

Love Me Or Leave Me

#Chapter 261 - Read Love Me Or Leave Me Chapter 261

Chapter 261

At that moment, Stacey was unaware of the matters concerning the Leavey family. Hayden could likely surmise this, but he remained indifferent as long as Queenie ceased her incessant badgering.

Stacey spent two days at Hoggard Manor with Lillian and Kevin. When Patrick and Debra arrived to pick them up, the atmosphere was noticeably warmer compared to their previous encounter. The two families shared a day filled with lively conversation and laughter. As dusk approached, Stacey gathered Lillian and Kevin's belongings and departed with her parents. Upon their departure, Patrick and Debra warmly extended an invitation for the Hoggard family to visit their home.

The Hoggard family was delighted, especially Jeremy. He was nearly tempted to leave with them but was held back by Hayden. It wasn't that Hayden opposed Jeremy joining the Carter family; he was simply concerned that if they grew too close, Stacey might feel overwhelmed, and he believed she needed her personal space.

After departing from Hoggard Manor and returning to the Carter Villa, Patrick and Debra shared exhilarating news with Stacey - Adrian had proposed to Isabella, and she had accepted. They had officially obtained their marriage certificate two days prior. In a few days, when Isabella's company commenced its holiday break, they would take Damian back to Alagua City to celebrate Christmas together. In other words, they would not only be celebrating Christmas but also preparing for the upcoming wedding.

Marriage was a significant milestone, and obtaining the marriage certificate was only the beginning. The Carter family was resolute in their decision to give Isabella a grand wedding. Even if Isabella made no specific requests, they were committed to ensuring nothing less than what she deserved. However, the suddenness of the wedding left them with a tight schedule. Numerous arrangements had to be made in just a few days. Despite the flurry of activity, everyone was filled with joy. Not only was Debra elated, but her parents - Stacey's maternal grandparents - Elijah and Deanna, also joined in to help prepare for Adrian's wedding.

In the past few years, although the Carter family was affluent and free from material concerns, they remained perpetually unhappy due to the loss of their daughter. However, in recent times, the Carter family appeared to have finally shattered their misfortunes. Not only had their daughter, who had been missing for over 20 years, returned, but their sons - who had remained single for years - were also discovering their life partners. Now, everyone was barely able to contain their smiles.

Elijah and Deanna were particularly fond of Lillian and Kevin and delighted to spend time with them. Lillian and Kevin, in turn, enjoyed their company immensely. Additionally, Dennis Phillips - Debra's brother and Stacey's uncle - was equally fond of Lillian and Kevin. With his company on vacation, he gathered his belongings and returned from afar. Instead of heading home first, he chose to visit the Carter Villa to see Stacey, Lillian, and Kevin. Although Stacey hadn't spent much time with Dennis previously, she found that when they were together, there was no awkwardness at all. On the contrary, they enjoyed each other's company immensely.

Dennis wanted to take Lillian and Kevin to his house, but Debra firmly refused. Having endured the anguish of losing her daughter, she was understandably anxious about the children. Given that Lillian and Kevin were still so young, she couldn't bring herself to trust anyone - even her own brother - who wished to take them home. Although Dennis was at a loss for words, he recognized that the loss of Becky remained a profound ache in Debra's heart. Even with Becky's return, it did not imply that Debra had forgotten the pain of the past. She was undoubtedly more vigilant in her care for the children now.

Dennis spent a day at the Carter Villa before driving back to his own home that evening. However, he didn't stay there for long. The following day, he returned to the Carter Villa with his wife and children, which Stacey and even Debra found amusing. Fortunately, Carter Manor had ample rooms, making it easy to accommodate them. In the days that followed, Dennis became enamored with playing with the children. His own child, along with Lillian, Kevin, and Jeremy - who occasionally came to play - got along splendidly with him.

Later, Adrian and Isabella returned with Damian, accompanied by Isabella's sister, Carly, who also brought Ronald along. Their arrival infused the house with even more vibrancy and liveliness.

When Dennis saw Damian, his

curiosity grew with each glance, as

Damian bore an uncanny

resemblance to Adrian! Having encountered many pairs of fathers and sons, this was the first time he had seen a child so

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his father. It was adorable to witness Adrian's prominent features transformed into those of an endearing baby. Dennis instantly fell in love with Damian. Unfortunately, the boy was somewhat introverted and tended to shy away from him. However, this did not deter Dennis. He brought out one toy after another, employing various methods to coax Damian into engaging with him.

Initially, Damian always hid behind Isabella, but he soon became fascinated by the assortment of intriguing items Dennis brought out, which encouraged him to step out from behind his mother. Isabella observed this transformation with surprise; she was impressed by the Carter family's ability to engage him. However, what brought her even greater joy was witnessing Damian's change. It seemed that being around the Carter family had positively influenced him, making him increasingly optimistic. He was no longer as timid and introverted as he had once been.

After Dennis coaxed Damian out, he lifted him up and began playing with him throughout Carter Villa.

It was essential to mention the backyard garden of Carter Villa. When Stacey returned with Lillian and Kevin a year ago, the garden was quite simple, adorned with flowers and plants favored by adults. However, a year later, upon their return, they found the garden transformed. While it still boasted a variety of vibrant flowers and plants, numerous children's facilities had been installed nearby. The small maze, charming slide, seesaw, and adorable little snail decoration transformed the entire garden into a whimsical haven for children.

Damian was awestruck by the beauty of the garden. Lillian and Kevin joined him, along with Jeremy, Ronald, and Dennis' daughter, Mildred Phillips. The children were ecstatic as they played in the garden, their joy radiating throughout the space.

While the children were busy playing,

the adults were equally occupied. Adrian and Isabella, in particular, were not preoccupied with work but rather with trying on an array of wedding dresses and accessories. Their primary goal was to create a beautiful wedding and ensure that Isabella experienced a memorable celebration. Carly was also drawn into the process, trying on several outfits. As Isabella's sister, she would undoubtedly need to wear a formal gown on Isabella's wedding day. Although Carly didn't place much importance on her attire, witnessing the Carter family's appreciation for Isabella genuinely filled her with happiness.

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While everyone was getting ready for Adrian and Isabella's wedding, Eugene arrived in Zentscape. Stacey and Adrian went to the airport to pick up Eugene and brought him to Carter Villa. When Eugene saw the beautiful house and garden of the Carter family, he was immediately captivated. Eugene was curious about everything, and Stacey had prepared all the information he was curious about. The flowers, plants, and house design were all different from Daprein's and new to Eugene. But what captured his attention most was the childlike fairy garden.

The design was full of childlike concepts. The cheerful Lillian and Kevin ran from one play area to another with bright smiles on their faces, radiating a happy vibe at every

moment. That kind of happiness was exactly what Eugene longed for in his heart. During his childhood, he had the same fairy tale dream as most children, but his dream was just a dream. It was not that Eugene came from a bad background. In fact, he came from an excellent background. However, the problem was that his parents were too demanding of him and had forced him to concentrate on studying since childhood. He was not allowed to participate in anything that children played. Eugene had achieved so much because his parents had been strict with him since childhood, but with achievements, his boring childhood left a wound in his heart.

When Eugene saw the playground built especially for Lillian and Kevin at the Garter Villa, where they were carefree and playing happily, Eugene found himself completely captivated without even realizing it. Soon, he even got an inspiration, not for adults, but for Lillian and Kevin, something wonderful and full of happiness and joy. Eugene suddenly laughed, took out his drawing board, set up his easel under the shade of the tree next to the garden, and began to draw.

Lillian and Kevin were curious, so they immediately ran over to see what Eugene was drawing. Eugene was also happy to see Lillian and Kevin ran to him. He turned around and said a few words to them in Dapreinish with a smile on his face. Unfortunately, neither Lillian nor Kevin understood

Dapreinish and could not understand Eugene immediately. However, it was not a big problem as Stacey had already prepared the interpreter because she knew Eugene would be coming. Now that the interpreter had been assigned a task, she immediately went to work interpreting for Eugene, Lillian, and Kevin. With an interpreter, Eugene could communicate more easily with Lillian and Kevin.

At first, Stacey was worried that Lillian and Kevin would disturb Eugene and wanted to stop them, but Hayden stopped her. Stacey then realized that Eugene seemed even happier with Lillian and Kevin than when he was with her and Hayden, and his happiness seemed to come from the bottom of his heart. Once Stacey understood it, she could also understand Eugene's feeling that children were the most innocent people in the world. No matter how kind adults sometimes pretended to be, they would never be as pure as children. When adults interacted with other adults, they were subconsciously on guard, unable to open their hearts and be truly happy. However, the dynamic changed when they were with children. Most adults subconsciously let go of their guard and pretense when interacting with children. Consequently, adults were more genuine to themselves in their communication and interactions with children.

The next afternoon, Eugene was playing with Lillian and Kevin. At first, Lillian and Kevin surrounded Eugene, then Jeremy came over, then Mildred, and finally Ronald and Damian. Eugene, who had not experienced any inspiration in a long time, was suddenly filled with inspiration after visiting Zentiscape. He created several drawings at once, and the more he looked at them, the more he liked them.

A few days later, Eugene attended Adrian and Isabella's wedding. The wedding was Clusian in style, with a bridal carriage. It was lively and beautiful, and Eugene was very captivated. The activities Stacey had arranged beforehand were completely unnecessary. Various Clusian style dresses and makeup already attracted Eugene.

Before the end of the year, Isabella and Adrian were to be married. Isabella's family was not from that area. According to Isabella and Carly, they had planned to have the wedding at the hotel, but Adrian did not think it was a good idea. Adrian soon bought a small mansion in Alagua City. The house was registered in Isabella's name. That mansion was their home in Alagua City, and it would always be. Whenever Isabella returned the mansion would be her home. Isabella was a little uncomfortable at first. She always felt it was wrong for her to take so many things from others just for the wedding, but in the end, Carly persuaded her. Carly told Isabella that Adrian was nice to her and she did not have to feel bad about it. It would not be good if Isabella rejected everything. If she really cared, she should have treated Adrian well, lived a good life, and stayed together as husband and wife. That was all that mattered.

Isabella and Adrian's wedding was much easier because they had their own home. A professional photographer captured the scene of Isabella being greeted by Adrian in the bridal carriage, along with her wedding gifts.

Carly watched the video many times after the wedding. The more she watched it, the more she felt happy and relieved.

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Isabella finally had a happy ending after so many years of hardship. Carly could not help but post the video of Isabella's wedding on Twitter.

On that day, Carly decided to divorce her husband. She had married Connor many years ago because she had loved him. Later, Connor had despised her after an incident. Carly had believed it had been her fault, so she had endured it and gave in. At first, she had been very much in love with Connor and had hopes for their marriage and their feelings. She had hoped that being patient and giving in a little would make things easier for Connor and help keep their marriage from falling apart. However, year after year, Connor's contempt for her had not diminished with time. Instead, their fights had gotten worse. Every day, they had argued and fought a cold war. Sometimes, they had even quarreled. In other words, Connor had been mean to her.

In the daily struggle, Carly's love for Connor slowly disappeared. She had given up her expectations. She no longer hoped Connor could accept her again and no longer expected her relationship with Connor to be as innocent as it used to be. Later, Carly had only put up with everything for Ronald's sake. She used to think a complete and perfect family had been good for Ronald. But after getting to know the Carter family, she realized a warm and happy home would have been more important for Ronald.

In such a joyful environment, people's moods would involuntarily change for the better. Unlike her home with Connor, every time she returned to that home, she felt very depressed. It was pointless for Ronald to live in such an environment, to see his parents arguing, fighting, and complaining about each other every day. She could sense Ronald was happier those days when he came to the Carter family, and he smiled even more than he had in the past year

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That Christmas was more lively and joyful than last year's. Stacey was initially worried about how to entertain Eugene, but after some time, she realized she did not need much effort. Eugene enjoyed Christmas in Zentiscape and liked the happy atmosphere of both the Carter and Hoggard families.

After Christmas, Stacey found a suitable opportunity and invited Eugene to collaborate with Carter's Jewel. Stacey felt nervous, afraid that Eugene might refuse. As expected, Eugene did not immediately agree but did not reject the offer outright. He said he needed time to consider it. Stacey was both surprised and delighted, asking, "Are you really willing to consider it?" The difference between Carter's Jewel and Eklonna was truly vast. Eugene had worked at Eklonna for many years and had already become a top designer. It seemed unbelievable that he would be willing to come to a company like theirs.

Eugene smiled and nodded. In somewhat broken Zentiscapian, he said, "I... really like... your family."

He did not know Zentiscapian before, but during his stay there, he was influenced by the joyful atmosphere of the Carter family. He also felt happy, which sparked his interest in Zentiscapian. Whenever he had free time, he learned Zentiscapian with Jeremy, Lillian, and Kevin. Although Eugene had learned Zentiscapian from the children and enjoyed playing with them, the language barrier was still a significant problem. Fortunately, Jeremy soon brought the writing tablet he had been using. It had a translation function, so the tablet could translate it into the other person's language whenever Jeremy wrote something on it. That way, Eugene and the children used the writing tablet to play and communicate. Over time, he learned a few simple Zentiscapian phrases. Although his pronunciation was not very accurate, everyone could understand him.

Stacey had not expected Eugene to like her family so much, but it was a good thing, and she was in a good mood. She quickly shared the news with her parents. Patrick was surprised to hear Eugene was willing to consider the offer, but he quickly calmed down and smiled. 'Becky's getting more and more

impressive, isn't she?' he thought. Finally, someone was to inherit the family business, and he did not have to worry about those three brats not wanting to take over the family business.

Time went by very quickly. Soon, Christmas was over, and everyone had to go back to work. Eugene also took his leave, wanting to visit other places in Zentiscape. Stacey offered to arrange things for him, but he refused, saying that he preferred to explore on his own, unaccompanied. Stacey had no choice but to send Eugene to the airport herself and let him travel alone.

Three months later, Eugene returned. He made the jewelry Hayden had previously ordered and delivered to Hayden and Stacey. She felt a bit anxious. After such a long time, there was still no result from Eugene's consideration. She worried that Eugene would no longer want to stay at Carter's Jewel.

The next day, when Hayden asked Stacey out on a date, she felt quite down. However, she completely forgot about her unhappiness when she saw the amusement park filled with roses. Her confusion replaced her initial shock as she looked at the roses and then turned to look at Hayden. Hayden smiled as he took out a brocade box and opened it. Inside was a ring. "Becky... Will you marry me?" he asked, kneeling on one knee as he looked at Stacey with a smile.

Meanwhile, many people suddenly appeared around the amusement park that had been cleared out. Patrick, Debra, Adrian, Isabella, Carly, Ronald, Damian, Lillian, Kevin, Jeremy, Charlie, Bryce, Paul, Jason, Sharon, Hayden's parents, and even Eugene were there. Everyone smiled as they looked at her with anticipation, blessing, and happiness.

Jeremy was the happiest. He could not help but smile as he excitedly watched Hayden and Becky's proposal scene.

When Stacey looked at everyone, she suddenly realized what was happening. She felt touched and extremely happy. "Becky, don't be stunned. Just say yes!" Debra urged anxiously when she saw Stacey standing there, dazed and not responding.

Stacey came to her senses and turned to look at Hayden. With a smile, she nodded and replied, "Yes!" Hayden smiled, took out the ring, and carefully placed it on Becky's finger. After the ring was placed on her finger, fireworks suddenly burst in the amusement park. Rows of fireworks were ignited almost simultaneously, shooting beautifully into the sky. It was beautiful.

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“Mommy!” Jeremy exclaimed as he ran over and hugged Stacey. She then bent down and hugged Jeremy, who had waited so long for that day, and finally got what he had hoped for when he saw Becky had said yes to Hayden’s proposal.

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Debra nudged Lillian and Kevin, ordering them to go over too. They were thrilled and immediately ran over.

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When Charlie saw everyone in place, he immediately took out a confetti popper and sprayed it wildly at Stacey, Hayden, and the three children. Caught off guard by the confetti, Stacey, Hayden, and

the children were completely covered in confetti, which was hilarious. It was funny not only to them but to everyone around.

After the ceremony, everyone shared the good news with Stacey Eugene had actually agreed to stay at Carter’s Jewel a long time ago, but he kept it a secret to surprise her, so he waited until today to tell her the good news. Stacey was stunned. She turned to look at Hayden, then at everyone else, and finally at Eugene, who smiled and nodded. Her heart was racing. Unable to contain herself, she walked over and quickly said, “Thank you!”

Eugene spoke a few words in Dapreinish while Hayden translated for him, saying, “Mr. Fraley said that he stayed because he liked the Carter family, us, and our joyful atmosphere. He felt happy being here with us, so he’s willing to stay. He said you don’t have to thank him.” Stacey was thrilled. She also loved the atmosphere and the happiness of the Carter family. She was also delighted by the joy of everyone being together.

After the proposal ceremony, Stacey and Hayden would need time to arrange the formal engagement and wedding dates. While arranging it, Adrian’s friend finally recovered the evidence from Carly’s previous case. With the evidence, they were sure they could get the case overturned for her. Adrian told Isabella everything and let the two sisters decide if they wanted to return to court to ensure the criminals faced justice.

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Chapter 264

"Isabella was shocked when she received the recovered evidence. She could not believe that the evidence, which had been deliberately destroyed, could be recovered. However, Isabella was not the one to decide whether to reopen the court and prosecute the criminal; she had to ask Carly. If Carly agreed, they could reopen the court. So, Isabella brought the evidence to Carly. When Isabella presented the evidence at Carly's home, Carly was also stunned. When Isabella asked whether they should go to court again and sue the criminal, Carly firmly said they should."

"Why do you want to sue? Don't you think it's embarrassing enough?" Connor asked. He suddenly came back and approached them somberly. He reached out to snatch the evidence from Carly's hand, but she instinctively gripped the flash drive and hid it behind her. Isabella also swiftly stretched her hands and protected Carly.

"Give it to me!" Connor yelled, staring at them unhappily.

"What are you going to do?" Isabella asked, staring alertly at Connor. She was very nervous.

Connor stared at the duo unhappily and ordered again, "Carly, give me the drive!"

Carly put the drive in her pocket, glared at Connor, and retorted, "This is none of your business. Stop interfering!"

"How is it none of my business? Do you have any idea of the embarrassment I have endured? I can't hold my head up at work or home with my relatives and friends. It's basically everyone I see!" Connor said with resentment. He stared at Carly with malice as if she were something filthy. "Carly, have some shame and throw the drive away. And don't mention this incident again!" he snapped.

Carly felt her heart pierced by the blatant disgust in his eyes. Although her feelings had been numbed over time, and she had never expected him to let go of what had happened, she was still distressed to see him look at her like that. "Why should I be ashamed? Connor, I was forced! I'm a victim, too! Why should I be ashamed? Fine! If you're ashamed, let's get a divorce! After we divorce, I will have nothing to do with you. You don't have to worry about being ashamed anymore!" Carly shouted in disappointment.

Isabella was distraught to see Carly crying. However, there was nothing she could do but protect her behind her back.

Connor stood and stared at Carly. When he heard she wanted a divorce, his expression turned dark. He raised his hand and was about to hit her. Isabella frowned and moved quickly forward. She was faster than him and slapped Connor hard in the face. He had never been slapped by Isabella before, so he did not take her seriously at that time.

Connor could not believe Isabella had slapped him. He was stunned as his mind went blank. He turned to Isabella, unable to grasp what had just happened.

"Isabella, did you just hit me?" Connor asked.

Isabella was also afraid. But thinking of her sister, she stood firm in front of him and did not budge.

"Why can't I? Connor, I have never beaten you before because you were my brother-in-law. But ask yourself honestly if you're really qualified to be my brother-in-law after what you've done over the past few years," Isabella argued, her face pale as she stared at him while asking.

"Isabella, get out of here. Don't think you can interfere in my family's affairs after marrying into the Carter family. If you want to take control, go back home!" Connor snapped, reaching out to pull Isabella away from Carly.

Carly could not stand it any longer. She lunged from behind and slapped Connor.

Connor was so angry that he wanted to fight back. However, the two sisters joined hands and fought together. One slapped him in the face while the other kicked him, directly knocking him down. In the past, Connor would beat people up when angry at home. Carly was always the one who got hit, not the other way around. But that day, he was beaten up by the sisters. Carly was also furious. As they fought, she grabbed the vase beside her and was about to smash it at Connor. Isabella's expression changed immediately as she hastily stopped Carly. It was fine to hit Connor, but not with a vase. If he died, they might have to go to jail, which was not worth it.

When Connor saw Isabella pulling Carly away, Connor quickly dodged. He looked at the two sisters fearfully.

Isabella saw his frightened look and suddenly remembered what Adrian had told her, 'In this world, most people bully the weak and fear the strong. If you're weak, others will want to bully you. If you act tougher, people won't dare to bully you and may even fear you.' Isabella thought Connor's reaction confirmed Adrian's words. She and Carly had used to endure and give in to Connor, but instead of being thoughtful and understanding,

Connor had even started to hate and

bully them more. On the contrary, when she and Carly grew stronger and were no longer afraid of him, Connor was afraid of their

retaliation.

"Carly, let's leave him alone and pack your things at home. You and Ronald can move into our house first. I can get Adrian to take care of your case, and when you move in, it'll be convenient for all of you to discuss things," Isabella said after some thought before turning to look at Carly solemnly.

Carly was still staring at Connor. His anxious expression made her feel ridiculous and pathetic. They had once been very much in love. Before the incident, they had taken care of each other and lived a happy life. However, things had ended up like that, and it felt ridiculous. When Carly heard Isabella's words, she nodded tiredly and agreed, "Okay." She did not want to stay in that house anymore.

The atmosphere in the family was filled with resentment and anger, which was not conducive to child development. So she had to leave with Ronald. Carly had not left or proposed a divorce to Connor in the last three months because she needed to gather evidence. Divorce in the society was troublesome. If Carly had not prepared and gathered enough evidence beforehand, her divorce might not have been approved. However, that did not

matter now. In the past three

months, she had collected enough

evidence of Connor's domestic

violence against her. Carly had discussed it with Adrian, who said that domestic violence was a major fault in a marriage. If there was evidence of Connor's domestic violence, she could file for divorce through the courts so the divorce would be quick and uncontested.

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After their discussion, Carly and Isabella returned to clean up their room.

Charles' expression changed. He looked at Isabella and Carly vigilantly. His eyes were filled with doubt. Then, he probed and finally turned angry.

Noticing that Carly put all her things into a suitcase, Charles ran over and took her belongings out of the suitcase. Instead of placing them properly, he threw them around in the room.

"Carly, don't try to leave me. You are my wife. Don't you even think of leaving me your whole life!" Charles said viciously.

Carly's face darkened. She went straight over and pulled Charles away forcefully.

Charles, a big man, usually boasted that he was stronger than Carly. However, now when Carly pulled him away, he lost his balance and was pulled away.

Carly looked at Isabella and said, "Isabella, help me pack my things."

Isabella was a little worried. Carly reassured, "Don't worry about me."

Seeing that the two sisters didn't take him seriously at all, Charles was also angry and struggled violently.

Charles is a man, after all. Carly couldn't hold him when he struggled hard, and he quickly got rid of Carly.

Carly turned around and picked up a vase from the side as a precaution.

Charles also put his hand on the stool, ready to lift it at any time. "Carly, tell her to stop," Charles ordered coldly.

Carly sneered, "In your dream!"

Charles trembled with anger. He looked aside and saw Ronald. He immediately ordered, "Ronald, go to the room and take out all the things your aunt has put in the suitcase. We can't let them leave!"

"No way!" Ronald shouted angrily when he heard that. He stared at Charles with a firm expression. "Mom wants to divorce you because you always beat Mom. You are not a good person, and I don't want you to be my dad!"

Charles' expression dropped when he heard this. His eyes instantly became vicious. He stared at Ronald and thundered, "Ronald, I am your father! Who taught you to talk like that? Hurry! Listen to me. Go inside and take out all the things your aunt packed. Don't let your mother run away. If she leaves, you will have no mother!"

Hearing that, Ronald was a little panicked and immediately looked at Carly.

Seeing that Ronald was scared, Carly hurriedly explained, "Ronald, don't be afraid. I will take you with me. Let's leave together. We won't live with Charles in the future. We can live on our own!"

Ronald's uneasiness was calmed by Carly's words. He hurriedly ran behind Carly, stared at Charles defensively, and then shouted in a serious tone, "I want to go with Mom, not stay with you!"

"You!" Charles was trembling with anger.

At the same time, Adrian and several bodyguards quickly arrived at the residential area. They immediately went upstairs and knocked on the door.

At the first moment of the conflict, Isabella secretly sent a message to Adrian. Adrian was working in the office. When he received the message from Isabella, he put down the documents in his hand almost immediately and rushed over with his bodyguards as soon as possible.

But even so, Adrian was very anxious. He rushed over as fast as he could, for fear that if he came a second later, Isabella and Carly would be in trouble.

Rushing upstairs, Adrian knocked on the door immediately. "Isabella? Carly! Are you guys here?"

Carly was surprised to hear Adrian's voice. Ronald's eyes lit up, and he immediately ran toward the door to open it.

Charles panicked. He couldn't care less about Carly at the moment and immediately rushed over. He reached out to pull Ronald to stop the latter from opening the door.

Carly reacted quickly by rushing up immediately. She grabbed and interjected Charles. Ronald managed to reach the door and opened it without obstruction.

Smack!

At the same time, Charles slapped Carly.

As soon as Adrian came in, he saw this scene. His face changed. He immediately rushed in, grabbed Charles, and slapped the latter fiercely.

The two bodyguards also acted fast and quickly restrained Charles.

Adrian rescued Carly from Charles. At the same time, Isabella, who heard something strange outside, also ran out of the room. Isabella's eyes lit up obviously when she saw Adrian.

"Adrian, you're here!" Isabella was surprised.

She didn't know when it started, Adrian always gave Isabella a strong sense of security. In dangerous situations, as long as Adrian appeared, she would feel relieved as if everything would be fine.

As a matter of fact, the situation did turn out fine.

Adrian's two bodyguards held Charles so tightly that the latter couldn't even struggle, let alone do other things.

But soon, Isabella noticed Carly's red cheeks. Recalling a loud slap was sounded from the living room, Isabella instantly understood what had happened. She hurried over and asked anxiously, "Carly, did he hit you again?"

Carly's cheek hurt, but now she was not afraid at all. She comforted Isabella, "I'm fine."

Isabella turned around and walked toward Charles. She raised her hand and slapped him without hesitation. A slap wasn't enough. Isabella continged to slap Charles several times in a row. Her hand hurt, but she still felt angry.

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She thought, "Carly should have figured it out before. The sooner she gets divorced, the sooner she gets rid of the misery. There's nothing worth staying with this jerk."

Adrian was silent for a while. After Isabella finished beating Charles, he asked, "What's going on?"

Isabella didn't speak for a moment. Carly hesitated before she explained what had happened to Adrian.

Hearing this, Adrian looked at

Charles displeased. Charles was suddenly scared when their eyes met, but he was unwilling to concede at the same time. Charles pondered, 'I didn't expect Isabella to marry such a powerful man. Carly and Isabella are so proud now because of this man, right? If I had known it earlier, I would have stopped Isabella from being with this man!'

"Go pack your things. Ignore him." Adrian turned to Carly and Isabella.

Hearing this, Carly nodded. "Okay." She knew that Charles was already ruined, and it was meaningless for her to continue to stay in this family. Leaving was the right choice.

Carly returned to the room and quickly packed up her things. Isabella also rushed over to help.

Not only that, even Ronald couldn't

wait to leave. He was happy that

Carly could be separated from Charles. Since he was a child, he had

seen Charles hit Carly many times. Ronald hoped that Carly could stay away from Charles so that no one would hit her.

There were a lot of things at home. Carly packed for a long time, but many things couldn't fit into the suitcase.

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Isabella thought for a moment and then suggested, "Why don't we call the moving company?"

Carly frowned. "But there are so many things. Where should we put them?"

"Let's put them at our place first. Adrian's mansion is large, and there are plenty of rooms. We can put these things here," Isabella said.

Carly hesitated. "But... will this trouble you too much?"

Hearing this, Isabella stopped and looked at her sister. She said angrily, "Carly, do you see me as an outsider?"

Upon realizing the situation, Carly hurriedly shook her head. "No, I don't mean that. I-I'm just worried that Adrian will be unhappy if I move so many things there."

Adrian happened to come over. Hearing her words, he said helplessly, "Carly, do I look like such a mean person?"

Hearing this, Carly was stunned for a moment. Then, she realized that she had overthought. She thought, 'The Carter family is indeed different from others. Their family members are very nice.'

"Well, then... Ronald and I will move our things there first, and then I'll go and find a house. When we find one, we will move out immediately," said Carly.

Isabella knew what Carly was thinking. She nodded and said, "Okay."

Carly was relieved when Isabella agreed, so they packed the things with relief.

They packed all the important things by themselves, while Isabella called someone from the moving company directly for other things.

In the house, the things that belonged to Carly and Ronald have been moved away, leaving Charles' things. Carly didn't want them either. Everything was packed, and they left together.

Charles finally panicked. He anxiously caught up and begged Carly to go back. However, she firmly pushed him away. Charles still wanted to harass them, but the bodyguards immediately went over and pulled him away.

Many residents in the area couldn't help but secretly watch the commotion.

Although there were many onlookers, only a few would come to meddle in their business, especially those who knew about the situation of their family.

Living in the same neighborhood, many of the residents knew about Isabella and Carly's situation, especially the latter. They saw her as a poor woman whose husband often lost his temper and inflicted domestic violence.

Before this, many people did not understand why Carly didn't divorce and leave the scumbag. So, no one felt strange to see Carly leaving that day. On the contrary, everyone couldn't help but be happy for her. They thought, 'It's good that she can figure it out. She will get better and better after leaving him.'

Although some people thought it was best, it was inevitable that there would be some with stubborn old-school mindsets who felt that Carly did wrong.

These people criticized her inwardly, 'They are married and have a child. Why did they make such a ruckus? Nowadays, young people are selfish. They only care about their comfort and don't think about their child at all. That child is so young and still in kindergarten. His parents are getting divorced when he's at a young age. He will have no home after that. What a pity!'

However, Carly didn't want to care about these people's thoughts anymore. She didn't want to be stopped by others' opinions.

In the past few years, she was bound by those thoughts and always felt that she couldn't get a divorce. If she got a divorce, it would be bad for her child.

However, the truth was that if the problem between her and Charles couldn't be solved, their conflicts would never stop. A home with no happiness but only resentment and distress was not good for a child at all!

Charles wanted to catch up but was stopped by the bodyguards arranged by Adrian. Charles was scared and didn't dare to fight with those bodyguards. In the end, he could only helplessly watch Carly leave with Ronald. After seeing them leave, Adrian called his bodyguards and left together.

Adrian didn't go to work today. He asked the driver to drive home directly when he left Carly's house. As Isabella, Carly, and Ronald left before him, they arrived home first. Adrian arrived later, but he felt much happier when he arrived at his home.

It was a small standalone mansion, which was Adrian's private property, not the house where Patrick and Debra lived for a long time. They were by themselves in the mansion, so Isabella and Carly felt more comfortable.

Isabella was so happy when Carly finally got rid of Charles and moved out. After getting out of the car, Isabella immediately began to move their things in. She wanted Carly and Ronald to move in as soon as possible and stay away from that jerk.

Carly was also moving things. It was not the first time she had come to Adrian and Isabella's new home, but it was the first time that she came as a stay-in guest bringing so many things, which made her nervous.

There was no butler in the mansion, and there were not many housekeepers. There was only one cook. Adrian thought it was unnecessary to hire so many people before, but later Isabella moved in with him. Isabella didn't like being served by too many people. She felt that she could do a lot of work on her own, and there was no need to hire outsiders. Adrian respected Isabella's idea, so he didn't hire help.

Now, they were alone. It was a little tiresome to tidy things up, but it made them happy.

Adrian moved all the heavy things in. Some daily necessities that were used often were put into the guest room, and some seldom-used things were put into the temporary warehouse.

After unpacking, Ronald blinked and asked happily, "Mom, do we really don't have to live with Dad anymore?"

Carly looked down at Ronald and nodded. "Yes, I don't want to go back anymore."

Ronald was immediately in a good mood and nodded hurriedly. "Uh-huh. I don't want to go back either!"

Although Ronald was Charles' son, Charles hardly fulfilled his responsibilities as a father. In the past few years, Charles treated them coldly when he came back home every day. He always lost his temper and became abusive.

Charles looked down on Carly and didn't even treat Ronald nicely, let alone take care of him.

Thinking of Charles' attitude toward Ronald in the past few years, Carly felt that she was stupid in the past.

She wondered, 'Why should I be influenced by those traditional ideas and feel that only a 'complete' family is the best for our child? In fact, not having a father is better than an irresponsible one!'

"Carly, I'll give you some medicine." Isabella brought some ointment and wanted to apply it on Carly.

Just now, Charles' slap onto Carly was not light at all. Her face was reddened before, but now it was visibly a little swollen.

"I-I'm fine. I don't need those," Carly suddenly stammered.

Although the person in front of her

was Isabella, she didn't want Isabella - her sister and her only family- to know that she had a bad life. When she got beaten before, she hid everything from Isabella as much as possible. She only let

Isabella know when she could no longer hide the truth.

Chapter 267

In the end, the medicine was applied. Isabella wasn't a fool. She knew Carly just didn't want her to worry.

Once everything was settled, Carly found Adrian at night and told him she wanted to refile the lawsuit. Seeing her decision, Adrian promptly began making arrangements.

All the evidence related to this matter, including proof that the witnesses were bribed and turned against them, had been collected. So this time, the lawsuit wouldn't only target the scion who assaulted Carly back then, but also the "witnesses" who took money and falsely accused her.

Adrian took care of everything, so Isabella and Carly just had to wait. This made them a little dazed, and they felt an unspeakable sense of security. During the last lawsuit, they had no idea what to do. With limited funds, they could only afford an average lawyer, while their opponent was overwhelmingly powerful. In the end, they lost completely > and embarrassingly.

The day of the trial soon came. As a plaintiff, Carly took her seat. She was very nervous and scared, but this unease only lasted a short while. She soon realized how good it was to have a top-notch lawyer. She didn't have to worry about anything. Adrian handled all the arguments in court for her. All she had to do was listen and occasionally answer a few questions from the judge.

Last time, when she was in the plaintiff's seat, the defendant's lawyer and the betraying witnesses made her lose control and left her unable to speak. This time, she saw the scion, Leo Harrison, who had assaulted her before, trembling in the defendant's seat,

Of course, Leo's fear wasn't just because he had assaulted Carly but also because Adrian

few years. had found several other girls who had been assaulted by him over the past Two of them were only 16 this year. One was 15, and the youngest was 13, just under 14.

Assaulting an underage girl was a serious felony! If nothing went wrong, Leo's life would be over. Not only that, Adrian also found evidence of Leo's drug abuse and trafficking, as well as forcing minors to use drugs. With this series of charges, Leo was ultimately sentenced to death.

The death sentence was an outcome that Isabella and Carly had never imagined. They certainly didn't expect Leo to be so guilty and evil. However, it was truly satisfying to see such a person get what they deserved.

After leaving the courthouse, Isabella and Carly felt a sense of disbelief. It wasn't until they were home that they fully grasped that the burden they had carried for so many

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years was finally lifted.

Especially for Carly, who felt a huge sense of relief as if a great weight had finally been lifted from her. However, this joy didn't last long, as another issue soon made her smile fade.

Connor unexpectedly showed up at the mansion. When Carly was out buying groceries, he seized the opportunity to grab her and demand her to go back!

How could Carly possibly go back?

In the struggle, Connor raised his hand and habitually wanted to give Carly a hard slap.

In the past, Carly might not have reacted at all. Perhaps her subconscious always made her feel that she was at fault and felt sorry for Connor so that she would endure his abuse. But this time, her mind was unusually clear. Her reaction was even faster than her thoughts, and she pushed Connor away hard.

> Connor didn't expect Carly to have such strength this time. He was pushed off balance and almost hit the passers-by behind. The passerby, startled, stepped back and looked at them in confusion.

Carly hadn't seen Connor for a while. Since moving out, she hadn't gone back. Even Ronald's school was changed under the arrangement of Adrian and Isabella from a regular kindergarten to an aristocratic one.

It wasn't that she wanted Ronald to attend an aristocratic kindergarten, but Adrian and Isabella both said that if she divorced Connor, he might target Ronald or even use him

against her. Keeping Ronald in a regular kindergarten would be too risky. After all, Connor was Ronald's biological father. If he tried to pick up Ronald from the kindergarten or cause trouble in other ways, a regular kindergarten wouldn't be able to stop him.

However, an aristocratic kindergarten was different. They had strict management. As long as they gave advance notice, even though Connor was Ronald's biological father, the kindergarten wouldn't let him see the child without their permission, let alone allow him to get close to Ronald.

Besides, they didn't inform Connor about Ronald's transfer. Connor shouldn't know where Ronald went to school now, so there was no way for him to use Ronald to threaten Carly.

"Carly Graham, are you done? Do you plan to live in someone else's home forever?" Connor lost his temper and scolded Carly with a gloomy expression.

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After scolding, he stared at Carly and asked, "And where did you transfer Ronald to? He's no longer at Seahorse Kindergarten!"

Upon hearing this, Carly immediately realized that Connor had already gone to the kindergarten. Indeed, Isabella and Adrian's concerns were not unwarranted. Connor was indeed causing trouble over the child.

"It's none of your business!" Carly said coldly.

Connor was angry when he heard the words. He rushed over and wanted to grab Carly. Carly hurriedly dodged.

"Carly Graham! Ronald Zane is my son. I have the right to know where he goes to school!" Connor roared.

Hearing this, Carly smiled and burst into tears, saying, "Yes, Ronald is your son, but Connor Zane, ask yourself honestly. In the past few years, have you ever cared about Ronald? Have you ever been concerned about him even once?"

Carly's anger suddenly flared as she stared at Connor, her voice filled with

disappointment and even despair. "Connor, all you know is domestic violence! Not only did you hit me, but you also hit Ronald. Just ask yourself, over the past few years, how many times did you accidentally hurt Ronald while you were hitting me?"

More and more people gathered around, and many began to sympathize with Carly after hearing about the domestic violence. Carly didn't want their sympathy and turned to leave.

Connor immediately chased after her. Carly reacted quickly and ran away.

Chapter 268

Carly exerted all her strength and ran like the wind into the residential area where Adrian and Isabella lived.

They stayed in a high-end mansion there where the security guards were very strict. Only those who were permitted could enter. Unverified persons weren't allowed.

After entering, Carly finally relaxed and looked back.

As Carly had guessed, Connor chased after her. But, once he reached the entrance, Bryan, a security guard stopped him. Eagerly, Connor claimed that Carly who just entered was his wife. He said he wanted to go in and take her out with him.

Hearing that, Bryan turned to Carly. He recognized her because Adrian and Isabella had informed him earlier that she'd be living with them for a while.

"Don't let him in!" Carly yelled to Bryan in a panic.

Stunned, Bryan still replied, "Alright."

The property management services of high-end residential areas were the best. A good example of such was this incident. If the owner's friend asked the guards not to let certain people in, they wouldn't, just like how they didn't allow Connor in.

When Carly heard Bryan's promise, she was still in a confused trance. It took her a while to understand what went on. 'Wow... that's possible?' she thought, frozen in place, before seeing Bryan stopping Connor.

The shallow Connor loved his reputation. Thus, his expression soured when he was stuck outside. However, he didn't dare to rush in for fear of appearing uncouth. In any way, he'd be unable to get in because the security guards there weren't like those in ordinary residential areas. All guards there were strong military veterans. Moreover, they were young. If Connor wanted to break in, he would only be thrown out.

Carly watched the scene and finally felt relieved. Then, she carried the groceries she'd just bought and went home.

During her time living in Adrian and Isabella's house, Carly took the initiative to cook their meals. After all, she wasn't there as a guest. She was staying there for a while, so she had to contribute. Otherwise, she would feel bad about it.

Adrian and Isabella were at work while Ronald and Damian were in kindergarten. Hence, now there was only her, and their housekeeper, Julie White, left at home.

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Considering that, Carly finally sighed in relief. She was worried Isabella would notice something was off about her.

Isabella had always been very sensitive to changes in others' moods and temperaments. If Carly had not regulated her mood in time, Isabella would surely have noticed that something was wrong.

However, it didn't take Isabella to realize something was amiss with Carly as even Julie sensed something off. "Ms. Graham, what's wrong? Why do you look so pale?" Julie asked concernedly upon realizing Carly's sickly complexion.

Carly shook her head. "It's nothing."

Julie still felt worried. "Could you be getting sick? You'd better have a good rest, then. Don't work yourself too much today. Let me do the cooking."

Carly shook her head again. "No need. I can do it."

› Hearing this, Julie sighed deeply and questioned, "Why are you being courteous with me? I'm getting paid for my work here. I don't work for free."

Hearing this, Carly was also stunned.

Julie examined her and advised caringly, "Ms. Graham, have a good rest. Mr. Carter is a very good person. He's kind and generous. You don't need to worry about him being unhappy with you staying here."

"You..." Carly was uncertain.

Smiling, Julie elaborated, "A few years ago, my son Jacob was coming to Hivalis for the SAT. Once Mr. Carter knew, he asked me to bring Jacob here for a few days so that he didn't need to stay in a hotel. Mr. Carter also specially told me to cook better food for him as a treat." When Julie mentioned this story, her tone and gaze filled with warmth. She seemed content, grateful, and happy. After she finished, she turned to Carly smiling. "Ms. Graham, Mr. Carter is already so kind to me. It's needless for me to mention how well he'll treat you. You are his wife's biological sister. I think he has been

genuinely treating you as his biological sister too. You don't have to walk on eggshells all the time."

'I don't have to be so careful?' Carly wondered as her heart pounded. Glancing at Julie, she recalled everything about getting along with Adrian and the Carter family in a trance. After replaying the memories in her mind, she suddenly realized that they seemed different from most families. "Yeah," she affirmed while nodding heavily.

At this moment, Carly realized that she was actually very similar to Isabella. She had

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always been anxious and cautious in every aspect of her life.

Both Carly and Isabella had always paid attention to keeping distance from others and tried hard not to overstep boundaries, take advantage of others, spend others' money, and owe others favors. Yet, this caution unexpectedly exposed their true nature.

'Our lives were truly uneasy, so we lived so carefully no matter where we went in fear that we'd involve others and drag them down. However, it's completely different with the Carter family,' Carly thought, and she consciously inhaled deeply. 'Perhaps not only Connor needs changing. I do, too. I need to adjust my mentality to be braver and more confident in the future. I can set a good example for Ronny that way and make him brave and confident too. Then, he wouldn't live such a miserable life as we did on the sidelines.'

"I don't feel uncomfortable," Carly told Julie the truth after some consideration. She then paused to ponder again before explaining, "My ex-husband Connor came. I met him by coincidence while shopping earlier. He wants me to go back."

Before this, Carly didn't want to tell anyone about such things. Yet, now, after thinking it through, she suddenly felt that there was no need to hide.

About an hour later, the kindergarten bus arrived. Ronald and Damian had finished school so Carly hurriedly exited the house to pick them up.

"Aunt Carly!" Damian yelled.

"Mom!" Ronald called out.

Damian and Ronald were well-mannered children who knew to greet her once they saw her.

Carly smiled before inviting them, "Damian, Ronny, let's go inside." Then, she led them into the house, watched them put down their schoolbags, and then go look for Lego sets.

Damian loved playing with Lego sets so Adrian bought a lot of them for him to play with. After Ronald moved in, Damian also graciously shared the sets with him. Since then, every day after school, they played with Lego bricks together happily.

Carly didn't disturb them. She simply stood aside and watched them play with Lego bricks.

After watching them for a while, Carly noted that both Damian and Ronald were much better now than before.

Before this, Damian was very introverted and didn't talk much. Even with Carly, he was somewhat reserved. However, now, anyone could sense that Damian was more cheerful than before. To boot, as Ronald had been playing with Damian daily, more smiles seemed to appear on his face too. It was unlike how he was in their previous home where he barely smiled.

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Chapter 269

An hour later, Isabella and Adrian came back from work.

The kindergarten that Damian and Ronald attended offered after-school care. If parents could not pick up their children immediately, the kindergarten would provide additional supervision for an extra hour or two until the parents finish work and could take their children home.

Because Carly was in that mansion these days, she felt that it would be better to take Ronald home and care for him rather than leave him at the kindergarten.

After that incident happened, Connor forced her to quit her job and forbade her from working outside. With no other options, she eventually taught herself to paint online. She was now a freelance illustrator, taking orders and painting from home without needing to go out and socialize with clients, yet still earning enough to support her family. Most importantly, she could also take care of her child while working.

Currently living at Isabella and Adrian's place, Carly also consciously helped them take care of Damian. She told them taking the kids home and caring for them personally would be better than leaving them at the kindergarten.

After thinking about it, Adrian and Isabella agreed to cancel the after-school care. Every day after school, Damian and Ronald would be sent home by school bus as soon as possible.

It was late, and it was time for dinner. Everyone sat down and ate together.

When dinner was over, Carly finally summoned the courage and said, "Adrian, if I want to divorce Connor, can I file for it now?"

Isabella was surprised because she didn't expect Carly to bring up the topic of divorce so quickly and proactively.

In the past, Isabella had advised Carly that if she really could not continue with Connor, it would be better to get a divorce. However, every time Isabella tried to persuade her, she never listened. 'Has Carly figured it out completely?' Isabella wondered. She was in a good mood, feeling happy for Carly.

"Anytime," Adrian answered.

Carly was stunned for a while, then she came to her senses and nodded hurriedly. "Okay."

Adrian looked at her. He was silent for a moment and then said, "Carly, I just heard that Connor came to pester you outside the residential area today?"

Isabella's expression changed when she heard that. She said anxiously, "What did you say? Connor was here?"

Adrian looked at Isabella and hurriedly comforted her, "It's okay. The guards didn't let him in."

Then Adrian looked at Carly and said, "Carly, I'll find two bodyguards for you tomorrow. It will be safer if you go out with them."

'Bodyguards?' Carly shook her head quickly upon hearing that. She said, "No, I don't need bodyguards. It will cost too much money."

Carly knew wealthy families often hired bodyguards, but she felt she didn't need one. She wanted to save the money she earned to buy a house. She and Ronald could not live with Isabella and Adrian forever. They needed their own place, their own home. Once her divorce from Connor was finalized and everything settled down, they would move out. She was currently quite short on money.

Adrian laughed. "Carly, you don't need to pay for it. They are all bodyguards of the Carter family. They get paid regularly but don't have much to do. I'll just temporarily

assign them here to protect you for a few days. Once you divorce Connor and he stops bothering you and Ronald, they will leave."

Actually, hiring bodyguards would cost money, but Adrian understood Carly's concerns, so he deliberately said it wouldn't cost extra. Only this way would Carly possibly agree to let him arrange bodyguards for her.

Isabella also suddenly recalled the situation from the previous visits to the Carter family. The Carter family had indeed hired many bodyguards, especially around Becky and her two children, with several bodyguards present.

Adrian looked at the still hesitant Isabella and Carly, and said, "When Becky got divorced before, the Edwards family was also restless. Our family hired some bodyguards to ensure the safety of Becky and the two children."

At the mention of Becky, Carly and Isabella also recalled the news they had seen before. Becky's life experience had been quite rough, but now her life was getting better and better. Witnessing that, they sincerely felt happy for her.

"Will transferring them over not delay things on the Carter family's side?" Carly asked with some hesitation.

Isabella hurriedly said, "Carly, it's okay. It won't affect them. You should take care of yourself first. After you get through this period and get divorced, everything will get better."

Carly was still somewhat conflicted. After hesitating for a while, she finally nodded and agreed solemnly, "Alright. Thank you all." She then thought for a moment and added, "Adrian, what is their current salary? How about I hire them myself and cover their wages for this period?"

"Carly!" Isabella put down her

chopsticks, looked at Carly, and said

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seriously, "I've already told you not to worry about the money. Why are you being so polite with us?" Isabella then turned to look at Damian and said, "You help us take care of Damian every day, and you haven't asked us for any money. If you keep being so polite with us, I'm gonna be mad, okay?"

Adrian also smiled and said, "Yeah, Carly, don't be so polite with us. If you keep being so polite, I would think that you treat me as an outsider."

Carly was stunned upon hearing that, and then she came back to her senses. She quickly shook her head and said, "No, it's not that, I..." Only then did she realize that the Carter family was indeed different from others.

"Alright, since you've all been so kind to me, I'll accept it all. If you ever need my help in the future, just let me know. As long as I can help, I definitely will," she hurriedly said.

Adrian smiled and agreed, "Okay."

At this moment, Adrian never imagined, nor could he have imagined, that many years later, the Carter family would really encounter major trouble. They would be schemed against by competitors and nearly be accused of plagiarism at the most important world competition, leading to a ruined reputation and bankruptcy.

At the most critical moment, it was

Carly, who had become a top-tier artist, who worked tirelessly to urgently design a stunning new set of designs for the Carter family. It replaced the plagiarized designs inserted by the competitors' spies within the Carter family and amazed the world, resolving their crisis, and preserving the family's reputation accumulated over the years. The designs helped them win the international competition, elevated the Carter family to a higher status, and opened up broader overseas markets.

The things that would happen in the future are unknown to them now. At this moment, after reaching an agreement, they began discussing the matter of filing for divorce.

In the past few months, Carly had collected a lot of information about Connor's domestic violence. That included videos of Connor hitting her and videos of him taking his frustration out on Ronald due to his bad mood. Keeping those pieces of evidence not only facilitated the divorce but also helped her in the divorce proceedings to secure custody of the children.

When it comes to the issue of child

custody, Carly was most grateful that after resigning from her job, she didn't remain idle at home. Although it was tough at first when she started learning to paint, she

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eventually became capable g

orders and earning money, which provided her with a source of

income. Having money was crucial for securing child custody.

Otherwise, the court might not grant

her custody of Ronald.

Chapter 270

"The other aspects are fine, but regarding work, if you don't mind, you can serve a temporary position at the Carter family's company," Adrian thought and said to Carly.

Carly was puzzled when she heard that. "I... I have an income, is that not enough?" she asked.

Adrian said seriously, "Having an income is indeed better than not having one. But, the profession of a freelance illustrator has great uncertainty in terms of income. If Connor clings to this, it might cause some trouble. To avoid unnecessary trouble and disputes, you should serve in a temporary position at the Carter family's company. Having a stable job will be much better." As he spoke, Adrian turned to Carly and continued, "You don't need to worry about the job. It's just a nominal position at the Carter family's company. If you don't want to go to work, just let them know. It's fine." Isabella also hurriedly added, "Carly, why don't you listen to Adrian? I think he is right."

Isabella was absolutely in favor of Carly divorcing Connor. However, if there were going to be a divorce, Ronald definitely had to stay with her sister and must not be taken by Connor.

Carly asked worriedly, "But if I go to work, will the court think that I don't have time to take care of Ronald?"

Upon hearing that, Adrian smiled and said, "It doesn't matter. The Carter family can draft a contract for you that allows you to work from home. This way, you will have a stable job and a steady source of income while ensuring you have enough time to take care of your child. With both of these in place, along with some other evidence we have, there will be no doubt about winning the custody battle."

Carly was at a loss for words.

Isabella took her hand and said in a deep voice, "Carly, just agree to it. No matter what, Ronald's custody is the most important."

Carly said hesitantly, "But... What kind of work is it at the Carter family? Can I... Can I handle it?"

Isabella was amused and she said, "It's not like you really have to do the job, you're just getting a title at their place."

Adrian looked at Carly and said with a smile, "If you really want to work with the Carter family, it's actually possible. The Carter family needs designers. Carly, you can draw,

right? I've seen your drawings, they're beautiful! If you're interested, you could consider doing jewelry design. It shouldn't be too difficult for you."

When Isabella heard that, her eyes lit up and she asked in surprise, "Really?"

Carly was speechless. She looked at Isabella helplessly. "Isabella, it's not that easy. I... I was just casually drawing. I don't know anything about jewelry design," she sighed, feeling a little embarrassed.

Adrian smiled and said, "It's nothing as long as you can draw. If you want to learn jewelry design, Becky will arrange for a few people to teach you when we get to the company. You should be able to do it soon."

Carly felt that she was not capable, but after considering it for a while, she agreed to the position at the Carter family's company that Adrian had mentioned. The matter was crucial to whether she could win custody of Ronald, so she wanted to be cautious and avoid any accidents. After everything was arranged, Adrian, in his capacity as Carly's lawyer, helped her file for divorce in court.

Connor was in a particularly bad mood recently because Carly and Ronald had moved out.

He thought that Carly was just out of her mind. 'Doesn't she know what kind of person she is? Just because Isabella married a wealthy man, she's become so arrogant that she even wants to get a divorce from me? Hmph.'

Connor would never agree to divorce.

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The matter was known not only to Connor but also to his parents and sister. His parents and sister were angry about Carly leaving with Ronald and wanting to divorce Connor. The whole family even wanted to come over to find Carly. They intended to scold her and tell her to behave and stop causing trouble. However, when they all arrived, they didn't see Carly at all.

They wanted to go to Adrian's place to cause trouble, but they didn't know where his villa was at all. They asked Connor, but he would not say anything because he was very concerned about his reputation. He felt that having the whole family go there and cause a scene would be extremely embarrassing for him.

But not letting his family stir up trouble did not mean that Connor was not angry or annoyed.

Recently, every day, when Connor returned home, he would stare at the empty house, which no longer had Carly and Ronald in it.

The woman he once deeply loved and his biological son were no longer there. He truly loved Carly before, because she was a beautiful, virtuous, and gentle woman. She was completely his ideal type.

When they got married, Connor felt incredibly lucky, as if he was one of the luckiest men in the world, to marry the woman of his dreams. However, that happiness faded after Carly was forced into a compromising situation by a guest during a business event.

She was forced and defiled by others. Every time he thought of that matter, he felt extremely angry, enraged, and then disgusted.

He knew it was not Carly's fault. He also hated himself for not protecting her properly back then, which led to her being bullied by others. If time could be turned back, starting from the day they got married, he would have had Carly quit her job and focus on staying at home to take care of Ronald, avoiding the public eye. Unfortunately, there are no ifs.

He also could not control his feelings. Every time he saw Carly, he could not help but think of how she was defiled. He could not help but feel disgusted and simply did not want to be intimate with her as a couple anymore.

Yet, at the same time, he was unwilling to accept it. He could not forget the pure, gentle, virtuous, and beautiful Carly, who was his ideal type and perfect in every way. So, he did not want a divorce, and he did not want her to leave him.

However, while he held on to Carly, he could not convince himself to accept her after what had happened to her. Eventually, their lives got worse before they knew it.

Sometimes he would feel that the person he was now seemed very unfamiliar. He often lost his temper and hit Carly. He knew that he had unconsciously become a loathsome domestic abuser, but he just could not control himself.

Sometimes he could not even

control his thoughts. He believed it was all Carly's fault. Carly, knowing how attractive she was, still went out to socialize with clients. He thought she might be playing hard to get, deliberately trying to seduce that scion. Just like what the witnesses said in court, Carly was a bitch, trying to seduce the scion. But, when she was played with and found out he was not interested in

taking responsibility, she falsely

accused him of assaulting her.