

His kiss 1181

Chapter 1181

But if he could be persuaded to return, not only would they avoid the penalty entirely — they could use his name to keep growing the business.

If they held on for a full year and fulfilled Century Grand Hotel's orders, future contracts could be negotiated entirely on their own terms.

No one would be able to take advantage of them again.

"Think it through. If Gabriela won't help, you're looking at losses of at least forty million. After that, the restaurant wouldn't even be worth keeping open — no future in it at all."

"But if she helps, you avoid that forty million entirely, and just fulfilling Century Grand Hotel's orders for the coming year alone will bring in real profit."

More than that — leverage from that contract could open the door to even more deals down the line. With the right timing, if the restaurant's reputation took off, Eight Treasures could turn into a genuine goldmine for Rebecca, for years to come.

That was exactly why Gabriela had said this was never really about a few million.

“Gabriela might be petty enough to vent by smashing a few vases, but let her. Her help alone could set your business up for a bright future.”

Sound as Lauren’s reasoning was, Rebecca still felt the sting of it.

“Gabriela could’ve helped me without any effort at all. Instead, she chose to humiliate me every step of the way.”

“Keep your composure.” Lauren’s jaw tightened. “Don’t worry. Gabriela’s arrogance will catch up with her eventually.”

Rebecca’s eyes lit up. “Mom, do you have a way to get rid of her once and for all?”

She truly couldn’t stomach Gabriela anymore, wished she’d simply vanish into some corner of the world and never resurface, never again take what rightfully belonged to Rebecca.

Something flickered in Lauren’s gaze.

“That kind of thing isn’t yours to worry about going forward. Since you’ve already acquired a restaurant as promising as Eight Treasures, I’ll find someone reliable to manage it for you.”

“Thanks, Mom!”

Thinking of Gabriela stepping in to save her from this mess, Rebecca couldn't help a flicker of contempt.

That worthless girl, only good for throwing tantrums and breaking things, probably has no idea how much money Eight Treasures could actually bring in.

Let her enjoy her arrogance for a while longer. Once the money started rolling in, Rebecca fully intended to use it to humiliate her, as publicly as possible.

Meanwhile, the "arrogant" Gabriela sat quietly in the back seat of her car, headphones on, listening to that exact conversation play out.

A shame, really.

The earrings she'd planted in Lauren's drawer didn't pick up everything with perfect clarity. Fortunately, Lauren genuinely adored those earrings and wore them often enough to various events.

Over the past several days, Gabriela had confirmed enough to be sure Lauren was tangled up in something illicit.

Once she had solid, concrete evidence, she'd see to it that Lauren ended up behind bars.

Whatever it took, punishing Lauren was how she intended to honor Allan.

“Gabriela, what are you listening to?”

Matthew, noticing the crease in her brow, couldn’t help but ask.

Chapter 1182

She slipped off the headphones and smiled. “Just some pop song. Not really your taste, Dad.”

He reached over and tapped her forehead lightly. “Sounds like you’re in a good mood — even teasing your old man now.”

Gabriela laughed and pulled his hand down.

“Dad, once your divorce from Lauren goes through, would you consider moving in with me?”

While the divorce was still pending, moving in with her might damage Matthew’s reputation.

But once finalized, it would be perfectly respectable — living with his own daughter, nothing more natural than that.

The idea tempted him.

Moving in would mean seeing his daughter and grandson every single day.

But Gabriela currently sat at the center of Okburg's social gossip. If he moved in, it might stir up unnecessary trouble for her.

"No, even if I did move in, you'd probably be married off before long. Then I'd just have to get used to living alone all over again."

At the mention of marriage, Gabriela hesitated for a beat and instinctively steered the conversation elsewhere.

She could see herself reconciling fully with Wesley — but marriage itself, she wasn't ready to cross that line yet.

Maybe no one could truly understand her feelings here. She and Allan had only ever been friends. So why did his memory still hold such weight over her?

It wasn't only that he held an irreplaceable place in her heart — after all, he'd once saved her life.

And then there was Wesley. His own life had been spared through a brutal trade — one life bought at the cost of another.

How could she possibly find peace, let alone marry Wesley, before she'd avenged Allan?

Seeing that Gabriela didn't want to dwell on marriage, Matthew tactfully steered the conversation toward Eight Treasures instead.

"I really have to thank you, on Rebecca's behalf, for this."

If Lauren hadn't provoked her so thoroughly, Gabriela wouldn't have vented her frustration by smashing the place apart.

"Dad, I only did it for you," Gabriela said.

Besides, venting all that anger in front of Lauren had felt genuinely satisfying.

Whether Rebecca actually managed to work well with Zeng Tong once she brought him back — that was entirely down to her own luck now.

After dropping Matthew off at home, Gabriela made a detour to the hospital to check on Aubrey.

As it happened, her parents were there as well.

The moment Aubrey's mother saw Gabriela, she greeted her with unusual politeness, even offering an apology — a stark contrast to her earlier combativeness.

Gabriela turned her attention to Aubrey instead.

Well aware of the disgraceful things her parents had done, Aubrey looked at Gabriela sheepishly, a hint of pleading in her eyes.

Gabriela could only give a resigned nod, signaling she accepted the apology from Aubrey's parents.

"It's fine. Let's leave it in the past. Just take good care of her."

Aubrey's mother nodded eagerly. "Of course. She's my own daughter, after all."

Still, Gabriela couldn't shake the sense that these two had some ulterior motive lurking underneath, and it left her uneasy.

Chapter 1183

She had a feeling something serious, something hard to contain, might unfold if no one kept an eye on them.

But as an outsider, what standing did she really have to interfere? In the end, all she could do was arrange for two caregivers to keep a closer watch on the situation.

Sure enough, Gabriela's unease proved justified.

That very day, while she was in the middle of discussing details with Leo at the SK Elite Boutique studio, a call came through from Alissa.

"Gabriela, get to the hospital now — something's happened!"

Gabriela hurried into the hospital room, her stomach sinking the moment she saw how crowded it already was.

Besides Aubrey's parents, there was Dr. Su, and two elderly figures she didn't recognize.

The two caregivers she'd hired had been sent away — clearly, this wasn't the kind of scene that welcomed outsiders.

Alissa leaned in to whisper an introduction. “Those two are Dr. Su’s parents.”

They looked exactly the part — graying hair, a calm, dignified bearing that spoke of respected elders.

But right now, their brows were pulled tight, fury radiating off them both.

Aubrey’s parents, in sharp contrast, wore expressions of unmistakable smugness.

And then there was Aubrey herself, pale, guilt written across her face, tears shining in the one eye still visible, the other bandaged. She looked utterly broken, as though something had crushed her from the inside out.

The whole room felt heavy, suffocating with tension.

Gabriela’s chest tightened. “What on earth happened here?”

“Let’s talk outside.”

Alissa pulled her out into the hallway and quickly filled her in.

Apparently, Aubrey's mother had been visiting every day, bringing soup, staying by her bedside for hours at a time.

Aubrey, believing all that attention came from genuine love, had felt nothing but pure, innocent gratitude.

Dr. Su, ever the conscientious physician, had likewise been checking on her every day, personally tracking her recovery.

But it seemed Aubrey's mother had been nursing some grudge against him all along, just waiting for the right moment to act on it. Today, she'd finally executed her scheme.

She'd sent the caregivers off, then "accidentally" spilled water across his white coat, all apologies, urging him to take it off at once so she could fetch a nurse to bring him a replacement.

And somehow, by the time she returned with the nurse, Aubrey was barely dressed, clinging to Dr. Su, burying herself against him. He'd tried pulling away — she'd only clung tighter.

His white coat, all the while, lay draped over a nearby chair.

Aubrey's mother wasted no time snapping photos, then launched into loud accusations, claiming he'd ruined her daughter's honor, demanding he either marry Aubrey or pay a settlement — or she'd call the police herself.

“I only got here a little while ago,” Alissa said. “But you wouldn’t believe it — by the time I arrived, Aubrey was already climbing out the window, ready to jump. Actually hanging outside the ledge. And the look on her face — completely hollow. Like she’d already given up.”

Gabriela’s stomach dropped further.

Chapter 1184

Aubrey had always been the cheerful, optimistic type. Even if her mother had used her to set up Dr. Su, that alone shouldn’t have pushed her to the brink of suicide.

There had to be more underneath it.

Alissa’s expression flickered between fury and pity as she went on. “It’s a real tragedy — parents this shameless, this vicious.”

Once the scene had erupted, Aubrey’s mother hadn’t spared a single thought for her daughter’s reputation. She’d shouted through the ward, claiming Aubrey couldn’t even keep herself decent while lying in a hospital bed, that the doctors were nothing but predators who couldn’t resist a pretty face, injured or not.

She hadn’t cared one bit whether her words humiliated Aubrey in the process.

If Dr. Su had been cruel enough to flip the story and claim Aubrey had seduced him first, there'd have been no recovering from the fallout for her.

"Those two despicable people from the Zhao family — they probably went after him specifically because they figured he was too decent to fight back," Alissa spat, contempt clear across her face. Had Gabriela given the go-ahead, Alissa might have hired someone to rough up Aubrey's parents right then and there.

Gabriela patted her shoulder gently, a silent plea for calm.

But Alissa's anger hadn't cooled in the slightest. "Honestly, they should've had them arrested the first time. That would've stopped all of this before it even started."

Dr. Su, a genuinely decent man, had had the terrible misfortune of getting dragged into this mess.

If it wasn't handled with real care, it could cost him his career entirely.

"What's Dr. Su's position on all this?" Gabriela asked.

"He's furious, obviously — but you can tell he's still trying to shield her. When she climbed out that window, he was the first one to grab her and pull her back in."

Alissa watched Gabriela carefully as she said it.

“You’re sharp — think of something. Fast. We need to get Dr. Su out of this.”

Gabriela’s mind raced.

She was good at building intricate plans, but this was an unfolding crisis, tied directly to a doctor’s reputation — a delicate, fragile thing. Handled wrong, even a cleared name might leave a permanent stain.

“I’ll call Wesley,” she decided.

Wesley and Dr. Su were on good terms, and the moment he heard, he dropped everything and headed straight for the hospital.

Meanwhile, back in the room, Aubrey’s mother was still trading barbs with Dr. Su’s mother.

His father, a composed university professor, was too dignified to stoop to harsh words. Aubrey’s mother, on the other hand, ran a flower shop and had a sharp enough tongue on her own, but even she was no match for the sheer combative force of Dr. Su’s mother, notorious for her cutting remarks.

“My son Allan is exceptional. If he wanted to marry, plenty of women would jump at the chance. He’d never stoop to settling for a girl who can’t see straight, let alone think straight,” Aubrey’s mother sneered.

Chapter 1185

“If he’s so exceptional,” Dr. Su’s mother shot back, face flushed with anger, “then why is he still single in his thirties, without so much as a girlfriend to show for it?”

Over the past few days, poking around the hospital, Aubrey’s mother had confirmed exactly that — Allan had no girlfriend.

“But my Aubrey has a boyfriend — Kevin. Nine years together, about to get married. And now your doctor son takes advantage of her while she’s lying injured in a hospital bed? That’s lower than the lowest scum,” Aubrey’s mother declared, righteous fury dripping from every word.

“If Kevin finds out Aubrey was with another man just days before their wedding, how do you think he’ll see her? He’ll refuse to marry her, that’s how!”

The cruelty in her words left Dr. Su’s mother momentarily speechless, her face burning red with rage.

But Aubrey’s mother showed no sign of letting up, her combative energy inexhaustible. Her husband stood off to the side, silent, simply watching the chaos unfold without stepping in.

“Enough!”

Aubrey suddenly stepped forward, unable to bear another second of it.

Her voice rang out, sharp with frustration, echoing through the room. Everyone froze and turned toward her.

Her face had drained of all color, tears streaming down uncontrollably.

“Mom. Just as you wanted — I already broke up with Kevin. That broke jerk.”

Just days earlier, waking from her eye surgery, Aubrey had seen his messages and called him right away.

At first, he’d seemed genuinely worried, asking how her recovery was going. When she told him there was a real chance she’d lose her sight permanently, he’d been visibly moved, promising to marry her, to take care of her for the rest of her life.

But the moment the dowry came up again, neither side would budge.

Aubrey had offered to borrow the money herself, so he wouldn’t have to shoulder it, planning to pay it back slowly, hoping only for her parents’ blessing rather than any grand show of it.

Kevin, though, felt certain that giving in once would only invite the next demand — another 880,000 down the line, maybe more.

Her parents were simply too much, treating their own daughter like a bargaining chip in a marriage negotiation.

He couldn't picture himself tied to a bottomless pit like that for the rest of his life.

The argument escalated until he finally snapped. "If we can't make this work, then what's the point? Let's just end it."

Aubrey had been stunned, gutted. "Kevin, do you really have to do this? I'm not even asking you for money anymore. Can't you just give in, just this once?"

But worn down by her parents' endless insults, and finding no comfort left in her words either, Kevin had answered coldly. "There's nothing left to say. Let's break up. Don't contact me again."

Dumped by a boyfriend of nine years, Aubrey had felt her whole world collapse.

She'd once believed her mother's daily visits, all that hollow comfort, had been meant to console her. Only now did she realize it had been poison all along.

In that moment, she'd been consumed entirely by the thought of ending it all.

Stunned by her daughter's outburst, Aubrey's mother took a moment to recover before snapping back. "You useless burden of a girl! A breakup is a breakup — how is that my fault?"

"Mom, you drove him away." Aubrey's voice trembled as she pleaded. "Please. Stop ruining other people's lives. Can you do that, just once? Dr. Allan is a good man. Please, don't hurt him."

Some of the tension finally eased from Dr. Su's mother's face.

Aubrey was a good girl — it was simply a shame her mother was cut from an entirely different cloth.

The elaborate scheme her mother had spent so much effort constructing had come undone with a handful of plain words from her own daughter, leaving her deflated, like all the air had gone out of her at once.

"Aubrey, I know you're upset about the breakup with Kevin, but how is any of that my fault? And now you're going to side with this shameless doctor and insult your own mother on top of it?"

Aubrey fixed her with a cold, level stare. "You know better than anyone who the real shameless one is here."

She turned, walked to the hospital room door, flung it open, and shouted out into the hallway.

“I’m the shameless one! I got hurt, couldn’t afford my medical bills, so I deliberately seduced Dr. Allan to get him to waive my surgery fees. I’m Aubrey Zhao, and I wronged this doctor. Whatever punishment comes to me, I deserve it!”

Her voice carried loud enough that the previously quiet hallway filled almost instantly with curious onlookers.

Startled by the commotion, Gabriela and Alissa rushed over and pulled her back inside, shutting the door behind them.

Aubrey’s mother stood frozen. She’d never expected her usually obedient daughter to defy her this openly.

“You useless burden! How dare you cry in front of everyone!”

She raised her hand, ready to strike Aubrey across the face.

Aubrey closed her eyes and made no move to dodge it, thinking simply, Let her kill me, then. I don’t want to live anymore anyway.

But just as the blow was about to land, Allan stepped in and caught her wrist, his normally gentle eyes now burning with fury.

“Mrs. Zhao. You are beyond redemption.”

Dr. Su Zhuoming didn’t blame Aubrey in the slightest — instead, he shielded her from the venom aimed her way.

Aubrey froze for a moment before finally managing, “Dr. Su...”

Meanwhile, having been shoved aside, Mrs. Zhao’s husband lunged forward, seemingly ready to throw punches.

Mr. Su and Mrs. Su stepped in at once, expressions tense, positioning themselves protectively in front of their son without hesitation.

The air in the room turned electric, as though a real confrontation were only a breath away.

Dr. Su glanced briefly at Aubrey before turning to Mrs. Zhao, his voice calm but edged with steel. “What is it you want?”

Seeing him finally speak, Mrs. Zhao's eyes lit up with triumph. "You've ruined my daughter's reputation! Either you marry her, or you pay us a generous settlement — cash, plus a luxury car — to make this right!"

Her husband nodded in agreement. "Otherwise, we won't hesitate to bring in the police."

Once the police were involved, even if the case eventually went nowhere for lack of evidence, the damage to a reputation like Dr. Su's would already be done.

For a physician as well-known as him, nationally recognized, a scandal like this was the last thing he could afford.

They were certain he'd cave to at least one of their demands.

Shameless, all of it.

Trembling with fury, Mrs. Su was on the verge of lashing out, but her son gestured for her to hold back. He looked steadily at Aubrey, then spoke, measured.

"Marry her?"

Mrs. Zhao jumped in at once. "Yes — but there are conditions. The dowry has to be a substantial sum, and it has to be cash."

She paused, weighing his standing, then added, “And there needs to be at least one luxury car thrown in.”

Aubrey’s face drained of color, panic setting in.

She cut in quickly. “Dr. Su, please, you don’t have to do this. Don’t worry — I’ll explain everything to the police myself. My mother spiked my soup, that’s why I ended up undressed in front of you. It was my own foolishness. It has nothing to do with you...”

As the humiliating words spilled out, tears streamed down her face again, her whole body radiating helplessness and despair.

Even Mrs. Su couldn’t bear to watch, turning away out of pity.

But Aubrey’s own mother, instead of softening, jumped up and shouted, “You useless child! He’s already seen everything there is to see! How dare you still talk about dignity? You might not care about yours, but I certainly care about mine!”

Aubrey lifted her tear-streaked face, her gaze suddenly cold and steady despite the grief underneath. Her own parents, using her reputation and self-worth as bargaining chips, all for money.

Today, whatever last shred of hope or trust she’d held onto for them shattered completely.

“Mom, Dad, you’ve done something this disgraceful, and you don’t feel a shred of shame. I’m your own daughter — how could I possibly have any right to feel ashamed either?”

Caught off guard by her daughter’s defiance, Mrs. Zhao seemed genuinely baffled by what had come over her.

She clutched her chest dramatically and collapsed to the floor, wailing. “I sacrificed everything to bring you into this world, and this is how you repay me! I might as well just die right here!”

“Then go ahead and die!”

Aubrey shouted suddenly, overwhelmed. She lunged forward and grabbed her mother’s arm. “The window’s right there — jump if you’re that desperate! I’ll jump with you, if that’s really what you want!”

Terrified by her daughter’s sudden fury, Mrs. Zhao’s dramatic wailing cut off instantly.

Gabriela rushed forward to hold Aubrey back, taking her hands gently, murmuring, “Don’t give up hope. This isn’t the end of everything yet.”

At that moment, Wesley walked in, Billy close behind, along with several imposing, professionally trained bodyguards.

The instant Aubrey caught sight of Wesley's commanding presence, her embarrassment deepened further. She lowered her head. "Mr. Moss."

Already briefed on the situation before arriving, Wesley nodded, his tone reassuring. "Don't blame yourself. None of this is your fault."

He then turned to Dr. Su and asked quietly, "Do you need help handling this?"

Whether it meant dealing with their theatrics or bringing in the police, Wesley had more than enough resources to manage it easily.

As for the rumors — baseless as they were, they'd fade on their own within a few days.

Dr. Su shook his head. "I can manage this myself."

Wesley nodded, understanding, and stepped back to wait patiently.

Gabriela stayed close beside him, while Alissa moved in to join them as well.

Dr. Su turned back to Aubrey and asked gently, “With parents like this — is there anything left worth holding onto?”

Aubrey cried silently and shook her head.

Whatever attachment she’d still carried for her family had been snuffed out completely by the trap they’d set for her today.

Part of her almost wished she were an orphan, free of the weight of family entirely.

Dr. Su spoke, his voice steady and grave. “880,000 yuan. I’ll pay it as a formal marriage settlement, on the condition it severs your ties with your parents completely. Are you willing?”

Aubrey stared at him blankly, not quite grasping what he meant.

He raised his voice slightly, his tone growing more serious as he held her gaze.

“Aubrey, I’ve already prepared the 880,000 yuan as a dowry payment. But there’s a condition attached — I’ll pay it to guarantee you’re free of your parents entirely. No obligations, no ties, from this point forward. Do you agree, or not?”

This time, understanding finally dawned on her.

Was Dr. Su proposing marriage to her?

And not only that — was he willing to pay 880,000 yuan just to secure her a life of peace and stability going forward?

She shook her head instinctively.

“Dr. Su, you’re a good man. I can’t drag you into this...”

Besides, she’d only just ended a nine-year relationship. The sudden closing of that chapter of her life still left her reeling.

“Just answer me. Yes, or no.”

There was a commanding edge in Wesley’s voice — one his own mother had never once heard from him before. However unwilling Mrs. Su was, a hundred times over, to see a girl like Aubrey marry into their family, she held her tongue. Her son’s resolve was unmistakable, and she chose not to interrupt.

Mr. Su, equally curious about his son’s intentions, stayed silent as well.

Overwhelmed by the weight of the moment, Aubrey found herself nodding almost before she'd made a conscious decision. "I agree."

The words had barely left her mouth when her mother sprang up, shouting.

"Impossible! Aubrey is my own flesh and blood — you think you can just buy her for 880,000 yuan? Dream on!"

Chapter 1189

Wesley didn't bother arguing with either of Aubrey's parents. He simply raised his voice. "880,000 yuan as the marriage payment, plus a car worth 200,000. Agree, and I'll pay immediately. Refuse, and I'll have the police handle this instead."

Her parents hesitated.

The entire scheme today had been orchestrated with exactly one goal in mind — money.

880,000 yuan was already a substantial figure, and a 200,000-yuan car on top of it was more than they'd have expected. Turning it down now — who could say when an opportunity like this would come around again?

Wesley cut through their hesitation flatly. "You have ten minutes to decide."

The whole hospital room dropped into uneasy silence.

Mrs. Su frowned and called out, "Wesley..."

He shook his head at her. "Don't worry. I know exactly what I'm doing."

Seeing her son's resolve, she had no further argument. She shot Aubrey's family one last disapproving look but held her tongue.

The ten minutes passed quickly.

Aubrey's parents had made up their minds. Her father stepped forward. "We agree."

The words shattered whatever was left of Aubrey's heart.

Disbelieving, she cried out, "Dad! Mom!"

Her mother, impatient and cold as ever, snapped back, "What are you crying about now? Weren't you bold enough earlier, siding with a stranger against your own parents? Why the long face all of a sudden?" She glared at her daughter. "We raised you for years, and this is what we get in return."

Aubrey fell silent, something inside her sinking deeper and deeper, as though it might never find solid ground again.

How ironic.

Aubrey Zhao — hardworking her whole life, always loyal, always caring.

For nothing, in the end.

A boyfriend of nine years, discarding her as though she were nothing at all.

Parents who'd raised her, now selling her off without a second thought.

What a complete failure she'd turned out to be.

Wesley turned to her parents. "Go home and bring back the official family records. Sign a formal document renouncing parental rights. After that, Aubrey and I will register our marriage, and I'll have her residency transferred into the Su family's legal documents."

Listening to Wesley's clear, decisive instructions, Aubrey said nothing.

Strangely enough, she felt lucky, in a way. For all her misfortune, she'd at least crossed paths with someone as kind as Dr. Su.

Skilled physician as he was, Wesley didn't have the widest social network or the kind of connections that came easily to those in high places.

To speed the residency transfer along, he'd need some help.

Not wanting to delay any longer, Wesley turned to Billy for the first time and said, "I need your help with something."

Billy nodded and set to work arranging the necessary paperwork.

By the end of the day, Aubrey and Wesley had obtained their marriage certificate — an official record recognizing their union. Her name was formally transferred into the Su family's legal documents, erased entirely from her parents' records.

Holding the marriage certificate in her hands, Aubrey felt strangely detached from it all.

Was this how she'd ended up married?

Her mother, indifferent to everything except the money, turned to Wesley, hand already outstretched. "Where's the payment?"

Chapter 1190

"First, sign the formal document renouncing your parental rights," Wesley said. "I'll dictate, you write."

Dr. Su began reading the document aloud, deliberately enunciating every word.

"Today, the Zhao family accepts a marriage settlement of 880,000 yuan and a car worth 200,000 yuan as part of this arrangement. In doing so, we voluntarily sever all familial ties with our daughter, Aubrey Zhao."

"From this day forward — whatever life brings, sickness, death, weddings, funerals — we will not ask Aubrey Zhao for a single cent. And when we grow old, Aubrey Zhao will bear no obligation of care or support toward us."

By the time he finished reading, a sharp pang of regret hit Mrs. Zhao.

Aubrey worked at a major company, earning an enviable salary. Cutting her off meant losing access to that income for good.

No way.

This deal wasn't worth it.

"I'm not signing this family severance agreement!"

Mrs. Zhao announced, feigning indignation, squeezing out a few crocodile tears.

"How could I possibly give up my own daughter over 880,000 yuan?" She turned to Aubrey, pleading. "Aubrey, you know why we need this settlement so badly. Your brother's getting married. Xiaoyan's carrying the Zhao family's grandchild. If we don't come up with the money by the end of the month, she'll get an abortion."

Her voice softened. "Aubrey, I don't want to lose you..."

Aubrey found the whole performance almost laughable.

Her brother's marriage was treated like a matter of life and death, while her own nine years with someone counted for absolutely nothing in their eyes.

She turned her face away, unwilling to look at either of them any longer.

Dr. Su's voice went cold. "If you don't sign it, there's no money."

Faced with Aubrey's continued silence, her parents panicked. Terrified of losing the payment altogether if they kept stalling, they scrambled to write out the family severance agreement.

Both her mother and father drafted separate copies, signed them, and pressed their fingerprints onto the pages before handing them over to Dr. Su.

He reviewed the documents carefully, then passed them along to Aubrey.

Tears streaked down her face, but she let out a bitter laugh. Then, deliberately, she bit down on her own finger until it bled and pressed her bloody fingerprint onto the pages as well.

She asked Billy to make two photocopies.

Keeping one for herself, she handed the other to her parents, entrusting the two original handwritten letters to Dr. Su.

He looked mildly surprised by the gesture.

Forcing a small smile, Aubrey said to him, "Dr. Su, you're my husband now. It's only right that you help me keep safe the things that matter most."

"Of course," he answered.

Watching the faint smile on her face, something in his expression softened.

He carefully tucked the severance agreements away before pulling out the 880,000 yuan in cash that Billy had prepared earlier. Without a flicker of emotion, he handed the money to Aubrey's parents, along with a car key.

"You can go now," he said flatly.