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Carter leaned on the pillow and said, "Granddad, you were young once. I'm sure you'd been madly in love before. It's difficult for a man to meet a woman who he's willing to give everything up for. So, once he meets her, she'll be the only one for him and he would do anything for her. I fell in love with Amelia at first sight. She's beautiful inside and out and is respectful to her elders. It's hard not to fall for such a woman."

Abel was speechless.

The passions of love were a thing of the past for Abel and he had forgotten about the feelings and thoughts he had back then. Talking about it now, Abel recalled what it felt like to be in love. It left a sweet feeling in his heart.

Even though a few decades had already passed, he was unable to forget the romance he had back then.

Abel had spent many years focusing on business and was supposed to be more hard hearted and decisive. However, the older he was, the more softhearted he became, especially when facing his family.

"Carter, Amelia's already someone else's wife. I think you should let go of your feelings for her. The two of you aren't destined to be together in this lifetime," said Abel sincerely.

"If she's happy in her marriage, I'll quietly watch over her. If her marriage falls apart, I'll save her from it. I don't intend to give her up in this lifetime."

Abel looked Carter in the eye and asked, "Do you mean that other than Amelia, you won't consider marrying any other woman?"

"Granddad, marriage is just a formality. All those couples get is a certificate."

"Even if it's only just a certificate, I want you to get married. I'm already almost at the end of my life. I don't want to die without seeing my great-grandchild."

"Two of my cousins are married, and another is already pregnant with a child. Your great-grandchild will come soon enough. Just don't complain that you have too many to take care of later on."

Carter had skillfully deflected the problem away from him.

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Abel glared at him and replied, "Don't try to avoid the topic. I'll give you a deadline. If she's still happily married by the time you're thirty, then you have to get married. I'll personally select a suitable wife for you amongst the daughters of those rich families."

Carter closed his eyes. "Granddad, you have promised not to interfere with my marriage."

Abel replied, "You're still young. It's the best time to work on your career now, so I won't intervene. But by the time you're thirty, your career would be successful and it would be the right time to start a family. If you marry the daughter of a rich family, it'll be beneficial to the business too."

Carter looked at Abel. "Given the power of the Scotts, I don't think I need to marry a rich lady to help the business, right? That would make me look really useless."

Abel replied, "If you don't want a rich lady, fine. But you have to get married either way. Amelia's already married. You'll never have a future with her. Just get over your feelings."

Carter lay back down, his voice was full of exhaustion. "I'm tired and I'm going to sleep now. Why don't you get the chauffeur to send you back for dinner? It's really late now."

Abel had a complicated look in his eyes.

"Carter, tell me honestly. Do you really don't have any feelings for Jennifer? She's quite a good girl and seems to really like you. Although she's from a rich family, she is still willing to cook for you. I'm sure that if the two of you get together, she'll be a huge help to your life. Are you really not going to consider her at all?"

Carter shook his head and looked at Abel with a hint of guilt. However, love could not be forced. "I know she treats me well and she took a lot of effort to take care of me these few days. I'm thankful for her but I don't love her. I only see her as a sister. If I marry her, neither of us will be happy in the end."

Abel then gave Carter some advice. "It's only because you're obsessing over something you can't have that you're acting so stubborn. If you take a step back, you'll find that there are so many other good women other than Amelia. Aren't those pretty, young girls better than her?"

"I have never expected you to say something so superficial."

Abel was caught off guard by Carter's words.

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He had good intentions but was criticized by his own grandson in the end.

"You brat, is this how you speak to your grandfather?" Abel glared at him.

Carter smiled sincerely. "Sorry, I know you only mean well for me, but I really have no intention to get married right now. I also don't intend to join the Scott Group. You're still healthy and strong. I'm sure you'll live a long life, so you can take good care of the company. As for your great-grandchildren, you can look for my cousins. They'll be happy to entertain you."

Abel's eyes widened. "Nonsense! I won't force you to get married, but you definitely have to take over the company! I'm getting old and your father and uncles aren't fit to manage the company. All your cousins only know how to play around so they can't handle such an important task. I'll only feel at ease if you take over the company."

Carter fell silent.

Abel then suggested a bold deal. "As long as you agree to return to the company, I'll take my hands off of your issue with Amelia."

Carter instantly brightened up. He said excitedly, "Granddad, do you really mean it?"

"Weren't you trying to trap me into saying this anyway? I watched you grow up. Don't think I don't know what you're thinking."

Instead of feeling guilty, Carter smiled. "Looks like experience really comes with age. I can't keep anything from you."

Abel broke into a smile. "You brat. How dare you play tricks on your granddad."

"It's because you taught me well. Who else would I learn my debate skills from?"

"Fine, stop your nonsense. I won't interfere in your business with Amelia anymore, on the premise of her being single. She's now married to Oscar and is a daughter-in-law of the Clinton family. Even though our family is also rich, it doesn't quite compare to theirs. So as long as she's still married to Oscar, you can't have anything to do with her. Our family can't handle it if the Clintons want to cause trouble. Even if both families were affected, the Scotts will definitely be the one at a greater loss. I developed Scott Group into what it is today. I don't want to see it collapsing just because of a woman."

Carter made a solemn promise. "Granddad, I know my limits."

"But you went overboard just now. If it weren't for Oscar's generosity, our stocks

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would have been unstable by tomorrow. You're a capable man, but in terms of managing your emotions, you are nowhere close to Oscar."

At first, Carter had brightened up. However, by the time Abel finished his sentence, Carter's expression had darkened.

"Am I really that bad compared to him?"

Abel knew what Carter was concerned about. When it came to one's love rival, no man wanted to lose to the other.

"I think highly of you, so naturally, you're very capable. However, you're still not that good compared to Oscar. You lack some decisiveness. Don't be so overly cautious and indecisive and you'll be a better match to him."

Carter's expression worsened.

"I've never lacked decisiveness. It's just that no one has given me a chance to show my abilities. Four or five years ago, I was too young. Now, the woman I love is already married to someone else. Everything's happening too quickly. No one has ever stopped to ask if all this is really what I want."

Abel patted him on the shoulder. "Don't overthink it and just rest up. You have a lot of work to do once you get back to work. Jennifer's been dealing with the company matters while you were unconscious these few days. No matter what, you have to thank her. Even if you don't become lovers, don't ever burn the bridges."

Carter pondered for a while before nodding eventually.

"Get some rest. I'll go to the washroom." While Abel took care of his business, Carter thought about the situation.

Carter and Abel had finally managed to reach some kind of agreement. On the other hand, when Oscar had first left the ward with Amelia, he had an unhappy expression. "How does it feel to hear your admirer talking to you so sweetly?"

Amelia sniggered before trying to comfort Oscar. "Mr. Clinton, don't overthink. Carter and I are just old friends. There's nothing else between us."

Oscar dragged Amelia to the staircase and pinned her against the wall. He gave her a condescending look. "Do you think I'm stupid? You told me that you haven't been contacting him. Then, why would he say that you promised to give him a chance to pursue you?"

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Amelia's throat felt dry. "If I told you that Carter never had a chance to come between us, would you believe me?"

Oscar was taken aback.

Amelia continued, "I've never flirted with other men, so Carter may have misunderstood something to have said that. Instead, you're the one who is constantly fickle throughout our relationship. You married me but can't seem to forget your ex girlfriend. Between Ms. Yard and I, you've always favored her. I don't get why you think you can question me like that. You're treating me as if I'm some promiscuous woman."

Oscar's gaze on her never shifted.

Amelia said, "Mr. Clinton, I may look strong, but it doesn't mean that I'm just as strong on the inside for I get hurt too. If you want a divorce, I can sign the papers right away. But could you not accuse me of having anything to do with Carter? The two of us are just friends."

Oscar stroked her cheek, then wiped away the tears that slipped out the corner of her eye. "Why are you crying?"

She lifted her hand to her eye. It was indeed wet.

Amelia was surprised. Ever since she got pregnant, she had been crying a lot. It was as if she had become a delicate flower that could not withstand the slightest torment.

Oscar stepped forward and their bodies pressed closer together. His hot breath tickled Amelia's face.

"Why are you crying? Because I have misunderstood you and Carter?" Oscar clearly knew the reason but pretended as if he did not.

Amelia held her tears back and replied stubbornly, "I'm not crying. That was sand in my eye."

Oscar wanted to laugh. Since when did his wife become so cute, learning how to tell such a bad lie.

“Okay, it was the sand. My woman is tough and strong, why would she cry so easily?” Oscar jokingly replied.

Amelia shot him an angry look. “Who are you calling tough?”

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“You’re the only one here. Of course, I’m talking about you.” Oscar was in one of the rare moments of a good mood.

Amelia pounded her fists against his chest, and spoke coquettishly, “Why did you misunderstand me then?”

Oscar brought one of her hands to his mouth and nibbled the back of her hand. “Didn’t you say you were hungry? Let’s go eat. I’ve already reserved a place.”

Amelia nodded

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Oscar held Amelia’s waist as they left the staircase. As they exited, they ran into an oncoming Elizabeth.

When she noticed their intimate posture, Elizabeth did a double-take before taking a few breaths and walking up to them.

“Oscar, didn’t you tell Cassie that you had something on at work? I didn’t expect to see you here having such a public display of affection in the hospital,” said Elizabeth sarcastically

Oscar kept on a straight face as he replied, “Mrs. Yard, Amelia’s here for a checkup. As her husband, I can’t leave her alone. I told Cassie that I had work because I didn’t want her to overthink anything. Cassie has you to care for her and when I’m done here I actually have to get back to the company anyway. I’m really busy with work. I think you should understand that, right?”

Elizabeth nodded. “If you’re busy with work, I understand and support you. If a man only knows how to flirt with women all day, I’ll really look down on him.”

She paused, then changed the topic. "But Oscar, since you've rekindled your relationship with Cassie, I want you to treat her sincerely. I don't want you lying to both parties. Right now she's only known as a mistress. You used to be a couple and even grew up together. You shouldn't lie to her no matter what."

Oscar's expression darkened.

Amelia glanced at Oscar then replied, "Mrs. Yard, Oscar and I are legally married. Is there anything wrong with my husband accompanying me to my checkup? They were indeed a couple in the past, but don't forget that it was Cassie who gave him up first. I'm his wife now. You're criticizing him as if he's some heartless traitor, but I'm sure Oscar doesn't actually have to take responsibility for Ms. Yard. To put it bluntly, we don't even know who's the father of Ms. Yard's child, right?"

Elizabeth's expression changed, although she was now less agitated.

"Ms. Winters, both you and your friend are indeed from poor backgrounds. You both speak so ignorantly, making me wonder if you're even educated. Are you suggesting that Cassie cheated on Oscar by saying that her child is not his?"

Amelia was taken aback. She really did not properly think through whatever she had just said.

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Oscar gently squeezed her waist before Amelia snapped out of it and composed herself.

Amelia said, "I didn't mean it that way, Mrs. Yard. But if you think that your daughter has been having an affair with another man, then I've nothing else to say."

Elizabeth laughed coldly.

Oscar tightened his hold on Amelia's waist. "Mrs. Yard, our baby is getting hungry. I'll take Amelia to get some food first. Please take care of Cassie. I'll come back to the hospital tonight."

Elizabeth stopped him in his tracks. "Oscar, tell me the truth. Are you going to marry Cassie?"

Oscar furrowed his brows.

Amelia replied, "Mrs. Yard, even if you did watch Oscar grow up, do you really think it's appropriate to say such a thing in front of his wife? If Ms. Yard is willing to be a mistress, I'll just bear with it. But you're really taking it a bit too far by urging him to divorce me."

However, Elizabeth only kept her eyes on Oscar. "Oscar, I'm waiting for your answer."

"Mrs. Yard, my wife is about to give birth. I can't divorce her for both legal and moral reasons."

Simply put, Oscar was not going to divorce Amelia anytime soon. Cassie could only bear with it for the time being. On top of that, nothing was certain in the future.

His answer was very ambiguous.

Elizabeth became increasingly upset.

"Oscar, Cassie aborted the child because of you. But it looks like you won't lose anything since you have both a wife and a child soon. Is Cassie just one of your little playthings?" asked Elizabeth with a sneer.

Oscar frowned.

"Mrs. Yard, Oscar's not an ungrateful person. He's always been trying to find a balance in this love triangle. Ms. Yard gave up previously then decided to interfere in our relationship again, so she inevitably became a mistress. I'm the one who has been hurt the most all this time. When it comes to giving criticisms, I think I should be the

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one to do it."

Although Amelia had spoken calmly and had kept on a straight face, you could hear the seriousness in her words.

Elizabeth was stunned. Indeed, her daughter was the one in the wrong. Not considering when she jilted Oscar four or five years ago, she was still a mistress this time, imposing on their marriage.

"Ms. Yard has always presented herself as the victim, but I'm the person who actually has been hurt the most in the whole fiesta. I have no idea why you think you can

simply criticize Oscar like that and order me to get a divorce. I just want the best for my child and me. Am I doing anything wrong?"

Amelia's words were starting to become aggressive.

The facial expressions on Mrs. Yard had changed by now.

Oscar hugged Amelia possessively and said, "I'll take Amelia to get some food first. I'll be back at night."

Although Elizabeth still looked unhappy, she still nodded.

As she watched them leave, Elizabeth glowered. She gritted her teeth and retrieved her phone to make a call. When the call connected, she said, "Mr. Hisson, have you decided whether or not to terminate the contract with Tiffany?"

After the person on the other end replied, she continued, "She's just a best-selling author. Your company is big. I'm sure there are many more authors like her under your management. As long as you agree to terminate the contract, Yard Group will invest in your project. All you have to do is to lose an author and win the support of Yard Group. You're a smart man. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you if it's worth it."

After the other party responded, Elizabeth became upset. "Are you looking down on Yard Group? Although we're not the best, we're not weak either. I hope you'll consider this carefully. Don't lose out just because of an insignificant author."

Another response later, Elizabeth remained unhappy. "You seem to be asking for a lot, don't you think?"

Another pause later, she replied, "I've always thought you were a smart man. I didn't expect that you would give up on your own interests just for an author. Are you sure your company's not actually a charitable organization?"

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The person spoke again before Elizabeth said, "I advise you not to be so impulsive. If you ofsend the Yards, your company won't go away unscathed. Is it really worth doing this?"

The person on the line spoke for a long time. Then, Elizabeth's expression brightened up. She smiled and replied, "You're a smart man indeed. As long as you give up on Tiffany, providing you with investment is not an issue. Although there'll be less profit if we invest in publishing, our company has been testing the waters in this market for the past two years. So in response to what you just said, I agree on behalf of my company."

The other party replied before Elizabeth spoke again. "I believe we've struck a deal on this. I hope you will give me a satisfactory answer. After all, only a fool would be willing to offend the Yard family over a small author."

After she hung up, Elizabeth smirked. "Tiffany, weren't you good at picking fights? Since you humiliated me yesterday, I won't let you live peacefully. There's more to the Yard family than just a name."

At the same time, Tiffany, who had rushed through the night to finish her manuscript, was sleeping soundly in bed. Her phone rang loudly, sounding as if it were coming after her life, forcing Tiffany to drag herself out of bed.

She felt around for her phone, and without looking at the screen, she answered the call. Her voice was small and sounded like a baby. "I don't care who you are, you'd better have something urgent to tell me. If not, I won't let you die a peaceful death since you've interrupted my sleep!"

Although she sounded like a child, her words carried no hint of innocence at all.

"Oh my god, why are you still asleep at this time? Hurry up and come over to the company. The boss says he wants to terminate your contract," replied her editor anxiously. Tiffany was the best-selling author who she managed. Without Tiffany, her editor could be out of work. Moreover, they had been working together quite well all these years. Although Tiffany sometimes submitted her manuscripts late, she was still a very competent author compared to the others and was considered highly productive.

Tiffany suddenly became alert. Her hands shook, not in fear, but anger and confusion.

Tiffany had been working with her current company for two to three years. She started off being criticized for every little thing. Slowly, she gained more recognition for her writing and her books started to sell quite well. She eventually managed to

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get her books on the best-selling novels list. Basically, her company and editor were the ones who watched her grow from a small novelist to the best-selling author that she currently was. However, they wanted to terminate her contract out of a sudden. This was a big blow to her.

"Why? Give me a reason." Tiffany thought of a thousand things to say but only managed to get that one sentence out.

Her editor was restless. "Stop asking questions. Just hurry and wash up then come over to the company. I've no time to explain so much to you now."

When the call ended, Tiffany felt very uneasy but still washed up as quickly as she could, changed into some clean clothes, then headed out the door.

After almost an hour, she arrived at the company.

Her editor had been waiting for her at the entrance.

“You’re finally here. Hurry, let’s go up. Don’t become too agitated when you see Mr. Hisson later. You know he’d always been taking good care of you. Just talk things out properly and try your best to keep your contract with the company. You’re a best selling author, so it’s a huge loss to the company if they stop working with you. There should be some misunderstanding here,” her editor rattled on and on.

Tiffany replied with a straight face, “I want to know what’s going on too. I’ve always been working well with the company so I want to hear an explanation from Mr. Hisson. Otherwise, it’s not simply about terminating a contract anymore. Although I don’t have any riches or connections, I got to where I am today all because of my hard work. I won’t allow the company to treat me like a toy, forcing me to terminate the contract for no reason.”

Her editor was getting increasingly concerned. “You’d better keep calm when you meet him and hold your temper. If you really get into an argument then it would be hard to mend the relationship.”

Tiffany took in a deep breath and replied, “Shannon, I know that. I’ll control my temper. But if the company insists on terminating the contract, I don’t know if I can continue to keep it in. After all, no one likes being someone else’s toy and having to accept whatever that was thrown at them.”

The editor kept silent after that.

The pair then took the elevator up. Outside the office, the editor knocked on the door. A pleasant male voice came from inside the room.

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The editor glanced at Tiffany and whispered, “Remember to speak calmly and don’t get too agitated, okay?”

Tiffany took a breath and composed herself. When she was ready, she gave her editor an OK gesture.

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Tiffany pushed the door opened and went into the office with the editor. Their gaze simultaneously fell on the man over at the working table.

He was buried in work when they entered. Although Tiffany could not see his face clearly, she could tell from his attire and style that he was a young man. He was dressed in a suit and tie and his hair was neatly brushed with hair gel. It went without saying that he was another one of those successful businessmen

"Mr. Hisson, Tiffany's here," the editor announced.

He put down the pen in his hand and lifted his grumpy face.

Tiffany took in a breath of cold air when she saw him. She could not believe how someone could be blessed with such incredible looks. Not only were his eyes charming, but they also sparked with a hint of wistfulness. His lips pursed tensely below his pointy nose with a perfectly straight bridge. His long and black lashes flapped in annoyance as he drilled his gaze into both of them. Tiffany could not help but gasp. Any woman would fall for a man like him.

His complexion and clear skin could easily put any woman to shame. Although his appearance was elegant, he exudes a demeanor of beguiling masculinity.

Standing in front of an impeccable man like him, Tiffany could not help but feel weak and small. Not only did he have the looks, but he was also accomplished, and had an enigmatic air about him. He could well be a *homme fatale*.

Tiffany found him scary.

She was originally all worked up by the news, but now that she saw this man in person, she felt weak.

"Shannon, I'll talk to her privately," the man spoke, waving his hand.

Shannon cast a worrying glance at her before leaving. "Tiffany, you have a good discussion with Mr. Hisson. I'll go back to work first."

Tiffany nodded and Shannon walked out.

Now that they were left alone, Derrick beckoned her over. "Take a seat," he said, toying with the ring on his middle finger.

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Tiffany did as she was told.

She clasped her hands together nervously and mustered her courage. "May I know why are you terminating my contract, Mr. Hisson? I'm under the impression that we've been working well together."

An enticing smile curved on his lips. "Would you come to my office otherwise?"

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"Huh?" Tiffany opened her mouth slightly in confusion.

The smile on Derrick's face deepened at her clueless face. "Tiff, did anyone tell you that you look cute?"

Tiff?

Tiffany could not even think straight. She simply could not believe what she just heard.

"What's wrong?" His deep and hoarse voice shook her back to reality.

Tiffany looked at him in the eyes and her hot cheeks were flushed red. This had never happened to her before—not even when she met Oscar and Carter. There was something different about this man. She felt an intense pressure being around him, so much so that her heart would burst any time. Her thoughts were all jumbled up and he made her disconcerted.

Tiffany took a deep breath, rubbed her sweaty palms against her thighs. "Mr. Hisson, why are you canceling the contract? Is it because my book is not selling well?"

Derrick shot her a mysterious smile as he watched her closely.

"You've been avoiding me, haven't you? Tell me if there's a better way to make you come to me."

Tiffany was puzzled. It was true that she came up with all sorts of excuses to stay away from him, but that was because she figured it would be better to stay as far as she could away from a man so dangerously attractive. She just wanted to distance herself from him so she did not fall under his spell.

He was like a drug to her. No one could resist a desirable man like him, and Tiffany felt a well-to-do man like him was way out of her league, so she had better keep her distance.

She did not understand how her staying away from him would provoke him—it

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should work the other way round!

“Mr. Hisson, I think you have misunderstood something. I didn’t avoid you on purpose. I just feel like I only need to deal with the editor to get everything sorted out. She can relay whatever she deems fit to you after that. I’m not doing this out of disrespect. I’m sorry if I’ve offended you,” Tiffany said in a very serious tone.

Derrick put both his hands on the table and leaned forward, closing the gap between the two of them. He was so near to her she could even smell the scent on his body.

“Emm... Mr. Hisson,” Tiffany mumbled, disoriented.

“Call me by my name.”

Tiffany was dumbfounded. She had totally no idea what Derrick was trying to do. Everything was happening at a pace her mind could not keep up with. The man before her was her superior, and she, his employee. There was no way she could call him by his first name.

“Is this a joke, Mr. Hisson?”

Derrick seemed to have a good time teasing her. He took a strand of her hair and ran his fingers through it.

Tiffany’s eyes widened in bewilderment and her cheeks were burning hot.

“Has anyone ever told you that you’re beautiful?” he asked.

Tiffany was about to lose it. His compliment gave her goosebumps all over her body and she lost herself in his mesmerizing smile. It was not until he chuckled out loud that she came back to herself. This guy is playing a fool with me.

Tiffany was infuriated. “Do you think it’s funny?” she asked sternly.

The man sat back in his chair and folded his hands. “It’s fun for me. I like your reaction.”

His words piqued her, but at the same time, she did not know how to react. She had always taken him as her superior, and she expected nothing more from their professional relationship.

Both of them were not from the same world. He came from a rich family, albeit being slightly more attractive than his counterparts like Oscar and Carter. Derrick started his own company without his family’s backing and managed to grow it all

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alone.

“Mr. Hisson, let’s get to the point,” Tiffany said, trying to feign indifference.

“This is the point.”

Tiffany was at a loss for words. She just could not get through to him.

“Look, Mr. Hisson, you said you wanted to end my contract, but you should at least give me a good reason for it. I know the compensation means nothing to you, but don’t you think it’s unethical to just bail out on a partner who has been working with you for years?”

“Did I say I want to terminate our contract?” Derrick cut her harangue short.

Tiffany stopped and blinked her eyes hard. “But... you said...”

“Come on, can’t you take a joke? Don’t be so serious.”

Tiffany clenched her fists tight as her blood boiled in rage. “Do you think this is funny?”

“Are you angry?”

She stood up immediately. “Angry? Who am I to get angry at you, Mr. Hisson? You’re my boss. I’ll lose my job if I offend you. Since you’re not terminating our contract, I don’t see why I should stay here. I pulled an all-nighter just to finish off my writing, and I need to get some rest now. See you.”

Seeing her leaving, Derrick quickly shot her a question. “Did you cross the Yard family by any chance?”

Tiffany’s halted. Thoughts ran through her mind as she tried connecting the dots.

“Did Mrs. Yard ask you to do anything?” she asked forthrightly. This was the last piece of information she needed to get the full picture of what was happening.

“Yeah, she did. She promised me tons of benefits just to get me to nullify my contract with a best-selling author. It seems like you’ve offended her big time.”

I knew it! Tiffany gritted her teeth at the thought of that woman. Does she think she can get back at me just like that? There are still a lot of companies out there who can’t wait to sign a contract with me even if my company ditches me. My books are selling like hotcakes across the world! My fans will not go easy on Yard Group if they know what she’s trying to do to me. She’s

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clearly underestimated me. I can still publish my books online if the company ends my contract. It's way easier to promote my novel online.

"I got into a fight with her at the hospital. I thought she would call it even between us, but it seems like she's holding fast on old grievances," Tiffany said with a nonchalant shrug.

"You got into a fight?" Derrick was alarmed.

Her cheeks were flushed unusually red in indignation. "I really couldn't take her nonsense anymore. I simply had to teach her a lesson."

The perplexity on his face quickly vanished and a smile appeared. "I thought you're just good at scolding people, Tiff, but it turned out that you're also a feisty one. I'm glad I got to know this side of you."

Glad to know this side of me? What's so good about being feisty?

Tiffany was lost.

"I'm sorry about Mrs. Yard. If you think it's too difficult to handle her, I don't mind terminating our contract. I know I might not be as rich as you are, but my savings are still enough to last me till I find another company. Besides, I'll still get a handsome compensation from you if you rescind the contract."

"Did I say that I'm ending the contract?" The Yard family is nothing to me."

Tiffany looked at him, astonished. She wanted to tell him not to think so highly of himself, but Derrick did not even give her a chance to speak and changed the topic.

"By the way, don't call me Mr. Hisson when it's just the two of us."

"Then, what should I call you?"

"Call me by my name."

Tiffany darted her gaze around, trying to figure out his game. "But, Mr. Hisson, I don't know your name."

"Derrick Hisson," he said begrudgingly.

Tiffany's pursed her lips and made a wry face. "Derrick? It means ruler. That's a nice name. I bet your parents want you to grow up to be a capable and successful man. Looking at all your accomplishments now, they must be really happy to see their

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dream being fulfilled. The girl who got you must be extremely lucky.”

Derrick locked his gaze on her without another word.

Tiffany met his eyes and blood shot up her face instantly. Her ears were pumped red and she could even hear her own heartbeat.

“If there’s nothing else, I’ll leave first, Mr. Hisson,” she said in a panicky tone, taking a few hasty steps backward. Her calves knocked against the chair leg and she staggered.

“Be careful!” Derrick leaped on his feet, dashed forward to the other side of the table, and managed to catch her by her arm to prevent her from falling.

Tiffany whipped her head around and saw him up close. An intense shade of pink dusted her cheeks immediately. She extended her hands and pushed him back against the chair with all her might.

Derrick knocked against the stile and bent his body in pain. “Tiffany,” he said, grinding his teeth.

She was so shocked that her jaw dropped. “Are... Are you alright?”

She had totally no idea why she felt so helpless before him. This was not like her at all back when she was putting up a fight with Elizabeth. Tiffany really had no clue what got into her.

Derrick tugged her shaky hands and planted his lips on hers before she could even do anything. Tiffany’s quivering gaze froze with her eyes wide opened. For a good ten seconds, she could not move. When she finally came back to herself again, she pushed him away, bolted toward the door, and fled.

Derrick looked at her scrambling away with a subtle smile on his face, his finger tapping his moist lips.

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"You'll be mine one day, Tiff. I can't believe you were so slow to pick up my hints in the past year. I thought a romance novel writer like you would be more sensitive when it comes to matters related to relationships. But gosh, you really have no idea at all. It's time I up my game, or I'll never get to make you mine."

After running out of Derrick's office, Tiffany hurried toward the elevator and went down without even paying attention to the secretary who had been looking at her curiously. After that, she went off without even telling the editor.

Her heart was still thumping wildly when she got in the car. She pressed her fingers against her lips as her eyes shimmered in a mixture of hope and confusion.

"Derrick Hisson, what are you trying to do?"

She ruffled her hair in frustration. "Argh! What am I gonna do? Do you think you can do this to me just because women find you irresistible? You'd better not use your tricks on me! I'll make sure you pay for it."

But regardless of how fierce she sounded, the flush on her cheeks was even more obvious.

She fished for her keys and tried multiple times to get them into the hole. "Dammit! Calm down, woman! It's all your fault, Derrick Hisson. You're my nemesis. I'll blame it all on you if I get into an accident today."

Despite how tempting it was to have both love and a handsome partner, Tiffany still thought she would readily give up on both if it meant she would lose her life.

She managed to get back to her neighborhood safely and parked her car. She took the elevator and went into her house calmly. But right after she got in, she went berserk and shouted at the top of her lung "What is wrong with you? It's just a kiss! Why do you have to keep thinking about him?"

She flung herself on the couch and grabbed a pillow in her arms before rolling around. Tiffany took out her phone and made a call. "Babe, I think I might have fallen for a guy. What should I do now?" she blurted out right after the call got through

Amelia was with Oscar when her friend poured out her heart to her, and she was shocked by her revelation.

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This was because Tiffany had always wanted to stay single.

"What did you say?" Amelia could not believe what she just heard.

"I said, I might have fallen head over heels for someone I shouldn't fall for."

"Is he married?" That was the first thing that came to Amelia's mind.

"Hey, Babe. Do you think I'm that kind of person?" she questioned.

"I'll go over to your place in the afternoon. Make sure you cook something nice. Don't starve your godchild."

"Alright. I'll make a whole table of food. Come over quickly!" Tiffany agreed without a second thought and hung up.

"What's the matter?" Oscar asked.

"Tiff said she found someone she likes. I feel like I'm losing a friend to a man suddenly," Amelia said regretfully.

Oscar pulled out a tissue and wiped her mouth. "Stop talking nonsense. Let's go get you some new clothes later."

"Why?" Amelia lifted her gaze and asked.

"Do I need a reason to buy my wife clothes?"

"That sounds normal, but you've never gone shopping for clothes for me on your own. It's either you ask your secretary to go on your behalf, or I go on my own. Do you even know my size?"

"What do you think?" Oscar threw the question back at her.

She just shrugged.

"Is there anything about your body that I don't know about?"

His words make her cheeks heat up in a flare. "Stop spewing nonsense," she retorted, it beating his chest.

"I'm with my wife. Why do I have to get so serious?" Oscar rejoined.

A blissful smile curved on Amelia's face.

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Cassie might look like she had won their battle over Oscar, but Amelia felt her heart was full when he got all protective toward her. At least he did not just brush her and her child off.

She knew she could give her child a complete family if she continued fighting.

Oscar hooked his hand around her waist and pulled her over, giving her a bite on her ear. "What do you want?" he teased in a low voice.

Amelia's struggled to break free from him. "People are watching, Mr. Clinton."

"They can look at us for all they want. Or are you embarrassed? I don't remember my honey being so self-conscious," he insisted, disregarding her.

Amelia rolled her eyes at him. "Yeah, the Oscar Clinton I know does not have thick skinned either."

Oscar chuckled at her witty response. It seemed like he was in a very good mood.

"You don't like me being like this?" he asked, biting her earlobe this time.

Amelia's ears tickled at his touch, but the frown on her brows intensified. "Stop it! Everyone is watching!"

Oscar ignored her and pulled her closer into his embrace as if she was a precious jewel.

"They are just jealous. They must be thinking I'm the luckiest man in the world to have a beautiful wife like you," he whispered in her ears.

His words tugged at her heartstrings. "What about you? What do you think?" she asked solemnly.

"It's indeed my honor to have a beautiful wife like you."

But unfortunately, she's not the one your heart desires. Else you wouldn't have asked for a divorce.

Amelia's gaze lowered at the thought.

Although he said he won't divorce me for the moment, I'm ultimately not the person in his heart. Despite me bearing his child and Cassie having a miscarriage, his heart still leans toward her. I'm nothing but a rebound. I really shouldn't get my hopes high. I might have become more important to him, but I'll never replace her.

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Oscar spotted the dejection in her eyes and knew her thoughts must have wandered elsewhere. He pinched her nose and called out, "Don't think about anything else when you're with me. You can only think about me."

"Don't be so unreasonable," Amelia said with a resigned smile.

"Isn't that what you like about me?" he joked.

Amelia's heart brimmed with happiness, but she quickly nudged herself back to reality. "I bet you use this trick on Ms. Yard too. Do you not feel any shame?"

"I only use this trick on you. Cassie is a good girl. You're more unpredictable," he replied without a change in his expression.

"Oh, so you're saying I'm childish, and she's more understanding?"

Oscar looked at her without deflecting her gaze as if he was agreeing with what she

said.

Amelia was annoyed. She reached for his waist, wanting to pinch him hard.

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He grabbed her hand and looked at her with affection. "When did you get so savage? You weren't like this when we first met. Who taught you all this?"

"Well, if you don't like me now, you might as well just let me sign the divorce papers, Mr. Clinton," she said, blinking her eyes triumphantly.

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"No other man will be able to take this temper of yours," Oscar replied with a smile and pinched her again on the nose.

Amelia lifted her chin high and looked into his eyes proudly. "Have you forgotten that some men fell for me too? I bet there will be men who are able to accept me for who I am. Do you wanna bet?"

Oscar grabbed her chin and faked anger. "I dare you."

"You're the one who said no men will like me."

“But you’re my wife. No one has the guts to get close to you.”

“Well, you’d better be on your guard. I won’t be waiting for you at the same place if you ever let me go.” Both of them knew what she really meant.

Oscar just hugged her tightly in his arms and changed the topic. “Let’s go get you

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some nice clothes.”

Amelia followed after him reluctantly.

Not long after they got to the clothing store, Oscar got a call from his employee. Clinton Corporations’ collaboration with a company in Erihal had just gone official and he was needed back at the company for a meeting with the representatives from Erihal.

He took out his gold card and gave it to Amelia and planted a kiss on her forehead. “This is my card. You can buy whatever you like with it. The representatives from Erihal are here, so I have to head back to chair a meeting. Wait for me at home after you’re done shopping?”

Amelia drilled her gaze into him and clung to his arm. There was so much she wanted to say, but in the end, she simply adjusted his necktie and sighed. “Alright. Drive safe. I’m going over to Tiff’s after I’m done shopping. Give me a call if you’re coming home tonight, if not I’ll just spend the night at her place. Our apartment is huge, I don’t feel comfortable staying there alone.”

A fleeting warmth flickered in Oscar’s heart as he looked at her. This was not the first time she gave him this feeling. A simple gesture from her was enough to touch the softest spot in his heart.

“I’ll get the chauffeur to pick you up. If I’m going home, I’ll drive over. I’ll still call you if I’m not coming home,” he said gently.

“It’s okay. I can take a cab over to her place. Off you go and don’t worry about me. I’ll take care of myself.”

The smile on Amelia’s face faded gradually after Oscar left.

She put his card in her bag and gave Tiffany a call, telling her that she was going over now. After hailing a cab and giving the driver the address, she sat back in her seat and closed her eyes to get some rest.

After thirty minutes, the cab drove into a familiar neighborhood. “We’re here,” the driver said.

Amelia lifted her heavy eyelids and took out a fifty note for the driver.

She hopped off and went into Tiffany's neighborhood after talking briefly to the guard.

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After she got off the elevator, she walked toward Tiffany's house and rang the doorbell. It did not take long for her friend to open the door. Tiffany gave her a big hug when she saw Amelia. "Hey, Babe! I thought you're coming in the afternoon? I haven't even bought the ingredients I need for cooking yet."

"It's okay. We can go together," Amelia replied, going into the house.

Tiffany closed the door behind her and poured her a drink. "Did you drive here?" she asked as she sat on the couch and grabbed a pillow next to her.

Amelia shook her head. "I took a cab."

"Oh. Why didn't you drive?"

"I went to the hospital and had a meal with Oscar after that, so I didn't drive."

"Seriously, I don't know what you're thinking," Tiffany commented negatively, "I really dislike the two women from the Yard family. I have no idea how you can still stick to that man even when he's clearly giving you the cold shoulder."

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"Well, says the person who asked me to go over to the hospital yesterday," Amelia taunted.

Tiffany pouted her lips in dismay. "I asked you to go over because I didn't want my godchild to grow up without a father. Those two Yard bit*hes are really repulsive. I wonder what Oscar sees in Cassie. He must be blind if he married her. You'd better stay out of all their drama as you have to think about your kid."

Amelia had resignation written all over her face and she decided to just talk about something else.

"You said you fell for someone? Who is this man that made you lose your head? He must be really charming to awaken this apathetic heart of yours."

Tiffany let out a loud groan when Amelia brought that up.

She pulled her hair and planted her body onto the couch.

"Babe, what should I do now? He will be the end of me."

Amelia was startled to see Tiffany behaving like this. This was not her normal self at all. "Hey, what's the matter? Tell me everything, then I'll see how I can help."

Tiffany sprang from the couch, ran over to Amelia, and sat down next to her. "Babe, do you remember the annoying boss I told you about last time?"

"Uh-huh. Mr. Hisson?"

Tiffany nodded.

Amelia's eyes widened in utter disbelief. "Don't tell me you fell for him," she blurted out, "That big fat ugly man? That's your type?"

From Amelia's recollection, Tiffany had told her that that man looked horrible—he had crooked teeth and the flabby flesh on his face made him look like a bulldog. Tiffany even said that he was short and stout. Amelia was not sure if her description was true or not, but because Tiffany had repeated it a few times, Amelia had had a highly revolting image of Derrick in her mind.

That was why Amelia was completely taken by surprise when Tiffany said it was him.

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She finally understood that beauty really lay in the eyes of the beholder.

An awkward smile carved on Tiffany's face. "Well, Babe, he's not as bad as you imagined him to be."

"So?" Amelia looked at her curiously.

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“What if I tell you he gives me butterflies in my stomach?” Tiffany felt like she was digging her own grave.

“Are you sure that’s how you feel toward him?” Amelia tried to confirm.

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In her mind, there was no way she could picture Tiffany’s boss and her together. That would be too cringy.

Tiffany was an extremely beautiful woman. Amelia could not imagine her together with a middle-aged man. It would literally be beauty and the beast. Amelia was not a lookist, but still, she would not want her best friend to get together with someone too ugly for her.

“Babe, I can tell from your expression that you don’t like the idea of it,” Tiffany noted.

Amelia snatched away the pillow in Tiffany’s arms and questioned her. “Honestly, you’re really full of surprises—bad surprises. You’ll need to bear all the consequences if my baby gets a shock and comes out right now.”

“Do you really dislike the idea of me liking my boss so much?” Tiffany asked weakly.

Amelia nodded with determination.

“But he’s rich and handsome. There are always women around him waiting to get him. To be honest, it’s not about whether I like him or not. It’s more like whether he thinks I’m good enough for him.”

“I thought you said he’s super ugly?” Amelia doubted.

“Did... Did I say that?” Tiffany choked.

Amelia nodded and mimicked Tiffany’s tone and actions back then when she told her about that man. “Not only does he have a big head, but he also has a flat nose and small eyes. He’s so fat he looks like a pig. The woman who gets together with him is doomed. That was what you told me,” Amelia recalled.

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Tiffany was at a loss for words. Indeed, that was really what she said back then.

“That’s a misunderstanding,” she corrected.

“So you lied to me?” Amelia questioned.

"That's not a lie. I was just exaggerating. I didn't know you really believed everything

I said."

"So what happened between the two of you. What made you fall for him so suddenly? Did he do anything to you?" Amelia bombarded her with a litany of questions.

Tiffany stuck out an approving thumb at Amelia. "Babe, I really think you're modern-day Sherlock Holmes. All your questions are spot-on. You're so smart you make me feel insecure."

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"Cut the shit out and answer me."

Tiffany let out a long sigh like a deflated balloon as she lay back down on the couch.

"Elizabeth approached him and coerced him to break the contract with me, so I charged into the office all fired up to fight for my rights. But everything was useless. I couldn't even look at him in the eyes and talk normally. I had an adrenaline rush and I was so disconcerted that I fled in the end."

"Mrs. Yard reached out to your boss?" Amelia got the main point.

Tiffany nodded.

"Then, are you still working for your company?"

Tiffany waved her hand dismissively in confidence. "Babe, what do you take me for? I won't let them discharge me unduly. I've worked with them for two to three years. I came from a nobody to a best-selling author, and the company has benefited tremendously because of me. Do you think they will lay me off so easily?"

Amelia did not say a word.

Given the Yard family's ability, they could easily uproot not just one, but ten popular authors if they wanted to. Companies would always care for their own survival and profits. Any company would readily side with the family and let a small author like Tiffany off without a second thought. After all, what they wanted was money. .

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"Come on, Babe, don't look so gloomy. Give me a smile. You're pregnant. You need to stay in a good mood, Tiffany coaxed.

"Tiff, did the company end your contract: Don't lie to me." Amelia asked seriously.

"Of course not, Babe. You have to trust my capability even if you don't trust the company, Tiffany replied with a smile on her face.

"Huh. I don't see any charm in you though, Amelia ridiculed her.

Tiffany pulled a face and glowered at her. "Babe, how could you say that about me: Would you be my friend if I weren't charming at all?"

Amelia broke out laughing. "Tiff, I'm really craving something sour. I remember there's a mom-and-pop shop in your neighborhood that sells pickles. Could you go get me some?"

Tiffany looked at her, bewildered, but she stood up nonetheless. "Do you want anything else other than pickles? You're already seven months into your pregnancy, pickles aren't good for you. I can go get some pasta for you if you want."

"But Sweetheart wants some pickles. You can't just deny a hungry baby," Amelia implored.

Tiffany heaved a sigh and relented.

"Do you want anything else besides pickles?" she asked.

"Just get whatever you feel like getting. You know what I like," Amelia replied.

Tiffany nodded and grabbed her money before going out.

Once she left, Amelia took out her phone and made a call. "Ms. Shannon?" she greeted once the call got through.

"Speaking. Is this Amelia?" a voice came from the other side.

"Yes, it's me. It's been a long time. I'm glad you still remember me." A relief smile sat on Amelia's face.

"How can I forget you? You're Tiffany's best friend. I still remember you from our last meeting at the cafe together with Tiffany. You left a really good impression. What's the matter, by the way?"

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"Are you free? I hope I'm not disturbing your work," Amelia said.

"Nope, just fire away."

"Well, this is the thing. I heard from Tiff that the company is terminating her contract. Is this true? You know I've been friends with her for many years. I really don't want anything to happen to her, so I'd like to know if her contract has really ended?" Amelia went straight to the point.

There was a brief silence on the other end. "It's true. But the board has yet to make a decision, and I haven't received any updates yet," Shannon answered frankly, "I brought Tiff to the CEO's office to talk things over today, but she left abruptly and I didn't even get to ask her anything, so I really have no idea what came out of their discussion."

"I don't mean to overstep, but is it okay if I get the CEO's number?"

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Another short silence followed.

"It's totally fine if you don't feel comfortable giving me his number, Ms. Shannon," Amelia quickly added politely, "I shouldn't have asked."

"I'm sorry as I can't be of help. I hope you understand. It's not that I don't want to give you his number, it's just that I'm just a mere editor, and the CEO is my superior. I don't even have his number, to begin with," Shannon replied.

"It's okay. I'm the one who should be apologizing. I'm just too worried about Tiff.

Thanks anyway. I hope I didn't disturb you."

"No worries. I'll get back to work then. I'll see you around. As for Tiffany, you should spend more time with her. I'll let you know once I get any updates from the company," Shannon assured.

"Alright, see you."

Amelia's brows furrowed as she hung up the call.

Just as she was thinking about other means of reaching the CEO, Tiffany's phone rang. Amelia reached for her phone and saw the name "Mr. Hisson" on her screen. She remembered Tiffany saying her boss' last name was Hisson and she picked up the call without a second thought. I

"Tiff?" A masculine and low voice rang through before Amelia could say anything.

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She was completely caught off guard. Judging from the man's raspy and sexy voice, it was impossible that he was a middle-aged man.

"Tiff went to get food. I suppose you're her superior, Mr. Hisson?"

"Yes, I am. And you are?"

"I'm her best friend, Amelia Winters. Is there anything I do to help?" she asked courteously.

"Nothing much, actually. I just wanted to know if she got home. I'll call back again at night since she's not available," Derrick replied.

But Amelia was not letting him go. "Just a second, Mr. Hisson. I have something to ask you. I wonder if you're down to meet up?"

She instantly realized how misleading she sounded. "Please don't misunderstand me, Mr. Hisson. I heard from Tiff that you are terminating her contract, but I hope that's not the case. My husband is Oscar Clinton. I believe you know him. I hope you can at least give me a chance and hear me out. Tiff might sound really forthright, but she's actually a very sensitive person. I don't want anything to happen to her. I hope I made myself clear, Mr. Hisson."

A long pause came from the other end. Just as Amelia thought he had already hung up, Derrick spoke again. "The truth is I liked her ever since I first saw her at the company. I bet you know how long she takes to warm up to others. I won't cancel her contract, but I hope you can help me with one thing. What about we meet up at six in the evening? I'll treat both of you to dinner, and we'll talk after we meet. You can choose a place and send the address to me. I'll see y'all there."

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Amelia was shocked to hear such an unreserved answer from Derrick, but she agreed nonetheless.

"Sure. We'll see you in the evening."

Amelia fell into deep thoughts after she hung up. She still could not get her head around what was happening. Judging from the man's mannerisms, he was not as bad as Tiffany said he was. Besides, he clearly sounded like a young man.

He must be a rich and successful man, but Tiffany painted a direct opposite picture. Amelia did not know if she should laugh at what her friend made him up to be.

When Tiffany finally came home, Amelia was looking at her phone.

"Hey, Babe, I'm back. You shouldn't spend so much time on your phone. It's not good for the baby," she said.

"Mr. Hisson called just now, so I picked up." Amelia's words struck Tiffany like a lightning bolt.

Her hand froze for a while as she put the food on the table. She gave off a rigid laugh and tried to sound natural. "Did he say anything?"

Amelia continued looking at her phone as a subtle smile played across her lips. "Tiff, it seems like you're hiding a lot of things from me, aren't you? Don't you think you owe me an explanation?"

Tiffany arranged the food on the table and tried to play dumb. "I don't understand what you're saying, Babe."

The smile on Amelia's face slowly faded as she locked her gaze at Tiffany.

Tiffany really did not like her behaving like this.

"Babe, stop doing this to me. You know I really can't take you looking at me like this. I'll tell you everything, okay?"

Amelia crossed her arms. "You'd better come clean this time. We've been friends for so many years. It's not like I'll do anything to harm you."

"Alright. Let's eat first. I bought some of your favorite snacks. I'll go grocery shopping

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later. I'll make you some chicken soup later. You're too thin for your own good. Your baby is already seven-month-old and your limbs are still so skinny."

"Don't change the topic," Amelia warned as she ate away.

Tiffany took some food herself and mumbled as she munched, "Babe, I didn't."

"From your boss' voice, I can tell he's our age. His voice is so magnetic, so I guess he must be an attractive man. But someone clearly said he was short, fat, and ugly. You should at least do him some justice," Amelia said.

Tiffany choked and coughed furiously when she heard her. Amelia quickly got her a glass of water and passed her some tissue before patting her on the back. "You okay?"

Tiffany took a sip of water and waved her hand lightly. "I'm fine. I was just shocked."

"There must be something going on between the two of you. Tell me, how long has this been going on?" Amelia interrogated.

Tiffany broke out in a fit of an uncontrollable cough again. She stared at her friend and cried out, "Babe! Can you stop doing that to me?"

Amelia shrugged and shot her a cheeky grin. "Alright, I'll stop, but you'll have to tell me everything. Are you guys still at first base? Or second, or third?"

Tiffany rolled her eyes at Amelia. "Babe, how did I not realize you're actually that nosy. Did something get into you today? Or have you been hiding this side of you all this while?"

"This is my true self. I'm just so curious about other people's lives," Amelia replied wittily, blinking her eyes at her.

"Oh, by the way, I've already made an appointment with him. We're meeting him at six. We need to talk about your contract. And of course, I need to see for myself this man who stole your heart away. There must be something special about him that attracts you. You're completely immune to handsome men like Oscar and Carter."

Tiffany's food fell from her mouth onto her plate as she stared at Amelia.

"Are you kidding me, Babe?"

"He called just now, and I've already promised him. He's your superior, so it's not like we can back out, right?"

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Babe, I didn't know you're this cunning.

Tiffany could not believe this was the Amelia she knew.

"Why not we skip grocery shopping. We'll eat out for dinner instead. I really want to meet him," Amelia insisted.

"Babe, there's really nothing going on between us. Our relationship is purely professional. Don't you think it's too much to meet him privately after work?" Tiffany asked.

"Even if there's really nothing between you two, you still have to meet him to talk about work. If he's really canceling your contract because of the Yards, I'll talk to him as a Clinton. I'll let him know that you have me as your backing."

Tiffany was moved by Amelia's words. "Babe, don't get all cheesy with me. I'll blame it on you if you make me cry."

"Finish up. We'll go for a good meal tonight. After all, it's his treat. We should just go," Amelia said, passing her some food.

Tiffany thought about it and finally nodded.

"Tiff, if you really like him, you should let him know," Amelia suggested. But on second thought, she changed her mind. "Fine. Let's just wait for him to take action. The fact that he called you means he doesn't see you just as his employee. He's a busy man. He doesn't need to waste his time and energy on a mere author like you."

"I'm not sure if I should take this as a compliment, Babe."

Amelia raised her brows and blinked her eyes slowly as if she expected Tiffany to know what she really meant.

"Babe, you'll know we're not of the same world when you see him. He's prince charming in a fairy tale whom every girl dream of. He's perfect, handsome, successful and he comes from a good family. Yes, I'm an independent woman who's able to fend for myself, but I'm still a Cinderella in everyone's eyes. There's no way two of us can come to the same level," Tiffany said with a solemn look on her face.

It pained Amelia to see her like this. She patted Tiffany on the head and comforted her. "Since when did the Tiffany I know became so doubtful of herself? You're the one who told me that we are people who work hard and can afford to enjoy the fruits of our labor. You said we should feel proud of ourselves instead of feeling inferior. Have you forgotten what you said?"

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"Babe, I told you not to make me cry. It was just adrenaline at play when I saw him. That's why I was all flustered. Don't worry, I know how to deal with relationships. I won't invest too much in a relationship I know won't come to

fruition. I won't get myself hurt. Besides, we've agreed to take care of your baby together."

Amelia smiled and said no more, but she was beginning to worry about Tiffany.

Love was not something you could just brush aside when it came knocking, else there would not be any unrequited lovers. Many could not help but fall in love, and they only sunk deeper when they struggled to break themselves free.

Tiffany might be loud and unrestrained sometimes, and she might even be an avid believer of singlehood, but she still had that desire for love in her bones. The fact that she was a romance novel writer showed that she had a longing for love, but she was aware of the harsh reality at the same time. On one hand, she was dreaming about meeting her prince charming; on the other, but her dream was suppressed by reality. Hence, Amelia really was not sure how these two conflicting forces would affect Tiffany when she finally met her Mr. Right.

When the clock almost struck six, Amelia sent Derrick a text and told him the place she and Tiffany chose. A terse reply darted back swiftly.

"Sure. See you in thirty minutes."

Tiffany glanced at his message and pursed her lips. "Seriously, all the successful people behave the same way. He's just like your husband."

Amelia smiled without saying a word.

The two women changed into something simple and went downstairs together. After they got into Tiffany's car, she fastened the seatbelt for Amelia and lowered her head toward her baby bump. "Sweetheart, we're going for a nice meal now. Is there anything you'd like to eat? Let Mommy know if what you want, and I'll get it for you. You're the boss here, and your mom comes second. I'm here to serve both of you," Tiffany said cheekily.

"You should just start the car," Amelia said, shaking her head.

Tiffany sat back in her seat and put on her own seatbelt. "Sweetheart, I'm driving now. I'll bring you to a place with all the nice food."

Amelia looked at her from the side as she drove. "Tiff, you should have a child yourself if you really like kids. You're a good catch, so you should consider getting into a relationship if you meet someone who's interested in you. Don't just bury

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yourself in your books all the time.”

“Stop it, Babe. I just want to earn a lot of money for you and Sweetheart. It’s not like I hope you’ll get a divorce though. I’m just preparing for rainy days. I always believe that we women should set aside some money for ourselves, only then we’ll be able to live their life to the fullest even without men. Money is the only thing that won’t betray us in our lives. We can’t even say for sure if our family will turn their backs on

us.”

A frown appeared on Amelia’s brows. “I don’t agree though.”

“Alright, fine. I shouldn’t have said that. But it’s really all adrenaline talking when I called and told you that I’ve fallen in love. I wasn’t thinking clearly back then and I said something irrational. Don’t take me seriously. He and I don’t come from the same world. You’d better not get too enthusiastic about shipping us when you see him.”

Amelia’s lips curved in an ambiguous smile as she glanced at her. “Tiff, why do you have to explain your relationship with him over and over again? Is there something necessary, to begin with?”

Tiffany quickly shut up.

It was times like this that made her think it was not entirely a good thing to have a friend who was too smart.

“Alright, I won’t tease you anymore. I know what I should and shouldn’t do. I won’t interfere with your relationship, just like how you never got yourself involved in my marriage. I’ll support you whether or not you enter into a relationship with him.”

Her words tugged at Tiffany’s heartstrings as they exchanged understanding looks. It only took one glance for them to know what was on the other person’s mind.

They agreed to meet at a Chanaean restaurant. The waiters and waitresses all looked impeccable in traditional clothing.

When they saw Amelia and Tiffany coming in, one of them hurried over and smiled politely. “Mrs. Clinton?”

Amelia nodded.

“We’ve prepared a private dining room for you. Over here,” the waitress said.

The two women followed her up to the second floor and took a right turn before

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walking down a corridor. The waitress opened the door before them and gestured at them to enter.

"There's another friend coming over later. We'll order when he's here," Amelia said after both of them were seated.

"Sure. I'll come back again later then," the waitress said.

After she was gone, Tiffany started surveying the classically decorated private room. "I really like the vintage ambiance. It's so elegant. This is a good place to dine. Have you been here before? They're really polite to you."

"Yeah. I have been here with Oscar a few times. He even told the boss that I'm his wife."

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Tiffany gave her an understanding nod. This was the benefit of being rich. It would not take a lot of explanation for people to know your status.

"It seems like Oscar is not that bad after all. He might have another woman, but he still knows you're his wife and doesn't make things difficult for you. I'd really teach him a lesson if he didn't acknowledge you as his wife," Tiffany remarked.

"Well, he might not be able to give me his full devotion, but he's actually quite nice to me," Amelia said, coming to Oscar's defense, "He makes sure I lack nothing and gave me a gold card with an unlimited spending limit. My life is actually pretty good compared to other women in my situation. It's just that I got greedy and started coveting his heart. I forgot that life's never perfect. We can't have everything."

"Babe, I don't like how you're talking about yourself. You can't blame yourself for falling for him. It's totally natural that you want him only to yourself. What's wrong with that? Besides, you're really tolerant of him. If I were you, I would have broken his limbs," Tiffany replied.

Amelia smiled but did not answer.

Tiffany rubbed her nose consciously and fell into silence. She was just speaking her mind, but frankly speaking, if she had really fallen for someone, she would be

heartbroken if that person had an affair. She would not even think about hurting him.

Although she professed to stay single, she still yearned for love. She hoped her Mr. Right would come to her one day too. It was just that dream died out slowly after a wait too long

A knock came from the door. "Come in," Tiffany said.

The waitress came in. "Mrs. Clinton, your friend is here."

She moved aside and ushered Derrick in.

Amelia was stunned when she saw Derrick. It took her a few seconds to finally come around again. No one could stand unfazed in front of such an exquisite-looking being. Yet, despite her racing heartbeat and her awe of Derrick, she tried to compose herself.

He walked in confidently and browsed at Amelia casually before landing his gaze on

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Tiffany

Amelia had already gathered herself when Derrick came closer to the table. A polite smile hung on her lips as she stood up and shook his hand.

"You must be Mr. Hisson. Nice to meet you."

"Just Derrick will do. And you are...?"

"Amelia Winters. Tiff and I share the same last name, but we're not related. We've been friends for many years. Just call me Amelia," she replied statement of factly.

Derrick took a quick and unnoticeable glance at Amelia as she introduced herself. He was impressed by her mannerism and demeanor. She had gotten on his good side just from their brief interaction.

Given his position, Derrick had met many remarkable and elegant women on different occasions. But Amelia gave him a very good impression; most importantly, she was Tiffany's most trusted confidant. Hence, he would like to be in her good book.

"Amelia. That's a lovely name. I've worked with Mr. Clinton a few times. I heard he's married, but I never knew it was you. Now that I've met you in person, I can only say that he's a lucky man," Derrick complimented.

"It's really nice of you to say that. I've heard about you from Tiff too. It's just that I didn't expect you to actually be so eye-catching. You're just like a prince who walked out of an anime."

"Oh, Tiff talked about me?" Derrick caught the most important information and glanced at Tiffany.

Tiffany met his gaze and her cheeks were pumped red instantly. Her heart began to beat faster at that question.

Why am I like this every time I see him? This man will be the death of me.

"Oh, yes! She talks about you a lot. She said you're the one who discovered her talent, and that she wouldn't be where she is today without you. She's really grateful for your help." Speaking, Amelia elbowed Tiffany. "What's wrong with you? Your boss is here. Aren't you going to talk to him?"

Tiffany took a deep breath and tried calming her racing heartbeat. "Good to see you, Mr. Hisson."

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"Derrick, not Mr. Hisson. We're not at work," he corrected, his voice particularly gentle compared to how he talked to Amelia earlier on. Derrick was not interested in being her employer, or her patron—he wanted her.

Tiffany evaded his gaze and disregarded what he said. "Take a seat, Mr. Hisson. Why don't we order some food first? I believe everyone is hungry now. Amelia's pregnant now, so she needs to eat on time."

It was not until Tiffany mentioned it that Derrick realized Amelia had a baby bump.

"It's so careless of me. I should've realized. Guess I got carried away talking to you. The baby must be a few months old already. Congratulations."

"Thanks. Have a seat."

Derrick went over to Tiffany's side and sat on her right. Tiffany glared at him from the corner of her eyes and her heart started racing uncontrollably again.

"Mr. Hisson, I think you're sitting way too close to me," she said blatantly, "Don't you think it's a little..."

Tiffany did not know what else to say. It was not like she could say she was burning with embarrassment if he sat so close to her.

Sometimes, being too attractive was not a good thing.

"I said call me Derrick. I like it better," he reiterated.

Tiffany spared him a confused look.

"Tiff, it's already past working hours. And to be precise, you're Derrick's partner, not his employee, so he's actually not your superior," Amelia elaborated.

Tiffany cast her questioning gaze at her friend. Babe! Why are you on his side? Why are you calling him by his first name? You have just met him!

Amelia ignored her stare and continued, "Don't you think it's better to just go with 'Derrick' since we're hanging out over a meal here?"

Amelia's entreat made Tiffany felt like she was being petty.

"Alright, Babe. Since when are you so naggy?" Tiffany caved, pouting her lips.

Amelia called the waitress over to get the menu. "Derrick, Tiff is only so quiet when

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she's with strangers. She's actually very talkative. I'm sure you'll like her if you spend more time with her."

"Babe, that's enough," Tiffany interrupted.

Amelia dropped the subject and ordered a few dishes. "It's our first meal together, so I don't know what you like. Why not you order something you like, Derrick? It's on

me."

Derrick did not shy away and ordered four dishes. "There's no way I'm letting you pay. This meal will be on me."

Seeing Tiffany looking at the menu without talking, Amelia spoke up to ease the situation. "Oscar and I come here a lot and Clinton Corporations pick up the tab for us, so I'm buying this meal no matter what."

Derrick smiled and agreed.

After they placed their order, Amelia started asking serious questions. "Derrick, I heard from Tiff that you're calling off your contract with her. Is this true?"

Derrick sipped his drink and put down his glass before answering. "That's just a misunderstanding. She's a prolific writer, and the stories she writes are engaging and captivating. I won't let go of such a talented writer," he said, glancing at Tiffany.

Tiffany felt tongue-tied all of a sudden. She quickly got on her feet and disregarded Amelia's frowning face. "I need to go to the washroom."

Amelia looked at her friend trying to get away frantically. "There's a washroom in here, Tiff."

But Tiffany was already out of the room.

After the door shut close, the smile on Amelia's faded away. "Mr. Hisson, I'm here to confirm something today."

Derrick knew just from the swift change in her expression that she was not just an empty shell.

"Call me Derrick," he said.

"How I address you is not important. I just want to know if you're ending the contract with her."

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"I was just pulling her leg. I don't mean it," he said, shaking his head.

Amelia put down her drink and took a good look at Derrick. "I'll just go straight to the point, Derrick. Tiffany might look like she doesn't care, but she's a sentimental person. She keeps everything to herself and she doesn't open up about her feelings no matter how difficult it is for her. She takes her job seriously although she might seem unperturbed by the contract termination. She will burn the midnight candles in order to come up with a good story. She'll even check through everything multiple times after writing. She's successful as she is today because of her talent and her hard work. Yes, there's an element of luck at play too, but if you're to end her contract, it'd be devastating for her."

Derrick listened quietly as Amelia spoke.

She let off a slight cough and smiled gently. "I must have said too much. I really shouldn't have let it all out on you. Please let me know if you find this a burden. I'll just stop talking."

Derrick rubbed his fingers as a civil smile played on the corners of his lips like a fox concocting some unfathomable plans in his head.

"I bet you know I like Tiff," he finally said.

Amelia was not expecting him to be so direct.

Derrick was a handsome man. He was a knight in shining armor. As Tiffany said, they were both from different worlds. Just from how Derrick carried himself, one could easily tell he came from no ordinary family. In fact, he was a golden bachelor.

Put his credentials aside, his looks themselves were enough to make most women fall for him. It went without saying that his partner had to have a very strong sense of security, else she would end up worrying day and night if someone else would steal her man away.

"But you know Tiff wants someone on par with her," Amelia told him outright.

"I can walk into her world," Derrick said confidently.

For a few seconds, Amelia stared at him, his words ringing in her ears. This meant Derrick was not only willing to understand her past, but he was also willing to make sacrifices to be part of her life and her future.

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"Tiff is just a simple girl next door. Although she's now one of the best-selling authors, she's very ordinary. She dislikes fine dining and isn't fond of learning proper etiquette. She's super messy and sloppy at home, to the extent of not showering when she's suffering from a mental block in writing. She doesn't look good most of the time. In fact, she's messy, disheveled, and unkempt. Can you stand a girl like her?"

Amelia described Tiffany like the back of her hand,

A sweet smile appeared on Derrick's face and gradually transitioned into a wide grin. He looked as if he could visualize Tiffany's casual looks at home.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing her true colors in daily life because it will mean that I'm already her man when that day comes," he hinted.

Amelia chuckled. "I'm not trying to discourage you. However, will a talent like you who is most likely to pursue exquisite things and a quality life tolerate a scuzzy person like Tiff?"

Derrick answered with a question, "How would I know if I don't give it a try?"

Amelia simply smiled.

Sipping her tea, she said, "Tiff has talked about you before but in a bad way. She described you as a pervert boss who's as fat as a pig. I didn't expect you to be so handsome. Honestly, you turned out to be better looking than any other man I've seen. I used to think that my husband's the most good-looking man on earth until I met you. Now, I finally knew how does a prince charming looks like. You've fulfilled all the criteria in the fantasies of all women. But somehow, I don't think you and Tiff are compatible."

Derrick looked at her intensely. "You don't agree?"

She let out a faint smile. "It's not about whether I agree to this. It's up to Tiff. If she likes you, I hope that you two can have the happily-ever-after life that you deserve. On the contrary, if she doesn't have any feelings for you, I hope that you'd let her go. After all, your backgrounds are completely different. There's no point in staying together when you can't guarantee her a future."

He fidgeted the cup in his hand. "Frankly, I've investigated everyone around Tiff thoroughly since the first day I fell for her. I'm aware and very certain that you're an

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intelligent woman. Your friendship with Tiff is way solid than I've expected. My purpose of meeting you today is to reach an agreement with you."

"Go ahead."

"Please don't be the stumbling block between Tiff and I."

Amelia laughed.

"Rest assured that I'll never meddle in Tiff's private affairs. I'll only help her analyze the options available but I won't decide for her based on my standards just because I care. Her marriage is her decision to make."

Derrick was full of praise for Amelia's wisdom.

A smart man would always enjoy negotiating with a smart woman as it is easier and more effective.

Derrick raised his cup of tea. "Allow me to toast with tea instead of wine. Thank you!"

After clinking glasses and taking a sip, Amelia said to him, "You're better than I thought, Derrick. A steady man. I'm afraid Till can't handle you."

Before he could reply, there was a knock at the door. Subsequently, it was pushed open and a few nicely dressed waitresses entered with dainty dishes in their hands.

Swiftly, they served the individually served portion. "Bon appetite, Mrs. Clinton. If you like the food, our manager has humbly asked that you put in a good word for us with Mr. Clinton."

Amelia nodded her head lightly.

The waitresses then left the room courteously. Amelia frowned upon realizing Tiffany was still not back from the bathroom. "Why is Tiff taking so long? Let me go and check in on her."

When she was about to stand up, Derrick stopped her. "Let me do it."

Amelia agreed. "Sure."

When he was tucking in his chair, she called out to him again, "Derrick, I can tell that you really like Tiff. However, I have my qualms if this relationship alone can suffice you in sustaining your fight against your family. If you don't have the confidence in winning the battle, please stay away from Tiff. She may look very carefree, but she's

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actually a very sensitive person who can get hurt very easily. Don't pursue her if your goal is just to fool around. She's not the type who wants a short-term relationship."

Without turning his head, Derrick smirked. "My marriage has always been my personal decision to make. Should I want to toy her around, I wouldn't have waited two to three years to make my first move. With my looks and family background, I can easily get a dozen of women presenting themselves to me without lifting a finger. Why do I need to exert so much effort on one woman?"

Amelia grinned. "Derrick, remember what you said today. Otherwise, I won't forgive

you."

He nodded.

When he left the room, Amelia muttered, "Tiff, I think he suits you well."

On the other end, Tiffany had no idea what the two had discussed behind her back.

Derrick came to the ladies' washroom and instantly got hold of a woman who was at the exit. The woman was shocked to the core, blushed, and faltered at the sight of a handsome man, "Any... anything, mis...ter?"

Before he could respond, Tiffany walked out of the bathroom and saw them seemingly having some physical contact. She rolled her eyes at him. "Mr. Hisson, why are you here? It's surprising to see a good looking man like you behaving like a rogue."

He released his grip on the woman and said charmingly, "You may go now."

Dwelling in her fangirling moment, the woman lost herself in a frenzy. Thrilled, she held Derrick's hand. "You're a celebrity, aren't you? What movie have you acted in? Or are you a model? You look so cool. I'll surely search for all of your work online."

As Amelia had said, men who had a successful career would have a specific threshold levels or tolerance for cleanliness, be it psychologically or physiologically. Derrick was a clean freak who did not like being touched by others. He could not bear messiness nor anything presumed as filthy or contaminated. He could not accept it when the woman ran her hand around his.

The only reason he subconsciously got hold of the woman just now was to request for her help to check on Tiffany in the bathroom.

Seeing his hand being grabbed by an unknown woman, Derrick's tolerance level almost hit a breaking point. Tiffany could sense that he was about to blow a fuse, so

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she quickly diffused the situation, "Ma'am, could you please let go of my friend? He has obsessive-compulsive disorder and rashes may develop on his body if you keep holding on to him like this."

The woman regained her senses and loosened her hand, knowing that she had lost her self-control. Her face turned crimson red. "Sorry, sorry..." She ran away after apologizing.

Derrick fixated his gaze on Tiffany, who avoided having eye contact with him.

"Mr. Hisson, why are you here?"

"I was worried about a cheeky girl who spent more than ten minutes in the bathroom," he said in a teasing manner.

Tiffany's heart skipped a beat, but she tried to maintain her composure. "My stomach doesn't feel too good. Sorry for making you worried."

Approaching closer, he cornered her. Tiffany was so anxious that she kept scanning left and right in case someone was passing by in the hallway.

"Tiff, are you scared of me?" He leaned over to her face, so close that she could feel the breath he exhaled.

She blocked him from advancing further by placing both hands on his chest. "This isn't appropriate, Mr. Hisson. Others might get the wrong impression if they saw us like this."

He insisted for an answer, "Tiff, are you scared of me?"

Her heartbeat raced rapidly as she tried to gasp a breath of fresh air to calm herself down. "Mr. Hisson, let's return to the private room. We can talk over there."

He continued gazing at her intently. In a sexy voice, he asked, "Tiff, has anyone ever told you that you're very attractive?"

Her heart was pounding so fiercely as if she was having an anxiety attack. Moments later, she got very upset and pushed him away. "Mr. Hisson, I don't know what you're trying to do. If teasing me makes you happy, then you've achieved the objective. Let me be frank with you, I don't like this. Quit playing games with my heart, it's game over for us now, or I'll consider terminating our working relationship."

Derrick gazed at her with intently.

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She took a deep breath. "Mr. Hisson, I'm happy to work with you, but if you continue harassing me, I'll seriously consider ending the contract. After all, nobody likes being pestered by a pervert!"

He cringed. Stroking her face and lifting up her chin, he concluded, "You are the only woman who dares to call me a pervert, Tiff."

She avoided his affection as her gaze grew cold. "We should go now, Mr. Hisson."

She left him behind and strode away. Sinking into deep thoughts, he stared at her back profile, then hurried to catch up with her.

When they returned to the private room, Amelia could sense something was off between the duo. "Tiff, are you okay? Why were you away for so long?"

Looking sullen, Tiffany shook her head.

Amelia knitted her brows and shifted her gaze to Derrick, only to find him locking his eyes on Tiffany too. Amelia chuckled and asked, "Derrick, did you bully my sweet

Tiff?"

Abruptly, he stood up and poured some wine into three glasses. Tiffany interrupted, "Not a drop for Amelia, she's pregnant."

Derrick apologized, "I'm sorry. I forgot that you're pregnant. You're too gorgeous and doesn't even look thick, I can't picture you as an expecting mom."

Amelia shook her head. "It's okay. Just a few sips is fine."

Tiffany pursed her lips and said under her breath, "Such a sweet talker."

Bewildered, Amelia glanced at Tiffany, turned sideways, and then whispered, "What's wrong, Tiff? You don't seem to be yourself."

Shaking her head, Tiffany took a deep breath and smiled. "Why wouldn't I be?"

Amelia added, "Tiff, don't just keep eating. Serve your boss. He's been so helpful in your career. How could you be so cold to him, right?"

Reluctantly, Tiffany took some food for Derrick. "May I serve you a dish, Mr. Hisson? If you mind it, I can have it all by myself."

Amused, Derrick accepted the dish. "Please let me try it."

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Subsequently, Tiffany did the same for Amelia. "Babe, please eat more. You have Sweetheart to feed, don't starve my little cutie."

Amelia burst out laughing.

"I can take care of myself, Tiff. You keep your boss company."

At that point, Tiffany had moved on from the earlier incident and could face Derrick at ease.

“Babe, Mr. Hisson is a matured man who will make sure he eats to his heart’s content. You should worry about yourself. It’s past seven o’clock and you haven’t fed my sweetheart.”

Amelia turned to Derrick. “Tiff is very straightforward and frank when she’s in front of close friends. Please don’t mind her antics. She’s very kind-hearted and always puts others first. She’s a blessing to the man who will be taking her as his future wife, I always wonder who will that be. Yet, I’m also worried if that man will still cherish her and treat her well after marrying her.”

As casual as it sounded, each word uttered by Amelia was carefully crafted with the intention to remind Derrick.

“Tiff is so beautiful, talented, and caring. I’m sure her future husband will treasure her and spoil her rotten. I don’t think he will let such a woman suffer even the slightest bit.” Derrick responded with a solemn promise, which he deliberately pronounced to Tiffany.

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Tiffany observed Amelia and Derrick. She was not a fool and understood perfectly well the hidden agenda behind their dialogues.

Derrick served Tiffany some food. “You’ve slimmed down recently. Eat more.”

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Realizing what she was served, Tiffany took a peek at Amelia, who was enjoying her meal with her head down, and then she cast a surprised look at Derrick.

“Why? You don’t like it? I remember you like Coq Au Vin,” Derrick said confidently.

Puzzled, Tiffany asked, “How did you know that my favorite is Coq Au Vin?”

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“When there’s a will, there’s a way,” Derrick replied.

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She could not help but feel her heart soften as the man's words made her heart ripple.

I acknowledged Derrick as a very outstanding person. His face is perfectly chiseled and his gestures are always reminded her of the elegance of a prince. He's a ten out of ten. How can I not be moved when such a rare gem goes the extra mile to get to know me? I'm a best-selling author who's written a plethora of novels, from romance, fiction, to horror. Yet, I'm never in any relationship now and neither have I had many boyfriends in real life. All of my past love stories ended in tragedies, either I dumped the person for being insincere or that I was dumped for not being gentle. I have mixed feelings about Derrick. His actions touched my heart, but I am also confused and fearful. It is the feeling of a poor person being blessed with a million in wealth out of the blue. First, the person is stunned. Then, he feels troubled for not knowing how to spend it or worried that the money might just disappear into thin air.

Anxieties crept up in her, causing her to feel uneasy. However, she had nothing to begin with. Therefore, she was not afraid of losing anything.

Amelia's lips curled upward. "Wow, it seems to me that Derrick, the big boss, is putting in a lot of effort to learn about the best-selling author, Tiff."

Keeping silent, Derrick continued serving Tiffany more food.

Tiffany glanced at Amelia. "Babe, go ahead and stuff yourself, or Sweetheart is going to start a protest."

Amelia obliged. "Mmm... the food tastes so good today. I wonder if it's because we have a real looker dining with us."

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Tiffany retorted, "Babe, don't forget your status as a married woman. It doesn't matter if he is handsome or not, it's got nothing to do with you. Cast your dirty

thoughts away and focus on the meal."

Amelia teased her, "I'm taken, but you're not. Since your boss is still single and ready to mingle, why don't you consider dating him?"

Tiffany darted her a warning to keep her mouth shut.

Turning away, Amelia asked, "Derrick, I heard from Tiff that the cover page for her new paranormal romance novel is done and it's going to be published in two months. Is that so?"

Derrick nodded. "The editing is completed. Two months from now, it'll be sold on various online platforms and bookshops. There'll be a large-scale press conference too. If the sales are good, we'll organize a signing event too. The team has put in a lot of effort working on Tiff's paranormal romance novel. I'm sure it'll be a new hit in the market."

Amelia agreed. "Wishing you all the best, Tiff, and hope it brings greater profits to your company!"

Feeling happy, Derrick chimed in, "Please also wish me luck in marrying my dream girl."

Amelia followed suit, "I wish you all the best in claiming your beloved. However, I think she's not falling head over heels for you yet, so you've got to work harder, Derrick."

"That's for sure!"

Tiffany ate quietly.

They spent two hours having dinner. When they left the restaurant, they were greeted by a dark grey sky across the horizon. The city was well lit by dim street lamps and flashing neon lights.

Derrick was a gentleman. "Ladies, do I have the pleasure of driving you both home?"

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Amelia let Tiffany decide, but she declined right away, "Thanks for offering, Mr. Hisson. We drove this evening, so please don't trouble yourself."

Derrick nodded helplessly. "All right then, drive safe. I'm glad to have a nice meal together with you both. I'll be the host when we meet next time. Please allow me to

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exercise my duty as a gentleman."

Amelia said politely, "Sure, it's your treat next round. Anyhow, by our next appointment, I hope to see you wearing a different identity instead of Tiff's boss."

A confident smug appeared on his face. "Most definitely!"

Amelia winked at him playfully. "Well, I'll keep my fingers crossed."

Derrick turned to Tiffany. "Please think of me when you get home, Tiff."

Tiffany almost vomited blood out of annoyance. She avoided his intense gaze. "Have a safe drive home, Mr. Hisson."

Derrick quirked his lips slightly and said, "I'll see you off first."

Tiffany bowed her head and pouted. "Suit yourself." She then held Amelia's hand and walked toward her car.

Seeing how she sped off, Amelia asked, "Are you upset?"

Tiffany hit the steering wheel lightly. "Babe, why do I have a feeling that you've sold me out to Derrick?"

Amelia laughed out loud. "If he's the one for you, I don't mind doing that at zero cost."

Feeling rather disappointed, Tiffany explained, "Babe, you aren't blind and you can see the vast difference between us. You know how it's like to be married into a prominent family, more than anyone else. Are you sure you want me to follow your footsteps?"

Sitting on the passenger seat, Amelia responded, "Tiff, it's not as complicated as you think it is. It all depends on your lover's attitude. If you have him on your side, your marriage will be a blissful one even if when you are faced with multiple challenges. On the other hand, if you don't have the right person with you, you'll suffer in agony albeit presented with rare delicacies and priceless luxuries."

That was the reflection of Amelia's true feelings.

Being the daughter-in-law of the Clintons, she was lucky to have met a mother-in-law like Mrs. Clinton, who treated her like her own daughter. She gave her a sense of belonging. Although the rest of the Clintons would jeer at her sometimes, they still tolerated her flaws.

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Amelia had never regretted her decision to marry into the Clinton family. Her only regret was giving her heart to Oscar, who could not return her with the same amount of love. To him, perhaps I'll never be as significant as Cassie.

Tiffany understood the meaning between her lines.

"Babe, don't overthink things. I was just babbling."

Amelia continued to ask, "Tiff, tell me how you really feel about Derrick."

Feeling slightly irritated and annoyed, Tiffany subconsciously hit the steering wheel again. "I don't know. We've been colleagues for two to three years now, but we've never spent a lot of time alone with each other. I usually communicate with my editor about my novels and the editor will report to the top management. I don't know how he feels about me... He's marvelous, indeed. Like a beam of shining light, he captures people's attention wherever he goes. He's always in the limelight. Everyone can tell that we're from completely opposite backgrounds. So..."

She shrugged. "I admit that he makes my heart flutter. But, so what? I don't see that we have a future together. Hence, why bother giving it a shot?"

Amelia looked out at the night view through the window. "Tiff, this is uncharacteristic of you to be so timid. You sounded like a coward."

Tiffany smiled wryly.

"Babe, you know me better than anyone else. I'm usually very courageous and bold, but I freak out every time I think about starting a relationship. My identity as a best selling author doesn't mean anything. I'm just an amateur when it comes to love."

Amelia could not hold back her laughter.

Tiffany looked at her, baffled.

"What's so funny?"

"Nope. It's interesting to see how Derrick could bring out the philosophical side of you." Amelia's reply cheered Tiffany up.

"Babe, I'm being all serious here while you think I'm being philosophical."

Amelia shrugged her shoulders.

Half way through the journey, Tiffany licked her lips and commented, "Babe, I see

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that you're always putting in good words for Derrick."

"Why not? He's an attractive guy, who is even more alluring than Oscar and Carter. Derrick can get any woman he likes in a snap of his fingers. Many know that he's a poison ivy, yet they are still dying to pounce on him at all cost."

Amelia continued to analyze the man, "He's really enchanting. I'm not surprised if you fell for him. I'm dumbfounded that you could still describe him as a fat pig though you know how charming he is. You're probably the only one on earth who would make such comments."

Tiffany's cheeks instantly turned red.

Silence filled the air. Moments later, Amelia advised her, "Tiff, I can tell that Derrick is serious about being with you. If you have feelings for him too, why don't you go for it? Be brave in love. Even if you fail, there's always me who's willing to spend the rest of your life with you."

Tiffany corrected her, "It's three of us, Babe, don't forget about the bun in your oven!"

"Oops, how could I forget to include my little bundle of joy." Amelia scratched her head.

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Smiling, Tiffany said, "Babe, I hope you'll stay happy and well being Mrs. Clinton."

Amelia's gleeful expression disappeared and was replaced with a tinge of exhaustion. Leaning back on the passenger seat, she murmured, "Oscar is entangled between Cassie and me. O Love You Enough to Leave You Chapter 140 Love You Enough to Leave You Chapter 140 Love You Enough to Leave You Chapter 140n one hand, he's enjoying sweet moments with her while he's also giving me unrealistic promises. I don't know which side of him to trust. Sometimes, I hate the playboy in him. Yet, most of the time, I hate the fact that I am not upholding the principles of my own beliefs. I've stooped so low..."

Tiffany felt so sorry for Amelia.

Tightening her grip on the steering wheel, she advised the latter, "Babe, divorce him if you're no longer feeling happy in this marriage. Considering how long you

guys have been together, I think Oscar won't demand a hundred million from you for breaching the contract, will he?"

Shutting her eyes, Amelia forced out a stiff smile.

Tiffany took a quick glance at her. As an outsider, I'm not in any position to pass remarks on their marriage. If it's so easy to cut off ties with a person, especially one whose life is closely intertwined with yours, there won't be so many couples locked in bitter battles.

"Babe, if you don't want to leave him, then stay and work hard to capture his heart," Tiffany suggested.

Heaving a sigh, Amelia said disappointingly, "It's very challenging to read his mind. We've been married for five years, but I still have no clue what he's thinking half of the time. Generally speaking, he treats me well and does show affection at times. However, I can't tell if he still has any feelings for me."

Tiffany chuckled. "Babe, one thing I don't like about you is how you'd falter back and forth before making a decision. From my point of view, what's there to be afraid of? It's no big deal even if you fail in the end. Most importantly, you've worked on it and have no regrets for yourself."

Amelia tried to shake the thought away. "Let's not talk about him anymore. I don't plan to go home tonight. I'll stay at your apartment."

Tiffany felt so helpless. "You know what? Since the day you married Oscar, I've lost count the times you stayed over at my place."

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Looking completely nonplussed, Amelia replied, "Well, you always turn into a nocturnal creature when you try to meet deadlines at work. You even barred me from visiting you if I had nothing urgent."

Batting her eyelids, Tiffany defended herself, "Babe, don't put the blame on me. Haven't I been welcoming you with open arms and serving you the best cuisines when you sleep over at my place? I'm so hurt by your words."

As the atmosphere started to liven up, Amelia became more relaxed.

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After a moment of silence, her topic revolved around Derrick again. "Tiff, I do think that Derrick is serious about you. How do you feel about him? Would you consider going out with him?"

Tiffany paused. The question had removed the twinkle in her eye. "Babe, why are you talking about him again? He's my boss, the one who feeds me, and there's no other possibility between us. Although I'm a renowned author, I'm just a small fry

compared to his family. My salary per annum is not even comparable to what they earn in a day. Do you think that they will accept a daughter-in-law like me?"

Amelia fell silent.

Some prominent families may prefer a spouse who comes from the same social circles. As realistic as this may sound, it doesn't rule out the possibility of gaining equal footing on other aspects which are as important. For example, if the woman is highly educated and has a similar lifestyle, then she is most likely to handle the etiquette required in unfamiliar situations too. This may bridge the gap of having a distinct difference in terms of wealth, making the union more desirable. There are many fairy tales about Cinderella marrying her Prince Charming. The story will usually end with a happily-ever-after with no sequel. This is because everyone knows that Cinderella didn't marry only the prince, she's gotten herself involved in the entire royal family. She needs to master all kinds of etiquettes and rules, endure the cynicism of others, demonstrate flexibility as well as an ability to overcome various unforeseen circumstances. When the going gets tough, Cinderella must either demonstrate tenacity or she will be defeated, end up getting a divorce, and leave her prince miserably. Conversely, the prince would succumb to the arrangement made by the royal family to choose the next princess who suits him best. The new partner might not be the love of his life, but a compatible one nonetheless. Unfortunately, this is the reality.

"From the way he acts and carries himself, Derrick seems like a person who's in control of his own life. Why don't you give him a chance?" Amelia thought for a while before prompting Tiffany.

"Babe, did he bribe you or something? Why do you keep saying good things about him? Tell me, what benefits are you reaping?"

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Amelia grinned from ear to ear. "Will I go above and beyond to promote him if I don't think he is any good?"

Tiffany was puzzled. "Why, Babe? Give me a reason. You've only seen him once. Why are you working so hard in making us an item?"

"My sixth sense," Amelia said.

It made Tiffany even more flabbergasted. "I thought you loathe forming an opinion based on sixth sense?"

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"The gut feeling of a woman can be quite accurate. I can just envision how he will spoil you rotten."

Arching her brow, Tiffany questioned, "Are you bewitched by his charm?"

"That's one of the reasons."

Tiffany could not help but shudder as her brows twitched. "Babe, when did you start judging a book by its cover?"

"I've always been like this. Don't you know?"

Rolling her eyes, Tiffany gave up.

Then, she said in a serious tone, "All right, Babe. Let's stop talking gibberish. At one glance, you and I can see clearly that Derrick and I are from different realms. I've been working with him for two to three years now and I can safely tell you that he didn't show any interest in me all this while. Anyone would be shocked to the core with his sudden confession. Aren't you worried if he's approaching me with ill intentions? Perhaps he wants to exploit my talents and then chuck me aside once I'm of no more value to him. Won't you feel bad for me?"

"Tiff, your reasons are..." Amelia was utterly dumbfounded by her logic. "I might believe it if you tell me that Derrick is eyeing your beauty and he wants to get intimate with you. But you're saying that he wants to manipulate you and take advantage of your expertise. Are you serious? He's the boss of a big company. Is there a need for him to do so?"

Knowing how bizarre her argument was, Tiffany did not refute.

"Okay, don't think too much. I can only say that your fate shows up in a timely manner. Prior to this, I was worried that you'd be a spinster forever. Unexpectedly, you wowed me with how the story has unfolded. I'm relieved, nonetheless."

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Sulking, Tiffany protested, "Are you looking down on me, Babe? What do you mean by I'd be a spinster forever?"

"Your daily activities rotate between writing novel, sleeping, and sticking around me. When I introduce a man to you, you always reject it by giving me lots of excuses. Wouldn't I be worried when you refused to meet any guy? I'm just like an anxious mother waiting for my overaged daughter to get married. Now that there's a person trying to court you, I actually feel good about it."

Tiffany was rendered speechless.

Before Amelia could continue speaking, her phone rang. It was Carter.

She looked sideways at Tiffany while the latter simultaneously asked, "Who's it, Babe?"

"Carter."

Furrowing her brows, Tiffany was slightly annoyed. "Why does that jinx keep calling you? As an eligible bachelor, he's always in contact with a married woman, is he trying to be a homewrecker? Are all those who are born with a silver spoon that free? They've got nothing better to do besides coming up with ideas to destroy someone else's families?"

Amelia was amused by Tiffany's comments.

She picked the call up, "Carter."

His faint voice was heard from the other side of the line. "Amelia, are you at home?"

"I'm with Tiff right now and I'll most probably sleep over at hers tonight. How are you feeling? Any better?"

"I'm all right. Thanks for visiting me today. I'd like to meet you. Is that okay?" Carter faltered before stating his request.

"What time?" Amelia hesitated.

"Now."

Amelia's frown deepened. "Carter, you've just undergone a surgery and shouldn't be moving around. We shall meet when you're discharged."

"I'm in your neighborhood. I'll just wait right here until you show up."

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"Carter, stop fooling around. Go back to the hospital. You can't move so much after an operation." Panicked, Amelia did not expect a capricious Carter, who would risk his health just to see her.

"Amelia, I'll wait for you in the neighborhood. I'll wait here the whole night until you show up." Then, he hung up.

Amelia had a strong urge to curse when the call was disconnected.

"What's the matter?" asked Tiffany.

“Carter is waiting for me in my neighborhood albeit not feeling well. He said he won’t leave until he sees me.” Feeling helpless, Amelia asked for a favor, “Tiff, please make a U–turn and send me home.”

The request almost made Tiffany hit the ceiling. “Who does the jinx think he is? A three–year–old? He’s such a childish dude. If others find out, it has no effect on him as he’s still single. On the contrary, you might be reprimanded by the Clintons. This man doesn’t think about your situation. He’s so spoiled and willful. Let’s just ignore him. Nothing good ever happens when he’s in the picture.”

“Tiff, don’t be so stubborn and send me home. He was admitted to the hospital a few days ago for stomach perforation and underwent surgery. His body surely can’t withstand the hassle of traveling to and fro. If he continues staying out in the cold, his condition might get worse.”

After some consideration, Tiffany’s heart was softened and she changed the course though she remained firm in her words. “I couldn’t care less even if he dies. He’s not concerned about his own health, so why should we?”

On the way home, she continued advising Amelia, “Babe, don’t go easy on this man who wants to be part of your life. If you allow him to do so, he will continue to sink deeper in his crooked love. Alas, things will get complicated or out of control.”

Amelia scratched her head. “I know, Tiff, but he’s the first man whom I’ve ever loved. Frankly, it’s so difficult for me to harden my heart and ignore him totally.”

Tiffany sighed because she understood what Amelia was going through and felt bad for her. She takes everything in and bears all the burdens on her shoulders. Yet, she always portrays to be strong, generous, and ever so gorgeous. Just because she can withstand the pressure, everyone thinks that she’s full of grit and competitiveness. However, nobody knows that Amelia lacks a sense of security. She’s extremely sensitive and is sharp to find out how others think or feel about her. She doesn’t show it upfront. Hence, others would think that she doesn’t take it to heart. The truth is, she gets hurt often too.

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“Babe, I’m not trying to pinpoint your mistake. I’m just reminding you to protect yourself and don’t get hurt. Neither Oscar nor Carter suits you. Admittedly, Carter loves you but he’s not a conscientious man who can fulfill the duty of taking good care of you. You’re destined to get hurt because of his carefree attitude,” Tiffany said earnestly.

Shaking her head, Amelia assured her, “Tiff, Carter is just a friend. He was then, he is now and he will only remain a friend even in the future.”

