

# A Lifetime With You Chapter 51

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## Chapter 51

Ava knew at first glance that her mother must've informed Damien about this restaurant. Otherwise, someone like him, who regularly dined at Michelin-starred restaurants, would never set foot in such a secluded and cheap stall. "What are you waiting for? Why aren't you getting down?" Ava did not get out of the car, but she stared straight ahead instead. Because Selden and Kelly were in front of them! Kelly also recognized Damien at first glance, so she quickly greeted him with a smile. O It seemed that the fabricated accusations last time didn't affect Selden and Kelly's relationship. "Mr. Radbury, what a coincidence, did you come here with Ms. Nagel to eat their sour fish?" Kelly was afraid that Damien wouldn't recognize her, so she took off her sunglasses. But, Damien became a little upset when he saw Selden. Selden didn't bother to look at Damien at all. Instead, he asked Ava concernedly, "Did you rest well after being discharged? How are you feeling now?" "...have almost recovered.". "That's good." Damien became even more displeased after he saw Selden's obvious concern for Ava right in front of him.

Kelly held Selden's arm and said coyly, "Since it's so coincidental and we could bump into each other, why don't we eat together?" "Okay." Selden agreed and smiled at Damien, "What is President Radbury's opinion?" Damien glared at Ava beside him and went straight into the restaurant without saying anything. Soon, the sour fish was served. Kelly was amazed after only one bite, "Wow, it's delicious! Honey, how did you get to know about this hidden gem?" "I always came here with Ava when we were in university," Selden replied with a grin as he looked at Ava.

"Honey, you went to a medical university previously, and you furthered your studies abroad later on. So, how did you manage to do that with Ms. Nagel?" Kelly asked suddenly. "It's because this restaurant is very close to her school, so I always played truant to look for her." "Oh, you guys were so close!" Damien's eyes expression darkened. He had purposely asked Jessica about Ava's favourite this morning, so she told him about this restaurant. No wonder Ava liked it, as she had a lot of memories with Selden here. Kelly sighed with regret, "Sigh,+ didn't know that there was such a delicious restaurant here. Honey, whenever I think about your school days, it's such a pity that I didn't get to have fun with you during that time of your life. Why didn't I bump into you earlier instead of Ms. Nagel?"

Ava was dumbfounded by Kelly's words, so she quickly said, "Ms. Hensley, don't you say that. Selden...and I only knew each other just a little earlier."

Damien snorted coldly.

Selden looked at the two women in front of him. Then, he seemed to smile bitterly, "Yea, there's no such thing as 'first come first serve' in terms of a relationship."

Kelly was overjoyed when she heard his words. Thus, she hugged and kissed him lovingly. "Perfectly said. Although I met you a little later, your love is only spared for me, alright?" Selden smiled without saying a word, as his attention was only focused on Ava. Ava still didn't notice Selden's lingering gaze, but Damien's expression became even grimmer.

Everyone had their own thoughts during that meal. After the meal was over, Damien immediately dragged Ava into his car and left. On the other hand, Selden opened the door to let Kelly get in the car.

However, Kelly stood still and her expression was even more displeased than Damien's just now.

"What's wrong with you? Get in the car, I'll take you back." "I still like you a lot, but I don't want to be your girlfriend anymore."

Then, Kelly replaced her usual bright smile with a dull tone.

"Come again?"

"Selden, actually I can't eat fish because I'm allergic to seafood," Kelly said coldly.

He was taken aback.

But she looked like she had enjoyed the meal more than anyone else in the restaurant just now. Kelly stretched out her arm after she rolled up her sleeves. Indeed, her arm was covered in red rashes.

He approached her and took a closer look. Then, he realized that even her neck was covered with red spots.

"You can't take seafood? So why did you ask me to bring you here? Are you nuts?!" Selden hurried to the back of the car and opened the trunk. She was lucky that he was a doctor. Therefore, there were always various types of medicines, including anti-histamine in the car. He still felt uneasy after he gave her the medicine. So, he got her into the car and wanted to take her to the hospital.

However, Kelly held the steering wheel and said, "Selden, I'm not crazy, but you are."

"What?" "I realized something a long time ago. Even though you always bring me along to have fun when we are together and you take the effort to make every date interesting, but you have never remembered the things that I like or dislike. Furthermore, this is not the first time that I've told you about my allergy to seafood." Selden was obviously stunned. Indeed, he didn't remember that at all. Kelly laughed and her face was flushed due to the allergic reaction, which made her look like she

was having a fever. "Selden, I have finally discovered your secret." He lowered his head and remained silent for a long time before he said, "I'm sorry."

Her laughter became more miserable, "Look, even after I've exposed your feelings towards me, you're still unwilling to give me an explanation and you only know how to apologize. I'm pretty sure that you've never really like me at all." Since the moment he saw Damien and Ava, he only ever had eyes for Ava. Although he didn't utter a single word as he held Kelly's hands the whole time, Kelly could obviously sense that the way he looked at Ava was totally different from the way he looked at her.

Selden actually fell for a married woman!

Because of this, he treated Kelly as a substitute? And, did he think he could approach Ava righteously, now that he had an official girlfriend? "I saved your dignity in front of them just now, and I have cooperated well with your act as well. Don't you think that I'm well qualified to be your fake girlfriend?" Kelly sneered. "Kelly, you are a very good girl, I didn't mean to take advantage of your feelings. I'm just..." "You were just looking for a substitute, and you

happened to come across me at that time, am I right?" Kelly interrupted him. He stayed silent. "Selden, I don't care who you liked or disliked before, but I should be the only one in your heart after you have chosen me. I've always been someone's first choice, not second." "I'm sorry." She laughed even louder. He didn't know what to do but apologize after she had made herself clear. It seemed that everything should come to an end now. "In that case, let's just end our relationship here." After saying that coldly, Kelly opened the door and walked out. .

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### Chapter 52

On the other hand, Damien sped up even though Ava was in the car. "Damien, what are you doing? Slow down!" She subconsciously grabbed her seat belt. The car was already over the speed limit on the congested roads in the city. Worst still, he drove recklessly and he even ignored the honking from the surrounding cars. He was driving so carelessly. Did he think he was driving a tank? "Damien, you're crazy!"

After he drove for a certain distance, he slammed on the emergency brakes and stopped the car by the roadside.

She almost hit the windshield because of the sudden brakes and her head would've been bleeding by now, if it weren't for the seat belt. "Damien, what's wrong with you?" He turned around and pressed her against the seat. He lowered her backrest slowly before he stepped over from the driver's seat all of a sudden. Then, he pressed her down completely and bit her lip harshly. She struggled so hard that she could barely breathe. "Damien, you... uh... let me go!" She forcefully scratched his cheeks and left a long, red gash under his eyes. That caused him a lot of pain, so he stopped his actions. However, the cold fury in his gaze was terrifying.

But, Ava still didn't understand the reason why he was so angry.

His entire body was pressed against hers and she couldn't budge at all. "Can you at least tell me what I did wrong if you want to throw your tantrum at me?" "Selden and Kelly will break up today and it is all because of you," Damien said as his eyes darkened.

"What?"

She was completely bemused. "So, are you breaking up with me because of him?" "Damien, do you know that you are being very unreasonable?"

Ava became very upset. She indeed wanted to end her relationship with Damien, but that had nothing to do with Selden at all.

And, why did he mention Selden and Kelly just now? Ava was slow-witted in these matters, so she still couldn't catch Damien's drift. She retorted coldly, "You were the one who brought me to that restaurant, and you also agreed to have a meal with them. I didn't do anything at all, but why are you accusing me of all these things now?"

"It's not your fault, it's mine."

He finally let go of his hand.

There were obvious red marks on her shoulder. And, the place she had scratched him with her nails was very apparent. Ava sat up straight and buttoned up her clothes. "Get off," Damien said coldly. Ava was still very angry, so she didn't argue with him anymore. Then, she immediately opened the door and got out of the car.

Meanwhile, Damien drove off after that and Ava was left alone by the roadside.

Then, she raised her head and looked around.

Where was this desolate place? Ava couldn't help stomp her feet in anger.

How could Damien drive all the way here and leave her at such an unknown place!

She couldn't see any signs of people as far as her eye could see, let alone cars! She couldn't even hail a cab if she wanted to, so she could only use her phone to make an online booking.

But...

Her phone was still in Damien's car! After Damien drove for a few minutes, he heard a phone ringing from under the seat.

He stopped the car and picked up Ava's mobile phone. It was a call from Jessica. She was worried about her daughter as Ava hadn't come back after work. "It's me," Damien answered the phone.

Jessica immediately became elated when she heard his voice, "Is Ava with you? If she is, then I don't have to worry. I will cook some dishes for both of you if you guys are coming back tonight!" "No, we are not." "Oh, alright, alright, she has been staying with me for the past two days. It's time for her to go back to the Radbury family, otherwise, it will be awkward. Damien, please take good care of Ava. She's an outspoken girl, but her heart is always loyal to you." Damien didn't bother listening to Jessica's rant, so he hung up. Then, he swerved his car and immediately headed towards the direction where he left her at.

However, Ava was no longer there. There were no shops nearby, so where could she be?

"Damn!" He thumped the steering wheel hard. Damien searched for her throughout the night. He looked for her along the highway as well as all the possible paths that she might walk to. Yet, there was still no news about her whereabouts even though the nearby residents had joined in to search for her.

He didn't expect that Ava would be lucky enough to meet a passing van a few minutes after he left

discussed their university life...

"Selden, did Ms. Hensley misunderstand something? I'll go and clarify everything to her!"

"You don't have to explain it at all because she didn't misinterpret anything." "Then what is going on?" "She... is smarter than both of us. It's just that we're not meant for each other."

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### Chapter 53

Selden's voice sounded rather helpless. However, he didn't seem to dwell on the sadness even though he had broken up. He even joked with Ava, so she had no idea how to comfort

him at all. Selden smiled, "Well, you have nothing to do with what happened between me and my ex-girlfriend, so you don't have to think about it too much. If you really feel guilty, maybe you can treat me to a meal later tonight." "Isn't it inappropriate for me to have dinner with you for the time being?"

"Then, tell me a time which suits you because I'm always free."

"Selden, how can you be so shameless for the sake of a free meal!" Then, a colleague knocked on the door of the pantry and reminded Ava softly, "The boss wants you to go to his office." After all, it was working hours, so Ava hung up the phone and walked into the boss's office.

Dempsey, who was the secretary of the Radbury Group, had just left and Ava had no idea what Dempsey had said because the boss looked upset.

"Mr. Hemsworth, are you looking for me?" An ominous thought flashed through her mind suddenly. Indeed, Mr. Hemsworth raised his eyes weakly and glanced at her. "Ava, although we are just a small company, I've treated you well enough all along, right?" There was a hint of resentment in his tone.

"What do you mean?"

"You have no idea at all?" Ava was very confused by her boss's resentful words. Then, she caught a glimpse of the document on Mr. Hemsworth's desk and it looked like the one that Dempsey had just brought it. "Mr. Hemsworth, do we have a problem with the Radbury Group?" she asked. "Ava, everyone knows about your relationship with Damien. Perhaps a small company like ours can no longer afford to hire such a big shot like you!" Ava was getting more befuddled by his words. So, she took a step closer and asked, "Mr. Hemsworth, what happened? Can you please explain everything to me clearly?" "The Radbury Group has just sent someone to inform us that the advertising project that we had done for them is unqualified. Thus, they want to terminate our contract, and they even asked us to compensate them with triple the amount of the initial fee!"

"What?"

Ava took the folder from him and glanced through it quickly. This project was the largest order that the company had received for the first half of the year. Besides, the revenue of the second quarter depended on this order. Furthermore, colleagues from the design and publication departments had worked overtime frequently to complete this project. But, a single "underqualified" word from Damien had obliterated all of their efforts. "Why do we have to pay for the penalty when the Radbury Group wants to end our contract?" Ava said. "You have to ask Mr. Radbury regarding this. The Radbury Group is a big company, so a small

company like us can't afford to offend them at all!" Mr. Hemsworth said. The Radbury Group could destroy their small advertising company effortlessly. "Ava, if you're dissatisfied with the company or me, you can just spit it out, I can even promote you and reduce your workload! Why do you have to complain to Mr. Radbury about this and cause our company to be in such a predicament?"

From Mr. Hemsworth's tone, Ava knew that he had totally misunderstood the situation. Unfortunately, all her efforts to explain it to him were futile.

Ava immediately realized that Damien had deliberately caused trouble for her company after their argument yesterday.

How could the president of the renowned International Radbury Group be so petty! "Mr. Hemsworth, this is..." "Ava, go and have a good talk with Mr. Radbury. We can fix his dissatisfaction with the project as well, and I'll try my best to make it up to you if you've been displeased with me, alright?" "But what's the point of asking me to inform him?" "Since you're his wife, can't you solve this issue easily by talking to him? Ava, could it be that you're unwilling to do that?" "It's not that, but..." How could she possibly have the right to speak to Damien in the current situation? Obviously, Damien was targeting her! And he wanted to show her who was the boss from the start! Ava shook her head, then Mr. Hemsworth immediately stood up and held her hand tightly when he noticed that she was reluctant to help. "Ava, the company will suffer a huge loss if we lose this project. Besides, the company can't afford to pay the penalty. Ava, please save our company for the sake of our comradeship for the past few years!"

"It's not that I don't want to, but I..." It was just that she was about to divorce Damien, so how could she beg for his help to save her company? "You are the wife of President Radbury! You can solve things like this easily. You can still go home peacefully and enjoy your luxurious life without the company. But, what about other employees in the company? They still need to support their family and pay for various loans. They won't be able to survive if our company goes bankrupt. Ava, I'm begging you, do I have to kneel down in order for you to agree?"

As soon as Mr. Hemsworth finished his words, he immediately acted as if he was about to kneel down.

Ava couldn't allow her boss to kneel in front of her, so she quickly helped him up. Ava couldn't stand his repeated requests, not to mention that this matter directly affected her, but it also involved the livelihoods of the other employees in the company. Thus, she had no choice but to agree with her boss' requests. When Mr. Hemsworth heard that she had agreed, he immediately had a delighted smile on his face. "Ava, please put in a good word about our company to President Radbury! Our company's future will be solely relying on your support from now onwards!" Ava gave a wry smile, which looked even more depressing than a crying face. She had no other option, so she called Damien under Mr. Hemsworth's penetrating gaze. "Sorry, the call you are dialing is in progress..." The call was not connected. Indeed, why would Damien be willing to pick up her call? "Mr. Hemsworth, Damien might be busy now, ..." "Ava, this issue must be resolved today. Otherwise, no one would be willing to do business with us if the news that the Radbury Group rejected our project is leaked out." Since the boss had already highlighted the importance of this matter multiple times, Ava was forced to bring the documents to the Radbury Group to personally ask Damien for help. No matter whether she was willing or not, she still had to give it a try.

Meanwhile, at the Radbury Group's Headquarters.

Ava rarely came here throughout her two years of marriage with Damien. "You have no right to look for me if I don't acknowledge you as my wife," Damien had once said those exact



words to her. She stood in the lobby on the first floor and said to the receptionist, "Hello, I am the executive director from the Westrise Advertising Company. I want to discuss some important matters with President Radbury." "Westrise Advertising? I've never heard of it! Did you make an appointment?" Although the receptionist was beautiful, her voice turned pompous when she heard the name of Ava's small company. Of course, Ava didn't make an appointment.

"I really have to meet Damien to discuss something urgent, so please pass on the message," Ava could only stifle her anger as she continued to speak patiently to the receptionist.

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### Chapter 54

"I can't relay the message if you didn't make an appointment." In fact, Ava visited the group a few months ago and she even fought in the secretary's office just to meet Damien. But the receptionist obviously couldn't recognize that she was Damien's nominal wife. Given the unpleasant experience last time, Ava didn't want to disclose her identity this time. But now, it seemed that she couldn't get to see Damien if she continued waiting like this. She gritted her teeth and receptionist, "I am Damien's wife, let me go up as I want to see him."

"Madam? Isn't our president wife...?" Ava retrieved her wedding photos with Damien from her mobile phone and showed them to the girl. The receptionist was flabbergasted and she covered her mouth for a long time without saying a word. "Can I go up now?" "This... is not edited, right? You... you, you are really..." Ava took the pass from the front desk and headed to the elevator without waiting for the receptionist to finish her question. The receptionist was stunned for a while before she shouted, "Wait, the president is meeting a guest now, you..."

But, Ava had already entered the elevator.

When the elevator reached the eighteenth floor, Ava went out and she was greeted by Damien's secretary, Dempsey.

Dempsey was also surprised when she saw Ava, "Madam? Why are you here?" "Where is Damien? Is he in his office?"

Ava feared that she would be blocked again, so she pushed Dempsey aside nimbly. However, Ava could hear a voice from the president's office just as she was about to dash in, so she halted her footsteps.

There was another woman in the office with Damien.

It was Selina!

"Damien, what happened to your face?" Damien and Selina were indoors, but he was wearing sunglasses. Besides, there was an obvious gash below his eyes under the sunglasses. Ava wounded him when she scratched him in the car yesterday. Damien frowned slightly, "Carry on with what my mother had told you."

"Auntie said that the elders from our two families are going to have a meal together next month for the discussion about the engagement." There was a subtle shyness in Selina's

expression when she told Damien about this. Damien snorted, "She is really in a hurry." "Don't blame Auntie, after all, she doesn't know about our relationship. She thinks we are dating, so she'll naturally think about our engagement." Outside the office, Ava subconsciously clenched her fist so tightly that it had turned white. Engagement? Sh\*t, they were really in a hurry. Ava hadn't officially signed the divorce agreement yet, but Damien's mother had already chosen her next daughter-in-law.

However, the divorce would be done soon or later. If it wasn't because it would affect Damien's reputation, he wouldn't keep delaying the process of signing the agreement, right? It was just that people like him were constantly surrounded by members of the upper-class, so fame didn't matter much to him.

Ava turned and left.

In the office, Selina bit her lip and said bashfully, "Damien, I can make it clear to auntie if you don't want to join the dinner. I can tell her that we are not really dating, but we are just in a cooperative relationship." "Okay." Selina was stunned. She assumed Damien would at least hesitate, but he actually nodded and agreed right away. It seemed that Damien really thought nothing of their relationship, except for business cooperation. Selina gave a bitter smile and her expression remained the same, "Damien, I know that you fobbed your mother off by choosing to have a fake date with me previously. But, now how do you plan on settling Ms. Nagel? After you guys divorce..." "Who said that I would divorce her?"

Damien raised his eyebrows slightly. Selina was taken aback, "But, I heard..."

"You better don't believe everything that my mother says, especially when it comes to matters like these."

Meanwhile, at the Westrise Advertising Company. After Ava returned to the company, she returned the document to her boss completely intact. "Mr. Hemsworth, I'm sorry, I really can't help you solve the problem with the Radbury Group." "Why? Aren't you Damien's wife? Why can't you lend a hand with such a simple issue? Ava, are you that cold-hearted?" Ava could only bite her lip with a sense of regret under her boss' relentless questioning. How should she plead with Damien in the situation just now? She didn't even want to step into that office.

However, she couldn't think of an alternate solution to solve this matter, other than seeking help from Damien

"Ava, you are placing the whole company at the brink of disaster! Are you going to pay for this hefty penalty? Or you will help me to get more business for our company?"

Mr. Hemsworth could no longer suppress his temper, so he yelled at her. "Mr. Hemsworth, give me a little more time. I will think of another way to solve the company's problems," Ava could only say that to ease his anger.

Then, she sighed heavily when she walked out of her boss's office and returned to her workstation. Albeit she had told him that she would think of another way, but she didn't have the capabilities to deal with this at all!

She would definitely have to pay the compensation fee! Ava gritted her teeth and she knew that she must meet Damien again no matter what. She would accept it even if he sneered at her, humiliated her, or requested her to do something outrageous! It's not like she hadn't



acted shamelessly before, and it was just an issue of dignity!

In the evening, in the Radbury family's villa. Initially, Ava assumed that Damien wouldn't be back tonight. Besides, she was also brooding on how could she meet him to discuss the issue regarding her company. Surprisingly, he was already in the study room. "Damien, I need to talk to you..."

Before she could finish her words, he said preemptively, "I heard from Dempsey saying that you came to the office to look for me this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"Why are you leave again since you were there?"

Ava cursed secretly in her mind, "Of course it's because I didn't want to disturb your date with your mistress."

She held the displeasure that arose within her and said, "Damien, I have thought about it. As long as you can be magnanimous towards my company, I will agree on whatever conditions you want." "Really?" Damien raised his eyebrows lazily. "I have agreed to sign the divorce papers from the beginning. So, as long as you promise not to claim the penalty from Westrise Advertising, I will move out of the Radbury family's villa right away. Besides, I won't ask for a single penny from you. If you are worried about criticism on your engagement with Ms. Newtown right after you divorce me, I can also issue a statement to make it clear that we have divorced earlier on."

Damien stood up from the chair. Then, he raised her chin with his hand and stared at her condescendingly.

"I haven't even signed the divorce papers, but you have already proclaimed that we've split up. Isn't this considered as public deception?" "Isn't it in your nature to lie and cheat?" "Ah." He snorted and let go of her.

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### Chapter 55

Ava reigned in her anger and spoke loudly, "I know that you just want to torture me, but this is a matter between us and it has nothing to do with my company. So, please don't implicate others."

Damien snorted again. In fact, he also came to know about Ava's advertising company today. That morning, Dempsey went to hand over Ava's phone and she found out that Ava was working for the company that the Radbury Group had collaborated with previously. So, Dempsey just sent the document as well.

The advertising plan that Ava's company came up with didn't meet the standards of the Radbury Group at all. Thus, it was reasonable for the Radbury Group to terminate the contract and Ava wasn't involved in that decision at all.

It seemed that she had misunderstood him completely. He sat back on the chair and said, "I can waive the penalty from your company but I won't let your company handle this project anymore." "Okay, that's enough," Ava turned and planned to leave. But Damien continued,

"You haven't heard me finish my terms."

So, she had to halt her footsteps.

What more could he want if he was still unsatisfied with the terms that he had mentioned just now? She had nothing else to give him anymore. "What are your conditions?" "Put this on."

Damien took out a small black box from the drawer of his desk and pushed it to her.

Her eyes narrowed instantly.

This was her wedding ring, wasn't it? "Damien, what do you want?" This ring was bought when they got married, but he had taken it back on the night after the wedding.

Because he said that she didn't deserve it.

That heartless sentence had destroyed her happiness from being newly-wedded. Besides, these rings would always be a reminder of her misery during their two years of marriage.

What did he mean when he took out the ring again? "Put it on when you're out and never take it off," his lips quirked up in a mischievous smirk. So, this was his condition.

"Damien, what exactly do you want to do?" "After all, everyone in your company knows about your status. So, just wear it to remind yourself of your current identity." Suddenly, Damien's expression became callous again.

He wanted her to wear this ring all the time to remind others and also as a warning that she belonged to him. It was also to avoid her from being involved with other men.

Ava couldn't catch his drift, instead, she felt that he was insulting himself.

She didn't deserve the ring in the past, but why did he suddenly change his mind now? She sneered before she turned around and left. Damien didn't move and said quietly, "You can't even do such a simple thing. Ava, it seems that you didn't come to me sincerely." She couldn't help but feel upset. Then, she turned around to grab the small box on the desk – before she walked away again. She clenched that ring tightly in her palm and she couldn't catch a wink of sleep that night.

She could still remember that she was extremely delighted on the night when she received her university offer. She did victory laps around her home and even pinched her thighs repeatedly to remind herself that she wasn't dreaming. She finally got into the same university as him. On top of that, she was in the same major and class as him.

No one knew how much effort she had put in to get closer to him.

On the freshman orientation day, she mustered up all her courage and went to greet him.

However, all she got in return was a cold and indifferent expression. "Damien, don't you remember me? We...we are from the same high school! I am in Class 5 and you were in Class 7! But now, we are finally in the same class." However, he didn't show any expression.

Obviously, he probably didn't even remember her name. As the student who entered the famous university with the top entrance examination score, everyone had their attention on Damien during the orientation. However, she just sat silently in the corner and watched him speak as he was the welcome representative.

Perhaps, in everyone's memory of their youth, there would be someone that excelled in every aspect. For her, that person was handsome, smart, and his presence shone like the dazzling sun. However, she could only look up at his brilliance as she struggled to stay close

to him. She thought that as long as she put in enough effort, she would be able to live up to his standards. However, she didn't know that they were worlds apart from each other. Indeed, someone as mediocre as her would never get close to someone who shone as bright as him, things would definitely end up badly for her. "Damien, you b\*stard," she said softly in her sleep.

She heard a familiar, yet foreign chuckle, "How did you manage to dream about me? Is it because can only play the bad guy in your dream?" Ava opened her eyes quickly. . She saw a pair of dark and deep-set eyes with a sardonic smile in the darkness.

Then, the light in the room was switched on.

She was jolted awake and she quickly sat up, "Damien? Why are you here?"

She had no idea when she had dozed off and what time Damien broke into her room. She clearly heard him entering another room before she fell asleep. "My bedroom doesn't belong to you just because you sleep here more often," Damien replied quietly. She soon discovered that Damien was lying on the same bed as her and he somehow crawled under her blanket too. "Then... I'll sleep in the living room," She quickly prepared to get out of bed to free some space for him in the master bedroom. Damien stretched out his arms and wrapped her together in the quilt as he hugged her. She was in a daze when she felt the warm skin of his chest. It was as if he was still the charming jock from her school days and she would get extremely flustered whenever he approached her occasionally. Her heart was pounding violently, so she took a deep breath and forced herself to keep calm. She tried to act normal, even though her lungs felt like they were about to burst. "What did you dream about when you fell asleep just now?" he asked faintly.

"What?"

"I saw a smile on your face. So, it must have been a sweet dream, but you seemed to be scolding me. Do you feel happy when you reprimand me?" Damien's tone was very gentle and it had no sign of anger. However, Ava still tensed up at that instant.

Since when had Damien been so kind and chatted with her at midnight? He must have a hidden motive! "I can't remember what I saw in my dream, haha...haha..."

She planned to evade the topic with an awkward laugh. She didn't feel any discomfort when he hugged her. However, she felt her arm become numb within a few minutes because all of her nerves were tensed up. Anyway, Ava did not dare to move at all as this guy had a mercurial temperament. She could only pray that he slept quickly so that she could ease the tension in her body. Finally, Damien stopped questioning her and he switched off the light before his breathing evened out.

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### Chapter 56

Later, Ava shifted her arm quietly because the sore and numb feeling was making her very uncomfortable. She moved lightly and tried not to make any noise. Yet, she forgot that she was holding the ring box before she slept and it was stuck in between Ava and Damien at

that moment. So, her elbow hit the box when she moved and she inhaled sharply in pain. Damien wasn't sound asleep, so he woke up instantly. He touched the little box that was under the blanket and chuckled, "It seems that you really value this ring. You even held it to sleep."

"That's... that's because..."

"You don't have to return it to me since you like it so much."

"Pardon?"

Ava thought she misheard it, but he had already closed his eyes as if he was asleep again. She held the box with mixed feelings in her heart.

The next day, Ava went to the office for work. She was about to go to Mr. Hemworth's office and inform him that Damien had promised not to claim any penalty from Ava's company. However, the Radbury Group would definitely not collaborate with Ava's company in that advertising project anymore. However, Mr. Hemsworth looked very pleased, "The advertising department from the Radbury Group called me early in the morning. Ava, this is all because of your help! After all, we will still have other clients even if we lost that project!" Ava was a bit confused when she saw her boss's excitement even though he had lost a big project, "Mr. Hemsworth, did you just get another new project?" "Absolutely! The studio of the female star, Kelly, had come to us, and they said that they need our help to plan a promotional video. Furthermore, they even offered me this price." Mr. Hemsworth lifted up a single finger with a secretive expression on his face. Ava was taken aback, "So much, huh?" "Yes, it's basically twice the production cost of an ordinary artist's promotional video. Ava, we have to work hard this time!" Ava didn't expect that Kelly's studio would hire her company for the production of their promotional film.

Although this business was nothing compared to the previous projects from Radbury Group, Ava's company could still earn a lot since Kelly's studio was willing to offer a high price. The shooting of a promotional video would definitely require liaising with other departments. Therefore, Ava needed to complete the logistic and administration tasks properly. But, she had never thought that she would face so many challenges on the first day of shooting. Kelly was rather picky towards her filming requirements. Firstly, she complained about the bad

location, then she showed her displeasure towards the props. After that, she criticized the creativity of the planning and also the filming effects. She even nagged the logistics staff, who bought her coffee.

Ava, who was the administrative and logistics supervisor, had to solve all these problems. Ava had expected that Kelly would be in a bad mood because she had just broken up with Selden. Therefore, Ava reminded her colleagues to be more patient.

However, Kelly heard Ava's words.

"What does Ms. Nagel mean? What do you mean by tolerating my temper? Are you upset because I'm hot-tempered?" Kelly's remarks were very spiteful and she even rolled her eyes. As the main character in the set, it was a given that everyone had to tolerate her.

Meanwhile, Ava could only smile wryly and said, "Don't get me wrong, Kelly. I just asked my colleagues to be cooperative." "Kelly? Am I close to you? Do you think that you can make up

for your mistakes just by acting friendly to me?"

All of a sudden, Ava's face burned with embarrassment and she didn't know how to react in this awkward situation.

Dozens of people in the studio cast their eyes on both of them. Everyone obviously realized that Kelly was targeting Ava deliberately. But, Kelly addressed Ava as Ms. Nagel very affectionately just a few days ago. It seemed that after she broke up with Selden, she also vented her frustrations on Selden's friend, Ava.

"Sorry, Ms. Hensley, I will have someone change the props now, please wait for a moment," Ava could only say politely. "Not only the props, the lighting, the backdrop, and also the cameras, replace them with the best ones!"

The entire day of filming was basically futile due to Kelly's importunate and unreasonable requests. However, Kelly only gave them two days to shoot the video, so it was uncertain whether the video

could be finished by the next day. After everyone wrapped up the set and returned to the office, they didn't clock off tacitly and they worked overtime automatically. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to finish the task by tomorrow. Ava hesitated before she sent a message to Damien. She informed him that she would be working overtime tonight, so she might be going back late. Even though he couldn't be bothered with whether she would go back home or not. However, after the message was sent, Damien actually replied to her within a few seconds, "Don't be too late." Those short and simple words startled her. She looked at the small ring box beside her hand. She felt that Damie had been acting strange recently, but she couldn't figure out when did his

abnormal behavior begin. Why did he want her to wear this ring? Ava put down the mouse and opened the box subconsciously. There was a crystal clear diamond ring inside, and it looked extremely pricey at first glance. She didn't dare to wear such a flashy diamond ring on her finger all the time. But Damien had deliberately reminded her to put on the ring before she went out this morning, so she just kept the box in her bag.

Two years ago, he told her in the coldest and most disparaging tone she had ever heard in her life, "You don't deserve this ring." So, what did his actions mean now? Ava gave a wry smile. She put the box back in the drawer and locked it. Then, she got up and went to the pantry to get a cup of coffee. However, she heard her name being mentioned when she was just about to enter the pantry. Two of her colleagues from the design department were standing there.

"Look at Ms. Nagel, I'm really surprised that she has such a strong background. Besides, she's so lucky that she married the Radbury president from the Radbury Group. Indeed, you can get anything in this world if you're beautiful!" "Did you see the box on her desk? The diamond ring inside is so big! Tsk tsk tsk, does she mean to show it off by intentionally bringing it to the office? Ugh, there's no point for her to act superior in front of us!" "Did you know that Kelly was continuously targeted Ms. Nagel in the studio this afternoon?"

"What's the reason behind it? Do they know each other?" "My friend, who works as an assistant in Kelly's studio, told me that Ms. Nagel snatched Kelly's boyfriend away!" "What? Isn't Kelly's boyfriend a rich doctor? And, Ms. Nagel is married, right?"

Their conversation became even more exaggerated and illogical. Ava sighed quietly, but she didn't stop her colleagues from gossiping. Then, she turned and went back to her desk. After her relationship with Damien was publicized, she knew that many colleagues would talk about her behind her back. Anyway, she should just let them be since gossiping was like second nature to them.

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 57

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### Chapter 57

But, what did Kelly and Selden have to do with her?

She felt helpless and resentful of the blame that befell her, and she hadn't even had the chance to explain herself.

The next day.

As everyone had arrived at the studio to prepare the day's shoots, it was suddenly announced that Kelly had fallen sick. She was unable to attend the filming. "What's going on? Miss Hensley seemed just fine yesterday?" Without the main actress, there would be no way to continue the filming. As Ava was liaising with the staff to postpone the filming, she was told, "Kelly has to start shooting for the movie immediately afterwards, so the schedule will be very tight and we won't have time to film the trailer." "So what are we gonna do now? We've done all the preparation already!" "Didn't we already get some shots yesterday? Let's just find a body-double, and sew the shots together in post-production editing." This was simply too much to ask, even for a skilled producer! Seeing as everyone's efforts in spending the whole night for preparation had gone down the drain, Ava then decided to personally pay a visit to Kelly at the hospital and discuss plans for the remaining shots. Little did she expect to find Kelly was sitting in a hospital bed. She was happily munching popcorn and looking healthy as a horse! Was she really sick? "Miss Hensley, I heard that you are unwell and so I've come to visit you on behalf of all the crew members." Ava placed the gift basket on the table by the entrance.

Kelly's joy faded upon seeing Ava. "What are you doing here?" "Well, if you're really ill, then I'm here to visit; but if you're almost recovered, I guess I would like to discuss the next filming session with you." "I don't want to see you, get out!" Kelly started sulking. Ava said politely, "Miss Hensley, I don't mind if you want to be rude to me, but this is business that we're talking about, so we should act professionally." "Alright, I'm telling you professionally now. The deal is off!"

Ava was deeply embarrassed by Kelly's words. For the sake of the company, Ava forced a smile and replied, "Miss Hensley, the deal between my company and your agency is a signed and sealed contract, you can't simply walk out on us." "If it's just a matter of paying compensation, then so be it! Ava Nagel, who do you think you are to lecture me like this?" "Behave yourself, Kelly!" A voice boomed from the ward entrance.

Selden had clearly overheard their conversation, and he seemed upset. Kelly turned to face him and asked, "What are you doing here?" "I heard from a colleague that my ex-girlfriend



has been hospitalized, so I came just to see if you've died already." Ava walked over and quietly pulled Selden aside, motioning him to speak in a more civilized manner. Kelly snorted disdainfully, "Did you really come to see me or is it because you heard that Ava was here too and you wanted to come to her rescue?" "Shut up, Kelly!" "Why should I shut up? It's you who doesn't have an ounce of impulse control. You couldn't even refrain from cheating on me, you sc\*mbag!" Seeing that the two of them were about to quarrel, Ava wasn't sure what to say to defuse the situation since she had no idea of what they were talking about. Selden said warmly to her, "Ava, you should head back first, I think your visitation is wasted on Kelly since she's not really sick after all."

Ava nodded. As the saying went, the saint had difficulties in settling family matters. As she was no saint herself, she chose to slip away from the scene.

As she exited the ward, she could hear Ava's shrill voice even from the hallway, "Selden Oakley! You're a no-good son of bitch!"

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On the very same day itself, Kelly came again to the filming site. Ava didn't know how Selden had managed to persuade her. But by the unhappy looks on her face, it looked like Kelly wasn't really convinced after all. Fortunately, Kelly still had a respectable work ethic. Once she got into character in the drama, she immediately resumed her wholesome and cheerful persona. The entire shoot went rather smoothly, though it ended late at 1 am the next day due to the delayed start. Everything was done at long last. As crew members left the set, they each looked haggard and almost collapsed in the next second. Ava failed to order a cab to take her home, as it was already too late at night. Also, the busses and subway had already stopped working at this hour. She let out a long sigh, and uncertain of how she was going to find her way back now. Her colleagues who drove to work had already left, while the rest had already been picked up by their family. She stood all alone at the intersection. "Hey, isn't Mr. Radbury going to send someone to pick you up?" Kelly sat in the back seat of the sports car and stopped beside her. How nice it was to be a big movie star. She got a private chauffeur to send her home even this late at night. Ava ignored her snide remark. She could not help but feel a little jealous.

Kelly continued to mock Ava, "Hmm...looks like Selden isn't that into you after all. He's aware that you're working late, and yet here you are all alone and stranded after work." "Miss Hensley, I don't think you understand the nature of the relationship that I have with Selden..." "It is you who do not understand, Ava." Kelly left her with that cold remark and motioned for her driver to depart. Ava glanced at the empty street. There was not a single soul in sight, much less a cab. "Never mind, guess I'll walk then, though it's a long way." Ava had been trudging wearily on the pavement for several minutes, when she heard a honk behind her.

She turned her head and was surprised to find that it was actually Damien's car! "Get in the car." He rolled down the window, and his face was indifferent as usual. She got in quickly and asked, "It's late, what are you doing around here?" "I am just passing by." "Really?" Ava doubted his words. It was almost half-past one in the morning, what was Damian doing out here when he should be snoring away by now? Moreover, this was in the middle of

nowhere, it was not an arterial highway that one would simply pass by. Damien said nothing as he focused on the drive. She fastened her seat belt and quietly enjoyed the trip home. She had never dared to imagine herself being picked up by a lover after work. Ava was drained from the day's work, so she no longer had the energy to ask questions about Damien's timely rescue. She leaned on the window and dozed off. In her dreams, she felt buoyed by two arms. She peeled open her eyes and saw that it was in fact Damien carrying her up the stairs in his embrace.

She had arrived home.

But why didn't he wake her up just now? "Um...you can put me down now, I can make it to the room on my own" Ava said sheepishly. Damien did not comply with her request. He carried her all the way into her room. Ava struggled to get up, wanting to go remove her makeup and freshen up. But, she was single-handedly pushed back onto the bed by Damien.

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 58

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### Chapter 58

"What...what are you doing?"

Damien was as still as a statue.

He merely stared into her eyes. The seconds ticked by... for about half a minute. Her lashes cast a shadow on her cheeks. The lamp above her head was rather glaring, and she was feeling a little light-headed.

She nearly lost her rationale. Finally, Damien stood up. He turned around and started taking off his jacket.

Ava subconsciously retreated deeper into the comforter.

Damien threw his jacket aside and told Ava, "I received news today that Beth may have fled abroad."

Hearing about Beth made her heart ached once again.

Her half sister from another mother had repeatedly caused her agony. Ava had been thrown into a dark abyss of despair numerous times because of her, and she had even lost her unborn child because of Beth.

Even the police had been unable to pin her down. Ava never had high hopes that Beth would ever be caught. But Damien never gave up the chase. "I'll be going abroad in two days. If we're lucky, I'll be able to catch her," he told her. "Do you intend to capture her on your own?" Ava was in disbelief. He nodded. This made Ava feel bad, so she muttered softly, "Damien, you don't have to do this for me, you know..." Damien cracked his knuckles and replied in an icy tone, "That's my unborn child that Beth murdered too, not just yours." "Is that why you've been extra nice to me lately? Is it pity or mercy that's driving your actions?" Damien did not reply. He only looked at her solemnly for a moment and patted her shoulders as if to comfort her.

"Just rest," he said.

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True to his word, Damien left the country with a few of his staff two days later. The world was infinitely vast and full of people. Ava did not know what were the chances of finding Beth, but if there was even a slim possibility of bringing her to justice, she thought it would be a form of condolence for her dead child. She took a day off and locked herself in her room. She did not feel like going anywhere. The loss of the child was so sudden that she never got to find out if it was a boy or a girl. Even if she wanted to create an altar to commemorate her child, she did not know where to begin. "I'm sorry, I failed to protect you..."

She whispered and her body trembled as she sobbed. Her phone picked this untimely moment to ring. The caller was her boss so Ava answered hurriedly. On the other end of the line, Mr. Hemsworth smacked the table angrily, "Ava, what's the matter with you?"

"What's wrong, Sir?" "How dare you ask me? Are you trying to bankrupt our company? Just what have I done to deserve this?"

Ava collected herself and hurried to the office.

At the office, the situation was a literal sh\*tstorm. Over the phone, Ava had found out that the raw footage of Kelly's promotional trailer had been leaked to the public, even though the final cut had not been released yet. Worse still, initial investigations by the company had revealed that Ava was the sole handler of the raw footage, which meant to say that she was the only suspect! When Ava arrived at the office, Mr. Hemsworth was on the verge of smacking her head with his cellphone, if not for the fact that she was still the missus in the Radbury family. "Ava Nagel! Looks like you've outgrown our tiny company! "Please calm down Mr. Hemsworth, we haven't sorted out the facts yet, so let's refrain from pointing fingers," Ava tried to advocate for herself.

However, the internet was littered with clips of Kelly's new trailer video by now. Usually, the timing of video launches was discussed and coordinated with the marketing department. Any unplanned leaks could lead to massive losses for both parties.

"You're the only person in this company who deals with this stuff. The final cut isn't even released yet, and your computer is the only place we store these director's cuts and poster shots. So tell me, who else can I blame but you?" Mr. Hemsworth roared at Ava.

"Actually, the photographer and Kelly's agency also have a copy of these items, so they're just as culpable as I am. How could you pile all the blame on me?" Ava retorted.

The photographer was incensed upon hearing this, he responded sharply, "Miss Nagel, what exactly are you insinuating here? Do you think I would leak my own work, and put my own professional reputation at stake?" The photographer had a point. He had no reason to do such a thing, and neither did Kelly's agency. Ava had just stacked the odds against herself. She could only steel herself and blurt out, "Mr. Hemsworth, I don't care whether you believe me or not, but I'm telling you now that it wasn't me who leaked the footage." "If it wasn't you, then why did you make a copy of the data before leaving the office yesterday?" a colleague asked. "It has always been my habit to make backups." "Bah! The way I see it, you're just jealous of my success. You leaked the footage to the press in an act of petty

vengeance against me!" Kelly bellowed as she stormed into their office. Kelly stood tall in her high heels, and she looked down with contempt at Ava, "You've been planning my downfall for a long time now, haven't you? If that's the case, I expected more from you than these cheap tricks." "I never!" "Hah, you are still trying to weasel your way out of this! What makes you think you deserve to be here in the first place?"

Kelly threw a tantrum in their office, and it was evident that she was extremely upset.

And yet, Ava had no defense against her accusations. Though Kelly did not produce any concrete evidence to condemn Ava, her accusations were almost certain to be accepted as truth with enough retellings in the rumor mill. Ava was trapped in a web of lies, and she was unable to acquit herself. Ava bumped into Selden as she was leaving the office in a hurry with a bundle of paraphernalia in her arms

"You're..." "I'm fired, is what I am. Thanks to Miss Hensley." She smiled helplessly. Selden rushed over as soon as he heard the news, but alas he was too late. It was because Kelly had finished her ranting and she left already.

"If you're here to see Miss Hensley, she just left not too long ago, I think you can still catch up to her if you make a move now."

"I didn't come for her, but I came for you."

Ava was stunned.

Selden held the door open and invited her in by saying, "I think it would be more appropriate for us to continue our conversation somewhere more private." Ava hesitated for a moment, but she finally relented and hopped into the car. "What's going on between you and Miss Hensley?" Ava asked as soon as she got in the car. "Oh, we just had a breakup, that's all." Selden chuckled. Ava had known Selden for many years now. As far as she could remember, Selden had always been a Casanova. On the surface, he appeared flirtatious and was quick to show affection to any females nearby. In reality, he was a cold-hearted man who could never truly be attached to a woman. It was almost as if he could walk through a field of weeds without getting burrs on his pants.

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### Chapter 59

Ava could not help but heave a long sigh, "You know, I thought you'd take that relationship a little more seriously since Kelly was such a distinguished girlfriend who's also highly compatible with

you." "But I've given you all of my true love. How could I ever look at another woman the same way again?" He smiled childishly. A leopard never changed its spots. This man was doomed to be a sweet-talking playboy. Ava rolled her eyes at him and said, "It's because of your loud mouth that spewing insincere flattery everywhere, so no nice girl can keep a serious relationship with you." "So, is that also the reason you didn't pick me?" Sensing his facetious behavior now aimed at her, she quickly cut him off in a serious tone, "Selden, am Damien Radbury's wife, so you better watch your manner with me." "Sure you are now, but

not necessarily forever, right?" His words had hit their mark. Ava was suddenly troubled because she had no clue as to how long she could survive the politics of the prominent Radbury family. Ever since the death of her child, she had given up on the Radbury family, but Damien.. She took a deep breath and forcefully steered her thoughts away from those dark corners. "Selden, I know that you have no shortage of women around you, and honestly, I don't know Kelly that well either. Though she is a little unruly, I can tell that she's serious about you. Are you really going to end things with her just like that?" Selden let out a laugh and asked, "Wow Ava, I never knew that you were actually Mother Teresa reincarnated! After everything Kelly has done to harm you, why are you still siding with her?" "What do you mean?" "Did you really think that the leak of the materials was an accident? And that the media storm surrounding the issue was merely a coincidence?" Ava was taken aback, "You mean to say that this was Kelly's work all along?" How was this possible? Earlier at the office, Kelly was outraged at the incident. Could this all be a ruse? But how would it benefit Kelly to get her fired? "That's nonsense! Why would she do such a thing?" Selden handed her a few sheets of paper and explained, "Two days ago when I first heard that her agency had contracted your company to produce the publicity clip, I felt that something was amiss. Hence, I took some time to investigate the matter. This morning when the story broke, I checked and found that the IP address of the source was pointing directly to Kelly's residence." The evidence was placed in front of her, and it was clear as day. Ava could not ignore them. But there was still something that she did not understand, "But still...why would Kelly want to harm me? Is there some misunderstanding between us I'm not aware of?" Before Selden could answer her, a lightbulb lit up in Ava's mind. That was it! Kelly must have misunderstood her relationship with Selden! "I can't let this go on, I must go to her and clear things up right now." Her hand was already on the door handle as she said those words, and she was ready to exit the vehicle. Selden grabbed her before she could leave the car.

"And what if she's doing this on purpose?"

Ava was stupefied. She turned around and found Selden, who looked very serious, instead of the smile he was wearing.

Ava was not used to seeing such a serious expression of Selden, so she was at a loss for words.

He repositioned his grip on her wrist and then to her palm, with a vice-like strength that was difficult for Ava to escape. "Sel... Selden, stop messing around, I want to get off this instant!" Ava stuttered. "I've told you many times over, but you've always brushed me off as a joker. Ava, maybe you had no idea before, but every jest I've made for you has been from the bottom of my heart." Selden's seriousness was unprecedented, and Ava squirmed uncomfortably. She could not wait to escape the situation.

"Ava, I've been a fool. All this while, I thought that you would return to my side if I just waited patiently at the sidelines. But you have ignored me instead. So this time, please give me a chance, and let me be the one to sweep you off your feet." "Stop your nonsense," Ava avoided his gaze, "Remember the last time you made me this exact promise? Well, what has it amounted to? Absolutely nothing! You ran off with your new girlfriend, Kelly, in a blink of

an eye.”

“Is that what you’re upset about? Because...” She did not have the courage to listen anymore, so she put an end to the conversation, “Selden, you and I are destined to be friends and nothing more. I’ll only ever see you as my buddy.” Ava batted away his hand and hastily ran out of the car. She bumped into Damien’s father, Daryl Radbury. It was then that she looked around to take in her surroundings. What a coincidence, Selden had been driving down a main road, and at the time of her exit, they had come to a stop at the intersection right outside of Radbury Group’s Headquarters. At the same time, her father-in-law who rarely appeared at the office building was incidentally walking down that same stretch of road.

He spotted her coming out of Selden’s car. Ava was dumbfounded and knew not what to say. Across a street not too wide, she bowed politely at Daryl and hoped it would pass as a greeting.

Daryl noticed Ava, as well as Selden who was beside her now.

“Ava, please let me finish.”

Selden had not recognized Daryl across the street yet. All he wanted was to grab Ava’s hand and only to be dodged by her.

“Long time no see, Selden.” Daryl was now making his way towards them. Selden was shocked and retracted his hand hastily.

“How do you do, Uncle Daryl?” Selden greeted him warmly. The Radburys and the Oakley family were both tycoons in the Southeastern part of China. Out of respect and mild enmity, the two families did not frequently meet with each other, hence their interactions were few and far between. However, it was only proper that Selden addressed Daryl as Uncle out of respect for the elderly. “What are you up to with Selden here?” Daryl inquired. Ava hurriedly lowered her head and explained, “Selden and I have been friends since high school, and we are just normal friends.”

Ava was worried that her interactions with Selden earlier on might be misconstrued by Daryl. Hence, she was eager to be rid of Selden as soon as possible. Selden smiled bitterly and corroborated her story, saying, “Yup, we’re just old friends having a chat. I don’t want to get in your way if you’re busy.” Daryl shot a look of mild confusion at Ava and he nodded, “Alright, I’m best to get going then, you two carry on, and I have to leave now.” Compared to Damien’s mother, Karen Adaly, his father could be considered a kind man. However, in the eyes of a shrewd and experienced businessman such as Daryl, someone like Ava was not at all an impressive character. Hence, his demeanor towards his daughter-in-law was at most lukewarm. Once Daryl was out of earshot, Ava whispered, “I’m sorry, Selden.”

Then she turned around and fled from the scene. She did not need to run far before she found a taxi. Afterward, she boarded it rushingly. The taxi driver smiled knowingly and asked, “Hey miss, are you just finished a fight with your boyfriend?”

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## Chapter 60

She quickly waved her hands in denial, "No, he's just a friend, that's all." "I doubt it. That fella is still staring at you. It's obvious that he's yearning for you, but off you go like a frightened jackrabbit!" She spotted Selden in the rearview mirror, and he was still standing motionless on the road. Whereas Daryl was long gone and out of sight. She was dismayed and heaved a long sigh. It was difficult to tell when Selden was being serious or joking. Maybe he was feeling extra playful today and decided to pull her leg again, she guessed. 8) As she arrived home, she suddenly realized that in her hurry to leave, she had left her belongings in Selden's car!

Most of the items were just a tangle of office equipment that she had salvaged after her dismissal, but she had also forgotten about her folder containing important documents. She gritted her teeth and made a call to Selden.

"Do you think you could arrange for a runner to return my items to me?" Ava was shaking as she held the phone. Only 30 minutes had passed since she had so vehemently rejected him, yet here she was asking him for a favor now. It was very awkward. The moments of silence from the other end were broken by Selden's usual cheerful and mischievous laugh, "Alright, but first, you'll have to buy me a cup of coffee, then I'll give you back your stuff." "Selden, ..." "Fine, fine...I know you're already wringing your brains to find an excuse to turn me down. I may be shameless but I still want to keep my dignity. Don't worry about it, I'll send your stuff over once I'm done visiting Kelly." "You went to see Miss Hensley?" "Well, what else can I do?" Selden feigned ridiculously, "Now, I'm not thrilled to run into more trouble with my ex-girlfriend, but it sure beats spending time with a little scaredy-cat like you! At least she's not going to run away from me over a little joke!" Ava breathed a little easier upon hearing this. So he was indeed joking earlier on. That was good. "Would it kill you not to play tricks on me, Selden!" Ava chastised him as she regained her bravado.

It was night, and Ava was alone at home, since Damien had gone abroad to hunt down Beth. Though it was common for him to be absent from home, he had been sleeping at home somewhat more frequently of late.

Ava felt a little forlorn now since she was alone at the dinner table.

"Did he mention when he would be back in the mainland?" she asked the housekeeper. The housekeeper shook his head, "Sir has not called to inform me yet." There was no update at all. This was how Damien worked. Ava had started eating her dinner slowly, when she heard footsteps at the doorway.

Then, a servant hurried in to announce, "Miss, Madam is here."

Before he could finish, Karen had already strode into the restaurant in her high-heels. She spotted Ava eating alone and sneered at her, "Well...well... looks like you're having a good time when living it up in the Radbury mansion even in Damien's absence." Ava quickly stood up.

Karen emanated a hostile aura.

Over the last two years, she had gotten used to such snide remarks from her mother-in-law. This wasn't the worst she'd heard yet, and she had experienced far worse insults.

"Are you here to see Damien? Unfortunately, he's not going to be back anytime soon," Ava

responded politely. Karen cocked her head arrogantly and continued ridiculing Ava, "You're quite the over-achiever, aren't you? As soon as your husband goes out of town, you busy yourself by flirting with other men. How industrious of you!" "What do you mean?" "Ava, do I really have to make a list of all your misdemeanors before you know the meaning of shame?"

Karen looked furious. Ava was stunned, but she immediately recalled that Daryl had seen her and Selden this afternoon. He must have mentioned the incident to Karen. Ava had nothing to hide about the incident, yet she was almost certain that Karen was going to blow things out of proportion. Sure enough, Karen raised her hand and almost slapped Ava, who subconsciously took a step back and managed to dodge it. Karen became even more irritated and cursed, "Ava Nagel, how dare you consort with other men in broad daylight, and taint the name of the Radbury family! If you had any shame at all, you would get lost this instance!" "I have never done such a thing." Previously, when Ava first found out about her pregnancy, Karen treated her better as she was partial to the child that Ava carried. But now that the child was gone, Karen naturally revealed her true colors once more. It looked like the day had come and Karen wanted Ava out. "Hah, save it. My husband saw it with his own eyes! You're quite something, you know that? As soon as Damien falters, you head right over to seduce a member of the Oakley family! Ava Nagel, you're not fit to be part of the Radbury family!" "I did no such thing." All of her justifications fell on deaf ears.

Karen was hell-bent on forcing her out of the house, and there was nothing Ava could say to change her mind. Ava took a deep breath and said, "If you want me out of the house, I've already drafted the divorce papers, so it's up to Damien to sign them now, yet he is refusing to do so. Instead of attacking me, why don't you ask your precious son what he's planning to do? "You...you insolent brat! How dare you talk back to me!" Karen was getting angrier by the second. She raised her palm as though to slap Ava again. Ava had foreseen this and deftly stepped aside. She said, "It's not healthy to be angry all the time. If you haven't had dinner yet, I'll inform the kitchen staff to prepare something for you."

Seeing Ava in a calm state drove Karen further up the wall.

"I have no need for your filial daughter-in-law act, you pretentious b\*tch! There are plenty of highly qualified candidates waiting to marry into the Radbury family. We don't need you! You're not worthy of the title!

Not worthy...

Ava smiled bleakly as all she was to the Radbury family was "unworthy". Nothing more than that. Even if her mother had exhausted all means to send her back to live with the Nagel family as a young lady, she would always be an illegitimate child.

And even if she was legally married to Damien, people around them would never take them seriously.

"Are you still feeling happy? Well, here's some news for you, the Radbury and the Newton family are preparing for an engagement ceremony soon. Once Selina moves in, you're going to step aside for her. Sooner or later, what difference does it make?" Karen stood triumphantly with both her hands on her waist. Ava's heart was broken again. Indeed, what difference did it make? It was only a matter of time. It turned out that they had found her

replacement, and they were making preparations for the engagement already. On paper, she was still a lady of the Radbury family; in reality, she no longer had any influence. "If that is the case, then please accept my heartiest congratulations to yourself and Damien. Your dreams have come true after all." Ava said without breaking her composure.