with you when you go out."

Violet chuckled. "I was just out for a stroll and had a little accident. My family is usually very protective and doesn't let me go out alone. We're a very close family. By the way, dear, you haven't told me your name yet. Why don't we exchange contact information? I'd love to treat you to dinner."

Winona considered the old woman's condition. Regular acupuncture treatments could reduce the frequency of her episodes. She agreed and took out her phone to exchange numbers. "My name is Winona Jowett. If you feel unwell again, you can call me, and I can come give you an acupuncture treatment."

Violet was delighted to get her contact information. She nodded happily. "Wonderful! Thank you, Winona. I'll definitely call you if I need anything. Are you married? If not, I'd love to introduce you to my grandson!"

Winona was amused by the woman's enthusiasm. "That's very kind of you, but I really have to get to work. Will you be alright on your own?"

"I'll be fine," Violet said. "I'll just text my family to come pick me up. You go on to work."

Seeing that her mind was clear, Winona felt reassured and turned to leave. Violet watched her go, wishing she could take Winona home right then and there to meet her grandson, Stefan. But she knew she couldn't rush things. The first step was to get Stefan to Riverton. She took out her phone and sent him a message.

*

Winona went into the office and found Conrad, who then took her to meet the department staff. In the past five years, the R&D department had gone through two major staff changes. Most of the new employees didn't know Winona or her connection to Yulen. They were all curious as Conrad led her in.

“Everyone, this is our R&D Director, Winona. Although she hasn’t been in the office for the past few years, she has been guiding our product development strategy from behind the scenes. She played a key role in building this department into what it is today.”

The team listened with skepticism. Daphne, the R&D manager, glanced at Winona’s stunning face and scoffed inwardly. She had clearly gotten the job through connections. Daphne guessed she was probably the mistress of one of the company’s shareholders; otherwise, how could someone so young hold such a high position without even needing to show up for work?

After greeting everyone, Winona went back to her office with Conrad. He handed her a stack of files. “Mrs. Locke, take a look through these first. If you have any questions, just let me know. I’ll leave you to it.”

Winona nodded. Once Conrad left, she opened the files and began to read. The documents included not only the R&D department’s achievements over the last five years but also the sales data. She was surprised to find that the company’s top-selling products were all ones she had helped develop, with core formulas that came from her. In other words, she was a major contributor to the company’s success. A bitter smile touched her lips as she thought about how she had given her work to the company for free, only to be betrayed by Yulen.

*

Yulen had just entered his office when Conrad came in to report. As Yulen's secretary, Tallulah was naturally present.

After his report, Conrad casually mentioned that Winona had officially started that morning.

Yulen raised an eyebrow. “She’s been out of the workforce for five years. She’s probably rusty. You don’t have to listen to her. Just execute things your way.”

Conrad, however, disagreed. “Mr. Locke, you’re underestimating her. The director is highly capable. She was the one who refined the core formulas behind several of our best-selling products.”

Yulen heard his words but assumed Conrad was just being polite for his sake. Winona had worked at the company for less than a year after graduating before she got together with him. Then she quit to be a housewife for five years. What skills could she possibly have?

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Chapter 16

He waved a dismissive hand at Conrad. “You can go now.”

After Conrad left, Tallulah said, “Conrad is usually so demanding and rarely praises anyone. I’m surprised he had such good things to say about Winona. She must be quite charming.” Her words dripped with insinuation, suggesting Winona used her feminine wiles to win people over.

The comment irked Yulen. “I know Winona,” he said to Tallulah. “She’s not like that. Conrad was probably just saying that to be polite, for my sake.” He had been Winona's first man. After they got together, her world revolved around him; she wouldn't look at another man. Besides, what man was more outstanding than him?

At noon, Winona put down her files and headed to the company cafeteria for lunch. In the hallway, she ran into Orion Flynn, the director of the sales department. Orion had joined Locke Group six months ago and didn't know about her relationship with Yulen. Seeing how beautiful she was, he greeted her with a smile. “What a coincidence, Ms. Jowett. Are you heading to lunch? Mind if I join you?”

Winona gave him a polite nod. Seeing she was quiet, Orion struck up a conversation about the company's sales performance, a topic Winona was eager to learn more about, so she engaged with him.

Tallulah saw them walking together and scoffed. She snapped a picture and sent it to Yulen with a message: “Winona certainly has good luck with men. It’s her first day back, and someone is already asking her to lunch.”

Yulen saw the photo and felt a tightness in his chest, as if something was suffocating him. Winona was beautiful—the kind of stunning beauty that captivated you at first glance. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been so drawn to her in the first place. The real reason he had insisted she quit her job five years ago was that he didn’t want other men around her. In his mind, she belonged to him alone.

He immediately tried to call Winona, but his number was still on her blocklist. Left with no choice, he used the company’s internal line. Winona didn’t want to answer, but in the office, he was her superior. She had to pick up. “Is there something you need?” she asked, her tone strictly professional.

Her coldness stoked the fire in his chest, and his own voice turned icy. “Come to my office. Now.” He hung up without another word.

Winona wanted to avoid him, but for the sake of her job, she had no choice but to go. When she walked in, she saw Tallulah sitting next to Yulen. Two lunchboxes were on the table, and Tallulah was casually using her fork to pick food from Yulen’s container. Winona’s face hardened.

Yulen saw her expression. Not only had she run away from home last night, but now she was giving him an attitude. His voice grew heavy. “You said you came to work for a change of scenery, but now you’re getting tangled up with male colleagues. What exactly are you trying to do? And don’t forget—you’re my wife.”

He believed that whenever a woman got too close to another man, she was the one who ended up paying the price. She was his, and he would absolutely not allow another man to touch what was his.

Winona’s response was laced with sarcasm. “Mr. Locke, what exactly are you implying? I came to work, and talking about business with a male colleague seems perfectly normal. How does that become ‘getting tangled up’ in your eyes? In fact, I’d like to ask you—what do you call sharing a lunchbox with Tallulah?”

Yulen was stunned. Not only was Winona not admitting her mistake, but she was questioning him. She had always been soft-spoken and accommodating. What had gotten into her? Was she still angry about yesterday? But couples didn't hold grudges overnight. She was being incredibly petty.

Tallulah put down her fork and turned to Winona with a placating smile. “It’s all my fault, I was being greedy. Winona, please don’t misunderstand. I just think of Yulen as family, so I wasn’t being careful about appearances here at the office...”

Winona’s gaze cut to her. “Is the office the only place you’re not careful about appearances?”

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Chapter 17

Tallulah flinched as if frightened by her, lowering her head without a word.

Yulen, seeing Winona’s newfound sharp tongue, grew even more frustrated. “Why are you making a fuss over Tallulah? She's practically family. What's the big deal about us having

lunch? You, on the other hand, don't seem to know how to keep your distance from other men. Maybe I've been too indulgent with you, and that's why you're being so unreasonable.”

Realizing there was no reasoning with him and that he was only here to argue over trivial matters, Winona turned to leave. Yulen shot up and grabbed her arm.

Only then did he truly notice her appearance: a chic pink suit that hugged her delicate figure. With her hair pulled back, her striking features and elegant collarbones were on full display. The sight of this different, more alluring Winona made him reluctant to continue scolding her.

He sighed. “Look, I know you’re just acting out because you're upset about yesterday, but I’ve already explained everything. Why won’t you listen? How about we both take a step back and just make up?”

For the past two weeks, he had spent nearly all his time with Tallulah, but with her pregnancy, their intimacy was limited to kisses and hugs. Seeing this new, more captivating version of Winona stirred the desire he had been suppressing for so long.

Winona didn’t want to cause a major scene at the office. After all, she still needed his permission to access the company’s operational and financial records. Softening her stance, she allowed him to lead her back to the sofa.

Yulen had his assistant bring in another lunch.

Staring at the meal, identical to Tallulah's, Winona had no appetite. But she had to work this afternoon, and with the pregnancy, not eating would surely bring on morning sickness. She forced herself to take a few bites.

Yulen, believing he had successfully placated her, couldn’t suppress a smug smile. He was certain now that Winona was simply jealous of Tallulah. A few sweet words, and she’d come right back to him. After five years together, he knew just how much she loved him. He was confident she couldn’t live without him.

Winona felt his gaze on her and was sickened, but she kept her composure.

Just then, her phone rang. It was her mother-in-law, Willow.

“Winona, Dr. Charlton told me you haven't been coming in for your injections. Have you decided you don't want to have a child for Yulen?”

Dr. Charlton was the fertility specialist Willow had insisted she see.

If she missed an appointment, a call from Willow was sure to follow. Even when Winona felt unwell, Willow would never let her rest, insisting the treatments continue. Yulen would murmur words of sympathy but never once stood up for her.

She suddenly realized how foolish she had been.

“I’m not getting the injections anymore,” she said coolly. “You don’t need to call and remind me again.”

Willow’s voice shot up several octaves. “What do you mean? Winona, have you gotten bold all of a sudden? How dare you talk back to your elders like that? As our daughter-in-law, isn’t it your responsibility to have children for this family? Plenty of women would be desperate for a life like this, and you’re really turning your back on it?”

Even though Tallulah was carrying Yulen's child, who would complain about having too many grandchildren? Her son had supported Winona for years; it was time for her to repay that investment with a few healthy grandsons.

Winona let out a cold laugh. “If other women are so eager to give you grandchildren, then you should ask them. Why bother me?”

With that, she hung up.

It was the first time she had ever hung up on Willow. Not only was Willow stunned into silence, but Yulen, who had been listening beside her, was also shocked.

He looked at Winona, a sense of unease growing. She was truly different now.

“Winona, what's gotten into you?” he asked, his brow furrowed. “Why would you speak to my mother like that? You've always been so respectful to her.”

Her voice was devoid of emotion. “I have a cold and I’m exhausted. I don't want to get the injections for a while. Is that too much to ask?”

Yulen saw her expression and decided not to push it.

In truth, he knew how difficult it was for Winona to conceive; all those injections were probably for nothing anyway. But how painful could one shot a day be? If she just complied, Willow wouldn’t torment her so much. He was only trying to help her.

“Fine,” he said, trying to soothe her. “If you don’t want the shots for now, then don’t get them. But that's no reason to talk to my mother that way. She's sacrificed a lot for me. Just for me, try not to argue with her, okay?”

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Chapter 18

Winona glanced at him. “Your mother may have sacrificed for you, but she’s never done anything for me. You can tolerate her bad temper, but I have no obligation to. If she respects me, I’ll respect her. But if she’s going to be hostile, I’m not going to put up with it anymore.”

She stood and straightened her clothes. “If she thinks I’m such an unsatisfactory daughter-in-law, maybe I should just stop visiting your parents’ house and getting on her nerves.”

“What are you saying?” Yulen’s own anger flared. “What daughter-in-law speaks to her mother-in-law that way? Winona, don’t you realize how much words like that hurt me?”

“She’s your mother, so you can be the one to dote on her,” Winona said dismissively. “Mr. Locke, I have to get back to work.” With that, she walked out of the office.

Yulen’s face was dark with fury.

Beside him, Tallulah had to suppress a laugh. She couldn’t believe how foolish Winona was. All it took was a little intimacy with Yulen, and Winona completely lost her temper, even daring to offend Willow. Did she want to be thrown out?

Outwardly, however, she feigned sympathy for Yulen. “Winona is being so immature. Yulen, you work so hard to provide for her, and she’s still not satisfied. I told you before, you shouldn’t have been so quick to appease her. It just makes her more arrogant.”

Yulen now thought Tallulah was making perfect sense. He shouldn’t have lowered himself to placate Winona; it had only made her more defiant.

Seeing the dark expression on his face, Tallulah knew her words had hit their mark. She continued, “I think you should teach her a lesson. Freeze all her credit cards. She’s used to living off you. The moment the money stops, she won’t be able to keep this up. She’ll come back on her own soon enough, and then you won’t have to coddle her anymore. She’ll learn to be obedient.”

In his anger, Yulen agreed. He picked up his phone and instructed his assistant to freeze all of Winona’s credit cards.

After work, Winona was about to head back to her own apartment when she received a call from Helena.

“Winona, something terrible has happened!” Helena’s voice was frantic. “Nikita was cleaning at home and fell off a stool. She’s at the hospital now. I’m on duty and have two surgeries back-to-back, so I can’t get there to look after her. Please, can you go check on her?”

Helena, a nurse, was usually composed, but now she was in a panic. Despite being a medical professional herself, she felt helpless now that her own family was in trouble.

After calming her down, Winona immediately hailed a cab to the hospital.

Nikita was lying on the hospital bed, her face pale.

“She has a femoral shaft fracture and needs surgery immediately,” the doctor told her. “You need to go and pay the fees right away. We can’t delay.”

Winona took the bill and went to the payment counter.

The cashier swiped her credit card several times, but each attempt failed. “Your card isn’t working. Do you have another one?”

Surprised, Winona handed over a debit card. This account held the twenty thousand dollars Yulen had transferred to her earlier.

But it was also declined.

She called the bank’s customer service. After checking the system, the representative said, “I’m sorry, Mrs. Locke, but all of your cards have been frozen by your husband. You’ll need to contact him.”

A chill ran through Winona. Nikita needed money for her surgery, and Winona, having been a housewife with no income, relied entirely on the cards he provided.

With trembling hands, she tried to call Yulen, but his phone went straight to voicemail. She then tried Helena, but her phone was off, likely because she was in surgery.

At that moment, Winona hated herself more than ever for giving up her career for Yulen. If she hadn’t, she would have had the money for the surgery right now.

Desperate, she started calling her old college classmates, asking to borrow money. In the end, she managed to gather only five hundred dollars.

Frantically scrolling through her contacts again, her eyes landed on Violet’s name. Swallowing her pride, she made the call.

The line connected quickly, but the voice that answered wasn't Violet's. It was a young man's, deep and magnetic.

“Hello? Are you looking for my grandmother?”

The Wife He Forgot to Marry (Winona and Yule)

Chapter 19

Winona hesitated, but Nikita's surgery couldn't wait. With a sincere voice, she asked, “My grandmother was injured in a fall. She needs an operation, and I'm still short three thousand dollars. C-could you possibly transfer the money to me?”

Worried he might think she was a scammer, she quickly added, “I can send you a picture of my ID. I'll write an IOU. Please, believe me, I will pay you back...”

But the man cut her off. “Give me your account details.”

The money hit her account almost instantly.

After a quick thank you, Winona rushed to pay the medical fees.

For the next two hours, she waited in anguish, terrified of what might happen if Nikita didn't make it. Though her grandmother was traditional and conservative, she had always showered Winona with love. Winona had grown up without parents but never felt she lacked anything. Her clothes were always new and well-fitted, her hair neatly combed. Whatever she wanted to eat, Nikita would buy it for her without a second thought.

Other elderly neighbors would tease Nikita, “She's just a girl. Why spoil her? Once she marries, she'll belong to another family. All that money will be wasted. You should adopt a grandson from a relative to take care of you in your old age!”

But Nikita would always retort, “She's my granddaughter. If I don't dote on her, who will? If we have anything to leave behind, we'd rather leave it to our granddaughter than hand it over to anyone else.”

People called Nikita foolish, but she paid them no mind, continuing to treasure Winona like the most precious person in her life.

Looking at the elderly woman on the bed, her brow furrowed in pain even in her sleep, Winona was consumed by guilt. If she hadn't married Yulen right after college and had focused on her career instead, she would have been able to provide for Nikita's medical

care herself. She deeply regretted letting love blind her to the importance of her own independence.

Suddenly, a commotion erupted from the next bed. Two men were shouting, arguing over who should pay for their father's surgery and who should stay to care for him. The argument escalated, and they started throwing punches and smashing things.

Fearing they might hit Nikita, Winona instinctively shielded her grandmother with her own body.

At that moment, a metal thermos came flying toward her back.

Before she could even register the danger, a shadow fell over her, and her body was enveloped by a familiar scent of cedarwood.

She froze.

Then she heard something clatter to the ground. Glancing down, she saw the thermos at her feet, hot water spilling from its loose lid. She realized the man had just shielded her from the projectile.

She looked up and recognized him—it was the man from the hospital entrance.

He frowned, slowly releasing her wrist. He turned to face the two brawling men, who had already been separated by his bodyguards but were still cursing at each other.

As Stefan's icy gaze fell upon them, a chill ran down their spines. The sight of his bodyguards restraining them only made them more afraid, and they immediately fell silent.

Stefan shrugged off his suit jacket, which was soaked with hot water, and handed it to his assistant. Underneath, he wore a perfectly tailored designer suit.

His aura was one of immense prestige, and his voice was as cold as frost. "These men caused a disturbance and intentionally injured someone in a hospital. Spencer, call the police."

His assistant, Spencer, pulled out his phone.

The two men instantly bowed and scraped, begging for forgiveness.

The old man on the bed, who had been angry at his sons for shirking their responsibilities, now panicked at the thought of them going to jail. "Sir, please, it's not that serious! They just have bad tempers, they didn't mean any harm. Look, they've apologized. Please let them go! Besides, if they go to jail, who will take care of me?"

Stefan glanced at the old man. “Even if they don’t go to jail, they have no intention of taking care of you.”

The old man choked on his words, the light in his eyes dimming. He had two sons, yet neither was willing to care for him.

After the troublemakers were escorted out, the ward returned to silence.

Surveying the mess on the floor, Stefan turned to Winona. “Your grandmother won’t be able to rest properly here. I’ll arrange for a private VIP room for her.”

Winona recognized his voice. He must be Violet’s grandson.

“Thank you, Mr. Goddard,” she said hurriedly, “but I can’t possibly afford a private room. We’ll be fine here, really.”

The Wife He Forgot to Marry (Winona and Yule)

Chapter 20

Stefan ignored her protest and instructed Spencer to make the arrangements. Soon, Nikita was moved into a VIP suite. The hospital director and several department heads came to visit her personally.

Stefan addressed the director, “Ms. Jowett did a great service for the Goddard family. I expect you to ensure her grandmother receives the best possible care.”

The director, who had never seen the formidable head of the Goddard family speak so pleasantly, was taken aback. “Of course, Mr. Goddard,” he stammered. “Rest assured, Ms. Jowett’s grandmother will receive the absolute best care.”

After the director and his entourage left, Winona looked at Stefan, feeling flustered. “Mr. Goddard, I promise I’ll pay back the money I owe you as soon as I can.”

Stefan glanced at his watch. He had flown in from the capital specifically for Nikita, but he had an urgent project at his company that required his decision, so he couldn’t stay long.

He looked at Winona, his tone distant but polite. “Ms. Jowett, you saved my grandmother. Everything I’ve done was simply to return the favor. You don’t owe me anything.”

But Winona still felt uneasy. “Saving your grandmother was just a small thing, but you’ve paid for the medical bills and arranged this VIP room...”

Stefan’s expression remained unchanged as he watched her struggle with her words. She was beautiful, but he was not a man easily swayed by beauty.

“Ms. Jowett, let’s consider the matter of the medical fees closed,” he said. “However, there is something else I’d like to ask of you.”

Winona blinked. “What is it?” What could a powerful man like Mr. Goddard possibly need her help with?

Stefan thought of his grandmother’s meddling and felt a headache coming on. “Ms. Jowett,” he began, his voice serious, “my grandmother is very concerned about whether I’m getting married. If she says anything out of line to you, please don’t take it to heart. I hope you’ll remember that I have no intention of ever getting married.”

Before Winona could process what he meant, he gave her a polite nod and turned to leave the room.

A soft cough came from the bed. Forgetting Stefan’s cryptic words, Winona rushed to Nikita’s side.

Seeing Winona, a faint smile touched Nikita’s lips. “I’m okay. Did I scare you?”

Winona grasped her hand, her voice filled with relief. “Grandma, you have to be okay. What would I do if something happened to you? You’re all I have left.”

Nikita’s eyes welled up. “Silly child, what are you talking about? You’re married now, you have Yulen with you. What do you need an old woman like me for?” She glanced around the luxurious room and chided gently, “Did Yulen arrange for this room? It’s far too extravagant. Tell him I’m perfectly fine in a regular ward.”

At the mention of Yulen, a wave of hatred washed over Winona as she remembered her frozen bank cards. But not wanting to worry Nikita, who was still weak, she said nothing.

Winona took three days off from work to care for her grandmother.

*

Back at Locke Group’s R&D department, Daphne couldn’t wait to tell Tallulah that Winona had taken a leave of absence.

Daphne and Tallulah were old classmates and close friends. Tallulah had gotten her the job at the company, so Daphne was always eager to please her. However, Tallulah had

never told her about the relationship between Winona and Yulen, so Daphne assumed Winona's connections at the company lay elsewhere.

"Tallulah, that Winona is a real piece of work," Daphne gossiped. "She gets a job through connections, works for two days, and then takes time off. She's completely useless. You should tell Mr. Locke to get rid of her. I don't want to work for someone like that."

When Tallulah heard that Winona wasn't at work, she smiled mockingly. She knew it. After five years of being pampered by Yulen, Winona wasn't cut out for the workplace. Her talk of getting a job was probably just for show.

But her absence was a good thing. It meant she and Yulen could be more comfortable at the office without having to hide.

*

That evening, after helping Nikita fall asleep, Winona opened her phone to check her work messages.

Suddenly, she saw a new Twitter post from Daphne. It was a photo from a dinner with colleagues from the R&D and executive departments. In the picture, Tallulah was leaning intimately against Yulen's shoulder. And on her hand was a brilliant emerald ring.

It was the very ring Yulen had offered to buy for her at an auction. When she heard its price tag—half a million dollars—she'd told him it was too extravagant and to not waste the money.

Winona laughed bitterly at the memory. A woman who bends over backward to save a man money is a fool. If she won't spend it, someone else gladly will.