

Beyond the Divorce

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Another Mrs. Murphy

I had only visited Tanum Corporation once when they first relocated to Galar Tower. Matthew took me there, and we rented an entire floor, which gave me a sense of accomplishment.

That day, he held me as we stood by the floor-to-ceiling window in his office and said affectionately, “Thank you for helping me and changing my life. Believe me, my love. It won’t be long before I give this building to you.”

I chuckled at his words. Now, he was about to tear it all apart.

When I entered the building, the young and attractive receptionist asked me which floor I was going to and who I was looking for. When I mentioned Matthew’s name, she gave me a quick once-over and said with a smile, “I’m sorry, madam. Mr. Murphy is not in. He went out with his wife.”

My head buzzed when I heard that. Although I had mentally prepared myself for it, her answer still shocked me. I tightened my grip around my handbag, but my voice turned somewhat sharp despite my efforts to control my emotions. “What did you say? Are you sure?”

She looked at me in puzzlement and replied, “Why, yes. You asked for Mr. Matthew Murphy of Tanum Corporation from the 10th floor, right? He left early this morning with his wife.”

Her certainty sent shivers down my spine. I felt tempted to ask who Matthew’s wife was. If another woman was his wife, who am I?

However, I held myself back and clenched my teeth. Then I turned and left Galar Tower. I wanted to leave with dignity and hoped the receptionist had made a mistake. That way, Matthew’s pride would be intact as well.

Ultimately, I called Johnson Link from Tanum Corporation’s marketing department to reconfirm what I just heard. My hands shook, but I calmed myself before asking, “Hey, John, is Matthew done with his meeting? I’ve

been trying to call him, but he's not picking up. I'm starting to get a little worried."

Johnson was one of the high-ranking executives at Tanum Corporation, so he would know if there was a meeting. Upon hearing my question, he seemed a little puzzled. "Meeting? There's no meeting today, Mrs. Murphy. Mr. Murphy is out."

"Oh," was all I managed to say before hanging up.

At that moment, a sense of powerlessness washed over me. My tense nerves collapsed, and I felt my knees buckle. It was like all my energy had dissipated, leaving me drained. My hand that held the phone shook uncontrollably.

I couldn't even muster the courage to call Matthew and ask where he was. Was there even a need to ask? Even if I did, he would just lie to me again. I no longer knew how to trust anything he would say.

He shamelessly paraded around Galar Tower with another woman, making everyone believe the other woman was his wife. That woman could freely enter and exit, step into the company I had built independently, and enjoy privileges that should have been mine.

I felt lost as I stood on the street among the crowd, and he was nowhere in sight. He resembled sand, slipping through my fingers. The more I tried to grasp him, the faster he slipped away.

After thinking things through, I found out who this "Mrs. Murphy" really was.

With that idea in mind, I gathered the strength to move my trembling legs and hailed a cab. Once I reached home, I went to the nearby market and bought many of Matthew's favorite dishes. I even picked out some pineapples that Ava loved.

I was going to wait for him to come home.

As I busied myself with chores, I thought about my next step.

I always thought time passed too quickly, but this time was different as it seemed to drag on endlessly. When evening arrived, I gathered my courage to call Matthew and ask where he was before telling him to pick Ava up.

He readily agreed.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Looking for Evidence

I had almost finished preparing the food when Matthew returned with our daughter. Ava ran in, exclaiming in her sweet and childish voice, “Mommy, I’m back! Daddy picked me up!”

Her adorable voice brought tears to my eyes, but I suppressed my emotions. “I got you some pineapples. They’re your favorite, right?”

“Oh! Mommy, you’re the best! I can’t wait to eat them” She ran out and headed to Matthew, saying, “Daddy, I want to eat pineapples!”

“You can have a small piece for now. You can have more after dinner, okay?” Matthew washed his hands and took a small piece to hand to our eager little girl. Then he squeezed into the tiny kitchen and hugged me from behind. “Why did you make so much food?”

I felt terrible because this once-happy family of three was now on the verge of collapsing.

“You just came back from a business trip. You must be tired.” I forced a smile and asked, “Were you busy today?”

He hummed a reply, and my heart immediately sank. I playfully nudged him with my elbow. “Set the table and get ready for dinner.”

His intimate attempts made me sick. I wondered if he thought of the other woman whenever he held me. When I finished cooking, I smiled and asked, “Do you want a drink? It’s been a while, and I want a glass of wine.”

Mathew looked at me questioningly. “Why do you suddenly want to drink?”

“No reason. Are you still going out?” I asked as I turned to get the wine. “Since I made so many dishes, we need to celebrate.”

I felt my heart shattering into a million pieces as I spoke. I knew Matthew couldn’t handle alcohol well, so I poured him a little to avoid arousing suspicion. Then I poured myself half a glass and toasted with him.

Once we started drinking, we became excited and talkative. I pretended to be in high spirits as I reminisced about our college days, starting the business, and our current life. I seemed so happy.

Matthew noticed how cheerful I was and poured himself another glass of wine while reminding me not to drink too much. Ultimately, he drank more than he could handle. He was drunk when I helped him onto the bed.

Afterward, I washed up and put Ava to bed before beginning my mission. My heart was pounding as it was my first time looking through his things in so many years. I finally realized how foolish I was to trust him.

I searched through his pockets and bag but found nothing valuable.

Finally, I found his phone, but it had a fingerprint lock. I quietly approached him, trying to grab his hand, but he suddenly turned and caught me, staring at me with unfocused eyes. My heart was about to jump out of my chest.

“I need water,” he slurred at me.

I ran out to pour him a glass of water and fed it to him. Then he collapsed back onto the bed, fast asleep. I unlocked and looked through his phone but found no suspicious names in the call history. I recognized most of them, and it seemed like very few were female, so I ruled them out.

Then I checked his WhatsApp only to realize he hadn't been messaging many people. I opened the conversation of the first contact and saw the message from the day he returned.

“Did she find out?”

It was just those four words with no additional information. It didn't seem like Matthew hadn't deleted anything, either. I clicked on the woman's profile picture and wanted to see her posts, but there were none.

I couldn't find any clues about who the sender was. It seemed like this person was cautious. Matthew told me it was Melanie, but I needed to verify it.

His photo albums included pictures of Ava and me and two of Melanie. Besides that, his phone was clean. I even scanned the phone with an app, but nothing suspicious was there too. I tossed and turned that night, wondering how there could be no traces.

I figured the woman wasn't someone from the company or the building. Otherwise, the receptionist wouldn't have called her "Mrs. Murphy."

I wondered who that other woman was or if I'd ever interacted with her.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Unexpected Company

I forced myself out of bed the following day. The dark circles around my eyes were horrible, and Matthew noticed them. He asked in surprise, "

The following day, I forced myself out of bed. My dark circles were horrible.

Matthew saw my haggard face and asked in surprise, "Are you sick, Coco? Why do you look so pale?"

"You kept me up all night," I retorted, not in the mood for pleasantries.

He was stunned but hugged me with a shy grin. "No more drinking for you. Exercise is better instead since it helps with sleep."

I didn't know why, but my stomach churned when I heard his words. I rushed to the bathroom, vomiting and crying.

Matthew rushed in behind me and patted my back. "What's wrong with you? Maybe I should take you to the hospital."

I pushed him away and lied, "It's nothing. I just didn't sleep well. You should take Ava to kindergarten. I'll be fine once I rest a bit more."

He lifted and laid me back on the bed, pulling the blanket over me. "Then get some sleep while I send Ava to school. If you don't feel well, just call me, okay?"

I nodded and listened to my husband and daughter's chatter get softer as they left. Finally, they closed the door behind them, and I left the bed to run to the window. I watched Matthew enter the car with my excited daughter.

I didn't look away until Matthew drove out of the gated community. My eyes teared up as I wondered if only everything could return to how it was before. Afterward, I changed into my jeans and t-shirt and tied my hair into a ponytail before slipping on a cap.

Then I went to the cafe across from Galar Tower and found the most strategic spot facing the entrance. I knew it was foolish, but I thought it was the most efficient way.

However, I returned home empty-handed for three consecutive days. I couldn't even see Matthew because I overlooked one crucial detail. He often used the underground parking, which had a direct passage to the lobby.

I only realized this on the fourth day.

Just as I thought I was at a loss, I saw Matthew hurrying out of the building with his phone. He seemed to be talking on the phone as he headed toward Crowne Square. My heart raced as I got up and followed him from a distance.

It was not lunchtime, and he didn't leave in his car, so I knew he wasn't going far. He crossed the road at an intersection ahead and entered a cafe with quaint decorations and an elegant environment.

It was the perfect palace for elites in the surrounding commercial district to hang out and discuss business here.

I guessed Matthew was meeting someone there and glanced at the floor-to-ceiling windows, wondering if I should follow him inside.

Just then, I saw someone sitting by the window on the second floor. The person wore a stunning rose-pink professional pantsuit, looking bold and graceful. It was Ivanna. She looked more beautiful than usual today.

I chuckled and thought it was a coincidence that she was there too. It meant I wouldn't have to put in much effort since Ivanna could see who Matthew was with. With that thought in mind, I picked up my phone and called her.

I saw Ivanna pick up the phone, but I was surprised to see Matthew at the window. I watched as Ivanna signaled Matthew to stay quiet before her voice came through the phone, "Are you bored or something?"

Those words struck my nerves. If this had happened in the past, I might've considered it playful teasing between friends and would've readily responded, but now I detected mockery behind her words.

It hurt more than seeing her with Matthew.

I asked, "Where are you?"

"I'm in a meeting at the office. I'll call you back later." I saw Ivanna gazing at Matthew as she spoke. Her answer left me speechless. After all, I never expected my best friend to do this to me.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Misfortunes Come in Threes

I smiled bitterly, replied, "Okay," and then hung up. Ivanna had become a conniving woman in my eyes. She had pretended to be sincere in advising me to reflect on my values, but now she mocked me in front of my husband.

I finally realized how unpredictable people could be. No wonder she tried to probe me by claiming to have seen Matthew. It became evident that it was because of her guilty conscience.

Matthew had said it had been long since he saw Ivanna. I felt heartbroken that he had deceived me like that. I invested myself in Ivanna and Matthew in this unfamiliar city, and they betrayed me. I didn't know who to trust anymore.

I kept staring at the window before calling Matthew. As I suspected, his response matched Ivanna's.

I was outraged and rushed to the cafe, but my phone rang as I entered. I received a call from the kindergarten teacher, saying that Ava had fallen off the slide and got sent to the hospital. The news terrified me, and I quickly hailed a cab to the hospital.

On the way, I called Matthew to inform him about Ava's accident.

He and I arrived at the Kinein Hospital almost simultaneously. We found Ava crying in the emergency room with a scrape on her forehead. The doctor told us she had a minor concussion as she vomited after the fall. They also suggested keeping her in the hospital after the observation.

The teacher responsible for Ava was frightened and tearful as she stared at Matthew guiltily. The dean was also there, apologizing repeatedly.

Although Matthew seemed displeased, he maintained his composure and asked the dean about Ava's injuries. The dean said a boy had pushed Ava off the slide's small platform.

What I heard horrified me because I knew the slide was at least five feet tall.

"Do you even care for the children at your school?! As parents, we trust you with our children, yet this is what happens?!" I couldn't stand their incompetence and yelled at them.

My outburst shocked Matthew, as he had never seen me so hysterical. Even Ava was scared and shivered as she continued crying.

Matthew comforted me while the dean guiltily handled the hospital administration procedures and arranged a hospital room for Ava. After the doctor had settled everything, Ivanna called me and asked where I was.

I figured she knew about what had happened. Regardless, I still told her that Ava had fallen and was hospitalized. Soon after, Ivanna rushed into the hospital and worriedly asked about Ava.

Coincidentally, Matthew was also in the ward. The two looked calm, though I could see a subtle exchange of glances between them. Matthew even seemed a little nervous.

I restrained myself from reacting and feigned ignorance. Then I asked Ivanna, "You're done with your meeting already?"

"Yeah. It wasn't anything important." Ivanna brushed off my question and asked, "Did you call for something?"

"Nothing. I was just bored. Matthew said he hadn't seen you in a while, so I considered inviting you for lunch," I said, watching her closely.

She glanced at me and calmly replied, "Gosh! If you want to eat, wait until Ava is fine. I'll treat your whole family to a big meal."

Then she caressed Ava's head and asked, "Is that okay, Ava? I'll buy you whatever you want when you're better."

Ava blinked and nodded with a pouty expression. Her head had swelled from the fall, and I felt terrible for her.

I instinctively brushed Ivanna's hand away, angry at her attempt to secure her position as the "stepmother." Was she already planning to take my place? I didn't even consider giving her that opportunity.

Ivanna sensed my distant attitude and looked surprised, asking softly, "Is there something wrong?"

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 A Shocking Thought

Before I could answer, Matthew explained, "She's not feeling well."

He touched my shoulder gently and said, "Don't worry, honey. The doctor said it wasn't serious. We can go home once Ava's passed the observation period."

Home?! That word was a trigger for me. I got up and pushed Matthew away before running out of the ward, sobbing. The cracks in this family were already showing, and I knew it might shatter at any moment.

Now, Ava's future stepmother was here, flaunting around me.

Ivanna followed me as I rushed out, and Ava started crying again.

"Coco, what's wrong with you? Don't scare Ava like that." Ivanna grabbed my arm, trying to console me. "Hold it in for a while. The kid is more important."

"Hold it in? How can I?!" I roared and glared at Ivanna.

I realized I had lost control and tried to collect myself, but I was trembling. My mouth twitched as I said, "You should go back! We're fine. Since you're so busy, you don't have to delay your work for us!"

Afterward, I brushed past her and returned to the ward, wiping my tears. As soon as I entered, I saw Matthew comforting Ava. I went over and pulled him away with tears streaming down my face.

Matthew looked at me dumbfoundedly and said, "Don't be too worried, okay? You scared Ava."

Then Ivanna finally entered the room, not knowing what to do. She smacked her lips a few times, and the atmosphere became awkward.

“Chloe, I’ll leave. Don’t get too worked up over it. Call if you need me,” Ivanna said awkwardly before turning to my daughter. “Ava, I’m leaving now. Get well soon. Then I’ll buy you some yummy food!”

I wiped my tears and turned to look at Matthew. “Didn’t you say you haven’t seen Ivanna in a long time? Go send her off.”

Matthew’s eyes narrowed for a moment. Then he grinned. “Sure. Don’t cry anymore, okay?”

He escorted Ivanna out of the ward, and I overheard Ivanna saying, “No need to walk me out. Go and take care of Ava. I’ll drop by again if I have time.”

I heard her footsteps fading as Matthew returned to my side, asking, “Honey, what’s wrong?”

“Do you not know what’s wrong?” I looked at him with reddened eyes, and Ava started crying again. I quickly leaned down and kissed her cheek, saying, “Be good. Don’t cry. Mommy’s here!”

Then I started crying too. Mommy would always be here, forever. But what about Daddy? If we got divorced, what would happen to you, Ava? I was shocked that such thoughts even crossed my mind.

I was restless the whole afternoon as people from the kindergarten visited. Even the boy’s parents came and went. It kept going until late at night, and I felt overwhelmed.

Ava finally fell asleep, and I stayed beside her. The doctor said she shouldn’t make any sudden movements.

Matthew was in the corridor making phone calls while I sat silently by the bedside, looking at my sleeping daughter. My heart was in turmoil, and Matthew knew something was wrong, so he stayed with me as a precaution. He didn’t leave the hospital that night, and I didn’t intend to let him either.

I felt a rush of conflicting emotions as I looked at him lying on the side of the bed. I would have urged him to go home and rest if I hadn’t discovered he was cheating on me. After all, he still had to work.

However, my thoughts had changed. Matthew was responsible for Ava and had to take care of her. If he no longer loved me, he had to love our daughter.

After staying in the hospital for three days, the doctor finally discharged Ava. Matthew said we should let Ava rest for a few more days when we returned home. Since he had taken a few days off, he had to return to the company immediately.

As I watched Matthew leave, I suspected he would rush to his lover. After all, he was trapped with me for a few days and was finally free. I felt relieved when that sly fox left. I wondered what else he could do behind my back since he could lie effortlessly to my face.

Ivanna called again a few days later to ask about Ava, and I responded indifferently. I shuddered whenever I remembered her lying to me while being with Matthew. I was disappointed that they would betray me so easily.

I wanted to confirm if she was the “Mrs. Murphy” the receptionist told me about. What if it was her? What would I do? I considered divorce for the first time. Ultimately, I gritted my teeth and told myself to make Matthew pay and force him to leave with nothing.