

# A Lifetime With You Chapter 61

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## Chapter 61

She smiled elegantly despite the wounds in her heart. She had fantasized countless times that her knight would swoop in and rescue her whenever her mother-in-law said hurtful things to her. She yearned to be protected from the people who snubbed her.

But, her fantasies never materialized.

Not even once. Furthermore, he was now in a foreign country. Even if he was in the house right now, he probably would not come to her aid either.

This was how disappointment accumulated over time.

Karen continued to berate her, "I came here on purpose to tell you that as of today, you can get lost from our home. Bobby, pack her things and throw her out!" Karen's driver, Bobby, obediently made his way upstairs to retrieve Ava's luggage. Ava ran over and blocked him from going upstairs. "How dare you obstruct my people? Ava Nagel, you're going to leave this house today, whether you like it or not!"

Karen shrieked and had Bobby push Ava aside as she ascended the stairs. Ava couldn't hold her back, so she could only quickly follow behind Karen.

"You don't have to go there. I'll do it myself," Ava muttered under her breath.

Somewhere in a foreign country. Due to the time zone differences, it was still a sunny afternoon here. More than a dozen subordinates were standing in front of Damien and they were hanging their heads dejectedly.

They had received word that a woman who looked like Beth was seen at this hotel, but they were too late again.

The woman had left the room earlier this morning and had gone missing again.

"D\*mn it!"

Damien punched the wall viciously. "Sir, don't you find it strange?" Damien's private detective asked. "What do you mean?" "We tracked her all the way here and wasted no time, but how, just two hours before we got here, she checked-out of her room and snuck out? How did she figure out that we were getting close?" Damien had already taken that into account. It was indeed strange that Beth who was just a regular woman could escape the local police and the Radbury Group lackeys altogether. She must have someone assisting her to escape overseas. But the question was, who was her guardian angel?

"Continue searching for her! Leave no stone unturned! Don't return to me until you have her!" Damien said coldly. A familiar figure entered the hotel lobby and headed towards the receptionist. It turned out to be his brother, Enrico Radbury! Damien stiffened and inquired, "What are you doing here?" Enrico seemed surprised as he removed his earphones slowly. He responded, "Damien? Aww, don't tell me you're here because you miss me! But why are all these staffs here with you? Are we playing mafia this time?" Damien gestured for his men to disperse from the lobby and begin their search. If he hadn't bumped into Enrico here, he had almost forgotten that his younger brother was studying in this city. "So, you live here?"

Damien asked coldly. "Yeah, the student dormitory is too crowded, naturally I moved out to live elsewhere that's more comfortable."

Damien looked him over. Enrico still had that smug air about him, as if nothing in the world could trouble him.

Damien did not have time to catch up with Enrico now. His primary objective was to capture Beth. He turned and was about to leave when Enrico halted him, "What's wrong, Damien? We haven't seen each other in a while. Why don't you come over to my place and let me buy you a drink?" "Get out of my way!"

Damien did not mince words. He flicked away Enrico's hands and strode off.

Once Damien was a distance away, Enrico's smile faded. Underneath his mischievous temperament, his mind was as sharp as a razor.

Back in the country.

The streetlights have just lit up, and the weather was chilly.

Ava subconsciously wrapped herself tighter in her thin overcoat.

She looked up as she dragged her suitcase along an empty street. The city lights were too bright that she could barely see any stars in the evening sky. When she was young, she always thought that she would grow up to be like those shimmering stars. But in reality, none of the stars had any edges. The human eye perceives the edges only because of our own astigmatism. Ava looked down again and checked her phone. Still, no news from anyone. Damien was probably sleeping with some socialite somewhere by now. Of course, he wasn't going to spare a thought for her.

She pondered about it for a while. But she decided to save on costs and headed to her mother's house instead of staying in the hotel.

When all was said and done, she was just a miserable woman who was jobless and got kicked out of her husband's home, with nowhere to go and nobody to rely on?

She was about to knock on the door of her mother's house when she heard a crash from the inside, along with the voices of angry men. Ava was shocked and quickly charged into the house. She saw her mother, Jessica Fuller, surrounded by a few burly men. She was shaking as she cowered in a corner. "What are you doing? Let her go!" Ava dropped her suitcase and rushed to protect her mother. "Ah, this is the one who married a wealthy man, right? She's quite a pretty thing, but who's the rich blind man?"

Several men laughed sinisterly. Their devious eyes fell on Ava and making her feel uncomfortable. Jessica pushed her daughter aside and shouted back courageously, "Leave my daughter out of this! I'll take sole responsibility for everything!" "Calm down, nobody is looking to bully her. But if you don't hand over the money today, I'll beat the both of you up right here!"

The muscular men wielded an array of melee weapons and they were ready to pick a fight. Ava and her mother had no chance of escape at all. Ava asked her mother in a low voice, "Mom, what's that mean?" "... Jessica felt ashamed and cast her gaze to the ground. "Your mother owes our boss five million dollars as part of a loan shark deal, and today's the final repayment date. Well, what will it be? Are you going to assume her debts?" "Five million dollars? Mom, what's going on?" "...I only borrowed three million dollars! These evil men

insisted that it's now five million because of compounding interests. Ava, this matter has nothing to do with you. Leave now!" Jessica desperately pushed Ava away, but how could the loan sharks let her go just like that? One of the big men, who was about 1.85 meters tall, raised his arm and pushed Ava to the ground. "Ava!" Jessica shouted.

She rushed over and tried to protect her daughter, but her arm was grabbed by one of the loan sharks.

Ava fell heavily to the ground with a thud and the pain from her elbow was unbearable. She scrambled to get up when she saw her mother held by the men. 1 "Let go of my mother!"

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"We don't have a problem with letting you go, but this is a business we're running here, not a charity. Just pay up what you owe, and we'll happily leave you in peace, otherwise..." Ava knew that these loan sharks were no different from gangsters, and they dared to use despicable methods. If they were provoked, they would not hesitate to dish out the cruelty. But this was five million dollars at stake. Where was she going to find that much money? Right now she was just an unemployed woman who had been disowned by her in-laws, and she had no one she could rely on. But of course, her mother did not know yet that Ava had been driven out of the Radbury family. She declared to the loan sharks, "As I said, my daughter is going to be the wife of Radbury's family! My son-in-law can easily pay you back even if it's fifty million dollars, let alone five million dollars! But first, let me go!" The loan sharks merely laughed it off and said, "You expect us to believe that you're related to the Radburys? What a good dream. If that were true, then why are you living in a slum like this, and why are you borrowing money from us in the first place?" "That's because." "Bullsh\*t, if you're the daughter-in-law of the Radbury family, then I'm Prince William himself! Haha hahaha..."

The men burst into raucous laughter as they were in total disbelief of Jessica's story. Jessica turned to Ava and begged, "Please, Ava, say something! Help me settle the debts!" "I don't have that much money..." Ava whispered, "Mom, why did you borrow such a large sum of money?" "If it wasn't for you being so heartless..." The men interrupted their conversation and barked, "Alright, time's up. Stop your scheming already and give us the money right now, or else we will kill you!" One of them had already unsheathed a sharp knife. Though they probably would not commit murder, it was enough to scare Jessica and make her cave. "Don't... Please don't... My daughter has money, she'll repay you! Ava, say something quick! Are you waiting to see them disfigure your own mother?" As the knife crept closer to her mother's face, Ava tightened her grip until her knuckles had gone white. She shouted, "Stop!"

"Oh, you've changed your mind, then?" "Just give me three days, and I'll have your money by then!" The loan sharks exchanged looks of doubt. They did not buy into her claims. But Ava had no other options at this point. She put on a brave face and tried to convince them,

"You're debt collectors, and all you want is the money. How are you going to get the money by hurting my mother? You have my word, in three days, I'll pay you back in full!" :

"Alright, let's say I believe you for now. You have three days. I don't give a damn if you're really an in-law of the Radbury family or some stray wh\*re from the village...as long as you pay me back in full, you hear me?" The group of loan sharks finally relented and left. Their home had been destroyed. Most of the items were broken or confiscated. Ava leaned against the wall and slumped to the floor. She then soaked in her own perspiration. Jessica crawled over and urged her, "Quick, you have to call Damien right away and ask him to send the money now!" She held her mother's hands and spoke sternly, "How did you get yourself so deep in this mess?"

"... I had accidentally fallen victim in a scam..."

"What the hell did you do with all that money? Ava was losing her patience, "Don't tell me you've been gambling?!" "No, I only tried my hand in the stock market, as I saw many people doing it too. I never expected to lose this much money..."

"You're lying! There's no way you can lose five million dollars from stock markets alone!" After Ava's hounding and interrogation, Jessica finally spilled the truth and told her, "The man said he had insider information, and promised us lucrative profits if we entrusted our money to him. All I wanted was to make a bit of extra cash, but I didn't have enough savings, so I went to borrow some money and thinking it would be a worthwhile investment."

"So you borrowed five million dollars? You're crazy!" "No! I only borrowed three million. The remaining two million dollars are the interest for those loan sharks, which they insist I pay! Also, I did not expect the man to be a con-man. I have lost all of my initial three million dollars investment!" Ava almost fainted upon hearing this.

"Then did you call the police?"

Jessica nodded, "I did. Two months ago, I reported the scam to the police, but they said that the con-man had already vanished and that it was impossible to recover my money." "This was two months ago? Why didn't you tell me sooner?" Ava was distressed and irritated at the same time. If it wasn't for her dropping by today, she wondered whether her mother was ever going to tell about this whole incident?

Nobody knew how much her mother must have suffered from the loan sharks' harassment over the last two months.

Jessica somehow felt aggrieved and complained, "Damien did give me a bit of cash last time, if it wasn't for you who refused to take it, and forced me to return the money to him, the interest for the loan would not have compounded this much!" "If I recall correctly, you used the money Damien gave you to buy a handbag immediately, no? Mom, when are you going to act maturely?" "Why should I act like one? I thought you marrying into the Radbury family would mean that I could enjoy a luxurious life as well. But instead, you're such a let-down that I have to find my own ways of making money. What a tough life..."

"Don't blame it on your luck. You're delusional if you think that there's a rags-to-riches story waiting for you."

"Ava, you can't pin it all on me! I'm doing all this just so you can have a more dignified existence in the Radbury family! Now I'm in trouble. Are you really going to leave me to

suffer?" Ava staggered as she got to her feet. She went to her room and locked the door. Her mother continued her nagging, simply because she wanted Ava to take the easy way out. She expected her daughter to convince Damien to help clear all of her debts. "No matter what, you're the rightful daughter-in-law of the Radbury family. It's merely five million dollars, I believe that's just spare change for someone like Damien. Surely, he won't just stand idly by as his mother-in-law is being hounded by loan sharks?" Ava plugged her ears, and she did not want to listen anymore. How could her mother have known that Ava had just been kicked out of the Radbury house? Indeed, asking for money from Damien now would only invite further ridicule. Even if she sold off her mother's house, nay, even if she sold herself to human traffickers too, it still wasn't enough to get five million dollars within three days! For the first time in twenty-odd years of her life, Ava was truly desperate. She could not bear to see her mother driven to suicide by debt. After a long silence, Ava plucked up some courage and dialed the number she had come to memorize so well.

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Somewhere abroad.

Damien's efforts to track down Beth had been unfruitful. He came close several times, but that evil woman always managed to slip through his fingers. He paused and thought carefully about the possibility of someone abetting Beth. Perhaps she had friends in high positions. "Go and check on Enrico, see if he is doing anything out of the ordinary," Damien ordered his men. "Sir, you've had us watch Enrico right from the beginning, but he doesn't seem to be doing anything suspicious." "None at all?"

Damien's heart leaped.

Maybe he was overthinking it after all. Enrico had no obvious connection to Beth, so there was no concrete reason to suspect that he was the one who helped her from the shadows all along. Damien knew his own brother well, that he would never lift a finger if there was nothing to be gained from it. "Assign two of your men to continue the search here. If they manage to catch Beth Nagel, extradite her to the country at once," Damien ordered. He had been abroad for a few days now with nothing to show for it. Damien could not afford to linger too long because there were pressing matters that needed his attention back at home.

His phone rang at this point.

The international call was from Ava.

"What's the matter?" He asked. There was a short silence on the other end, then followed by Ava's hoarse voice, "Damien, I need you. When are you coming home?" He was taken aback. He then glanced at the time before he answered her, "Tomorrow." "Alright, I'll be waiting for you." Then she hung up. Indeed, some things couldn't be disclosed over the phone. Though it might be even more difficult to convey them face-to-face.

The next morning.

Damien boarded the earliest flight back to the country and rushed home as soon as he disembarked.

Before boarding the plane home, he had already learned from the housekeeper that his mother had caused a ruckus at home and kicked Ava out. He guessed that it was because of this matter that Ava had called him. When he arrived home, he was greeted by the sight of Ava curled up just beside the gate and sound asleep in a bundle.

Was she too dumb to find some other place to sleep instead? "Hey, wake up..." Damien crouched to wake her and discovered that her face was streaked with tears. Looking at her pale and tear-stained face, Damien's heart shattered. He switched to a gentler tone and coaxed her, "Hey sleepyhead, it's time to rise and shine." Ava awoke quickly as Damien tenderly shook her shoulders. She hadn't been sleeping deeply anyway. "Damien, you're back at last..." Her voice was raspy and nasally. She must have been uncomfortable after she camped outside his house all night in the cold weather.

"Just how silly are you to sleep out here? Are you trying to make me pity you?" Damien said curtly.

Ava tumbled into his arms without another word.

He was dazed but caught her in time. Her body was very cold, and he could feel the chills in her bones even through their clothes. She wore thin clothes, and god knew how long she had been waiting for him out here. "How did you become so wretched?" His tone was blameful, but he actually couldn't bear to see her in this state. He held her close and hugged her tightly.

The housekeeper had detected the commotion and hurried over to open the gate. When he saw Damien and his wife locked in a tight embrace, he quickly averted his gaze in surprise before silently walked off to give them some privacy. Damien did not know how much time had passed. Though she was of a small-build, his arms were starting to get tired from supporting her weight.

He steadied her and asked, "What the hell did my mother do to make you suffer like this?" Ava shook her head meekly.

Now, she couldn't care less about how her mother humiliated her before. Without money, her mother's life would be in danger.

Earlier on, she hugged Damien because she was overcome with emotions. But after she regained her wits, she shifted awkwardly and was afraid that he would be unhappy with her actions.

Fortunately, he seemed to be in a neutral mood.

"Damien, I...I want to borrow 5 million dollars from you."

She gritted her teeth and finally spit out the words. Damien could not believe his ears, "What?" "... I need money, and I need it urgently." "What do you need the money for?" She hesitated.

She did not want to disclose the fact that her mother had borrowed money from the loan sharks, for fear of earning his scorn.

"That's a private matter. The bottom line is, I need it to save someone! Don't worry Damien,

I'm not taking it for free. I'm well-aware that it may take a long time with my current income, but I promise you that I will pay you back every single cent that I borrow!" Seeing the resolve in her eyes, Damien's heart sank. All this while, he had imagined her waiting for him loyally out here in the cold because she could not bear to leave him.

Was it all because of his money, after all?

He let out a sneer.

His eyes lost all their warmth instantly.

By now, he shouldn't be surprised by this. He had known her intentions since the beginning. She did what she needed to, for the sake of power and wealth. Moving up the ranks with the ends justifying the means, wasn't that her true nature after all?

He had been a fool for dropping everything and rushed back here because he was worried that she might have suffered any indignities. Instead, she was here for an alimony. "You haven't changed at all, Ava. Ever since I've known you, you've always been the same person as you were then."

She hung her head and murmured in a low voice, "It's not like that at all...you've never really known me deeply."

Damien did not manage to catch what she had just said. She continued, "I know it's difficult for you to understand the current situation, and I don't expect you to show me any kindness as a husband should to his wife. All I ask for is that you find it in you to be a kind Samaritan now and loan me five million dollars. It's probably not a huge sum for you, but it would mean the world to me because I need it to save a life."

"Do you need it urgently?" "Yes, I need it as soon as possible."

Damien snickered, "Since it's that important to you, yet you won't even give me a reason for loaning you the money, I guess I can deduce that all I am to you is either an ATM or just a sucker...right, Ava?"

"That's not it! Since when have I asked you for money ever since I married into your family? It's just that this time..."

"This time, you need to get your money's worth before leaving, yes?" Damien did not hold back the contempt in his voice now as he mocked her, "I must say that you are not ambitious enough. Five million dollars sounds like too little money for you, or are you going to keep pestering me for more?" Ava had come prepared to forgo whatever dignity she had left. Whatever insults he could muster and fling at her, she would be able to endure it. She gritted her teeth and answered, "Don't you worry, Damien. This is the only time I ask you for a favor. Once your engagement with Selina is sealed, I'll quietly slip away and disappear forever. I won't cause you any further grief. I'll do whatever you want me to do in return for the loan." Damien became livid upon hearing this. "Quietly slip away?! Ava Nagel, I'll be dumb if I let that happen!" Ultimately, despite all of Ava's pleas, he did not budge an inch. But to his surprise, Ava stopped pleading. She turned her heel and walked off, leaving him to stare after her determined yet forlorn figure.

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"Sir, Miss Nagel left with her belongings after Madam's visit yesterday and came back again at midnight. I truly do not know what has happened." The housekeeper explained to Damien. Damien looked troubled and said, "So she left just like that?" "They left miss Nagel with no choice..." "Send someone to investigate. I want to know why is she asking for so much money."

Ava could only return home to her mother after leaving the Radbury family residence. Her home was still in disarray from the aftermath of yesterday's visit by the loan sharks. Her mother was seen taking a nap on the sofa and couldn't care less about anything. Upon Ava's return, her mother cried and reprimanded her for being such a useless daughter. Not only Ava had lost her husband but also failed to earn money for the family. Ava could not be bothered to argue with her mother. She knew her well enough by now. She suddenly saw new footprints in her home, which were definitely not present last night. "Mom, did anyone else come here while I was gone?" "Who else could it be? It was those gangsters again, and they barged in early this morning! See for yourself. They even took the television and the air conditioner away!" Jessica pointed at the empty house as she wailed miserably. "They also mentioned that if we failed to pay them back within three days, they will return and cause havoc every single day! Seizing our stuff was only the beginning and after three days, my fingers would be gone by then! Each finger is worth ten thousand dollars and once I have lost my limbs, they will stab my body then! Oh lord, why am I suffering so much!" Ava's mother continued her howling. "Enough! Crying doesn't solve any of our problems!" Ava was sick of listening to her complaints, and she went to hide in her own room. During the walk back home, she had time to think carefully. Since Damien refused to help her, she would have to go to Selden. Although Selden was merely a doctor, he was the next-in-line heir of the Oakley Corporation. Hence, five million dollars was nothing for him. But...it was already difficult enough for her to ask for money from Damien, not to mention Selden. She mulled over it for a long time before she decided to call him. "I thought you're unwilling to meet me again, but it looks like you've changed your mind." Over the phone, Selden's voice was as light-hearted as ever. But Ava was in no mood to banter. "Selden, I want to borrow..." Before she could finish, she heard a demure female voice asking, "Selden, who are you talking to over there?"

Ava recognized it was Kelly. "Are you with Miss Hensley now?" "Yup, I need to settle something with her," Selden glanced at Kelly who was sitting beside him. He was determined to get Kelly to apologize for scheming against Ava and framing her for the video leaks.

But Ava could not have guessed the reason for their encounter. She only prayed that she would not cause any further misunderstanding between Kelly and Selden. So she told Selden, "Then I'll call you back later. Enjoy your time with Miss Hensley."

Then she hung up.

Ava couldn't do it...even if he was an old friend, she couldn't bring herself to borrow money from him. She knew full well that Selden would not hesitate to grant her the loan, and she

only had to ask for it. She scrunched her hair in frustration. As she rolled around in desperation, she accidentally knocked over her bag that was resting on the nightstand. The contents of the bag spilled out everywhere. As she bent down quickly to retrieve them, a small velvet box caught her eyes. It was her diamond wedding ring. She opened the box and was bedazzled by the diamonds within. Ava shut the box quickly, as though she was a thief sneaking around. With her heart thumping in her ribcage, she opened the box again, but this time very slowly. Considering the ring was a gift from Damien, it should not be a problem to claim it for herself, right? It was the last remaining memento that she had for her nightmare-like marriage. Cutting through her mother's cries of despair and her own dejection, the ring almost seemed to glow brilliantly with an angelic halo.

The next day, Ava made up her mind to pawn the diamond ring. Although the money she got from it was barely even half of its true worth, she couldn't be picky anymore.

The man at the pawnshop handed her a receipt. He then explained that she could redeem her diamond ring within two years at a higher price if she still wanted it back. Ava thought it was unlikely that she would ever get to do so within her lifetime. As soon as Ava received the cash for the ring, she immediately made her way to the loan sharks' den.

Much to her surprise, the boss of the loan sharks welcomed her warmly. It was a stark contrast to his previous violent disposition. He even offered her a cup of tea upon her arrival. "Miss Nagel, I do hope you'll kindly overlook our brashness earlier. We're deeply sorry for the way we

behaved. Please, you must believe that we had no idea of your true identity!" The head of the loan sharks was a prominent figure in the underworld, and yet he was now bowing respectfully as he offered tea to Ava. Ava was more confused than surprised. "I have the money. Give me your bank account number now and I will bank in five million dollars before noon," she said. "That will not be necessary. Someone has already paid off your mother's debts." "Who was it?" Ava was taken aback.

"That would be your husband, of course, the CEO of the Radbury Group. Miss Nagel, please forgive us. We know now that we have made a big mistake in underestimating you! We're truly sorry, and please forgive us!"

Ava stood up in surprise.

So Damien eventually helped her to clear the debts? But, earlier on, he was... It was at that moment that she noticed the loan shark lackeys who trashed her house the other day. They were standing meekly in a corner with bruises and wounds on their faces. "Was this...

Damien's work?" They quickly denied her suspicions and explained themselves, "No, Miss Nagel, it's all our own fault! We got these wounds from uh...we uh...we ran into a wall! Yes...it was an accident! Miss Nagel, we didn't mean to hurt you and your mother, please believe us!"

Ava turned around and quickly left the place. She hopped in a taxi and headed to Radbury Group. The young receptionist recognized Ava, and she did not question her. She followed Ava into the elevator quickly instead. In the CEO's office, Damien was focusing on a briefing by his secretary. He didn't seem perturbed by Ava's intrusion, but merely motioned for his secretary to leave them. It was only the two of them in the room now. "You are here? Well,

seems like you have everything figured out then." Damien said as he grinned. "Was it you who paid off my mother's debts?" "Five million dollars, phew! Your mother sure is something else." Damien admitted. Ava was puzzled, "But why? You obviously didn't..." "Ava, I'm a businessman, and obviously, I don't do things for free." Damien put aside the folder that he was holding.

It was right then that Ava spotted the wedding ring which she pawned this morning on his office desk!

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Damien had retrieved the wedding ring from the pawnshop! This explained why such an expensive ring was repurchased immediately. "Damien, what do you want from me?"

Damien stood up with a smirk on his face and said, "You pawned our wedding ring without hesitation and I assumed you are trying to leave me as soon as possible. Am I right, Ava Nagel?" "I've always desperate but it was you who never care about me," replied Ava.

Damien clenched his fists and looked at Ava intensely, as if trying to stare into the depths of her soul.

Ava took a step back, but not before Damien advanced towards her in long strides.

"You...what are you doing?" "I just saved you and your mother. Think twice before acting coldly towards me, Ava." Damien was right, and she owed him a big-time now. Ava politely replied, "Fine. Thank you for helping me." He chuckled, "What? All I get is a lousy thank you?" "Then what else do you want from me?" Damien was inches away from her now as he stared down at her. "I heard that you had lost your job at the advertising agency the other day.". Albeit being unable to predict where this conversation was going, Ava replied, "I guess nothing escapes your watchful eyes, Damien." "Since you're my wife, I must care about you." Damien lifted Ava's chin playfully while hovering over her.

Thinking that a kiss was coming her way, Ava tried to dodge, but Damien merely brushed her lips slightly. Upon seeing Ava's reaction, Damien teased her, "Oh dear, what should we do now? After all, you do owe me five million dollars."

"Don't worry, I'll get a new job as soon as possible and pay you back in installments. It will take a while but rest assured that I will pay it all back." "You have offended Kelly this time, and that girl has a bad temperament. Don't tell me that you are expecting yourself to join the industry again?" "Huh?" Ava was stunned for a moment, but she recovered and retorted, "She may be a big celebrity, but I doubt she holds sway over the entire industry! Plus, I'm not even an actress, surely I'll be able to find a job in advertising." "Well, you can be an actress with that pretty face of yours but sadly, you are just untalented in acting." "What are you suggesting? Just get to the point." He poked her forehead with a finger and said, "How about working for me? Then I'll consider your debt repayment."

"Wait, what?"

"Be my secretary and I'll pay you fifteen thousand dollars a month according to the market

rate. Eighty percent of the payment will then go back to me, which means you are working in this company until the debt is cleared." Ava did some quick mental calculations. With a salary of fifteen thousand dollars per month, twelve thousand dollars went to Damien. All in all, it would take her more than thirty years to pay off the debt of five million dollars! This was a rip off rather than a pure act of kindness! However, she was not in a position to negotiate. As much as she hated to admit, Damien was right. It would be difficult for her to find a job with much higher pay. Moreover, most of her job applications were rejected in these few days. The salary offered by him was considered high for the position of administrative secretary. Ava's wages as administrative personnel in the previous smaller firm were nothing compared to this. "Alright, fifteen thousand dollars as you said then. You better keep your promise." Damien chuckled and said, "Certainly, Ava. You're mine, now and forever."

On her first day working at Radbury Group, most of the employees were aware of Ava's position as the new secretary. She couldn't escape from their curious gaze. After all, her title as the CEO's wife was an open secret to everyone. At first, she was worried that Damien would get angry. After all, Ava was not allowed to reveal her title as Mrs. Radbury publicly previously. It was until a few days ago that she realized that Damien was probably the one who spread the rumors about her wife working in the same company. What was he thinking? In Damien's secretarial department, there were more than a dozen staff including the chief of secretary, Quinn Davies. With a whole host of secretaries to serve him, Ava should only be handling a few simple reports (at most), yet Damien would always find something for her to do. Even menial tasks such as preparing refreshments should be handled by the interns instead of Ava. Yet Damien demanded, "You are still serving the three-month probation period. Starting now, the refreshment preparation and office sanitation are your jobs." "Wait. Isn't office sanitation is handled by cleaners?" "There are many confidential documents stored in my office and obviously, not anyone is allowed to enter here including sanitation cleaners." Ava just realized that it was Miss Bradley tidying up Damien's office all this while and now, the job was passed to her.

With the new role assigned, she had to leave the office fifteen minutes later than everyone else.

At the end of the day, Damien waited and watched her cleaning the office instead of leaving. "Mr. Radbury, put your feet up please," Ava demanded grudgingly. Damien lifted his foot slightly, making it difficult for Ava to maneuver the vacuum cleaner.

Consequently, she accidentally hit his calf. "Such a sloppy person, aren't you?" "Blame it on yourself then. I have warned you." He reprimanded her mildly, "Woah, this is my first time being ordered to make way for a mere cleaner." Ava replied annoyingly, "It is my first time witnessing a CEO staring at cleaners after work." After struggling to vacuum the carpet, Ava proceeded to clean his office desk. The desk was messy, yet Damien remained motionless in his seat. Ava had no choice but to lean across the table to arrange the documents. This time, Ava accidentally hit his arm. In one swift motion, Damien pulled her into his embrace.

"Hey...what are you doing?" "This is the second time, Ava. I take these repetitive physical contacts as a form of seduction then," muttered Damien. She was speechless and said, "You

are such a narcissist!" "It's fine. I love it though." A cunning look flashed across his eyes and before she knew it, Damien pressed his warm lips on Ava. Her whimper was muffled by the sudden kiss. Damien caressed her waist and pushed her onto the chair. The documents went scattered everywhere. Ava struggled to break free, but to no avail. Damien was firm yet gentle, as if he was afraid of hurting Ava. But he grew impatient as time went by. With hot breath and heavy panting, he pulled Ava closer and their tongues intertwined wildly in the kiss. Ava lost in a trance, and her arms were now tightened around Damien's nape. The latter smirked and deepened the kiss passionately.

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 66

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### Chapter 66

On the way home, Ava stared out the window silently. Damien was feeling good, and he glanced at Ava from time to time. He smirked despite receiving a cold shoulder from her. He did not take her home to the Radbury residence, but instead to the suburb where her mother lived.

Ava was not surprised by his decision. Since Miss Adaly was not fond of her, Ava was not expecting Damien to disobey her mother's decision.

Damien pulled over on the entrance towards her housing area and said, "I'll pick you up tomorrow morning, and let's go to the office together."

"That won't be necessary. I can take the subway on my own."

"Fine. Suit yourself."

He chose not to argue with her and Ava got off immediately without looking back. Damien waved her goodbye, but the latter wasn't aware of it. Damien sighed while looking at her figure slowly faded away. He then took out his phone from the pocket. There were several missed calls from her mother, and he only answered them now. "Damien, why aren't you here yet? Selina and her parents have been waiting for you for quite some time now." "I'll be right there."

Damien was late for the gathering held at the private dining of Central Garden Hotel.

Both of his parents as well as the Newton family were waiting for him patiently.

Karen's face brightened up upon seeing her son and said, "Damien, you are finally here! I know you are busy, but how could you forget about such an important occasion? We have been waiting for your arrival."

Damien took his seat and immediately apologized, "I'm truly sorry for the delay as I was sending Ava home after work."

The atmosphere was awkward upon hearing his explanation. Yet, Damien seemed oblivious and poured himself a glass of water. Karen tried to salvage the situation by laughing it off, "Haha, Damien was joking about it! Please don't mind him too much." "Well, Ava is indeed my secretary in the office. Didn't you hear about it, mom?"

Karen froze upon the statement since it was her first time knowing this. She stood up and asked, "What did you say?" Daryl pulled her down immediately and whispered, "Stop

overreacting!" The Newtons were taken aback with a pale face. The gathering was planned to discuss the wedding engagement between Damien and Ava, but the atmosphere was interrupted now with the newly revealed relationship between Damien and Ava. D Mr. Newton asked, "Damien, I thought both you and Miss Nagel are no longer together, isn't that right?"

Karen blurted out immediately, "Of course! The divorce was finalized and Ava has left the residence. She is no longer part of the Radbury family anymore." "Who told you the divorce was signed? I tore up the agreement long ago," claimed Damien.

"What!" "Mom, it seems like you have been deceiving Mr. Newton and his family." Karen was panic-stricken, "Damien, I thought we had an agreement. Once you're engaged to Selina..."

"What an absurd thing to say! I am married for more than ten years and I have no intention of getting a divorce anytime soon. Forcing me to marry Selina is a sin, mom." D

Daryl shouted at his son, "Watch your words, Damien!"

Damien faked a smile, and his intention of not marrying Selina was obvious. The Newton family was prideful, and they would never have agreed to the marriage between Selina and a divorcee. It was all because of the reputation of the Radbury Group. But now, it seemed like the marriage discussion was called off.

Mr. Newton stood up instantly, "Selina, let's go."

Mrs. Gu followed suit.

But Selina remained seated. She stared at Damien in silence for a while before saying, "So... it's over between us, right?" "Miss Newton, you are a great business partner and we have been getting along quite well, right?" "Uh... yeah, both of us are just business partners."

Selina was heartbroken. 1 But she had no one to blame but herself. She was the one suggesting their relationship as a mere partnership in the first place, after all. She suggested faking an engagement with Damien, hoping that both of their parents were satisfied and could stop disturbing them.

But falling in love with Damien was not part of the plan. It was all because she was too immersed in the fake acting. "As expected, you have lived up to your reputation, Mr. Radbury. Seems like I have learned a lot from you." Selina finally straightened herself. "Mom and dad, let's go." Now that her plans were crushed into pieces, Karen was enraged and she tried to stop the Newton family from leaving. But Selina was firmed with her decision without looking back.

Being the only child of the Newton family, Selina was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Moreover, she was used to getting her way through everything and making her a rather prideful woman.

She wouldn't beg for something impossible. Once the Newton family left, Karen slammed the table and blamed her son furiously, "Damien, have you lost your mind? I thought we have discussed the idea of your marriage?" "But I never agreed to it." Brushing her mother off coldly, Damien started enjoying the meal.

"You...tell me, have you gone insane because of Ava? You are behaving recklessly, son!"

Damien paused for a moment and smiled smugly, "Hm...perhaps you're right. I must have gone crazy." Daryl and Karen stared at their insolent son, scarcely believing their eyes. Ever

since he was a kid, Damien hardly smiled, and it was even worse when he grew up. Was he really smiling to himself now? Karen's vision blurred, and she almost fainted. The next day at the Radbury Group. Ava was late and barely squeezed herself in the subway on time. She was all sweaty and looking disheveled once arriving at the office. Upon reaching the company, she headed to the pantry immediately to fix herself. As she was re-applying her makeup, the pantry door swung open and in walked Damien. Ava was startled and accidentally smeared the lipstick on her face. "Looks like you are having a great time there! Can't believe you have the time to fix your make-up during working. Who are you trying to seduce?" Damien remarked. "...I was just..." He closed the door of the pantry with a click and strode towards her. Ava took a step backward instinctively, only to realize that there was nowhere to escape. Damien rubbed his finger on her smeared lips to fix her makeup. Unfortunately, the smudged area enlarged and Ava was looking even worse now. Staring at her rosy cheeks, Damien was nervous. Ava was reminded of yesterday's scenes. Hence, she pushed him away quickly and forcefully. "Damien, this is considered workplace sexual harassment!"

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 67

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### Chapter 67

Damien wrapped her arm around Ava's waist with a smirk, "We are married and there is nothing wrong with that." "But we're in the office!" Amidst her struggle to escape, she smacked a cup of hot coffee accidentally. The boiling coffee spilled over Damien's arm and he hissed in pain before he let go of her. The coffee stain was rather obvious despite the dark-colored shirt worn by him today. As Damien rolled up his sleeves, a large patch of reddened skin was revealed and it was somehow painful just by looking at it. Ava went frantic, "I'm sorry! I didn't mean to..." She quickly soaked his arm in the cold water, and Damien did not resist it. It was his first time being cared for by a woman, and he felt strange. The panic in her eyes reflected her concern towards Damien.

Instead of getting upset, Damien embraced her with a grin. "Uh oh, you're in trouble now, Ava," he whispered in her ear. "What should I do now? Is it painful? Wait here, I'll go and get you some ointment for the burn!" In a flash, Ava ran out to get him some soothing gel.

Damien was dumbfounded by her sudden action. By the time Ava returned from the pharmacy with the ointment, Damien was back to his office. He propped his head up on one elbow and his sleeve was rolled up. The reddened skin was now visible to Ava.

Ava rushed and passed him the ointment.

"Here, take this. It was recommended by the pharmacist. Do apply thrice a day and your skin will heal within two days." "Fine. Apply them for me then."

Ava originally intended to leave once delivering the ointment to Damien. But now she was left with no choice but to treat his wound.

It was not a serious injury. Yet, Damien's arm seemed to be severely affected. He even yelped a little when Ava applied the ointment and reminded her to be gentler.

As far as she could remember, Damien had a high pain tolerance. "Well, you can't blame me. Who told you to behave recklessly just now?" Ava muttered. "What did you say?" "... I am saying that you are a delicate and precious person. I can't afford to cause you any harm. So, for the sake of everyone, we should keep a distance of at least five meters apart at all times." Damien snorted slightly. –

Ava had to bend over slightly to tend Damien's wound because the latter was seated. Her cool fingers were somehow a relief to his scalded skin.

Such a minor burn shouldn't require much attention. At this point, it was not painful for Damien anymore.

However, he reminded Ava, "Since the ointment has to be applied thrice a day, don't forget to come and tend my wound during the afternoon."

"It's not even that serious. Why can't you do it on your own? It's not like you're handicapped anyway." Damien lifted his arm and continued, "You hurt me and the responsibility is yours now."

"What a nuisance," Ava muttered. She placed the ointment down and left.

The nature of Ava's work was not complicated, but many details required her constant attention. She continued her work and before long; it was lunchtime already. Ava looked up and realized that there was no one left in the office except herself. Though her colleagues had their lunch at the canteen, everyone avoided Ava because of her identity. She patted her grumbling stomach and headed out for lunch. Suddenly, Damien appeared and blocked Ava before she could leave the office. "I told you to tend my wound in the afternoon. Have you forgotten about it?" Damien mumbled. Ava was frustrated, "Even so, please let me have my lunch first, Mr. Radbury." "Fine, let's have lunch then." Damien then pulled her into his office. His lunches were usually prepared by the chef he hired, and the meals were luxurious compared to the company canteen. While entering the office, Ava found two sets of cutlery placed beside the lunch. "What is the meaning of this?" Ava was getting confused.

"Lunch is served."

Ava was dragged to the sofa by Damien. The latter was breaking his own rules now. Earlier on, he claimed that everything was strictly professional at the workplace despite their personal relationship. Damien noticed that Ava did not resist the lunch offered by him. After all, Radbury residence had a certified Michelin star chef. The only thing Ava missed while staying at the residence was the food served. Seeing Ava scooped the first mouthful of food into her mouth, Damien suddenly said, "From now on, the lunch fee will be deducted from your salary." Upon hearing Damien's comment, Ava lost her appetite instantly and rebuked him, "But why!" "Because nothing is free," muttered Damien. Instantly, Ava placed her chopsticks down and prepared to leave. Instead of paying for the food, she would rather enjoy her free lunch at the company canteen.

Much to her dismay, the office door was locked by Damien. Failing to open the door, Ava turned around and demanded, "Who do you think you are! Unlocked the door now!"

Damien ignored her request and said, "Come back here. Let's enjoy our lunch together." Ava was tempted by the offer before returning to her seat. She refuted, "Since Mr. Radbury needs a lunch companion, then you should pay me for the extra services, right? After all,

someone taught me that nothing is free in the world." "It's fine by me," Damien agreed to her demand. Damien started digging in without waiting for Ava. On the other hand, Ava was tortured by the food aroma and suddenly, her stomach grumbled loudly. This was embarrassing for Ava! She pressed her stomach right away while trying to endure her hunger. A faint smile crept across Damien's face. As if teasing Ava, he picked up drumstick into his bowl. Looking at Damien enjoying his meal deliciously, Ava gulped and hesitated before decided to join the lunch.

At the entrance of Koi Condominiums. The doorbell rang, and Kelly answered the door, only to find Seldon was standing in her doorway. With a gloomy expression, Kelly snapped, "What are you doing here?" "You didn't answer my calls. So, here I am today," replied Seldon. Kelly snorted at the remark. She blocked all of his contacts after their rather unpleasant breakup. When Seldon approached Kelly that day through her assistant, the latter had initially thought about the possible reconciliation between them. Yet, Seldon was furious at Kelly for framing Ava instead. It was all Ava's fault for being a pretentious woman! Kelly was infuriated by how she flirted with other guys despite being a married woman. In her opinion, Ava had gotten off easy! She deserved far worse consequences than just losing her job.

Yet, Seldon chose to support Ava, in which Kelly was extremely irritated.

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 68

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### Chapter 68

"Why are you here again? Especially when I am nothing to you," asked Kelly sarcastically. She tossed a slipper at Seldon angrily and hoped the latter would disappear from her sight. Seldon dodged the flying slipper instantly. Realizing that Kelly was about to return inside, he extended his hand quickly to prevent the door from shutting. Kelly didn't expect the sudden act, "Hey, what do you want from me?" "I will leave as soon as I got my stuff." Kelly was stunned. She threw away all of his belongings after their breakup.

"There's nothing here! Go and find them in the dumpster downstairs if you want!" Kelly grunted.

"Wait, what? Don't tell me you have threw my medical documents away!"

"Huh? I threw everything away, so stop bothering me!" Seldon was frustrated as they were crucial research outputs from the hospital. He had been searching the papers for a while before deducing the possibility of leaving them in Kelly's car two weeks ago. Now that they were gone, and he had no extra copies of them! Knowing that Kelly was an ignorant woman, Seldon was certain that the documents were lost. "Kelly, please tell me you are joking. It is a thick folder with our hospital's name printed on it. Think about it again, please." Seldon tried again. Kelly was disappointed with Seldon. Apart from being a workaholic, Ava was the only thing he could think of! It was obvious that Seldon wanted nothing to with her now.

"Seldon, there are so many guys out there pursuing me. You are such trash! How dare you toy with my feelings!" Kelly couldn't hold it anymore and she threw another slipper towards

Selden.

It hit Selden this time.

It was painful, and the mark was visible on his forehead now.

The door slammed before Selden could do anything.

Since she was a child actress, Kelly was constantly under the spotlight and well-loved by everyone. Yet, she was now failing at romance despite having a remarkable career recognized by everyone. Kelly leaned against the door and sobbed, unbeknownst to Selden. If only he could see her now, Selden would realize that the outspoken Kelly was a disguise, and deep down she was merely a fragile woman yearning for love. "Selden, you fool!" Kelly gritted her teeth and wiped off her tears.

After exiting the condominium, Selden was tempted to uncover his documents from the dumpster.

However, it was a few days ago since he last met Kelly and the trash cans were probably emptied by the collectors. There was a little to tiny chance that he could find them again. Selden sighed deeply and thought that all his hard work gone to waste just like that. As Selden was about to enter his car, a woman greeted him from behind, "Hello, Mr. Oakley." Turn around, he saw a woman dressed in casual attire. Based on the fine make-up and luxurious accessories, she was not a regular person. "I am Selina and we've met before." As the woman tilted her face up, she revealed her elegant features and charming smile. "Miss Newton, how can I help you?" Selden was surprised by her sudden presence. As far as he was concerned, they were not close to each other. "Can we have a private discussion? A cup of coffee is fine by me." "Sure. A date with beauty is my honor," said Selden with a flashy smile. In the coffee shop, Selden asked her directly, "So tell me, Miss Newton. How can I help you?"

"I have a gift for you." Selina placed a folder in front of Selden. Selden's eyes widened in shock as they were the medical documents that he lost previously. "Why do you have them with you?" asked Selden suspiciously.

"Calm down, Mr. Oakley. Kelly and I are friends, and her assistant was cleaning some stuff during my previous visit. Upon hearing the breakup news between you two, I was pretty sure that Kelly would get rid of your belongings. In the end, I stumbled across this folder among the piles of rubbish."

"Wow, you sure are a strange person," replied Selden sarcastically. Selina ignored his sarcasm and continued, "This plain folder caught my eye among the clutter of branded handbags and makeup products. Kelly probably threw it away recklessly. Just as I thought, they are important documents, right?" "You're right. The documents are important for my application as a chief medical officer." Selden opened the folder and found that everything was there. "Thank you, Miss Newton," blurted him.

"The pleasure is mine," Selina beamed at him. "But I don't think you are here just to deliver this folder in the middle of your busy day, Miss Newton." "You're indeed as perceptive as they say. I suppose I don't have to waste time." Selden chuckled and thought that Selina had been wasting time all this while when their conversation could have been concluded much earlier. "I'm here because..." Before Selina could finish, Selden interrupted her, "I refuse."

"Mr. Newton, I am not done yet." "Whatever it is, the answer is a no." Selina did not expect such a reaction, and she was feeling awkward by his firm refusal. Selden stood up and stretched himself, "If that's all, then you'll have to excuse me. Again, thank you for returning the folder."

"Mr. Oakley, wait!" Selina followed him. She asked directly, "I know why you broke up with Kelly. Are you really going to stand there and watch her marry another man to start a new family?" Selden smirked, "Kelly is not my only option for everything, you know?" "I'm not referring to Kelly, but Av..."

"Know your place, Miss Newton!" Selden interrupted her coldly.

He was a playful person until matters regarding Ava. Right now, Selina was testing his patience.

"Miss Newton, not everyone is persistent like you, and some of us know our limits."

"But are you happy with this?" "What about you?" Selden refuted. "... " Selina was suddenly at a loss for words. "You can't do anything about it. Just let it go if it's not yours," reminded Selden.

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 69

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### Chapter 69

Selden took a step towards at glared at Selina. "Mind yourself, Miss Newton. I will be the first one to come after you if you dare to hurt Ava" warned Selden.

Goosebumps broke out all over Selina. Selden looked different from his usual carefree self, and her plan seemed to fail miserably.

She was in trouble now.

"Mr. Newton, I understood your point of view. But how long can you restrain yourself? Since you are unwilling, then I will do it by myself!"

At the secretarial department of Radbury Group. Damien left for a meeting with Miss Bradley in the afternoon. After less than twenty minutes, an intern from the finance department, Miss Lilly Walker rushed into the office. "Miss Nagel, where is Mr. Radbury?" The sweaty Lilly panted heavily with a folder in her hand. "Oh, he just left. Do come back again after four in the afternoon," Ava replied. Lilly went into panic, "This is bad! There are errors on the report submitted to him earlier, and here is the corrected version of the document!"

"What!" Ava was stunned at the remarks.

Approximately thirty minutes had passed since both of them left, and it was impossible to catch them up by now. She tried calling both Damien and Miss Bradley again and again, but to no avail. Perhaps the meeting had started and both of their phones were silenced. "What should we do now! The finance department will be sacked if the project goes wrong due to inaccurate data!" Lilly shrieked. Lilly was feeling helpless and broke down in tears. Ava glanced at the new documents brought by Lilly. Indeed, the company would have to suffer a massive loss due to the incorrect figures provided. Although the amended copy could be

submitted again in the future, the reputation of Radbury Group would be tarnished by then. "We are doomed..." Lilly had given up and plopped down on the floor. Ava knew that such mistakes were impossible for a fresh graduate like Lilly. She was most probably a scapegoat for the incident. She grabbed Lilly and comforted her, "Don't worry. The meeting has just started and we can still make it in time if we leave now." "... Really?" Lilly saw a glimmer of hope upon hearing Ava's words.

But she soon shuddered in fear again, "No way! I'm just a mere intern and it is impossible to barge into the meeting like that! How can I switch the report on time?" Lilly started sobbing again. Ava couldn't bear to see her crying and gritted her teeth before saying, "Alright, I will personally deliver the report then."

"Really, Miss Nagel?" "Yes, but I can't promise to make it on time."

Ava grabbed her phone and the report before dashing out immediately without her coat on. The success of the recent acquisitions as well the career of the whole finance department was at stake now. She could only pray to arrive on time while urging the driver to drive faster. Fortunately, the meeting location was not far away and she arrived within fifteen minutes. Ava rushed inside the tower but was clueless about the exact location. She was left with no choice but to search floor-by-floor.

Ava kept dialing the number but Miss Bradley was not answering her calls. By the time she reached the fifteenth floor, Ava was deeply exhausted and panted heavily. She nearly tripped as she pressed on the elevator door. A group of people exited the elevator and Ava bumped into one of them accidentally due to instability. She felt a firm body and a man groaned in pain.

"Oh! I'm sorry..." Ava was startled and apologized immediately. He was a middle-aged man dressed smartly in a suit and leather shoes. Ava bumped into his nose bridge and the latter was grimacing in pain now. "Hey! Watch where you're going!" The male assistant supported his boss immediately and reprimanded Ava.

Ava was stupefied and her anxiety escalated. "I'm terribly sorry! I wasn't paying attention..." Ava was bowing and apologizing profusely. Just then, the back of her collar was grabbed by an arm and she was forced to straighten her back. She looked up and it was Damien!

"Damien, I was looking for you!" Ava was overjoyed upon the meeting.

As the middle-aged man was about to scold Ava for injuring his nose bridge, he was surprised to see their interaction, "You know her, Mr. Radbury?" "Yes, I do."

Ava introduced herself immediately, "Hello, I am Mr. Radbury's...administrative secretary. Nice to meet you!" Seemed like this man was Mr. Sachel, the one meeting Damien today then. This is the worst! Ava peeped at Damien nervously and worried about his reaction towards her sudden presence. Much to her surprise, Damien caressed her head gently instead and asked, "Does it hurt?"

"..."

Compared to Mr. Sachel, Ava was in better condition. She replied, "Don't worry, I am fine." Damien turned to Mr. Sachel and apologized, "I'm sorry that my wife ran into you by accident. Demsey, please accompany Mr. Sachel to the hospital for a quick check. The medical bills are on me." Mr. Sachel was stunned by the exclamation, "W... wife? So you're

Mrs. Radbury then?" He was left speechless now. It was an open secret that both Radburys and Newtons were preparing for a union. Hence, the rumor of him being married for two years was dismissed by Mr. Sachel. While wiping his nosebleed, Mr. Sachel's annoyance was replaced by a smile, "It's a pleasure meeting you, Mrs. Radbury. Please excuse me for the hasty behavior." Suddenly, Ava felt embarrassed. Being Damien's wife was a privilege and she knew it. While Ava was prohibited to reveal her true identity in the past, it was Damien being frank about their relationship now.

## A Lifetime With You Chapter 70

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### Chapter 70

"Mr. Sachel, please forgive my recklessness," Ava bowed apologetically once again. Everything then ended. Once Miss Bradley accompanying Mr. Sachel to the hospital, Damien turned around and asked, "What brings you here suddenly, Ava?" "... Ava smacked her forehead upon realization. She had forgotten the most important task! "Damien, hurry up and go after Mr. Sachel! You have the wrong report for your meeting just now!" Ava passed the amended copy of the document to Damien only to realize that the latter remained calm as if nothing happened. "Don't you understand? The acquisition will be affected by the wrong figures in the report! You should do something before it's too late!" Ava was frustrated by his nonchalant attitude. Damien muttered, "The company would have long gone if I didn't realize the errors in the report."

"What?"

Damien dragged a befuddled Ava with him into the elevator. Damien had spotted the errors during the meeting earlier. As he recalled the correct figures in the report emailed by the finance department earlier, Damien edited documents by himself. Ava had mixed feelings, "Looks like you've got everything under control. What a waste of time for chasing you madly!"

Not to mention that she searched every floor of the building for Damien! Damien was amused and teased her, "Such a foolish action you have there! Although Dempsey missed your calls, you could have got the location details from those who arranged the meeting." "... I was in too much of a panic just now, it did not cross my mind to do that." Damien held her hands while exiting the elevator. The driver was waiting and both of them entered the car. "Wait, this document was from the finance department. So why are you here instead of them?" Damien asked.

"It's because I wanted to help Lilly the intern, whose team worked on this report. I could not bear to see her in such agony, so I volunteered myself to help her." Damien's frowning expression was caught by Ava. Everything ended smoothly, so what's with his long face? He had not let go of her hand since they got in the elevator. Ava was motionless as she gazed at their interlocked fingers. Never thought that they could hold hands together, and it was like a dream for Ava. Ava peeped at Damien. His side profile was perfect under the glowing light from the window. Since she first fell in love with him in high school, she knew that she

would spend her life pursuing beauty and justice, and that it was enough for her if she could just stare at his beautiful face silently.

Damien turned around suddenly, "You've been staring at me for a while. Am I that handsome?" Somehow, Ava caught a glimpse of his smile.

There and then, she blushed and retracted her hand.

Without her realizing it, Ava's palm grew sweaty. Damien summoned the chief financial officer, Mr. Emerson Jones immediately upon returning to the office. "Mr. Radbury, it was a mistake by the new intern. Please forgive my negligence and it's a relief that everything went smoothly..."

Emerson was beaded with sweat as he mentally prepared himself for everything.

But Damien repeated coldly, "... An intern?" "That... that's right. Don't worry, Mr. Radbury. I will fire her as soon as possible!" "Sure. Pack your stuffs and leave with her then." Emerson was in disbelief upon hearing Damien's instruction. He admitted that the department was at fault this time. Still, everything went well for the company. How could Damien fire him without hesitation?

Damien explained again, "Instead of the mistake made, I was angrier that a mere intern was blamed for your negligence." "Sir, that is not the case, the intern did really make the mistake..." "Your department committed the error and had an intern to bear the mistakes. In the end, you even had Miss Nagel deliver the reports to me. What a great plan, Mr. Jones." Damien was losing his patience.

"You took advantage of the relationship between Miss Nagel and me, knowing that she will never be reprimanded nonetheless. In the end, a mere intern shall be sacrificed instead of you. Is this how the finance department works?"

Emerson was terrified and felt his knees weaken upon the statement. He was feeling helpless in the situation.

"Mr. Radbury.....I only..." Emerson stuttered to defend himself. "Mr. Jones, you have taken advantage of Ava's kind-hearted personality. I can't believe that you have the guts to manipulate those who are closest to me." Emerson wiped the cold sweat from his brow again.

When Ava first joined the company, Karen had come to see him, saying that Damien did not really care much for his wife, and that it was acceptable for Emerson to frame her, if the situation called for it. But now, it seemed like he made a grave mistake! Damien looked at him annoyingly, "If something like this happens again, you will be transferred to our regional branch in Africa and spend your time in the warehouse." Once Emerson left, Damien summoned the manager of the human resources department. "Everyone in the finance department except interns will have their salary reduced by fifty percent this month. Plus, the team leader and Mr. Jones shall be demoted by one rank." Damien made a quick decision for the negligence of the finance department. Despite no one was fired after the incident, it was a warning for everyone in the company.

That day, Ava said to him, "It was my idea to help the intern and you should not have punished the entire finance department for it."

Damien glanced at her helplessly, "Learn to get smarter, Ava." "Hey! I am smart already..."

The driver stepped on the emergency brake suddenly and the two were caught off guard. It was fortunate that Damien and Ava had their seat belts fastened, otherwise, both of them might have been thrown out of the car. "What's going on?" They looked ahead instantly. A truck broke the traffic lights from the intersection and both vehicles almost collided. They would have been crushed to death if it wasn't for the driver's sharp response.