

ONCE THE FOOLISH WIFE, NOW HIS ETERNAL OBSESSION

Chapter 5:

Liam shot Cathryn a glare, his voice flat. "Get inside. Let's proceed with the divorce."

Just yesterday, right after Bettina passed away, Richard hadn't wasted a second. He'd grabbed the death certificate, handed it to the lawyers, and drained every account before Cathryn could even react.

With not a dime left under Cathryn's name, Liam dreaded the idea of her clinging to him out of desperation.

Inside the courthouse, Liam and Cathryn wasted no time. They moved straight into the divorce procedure. Behind the counter, the clerk sifted through their paperwork.

"You'll need to wait thirty days for the divorce to process," the clerk said. "Either side can back out during that window."

Liam didn't hesitate. "That won't be happening," he replied, cold and resolute.

"In that case, your divorce will be official in thirty days," the clerk said, not raising an eyebrow.

Jordyn leaned in and muttered under her breath, "Why does it take a whole month? What's the point of waiting?"

Off to the side, Cathryn tuned them all out. She pulled out her phone, her eyes locking onto the lines of code in her program. She understood its value better than anyone. In the right hands, her work could turn the tech world upside down.

Brooks Group sat at the top of Olekgan's food chain. Year after year, Andrew had shattered financial records, driving the conglomerate to new heights. And lately, Brooks Group had set its sights on tech.

Cathryn was willing to bet that handing Andrew the program she'd crafted and perfected over three relentless years would be a wise move. Of course, she wouldn't do it without conditions. She would lay out her demands when she finally stood face to face with him.

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Rumor had it Andrew had been living overseas, disfigured by the accident and unwilling to be seen, with no photos of him anywhere online.

Cathryn didn't care. She already had a contact deep inside the Brooks family. Meeting Andrew was only a question of when, not if.

"Hey, look! Kestrel just popped online!" Jordyn nearly bounced out of her seat, thrusting her phone into the air.

Liam fumbled for his phone, his heart racing. Sure enough, Kestrel's avatar had lit up.

Years ago, nearly every hacker and coder in the industry had downloaded an app built for one purpose: tracking Kestrel. Whenever Kestrel logged in, the avatar would glow. For three years, it had stayed dark—until now.

“Jordyn, was that you?” Liam’s eyes shone with shock, hopeful joy flickering across his face. “Did you actually reach Kestrel?”

Jordyn nodded, though her heart thumped uneasily. “I... I think so.”

Liam swept her into a tight hug, trying to reassure her. “Once the thirty-day waiting period is up, I’ll marry you right away.”

“I’m looking forward to that day, Liam,” Jordyn whispered, pressing herself closer.

Cathryn watched them coldly, a razor-sharp smirk on her lips.

Jordyn twisted toward her and blurted, “Face it, Kathryn. You couldn’t keep a man like Liam. You never had what it takes.”

Cathryn’s reply cut like glass. “Keep telling yourself that. Does it feel glamorous, slipping under your brother-in-law’s sheets?”

Jordyn’s cheeks flamed, her bravado cracking.

People strolling by caught fragments of the argument, and the story snapped together in their minds—the younger sister making off with her older sister’s husband. Fingers pointed. Stares followed. Shame clung to Jordyn like oil.

Liam turned on Cathryn with pure contempt. “You’re bitter, that’s all. You clearly don’t want to leave me, and this divorce is killing you. But you’ve got nothing left to offer me. You don’t deserve me anymore.”

A dry, almost mocking laugh slipped from Cathryn. Bitter? The Watsons were incompetent fools, every last one of them. Watson Tech’s rise in recent years had come from the fortune she’d brought into the marriage and a lucky bet on the tech industry.

Now Watson Tech was running out of steam fast. Without something big, they’d be crushed by real competitors.

Liam’s obsession with finding Kestrel made perfect sense.

“Once I have Kestrel’s program, Watson Tech will hit the stock market,” Liam declared, his eyes fever-bright. “By then, we’ll bury the Brooks family, and Andrew Brooks won’t even be worth a footnote.”

Jordyn clung to Liam’s arm, practically radiating smug delight. In Olekgan, Andrew was old-money royalty—wealthy, powerful. But the word on the street was that he’d vanished overseas after a brutal car accident left him crippled and disfigured.

Meanwhile, Liam was about to become the city’s rising star. Jordyn had no intention of letting go of a catch like that.

Cathryn refused to spare them another glance. She rose and strode outside, determined not to let their ridiculous display ruin her day. She had barely made it down the front steps when a midnight-black Maybach rolled to a stop right in front of her.

Under the afternoon sun, the limited-edition car gleamed, turning every head on the block.

The passenger door swung open. Karl stepped out, sunglasses catching the light, every movement polished and precise. He circled to the rear door and offered a low, respectful bow. “Ms. Moore, your ride is waiting. Please step in.”

Jordyn, trailing behind Cathryn, skidded to a halt. Ms. Moore?

“Liam!” she squealed, eyes widening. “Is this... did you buy this for me?”

Before Cathryn could react, Jordyn elbowed her aside and rushed to the Maybach. She pressed both palms flat against the glossy paint, unable to hide her triumph. “You’re the best, Liam,” she said, loud enough for everyone to hear.

After all, there were only five of these cars in the entire world—each one a statement of wealth and status. Jordyn was already convinced Liam had gifted her such a luxury car, even before marrying her.

With a sly smile, she shot Cathryn a glance. “See this? Liam just started the divorce process with you, and the first thing he did was buy me a new car. Must sting, right?”

Karl’s reply sliced through her smugness, sharp as glass. “Miss, if you’re that desperate for one, go buy one yourself. Please don’t block Ms. Moore’s way.”

With a swift, practiced motion, Karl guided Jordyn aside and opened the door for Cathryn, every gesture steeped in deference.

Something flickered in Cathryn's chest—a small, unfamiliar spark of gratitude. She hadn't expected her soon-to-be husband to send his assistant to pick her up, let alone in a car like this.

Just as Cathryn moved to get in, Karl lifted a hand. "Just a moment."

Pulling on spotless white gloves, he drew a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the spot where Jordyn had left her fingerprints. "That needed cleansing," he said, calm and unruffled. "Wouldn't want your hands to be tainted by someone else's filth."

The words landed like a blow. Jordyn's cheeks went scarlet, but she said nothing—because whoever owned a Maybach played in a league far above her own.

A moment later, the Maybach purred away, leaving Liam behind—tense and silent. He stared after the car, confusion creasing his brow.

"Why is Cathryn getting that kind of treatment?"

He couldn't make sense of it. Had Cathryn already found a new man—someone wealthy enough to send a driver and a luxury car?

Trying to hide her nerves, Jordyn forced a scoff. "She's damaged goods. No man with any sense would ever want her."

Still, the memory of what she'd seen through the tinted window clung to her. She had caught a glimpse of a man inside—older, silver-haired, unmistakably powerful.

Jordyn's lips curled. So that was it.

Cathryn had latched onto some sugar daddy.

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