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My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 456 - 460

Chapter 456

Chapter 456 Love

Our life seemed to have returned to how it used to be. Back then, Derek was so good to me. He looked after me, protected me, and I basked in his attention.

The only difference now was that we had two kids. In the past, I was hesitant to claim that he loved me, because I was too afraid to assume that there was indeed love between us. And although I loved him, I thought that it was an unrequited love. But now, he expressed his love for me in both words and deeds. Moreover, the restored recording also showed that he truly loved me.

I guessed now, I could claim that our kids were the fruits of our love, huh?

As time passed by, my wound began to heal, and it was scabbing now. Every night since we got back,

Derek would hold me to sleep. He would kiss and make out with me, but he wouldn't do anything more than that.

I could feel how much he wanted to do it with me, and I could also feel that he was restraining his desires. I thought that he was resisting his desires because he loved me so much and he didn't want me to get hurt.

One day, in February, I put the two kids on the sofa and played with them.

All of a sudden, someone rang the doorbell. The nanny hurried to the door and opened it.

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The person who visited me was an acquaintance, and she brought me bad news.

She was Lavinia's assistant. After hearing from her about Lavinia's situation, I left the children in the nannies' care. I changed my clothes and went to the hospital along with the assistant.

At the gate of the hospital, there was a group of journalists waiting. It seemed that they had already heard about the news. As soon as we got out of the car, they surrounded us.

"Ma'am, can you tell us something about Mrs. Mayer?"

"They say she's in an unstable condition. What happened to Mrs. Mayer?"

Lavinia's assistant didn't respond, and just quickly walked towards the hospital wearing a stern expression. Meanwhile, I followed her closely. Eventually, the security guards came to stop the reporters from going in.

In a VIP ward, there were lots of doctors and nurses, along with Lavinia's students. But even with all the people, it was very quiet.

The smell of disinfectant pervaded in the air, and everyone could smell it.

Lavinia was lying in bed, wearing a hospital gown and an oxygen mask. Her face was deathly pale, and she looked haggard.

But even so, her eyes were open. The moment she saw me, she smiled at me with difficulty.

The nearest doctor to her was probably her attending doctor. Realizing that she wanted to speak, he helped her take off the oxygen mask. "Eveline."

Lavinia reached her hand out to me.

I immediately walked to her bedside and held her hand.

"Mrs. Mayer, I'm here."

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I had always known that she had a heart problem, but she paid special attention to her health care, so I never expected this would happen to her so soon. Judging by the look on Lavinia's face and the heavy atmosphere in the ward, I feared that she might not have long to live.

Lavinia) was my mentor, and she was instrumental on my road to starting a business.

She not only taught me knowledge on the industry, but also how to build up self-confidence. She guided me through the path of self-improvement, and taught me to be a strong, independent woman. Aside from that, she told me that I should pay attention to both my mental and physical health. Even though she was on the brink of death, Lavinia was still smiling.

It was as if she wasn't about to die. It was like she was about to be free from the burdens of this world, and she was going off to a better world. 2 "Eveline, promise me one thing."

"Mrs. Mayer, I promise to do it if I can," I replied. Lavinia smiled with relief. "You can do it. I'm sure of it."

She then turned to her assistant next to her. The assistant took out a document from her bag and handed it to me.

My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 457

Chapter 457

Chapter 457 Legacy

After taking a look at the document, I understood what Lavinia meant. I immediately shook my head. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Mayer, but I cannot accept that." Lavinia held my hand and said, "Didn't you promise me that you'd do it. I honestly believe that you can handle it."

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The contract indicated that I could purchase her company for a dollar.

In all honesty, I was flattered by how much faith Lavinia had in me, but at the same time, I felt uneasy about this whole thing.

Now, I finally understood why Lavinia gave me all those U-disks at the start of the previous year. It was a summary of her life's work. She probably knew that she didn't have long left to live, and she needed someone to inherit her legacy.

And it seemed as though she had been trying to do this one thing her entire life. It was her lifelong achievement to make more women become more confident and beautiful.

Lavinia held my hand tightly, staring at me with her usual gentle eyes. At this moment, her gaze displayed how hopeful she was for me.

I didn't want her to leave this world with regret, and I didn't want to betray her trust. Thus, in the end, I decided to accept the contract.

Lavinia was relieved to know that I accepted it. And it looked like she was relieved that she had finally accomplished her penultimate goal in life. "Eveline, put on my makeup for me," she said. Her words almost drove me to tears, but I composed myself, for I didn't want to weep in front of her.

Contrary to my sadness, Lavinia was smiling as though she was about to attend a banquet, and she still wanted to be one of the most beautiful women to show up.

I knew that she had been a stunning woman all her life, and I could tell that she hoped she could leave this world as beautiful as she once was in her prime.

Her assistant took out Lavinia's large makeup kit, and soon, I put on her makeup myself.

Once I was done, Lavinia looked absolutely divine. The blush on her face made her cheeks look ruddy. Somehow, she looked like a healthy person; mainly because her eyes were still brimming with life, and she had no fear of death.

Once more, Lavinia held my hand. "Eveline, the harder you work, the luckier you will be. I'm sure of it."

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It was as if an invisible force transmitted from her palm to mine. This was a spiritual wealth that could never be bought with money.

The meaning of a person's life wasn't based on how long they had lived, but on how many lives they had touched, and the depth of their life. Even though Lavinia's life was short-lived, she had lived her life to the fullest, and made countless people beautiful.

And so, she departed to the afterlife with a bright smile on her face; unburdened by pain or regret. Later on, I heard from her assistant that Lavinia had already known about the progress of my company in Chinston.

Lavinia proudly declared that she indeed had a keen eye for talent, and that she had expected that I'd be where I was today. This proved the fact that she had already made up her mind to hand over her company to me after she found out that I was interested in the beauty industry, and accepted me as her apprentice.

Lavinia not only gave me her company, but also a massive amount of trust.

As a matter of fact, I also wanted to shift the focus of my business operations to Sousen. I didn't have a branch of Jolly Beauty Salon in the city. I even wanted to move the headquarters here, because I didn't want to be away from Derek. And now, I had taken over Lavinia's company. It had a very strong foothold in Sousen and the rest of the country.

I held a press conference to replace the name of Jolly Beauty Salon to Jolly & Mayer Company, which would take root in Sousen. I also set up the headquarters here.

Jolly & Mayer Company wasn't just a cosmetics brand. It also conducted business in different industries.

Lavinia had passed away, and I took over her company. This was the biggest news in Sousen this year. Media from all over the country reported it one after another, and by extension, they made my newly established company prestigious.

My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 458

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Chapter 458

Chapter 458 The Opening Ceremony

The main store of Jolly & Mayer Company opened in the middle of February. People from the media crowded the entrance of the building, and the ceremony was lively and successful.

Dere International sent over a congratulatory flower arrangement, which was probably the most extravagant the city had ever seen. It stood as tall as two whole floors, certainly difficult to miss even in the middle of the bustling street.

Once the opening ceremony ended, we commenced with the first morning meeting.

We had already begun when a young woman who looked to be in her early twenties burst through the door of the conference room. She was still tidying up her messy hair even as she rushed to a vacant seat.

"I'm so sorry for being late."

Needless to say, her sudden appearance interrupted our ongoing discussion.

I walked over to her, effectively stopping her from plopping down on the empty chair. Slowly, I looked at my watch, then back at her.

"Do you have any explanation for your tardiness?" I asked in a casual tone.

The girl was visibly nervous and rambled on with a paltry excuse.

"Yes, I'm really sorry. That—I was stuck... in a traffic jam, I mean. When I was on my way here. So..."

She drifted off into silence, likely intimidated when I looked deep into her eyes.

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“Traffic jam?” I repeated before nodding my head.

“I see. Of course, every city has its own rush hours in the mornings and evenings. Why, if there had been a traffic jam, I’m quite surprised that my other employees managed to make it to work on time.”

The rest of the team, who had been whispering among themselves behind me, suddenly grew quiet.

I crossed my arms over my chest and spoke my words with emphasis.

“Is it really because of the traffic jam, or did you simply wake up late this morning?”

The girl bit her lower lip and hung her head. She said nothing, but I saw her ears redden in embarrassment.

I turned on my heel and walked back to the head of the table. I swept a glance over the staff in attendance before returning my gaze to the young woman.

“You made two grave mistakes today. One, you were late. Two, you lied to my face. Our company has no use for people who have no sense of time, much less a sense of accountability and, overall, integrity.”

The girl snapped to attention at that. Regret was written all over her face.

“Boss, I...”

“Resume with the meeting!” I barked, looking away from her.

Everybody else took their cue from me and went back to our discussion as if nothing had happened. In the end, the young woman had no choice but to walk out of the room.

When we were done, I asked the manager of the Human Resources Department to bring the files of all the newly-hired employees to my office.

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I went through the resumes and finally found that of the girl from earlier. Apparently, she had graduated from a junior college and hadn't pursued further studies. She didn't have much experience in the field, either.

One line from her profile caught my attention: "I may not have a remarkable educational background, but I am a fast and willing learner. I will strive hard to keep up with my peers and achieve the standard that the company demands." Despite myself, I was quite impressed by her mettle.

I called Ady to my office and gave her the girl's contact details.

"This is the number of that young woman who came in late. Give her a call and make arrangements for her in the Training Department. If she passes probation, bump her salary by 20 percent."

Before Ady could even respond, the sound of clapping came from the door.

I craned my neck to see who it was, and almost froze in shock.

It was Gifford.

Ady glanced at him and stared at me, silently asking if she should stay.

I gave her a small nod and waved.

After a moment's hesitation, Ady sighed and excused herself.

Gifford invited himself to the chair opposite my desk, crossing his legs and lighting a cigarette. "It's exhilarating, isn't it? Punishing others and making an example out of them."

"What would you like to drink?" I asked with a faint smile, making a point to ignore his remark. "Coffee or water?"

My calm seemed to surprise him. He scoffed once and said nothing more.

I pressed the intercom and instructed one of the secretaries to prepare a cup of coffee for him.

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I had no idea what he was doing here. I would have to mask my emotions until he revealed his intentions.

Gifford leaned back on his seat and flashed me a smile.

It was sinister, just like all the other smiles he had given me whenever we met. It was full of contempt and somehow taunting, as if he wanted me to think that he knew my dirty little secrets, even though I had none.

"I must say, Miss Stone, you've managed to become a successful CEO in just two years. It's rather extraordinary."

"Thank you for your praise."

I knew it wasn't sincere, of course, but I wasn't about to take his bait.

Gifford chuckled. "I doubt anyone would believe that the head of the Jolly & Mayer Company was a meek nurse who was struggling at rock bottom just a couple of years ago."

"What is it that you want to say, exactly?" I asked, matching his snide smile.

He took a long drag from his cigarette and took his time puffing out smoke. "I'm saying that I really underestimated you," he said lightly. "Seeing how far you've gone, you're obviously much more ambitious than I initially thought."

My jaw clenched as I tried to restrain my outrage, but I maintained a calm expression, my eyes clear and unwavering.

My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 459

Chapter 459

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Chapter 459 I'm Very Busy

Just as the tension rose in the air, the nanny called me.

Dexter was burning up and needed to be sent to the hospital.

After hanging up the phone, I shot Gifford a cold glare.

"No matter what you say, Derek and I already have two kids together."

Upon hearing me mention the kids, Gifford chuckled with disdain.

It appeared as though he already knew about the existence of the kids.

"Oh, the kids, huh? I'm not even sure if they're really Derek's or not," he responded,

This time, I looked at him in disbelief.

I wanted to chastise him for his rude remark, but right now, my kids were more important and I didn't want to waste my time on this damned fool who'd never be satisfied with me.

"Got anything else to say? Hurry up. I'm very busy." Gifford stubbed out his cigarette on the ashtray before walking with his hands behind his back. Later on, after Dexter's infusion, his fever went down. I didn't go to the company for two days and just stayed at home with my kids.

I didn't want to neglect my motherly duties just because of my career. And even though I had two perfectly good nannies, they could never replace the motherly love that I could provide.

After that, I spent most of my time working in the administrative headquarters.

I had already consulted an architect to design a blueprint of the garden in the headquarters, and prepared to build a statue of Lavinia in an eye-catching position.

Later in the day, I opened my email and found that the sculpture company had sent me some sketches of their designs.

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While I concentrated on observing the sketches and chatting with the designer, I heard a knock on the door.

“Come in, please,” I said, staring at the computer screen.

Soon, a cup of coffee was placed on my desk. When I raised my head, I saw Elaine Jarvis—the girl who was late for the meeting that day. I had transferred her to the administrative headquarters since then.

Today, her long hair was braided, she was wearing light makeup, and she was dressed decently. Upon noticing that I was eyeing her up and down, she flashed me a meek smile.

“Ms. Stone, thank you for giving me this chance. At the time, I really thought that you didn’t want me, and I! regretted being late. And I was so pleasantly surprised that you gave me an even better opportunity. I really appreciate this,” she said.

I smiled back at her and replied, “I assume the incident has been engraved into your memory. Thus, I believe that you’ll never be late again.” Elaine blushed, nodding earnestly.

“Yes, ma’am! I’ve already set several alarms to ensure that I wake up on time. I won’t ever be late again.”

I really appreciated her desire to improve upon her failings, and nodded with satisfaction. “Elaine, your attitude towards the job will determine everything. And I firmly believe that you’ll do well here.”

With great confidence, Elaine replied, “I’ll do my best, Ms. Stone!”

During lunch break, I went to the coffee shop across my company’s building and made a phone call.

After a while, Megan entered the coffee shop, saw me at my table, and immediately approached. She pulled out the chair across mine, sat down, and cleared her throat.

“Shall I call you Eveline, or do you prefer Ms. Stone now?”

I looked her in the eye and asked, “What do you think?”

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“Well, Ms. Stone, what can I do for you?” She grinned at me.

I rolled my eyes at her and remarked, “Mind your words.”

Megan stuck out her tongue and replied, “Do you think it’s still appropriate for me to call you by your first name?”

After taking a sip of coffee, I put down the mug. “So, is that why you’ve been avoiding me lately?” As Megan held her cup of coffee, she chuckled awkwardly.

“If I hold your arm and pester you like before, what will others think of me? They’ll think I’m kissing up to you or something!”

“So, to prove your innocence, you just decided to dissociate yourself from me?” I asked.

Megan almost choked on her coffee and began to cough repeatedly.

She looked around before whispering, “What are you talking about? People might think that we have a shameful secret relationship. We need to be more careful, okay? Especially because I’m not married yet!”

My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 460

Chapter 460

Chapter 460 In A Dilemma

I couldn’t help but laugh. Megan leaned back, smiling at me while looking at me with admiration. “Eveline, you are one lucky girl. Mrs. Mayer thought highly of you. And now, you

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have such a successful career! And most of all, you're married to such a handsome husband. But me, I wonder if there'll be a Mr. Right in my life."

"Do you want me to set you up with someone? What kind of guy do you like?" I bantered. Megan sighed. "Well, you're in a completely different social class now. I'm sure all the rich, handsome guys you know won't even look at me." I smiled at her and replied, "You should have more confidence in yourself, Megan. You don't look bad. All you need to do is to improve yourself." "But how?" Megan stirred her coffee, visibly frustrated.

"If you promise you won't chase after stars like a paparazzo again, I'll give you a chance to improve yourself," I said.

Her eyes lit up as she nodded eagerly.

"I've already stopped chasing after stars. I only did that because I was dying of boredom. But now, I think chasing after stars is boring!"

In fact, Megan could be silly at times, but she was a hard worker and she was dedicated to her job. Moreover, she had been working for Lavinia for a long time, and she knew a lot about the company. That was why I intended to promote her.

I asked Megan to be the new head of the human resources department.

Her first task was to arrange part-time jobs for college students, so that they could work for Jolly & Mayer Company.

As the new head of the human resources department, Megan was quite efficient. The very day the recruitment advertisement was released, many college students submitted their applications.

On the first day of the recruitment, a long line had formed at the gate of the company.

I sat in the car, looking through the window at the group of beautiful young college students. All of a sudden, I caught sight of a particular person.

As soon as I got back to my office, I called Megan. Moments later, she brought a college girl into my office.

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"This is our boss, Ms. Stone," Megan said to the girl.

The college girl was visibly surprised to see me. "You can leave now and go on with your work," I said to Megan.

Once she had left, I smiled at the college girl. "It's been a while," I said.

The college girl smiled back at me. "I didn't expect it would be you!"

The college girl standing right in front of me was Gina, Layne's adopted daughter.

I asked my secretary to make two cups of coffee. I sat on the sofa with her, itching to ask her about Layne and Louise.

The moment I mentioned Layne, Gina lowered her head, visibly dejected.

"All people are equal before the law. If one does something wrong, he or she must be punished. And if one does something good, it will be acknowledged. However, all the good deeds one has done can never completely offset the wrong ones."

Gina told me that Layne was originally sentenced to life imprisonment. Later on, his lawyer gathered all kinds of favorable evidence that Louise used to make an appeal. Through this, Layne's sentence was reduced to fifteen years.

As a matter of fact, I had a hunch that this would happen to Layne. I believed Louise knew just as much. She must've been mentally prepared for it. And the only reason she fought for a lesser sentence was for a tiny glimmer of hope.

Fifteen years was long, but it was much better than life imprisonment. Sadly, that kind of time could waste a woman's best years.

I wondered if Louise would be willing to wait for that long. In fifteen years, Louise would be in her forties. How many fifteen years did a woman have? "How are Louise and her child?" I felt really bad for my best friend.

When I mentioned them, Gina nodded and smiled. "They're doing fine. She gave birth to a boy, and he's beautiful."

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It seemed that she didn't want to talk more about Louise.

When I asked her for Louise's phone number, she lowered her head in silence.

"Is something wrong?" I saw how conflicted and embarrassed she was.

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