

My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 341

Chapter 341 Secret Copy

Spirals of rage filled Rodger as he realized that Timmy had tricked him. He clenched his fists and cursed loudly, "You want to stick your nose here, don't you? Boys, knock him down!" At Rodger's command, his men rushed towards Timmy in unison. I had a suspicion that Timmy probably had hidden his real strength all this time, but I was still worried about him. He was just a driver after all. Taking on these hefty and vicious men alone would definitely be hard for him. However, my worries were put to rest the next second. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined what I was currently seeing. Timmy was fighting off the vicious men skillfully. Even though they were many, they were no match for him. The knot of uneasiness in my heart loosened. I secretly felt a sense of security for me and Becky. In the blink of an eye, all of the men were lying on the ground, except Rodger. "Aargh! Who the hell are you?" Rodger was appalled at Timmy's strength. He seemed wary of him now that his men were defeated. With his face void of expression, Timmy patted the dust on his clothes and said lightly, "Just a nobody." Silence fell on the factory before the sound of heavy footsteps came from outside. The moment a familiar figure appeared at the door, my eyes turned red. Derek took a long drag on his cigarette with his head lowered. He slowly puffed out the smoke as he walked into the factory. "Oh, Timmy. I thought we both agreed that you would exercise some restraint. Why are these men pathetically writhing on the

ground?" Derek's arrogant words and the villains' misery gladdened my heart. I also felt more at ease. A faint smile tugged at the corners of Timmy's lips. He shrugged innocently and said, "I have been easy on them. I just didn't expect them to be so weak." "De... Derek?" It was obvious that Rodger knew Derek. He suddenly began to quake in his

boots. His reaction to Derek's presence made me conclude that he wasn't let off the hook easily when he had done such a bad thing to Becky back then. He must have been taught a terrible lesson. However, it seemed that Rodger had completely forgotten about the punishment until now. @ Derek continued to smoke as he stood a few meters away from the erring man. He didn't move or give a callous look, but his calm countenance made him even more intimidating. Just then, a man walked into the factory. I remembered him. He was Keith, the bald man who had made a bet with Derek in the underground casino the other day... When Rodger and his men caught sight of Keith, they all became more scared. "Boss!" they greeted him with trepidation. Keith strode over, kicked one of them in the stomach, and cursed, "Bloody idiots! You have worked for me for long, but I didn't know that you could be so bold."

The battered men were so scared that they trembled and lowered their heads. "Boss, we... we..." In the heat of the moment, the men badly wanted to put the blame on Rodger, but they were a little scared. Keith was a smart man. From the look of things, it seemed like he had already gotten wind of everything that happened. In sheer fury, he grabbed Rodger's collar and queried, "You made a copy of the video behind my back? Huh?" Rodger's arrogance vanished into thin air. The previously conceited man arched his back and shamelessly begged Keith for mercy. "Boss, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to cause you any trouble. Please forgive me. I would never do that again. Please..." Keith threw him to the ground without an iota of pity. "I am someone who accepts defeats. I prefer to lick my wounds than cause trouble for the winner. Why have you ruined my reputation?" With these words, Keith turned to look at Derek. He coughed slightly and said sincerely, "I swear with my life that I personally destroyed that video. I had no idea that they secretly made a copy." Rodger nodded incessantly. "Yes, I copied it secretly. My boss knew nothing about it. Please don't hold him responsible." In a trance, I put two and two together. The video must have been stored in that U disk. Derek had made a bet with Keith in order to get the U disk

back. In a bid to protect Becky, he wanted to prevent it from leaking to the public. A heavy foot suddenly landed on Rodger's face when he was about to get up. With one side of his face against the ground, he was completely immobile. "Rodger, tell me, what's wrong with you today?" Derek asked in an indifferent tone as he mounted more pressure on the writhing man's face. From where I was, I saw how the shoe pierced into Rodger's skin, disfiguring him. Rodger painfully stammered, "Mr. Sullivan, I'm sorry." Derek finally lifted his foot. Rodger let out a sigh of relief. But it was short-lived. The next second, he gave an ear-piercing scream. He had just received a kick right on his crotch. "If you really can't control this thing, we could just cut it off. What do you say?" Rodger held his crotch with both hands as he begged for mercy like a whipped dog.

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Chapter 342 Being Saved

Timmy finished untying the ropes that bound me and Becky. The moment Becky was set free, she sprang to her feet, rushing into Derek's arms and crying hysterically. I could tell that her crying wasn't fake. By now, she must've mentally collapsed already. @ Gently, Derek caressed her back and held her steady in an attempt to comfort her... "Hush now, Becky. You're fine now. Don't cry. Your agent is waiting for you outside," he said. Becky grabbed his clothes, unwilling to let go. However, Derek was determined to make her leave. She was hesitant to leave his side at first, but she finally let go. She wiped her tears away before dragging her feet outside. Before she could even get outside, her agent rushed into the factory and draped a coat and a hat on her. Derek turned his attention to me. His eyes dimmed as he strode towards me. Then, he raised my chin using his hand while staring at my face. Based on the look in his eyes, he was enraged. © "Who hit you?" he asked. The

bearded man was so scared that his legs trembled violently. The following moment, he dropped to his knees and pleaded for his life.

“It... it was me, sir! I’m so sorry!” “Hit yourself.” Keith kicked the bearded man while hurling curses at him. The bearded man nodded, and then he started hitting himself using both hands. “How did he hit you?” Derek asked me; his face had turned grim. Hurriedly, the bearded man explained, “I merely slapped her once, sir. That’s all!” Suddenly, he remembered that he had taken our phones, so he took out two smartphones from his pocket and handed them to

“And I took these smartphones. I didn’t do anything else to her, sir! I swear—” But before he could finish his sentence, Derek sent him flying backwards with a powerful kick. The bearded man writhed on the ground like an earthworm. His legs were wriggling, and he was covering his stomach in an attempt to alleviate his pain. Fortunately for him, Derek didn’t kick him again. “He’s your man, so I’m going to leave him to you,” he said to Keith. He then lifted me up and walked towards the door. I told him that I could walk by myself, so he put me down and held my hand tightly. Afterwards, we walked out together. Once we had gotten out of the abandoned factory, I didn’t see Becky anywhere. Perhaps her agent had already taken her away. Derek and I sat in the back seat of the car, while Timmy drove the car for us. Soon, we were set to leave this nightmarish place. “How did you figure out that we were there? And I didn’t even know Timmy is such a skilled fighter!” I remarked. Timmy smiled, seemingly amused by what I said. “I’m not really a skilled fighter. I enjoy working out, and it happened to come in handy today.” Derek snorted and said, “Those kidnappers are idiotic. You do know that there are surveillance cameras everywhere inside the hotel, and even the entire city has cameras in every street. It would be nigh impossible to abduct someone without being noticed. They basically dug their own graves.”

After dropping us off at the villa, Timmy drove away. Once we were in the living room, Derek told me to sit on the sofa and wait for him. Then, he went into the kitchen and soon came out with an ice pack in his hand. He sat next to me, wrapped the ice pack with a towel, and carefully pressed it against my face. When I thought of what happened tonight, I felt so conflicted. “Honestly, between me and Becky, she’s the one who needs comfort right now.” I was telling the truth. I never knew that Becky had suffered through something like that before. I must admit that she could be detestable at times, but now that I knew she had a traumatic past, I realized that it must be why she was like that. “She’s much stronger than you think,” said Derek. I remembered how she wailed like a banshee in the video, and how she screamed and cried incessantly when she knew that we were safe. Clearly, she was on the brink of insanity. But I believed that Derek was right. I shouldn’t underestimate her psychological endurance. If she weren’t strong enough, she wouldn’t be able to bounce back and be a cheery individual after experiencing something so horrible. Perhaps she had chosen to lie to herself and pretended that the tragedy didn’t happen to her. Only people who were strong enough could manage to do that. “So, that video was the one in that U disk?” I asked.

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Chapter 343 Derek’s Explanation

Derek put down the ice pack, leaned against the sofa, and took out a cigarette. However, he didn’t light it right away. He stared at the cigarette for a long time and said, “I wagered Dere International on that bet, but I didn’t do it for Becky. Had it been someone else, I still would’ve done the same. I did it because that video could ruin a person’s life if it’s exposed to the public. Besides, that was a bet that I was sure I would win.” I believed his every word. He wouldn’t just stand by and

watch someone suffer, because he wasn't a heartless person. For instance, the very first time we met, he could've ignored me and carried on with his day. Instead, he helped me, because he was a warm and caring man. After lighting his cigarette, he continued, "I wanted to destroy that U disk as soon as I got it, but I hesitated, because I was afraid that you'd ask me about it one day. I wouldn't tell you about this unless you specifically asked for an explanation. And I knew you wouldn't be happy to hear the answer." Derek was right. Even though I understood the situation now, I was still dejected. "You told me that you dropped the U disk into the sink that night. Naturally, I didn't want you to blame yourself, so I told you that it didn't matter. Later on, I tried to get it back, because I didn't want another person to get it and eventually use it to destroy Becky's life. Sadly, I couldn't find it. I thought it had fallen to the drain, and so I thought that there was nothing to worry about anymore." He laid out a very detailed explanation, leaving no room for doubt. Gently, he drew circles on my palm with his fingers. "Do you believe me, Eveline?" I stared at him in silence for a long time. "It's not that I don't believe you, Derek. It's just that you don't have enough faith in me. You don't trust me enough to think that I can handle all of this." As he tilted his head, the soft light accentuated his chiseled facial features. "Honey, do you know why I feel unsettled, scared, or worried?" he asked as his eyes lit up like flames. "Because I care," he said, answering his own question. When I heard that, my heart raced all of a sudden. He got closer to me and pressed me on the sofa. Then, he began to kiss me. The kiss was so passionate that I felt like my lips went numb. After quite a while, he finally stopped to catch his breath and then he looked me in the eye. "If you want to be a hero again next time, make sure to take me with you. We're a couple, remember? We have to work things out together. Do you understand? You almost scared me to death!" I was moved by his sweet words. Happiness poured into my heart, despite everything I had been through. "I wanted to tell you about it, but it happened so fast that I didn't get a chance to do so," I whispered. Derek

brushed his thumb across my lips. Not long after, his gaze fell on my lips. The smile on his face was indescribably tempting. It was a devilishly handsome grin that was more than enough to intoxicate me. “My wife has an extremely kind heart.” When I heard what he said, tears welled up in my eyes. I suddenly realized what his smile meant. It was a smile that conveyed just how happy he was. Ever since the kidnapping, I hadn’t heard any news about Becky. Every day, Derek went home on time, but he never mentioned her to me. I had no idea if he was meeting her in private or if he even tried to comfort her. It was clear to me that this tragic event must’ve reopened Becky’s old wounds and was a big blow to her ego. It made sense that she needed some time to calm down.

Coincidentally, I met her on the street a few days later. I heard from Charlene that Tina had found a job as a cleaner in a kindergarten. The principal pitied her and promised her that she could take her child to work as long as she could finish her duties on time. I was really happy to hear the news. Even though the job wasn’t lucrative, it meant that at the very least, she was fighting against fate through her own efforts. Tina had no man to rely on, nor did she want to. She was all on her own now. No matter what kind of job it was, as long as she could integrate with society, she would slowly learn and mature. She was only eighteen years old. Even though she had to raise her child alone, she still had a lot of time to realize her full potential. Charlene and I visited her together one day. The kindergarten was already on holiday, but there were still some children in the custody class, so Tina didn’t have much work to do.

Tina’s daughter, Lily, was only a few months old. It was good that she got a job this soon. The moment I saw her, I noticed that she looked a lot better than before. Perhaps it was because getting this job brought hope to her heart once again.

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Chapter 344 How Can You Be So Awful To Me

After we left the kindergarten, Charlene and I went on separate ways. I happened to notice a tall woman heading towards the post office nearby. She was carrying a lot of bags. Even though Becky was wearing a mask and keeping a low profile, I still recognized her. Then, I waited outside the post office for about ten minutes until she came out. She walked so hurriedly that she didn't even notice me. When she arrived at the street, she took out her phone and made a call. I decided to hide behind a billboard so that Becky wouldn't be able to notice me. We were very close, but she couldn't see me. Even though it was faint, I could hear her voice. She was talking to her family. She told them to take care of themselves, but she didn't mention anything about the bad things that happened to her lately. After hanging up her phone, she walked past me. Her eyes were bloodshot as if she had just cried. While looking down, she scuttled away, still unaware that I was nearby. During the evening, I asked Derek if Becky still had any family. Derek seemed surprised that I took the initiative to ask about Becky, but he still answered me. "Her father died a long time ago, and her mother has been paralyzed for many years. That's why Sybil had to drop out of college to work, so that Becky could continue her education." It turned out that nobody's life was easy. Everyone had stuff to deal with. Life was hard enough already, so why did people have to make things harder for each other? New Year's Day was coming in ten days. I was planning to give the house a thorough cleaning to welcome the New Year. Derek suggested to just hire some cleaning ladies to clean up the house, saying that it would be tiring to do it all by myself. But I had different plans. I had nothing better to do at home, so I could do the cleaning for a change of pace. Thus, I refused his suggestion. I woke up really early. I started cleaning right after Derek went to work. During the middle of the cleaning, I decided to sit on the sofa to get some rest. It was then that I received a call from Alvaro. I didn't want to answer his call, because all he ever brought me was trouble. But when I remembered that I was the reason his leg got injured, I decided to answer his phone. @ "How could you be so awful to me?"

he said right after I answered his call. a “What are you talking about?” I asked. He tried to make himself sound as pitiful as possible. “I got hurt for you. Why haven’t you visited me in so long?” @ I scoffed and said, “Your leg has already recovered, hasn’t it? And don’t tell me that you weren’t that bear mascot that night.” “My leg hasn’t completely recovered and Derek shoved me, making my injury even worse. I can barely move all day long, and nobody cooks for me. Do you want me to starve?”. I didn’t respond to him then. Suddenly, I heard Alvaro’s laughter over the phone. I sensed that something was amiss. And just as I had expected, he said, “I’ll wait for you at home. Remember to bring me some food. If you refuse to come here, I’m going to send that video to Derek.” @ I was so angry that I was having a hard time breathing. After hanging up the phone, I threw away the rag in my hand in an attempt to vent my anger. Then, I went upstairs, changed my clothes, and left the house. First, I went to the market to buy some ingredients. And then I took a cab to the address that Alvaro gave me. When I got out of the cab, I remembered that this villa was the same place Alvaro brought me to the last time he kidnapped me.

The front door had been left open. As I walked in, I saw him lying on the sofa with both of his legs on the armrest. Upon hearing my footsteps, he looked up and smiled at me. “Oh, you’re here!” he said, feigning surprise.. He was acting like I had the right to refuse. How could I refuse after he blackmailed me with that video? I just shot him a cold glance and said nothing. Alvaro patted a spot on the sofa, beckoning me over as if he couldn’t see that I was angry. “Come, sit with me,” he said. To Me I went to his side like he told me to, but I didn’t sit down. He glanced at the cooking ingredients I had in my hands and muttered, “Wow! They’re all my favorites.” He then flashed me a cheeky grin. I ignored him again and looked at his leg. “How’s your leg?” I asked. Alvaro’s expression dimmed at my question. “Why don’t you take a look for yourself? Honestly, I couldn’t care less.” I wondered if his injury was

really that serious. Once more, I examined his injured leg and felt so guilty. “Wait here. I’m going to cook,” I said. “Great!” Alvaro put on an impish grin. He still hadn’t gotten used to my friendly attitude.

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Chapter 345 A Dog

Naturally, I wasn’t used to Alvaro’s kitchen yet. After checking all the basic equipment and condiments available in his pantry, I washed my hands and started to cook. Even when dinner was ready, he was still lying on the sofa like a lord. “Feed me,” he said. I rolled my eyes at him. “Your leg is injured, not your hands. Why can’t you eat by yourself?” I growled. Alvaro was taken by surprise because of my sudden outrage. Then, he put on an impish grin. “I never thought you’d be this feisty!” After putting down a plate and a fork on the table, I said, “Are you going to eat or not?” “I’ll eat. But I want to eat with you,” Alvaro said as he sat upright before picking up the fork and taking a whiff of the food’s scent. “Oh, my God! Smells so great!” he said with an exaggerated look. “Thank you for your compliment, but aren’t you exaggerating? What’s so good about that?” He cleared his throat, put on a straight face, and said, “It smells like home.” Suddenly, I remembered the first time that I had cooked at Derek’s house. He had said almost the same words. “Seeing a woman cook in the kitchen makes me feel like I have a home,” Derek had said. “Why are you standing there? Just eat.” Alvaro’s voice pulled me back to reality. When I looked down, I noticed that he had put some food in my plate. After dinner, he lay back down on the sofa. While I was washing the dishes, he said, “Ebony is in the backyard. Could you give him something to eat?” I guessed that Ebony might be one of his friends. Once I was done with the dishes, I wiped my hands. I put some food in a clean bowl, and then I went to the backyard with it. The second I opened the back door, a black figure pounced at me. “Eek!”

I screamed and accidentally dropped the bowl in my hand, causing it to shatter on the ground. When I fell backward, I felt a hand wrapped around my waist and caught me in time. “Ebony, get the hell out! You’re scaring her. Don’t make me hit you.” Alvaro gently kicked the animal away. I was still in a state of shock. It turned out that the black figure that rushed towards me was a black dog. It was so big. Perhaps it was some sort of wolf-dog hybrid. And the way he was looking at me wasn’t friendly at all. “That dog is Ebony? What is this? Some kind of joke?” I shouted. At this point, my blood was boiling. Alvaro patted me on the back in an attempt to comfort me. “Hey, hey... There’s no need to be scared.” He then looked into my eyes and added, “I never said he was human!” In all fairness, he was right. Wait a second... I lowered my gaze, staring at his feet before looking back at his eyes. “What the hell, Alvaro? You lied to me! Your leg is completely healed. Why do you have to be so childish?” He acted as though he was embarrassed. “I really wanted to see you,” he said. I shook off his hand, turned around and was about to leave. However, he hugged me from behind. “Don’t move!” I tried to break free, but he held me even tighter. His voice was resonating in my ears. “All I want is a hug, Eveline. But if you keep wriggling like that in my arms, I’ll want to take you right here, right now.” He was always threatening me in such a shameless manner. I was so angry that I wanted to scream at the top of my lungs. “Alvaro, you do know that I’m married, right? What pleasure do you get from flirting with a married woman?” He scoffed, loosened his grip on me, and turned me around so that he could look into my eyes. “I don’t care whether you’re married or not. What matters to me is that I have feelings for you that I can’t seem to shake off.” I should’ve been surprised by his declaration of love just like any other woman would, but I wasn’t. Personally, I didn’t believe that he actually had feelings for me. I thought that he merely said those words just to get into my pants. Calmly, I looked at him and then I instantly averted my gaze. Not a minute later, I attempted to leave again. But the following moment, Alvaro swept me off my feet and carried me.

I screamed, looking up at him. I saw the smile on his face that made me think that he was up to something evil.

I kept on struggling and flailing about, but I couldn't break free from his grasp.

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Chapter 346 Tactical Blackmailer

Alvaro carried me and strode back to the living room. He then placed me on the sofa, but he didn't let go. He caged me with both arms on my sides. Despite my nervousness, I couldn't bring myself to get out of his embrace. I just couldn't dare to provoke him. This wasn't the first time I was meeting him, so I knew him well. He wasn't someone to provoke. Any form of defiance against him would be unfavorable for me. I didn't dare to look into his eyes in order to hide my nervousness. All of a sudden, I heard a chuckle above my head. "Why is your face so red?" he asked knowingly. I glared at him speechlessly. His smile brightened as he looked at me from head to toe. "Are you feeling hot now? Take off your coat if you feel hot." Hearing these words, I covered my chest with my hands subconsciously. He seemed amused and smirked in mockery. Alvaro finally straightened up and said, "Well, it's a harmless suggestion. The air-conditioner is on. Make yourself at home. You don't want to get sweaty, do you?". He then walked towards the back door. The moment he went out of sight, I decided to make a move. But I saw Ebony running towards me as soon as I stood up. I quickly sat back down out of fear. Ebony had previously left a psychological scar on me. I was very afraid of the dog. Alvaro soon returned to the living room. He picked the pet lightly from behind and walked forward. "Sit down." Ebony obeyed this command by sitting down immediately on his haunch. Alvaro sat down on the sofa and stroked the dog's head. As if he was on cloud nine,

Ebony closed his eyes and rubbed his head against Alvaro's palm. He even licked his palm occasionally. "Ebony, you scared my guest just now. Apologize to her," Alvaro ordered. My eyebrows creased in shock. His order sounded very stupid to me. Ebony was just a dog.

The dog left his tongue hanging out and looked around in pretense. "Do you hear me? Apologize," Alvaro reiterated as he patted the dog's head gently. Ebony seemed to understand his master's words at this moment. He lowered his head and slowly bent down, whining, "Ebony is saying sorry to you. See?" Alvaro turned to look at me and pointed out I looked at the dog with raised eyebrows. Indeed, Ebony didn't look as vicious as before. In obedience to the command, he was lying on his stomach. His eyes glistened and gave off the common puppy-dog look. The dog seemed to be waiting for punishment or my generous forgiveness. Shaking my head, I said crossly, "I'm not like you. I don't understand his language. How am I supposed to know what he's trying to say?" Alvaro picked out the sarcasm in my tone. With slight frustration, he stood up with both hands on his hips and bit his lower lip in silence. I found his behavior very funny. Although I tried to bite back a laugh, I found myself guffawing in a split second. Alvaro was taken aback by my laughter. After staring at me amusedly for a while, he also burst out laughing. The awkwardness in the atmosphere eased up a little. I grabbed my bag and said, "I need to leave now." Before I could stand upright, he put his hands on my shoulders and forced me to sit back on the sofa. "Tsk, tsk. Not so fast. Why are you in such a hurry to leave? Let me drive you home. Wait a minute. I'm going to get changed." He turned around and walked away, but then stopped and looked back at me. "Don't move an inch away from there. If you leave before I get back, I will send the video to Derek." Oh, my God. This again! Sheer indignation filled me as I stared at his back. It annoyed me even more that he was cheerfully humming a tune as he went upstairs. Receiving threats and obeying his every whim were the last things I wanted to do,

but I had no choice. His tactic worked on me. I could only sit on the sofa and wait in anger. I impatiently checked my wristwatch as five minutes passed, then ten minutes, and finally fifteen minutes. What was with the delay? How much time did a man need to get changed? Did he need to put makeup on?

My patience ran out. I got up and went upstairs. The house was magnificent, so there were several rooms. The pair of slippers that Alvaro had just worn was at one of the doors. As a result, I concluded that he had gone into that room. I walked to the door pensively and knocked.

“Hello, are you done?” No response came from the room. My mind suddenly pictured a death scene at the other side of the door. My first instinct was to leave at once. However, the Nightingale pledge I took as a trained nurse prevented me from leaving. I hesitated for a few seconds and finally plucked up the courage to reach for the doorknob.

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Chapter 347 A Familiar Picture

A weird feeling went up to my gut as I twisted the doorknob and pushed the door open. The room was slightly dark due to the closed curtains and dim light. The atmosphere also gave me an eerie feeling. “Hello, are you there?” No one answered me. I swallowed hard and walked into the room slowly. I stopped dead in my tracks after a few steps. Alvaro was leaning against the bathroom door and he was staring at me with a sinister smile. His presence here wasn't what freaked me out. After all, I had expected him to be here. The scary thing was that there was only a short bath towel wrapped around his waist, barely covering his buttocks. This wasn't my first time seeing a man's naked body. He wasn't even completely naked. There seemed to be no need for me to panic. If I made

a big deal out of this, I would be even more embarrassed. To avoid further awkwardness, I turned to leave with the calmest expression I could put on. But Alvaro suddenly walked over, closed the door, and pressed me against it. “What are you doing?” My fake calmness turned to obvious discomfiture. His body was still wet and steamy. The soothing scent of his body wash filled the air and wafted into my nose. “What brought you up here? If you want to see my body, just say it. After all, I am more than willing to show it to you. You don’t have to take a peek on the sly.” Alvaro teased me with a smile. His face was only a few inches from mine.

The closeness and flirtatious words made my face blush scarlet. “Uhm. Why are you so narcissistic? Who wants to see your body? I only came up here because you were taking so long. Actually, I thought you had dropped dead. Why didn’t you answer when I called out?” “Were you worried about me?” He smiled at my reply. I snorted and rolled my eyes. “Don’t flatter yourself. Why would I be worried about you? I’m worried about myself. Your sudden death would put me into trouble. Since I was the last person that saw you, the police would label me as the prime suspect.” “Oh, is that so?” Alvaro raised his eyebrows. Feigning calmness, I gave him an affirmative look and said, “Of course! Besides, why did you take a shower when you were supposed to just change clothes? Is there something wrong with you?” Alvaro moved away from me and replied with a faint smile, “It’s nothing. I’m just used to taking a shower before changing clothes.” The small distance between us afforded me the opportunity to look at his body well. He looked masculine and sexy. I didn’t want to be alone with him like this. Now that he had let down his guard, I quickly turned around to leave. But something caught my attention the moment I turned my head. It was a black and white photo hanging on the wall. The person in the photo looked a little familiar to me. The dim light made it difficult to see. So, I stopped to have a closer look. However, a weird sight made my mouth fly open. Alvaro had taken off the towel. He froze when he saw that I had turned

around. Perhaps he hadn't expected me to look back again. In a fit of panic, I pulled the door open and rushed out. Alvaro's mocking laughter rang out from the room in my wake. I ran downstairs and went out of the villa without looking back. In the yard, I tried to pull myself together by taking deep breaths. It was of very little help. The cold air outside was the only thing that helped subside the heat inside me. Alvaro came out of the villa fully dressed a few moments later. He looked very refreshed. His hair was slicked back and only a few wisps fell on his forehead. With a bright smile, he looked at me and walked towards the car holding the car key. I followed him silently. When the car beeped, I opened the back door and was about to get in, but he shut it with a bang. Alvaro opened the front passenger seat and shoved me inside. While I stared daggers at him, he fastened the seat belt for me and closed the door. He then walked around the car and got in the driver's seat. After giving me a warm smile, he started the car. On the way home, I suddenly remembered something. Derek had gone ballistic the last time Alvaro dropped me home. What would he do if he saw us together again? I really wanted to stop Alvaro from dropping me off. However, if I did that, he would blackmail me again. Just as I was at my wits' end, Louise's call came through. Oh, talk about perfect timing! I answered the phone without hesitation like she was my savior. "Hello, Lulu. Yes. Where are you now? Okay, I'll wait for you there. See you soon." I hung up the phone and turned to look at Alvaro calmly. "My friend just asked me to go shopping with her. Please drop me at the next intersection."

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Chapter 348 Heart-to-heart Talk

Alvaro brought the car to a halt at the intersection. He seemed not to have any objections. But when I was about to get off, he grabbed my arm. "Why the hurry? You can wait in the car until your friend arrives. What

if she stands you up? It would be difficult to get a taxi here. You might get stranded,” he said, looking sincerely. Despite his caring tone, I suspected that he thought I was lying to him. I did lie to him. Was it so obvious? Alvaro locked the door, so I had no choice but to wait in the car. He then turned on the stereo and listened to the music leisurely. Time passed and we didn’t talk to each other. All of a sudden, I had cold creeps. I turned to see him staring at me. His eyes were burning with an amorous flame. He leaned closer and my heart missed a beat. Just then, someone knocked at the car window.. It was Louise. I breathed a sigh of relief and announced hastily, “My friend is here. Let me off the car.” Alvaro had already leaned back in his seat. He admired my nervous look for a while before reaching out to press the button to unlock the door. I hastily opened the door and jumped out. Without uttering a word, I pulled Louise to her car. She looked at me with a suspicious grimace. “Eve, what’s wrong with you? You were blathering on the phone. So, I suspected that something was going on with you. Tell me, who is that man?” Since I could never get anything past Louise, I briefly told her about Alvaro. She stared at me in utter disbelief as she listened. “Eve, what’s wrong with you? How could you be so bold? He had kidnapped you once. Why did you get in his car?” I shrugged indifferently. “It’s really not as it seems. A part of me feels like he’s not entirely a bad guy. He seems tender-hearted. He even hurt his leg while trying to save me. I think there’s more to him than meets the eye.” “Oh. So you lied to Derek at the hospital the last time because of that man too?” I nodded affirmatively. As I remembered something, I asked, “By the way, why did you call me? Sorry that I didn’t give you the chance to speak on the phone.” With her hands on the steering wheel, Louise frowned slightly. “It’s just that I think there’s more to Layne than meets the eye.” I knew instantly that Louise wanted to have a heart-to-heart. As a result, we went back to the villa. I made her a cup of hot coffee and then sat beside her on the sofa. It occurred to me that we hadn’t spent time together like this in ages. “What’s wrong? Hasn’t Layne been treating you well?”

Holding the cup, Louise leaned against the sofa slowly. “He is very nice to me.” Although I didn’t know if they got on well in private, I had seen how Layne treated her well during her stay in the hospital after the operation. It was a known fact that in marriage, the person who loved more tended to be more humble and tolerant. Since marriage was a two-way street, couples were advised to strike a balance between giving and receiving for the union to last. Humans are not God. They are prone to anger, disappointment, and they could give up when the going gets tough. “That’s a good thing. Lulu, men that treat women well are hard to find these days. It would be foolhardy to just ignore his kindness all the time. A bird at hand is worth more than two in the bush. Just because you got what you have easily doesn’t mean he’s cheap.” Louise stared at the rising steam from the cup in her hand. It was unlike her to be so quiet. “I know what you mean. I don’t think Felix is the best, neither do I think Layne is cheap. In fact, the best is not necessarily the fittest. I am not a perfect person. Why would I have unrealistic expectations or place anyone on a pedestal? I just feel that fate is mischievous. I didn’t mean to hurt anyone. No one in their right mind wants to hurt anybody.” . Louise seemed much calmer as she talked about Felix again.

“The problem is that Layne is too mysterious. These past few days have made me realize that I know nothing about him,” Louise said with worry lines on her forehead. Her last words resonated in my heart for some weird reason. My mind went to Derek. He was also very mysterious. I had been married to him for more than six months, but I still felt that he was a closed book. Louise put down the cup and said, “I asked him about his past the other day. Guess what he said? He said that he wasn’t a nice guy before, but now he has changed since he has a wife and a family.” Smiling assuredly, I said, “There’s no cause for alarm then. It only means that he would continue to treat you well.” “But he said he was not a nice guy before. How am I supposed to be comfortable knowing that?” I reiterated, “Lulu, don’t overthink it. Everyone has a

past, right? His past has nothing to do with you. Even though he was a bad guy before, he has turned a new leaf for you. You should be proud of yourself. After all, you changed him for the better.”

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Chapter 349 What A Good Husband

Louise pondered for a second and smiled. “You know what, Eve? You’re right!” As I looked at her relieved expression, I put on a serious face. “Lulu, Layne has a place in your heart now.” Stunned, Louise looked into my eyes. “When you married him, you didn’t care whether he’s a good man or an evil man. You didn’t even bother to think how many secrets he had or if he was sincere with his intentions. You only married him at the time to vent some of your frustrations. But now that you’ve spent time together, you’ve begun to develop feelings and you’re starting to care about him. You just don’t realize it.” Louise fell silent for a moment, seemingly confused. “For real?” “Yep.” I nodded. “Lulu, both Felix and Layne are madly in love with you. In the end, you chose Layne. It doesn’t matter why you chose him in the beginning, but you should know that marriage isn’t a game. People inevitably get hurt, and it’s inevitable to hurt others as well. Since you and Felix can no longer be together, you should be kind to Layne. Otherwise, all three of you are going to get hurt in the end.”

I didn’t mince my words. I knew that Louise was strong enough to take my bluntness. Louise smiled at me. “Eve, back when you married Shane, you were hopelessly naive. But now that you’re married to Derek, you’ve grown wiser.” A wry smile appeared on my lips. “Experiencing failure and committing mistakes are pivotal to one’s growth. I’ve failed and gotten hurt in the past, so I’ve started to cherish the present and become a more tolerant, considerate individual.” “Well, that makes sense.”

Louise chuckled. Suddenly, she remembered something. “By the way, did Felix and Derek fight that night? Why were they fighting?” That night, Louise was hammered and wasn’t aware of what was happening. Her memory of that night was hazy, so she only had a faint memory that Felix and Derek had a fight. I shrugged and said, “I don’t know. I think they had some sort of misunderstanding.” Louise sneered. “Sometimes, Felix just loses his shit. Ignore him when it happens.” Based on how she spoke, it seemed that she was starting to move on from Felix. No matter how painful a wound might be, time would be able to heal it. I sincerely hoped that the same could happen for Felix. I told Louise that she could stay for dinner and she agreed. When she saw that Derek came back just on time for dinner, she teased him for it. “My, my, Mr. Sullivan, you came home on time right after work. What a great husband you are!” Derek played along with her banter. “Of course! I’m sure you can understand the desperate urge to see your beloved after being away from each other for a whole day. Just as the saying goes, absence makes the heart grow fonder,” he responded. “Eve, you need to be more careful. I just now realized that your husband is a smooth talker,” Louise said with a chuckle. I also broke into laughter. As a matter of fact, I had long known that Derek was a smooth talker. After dinner, Derek mentioned that his company was preparing for a team building activity. They had several places to choose from. Most of the employees wanted to take a spa trip. And Derek wanted me to come along with him. Louise smiled when she heard about it. “You really know how to enjoy yourself, huh?” Derek took a drag on his cigarette and smirked. “If you want, you can come with us. Bring that husband of yours along.”

Louise agreed without hesitation. After she left, the doorbell rang again. The visitor kind of looked familiar to me. She introduced herself as Becky’s agent. The agent told us that ever since Becky came home after the kidnapping, she had locked herself in her room and was unwilling to see anyone. It seemed that she had lost her confidence. Becky’s career had only just begun. If she were to go on like this, her life would be as

good as done. The agent told us that she was hoping we could talk some sense into Becky. I knew that getting kidnapped was a big blow to Becky's sanity, especially when her miserable past was revealed in front of me. It was easy to tell that it had ruined every fiber of confidence she had. After the agent left, I said to Derek, "Maybe we should invite Becky to the team building event. It could help her relax a little." Derek pondered for a moment before he nodded. "Alright!"

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Chapter 350 The Doctor Is Sick

We drove up the mountain road and finally stopped at the parking lot of the resort. After I got out of the car, I immediately noticed Aaron. For some reason, he looked a little pale today, and he was coughing every now and then. "Did you catch a cold?" I asked. He smiled at me and said, "I actually refused to come here, but Derek told me that you guys would need a doctor." "Yes, but it's ironic that the doctor is sick, isn't it?" I replied. Aaron chuckled at my response. "I'm fine. It's not a big deal." It was then that I saw Charlene and Lean.

Honestly, I'd rather not see Lean, but considering that he was the manager of Dere International now, it was imperative for him to attend an event organized by the company. I also noticed that Louise and Layne had arrived. The latter made some small talk with Derek. Meanwhile, Louise pulled me aside. "What is that bitch doing here?" I followed her gaze and saw that Becky was getting out of a car that had just arrived. She was wearing a long down jacket, a hat, and a large pair of sunglasses to hide her identity. "How did you manage to recognize her even while she's wearing something like that?" I was actually surprised of how perceptive Louise was. Louise snorted. "She's a hussy. It's not difficult to spot her at a glance." Moments later, everyone put their luggage into

their respective rooms. Our rooms were separated from the other employees of Dere International. Louise intended to stay in the same room as Layne, for she probably didn't want to make him lose face in front of so many people. The manager of the resort invited Derek to have a cup of coffee. Once I had finished putting my luggage in my room, I went out and saw that Lean was blocking Becky in front of another room. "Can you please get out of the way? That's my room," said Becky. Lean leaned against the door, taking off her sunglasses. He put on a playful smile and said, "Why are you covering such beautiful eyes with sunglasses? Hmm... you look familiar. Have we met before?" Becky tried to swipe away her sunglasses from Lean's hand, but he raised his hand in the air to prevent her from taking it. Not wanting to waste time on him anymore, she pushed him out of the way, entered the room, and slammed the door behind her. Lean didn't seem like he was angered by her behavior, and he even knocked on the door. "I never imagined that a superstar like you would have such a bad temper. Ouch!"

Before he could finish his sentence, he screamed in pain and turned around to see who was gripping his ear. Charlene refused to let go of his ear. "Lean, you'd better behave yourself while you're here. Otherwise, you can fuck off!" ... "Let me go!" Lean bellowed. Upon hearing his plea, Charlene loosened her grip. While covering his ear, Lean noticed that I was nearby, laughing at him. He didn't want to lose face in front of me, so he composed himself and straightened up. "Charlene, I think you've forgotten one important fact. I'm your boss now. Many of our employees are with us right now. The least you could do for me is to show me some respect. But if you're not going to treat me with respect, then don't blame me for treating you the same." Even though Lean was trying to sound as domineering as possible, he was actually afraid of Charlene. Right after he said that, he wanted to run away. However, Charlene pulled him back. "You want a piece of me?" Lean finally broke free from her grasp. After widening the distance between them, he turned

around. “Don’t think that I can’t beat you, Charlene! I’m just letting you win!” The resort wasn’t as big as a hotel, and there wasn’t a venue large enough to accommodate everyone at the same time, so everyone was free to choose where they wanted to relax. That night, an open-air party was organized in the resort. Though it was cold outside, all of us weren’t freezing because there was a bonfire set up in the center. Additionally, there was music playing in the background, good food, and they had also set up several grills for a self-help barbecue. Louise and I tried out the grill. There was no cumin out here, so I had to go into the kitchen to get some. I didn’t expect Lean to be in the kitchen as well, and he was putting something into a glass. “What are you doing?” I asked, staring at him. Startled, he turned around. Fearing that he had been exposed, he pulled me in and closed the kitchen door. “What did you put in that?” I pointed at the wine glasses on the kitchen countertop. Before Lean could respond, we heard footsteps coming from outside. Panicking, he pushed me into the cubby where all the ingredients were stored in the kitchen. Through the hole in the door, I saw several waiters come in and placed the wine glasses onto different trays one by one before taking them away. I wanted to shout, but Lean covered my mouth.