

Once The Foolish Wife, Now His Eternal Obsession

Chapter 386:

She opened the closet to fetch her clothes, her hand brushing against a row of neatly pressed shirts. Her gaze landed on the sleeve of a white shirt.

A glint caught her eye. Her heart gave a jolt. The shirt was fastened with the cufflinks she had designed and gifted to Andrew—blue irises, delicate and unmistakable.

She ran her thumb across them, disbelief thickening in her chest. How could the cufflinks she'd given Andrew end up in Damien's wardrobe?

Could it be...

The sound of the door opening snapped her thoughts apart. Damien stepped out of the bathroom with a towel slung low around his waist, water still tracing his skin.

He saw Cathryn holding the shirt with the cufflinks, and his gaze softened. It seemed she had finally noticed.

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Truthfully, he'd been waiting for her to uncover his identity. He wore those cufflinks to work every day, but since she'd never visited him at the office, she hadn't seen them.

"Are you..." Cathryn pointed at the cufflinks, her voice trembling.

Assuming she had deduced he was Andrew, he nodded slowly. "Yes."

Cathryn's confusion flared into anger. "Unbelievable! Andrew actually gave away the gift I made for him? That's beyond rude!"

Damien blinked, stunned, and pointed at himself. "Actually, I'm—"

She cut him off, tossing the shirt onto the floor. "I spent days crafting those cufflinks. If he disliked them, he should have refused them outright!"

He tried again, his tone patient. "Hold on. Let me explain—"

She glared at him. “Even if you’re an illegitimate son, you’re still part of the Brooks family. Why would you pick up someone else’s castoffs? It’s beneath you!”

Damien scooped up the shirt and held it to his chest. “You made the cufflinks yourself. Of course I’m keeping them.”

Cathryn snatched the shirt from him and threw it down again. “You like them that much? Fine. I’ll make you a new pair. Just leave this pair behind.”

His lips curved into a grin. “You’d really make me a pair?”

She nodded firmly. “You’ve got better taste than Andrew.”

Her gaze lifted to the walls. “Are these paintings real or replicas?”

Damien’s brow arched. “You said I had taste. Do you really think I’d hang counterfeits?”

Cathryn’s breath caught. “Louis Marquet... Claude Merville... If these pieces are genuine, they’re worth millions.”

He sank onto the bed, watching her with quiet amusement. “They’re real.”

She swallowed hard. “I had no idea you were this wealthy.”

Damien’s expression softened. “There’s a great deal you don’t know.”

Before she could speak, he reached out and drew her toward him. She yelped as she landed in his lap, her palms pressing against the hard lines of his chest.

“Now,” he murmured, fingers brushing the collar of her pajama top, “let me take a closer look at you.”

Her heart fluttered. She knew what was coming, and her resistance melted away.

The night blurred into warmth, tangled breaths, and whispered promises.

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Morning arrived wrapped in golden light. After breakfast, Andrew insisted on driving Cathryn.

As the Maybach glided into the Brooks Group's underground parking, Cathryn pressed her face close to the window, nerves prickling. There was no way she would let her coworkers see her stepping out of such a luxurious car. It would stir up gossip in an instant.

The moment the vehicle stopped, Cathryn slipped out like a startled rabbit, darting toward the elevator.

But Andrew caught her by the waist, steering her toward the private elevator reserved for the CEO.

Her eyes widened in alarm. "Hey! This is the CEO's elevator! You're really using it?"

He smirked. "Why not?"

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Her voice quivered. “You might have the guts, but I don’t.” If anyone saw her, she’d be toast.

Her mind immediately conjured Minnie and Leona, always circling for gossip, eager to pounce on any mistake she made.

She clasped her hands together, whispering under her breath.

Andrew glanced sideways. “What are you muttering about now?”

She lowered her voice. “I’m praying no coworkers are there when the doors open.”

He looked at her anxious face and smiled faintly. How could his wife be so endearing—even when she was terrified?

The elevator chimed softly as it reached the twelfth floor. The doors slid open, and Cathryn bolted out like a startled bird escaping its cage.

Andrew reached out on instinct, his fingers grazing nothing but the hem of her blouse before she disappeared down the corridor.

He exhaled, shaking his head. If she stopped to think for even a moment, she would start doubting everything about him—his name, his face, his story.

“Cathryn!”

Hearing her name behind her made her freeze mid-step. A shiver ran down her spine. Had someone seen her step out of the CEO’s private elevator?

She turned—and blinked.

Minnie and Leona stood a few steps away, both looking oddly darker than before.

Cathryn smiled. “Well, look at you two. Did you get a spray tan?”

Minnie scowled. “Cathryn, you have some nerve using the CEO’s private elevator. Do you have a death wish?”

Cathryn tilted her head, outwardly unbothered. “I did. And?”

Minnie's nostrils flared. "Are you trying to cozy up to Mr. Brooks?"

Leona crossed her arms, her tone sharp. "Someone once tried that same stunt—taking the CEO's elevator to stage an 'accidental' encounter with Mr. Brooks. Ethan fired her on the spot."

Cathryn's stomach tightened. She knew that elevator was off-limits. Damien had just handed Minnie and Leona ammunition.

Minnie grabbed Kathryn's arm roughly. "Come with me to the CEO's office. I'm filing a complaint against you."

Before Kathryn could reply, a voice cut through the tension. "Let go of Kathryn, Minnie."

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Sophie had appeared from behind a row of cubicles, her tone calm but edged with warning.

Minnie's eyes narrowed. "And if I don't?"

Sophie gave a slow, dangerous smile. "Then you'll have only yourself to blame for what happens next."

Minnie snorted. "We'll see who ends up in trouble once we're in front of Mr. Brooks."

"Please do take it up with Mr. Brooks," Sophie said dryly, pressing the elevator button for the thirty-eighth floor.

Sophie had long grown tired of Minnie and Leona's petty gossip—and their habit of picking on new staff. She would love to see their faces when they realized Cathryn was Andrew's wife.

Minnie hesitated, but refused to back down. She tugged Cathryn toward the elevator, forcing a confidence she didn't feel.

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Cathryn's eyes darted to Sophie, uncertainty flickering in them. Was Sophie actually serious about this?

Sophie merely smiled and waved.

Cathryn furrowed her brows. Something had been off with Sophie ever since her meeting with Andrew yesterday.

When the elevator doors opened on the thirty-eighth floor, Minnie and Leona each seized one of Cathryn's arms, as if afraid she might vanish.

"No matter who you think is protecting you," Leona hissed, "it won't save you from Mr. Brooks's wrath."

"Even Vanessa isn't allowed to use Mr. Brooks's elevator," Minnie added. "And you dared?"

They dragged Cathryn down the hallway, heels clacking against the marble.

“What is going on here?” Ethan’s voice sliced through the air as he stepped into their path. “You’re disturbing Mr. Brooks’s work.”

Minnie pointed at Cathryn, her tone shrill. “Mr. Owens, she used Mr. Brooks’s private elevator this morning!”

Ethan glared at Minnie. Cathryn using Andrew’s elevator was hardly a big deal. She’d arrived in Andrew’s car this morning. And at night, they shared a bed as husband and wife.

Leona chimed in confidently. “Last time Vanessa used that elevator without permission, she was scolded in a company-wide statement. Cathryn should be punished the same way!”

Ethan clasped his hands behind his back, the faintest twitch betraying his irritation. Minnie and Leona had no idea how deep a hole they were digging.

“You two are making a scene outside the CEO’s office,” he said coolly. “You’ll be punished first—for disrupting his work.”

Minnie and Leona froze. “But...”

Ethan gestured for an assistant to hand over a folder. “Mr. Brooks has already signed the document you retrieved from the west side of the city. You can take it back.”

Minnie reached out hesitantly, her fingers brushing the edge of the file before she took it.

Ethan’s tone remained even. “Head out the same way you did last time.”

Minnie and Leona exchanged uneasy glances. “It’s scorching out today...”

Ethan only nodded, his expression unreadable. “All part of being eco-friendly, isn’t it?”

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Minnie's frustration cracked through her composure. She jabbed a finger at Cathryn. "She broke company rules too. You can't just let her slide."

Minnie figured that if she and Leona were going to suffer, Cathryn shouldn't walk away unscathed.

Unbothered, Ethan turned and strode toward the CEO's private elevator. He pressed the button, the metallic chime echoing softly down the hallway. Then, with a faint, respectful smile, he said to Cathryn, "Ms. Moore, please feel free to use it."

Cathryn blinked, unease flickering in her eyes. It felt inappropriate for her to use the CEO's private elevator.

Ethan caught her hesitation and kept his smile, holding the door open like a gentleman awaiting her entry.

She hesitated a moment longer, then murmured, "I can take the regular elevator..."

“Don’t worry,” Ethan said smoothly. “You can take this one.”

Cathryn still couldn’t fathom why she was being treated differently—why she was being invited into Andrew’s elevator. But mischief curled her lips at the thought of infuriating Minnie and Leona.

She stepped into the elevator, turned to the two women, and gave them a playful wave—paired with a provocative smirk.

Minnie’s and Leona’s faces flushed with fury. So Ethan was Kathryn’s shield—her secret backing.

When Kathryn returned to the administrative office, the room stirred immediately.

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At the sight of Kathryn, Sophie sprang to her feet as if she’d been burned. “Mrs. Broo—Cathryn...” She corrected herself just in time, her voice cracking.

Cathryn set a steaming cup of coffee on Sophie’s desk and winked. “Made it myself. Hope you like it.”

Sophie nearly fumbled it in shock, cradling the cup with both hands. “Th-thank you...” She could hardly believe Mrs. Brooks had just served her coffee.

Cathryn leaned in, amusement glinting in her eyes. “I’ve always made your coffee. Why the sudden formality?”

Sophie lowered her head, sipping her coffee with an uneasy wince. “I was just clueless before,” she muttered.

Cathryn leaned over and tapped Sophie’s forehead lightly. “Something’s off with you. Are you keeping something from me?”

Sophie jerked upright, shaking her head so fast her ponytail swished. “Nothing! Absolutely nothing.”

Andrew’s warning echoed in her mind like a seal she dared not break. Not a word about his true identity—not to Kathryn.

Cathryn sighed and dropped into her chair, resting her chin in her palms. “Have you met Mr. Brooks?”

Sophie hesitated, then ventured, “Have you?”

Cathryn shook her head. “Didn’t get to meet Mr. Brooks. No idea why, but Ethan sent Minnie and Leona to deliver files to the west side of town—on foot.”

Sophie bit her lip, laughter bubbling up despite herself. Cathryn might be clueless about the reason for the punishment, but Sophie understood perfectly. Mess with the Brooks family’s lady, and you paid for it.

Cathryn’s brow creased. “Ethan made a big show of letting me use the CEO’s private elevator in front of them. He might as well have painted a target on my back.” She knew Ethan’s intention—to show his support—but flaunting that kind of favor only fueled gossip.

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Sophie grinned over the rim of her cup. “Relax. No one’s going to mess with you.”

Cathryn arched an eyebrow. “You’re getting bold these days, huh? Holding the elevator for Minnie and sending me up to the thirty-eighth floor like it’s no big deal.”

Sophie hid her laugh behind her mug, feigning innocence. She’d hoped Cathryn would finally recognize who her husband truly was, but no—Cathryn had walked right past him without realizing it.

Opening her desk drawer, Cathryn found the thick folder Damien had given her. He’d said all his assets were inside.

Her fingertips lingered on the edge of the file. She wasn’t after his wealth. What she wanted was simple: to reclaim her mother’s property. Even if she and Damien were building a life together, she refused to live off his money.

Money? She would earn it herself.

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Cathryn turned toward Sophie. “Could you lend me some cash?”

Mid-sip, Sophie was so startled that coffee misted across the desk.

Cathryn leapt up at once, thrusting tissues toward her. “I’m not asking for much. Just a few hundred.” She assumed the request had simply caught Sophie off guard.

Still coughing, Sophie dabbed at her mouth. “You’re short on cash?”

Disbelief coursed through Sophie. Mrs. Brooks couldn’t scrape together a few hundred? It sounded absurd. Who would believe it?

“I haven’t received my payroll yet. I’ve only been here a few weeks. I’m a little strapped,” Kathryn explained, her cheeks pink.

Household expenses had always been handled by staff. But now, working and socializing on her own, she was suddenly realizing how much she needed money on hand.

Sophie frowned. Andrew was loaded, yet he had his wife working as a janitor and didn’t even give her an allowance? The thought made Sophie bristle with quiet disapproval.

Mistaking Sophie's expression for reluctance, Cathryn smiled awkwardly. "It's fine if you don't want to lend it."

Sophie immediately unlocked her phone. "I'll send a thousand. Is that enough?"

Cathryn nodded gratefully. "Plenty. I just wanted to treat you and Harley to dinner. You two did so much for me when I ran away from home. I owe you more than I can say."

Sophie waved her hands quickly. "Owe us? Please. We're just glad you never looked down on us. There's no way we'd let you pay for dinner."

Cathryn blinked, confused. "Why would I look down on you and Harley?"

Sophie gave a weak laugh. "I mean... you may be down on your luck now, but you were the Moore family's golden girl."

Cathryn's expression dimmed, shadows flickering across her eyes. "The Moore family and I are done. And for the record, I was never their golden girl. I lived and ate with the household staff."

Sophie's heart clenched. "I didn't know you went through all that."

Cathryn managed a faint smile. “It’s in the past.”

Just then, Howard walked in and dropped a folder onto Sophie’s desk. “This needs to go to the CEO’s office.”

The moment he left, Sophie shoved the file into Cathryn’s arms. “You take it.” She wasn’t planning on stepping into Andrew’s office ever again.

Cathryn blinked. “Don’t you usually handle that?”

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