

REBORN, REAWAKENED, REKINDLED

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 “Mom, don’t worry, Neil and I have been to doctors. We’re all good. Probably we are just taking longer to have a kid because he’s always so busy with work.” I said, feeling touched, but with a pang of regret that I might not be her daughter-in-law for much longer. “Ryan and I have read about his affairs in the paper, you know. We’ve given him lectures plenty of times. But you’re his wife. You need to keep an eye on him, understand?” Faith advised. Even though I knew I couldn’t control Neil, and that he might soon be chasing other skirts, I nodded at her in a sincere look, “Alright, mom.” After our chat, I had breakfast with my parents-in-law and learned that Neil had left early in the morning. I didn’t really care. I’d decided to just let him do whatever. After breakfast, I left home and made a beeline for the hospital to give Russel a piece of my mind. I stopped Russel just as he was getting back to his office after him making rounds of the wards. With a smile, I asked, “Dr. Russel, got a minute?” “Nope.” He replied, his handsome face devoid of any smile. “Scared to face me, are you?” I sat down next to him and started giving him a lecture. “I asked you to convince Neil to divorce me, but instead you convinced my parents-in-law to move to Sterling Estates! Since when did Dr. Russel become such a proponent of preserving marriages?” Russel gave me a glance and spoke in an indifferent tone, “They asked about how things were between Neil and you. I just said you wanted a divorce.” 1 Hearing that, I wanted to make a scene right then and there! Did he trade in his social skills for his good looks? With all the problems between Neil and me, he just chose to tell them “she wants a divorce.” What are my parents-in-law supposed to think of me now? Just as I was about to lose my temper, Russel was called away by a nurse. Left alone in his office, I saw his thermos on his desk and threw some lipstick

in it from my bag. Might as well poison him, I cursed in my head, and then storm

I out of the hospital. With no job to go to, I had nowhere else to be. So I went home after a bit of aimless wandering. It was lunchtime, and the smell of food wafting from the kitchen was tempting.

Neil and his parents were sitting in the living room, talking about something. The atmosphere was tense. Seeing me return, Faith broke into a smile, "Irene, you're back." I nodded and sat down next to her. As soon as I did, she grabbed my hand and said to Neil, "Neil, your father and I had a clear talk with you today. If you continue to have affairs with unsuitable women, don't call yourself our son!" "What the..." I was taken aback by Faith's words. "Irene, I know you've had a tough time in this marriage. Neil's behavior these past few years has been very disappointing. He's been living a life of corruption, and few people could tolerate him like you have," Faith sighed. "Give him another chance. Your father and I will help keep an eye on him." Me saying I wanted a divorce got the SO serious? In my past life, I never realized they cared so much about me, liked me this much. But when Neil decided to divorce me and brought Bonnie to the Whitmore family, their words of persuasion were to no avail. Neil sat across from me and gazed at me coldly. He probably thought all of this was my plan. Even though I had already brought out the divorce papers last night, he wouldn't change his mind. "Don't worry. Most of Neil's affairs are just rumors, just business stunts. I trust him." I said, trying to ease their fears. Ryan added, "Irene, you're a sensible woman. Your understanding and trust in Neil are commendable, but we've seen how he's treated you these past years. You don't need to indulge him too much. Men can be very presumptuous."

"Yes, the nicer you are to him, the more likely he is to take it for granted. You always want what you can't have," Faith agreed with her husband. My parents-in-law patiently teaching me how to handle my marriage was both

touching and funny. Neil was clearly not amused. "I understand," I nodded obediently. Just then, Ada came in, "Dinner's ready." Faith complimented Ada, "The food smells wonderful." I smiled, "Ada's cooking is indeed excellent. I've gained a few pounds because of it. You should try her dishes more often." "I'm leaving in a couple of days and I won't have the chance. You're too thin and should put on some weight," she chatted with me as we headed to the dining room. I wish I could tell her she'll have plenty of chances in the future. Despite this rare family gathering, Neil acted coldly. I chatted with my in-laws, and the overall atmosphere was not bad. Suddenly, Neil's phone rang. He glanced at it, and then looked up at me with a strange look. I didn't understand why, but I didn't think much of it. It wasn't until after lunch, when was about to take a nap, that Neil came to me. He showed me a photo, "Did you do this?" "Irene's doing," the accusation came with the photo Russel sent Neil. The lipstick in the thermos was soaking in tea, looking very out of place. I admitted, "Yes, serves him right for tattling to your parents." "Irene, what's gotten into you?" Neil put away his phone and looked at me with narrowed eyes, "What are you trying to do?" In the past I barely interacted with his friends. We had completely different lifestyles. Now I was tossing

lipstick into Russel's thermos! "I've just come to my senses," I explained calmly, "Neil, I've wasted ten years of my youth and emotions on you. Since you can't feel anything for me, won't give me any response, I'm going to live my own life. Is that wrong? I don't want to suppress myself, force myself like before." "If being with me for ten years was so oppressive, why didn't you give up earlier?" Neil was firm with a chill in his deep eyes. "I'll give up when I want to give up!" I shot back, getting angry. Things got awkward for a bit, and Neil stared at me for a while, like he didn't quite recognize me. We were locked in a stare down and finally, Neil was the one who left. I breathed a sigh of relief, plopping down on the bed, feeling a bit empty deep in my heart. After Neil took off, I also decided to step out and headed to La Rencontre. Every time I

visit, Bonnie's always there, but on that day when I had arranged to meet Russel, Bonnie was nowhere to be seen. Weird. "Irene, black coffee, as usual?" When Bonnie is on work, she always had her hair up in a high ponytail, giving off a refreshing vibe. She gave sunshine smiles to every 1/2 18:01 Chapter 17 customer. "No thanks, got any recommendations for something a bit sweeter?" I asked with a smile. "Sure do, cappuccino and macchiato are both great. They leave a sweet aftertaste, kinda like being in love," Bonnie explained with a cheerful tone. I thought about it for a second and ordered a macchiato.