

Once The Foolish Wife, Now His Eternal Obsession

Chapter 111:

Margaret carefully laid the extra bedding on the other side of the bed and smiled warmly. “It’s good to see you two close again.” She slipped out, closing the door gently behind her.

Cathryn’s tone softened as she turned back to Damien. “Does your injury still hurt?”

Andrew nodded, lips pressed together. “It does.”

He reached out, palm open, toward her.

Cathryn hesitated, unsure what he meant, then placed a glass of water into his hand.

Andrew frowned. “That’s not what I wanted.”

She blinked at him, confused. “Then what is it? Just say the word and I’ll help.”

His jaw tightened. He muttered, almost sullenly, “I want your hand.”

Her gaze drifted to his outstretched palm, to those strong fingers, and warmth rushed to her cheeks. “My hand isn’t magic. Wouldn’t you rather take a painkiller?”

Andrew let out a low, frustrated sound. “Cathryn, have you always been this clueless about romance?”

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She fidgeted with her fingers. To her, romance belonged to lovers. But what were they now? Were they truly lovers?

Andrew released a dramatic groan and pressed his face into the pillow. “This is torture...”

Cathryn knew that kind of pain all too well. Worried, she leaned forward. “Seriously, a painkiller will help. Let me get one for you.”

Before she could reach for the bottle, Andrew yanked her down and rolled her beneath him in one swift, practiced motion. “You’re all the medicine I need,” he murmured.

Her cheeks burned as she avoided his intense stare. “Stop talking nonsense...”

His lips drifted to her throat, his teeth teasing her skin until goosebumps rose along her neck.

She shivered and whispered, “Damien, don’t...”

His kisses trailed lower—searing, hungry—until his mouth closed over her breast, biting and sucking. Her delicate skin bloomed crimson within seconds.

The sight and taste of her drove him nearly feral. One arm held her pinned as his voice thickened with want. “What am I supposed to do when all I want is to have my way with you on this bed?”

Cathryn caught his wandering hand and tried to push him back. “You’re still hurt. We can’t do this.”

His eyes glittered with mischief. “The injury’s on my back, not anywhere else...”

She shot him a stern look. “If you don’t take it easy, you’ll tear the wound open.”

He leaned in, breath hot against her ear. “There are plenty of positions where you take the lead and move, and I just stay still.”

“Damien!” She thumped his chest with small fists. “Really? In the middle of the day?”

He caught her wrists and kissed her knuckles, his grin sly. “I’ve gone mad wanting you.”

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“I said no, and I meant it. You need to rest—wait until you’re healed.”

He groaned, “That could take at least a whole week.”

“It’s just one week. Surely you can handle that,” she insisted.

He shook his head without hesitation. “No chance.”

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Cathryn stared at him in disbelief. A week without sex was too much for him? She couldn’t help wondering how wild he’d been before their marriage—he must have never spent a night alone.

A cold look settled over her face as she made up her mind. “You stay in this room. I’ll be in the guest room tonight.”

Andrew reached for her, catching her wrist before she could leave. “Don’t go.”

“Then keep your hands to yourself,” she snapped, her glare sharp.

He managed an exaggeratedly innocent nod. “I promise I’ll be good.”

“Good. Now stay put, and don’t even think about moving,” she said.

Andrew sank back against the pillows, forcing his breathing to steady. As the haze of desire ebbed, the fiery ache in his back surged in again—relentless and raw. Jordyn’s barbed whip, swinging toward Cathryn’s face, replayed in his mind, tightening something hard in his chest.

Finally, he spoke, voice rough. “Why did you meet up with Jordyn without anyone there to protect you?”

If Gavin hadn’t been monitoring Cathryn’s every move at his order—if he’d hesitated for even a second—her face would have been ruined beyond saving. The thought twisted Andrew’s gut.

Cathryn shook her head. “I never planned to see Jordyn. I just ran into her and Vanessa at the mall. Vanessa tricked me into stepping outside.”

Andrew’s gaze sharpened, his tone turning firm. “From now on, you’re not leaving this house without security. And if it isn’t something important, let the staff or Gavin handle the errands.”

She lowered her eyes, her voice soft and quiet. “It was important.”

Suspicion flickered in his eyes. “What was it?”

Cathryn reached into the shopping bag beside her and pulled out a box wrapped in crisp paper. She offered it to him, her voice barely above a whisper. “Yesterday was your birthday... I missed it, so I went out to get you this. I just wanted to make it up to you.”

A sudden gleam of astonishment flashed across Andrew’s expression. “You went all the way to Olekgan Mall just to buy me a birthday gift?”

Cathryn gave a small, shy nod. “I didn’t have any money, though. The tie wasn’t a luxury—you probably won’t like it.”

Andrew took the tie gently from her hands, a faint smile tugging at his lips. “Of course I love it. It’s from you.”

His obvious delight eased her heart, brightening her mood. “It might not cost much, but it was the most expensive one in the shop.”

He reached over to ruffle her hair, chuckling. “So you picked the priciest one they had. You’re so sweet.”

With a quick shake of her head, she said, “I didn’t pay the bill. Jordyn did.”

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Andrew’s hand stilled, his smile fading. “You mean this tie came from Jordyn?”

Cathryn hesitated before giving a quiet nod. “You could put it that way, yeah.”

Andrew’s face darkened, his jaw tightening. With a sharp flick, he let the tie drop to the floor as he muttered, “You’re my wife. Why would I ever wear something bought by Jordyn?”

Cathryn crouched, her fingers closing around the fallen tie. “I’d picked one for under five hundred. But Jordyn showed up and insisted on paying, so I let her—and I made sure she paid for the most expensive one. Since she wanted to throw her money away, why should I stop her?”

Two thousand might not have meant much to him, but to Cathryn, it was still real money.

“I don’t want this one,” Andrew grumbled, anger flashing in his eyes. “I want the one you chose. Not whatever Jordyn paid for.”

She clicked her tongue in exasperation before replying, “What’s the difference? I picked them both.”

“There’s a huge difference!” Andrew shot back. “One would’ve been from you. This one’s from her.”

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Cathryn faltered, blinking in confusion. “Technically speaking, the one under five hundred wouldn’t really have been from me either.”

A frown tightened Andrew's brow, the lines drawing closer. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"I don't have any money," she blurted, her voice tight. "I even had to borrow money from Margaret just to buy you something."

Andrew's temper flared, his voice booming. "Cathryn! Is that how little I mean to you? You spent days crafting something for Andrew, yet for me, you're scraping by and borrowing money from Margaret?"

She muttered under her breath, "Why are you always comparing yourself to Andrew?"

"I damn well feel like it!" he shot back. "Why should his gift outshine mine?"

Her tone softened, coaxing. "Andrew's just a stranger to me. I had to keep up appearances—what would people think if I gave the wealthiest man in Olekgan a tie worth less than five hundred?"

She met his gaze, steadying her voice. "But you... you're my husband. Price doesn't matter with you. You'd never look down on what I give you, right?"

The anger on Andrew's face melted instantly. He gripped her hand as if anchoring himself. "Right. I'm your husband."

Cathryn lifted the tie with a teasing arch of her brow. “So? Want it or not?”

Without hesitation, he nodded, resolute. “Of course I want it. You said Jordyn stole your mom’s money. Then that makes her money yours. Since this tie was bought with what’s rightfully yours, I’ll wear it proudly.”

Cathryn pressed her lips together, holding back a laugh. Only he could make that logic sound reasonable.

“Come on,” he said, leaning forward and baring his neck with a half-smile. “Tie it for me.”

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A resigned smile tugged at her lips as she glanced at him. “A tie goes with a shirt. You’re shirtless—where am I supposed to knot it?”

The look in his eyes sharpened, a challenge thrown down. “Well? Are you tying it?”

She smirked, deliberately defiant. “Nope.”

A sly spark lit his expression. “Guess I’ll just have to put it on you, then.”

Her brows knit in confusion. “Why should I wear a tie?”

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Andrew’s mouth curved into a slow grin. “Women can pull off ties just fine.”

Before she could react, he yanked her off balance. She toppled onto the bed beside him, and in one swift motion, the tie slid around her wrists.

“Damien!” she cried in surprise as she caught on to his intentions. “You’re injured! Are you out of your mind, still wanting to have sex?”

With a sharp tug, the tie tightened, securing her firmly in place. “The injury is nothing.”

After all, he had walked through storms of bullets, fought off a pack of starving wolves with his bare hands, and survived. His tolerance for pain was brutal; this was barely a scratch.

With her wrists bound, Cathryn couldn’t stop him. Breaking the moment, she pressed her tied hands hard to his chest, the words spilling out in a rush. “I don’t want to get pregnant.”

The blaze in Andrew’s eyes cooled a fraction, though his voice stayed low and hoarse. “Alright. I’ll use protection next time.”

Only then did her shoulders ease. She’d already taken emergency contraception twice—she knew she couldn’t keep relying on that. From now on, it had to be him.

All the while, she kept urging him to be gentle, to end quickly.

But it still went on for nearly an hour.

By nightfall, Andrew was burning with fever.

Cathryn stayed up at his bedside, wiping him down and swapping out towels. Yet by dawn, his temperature was still raging. Panic clawed at her as she grabbed the phone and called the doctor.

The male doctor from yesterday rushed over, peeled back the dressings, and frowned deeply. “How did this wound split open again?”

Cathryn’s face went pale.

The doctor pressed, his tone turning grave. “What exactly did he do last night?”

Heat flooded her cheeks. “We...” Her voice faltered, the words catching in her throat. She couldn’t bring herself to lie, yet admitting they’d had sex felt impossible.

Catching the flush on her face, the doctor pieced it together. He’d noticed the way the couple had looked at each other yesterday; there was no chance they’d kept their distance. With a weary sigh, he lowered his voice. “Mrs. Brooks, you pushed your husband past his limit. With an injury this severe, he shouldn’t have had sex in the first place.”

Cathryn blurted a protest, words tumbling out. “It wasn’t me...”

Doubt lingered in the doctor's eyes, his expression far from convinced. "A whipping like that leaves pain sharp enough to smother most people's desire," he said pointedly, implying she had been the one craving intimacy.

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Rage surged through Cathryn—she wanted to slap Damien awake and demand an explanation.

The doctor simply re-dressed the wound, his tone grave. "Good thing he's sturdy. If he weren't, we'd be sending him straight to the hospital."

Mortification scorched her cheeks, and she wished the floor would swallow her whole.

The doctor wrote out a new prescription, patiently explaining the dosage before heading for the door. On his way out, he paused to deliver a final warning. “You’ll need to hold off on sex until your husband’s wound has healed.”

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Too embarrassed to answer, Cathryn only dipped her head in a mute nod.

If Damien hadn’t still been burning with fever, she might have been tempted to chew him out—and toss in a solid kick for good measure.

Andrew bounced back quickly after taking his medication—his fever didn’t stand a chance against him.

When he finally opened his eyes, he found Cathryn perched at his bedside. He reached for her hand, but she smacked it away without hesitation.

“What’s gotten into you?” he asked, baffled.

Cathryn's cheeks flushed pink as she rose and strode out of the room without a word.

A short while later, Margaret came in to tidy up. Andrew pinned her with a questioning look. "Did someone upset Cathryn?"

Margaret raised both hands in protest. "Mr. Brooks, it's not us. It's you, actually..."

Andrew frowned. "Me? What did I do?"

Margaret hesitated, then admitted, "The doctor told us your injuries haven't healed yet... He said you really shouldn't be... well... doing anything strenuous with Mrs. Brooks for a while."

Andrew scowled. "That doctor really doesn't know when to keep quiet, does he?"

He'd finally managed to coax Cathryn closer, and one warning from the doctor was enough to ruin everything.

True to form, that evening Cathryn snatched up her quilt and announced, "I'm staying in the guest room tonight."

Andrew caught her wrist before she could leave. “Don’t go. I promise I won’t touch you.”

She narrowed her eyes. “I’ve heard that one before.”

He lifted a hand in mock surrender. “If I so much as touch you, I’ll eat my hat.”

Cathryn studied him for a long moment, then tossed her quilt back onto the bed. “If you even try, you’ll regret it.”

She insisted they each use their own quilt, while Andrew did everything he could to wriggle under hers.

Annoyed, she clung to the edge. “If you keep this up, I really will move to the guest room.”

He clutched the corner of her quilt, sounding almost pitiful. “I’m not feeling great, you know. Your quilt is so much warmer than mine.”

Cathryn shot him a look, speechless. Summer had only just begun and the air conditioner hummed through the night, yet he claimed to need extra warmth. What a clumsy excuse.

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“You didn’t seem so frail last night when you...” Cathryn grumbled, frowning and pouting.

He stretched out his hand, giving her his best pitiful look. “Touch my hand if you don’t believe me. I swear, I’m freezing.”

Not convinced, Cathryn reached for his hand. The heat of his skin hit her the instant they touched, and that was when it dawned on her—he’d fooled her.

But before she could react, Andrew had already tugged her under the quilt, locking his arms around her waist and drawing her tightly against his chest.

Cathryn glared at him. “You promised you wouldn’t touch me.”

He pressed his face into her hair, breathing her in, his voice a low rumble. “I’m not touching. I just want to hold you while I sleep. That’s all.”

Cathryn gave up struggling. The last thing she wanted was to hurt him by accident, so she lay as still as she could.

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Andrew managed to keep his hands to himself—at first. But soon, he started wriggling closer.

“Cathryn, why does it feel like you’re wearing armor? How many layers are you hiding under there?”

Cathryn shot him a look. “Since when do pajamas have layers?”

Andrew tugged at the hem of her pajamas, feigning innocence. “Aren’t you boiling in this? Take it off. You’ll sleep better.”

Cathryn lifted her head and fixed him with a glare. “Weren’t you the one whining about being cold a minute ago?”

He grinned, not missing a beat. “Well, it was cold then. Now, it’s too hot.”

She shifted as if to leave. “Fine. Then I’ll sleep in the guest room.”

Andrew caught her wrist, his gaze deep. “Don’t go.”

She hesitated, then settled back down—only for Andrew to start fidgeting all over again.

“What is it this time?” Cathryn mumbled, exasperation weighing down her voice.

Andrew shrugged off his nightshirt and tossed it aside. “I got overheated. Had to cool off.”

Cathryn opened her mouth to scold him, but before she could say a word, he slid a hand behind her head and pulled her face against his bare chest.

“Relax,” he murmured. “Just because I took mine off doesn’t mean you have to.”

His chest was warm and solid beneath her cheek, each steady heartbeat echoing in her ears.

She had glimpsed his body before—broad shoulders, taut abs, the kind of strength that was impossible to ignore. Now, with her cheek pressed to him, she couldn't help being drawn to his sun-kissed skin.

His unique scent surrounded her—clean and earthy, so familiar it left her dizzy. Heat rose through her body, stealing her breath. A flush crept up her neck and warmed her ears. A thin sheen of sweat clung to her skin, and she tried to edge away, hoping to steady herself.

Andrew's grip tightened. "Stay still, or I might lose my self-control," he murmured, his voice rough with warning.

Cathryn didn't dare move again. His sculpted abs and honey-colored skin sent her thoughts spinning, forbidden images of them tangled in bed flashing through her mind until she was flustered.

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Suddenly, Andrew dipped down and brushed his lips across hers. Their breaths mingled, and her whole body hummed. It was getting too intense. If this continued, she would lose control.

Cathryn pushed him away, snatched up a quilt, and scrambled off the bed. "I'm going to the guest room," she said, her voice shaking.

Andrew sat up, looking wounded. "Cathryn, I swear, I only want to hold you. Nothing more."

She hid her burning face behind the curtain of her hair. "I'll move back to this room when your injury heals. It's just safer that way."

Truthfully, it wasn't his self-control she distrusted. She was more afraid of losing her own.

Cathryn hurried out of the master bedroom and dashed into the guest room, her heart pounding, unable to shake the longing he had stirred awake in her.

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She gave her cheeks a light slap, trying to jolt herself back to her senses. She had to keep her head clear. Their marriage was nothing but a one-year arrangement. All she needed to do was play the part of a good wife for that period—nothing more. After the year was up, they would go their separate ways and never cross paths again.

With that thought, the strange heat in her chest finally eased. She lay down and, at last, managed to fall asleep.

Meanwhile, Andrew tossed and turned in the master bedroom. He had finally gotten his way—moving back into this room—only for Cathryn to slip off to the guest room instead.

With nothing but the quilt for company, he hugged it close and breathed in the faint scent she had left behind.

Without Cathryn beside him, Andrew's injuries healed quickly, and the fevers stopped returning.

One day, Margaret came back from the market, grumbling, “There’s some big couple’s event over on the east side. Traffic’s insane—everything’s jammed.”

Andrew scrolled through his phone and spotted a local news story about a dessert shop’s new heart-shaped cake, called “Just Us Two Together Forever.”

Apparently, the bakery had hired influencers to hype it up, and now half the city’s couples were flocking there for a taste.

Andrew sprawled across the bed and said in a weak voice, “Cathryn, I want cake.”

Cathryn raised an eyebrow. “You don’t even like sweets.”

“I’m not feeling well,” Andrew replied, exaggerating his discomfort. “A bit of sugar might perk me up.”

Cathryn rolled her eyes. She knew he was wringing his injury for all it was worth, but she played along. “What kind of cake do you want? I’ll have Gavin take me out to get it.”

He showed her a picture of the heart-shaped cake. “This one.”

Cathryn’s gaze flicked to the words printed beside it: “Just Us Two Together Forever.”

The irony made her lips twitch. She and Damien had a deadline built into their marriage; “together forever” was nothing but an empty slogan.

Still, she nodded. “Alright, I’ll get it for you.” He had gotten hurt because of her. The least she could do was indulge a small request.

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Cathryn froze when the car pulled up outside the shop. The line snaked around the corner, doubling back on itself before it even reached the entrance.

Gavin spoke up at once. “Mrs. Brooks, why don’t you wait in the car? I’ll handle the line.”

Cathryn’s gaze landed on a bright poster taped across the window: “Couple’s Heart-Shaped Cake—Both Names Required for Purchase.”

She nearly laughed. The lengths these places would go to for hype—so much fuss just to sell a cake.

Cathryn shook her head and stepped out. “I’ll queue up myself. It’s fine.”

Gavin hurried after her, ever vigilant. He couldn’t risk leaving her side—Andrew’s orders had been clear.

All around them, young couples giggled and leaned close, sealed inside their own little worlds. Meanwhile, Kathryn and the silver-haired Gavin stood out like a sore thumb.

Gavin offered her a sheepish smile. “Sorry, Mrs. Brooks. I’m not exactly the kind of company people expect here.”

He was a little embarrassed. Again and again, Jordyn had mocked Kathryn as nothing more than a “chauffeur’s wife,” simply because Gavin so often accompanied her.

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If Andrew hadn't kept their marriage under wraps, Gavin would never have allowed anyone to insult Cathryn that way.

But Cathryn only gave him a gentle smile. "Not your fault. People see what they want to see. Some folks find scandal in everything."

Gavin's respect for her deepened. What had begun as an ordinary assignment had turned into genuine admiration. He'd watched her bring her ex-husband and his mistress to heel, stand up to her scheming father, and even pry open her mother's coffin with her bare hands—all before she'd reached her mid-twenties. Unlike Jordyn, Cathryn never looked down on anyone. She treated everyone with the same quiet dignity.

"Mr. Brooks is fortunate to have you as his wife," Gavin said, sincerity ringing in every word.

Cathryn gave him a half-smile. "He's never been married before, but I'm the divorcée. If anyone's making out like a bandit in this deal, it's me."

Gavin only offered a small smile. She wasn't wrong, really. Still, he couldn't help thinking how little Cathryn knew about the man she'd married—she'd landed the richest man in Olekgan and had no idea.

Gavin chalked it up to luck, fate, or maybe the universe playing favorites.

Even in a sea of couples, Cathryn and Gavin couldn't help attracting attention. She was the picture of youthful elegance, and he—dignified with his gray hair—looked more like a bodyguard than a partner. Their presence drew curious glances and a few poorly concealed smirks.

A few places ahead, Liam shuffled forward with the line, expression blank, moving only when it inched along.

Lately, Jordyn had grown more and more insecure about their marriage, constantly pressing Liam to prove he loved her. He was growing weary of the endless reassurance. But with her connection to Kestrel, he couldn't afford to lose his temper—at least, not where she could see it.

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Today, Jordyn had insisted Liam take her out to buy some ridiculous “couple’s cake.” Her words had been painfully clear: “If you really love me, you’ll buy it. If not, then I guess I don’t matter to you.”

But the moment they arrived, she’d glanced at the line and scoffed. “It’s too long. Waiting is exhausting.” Then she turned on her heel and walked straight back to the car, leaving Liam to stand in line alone.

Life with Jordyn had worn him down, resentment piling up until it shadowed everything. His patience had thinned, crumbling under each new demand. Whatever pull he’d once felt toward her had faded just as quickly. And when they did have sex, it was always in the dark—and the only way he could even perform was by imagining it was Cathryn beneath him.

Every time Cathryn’s face surfaced in his mind, he cursed himself. He’d had her for three years—a treasure within reach—and he’d squandered every moment. Only now did he see how blind he’d been.

Lost in those bitter thoughts, Liam noticed the crowd’s quiet stares and hushed gossip behind him. He turned to see what had caught their attention—and his heart jerked hard.

Cathryn stood there, more poised than ever. Beside her was a silver-haired gentleman—the supposed chauffeur.

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Liam's eyes brightened. The memory of the well-dressed young man at the courthouse flashed through his mind. A hired actor, he decided—someone Cathryn had brought along just to get under his skin. Her real companion was the older man at her side.

A wild thought fired through his mind. Cathryn's feelings for him must have never truly died. That had to be why she'd staged that little act with the handsome young man—hoping to spark his jealousy and pull him back to her side. It was probably why she'd kept clashing with Jordyn, too; she'd cared too deeply to let go. And when the day came that she watched him marry Jordyn, despair must have swallowed her whole, driving her to accept an older man purely out of resentment. Hope and excitement surged through him as the fantasy took shape.

While Cathryn exchanged a few words with Gavin, he missed a step at the curb and rolled his ankle hard.

Cathryn reached out just in time to steady him by the arm. "Careful. Are you okay?"

Gavin chuckled, sheepish. "I guess I'm not as spry as I used to be. Age is catching up with me."

“Why don’t you rest in the car?” she suggested. “The line’s moving pretty quickly now. I’ll be fine on my own for a bit.”

Gavin scanned the bustling crowd of couples. Seeing no immediate danger—and knowing his presence only drew more judgmental looks—he nodded. “Call if you need anything.”

He stepped away, leaving her alone in the queue.

Almost immediately, the whispers started.

“She’s so young and gorgeous—what’s she doing with a man that old? Doesn’t she care about the mothball smell?”

“She’s after his money. What else?”

“Seriously, it’s such a mismatch. He could be her dad—maybe even her granddad.”

None of it touched Cathryn. She kept her chin lifted and moved forward, her expression unreadable.

Not far off, Liam watched it unfold. He'd already seen Cathryn holding Gavin's arm. Now, as the cruel comments drifted through the air, an idea sparked to life. That silver-haired man had to be at least in his late fifties. There was no way he could satisfy Cathryn—no way he could give her what she wanted.

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Liam slid his hands into his pockets and sauntered over, removing his sunglasses with a practiced flick.

“Well, if it isn't Cathryn,” he said, voice smooth with a touch too much smugness. “What are the odds we'd run into each other here?”

Cathryn flicked a glance at Liam and kept walking, her silence sharper than any retort.

Around them, the onlookers murmured, their confusion swelling. The man at her side had somehow shifted—from the dignified older companion they'd seen earlier—into a much younger one. Liam flashed the crowd a smile. "She's my ex-wife."

He sounded almost triumphant, parading her beauty like a trophy. He wanted everyone to know he'd once had her.

A voice rose from the throng, dripping with scorn. "A young ex-husband like him, and she trades him for an old man? What's wrong with her?"

Liam's eyes cut sideways toward Cathryn. The stranger had just voiced his very thoughts.

Cathryn let out a brittle, chiming laugh. She lifted her chin and fixed Liam with a steady look. "I spent three years in your bed and walked away still a virgin. Does that sound like a marriage to you?"

Her words cracked through the air like a whip. Every head turned, hungry for gossip.

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The malicious stares snapped from Cathryn to Liam in an instant.

“Looks all right on the outside, but useless where it counts...”

“If that’s true, I’d choose the old man too.”

“Probably conned her into marrying him to hide his sexual orientation.”

Each barb struck Liam like a knife. In a man’s world, an insult to his virility was a public execution. Color flooded his face. “Who says I’m useless in bed? I’m damn good at it!” he barked, his voice cracking with panic.

A snicker came from the back. “Three years with a gorgeous wife and you never touched her. How exactly are you proving you’re good at it?”

Sweat beaded on Liam’s brow. To clear his name, he’d have to confess to cheating. But if he stayed silent about the cheating, impotence was the only conclusion left—an inescapable trap.

“Young wife, three years, still untouched? Either he’s impotent or he’s gay,” someone jeered.

Cathryn didn't spare Liam a glance. Her disdain was as sharp as a blade as she strode off, leaving him flailing in his own humiliation. She wasn't thick-skinned; if Liam hadn't disgusted her so deeply, she never would have bared such a secret in public. But right now, she realized that never being touched by him had been a blessing.

Liam hurried after her, hissing, "You of all people know I'm not impotent!"

Cathryn's laugh was cool as frost. "Jordyn has the answer. I wouldn't know. We never slept together."

His anger twisted with panic—until a thought sparked. She had humiliated him in public because she still cared. Fury born of love. It had to be. The idea sent a shiver of excitement through him.

Liam moved closer, his shoulder brushing hers. "Cathryn, I know you haven't moved on from me. I can give you another chance."

She stared at him, stunned by his audacity. "Mr. Watson, I am married."

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