

## A Contract Marriage With My Boss by Anna Shannel Lin Chapter 14

A cool breeze was blowing as waves rolled onto the beach, backward and forwards. The ebb and flow of seawater, sunrise, and sunset reminded Sarah of a simpler, more ordinary life. However, there was nothing ordinary about this moment.

Charles kept silent with one hand in his pocket and another putting a cigarette in his mouth. They walked slowly along the beach.

After a long time, Sarah spoke first, “Why is it so hard for you to talk about your family?”

Charles didn’t answer her question right away, he lowered his head and continued to smoke for a while, “Sarah, I didn’t mean to hide it, but those old days... I don’t know how to talk about it.”

“What have you experienced?” Sarah looked at him. The light was dim. She couldn’t see his face clearly, but she could make out the glowing red embers of his cigarette. Sometimes, she could make out the outline of his face against the starlight in the distance when he lifted his head. He was very handsome.

Charles replied, “Now that you don’t trust me and want to know my past, I may as well tell you. My sister and I...” He stopped for a moment to think and then said, “We do have a history.”

Sarah was surprised by his honesty and looked at him, coldly in the dark. Her heart suddenly sank into her stomach. As expected, her intuition was right. She had guessed that Charles was involved with that girl in the photo. Now, however, she just felt numb. It was true, and there was another woman.

Charles turned to Sarah and said, “My sister was adopted; she was ten years younger than me. My parents spoiled her. I am the only son of my parents, and I was very rebellious in my childhood. I always did the opposite of what everyone else did and caused a lot of trouble for my parents. They wanted to have another child, but it was difficult, so they adopted my sister from an orphanage. When she came to my house, she was just three years old. She was thin and small with big, innocent eyes. Although she looked smart and cute, I still disliked her because she was spoiled like a princess by my parents. At that time, I always bullied her. She never complained to my parents. She just silently accepted it. She would even listen to my troubles and care for me secretly.”

Charles lifted his head and looked to the horizon, “I really didn’t know why she was so sensible at such a young age. I would observe secretly, I noticed that she would help around the house. For instance, she’d clear away things without being asked. Can you imagine a three-year-old doing these things on her own? Even if there was a maid, she would still help. Furthermore, she was always very smart and obedient in front of my parents. At night, however, I found her crying in her room. Do you know what she was saying? She looked at a picture of her parents and cried, ‘Mommy, daddy, I’m very obedient now. I will try my best to be a good kid to gain their love and then I will have a family. Mommy, why did you abandon me? Why did you and daddy go away? You left me all alone.’ When I saw that, I felt sick. I eventually knew why she was so obedient. I thought she just wanted to have a family. After I witnessed this, I never bullied her, I was only ever kind to her.”

“Do you regard her as your sister?” Sarah still spoke it out.

Charles kept silent for a little while and threw the butt of his cigarette on the ground. “When we grew up, my sister was always sensible. She was excellent, and she skipped grades in senior high school. When she was sixteen, she was accepted into university. I always admired her, and we...”

“You fell in love with each other?” Even just asking this almost destroyed Sarah, but she couldn’t deny herself the truth.

Charles answered, after a moment’s silence, “I don’t really know how it happened. Our love came abruptly. I had seen her grow up from childhood. She was so beautiful, virtuous, sensible, and brilliant. No one can hold a candle to her. Moreover, she was not my biological sister. How couldn’t she appeal to me? She also loved me and I had never truly experienced that before. When she was admitted to the university, and on the day when she was celebrating her sixteenth birthday, she called me and we met for a while after the party had finished. At that time, she told me, ‘Brother, I’ve realized that I like you. What should I do? I know that it’s taboo, but I can’t help loving you. What should I do? How can I extinguish this thought?’ At the time, she was so sad, unaware that I was so happy. My beloved girl, my beloved sister, she loved me too! She was usually so sensible and tolerant, so I had never expected it, but she had finally given in and said it. I had wished for it for a long time and hugged her without even thinking of what was to come.

Charles continued, “I told her, ‘we are not related by blood, everything is okay. I like you, go out with me!’ Emma was frightened. She had not expected me to suddenly show my love for her. At first, she wanted to refuse, but I continued to persuade her, we are not siblings, why can’t we be together if we love each other? Why should we care about what others think? Will we ever be free if we need to care about what others think whenever we do something? I didn’t know whether she was convinced or not. She cried for a while, then accepted me and tightly hugged me. I remembered that day forever. Since that day, we knew each other for what we really were and began to date, secretly.”

Charles was basking in the pleasure of recalling his love story with his sister, Emma.

