

ONCE THE FOOLISH WIFE, NOW HIS ETERNAL OBSESSION

Chapter 10:

“You miserable little brat! I swear I’ll beat you within an inch of your life!” Richard snarled, his voice booming as he snapped the whip through the air.

Zoe lunged forward and grabbed his arm. “You should be punishing Cathryn, not Jordyn! Cathryn ruined Jordyn, after all!”

Richard shoved Zoe away with vicious force, sending her crashing to the floor. “You deserve punishment too! I told you to keep things quiet until everything blew over, but you wouldn’t listen. You went behind my back, sent out invitations, and left me no choice but to host this ridiculous birthday banquet. Now all of Olekgan is laughing at me.”

Richard had just secured every penny of Bettina’s assets and was already planning Moore Trading’s expansion. But because of tonight’s disaster, business partners were pulling out, and the company was suddenly on shaky ground.

The thought made his anger boil over. He lashed out again.

Zoe cried out, unable to bear it, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Liam couldn’t watch any longer. He lunged forward and grabbed the whip. “Please, Mr. Moore, stop. Today is supposed to be Zoe’s birthday. Can’t we all calm down?”

Richard's fury only deepened at the sight of him. "You knew it was her birthday, and you still couldn't keep yourself in check? You dragged Jordyn into some dark corner to fool around in the middle of the party, and everyone saw it! You brought disgrace on me and my family!"

Liam's face tightened. "That corridor camera hasn't worked for months. How did it start working tonight?"

Richard went still.

That camera hadn't responded even after he'd paid to have it repaired. It was useless—no signal at all. Unless someone with real skill had fixed it in secret.

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It had to be Cathryn.

Ever since childhood, Cathryn had been drawn to computers. By the time she was seven, she already knew how to write programs—tinkering with the household cameras for fun. The timing of the corridor camera suddenly coming back online was far too convenient to be coincidence.

The only person who could have orchestrated this was Cathryn.

Tears streaked down Jordyn's cheeks as she choked out her justification. "If Cathryn hadn't thrown herself at Liam, I wouldn't have been eaten up by jealousy and pulled him into that dark corner. I wouldn't have done things so recklessly."

The realization struck Richard like a stone. This entire debacle had been Cathryn's design—she wanted to ruin the Moore family.

"I knew it. Cathryn is poison," Liam huffed, his jaw set. "Divorcing her is the best decision I have ever made."

Jordyn sobbed harder, her voice trembling with grievance. "Dad, you've never hit me before. But tonight, because of Cathryn, you did."

A wave of regret overtook Richard. He tossed the whip aside, panic tightening his chest. "It's my fault. I let Cathryn twist things in my head. I wasn't thinking straight. Somebody call an ambulance!"

A while later, red and blue lights flashed as emergency responders sped away from the Moore property.

Beyond the estate gates, Gavin stood quietly with his hands folded, facing Harold with practiced respect.

Harold's voice was steady as he looked Gavin in the eye. "Tell me the truth. What's going on between Cathryn and Mr. Brooks?"

Honesty warred with Gavin's loyalty to his old commander. He parted his lips. "Mr. Newman, they—"

"Mr. Miller." Before Gavin could finish, Cathryn stepped out from the shadows, cutting him off. Her divorce from Liam was still pending. If Harold discovered she had already entered a contract marriage with that man from the Brooks family for a full year, he would be disappointed in her. She couldn't let Harold find out.

Cathryn lowered her gaze, her tone soft. “Mr. Newman, I apologize for what you had to witness tonight.”

Harold was her mother’s old friend, and he would have wanted her to live quietly—held by a steady marriage, not dragged into chaos like this.

Harold touched her head gently, his voice thick with concern. “Tell me honestly. Have the Moore family or the Watson family ever wronged you or your mother in any other way? If they have, I’ll make sure they answer for it.”

Blinking back the sting in her eyes, Cathryn managed to reply, “You saw it all tonight. Liam cheated with my sister. That’s all there is.”

She kept the darker truth buried. The facts about the Moores and Watsons plotting against her mother, faking a will, and stealing Bettina’s legacy would never...

...reach Harold. He was already getting on in years, his health delicate, and the truth would break him.

Harold exhaled, sorrow shadowing his expression. “Your mother was gifted beyond words. She could grasp astronomy, geography, art—just about anything. But she was always too gentle. She let love rule her life, and it led to nothing but heartbreak. Promise me you won’t walk the same road. And as for Liam, cut ties for good.”

Cathryn gave a small nod. “I’ve already filed the divorce papers at the courthouse.”

Relief crossed Harold's features. "That's the right thing to do. Even if your marriage ends, your mother left you enough to build a good future. If you ever find yourself in trouble, you know you can always come to me."

Cathryn nodded again.

Before leaving, Harold gave Gavin a pat on the shoulder.

Once Harold disappeared down the drive, Kathryn lowered her voice. "Mr. Brooks insisted we keep our marriage contract secret. Not a word to anyone, please."

Gavin bowed his head. He had followed orders without question in the army, and his loyalty now rested with Andrew and Kathryn. He would honor it, whatever it took.

A shrill ring from Kathryn's phone shattered the silence. The moment she answered, Richard's furious voice erupted through the line. "How dare you ruin your own sister, Kathryn! What the hell is wrong with you?"

A dry laugh slipped from Kathryn. "Ruin her? I didn't shove her into bed with Liam. Try blaming the right person for once."

"Jordyn loves Liam! If you weren't so selfish, you'd let her be with him instead," Richard barked.

A faint smirk tugged at Kathryn's mouth. "My mother wasted her best years married to a man like you. She deserved far better than the life you gave her."

Richard's anger exploded. "Don't think you'll get away with this, Cathryn! I'll make you pay for what you've done!"

Cathryn ended the call without hesitation.

All his life, Richard had cared more about his reputation than anything else. And even after Jordyn dragged the family name through every gutter in Olekgan, he still clung to protecting her.

The realization hit Cathryn like cold water—her father had never truly cared for her.

With her mother gone, whatever thread had tied her to him snapped for good.

Far across town, Andrew sat in the CEO's chair at Brooks Group, eyes rimmed red from yet another sleepless night. Kestrel's avatar still hadn't lit up again.

Then his phone buzzed.

A series of clips arrived from Gavin—footage from the Moore family birthday banquet. Andrew hit play and watched them one by one, an eyebrow lifting.

"No wonder Grandma likes her. The girl's got brains."

He had only just begun to appreciate Cathryn's sharp moves when another video loaded—Cathryn in Liam's arms, sobbing out "sweetheart" loud enough for everyone to hear.

Andrew's eyes narrowed. His jaw clenched. Heat surged through him. Without thinking, he slammed his phone onto the desk, sending it skittering across the polished wood.

So she thought she could have it both ways?

Tonight, he would go home and set her straight. She needed to understand who she belonged to now.

Later that night, Cathryn retreated to the bathroom for a steaming shower, letting the water rinse away the weight of the past few days. Watching her father, Zoe, and Jordyn suffer had brought a flicker of satisfaction—a rare moment of relief since her mother's death.

As the tension eased from her shoulders, exhaustion rushed in to replace it. All she wanted was to crawl into bed once she was done.

But when she stepped into the walk-in closet afterward, she found rows of men's shirts and tailored suits—nothing soft or feminine, nothing meant for her. With a weary shrug, she slipped into a crisp white shirt and buttoned it up.

Just then, Andrew returned.

His footsteps echoed down the hallway, and he caught sight of a woman's half-clad silhouette gliding past—his shirt hanging loose on her frame.

