

The Wife He Forgot to Marry (Winona and Yule)

Chapter 9

Winona had her excuse ready. "I'm going back to work," she said calmly, "and my old clothes weren't professional enough. I cleared them out to make room for a new wardrobe. You're not going to scold me for wasting money, are you?"

Hearing her explanation, Yulen relaxed. "Of course not. Buy whatever you want. Get rid of anything you don't like."

He knew Winona was usually frugal. The allowance he gave her was more than she ever spent. This was the first time she'd ever been so wasteful, throwing so many things away.

But the clothes and bags were years old. Let her toss them. He figured she'd probably regret it later and wouldn't be so quick to waste money in the future.

In no mood to talk to him further, Winona walked back to her desk, intending to continue reviewing the product information Conrad had sent.

In the past, whenever Yulen returned from a business trip, Winona would be incredibly affectionate, hugging him and talking his ear off. But now, she was distant, acting as if she hadn't missed him at all. Yulen suddenly felt a familiar itch. Her current demeanor reminded him of when he was first pursuing her.

Back then, she had been just as cool and distant. She was a young woman, but her personality was cold and stubborn, unlike any of the socialites he'd ever met. He had been instantly intrigued. He chased her, and she ran. The more she avoided him, the more obsessed he became. After he finally won her over, they'd had a sweet, romantic period.

But somewhere along the way, he started to feel that something was missing. It wasn't until Tallulah appeared that he realized what it was: their relationship had become too stable. It lacked excitement.

Seeing Winona revert to her old self reignited his desire to tease and provoke her. Maybe it was a weakness he had—the colder she became, the more drawn to her he felt.

He stepped forward, wanting to embrace her.

Winona felt him approach and her body stiffened. When she had loved him, she'd wanted to be close to him constantly. But from the moment she discovered his betrayal, her love had died. Now, his very presence, his scent, made her feel sick.

She instinctively pulled away, changing the subject. "Yulen, I want to buy a car to make commuting easier."

"No problem," he agreed without a second thought. "You pick it out, I'll pay for it."

He leaned in to kiss her, but Winona blocked his lips with her hand. Seeing suspicion cloud his eyes, she fought back her disgust and feigned a playful pout. "Yulen, have you forgotten? I'm still getting over my cold. You just got back from a trip, and you must have a lot to do at the office. It would be terrible if I got you sick. I just took some cold medicine and I'm feeling sleepy. I think I'll go to bed now."

Yulen considered this. If he caught her cold and passed it to Tallulah, it could be bad for the baby. He decided to drop the idea of being intimate.

He stroked Winona's hair, his voice still gentle. "Alright, you get some rest. I'm going to step out and make a call."

After he left the bedroom, Winona pressed her lips together and silently followed him. As she expected, he went straight to Tallulah's room.

The door wasn't fully closed, and standing outside, Winona could hear everything clearly.

"Yulen, did you give Winona a sleeping pill?" Tallulah's voice whispered. "If she's not asleep, we should probably keep it down. It would be bad if she found out."

"She took cold medicine, so she's probably drowsy and asleep by now. No need for a sleeping pill tonight."

The rustling of clothes followed.

Winona gripped her phone, her hand ice-cold as she recorded a video of them kissing. She couldn't believe it. To carry on his affair with Tallulah under her own roof, Yulen had been drugging her with sleeping pills.

After recording the video, she tiptoed back to her room, took a bottle of vitamin C tablets from the cabinet, opened it, and dropped one tablet into a glass of warm water.

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Then, she poured in a few drops of iodine tincture.

As a pharmacology student, she knew exactly how to distinguish the two substances. If the bottle had contained vitamin C, the brown iodine in the cup would have rapidly turned clear.

But the water in the glass showed no chemical reaction at all. This wasn't vitamin C.

Her mind flashed back to the mysterious headaches, fatigue, and low moods she'd been suffering from lately. She had assumed it was anxiety over her inability to conceive, but now she understood—they were all side effects of long-term sleeping pill use.

And the architect of it all was Yulen!

A wave of fear washed over her. For the past half-month, Yulen had been away on a “business trip,” so she hadn't taken the pills. If she had, the child growing in her womb would have certainly been harmed.

The thought ignited a fresh blaze of hatred for Yulen. He had not only betrayed their marriage but had also been systematically poisoning her.

Resting a hand on her stomach, Winona was overcome with a profound sadness. If her child ever learned what a cruel man their father was, she would rather they had never been born.

She took out her phone, ready to book an appointment for an abortion, when it suddenly rang.

It was her grandmother, Nikita.

After her father's death and her mother's remarriage, Winona had been raised by her grandparents, and she was very close to them. When her grandfather passed away during her college years, her aunt Helena brought Nikita to live with her in Riverton. Winona had stayed in Riverton after graduation, hoping to spend more time with her grandmother.

But after marrying Yulen, she had been so consumed with trying to get pregnant and so distressed by her poor health that she'd rarely visited, not wanting Nikita to worry. A pang of guilt struck her.

“Winona,” Nikita's warm voice came through the phone, “it's your aunt Helena's birthday tomorrow. If you and Yulen are free, you should both come over.”

The last thing Winona wanted was to be near Yulen, but for her grandmother's sake, she agreed.

The next morning, when she came downstairs, she found Yulen and Tallulah already dressed and seated at the dining table, waiting for her.

Seeing her, Yulen smiled. “You’re up. We were waiting for you. Is your cold any better?”

Winona just grunted in acknowledgment and sat down across from him.

Tallulah seized the opportunity to chime in. “Yulen made all of this. He got up early and cooked this huge breakfast. I’m so jealous, Winona. You found such a wonderful husband.”

Winona glanced at the lavish spread on the table: eggs benedict, fluffy pancakes, and fresh fruit—a breakfast they never normally ate. It was obvious who Yulen had made it for.

She looked at him. “I thought you only knew how to make pasta. When did you learn to cook something so complicated?”

Yulen cleared his throat. “It’s mostly from a kit, it wasn’t much effort. Hurry up and eat before it gets cold.”

Winona had no appetite. She took a sip of her juice, then put her glass down and told him about the dinner at Helena’s.

Yulen nodded. “It’s been a while since I’ve seen them with you. I’m free today, so let’s go together.”

After breakfast, Winona went upstairs to change. When she came down, she and Yulen were ready to leave.

Tallulah stood behind them, beaming. “I’ll wait for you guys to come back. I can help tidy up the house a bit.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Yulen said. “Just watch some TV, have some snacks. If you get hungry, I’ll have my assistant bring you lunch.”

Tallulah nodded, her expression full of innocent charm. “I’ll be fine, Yulen, don’t worry about me. Go on and have a nice day with Winona.”

But Yulen still seemed concerned, fussing over her with a few more instructions.

Not waiting for him, Winona got into the car. As she sat in the passenger seat, she noticed a journal.