

ONCE THE FOOLISH WIFE, NOW HIS ETERNAL OBSESSION

Chapter 6:

From behind the wheel, Gavin caught Cathryn's gaze in the rearview mirror and spoke with careful respect. "Ma'am, I'll be handling your rides from now on."

Cathryn sat upright, her eyes drifting to the scenery sliding past the windows. "I appreciate it."

There was a quiet reliability about Gavin—the kind of steadiness that made her feel she could trust him.

Andrew sat beside her, perfectly at ease, one ankle resting over his knee. He radiated a cold confidence that seemed to command the entire car. Seeing him here in person unsettled Cathryn more than she expected.

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The air inside the Maybach felt taut, every breath heavy with unspoken tension.

An earpiece fit snugly against Andrew's ear, his brow slightly furrowed as he murmured instructions. In the front seat, Karl was hunched over his laptop, fingers moving at a relentless pace.

Gavin lowered his voice as he said to Cathryn, "Mr. Brooks is searching for someone important."

Just ten minutes earlier, Karl's phone had buzzed with an update from their intel team—Kestrel had reappeared online. Andrew had assembled a legion of elite hackers, his own shadow network, with a single goal: hunting down Kestrel, the ghost of the industry.

Now, as data poured across the screen, the team worked in overdrive, eyes fixed on a shifting digital map.

"We're closing in," Karl said, unable to hide the thrill in his voice as a green blip pulsed on the display. They were seconds away from pinpointing the target's exact location.

Cathryn reclined in her seat, far more interested in scrolling through her phone than whatever was happening around her.

Then tension swept through the car as Karl looked up and caught her eye in the rearview mirror. "Ms. Moore, would you mind turning off your phone? It's disrupting our signal."

Cathryn blinked, then shrugged and powered it down without protest. "All right."

Immediately, the blinking dot on Karl's monitor vanished.

Karl's complexion went pale.

"Did we get the trace?" Andrew's voice cut through the air, steely and urgent.

Karl spun around, visibly shaken. “We almost had it. The target disappeared at the last second.”

Andrew’s eyes narrowed. “Where was the last signal?”

His earpiece crackled to life. “Last ping was somewhere in Olekgan.”

Andrew’s lips pressed into a thin line—relief mixing with determination. Olekgan was his domain. If Kestrel was hiding here, finding him was only a matter of time.

Karl couldn’t shake the feeling something was off. The signal had been strong—then gone, as if cut by a ghost.

Andrew turned to Cathryn. “You should get some rest. I’ve got work to do.”

Without a word, Cathryn stepped out of the car, not bothering to look back.

Two days crawled by, and Andrew didn’t reappear.

Gavin’s only update came in a low murmur. “Mr. Brooks is still on the hunt.” But Kestrel never resurfaced.

While Cathryn was busy planning her next move against Liam and Jordyn, a formal invitation from the Moore family landed in her hands.

Zoe White's birthday bash was shaping up to be the gathering of the season, drawing in relatives, family friends, and every hanger-on eager to polish their reputation.

Cathryn didn't hesitate to ask Gavin for a ride.

From her vantage point upstairs, Jordyn watched as the sleek car rolled up, anticipation glinting in her eyes. Everything was unfolding exactly as she'd planned. She had sent that invitation to Cathryn herself, desperate to drag her into the spotlight. More than anything, she wanted a look at the sugar daddy Cathryn had supposedly snagged.

Soon, Cathryn stepped out of the car, and a distinguished, silver-haired man followed behind—the same one who had chauffeured her earlier that week.

A smug grin tugged at Jordyn's lips. Her suspicions were dead on. Cathryn—cast aside and humiliated—was settling for an older man and his money. Any envy Jordyn might have felt at Cathryn's grand arrival vanished, replaced by gleeful contempt.

The moment Cathryn crossed the threshold, Jordyn made a beeline for a group of well-dressed socialites clustered near the entrance. She made sure her voice carried, thick with mockery.

"Can you imagine crawling into bed with some old guy just to get a fancy ride? Seriously, I'd gag."

"That's just nasty. Who could do that?" one of them chimed in, wrinkling her nose.

Another flicked her hand as if shooing away moths. Laughter bubbled up, and Cathryn became the target of their cruel amusement before the party had even begun.

“Mr. Newman!” Cathryn called, her voice brightening as she spotted an elderly gentleman walking by.

Harold Newman—white-haired and spry for his age—paused and greeted her with a twinkle in his eye. “Cathryn, what brings you out here?” he asked gently as he moved closer.

Cathryn looped her arm through Harold’s and offered him steady support, her gaze drifting toward the group of women Jordyn had rounded up.

Noticing their stares, Harold’s expression darkened. “Were they giving you trouble?”

A faint smile touched Cathryn’s lips. “They say I have to be intimate with some old, lustful man just to get a fancy ride here.”

“Nonsense!” Harold snapped, striking the marble with his cane. “Your mother was loaded. You have never been short of money. A luxury car should be the least of your concerns!”

Harold’s reputation spoke for itself. Decorated for his military service, he was a legend in Olekgan, the kind of man even the boldest thought twice before crossing. The moment his voice rose, the room fell silent. Not even Jordyn dared to say a word.

“Years ago, I stood up for your mother the very same way,” Harold said, squeezing Cathryn’s hand as they walked toward the banquet doors. “As long as I’m still around, no one gets to bully you.”

Jordyn and the group of socialites quickly dispersed.

The mention of her mother sent a dull ache through Cathryn’s chest. Bettina had grown up under Harold’s watchful eye—yet he didn’t even know she was already gone. The Moore family had deliberately kept the news sealed.

Beneath the golden chandeliers, Richard basked in attention, cheeks flushed as he chatted with the city’s elite. At his side, Zoe shimmered in a purple gown, every movement rehearsed to fit her role as the family’s rightful matriarch. Jordyn trailed behind them, wrapped in scarlet, her smile fixed and brittle.

Cathryn’s hands curled into fists. Her mother hadn’t even been laid to rest for a full week, and yet these three paraded in jewel tones, throwing a party as if grief had never touched their door.

Tonight, she vowed, there would be consequences.

Liam appeared, a camera swinging from his neck. “Family night calls for a group shot, don’t you think?”

The three Moores swept onto the stage, arranging themselves beneath the bright lights like a carefully composed painting.

“Go on up there, Cathryn,” Harold murmured. “You’re still family.”

Before Cathryn could react, she was nudged forward.

Surrounded by glitter and color, Cathryn stood out like a wound—dressed in black, a stark white bloom pinned to her chest, mourning wrapped around her like a shroud.

A hiss of whispers rippled through the crowd.

“Why is she dressed in black like she’s attending a funeral instead of Zoe’s birthday?”

“She can’t even show respect to her stepmother? Unbelievable.”

“She looks like she’s crashing a funeral, not joining a party. Doesn’t she know basic dress code?”

From the stage, Jordyn thrust a finger toward her. “Are you trying to ruin Mom’s night, Cathryn?”

Cathryn’s eyes burned. Then her expression shifted abruptly. Tears slid down her cheeks as she spoke, her voice trembling.

“I wanted to celebrate with you. I really did. But my mother died only three days ago. I can’t force myself into bright colors and a fake smile. This dress—this is the only way I know to remember her.”

The hall fell silent, her words cutting through the chatter.

Dead?

The former Mrs. Moore—gone, only days ago?

All around, faces turned toward the hosts, stunned. They had invited the whole city to celebrate, parading as if loss hadn't just struck their own home.

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