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Chapter 26

Damien was startled. Ava didn't continue speaking. "You plan to leave just like this?" he asked. "Isn't it just what you want?" "After putting on an act for so many years, why would you stop suddenly?" Damien's tone was — mocking

Ava raised her head and said with a smile: "Because I have already found my next husband." Ava only casually said that because she was indignant, but a trace of gloom flashed past Damien's eyes. He was standing at the door and blocking Ava's way. But now, he stood aside. Ava zipped her suitcase. The suitcase was extremely heavy, and it was difficult for her to carry it alone.

But she gritted her teeth and pushed it to the stairway.

Throughout her stay here, she went up and down the spiral staircase countless times every day. Right now, as she held the suitcase which felt as heavy as lead, her heart was heavy too. Karen and Selina were still downstairs. Ava could have asked a servant to carry the luggage for her, but for some reason, she tightened her grip on it and decided to carry it herself.

"Hmph." Karen snorted coldly. Selina looked up at Damien who was walking behind Ava. Damien merely watched Ava quietly. He didn't step forward to help her.

Ava carried the suitcase down the stairs with difficulty. By the time she almost reached the ground floor, she was drenched in sweat. This was when she slipped and fell. Although there were only a few steps left, the fall was extremely painful: The suitcase also cracked, and some of the things inside fell out. She clutched her sore elbow and struggled to get up. Everyone looked at her, but no one came forward to help her. Ava suddenly came to a realization. Throughout her marriage to Damien, she had tried hard to be a good wife and please him. But at the end of the day, she was the only one who saw her own effort, and everyone just thought of her like an idiot.

"Stop pretending to look miserable. No one cares," Karen mocked. Selina walked over and offered to help Ava put her things back into her suitcase. Before Ava could refuse, Damien said coldly, "Let her do it herself."

She raised her head and looked into Damien's eyes, which were as icy as ever. They had been married for two years, and he had always been so cold. Ava couldn't remember any instance during their marriage where Damien would make her so happy that she jumped with joy. But there were many times when Damien saddened her so much that she could only sit and do nothing. Finally, Ava was done putting everything back into the suitcase. She turned and left.

The next morning, the lawyer Ava appointed came to see Damien. She really did keep her word and had gotten everything prepared. "Mr. Radburry, you just need to put down your signature here." Without even looking at the agreement, Damien asked coldly, "Where is she?"

The lawyer didn't know the answer to this question. Hence, Damien refused to sign it. When she left yesterday, he did not stop her. It wasn't really because she said that she had found

her next husband. It was because she showed no reaction at all when she saw him and Selina standing together. That made him very angry. "Mr. Radburry, if you have any doubts about this divorce agreement..." Before the lawyer could finish speaking, Damien stood up and tore the divorce agreement into pieces.

"Go and bring her here," he ordered his men.

However, his men couldn't find Ava.

She wasn't at her company or the Nagel family's residence. She didn't even go to her mother, Jessica Fuller's, place.

Damien subconsciously thought that his mother must have sent Ava overseas to avoid any future trouble.

However, Karen called him and asked him if he had signed the divorce agreement. She didn't sound like she knew that Ava had gone missing. If his mother didn't do anything, why had Ava disappeared?

Never had Damien expected that Ava actually had not gone far at all. After leaving the Radburry family's residence, she went to find her mother. Jessica threw a tantrum the moment she saw her daughter carrying a suitcase and found out that she had been driven out by the members of the Radburry family. "You are Damien's rightful wife! And you agreed to a divorce just because of a scandal? Have you lost your mind?" After she said that, she grabbed her daughter by the hand, wanting to drag her back to the Radburry family's residence. Ava stood rooted to the spot. "Mum, I don't want to do this anymore." "My dear daughter, are you stupid? By agreeing to a divorce just like that, you aren't getting anything from them. The Radburry family is super wealthy, and I put in so much effort back then so that you could marry Damien. How could you divorce him just like that? No way! I don't agree!" "Right now, you have no choice but to agree." Ava flashed a bitter smile.

Although Jessica gave birth to a daughter for the Nagel family, at the end of the day, she was nothing but a woman Keenan had a one-night stand with. Keenan didn't want the world to find out that he had cheated on his wife before, so he had never cared about Jessica. All along, she had survived on the money Ava gave her. Now that her daughter was divorcing Damien without getting a single cent, it meant that she would no longer be able to live on the Radburry family's money. Of course she was furious. "You good-for-nothing! Without the Radburry family, how are the two of us going to survive in the future?" Jessica raised her hand, wanting to hit Ava. But in the end, she didn't have the heart to do it and slapped the table forcefully instead. "Mum, all the money I have given you over the years is from my own salary. I've never taken any money from the Radburry family. Don't worry. I can still afford to support you in the future." "You can afford to support me? With what? With the salary you get from that shabby company of yours?" Jessica was so angry that she was almost losing her mind. "No way! Go back to the Radburry family now. Right now!" After arguing for some time, Jessica drove Ava out of the house, wanting her to go back to the Radburry family and admit defeat.

But it wasn't possible for her to go back.

Ava stood in front of her mother's home for a long time. She had three homes: her mother's home, the Nagel family's residence, and the Radburry family's residence. But none of these

places . welcomed her.

She sighed. She had not rest well for the past few days, and there was a sense of suffocation in her chest. She leaned against the street lamp and retched a few times. "Tsk, tsk tsk. Ava Nagel, what a miserable sight you cut. The Radburry family drove you out, didn't they? You're such an embarrassment to the Nagel family." A familiar and sarcastic voice rang out. Ava turned, and as expected, she saw Beth. Beth was good at kicking someone when she was down indeed. "I'm not the only one who's an embarrassment to the Nagel family." Ava said coldly. After she finished speaking, she suppressed the nausea in her chest, sidestepped Beth, and walked away.

"Where are you going?" Two men walked out from behind Beth and stood in Ava's way. They were tall as well as burly, and they looked like gangsters. "Beth, what are you trying to do?" "I'm a vengeful person. Ava, you probably don't know this, do you?" Beth smiled triumphantly. The two gangsters blindfolded Ava with a black cloth, tied her hands and feet, and shoved her into a van. Ava struggled with all her might, but it was useless. The car stopped after a while. Based on the humid air of the surroundings, Ava reckoned that she had been brought to a warehouse.

Beth ordered the two gangsters to drag Ava out of the car and press her down on a chair. Immediately after that, she felt a sharp pain in her wrist. It seemed like her wrist had been slashed by a knife, and the pain was unendurable.

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Ava couldn't see anything. She could only hear the sound of the blood from the cut on her wrist dripping into some kind of container. "Ava, I want you to know how it feels like to bleed until the blood in your body runs dry. I wonder how it's like." Beth sneered and said beside her ear. The cut on her wrist was excruciatingly painful. Her limbs were tied up and numb. All she could hear was the sound of her blood dripping non-stop. If this continued, she was afraid that she would die of blood loss in less than an hour. Beth's expression was hideous as she laughed. Beth obviously couldn't wait to see Ava die with her own eyes. "Ava, have you ever heard of this experiment? A person was blindfolded, and a small cut was made on his wrist. Actually, he didn't bleed much. But he was so horrified by the sound of his blood dripping that he frightened himself to death." Beth whispered in Ava's ear, her voice menacing. Together with the sound of her blood dripping, Ava felt a chill run down her spine. "Hahaha... My dear sister, why don't you guess if you're really bleeding or if I'm just scaring you?" Ava bit her lower lip. Right now, she did feel dizzy, as though she had lost a lot of blood. But she couldn't tell if Beth was just scaring her or if she did really bleed that much. "Ava Nagel, you should have died a long time ago," Beth said mercilessly.

Ava could hear Beth's footsteps as the later went out, and the door was closed.

The air was moist, and the ceaseless sound of blood dripping echoed in the quiet space. Why would Beth scare her? Beth probably wanted her dead. Her consciousness gradually

blurred. "Here, pass the ball!"

"Watch out!"

Someone in the court exclaimed as a basketball flew at lightning speed towards the bleachers where Ava was sitting. This was when Beth pushed her forcefully into the court. Ava's face was about to be smashed by the basketball when a large hand reached out and nonchalantly caught the ball. She raised her head and saw a boy wearing a white T-shirt. It was as though he had just passed by and saved her while he was at it. He didn't even spare her a glance as he walked away indifferently. Ava remembered that it happened a long time ago, when she was in high school. She never believed in falling in love at first sight. But even though she managed to escape being smashed by the basketball, she couldn't escape falling head over heels for this boy. Just like in many shoyo mangas, whenever girls fall in love at first sight, the boys were always handsome.

Damien was the most good-looking boy she had never seen. His appearance was impeccable.

From then on, Ava had a crush on that boy for a long time. Unfortunately, he never spared her a glance. Really... Everything was over...

"Ava."

She heard someone calling her name.

Someone kicked the warehouse door open. Someone pulled off the blindfold covering her eyes. She tried hard to open her eyes, but she couldn't muster up the strength. "Damien, let me explain. I..."

"Get lost."

In a daze, Ava felt someone carrying her in his arms. She managed to open her eyes a little and saw someone's side profile. Was it him? No, how could it be him? Why would he... Why would he save her?

From high school to university, her love for him was unrequited. She gave all her youth to him for nothing in return.

To be able to go to the same university as him, she worked hard and scored the second highest in her grade. She gave it her all to be his equal.

But in the end, it was all in vain.

It was late at night when she woke up. There was a white silhouette in front of her, and it was dark outside the window.

If it wasn't for the fact that the nurse walked towards her, the contrast between the whiteness and the blackness would have made Ava think that she was at the intersection between heaven and hell. "You have lost too much blood, don't move around" the nurse said. Ava turned and looked at her wrist, which was wrapped in a thick gauze. Indeed. Why would Beth let her live? That woman blamed Ava for the fact that Karen and Damien no longer paid her any attention. Of course she wanted Ava dead. "Why... Why am I here?" she asked the nurse. "Miss Nagel, don't worry. You've just received a blood transfusion, and your life is no longer in danger. Also, you are pregnant." "What did you say?" She immediately became a lot more awake and struggled to sit up. Pregnant? How was this possible? The nurse quickly comforted her. "Miss Nagel, you are very weak right now. Please

don't get overly emotional." She was stunned for a long time, unable to get over the shock of the news.

"Don't worry, I will sign the divorce agreement as soon as possible. As for this baby... If you don't want it, I'm willing to get an abortion." Ava tried to compose herself and said.

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Chapter 28

However, there was a deep sense of suffocation in her chest. After waiting for so long and putting in so much effort, she finally had a baby. She didn't have the heart to take away its opportunity of seeing the world. D However, since they had gotten divorced, Ava reckoned that Damien wouldn't want a baby with her. Ava sneered. Damien, though, looked annoyed. "Ava, do you know what you are talking about?"

"The baby in your womb belongs to the Radbury family. Don't you dare do anything to it!" Damien was obviously angry, and he grabbed her wrist forcefully with his cold hand. Ava really didn't know why he was angry. He wanted a divorce, and she agreed. He wanted her to leave the Radbury family's residence, and she agreed. She even let him do whatever he wanted to the child. What was he dissatisfied with? "Damien, if you want to spare Beth for the sake of your past relationship with her, I'm okay with it. After all, she didn't end up killing me." "Spare her?" "Yes," She withdrew her hand and smiled. "Just do anything you wish." Damien's expression became increasingly gloomy and terrifying. He stared coldly at her for a few seconds and said, "Alright, I'll spare her then." As expected, Damien wanted to spare Beth. Ava chuckled self-deprecatingly. That was right. Why would he punish another woman just because of her?

The next day, the Radbury family's driver came to fetch her back to the Radbury family's residence.

There was no way that Ava could refuse.

Due to excessive blood loss, she was too weak to even stand up. When Karen learned that Ava was pregnant, she personally came to visit. Even though she didn't comment on Ava staying in the Radbury family's residence, she couldn't help but mock Ava. Ava was very

weak and couldn't even muster the strength to reply Karen. She merely lay on the bed and rest.

"Heh, it's just a baby, and you're acting like you're pregnant with the emperor's son. Stop acting so stuck up in front of me," Karen scolded.

But now, Ava was pregnant with the Radbury family's grandson. No matter how much Karen disliked this daughter-in-law of hers, that baby was her first grandchild. So, she didn't do anything out of line. On the contrary, before she left, she told the servants to take good care of the baby in Ava's womb. "Ava, don't you think that your position in the Radbury family is secure just because you're pregnant. Damien only let you stay for the sake of the baby. A woman like you doesn't deserve to be my grandchild's mother at all." Karen said arrogantly and left. For the sake of the baby.. Ava caressed her lower abdomen. The baby was only about the size of a peanut now, but everyone in the Radbury family treated it like royalty, afraid that something would go wrong. Even Damien never talked about the divorce agreement again. It seemed that having a baby really changed things. She knew very well that she was only a baby-making machine. But every since she got pregnant, Damien came home every day. He seldom talked to her. She was in poor health and was lying in bed most of the time. Damien would sit by the bed and watch her as she ate. "Stop looking at me like this. You're making me lose my appetite." As Ava held her bowl, she tried to avoid Damien's gaze.

But Damien's gaze was extremely intense, and she couldn't avoid it no matter what. She slowly finished the bowl of porridge with shredded chicken. After she was done, Damien immediately peeled an apple and gave it to her. Was he... Was he taking care of her? Ava couldn't help but shudder. He was treating her with so much tenderness all of a sudden, and she couldn't get used to it at all. There was an upheaval in her stomach again. She covered her mouth, got out of bed, and rushed to the bathroom. She vomited out the bowl of porridge that she had just eaten. In the past few days, due to severe morning sickness, her body had become weaker and weaker. She even lost a few pounds. Damien leaned against the bathroom door and handed her a towel.

"Thank you."

She rinsed her mouth and wanted to walk back to bed by herself, but Damien carried her in his arms all of a sudden.

"Damien, let... Let me go."

He carried her back to the bed and sat down. He then bent down and held her foot all of a sudden. Ava was so frightened that she trembled. She ran out of bed barefoot just now, and the bathroom floor was cold. Right now, her feet were icy. His hands were warm, and he gently rubbed the soles of her feet until they were no longer cold. He then put on socks for her and tucked her in.

Damien was being so gentle and considerate that Ava was starting to suspect that this Damien in front of her was nothing but a robot that was made to replicate Damien's

appearance and take care of her.

It seemed that he cared about the baby a lot. In the past, though, Ava never realized that he wanted a baby this much.

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baby this much.

After Ava's mother, Jessica, heard that Ava was pregnant, she was elated. She came to the Radbury family's residence to visit Ava. She deliberately picked a time when Damien wasn't at home to come. "Oh, God is finally treating us well. We have spent so much effort to get you married into the Radbury family. I can't believe that you wanted to get divorced just like that! Ava, please give birth to a son! If you give the Radbury family an heir, the two of us can live the rest of our lives in luxury!" Jessica looked around at the luxurious Radbury family's residence and couldn't hide the joy in her eyes.

"Mum, stop talking about this." Ava frowned. "Why should I? I know the Radbury family very well. Your mother-in-law, Karen Adaly, looks like a trendy and modern woman, but she's actually super traditional. She always berated you for being unable to get pregnant. We must give the Radbury family an heir this time!" Jessica was so full of joy that she didn't realize how pale her daughter's face was at all. In fact, Jessica had never come to the Radbury family's residence. After all, she was only a mistress, and all the members of the Radbury family had always looked down upon her. But now that her daughter was pregnant, she could finally hold her head up high. "Mum, actually... Actually, I don't feel like staying in the Radbury family's residence anymore." "What kind of nonsense are you talking about?" Jessica's expression immediately changed when she heard this. Ava lowered her gaze. "At the end of the day, they only let me stay because I'm pregnant. Also, Damien likes another woman." Every time she saw news reports talking about what a good match Selina and Damien were, she couldn't help but laugh at the irony of her situation. "Does it matter? You're the legitimate young missus of the Radbury family! Ava, if you give up the marriage now, you'll be just like me, raising a child alone and being looked down upon all your life." "... But Damien has no feelings for me at all."

Jessica was very angry. "I didn't put in so much effort to get you married into the Radbury family just for you to give up like this." "Mom, what do you mean? What effort?" Ava froze.

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Chapter 29

Back then, although Ava secretly admired Damien, she never dared to confess to him because she felt inferior.

But God always had a way of playing tricks on people. Two years ago, both of them drank too much during a party and ended up having sex. It was just a one-night stand, but for some reason, word got out about it, and both their parents found out about it.

The Radbury family had always cared about their reputation a lot. Even though Ava was

merely the Nagel family's illegitimate daughter, the two families cooperated a lot when it came to business. There were a lot of profits involved, and the Radbury family couldn't just sour relations with the Nagel family like that. Moreover, when it came to things like this, the woman's reputation was affected more than the man's. If the Nagel family were to hold the Radbury family accountable for this, things would get ugly. Therefore, after some negotiation between both families, Ava finally fulfilled her dream of marrying Damien. But what did Jessica have to do with this matter? "Mum, tell me? What did you mean?" When Ava saw that Jessica was avoiding her gaze, she asked. Jessica paused for a while before she said, "Cowardly as you are, if I didn't drug the wine the two of you were drinking, do you think that you would ever have the chance to be with Damien?" "Mum, what did you say? You drugged Damien and I?"

Her heart sank.

She had always thought that this was an opportunity from God. Even though she suffered a lot under the hands of the members of the Radbury family, she didn't mind because of her love for Damien. But it turned out that everything was just a scheme. It was no wonder that Damien hated and disdained her so much. It turned out that just like what Damien thought, she was merely a woman who resorted to unscrupulous means to marry into a rich family. "Da-Damien, why are you back?" There was a tremble to Jessica's voice. Ava turned around and saw Damien standing at the door. It was obvious that he had heard the conversation between Jessica and Ava. Ava opened her mouth, wanting to explain things. But in the end, she decided against it.

Her mother only did that because of her. She was in no way innocent.

"Damien, listen to me. It's not... It's not what you think..." Jessica panicked. However, as Damien walked into the room, he didn't fly into a rage as Jessica and Ava expected.

He merely said, "I bought you a cake, do you want to eat it now?"

"What?" Damien was holding a small and exquisite box from a dessert shop. She merely said casually that she was craving for cake the day before, but Damien actually remembered it. But what was going on? Jessica stood awkwardly beside them, as though waiting for Damien to scold her. However, Damien didn't say anything. She had no choice but to say, "If... If there's nothing else, I'll leave first."

Damien paid no attention to Jessica and untied the ribbon on the cake box.

There was a chocolate layered cake in the box.

"You're only allowed to eat one piece. No more than that."

He cut the cake and handed a slice to her on a plate.

Ava looked at him in fear. She couldn't decipher the emotions in his indifferent eyes.

She did not dare to eat the cake. For a moment, she suspected that Damien was trying to poison her.

"Even if you don't want the cake, my son wants it," Damien said coldly. It turned out that he only bought him the cake for the baby's sake. She had no choice but to pick up the fork and take a bite. "What my mother said... Although I didn't know it before this, if you're angry, vent out your anger on me. She only did it for me."

Ava carefully observed Damien's expression. She was worried that Damien would get angry

and do something bad to her mother. Unexpectedly, Damien said, "Ava, not everyone in the world is stupid like you." * "What do you mean? You already knew it?"

Damien neither agreed nor disagreed. He was not at all surprised when he heard what Jessica said just now. He probably already knew that he was drugged back then.

This was why he had always been so disgusted by Ava. Moreover, he had never allowed Ava's mother to enter the Radbury family's residence.

The cake was very sweet, and the rich creamy aroma along with the taste of chocolate slipped into her throat. Ava only took a few minutes to finish the small slice of cake. There are very few happy moments in her life, but she felt happy whenever she ate dessert. The aftertaste of the cake lingered in her mouth, and she almost cried.

Fortunately, her heart wasn't stone cold and dead yet. She could still be touched by such a small gesture and feel happy because of it. She could still cry tears of joy because he was suddenly in a good mood and decided to treat her well for once. "Damien, thank you."

Damien left after she finished the cake. She glanced at the time. It was one in the afternoon. He probably went back to work.

Then why did he come home all of a sudden? Just to bring her a piece of cake? The moment this thought appeared in her mind, Ava shrugged it off. Why would he do something like this for her? It was probably for the baby's sake. Her cell phone suddenly rang. It was a call from Selden. "I'm outside your house. Come out and see me now." She was stunned. Why did Selden visit her out of the blue?

Ava hurried to the window and saw Selden sitting in his roadster. He was waving at her with a smile.

Worried that Selden would get out of the car and be seen by the Radbury family's servants, Ava immediately ran downstairs without even bothering to wear a jacket.

"Why are you here?"

He leaned a little closer, took a look at her face, and frowned: "Your complexion looks horrible. It seems that what I've heard is true.

"What did you hear?"

"I heard that you were kidnapped. When you were sent to the hospital, you were almost dead. There wasn't enough blood in the hospital's blood bank, and Damien donated two bags of blood to you. It has almost become a legend in our hospital." Selden sounded borderline sarcastic, as though he was dissatisfied with what had happened. She lowered her gaze. "I am fine now." "Since you're fine, then come with me."

"Where are we going?" Without giving her a chance to refuse, Selden suddenly grabbed her arm and shoved her into his car. Before she had time to ask, he had fastened her seat belt and sped away. It was very windy, and he immediately closed the roof of his roadster. He then said, "Ava, don't tell me that just because he decided to spare you a tiny shred of kindness, you decided to continue to love him forever."

"I don't understand what you are saying."

"He's not treating you well. Even an outsider like me can see it. Can't you see it?" Selden obviously sounded angry. "If he cares about you and doesn't go around messing with other women out there, you wouldn't have been kidnapped at all!" "This is my own business.

Selden, where on earth are you taking me?" "You promised to treat me to three meals. You haven't treated me to a single one yet!" Selden stepped on the accelerator and sped up. "This guy was really..." Ava thought. In fact, Selden was always wearing his white coat and gold-rimmed spectacles, and he looked like a gentle and polite man. He only seemed like the willful second young master of the Oakley family whenever he sped.

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Chapter 30

Selden sped all the way and finally stopped at the entrance of a restaurant.

He actually sped in the city. What a man. Ava couldn't help retching the moment she got out of the car. Selden panicked a little. "Hey, even though you haven't fully recovered, you couldn't be so weak, could you? Are you okay?" "I'm okay..."

He took her arm as they walked into the restaurant and sat down at the table.

Strangely, the restaurant which had always been crowded was totally empty today. There were only waiters and waitresses inside.

"Why is there no other customer?" Ava looked around, finding the atmosphere a little strange. "Of course it's because I booked the whole restaurant," Selden said with a big grin. "Don't you have anything better to spend your money on?" "Of course I do. You're the one treating this meal, so you'll be paying for the booking of the entire restaurant." Ava was drinking a glass of water, and she almost choked.

This was a Michelin-starred restaurant, and even a normal meal here cost a lot. Selden was a rich man's son, and he could afford to book the whole restaurant if he wanted to. Why would he make her pay? "Even if you were to kill me and sell all my organs, I wouldn't have enough money for it." Ava admitted defeat. "Well, since you can't afford it, I will pay on your behalf. But in return, you have to marry me to pay me back."

Ava raised her fist and pretended to punch Selden. Why was this man never serious? "Selden, what on earth are you trying to do? Are you just pranking me? I'm a patient, okay?" "It's exactly because you are a patient that I'm being serious this time," Selden said with a solemn expression all of a sudden. Having known Selden for so many years, it was rare for Ava to see him being so serious. She couldn't help being stunned. "What do you mean?" "Ava, leave Damien and come with me." Ava gave a wry smile. "Stop talking nonsense." "I really want you to come with me." Selden took Ava's wrist all of a sudden. There was still a gauze on her wrist, and Selden's grip hurt. Ava couldn't help but moan in pain. "Look. With him, you are always hurt." Selden's gaze rarely looked so profound, and even his voice became deep and gloomy.

"Ava, I've been paying attention to news about Damien since I was abroad. Although he's the president of a listed company, his name appears more frequently in tabloids compared to finance magazines. He's always having scandals with celebrities, socialites, his secretaries, and university students. When has there ever been a good word about him out there? Ava, are you really happy in this kind of marriage?"

"Since you're married, I shouldn't have bothered you. But seeing the way you are now, I can't just do nothing." "Selden, this is nothing to do with you." Ava's head was lowered. Holding a glass of water, her voice became increasingly low. Selden became a little emotional. "Ava, just say the word, and I'll take you away. Stop caring about the Radbury family and the Nagel family, okay?" Stop caring? There was a bitterness in her throat. Earlier, she was indeed determined to sign the divorce agreement, but now... "Actually, Damien has been treating me pretty well for the past few days." "You almost died because of him. Just because he decided to spare you a shred of kindness, you think that he's treating you well?" "What about you? Selden, why are you treating me so well?" Selden paused for a moment and said with a smile, "Of course it's because I like you." Ava raised her head in surprise. Selden was never serious when it came to women, and he was always fooling around. From the time they were in high school until now, he had probably confessed to at least eight hundred girls. So no matter what he said, she had always taken it as a joke. But right now, his tone was solemn. This was the first time Ava had seen him being so serious. "I like you, Ava. After all this time, can't you tell?" "Stop joking." "I'm not joking with you, Ava. From the time we were in high school, every single time I told you that I like you, I was never joking with you. It's just that you've never liked me back."

Ava liked Damien, and this was a secret that Selden knew from the very beginning. Therefore, he could only stay by her side as her "best friend". He even gave her suggestions when it came to how to attract Damien's attention. But now, he didn't want to be her best friend anymore. "As long as you say yes, I'll take you with me and leave now. It doesn't matter that you don't like me right now. I just don't want to see you suffer." Ava stayed silent for a long time. In the end, she shook her head. "But Selden, it's too late." "Why is it too late? Just because you have gotten married, it doesn't mean that you must get locked up like a prisoner in that mansion forever! If you don't dare to leave, I'll help you!" "But I can't leave." She shook her head again. "Why? I will protect you. I have the ability to protect you!" "But I am pregnant." Everything was silent for a moment. Selden froze for a few seconds and chuckled all of a sudden. "So, I'm late again, aren't I?" "Selden, I'm sorry." Ava stood up and left the restaurant, as though she was fleeing.

Selden sat motionless, his smile stiff.

The restaurant manager came over. "Mr. Oakley, those things..." "Are you blind? Can't you see that I have been rejected?" Selden gave the restaurant manager a fierce look, got up, and left. The moment he walked out of the restaurant, he plastered a smile over his face, and he looked like his usual willful and dandy self again.

To confess to Ava, he had prepared 999 roses and her favorite chocolate cake. He even secretly bought a ring. But he didn't have the chance to give her any of these.

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After Ava left the restaurant, she stayed outside alone for a while before returning to the Radbury family's residence.

It was night time already, and Damien was waiting for her at home. "Where did you go?" Damien, who was sitting on the sofa in the living room, said coldly. The lights were not on,

and in the darkness, his gaze looked as sharp as a blade. "...I went to meet a friend," she said a little awkwardly and took a deep breath.

"Selden Oakley?" "No..." "Ava, you're so stupid that you don't even know how to lie."

Damien stood up and switched on the lights in the living room. The brightness made her a little dizzy.

He reached out, wrapped his arm around her waist, and pulled her into an embrace. "What... What are you doing?" "If you dare to hook up with another man under my nose, guess what the consequences will be?" "What consequences... Damien, even if I really do that, I'd just be doing the same thing as you." Ava didn't know where she suddenly got the courage to refute. Damien raised his eyebrows, his gaze as sharp as blades. "Do you think that you can be bold when speaking to me now just because you have Selden Oakley to back you up?" "What does this have to do with Selden? You're so unreasonable!" She shoved away his hand and wanted to walk away, but he grabbed her wrists and kissed her lips.