

Chapter 199 Stay In My Home For The Time Being

My eyes widened when I realized the one singing on stage was none other than Becky.

She had an infectious voice. Although she was young, she could sing sad, romantic numbers without any accompaniment. It looked like the judges were mesmerized by her voice.

Aaron and I went back to our seats in succession. Derek, who was staring at the stage, suddenly looked at me.

"What happened? You were gone for a long time. Are you all right?"

"I saw Aaron when I walked out of the restroom, and we chatted for a while," I answered honestly.

"Oh." He nodded slightly.

"So, how was her performance?"

Derek crossed his arms over his chest and looked at the stage again. "It looks like she is a sure finalist. She wouldn't have a problem entering the national final."

The judges applauded Becky after she finished singing.

"Well, I was sleepy, but then your voice was like a spring breeze that woke me up," one of the judges joked.

Perhaps music ran in the Nash family.

Becky thanked the judges like an obedient student. However, the last judge felt she had paid more attention to her skills, which had stopped her from conveying the emotion of the song. She thanked the judge despite the obvious unhappiness on her face.

I couldn't figure out what kind of a person she was. After all, this was our first meeting. Although she looked like a simple girl, I felt she was ambitious—not just in terms of career.

Later, Cindy got on stage. She was yet another performer who managed to captivate the audience's attention.

She sat on a stool and played the guitar as her electric voice filled the room.

She was singing Sybil's song. As soon as the song began, I glanced at Becky, who was standing on the side of the stage, staring at Cindy with wide eyes.

It was a crucial competition for music enthusiasts, and any good performer would leave the other participants feeling worried and insecure.

In the end, both Becky and Cindy passed the audition. ①

Becky was over the moon. She joked that she wanted Derek to invite her for dinner.

Derek immediately called a restaurant and booked a private room. ①

He invited Cindy as well, but she politely refused.

At the restaurant, Becky filled our glasses with wine. However, I took Derek's glass away and said, "Well, he has a bad stomach, so he can't drink."

Becky's hand holding the wine bottle froze in the air. After a short pause, she studied his face and asked, "Derek, are you having a stomachache again?"

I didn't know if I was being too judgmental, but the word "again" seemed intentional as if she wanted me to know that she knew him better. ①

"Drink some water, then. I'll ask the waiter to bring you a cup of warm water."

She sounded sweet and considerate as if she was the host today.

"Nothing serious." Derek shrugged.

There was not even a moment of silence because Becky never ran out of things to say. She mostly spoke about the past and Sybil. Although the rest of us were embarrassed, she had an innocent smile plastered to her face the entire time.

I could tell she was deliberately doing everything.

"Eve, be careful! A bitch has entered your life. You have to be cautious," Louise whispered.

Halfway through the meal, Becky looked at Derek. "Can you give me a ride later? I'm looking for an inn in the suburbs. The hotels here are too expensive. I can't afford to stay there for long."

I thought she meant something else.

Louise pinched my thigh and shot a knowing look at me. It looked like she had also figured out her intention.

Derek put down his fork and looked at her. "It's not safe for you to stay at an inn in the suburbs."

For a moment, no one spoke.

Becky sat there quietly, looking like an innocent child.

I could tell that Derek wanted to say something, so I spoke before him.

"You can stay at our home for the time being." ③

Everyone turned to look at me in unison with a surprised look on their faces—especially Derek.

His eyes were wide open as if he didn't know me at all.

Chapter 200 He Is My Brother-in-law

I smiled at Becky, trying to be the bigger person. "You're a young girl who isn't familiar with the city. We would be worried about you even if you stayed in a hotel in the urban area, let alone an inn. If you stay with us, it would be easier for us to take care of you."

Becky looked at Derek expectantly. I sensed her uneasiness and knew she was waiting for him to agree.

"Is it okay? Will I trouble you too much?" she asked.

I guessed she was already bubbling with happiness.

Derek took out a cigarette and lit it. After exhaling a smoke ring, he looked at me and smiled. "My wife is in charge of our family."

My heart swelled with pride. He had emphasized my identity and importance in front of Becky.

When we left the restaurant after dinner, Louise discreetly pulled me aside.

"Eve, I'm impressed with you. You have made a wise decision. At first, I didn't understand why you did that, but everything made sense later. Your decision not only makes you seem generous, but I'm sure Derek would also be grateful to you and think you are a kind and considerate wife. Well done!"

"Besides, it's easier to control the situation when they are in front of my eyes than behind my back," I added.

"That's right. If she really stays in a hotel or an inn, she might find an excuse to call your husband in the middle of the night. Who knows what she might do in her place? Things will get out of hand if she tries seducing him or playing nasty tricks. Eve, you're awesome!" She gave me a thumbs up.

I smiled at her.

I sensed Becky had a motive, so I had no other choice but to keep her under my watch.

Then, we took Becky to the hotel to get her luggage.

We waited in the car for a long time, but Becky didn't come. Derek checked his watch several times. I didn't know whether he was impatient or worried.

"I'll go and see what she is doing. Maybe she is finding it difficult to bring the luggage. I'll give her a hand," I offered.

Since all of Becky's roommates were girls, Derek chose to wait in the car.

I inquired the receptionist for Becky's room number and took the elevator.

From afar, I could see the room was open. Before I approached, I heard voices from inside.

"Becky, I saw you get out of a Maybach. Only rich people can afford such a car. Tell me. Have you hooked up with a wealthy man?" asked a girl.

"Ooh!" exclaimed another girl. "Becky is a beautiful girl. Who wouldn't fall for her charm?"

"Don't talk nonsense. That's my brother-in-law." Judging from the voice, I knew it was Becky. She didn't seem annoyed.

"Brother-in-law? You are lucky to have a wealthy brother-in-law."

"Well, Becky, I remember you said that your sister had died a long time ago, so you have a good chance now. That way, you can seize his wealth."

"That's right. A lot of brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law have affairs."

I could hear every word of the conversation.

Anger coursed through my veins. Why were the young girls nowadays thinking such things?

I took a deep breath and walked over. They were so busy chatting that no one saw me standing at the door.

I gently knocked on the door, and the gossiping finally ceased as they all looked at me.

Becky was startled. Her face had turned pale. She was probably worried that I might have heard the conversation.

"I came to help you with the luggage. I was worried that you might not be able to carry everything by yourself," I said.

There were a few other girls in the room. They looked at me and back at Becky.

"It's okay, Eveline." Becky took her suitcase. "This is my luggage."

I nodded and turned around. The two of us entered the elevator as the other girls continued to stare at us. Silence lapsed in the elevator; neither of us spoke.

I didn't think it was wrong for her to tell her roommates that Derek was her brother-in-law. After all, he had dated her sister. It was much better than saying he was her man.

After we left the hotel, Derek took her suitcase and stowed it into the boot. Then, we got into the car and went back to the villa.

Becky gaped around the villa like an innocent child. I could see innocence and liveliness on her.

It looked like she had never come here before. After all, Derek didn't have this villa eight years ago.

Derek went back to our room to take a shower. I showed Becky around downstairs to get her familiar with the kitchen, bathroom, fridge, TV and taught her how to use the other electric appliances she might need. Later, I ushered her to the guest room upstairs.

I taught her how to use all the household appliances in the room, showed her the cabinet, dresser, and even told her how the shower worked.

"Eveline, you probably think I am a bumpkin from the countryside. I know how to use all these. You didn't have to teach me."

Although she sounded rude, her innocent smile left me speechless.

I blinked and forced a smile at her. "Perhaps I was overthinking. I thought you didn't know how to use these but was embarrassed to ask me about it. I'm glad you are familiar with everything. I want you to feel at home. If at all you need anything, just tell me. I think it would be more convenient for us women to interact with each other."

Becky nodded and smiled at me.

"Eveline, you are so kind and thoughtful."

Chapter 201 Put This Photo Away

Becky then sat in front of the dresser and gently removed her makeup. I pulled out a fresh bed sheet from the cabinet to replace the old one.

After removing her makeup, she opened the suitcase and placed all her cosmetics and daily necessities in order.

I couldn't help but look at her. Her skin looked flawless even without makeup.

I once had clear, plump skin, but even my skin seemed to age as I grew older. I would never look as youthful as I once did.

"Everyone says that I've got my sister's eyes. By the way, eyes are my sister's best features. What do you think, Eveline? Do my eyes look like hers?"

She suddenly held a photo frame beside her face and smiled at me.

It was a medium close-up shot of Sybil. She looked beautiful in the picture.

However, I was not in the mood to check their eyes and see if they looked alike or not.

I remained silent even though I knew it was rude.

Becky put the photo frame on the bedside table. I couldn't tell if she was innocent or doing everything on purpose.

"I must win this competition. It's not only my dream, but my sister's as well. I will follow in my sister's footsteps. After all, she is the source of my strength and power."

"Put the photo away," I grunted.

Becky turned around and looked at me innocently.

"Eveline, what's wrong?"

I knew she understood my uneasiness but pretended to remain oblivious.

I strode over, picked the photo frame, and thrust it in her hand.

"Put it away. I don't want to have a picture of a dead person in my house."

Becky took the photo frame and lowered her head, looking aggrieved.

The next moment, the frame in her hand slipped down and shattered into pieces.

Then, she began crying like an innocent child.

"Eveline, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have taken out my sister's photo. I'll put it away if you don't like it. This is the only photo I have of my sister, but it's broken now."

She squatted to pick up the broken glass fragments, but a hand pulled her up.

Derek turned his head and looked at me. The coldness of his gaze sent a shiver down my spine.

Becky was still crying as if she had suffered a great grievance, but the photo frame had slipped from her hand, not mine.

I felt she could have chosen a career in acting instead of singing. She would undoubtedly become successful.

"Don't cry. The photo is fine; only the frame is broken. You can mount it again," Derek comforted her in a gentle tone that was in stark contrast to the way he looked at me.

I felt like someone had stabbed me in the heart.

However, Becky looked like a frightened bird. She leaned toward Derek, trembling with fear. "No, thanks. I'll put it away."

"Mount it!" Derek's sudden roar startled both Becky and me.

He didn't even bother looking at me. I knew he believed that I had deliberately broken Sybil's photo.

I knew he meant to let me hear those words. The tone he used against me broke my heart.

Tears welled up in my eyes.

"Derek, I'd better leave. Don't worry. I can stay in a guest house."

Becky held Derek's hand, pretending to be timid.

I didn't bother explaining because it seemed pointless. He had already concluded that I had broken the photo frame on purpose.

Before the tears fell, I turned around and stormed into my room.

I closed the door and leaned against it as the tears finally flowed down my cheeks.

I didn't expect that I would lose to a little girl on the very first day.

Derek had never been rude or cold to me before.

However, everything had changed the moment Becky entered our house.

I couldn't help but question my decision. I felt like I had dug my own grave.

Minutes seemed to drag into hours. Derek didn't return to our bedroom all night.

Chapter 202 I Regret It

The next morning, I got up and opened the bedroom door just as Derek emerged from the study. I glanced at him for a brief moment, then looked away without any emotion and went downstairs. I was still mad. He probably was, too.

The smell of cooking food wafted over to the living room.

Becky poked her head out of the kitchen and looked between me and Derek.

"You guys can sleep a little longer. I'll call you over once breakfast is ready."

She was wearing my apron, as if nothing unpleasant had happened just the night before.

Unlike her, however, both Derek and I still felt burdened by the incident.

This girl was so considerate and sensible, I knew it only painted me in a worse light. I was being unreasonable.

It didn't take long for her to finally finish cooking.

I couldn't bear to treat Becky like a servant. I was the one who had offered her a place to stay, after all. If anything, this would only make the situation much worse. And so, I headed into the kitchen to help her serve the meal.

The noodles she had made looked so good.

Just when I was about to pick them up from the counter, she picked that exact moment to add soup into each bowl.

I wasn't sure whether I was just absent-minded, or she had actually done it on purpose, but Becky ended up pouring a spoonful of the piping hot liquid onto the back of my hand.

I screamed and recoiled. My skin was totally scalded.

Derek was instantly there, rushing over and grabbing my wrist.

He inspected my burnt hand, his brows furrowed in a deep frown.

Was he concerned for me? I really couldn't tell.

He ushered me to the sink and put my hand under the running tap.

Behind us, Becky kept apologizing fervently. "I'm so sorry, Eveline! It was an accident, I swear. I didn't mean it at all. Oh my gosh, do you need to go to the hospital?"

Her words sounded hypocritical to me, and I lost my appetite there and then.

A bit of soup had also splashed on my clothes, and I grabbed the opportunity for an excuse to leave. I withdrew my hand from Derek's grip. "I'm going to change my clothes." Then, I fled upstairs as fast as I could.

I had just taken off my soiled clothes when the bedroom door suddenly opened.

I was only in my bra and panties. Derek kept his eyes on mine as he stepped inside and shut the door behind him.

I quickly reached into the wardrobe and grabbed the first shirt I could find.

I struggled to put it on, my fingers turning clumsy from all the nerves I felt. I tried twice and failed.

Finally, Derek strode over to me and held my hands still.

"Don't move."

He reached over to take out a coat from the wardrobe, and put it on me. Then, he pulled me to sit on the edge of the bed. He said nothing the entire time.

I clutched the edges of the coat and wrapped it tighter around me.

I was definitely angry, still, and I wasn't inclined to afford him a view of my naked body.

To my surprise, he produced an ice bag out of nowhere and gently applied it to my burnt hand.

The cold feeling was soothing and made me feel better right away, if only a little. But since I was still feeling cross with him, I made a point of keeping an indifferent expression.

Derek would lift the ice bag for a few seconds before putting it against my skin again, probably thinking that I might not be able to endure the prolonged cold.

"Does it still hurt?" he asked softly, his eyes intent on my hand.

I stared at the floor and stubbornly stayed silent.

Without warning, he took my chin between his fingers and lifted my head so that our eyes met.

When I'd washed up this morning, the first thing I noticed was how puffy my eyes had become. Now that he was peering at me at such proximity, he should be able to note it as well.

He tossed the ice bag aside and cupped my face with both hands as he leaned close. I closed my eyes instinctively, only to feel his lips press against my eyelids, one after the other.

"I was wrong, okay? It's all my fault."

I wished I could be more steadfast, I really did. But he sounded defeated, his voice hoarse and weak, and I just burst into tears.

Derek continued to kiss my face, catching my tears before they reached my chin. "Don't cry, please. I'm sorry. It's my fault."

After a while, I was able to muster enough strength to push him away. I swiped at my eyes and glared at him even as they filled with fresh tears.

"It's so easy to just say you're sorry. Do you think a bunch of words is enough to erase the hurt you caused someone?"

Derek bit his lip and looked up to stare at the ceiling.

"Eveline, I think you understand why I reacted that way."

I huffed and managed a bitter smile. "Sure. Of course, I understand. You were furious at me for breaking that photo frame. And why wouldn't you be? Sybil has clearly always been in your heart. Even now, she's more important to you than I am, isn't she? I understand everything perfectly."

Derek braced his hands on my shoulders and cocked his head to the side. He looked weary and helpless.

"Eveline, I already told you that whatever I had with Sybil is all in the past. And Becky... She's just a poor, unfortunate girl. I truly thought that since you were willing to keep her at our house, you've already done away with your insecurities."

"Well, I haven't." I shook my head, even as I knew I was being pathetic. "I regret taking her in. I keep thinking that she'll seduce you sooner or later. There are so many girls out there just like her, unfortunate and have nowhere to go. Why don't you just invite them all into your home, then?"

Derek frowned.

It was just yesterday when I'd asked Becky to move in with us, and now I was making trouble out of nothing. I knew I was being unreasonable, irrational even. But for the life of me, I couldn't comprehend why I was acting this way.