

## **Susan's Happily Ever After Chapter 11 - 20**

### Chapter 11 Backing Her Up

Eric let go of the hag's hand, looking disgusted. He said coldly, "What makes you think you can abuse her however you want?"

The short, old woman looked at the man who came to help Susan. She was scared by the look in his eyes, but she still glared at him. "She's my daughter-in-law. I get to do anything I want with her. It's none of your business."

Eric sneered. "None of my business? I'm afraid you don't get to call the shots," he said calmly, but there was a storm brewing in his eyes.

Jocelyn met his gaze and felt her heart thumping furiously, as if it was telling her to shut up if she wanted to live.

Rachel held Jocelyn up, and she was finding it embarrassing that the crowd was getting bigger. "It's almost time for the checkup, Mrs. Bailey."

Jocelyn ignored that and angrily demanded, "And who are you anyway? Stay out of this."

"Oh, I'd be quiet if I were you. Another episode of your... brash bravado, and you might find yourself locked in this hospital forever. Just because you're old doesn't give you the right to abuse anyone." Eric looked at the fidgeting Susan. She must be scared, for she was on the verge of tears. Quickly, he pulled her to his side. He didn't do anything further than that, but they were standing really close to each other.

Eric shot Jocelyn with a cold, sharp look, and she couldn't say a word.

Susan looked up at him and gulped, then she tugged on his sleeve, telling him to stop while he was ahead.

Jocelyn snapped out of it. Shivering in fury, she said, "H-How dare you? What are you doing? You're an embarrassment to our family! You're cheating on Andrew, and now you're using your lover to threaten me? That's it. I'm telling Andrew. Let's see how you like this!"

Susan was shocked. What? What makes her think I'm cheating? It's not like we're even

making out. We're just standing together. Still, Susan was a little uneasy. She would never try to cross Jocelyn, since the hag would always play the victim whenever her son was around. The Baileys were too powerful for civilians like her, and she would just make things worse for Eric at this rate. Quickly, she held Eric's arm and tried to take him away before he could say anything more.

"Andrew? You're in a meeting? It's your wife! Her lover beat me up! You have to help me! My head hurts, a-and I think I'm fainting." Jocelyn cried into her phone.

Oh, I see now. No wonder every time I see Susan, she looks like she's traumatized. So, it's all because of this hag.

When they came out of the hospital, Susan heaved a sigh of relief and quickly let go of Eric's hand. "Sorry you had to see that."

Eric lit a cigarette, and the swirling smoke hid his face behind a grey veil. "Why are you so scared of her? Why didn't you dodge?"

"I wanted to, but I can't. They're too powerful. You won't get it. My whole life is a mess, but I have to live in it. This is what I get for marrying a rich family. It might look nice, but there's no freedom at all."

Rich family? Eric sneered. He could still recall how violent Susan was to him that night. She was using him to vent all her frustration. She was blabbering on and on after she got drunk, and she was lying on him, crying away. Apparently, she must've taken him for someone else, since she kept asking him why he cheated on her. Guess she must've kept her frustration suppressed for a long time.

Eric shot her a look. "So, you took it all out on me and did whatever you wanted. But when push comes to shove, you're a coward. You can always leave; you just don't want to."

Susan snapped, "Yeah, easy for you to say. I want this to end, but the choice is never mine. You have no idea how far the rich can go for profit. I'm just a pawn in their game."

Eric sneered. The rich? No one's richer than me.

Susan thought something must be wrong with her. Why did I tell him all that? He's just an escort. She quickly stopped a cab and ran toward it. She was in such a hurry that she missed a step on the stairs and tripped. She almost fell, but she was caught by someone. Eric tensed up and held her in one arm. He could feel her shivering, so he took his coat off and draped it over her. "Are you asking me to help you? Might as well, since you've been trying to come on me for a while now. Just tell me what you want."

Susan was a little bemused and amused. I don't want anything from an escort. There's nothing I need from you. She leaned on Eric and tried to get up, but someone called her name.

It was Rachel. When she saw Eric holding Susan, her eyes went wide. "Susan, you..."

## Chapter 12 I Cost a Lot

"Did you get a boyfriend?"

Susan knew that look in Rachel's eyes. Rachel was thinking that she didn't deserve love at all. "Why not? You slept with my husband and got knocked up. I want to get knocked up too."

Eric almost choked. I'm not your personal sperm factory.

"I'm happy that you found love. I think Andrew will be delighted too. We should meet up and talk things out. How does next week sound? And bring the divorce papers. I'm sure Andrew will be happy to sign them after all that's happened."

Susan sneered. Is she mad? What is she trying to do? Susan said nothing. Instead, she looked at Eric, who was staring at her coldly. Gah. We shouldn't be airing dirty laundry to the public. This guy heard everything. Great, an escort overhearing our family business is the last thing I need.

Eric didn't think he would be entangled in this kind of low-level drama. He prided himself as someone being on top of the hierarchy, and this kind of drama was beneath him.

Just then, Rachel got a call from Jocelyn, telling her to come back to the hospital. Before she left, Rachel said, "Bring your boyfriend along with you when the time comes. If he is your boyfriend anyway."

Susan held Eric's arm and retorted, "Good. My boyfriend's been waiting for me to get a divorce. We'll be there."

Boyfriend? Eric paused for a moment. Wow, she lies as naturally as she breathes. Rachel smirked. She's looking for trouble. She's been married to Andrew for years now, and she still has no idea how angry he can be? Doesn't she learn? But still, this is what I want to see. The worse the argument gets, the better. I'll be watching as Andrew teaches her a lesson right in front of her new boyfriend. She really thinks she's something just because she gets a new man? How naive.

Rachel happily returned to the hospital only to see Jocelyn arguing with some doctors, and the intensity was about to scorch the ground. "Rachel! Just in time. For some reason, they're refusing your checkup. We had an appointment."

Rachel's heart sank, and she quickly asked, "I paid in full, doctor. All the way from checkups to labor. Why can't I do it here?"

"We're sorry, but we received instructions. We'll be refunding you, of course."

Rachel wouldn't stand for this and she angrily asked, "Reason? You can't chase us out without any reason."

"I'm not sure either. Please, go home."

Rachel's good mood dissipated at once. She had told everyone she would be giving birth at Holyeye. If she were to change hospitals right now, everyone would laugh at her. They would say Andrew didn't care about the baby enough to give her the best he could afford. Being a client of Holyeye was the hallmark of rich mothers. Every mother would love to have this hospital take care of them throughout their pregnancy. She quickly asked, "Can we talk for a bit? I'm sure this is a misunderstanding."

Gah, does she not understand words? The doctor lost his patience and said, "No. Ford Group's president called the director. Yes, he doesn't like you, so you're not getting anything from us. Clear? Leave, or I'm calling the guards."

Rachel was flabbergasted. Ford Group? There's no way their president could have run into me.

Susan regretted agreeing to the challenge, and she was in a rut right now. Great. Now those b\*tches are going to spread the news, and everyone's going to think I have an affair with the escort.

Eric was smoking some cheap cigarettes. Susan was reminded of Andrew. The cigarettes he smoked cost a ton. They look the same age. She sighed. One has to sell his body for money, and the other lives a large life. Hey, wait. Work is hard for him, so why don't I ask him to come with me to the meetup? It's just a meal. No big deal. And Andrew's ego is bigger than his head. If this guy shows up, he might sign the papers right away.

Susan grinned and leaned into Eric's embrace, then she looked at him like a hurt little kitten. "Want to make some quick money, lad?"

Eric saw through her right away and smirked. “You want me to fake being your boyfriend? So how much can you pay?”

## Chapter 13 Selling His Body

He came out and looked at the house across coldly. There was a shoe rack outside, so that meant there were residents around. Eric smoked an

## Chapter 13 Selling His Body

Susan realized that Eric’s eyes were beautiful, and she could easily get lost in them, so she looked away quickly. She then bit the bullet and clumsily hugged him for one second before backing off again “Seventy-five dollars. Be my boyfriend for a day and do everything I tell you to

Yeah, she’s a good flirt only when she’s drunk. She’s a total no when she’s sober. No one’s going to like her state. I’ve seen women who are a hundred times better at flirting And she’s finally raining the payment More than

times for.

He held her wrist, and Susan tensed up. After what Andrew did to her, she was traumatized every someone held her wrist, worried she might be slammed into a wall again, but this time, she was pulled and every time

into an embrace

Eric felt Susan stiffen up like she was scared of something. He pressed his lips against her forehead and said. “Are there any perks to being your temporary boyfriend? Can we go all the way, or do we stop at touching? I am a professional at this and I won’t leave any customer unsatisfied”

Susan gulped and tried to control her nerves. I’m not going to sleep with just about anyone. So, do we

‘have a deal?

Eric smirked and met her innocent gaze. “Sure. Call me if you need anything. Seventy-five dollars gives you a month of service”

“Can I call you anytime? Are you out of a job?”

Eric smiled. “Yeah, so I’m looking for a new one. You held me back, so I’ve not been able to work for days

He let her go, and as she left his arms, his warmth disappeared quickly as well. Then, he touched her cheek and whispered, “So when are you paying me? I don’t start until I get paid?

Start what? Susan blushed and quickly took out her money. “Til call you if I need you. Don’t turn your phone off. You’re on standby all day.”

Eric’s phone rang before she could finish. He took the money and went away

Susan looked at the time. It was getting late and Eric probably had work to do, so she quickly left

hisking

Zyon looked at Eric’s new home, feeling annoyed. There wasn’t even an elevator in this rundown building and climbing eight floors almost killed him. He was speechless. I can ever guess what the Why is he doing this? He doesn’t want to stay in his big mangle even though it’s decked out with a group of servants. Why did he come here? This house smells like mold Zyon covered his

a

However, he wouldn’t ask any unnecessary questions Eric was his boss so he wasn’t supposed Eric, but at the same time, he was Eric’s friend, so he sled in the end. “Man not even your dog want to live in this place. What are you doing

Eric was in a and he pursed his lips.

Chapter 14 Move Over Tonight

“Oh, you lost weight again. You’re so thin, Susan. Please don’t get mad at Dad and Mom. They only did this for your own good. And thanks to you, I can get over this crisis. But um, can you lend me thirty grand? I promise I’ll pay you back. I wouldn’t have asked, but I have no choice.”

Susan put her chicken wing down and wiped her hands with the tissue, then she looked at her brother- Dick Mondragon-with resignation. “Why do you need so much money? I don’t have any money left. I spent seventy-five dollars last night, and I have barely two hundred left. I don’t have thirty grand. Thirty dollars, maybe. Thirty grand? Forget about it.” She whipped out her phone and showed her bank balance to him to prove she was telling the truth.

After Dick looked at it, he took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes, looking as if he was crying. “You can get Andrew to lend you some. Thirty grand is nothing for him. Someone scammed my wife out of thirty grand, and the debt collectors are hot on our tail. If we can’t pay up, she’s going to get a divorce. You don’t want my son to have a broken family, do you?”

Susan tensed up and felt her heart squeeze. Ugh, look at him playing the victim again. As if he doesn’t want the divorce. I’m sorry, but I can’t help. Surviving is already hard enough, and Andrew won’t help. We’re getting a divorce soon. No matter how rich he is, it’s none of my business.”

“Susan, I’ve always been nice to you, haven’t I? Please, help me this time. I’ll do anything to pay you back. Anything.”

Susan massaged her forehead, her heart sinking. She didn’t want to relent this time, so she said nothing.

Dick didn’t expect his softie of a sister to be so stubborn this time. She must be in a pickle. He looked at the time and grabbed his coat. Time to pick up the boy. He patted Susan’s shoulder before he left, and he said, “I can wait. Two days. Please, help me out.”

“And I’ll still tell you I have no money, said Susan promptly. She wanted her brother to give up on asking her for help. She didn’t want to make any promise she couldn’t fulfill.

Andrew promised her he would love her forever, but it only lasted three years. Now they were sworn enemies, and he would love to chop her head off. Dick ignored her, and then he came back right before he could leave the shop.

Susan thought he left something behind, so she looked around, but there was nothing to be found. Then, she turned to her brother and saw him looking at her awkwardly. “My wife’s been angry at me for days, and she didn’t give me any pocket money. You can lend me thirty dollars, can’t you? Please, I just need thirty to get something.”

Susan’s temples throbbed, but Dick wasn’t lying. His wife had been in charge of finances ever since they were married. She quickly gave him the money and saw him scurry off, then she sighed.

Dad and Mom must have prepared a feast for him at home. Aside from his wife, no one would eat in his absence. Her parents would always wait for their precious son to come home before they ate. However, ever since they knew she would get a divorce, they never seem to even have a spot for her at the table, much less wait for her.

Susan stayed in the fast-food joint, looking miserable. She had no idea where she should go next, and then her phone rang, but she waited for a while before picking it up.

“Found you a house. Move over tonight,” said Eric.

Susan perked up. Ooh, he works fast. Seventy-five dollars isn’t much in the grand scheme, but he’s reliable. “Where?

## 14 Move Over Tonight

“I’m coming over,” she gushed.

“Give me your location. I’ll pick you up.”

“You have a car?” Susan froze.

Eric paused for a moment. “I’ll get a cab.”

## +15 Bonus

Susan was silent for a moment. “Eh, it’s alright. You don’t have to waste that kind of money. We’re both broke, so I’ll just catch the bus. See you in a jiff.”

## Chapter 15 Taking Advantage



Susan looked around her new house. The place was nothing more than a shack, and there was barely any decoration inside. Fortunately, it was furnished and had all the necessary facilities. “This works. Thanks.”

Eric stood behind her, surprised by her reaction. He couldn’t believe she wasn’t complaining about the state of the house. This is not what the wife of a rich guy should act like. “Don’t you think it’s a rickety place?” Eric couldn’t stand living in this kind of place. Even the air smelled foul. He wanted to leave right away.

Susan sat on the couch and patted its seat. Okay, it’s a little bouncy, but still usable. “As long as I have a place to stay, I don’t mind. So how much is the rent? I’ll pay you. Better if there’s no bulk payment or deposit. That’ll really help my situation.”

“A hundred and twenty dollars.

Susan looked deflated and she reluctantly got up, putting her hand on the armrest. Melancholy filled her eyes. “Cancel the contract. I’m fifteen dollars short.”

Eric stared at her. She brags about being a rich man’s wife, and this is all she has to show for it? He took out his wallet and gave her fifteen dollars. The only cash he had was the fee Susan gave him.

Susan froze for a moment, surprised that Eric would have her back. No, she wasn’t looking down on sex workers. She just thought they were not as keen on lending a helping hand compared to most people, They had a lot of customers anyway, so he didn’t need to do this. She took the money and thanked him “I’ll pay you back when I get more money.”

She only had a few wings for dinner just to save money, so her stomach was rumbling. She plopped down on the couch and rubbed her belly.

Eric was dealing with work on his phone, and he thought he heard the sound of the rumbling from a certain someone. When he noticed it was from Susan, he stared at her. There was an awkward look on her face, but she looked adorable.

“Hungry?”

Susan nodded and shook her head right away. She was starving and freezing, and she thought she was pitiable. Andrew said she was nothing without him, and now she proved him right. Susan regretted not being careful with her money. She didn't plan ahead, and now she was going to die. A sigh escaped her lips. I was a stay-at-home mom for three years and I didn't do anything to improve myself. I was too busy spending all my time and effort trying to build a family, but now it's all gone.

"You should grab something to eat. It's on me. You're my boss, after all. If you die, I won't have anyone to serve." Eric approached her and smirked, then he held her chin and slid his hand down.

Susan thought something was wrong. Hey, I'm the boss here, not you. Stop taking advantage of me. She shot up and evaded his hand, her cheeks red. "Don't try anything funny with me. I'm not like the other rich wives. I'm broke, as you can see."

Eric looked at the blushing woman and coolly said, "I am giving you a whole month of service, so I'm going to do my best. And as you said, I'm not as young as the other boys, so customers haven't been picking me lately. I'm snapping up whatever clients I can get."

Susan said nothing. Her hunger was keeping her from talking.

vantage

Eric left for a while and

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## Chapter 16 This Is My Home

"Home? But this is my home."

Susan stared at the smoking Eric, and she tugged on the hem of her shirt. No wonder he gave me some money and bought me food. Does he think I'm going to give in so easily? She uneasily went to the door and opened it, then she bowed while asking Eric to leave. "I rented this place. You can't just stay over after paying just fifteen dollars. It's late, so either you leave, or I will. Thanks for finding this house for me, but that doesn't mean we can stay together. I'm not that kind of woman.

Eric cocked his eyebrow, and a dangerous smile curled his lips. He closed the steel door and locked it up. "Can't even let me stay for the night? I'm going to be homeless if you don't take me in."

Damn it. He's trying to scam me for a place to stay. I have a feeling he's up to no good. "Don't pull that stunt with me. If you need money, make some. It's easy for people like you, isn't it? Just f\*ck someone and you'll make enough for rent. She strode to the door and unlocked it, this time standing outside the house. If Eric refused to leave, she would.

Eric's face fell, and he pursed his lips in displeasure. Hmm, so she doesn't like me. She just needed my services in times of desperation. Eric walked out the door and wrapped his arm around her hip, then he muttered seductively, "I lost my job. Why don't you let me serve you? I can give you a twenty percent discount."

Susan gulped, her heart almost jumping out of her chest, then she elbowed his chest. "I'm not doing this anymore. You can give me a hundred percent discount and I still won't do it. Susan yanked on his arm and dragged him out like he was trash.

Eric was kicked out, and the smile on his face disappeared. Instead, darkness filled his eyes. He looked totally different than how he was before. He emerged from the rundown building, the look in his eyes cold. Before he got in his car, he looked at the solitary light shining on the eighth floor, and he fell into silence.

Susan looked at her new place. There was barely anything in it. She did a simple cleanup and sat on her cold, hard bed. There wasn't even a sheet, let alone a mattress. Her phone screen was lit up, and it showed Rachel's social media profile.

'Candlelit dinner with my love (my husband made this)

There was a picture there. The background was her home. Or to be precise, her old home. The plates they were using were the matching ones she bought online. She didn't even get to use it herself, and these scums were already enjoying them.

Susan commented, I bought those. Toss them away after you use them, thanks. She was a bit of a masochist, so she had kept Rachel on her friend list. Every time she showed off her relationship, Susan could see it right away. Even now, she couldn't let this failed relationship go.

Just then, she heard a phone vibrate. Susan looked at her own phone, but it was sitting in her hand silently. She started sweating. I-1-1-Is this house haunted? I'm holding my phone, so where did that voice come from? And it's getting louder.

She was scared out of her wits, thinking someone was here to rob her. This place had no security to speak of. If she-a lonely, almost-divorced woman-were to die, she would only be found after her corpse was bloated. The more she thought about it, the more afraid she became.

Yet, she mustered her courage and opened her room's door quietly, then she saw a small light coming from the couch in the living room. She quickly switched on the lights. When she realized it was Eric's phone, she heaved a sigh of relief.

## Chapter 17 Cheap Thrills

Not a lot of people were using an outdated phone like this one. The back's already cracked so much, and he still is not changing it out. How can he even use this? Susan muttered, "Man, business must be bad for him. Not even one rich gal would buy him a phone? Even my dad uses a better phone."

Morning came, and Susan was woken up by the sound of someone knocking on her door. Groggily, she went to open it. She slept on the wooden bed the whole night and woke up feeling like she was run over. Every bone in her body screamed out at her like she had broken them piece by piece. Every step was agony for her. When she opened the door, she saw Eric standing right outside.

A yawn escaped her lips, and she tied her hair up in a bun, then she turned around without even saying hi. A moment later, she came back with his phone. "I told you that you should be on standby all day. I can't believe you would leave your phone behind. Watch out next time."

There were tears in Susan's eyes, and she kept yawning. Eric, however, looked energized. She asked curiously, "You're early. Did you just come back from work?"

Eric placed her breakfast on the table. I lost my job, remember? So, I took a break last night."

Susan looked at the buns on the table, and she stared at them like a hungry puppy. I want them. "Meat buns?" she asked quietly.

"Vegetarian."

Susan frowned. "But meat tastes better."

Eric said curtly, "Pricier too."

Susan was a little melancholic. Aside from his looks. Eric didn't have much going for him. Meat buns only cost less than ten cents more, and he wouldn't even buy me one? She wouldn't complain about free food, though, and she made a mental note about owing him three buns.

She could understand why Eric was so careful with money. Working was hard, so they would scrimp and save at any chance possible. But if he does go to the meetup, that b\*tch is going to mock him for being so stingy.

"What's wrong with your face? I didn't get to ask you last time." Eric leaned down and pulled her hair back to have a closer look.

Susan put her bun down and smacked his hand away. Obviously, she didn't want him to get nearer. "I bumped into something."

"Where?"

"A sh\*thole. A boulder, that sort of stuff.

Eric lost interest in the story. She can bullsh\*t her way out of anything, huh?

"We'll be going for the meetup tomorrow. Just tell them you're my boyfriend. If this works, I'll give you thirty dollars."

Eric's face fell further.

Beset by worry, Susan quickly started rehearsing just in case her ex and his new wife found out they were

broke.

Even though Andrew didn't love her, he loved his ego more than anything. There was no way he would let his wife go out with another man. Before they were divorced, he would not accept her having another lover, even if he had a lover of his own. He had a serious case of double standards.

"Will you get nervous during meetups?" Susan crossed her legs and picked up her thermos, then she blew at it.

Eric looked at her. Look at someone being an interviewer. If she's holding a newspaper, she might be J. Jonah Jameson too. He asked, "Why would I be nervous?"

"Because the b\*\*stard's rich and short-tempered. You might be scared of him."

Eric's face fell, but the next second, he smirked. "What if he comes down on me hard? I get scared easily.

## Chapter 18 No Refunds

Susan smacked the back of her head. Man, he's unreliable. Guess I was being desperate back then. Her smile soured, and she almost teared up. She had a feeling Eric wasn't taking her business seriously.

Eric said nothing for the longest time, and she started crying. Guess that's it for the fake boyfriend plan. She said through sobs, "I had no other way. You know I've been cooped up in that house for the entirety of my marriage. I couldn't even get close to any other males. You're the only hope I have." She tried her best to force some tears, then she glanced at Eric.

Only after she started crying did Eric keep his sharp gaze hidden. Susan had to keep crying until she was out of breath before he would agree to help.

A new place called Admiral Mall just opened nearby, and Susan stood before it, in awe of its majesty. “Wonder how much money Ford Group’s boss makes. Their malls are appearing all over the nation lately. Susan had nothing but respect for that company’s boss.

“Huh?” Eric picked up on that. He wondered what she would say about him.

“Yeah, the boss. Must be super old to be able to open so many malls and be so rich.”

Old? Eric felt a little insulted.

Susan took him to the second floor. The mall was big, and she looked around before finally seeing the Prada shop. Andrew liked that brand. Every season, he would get their newest arrivals, and thanks to that, he got a diamond card. Susan didn’t care if Eric and Andrew ended up wearing the same shirt because Eric was more handsome than Andrew. She wanted Andrew to know her new boyfriend was cool too.

“We can’t lose out to them. I’ll get you some good clothes.” She picked up a navy-blue shirt and compared it to Eric’s size. It fits. He’d look like a super-rich guy if he wears this. She clicked her tongue. “You look good in anything, but you’re already good-looking, to begin with. You’re born to be a mo...” She quickly swallowed her words.

She was going to say he was a model, but he might take it the wrong way and go on a rampage. Men loved their egos after all.

Eric felt like a puppet being fiddled by Susan. She kept trying to see if every piece of clothing she took would fit him.

“You like these? I can give them to you.” Susan loved how Eric looked in those clothes.

Eric looked at the price tag, and Susan checked it out as well. When she saw the price, she rubbed her eyes in disbelief, then she counted the zeros again. Finally, she confirmed that this shirt alone cost three thousand four hundred and fifty dollars. She almost screamed.

Andrew's more extravagant than I thought. No wonder he screamed at me when I put his clothes in a washing machine. I really need to see more of this world.

"Still going to give me a shirt?" Eric looked at the silent Susan.

"No." Susan had no choice. In the end, she picked out a few shirts in another shop that cost a lot less than the Prada one, then she patted Eric's shoulder. "You still look great in cheap clothes." She then took out her card, and she winced as she did that. Now that she had no money, she had to use credit.

Eric noticed her flinching when she was paying for the clothes, and he tugged on his jeans. "I need to change my pants out too."

Susan looked a little miffed. "I'll get myself some bubble tea. Wait here. We'll talk about your pants later." Eric stood around as ordered and checked out his shirt. Her taste is terrible.

The mall's manager was patrolling the place along with some subordinates. When he came to a men's fashion store, he stopped in his tracks.

## Chapter 19 Eat Me

Nobody told me the boss would be here. After so many years of working, this was the second time he saw the boss of Ford Group. Joneson Witchton rubbed his eyes and confirmed that he wasn't seeing things. If they had known the boss would come, they would have prepared for his visit. Joneson was more than a bit panicked, wondering why Eric was checking out this store. His legs felt like lead, and yet he still went ahead.

"Mr..."



Just when he was about to address Eric, Eric shot him a look, and Joneson shut up. He stood around, fidgeting. Beads of sweat poured from his forehead, and a chill ran down his spine.

Susan came back with two cups of bubble tea and saw a group of men in black standing around Eric. They were obviously the management, and she wondered why they were here. Stiffly, she handed a cup of bubble tea to Eric. Eric didn't take it, but she stuffed it into his hand anyway.

Joneson was too scared to even breathe. He glanced at the young lady who just showed up, but he didn't take a closer look.

"You know him?" Susan asked quietly, sipping on her bubble tea.

"No," said Eric calmly.

Joneson didn't look up due to fear, and the moment Eric said he didn't know him, Joneson knew what to do. Susan watched as the men in black scurried off like they had just seen a lion, and she wondered what was going on.

She then treated Eric to a meal just to pay him back for the buns he bought her. She took him all the way down to basement level one because she could only afford the food here. At most, it would only cost fifteen dollars.

Eric would survey his malls from time to time, but he would never step foot into the basement level. He thought this place was chaotic. Never did he expect to show up here with a woman.

"Is barbecue okay?"

"No."

“What about pasta? Or tortilla.”

“Too oily.”

Susan massaged her forehead. Ugh, so picky. You can’t even afford a bottle of mineral water, so stop being choosy. She then came to a stop before a stall and pointed at the sign above. “What about pho?”

Eric looked at the sign. There was a fat cow on it, and it was wearing a chef’s hat and apron. The cow was smiling, though to Eric, it looked like a grin. “So, you want to eat me?” he whispered. He was wondering if she picked this stall because the food sounded a bit like a certain... verb.

Susan blushed and quickly sat down, then she ordered two bowls of pho-one without chili pepper, the other with extra chili pepper. “He’d never eat anything like this. Thinks it’s beneath him. But I don’t feel right in posh restaurants either.” Susan picked up some rice noodles with her chopsticks, and a few bites later, she was filled with sadness. I can see why he thinks less of me.

Eric looked at her silently, his eyes showing no emotion. “Is he rich?”

Susan nodded, tears glistening in her eyes. “The Baileys are really rich. I’m not a good match for him in

## Chapter 20 Powerful Gaze

Susan felt a bit sorry for Eric. “You’re in a worse situation compared to me. I know you wouldn’t have worked in this industry if you had a choice. We’re all just trying to survive. I’m not belittling your career.”

Eric was silent for a few seconds. “I think my life is darker than you think. I clawed my way back up from the depths of hell, after all.”

She snapped out of her sorrow and looked at the man before her, wondering what he was saying. She noticed a hint of ferocity and iciness in his eyes when he said that, and that look scared her.

“You don’t get it, do you?” Eric looked at her.

Susan looked at him, wide-eyed. “No.”

A small smile tugged his lips. “You will soon, so don’t worry.”

They finished their meal, but Susan felt heavy-not because of the food she ate, though. She still couldn’t shake the feeling that there was more in that gaze of Eric’s earlier, and it sent a chill down her spine.

Erie walked with her until she was at the rundown building, and she saw him off, saying, “Last train sets off at eleven. Don’t dawdle around.”

He didn’t look back, and he slowly disappeared into the darkness. Susan went into the building and stomped her foot, then the voice-controlled light lit up. She climbed to the eighth floor, but when she saw her mother outside her house, she almost missed a step and fell.

Loretta poked her watch. “You’re late. I’ve been waiting for four hours. Why didn’t you take my calls?”

“It’s not my fault. You should’ve called before you came. My phone was on silent mode.” Susan rummaged for her key and opened the door.

Loretta darted into her house before Susan could, and she looked around. Angrily, she said, “You’re an adult now. Why won’t you listen to us? You just had to get a divorce, and now look at you, staying in this rundown shack.”

Susan put the keys on the table and her bag down. “So what?”

Loretta touched the yellowing wall in disgust. “It’s like a cheap pigsty. Only scum and trash live here. This place is filled with the lowest kind of people this society churns out. You can’t stay here alone.”

Susan looked at her mother. Ever since she married Andrew, everyone who knew her mother praised her for raising a good daughter. All the compliments had gotten to her head, and she actually thought she was better than everyone else when she was just a retiree who lived on less than one thousand dollars a month.

“What do you want? If you’re trying to tell me to cancel the divorce, I’d tell you to go home. She went to the kitchen to boil some water.

“Are you still trying to get a divorce? Are you stupid? Wake up. Once you get divorced, you won’t even have a house. Why would you stay in this shack when you have a big house to live in? You’re stupid.”

Susan looked at her house. She didn’t think it was bad, and she retorted calmly, “I think I’m living fine. It’s a peaceful life. Hardships are temporary. This won’t last forever.”

Loretta pointed at the blister on her lips. “Look at me. I got so mad because of this and it gave me a blister. Marriage isn’t just between you two. It’s between our families. If my friends find out that you’re getting divorced, they’re going to laugh at me. I can’t face them like this, and aren’t you frustrated living in a small place like this?”

Susan stood beside the stove, her face turning red from the steam of the boiling water.  
Wait a minute. “How did you know I live here anyway?”