

You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone Chapter 1 - 10

Chapter 1 The Divorce Is Official

“Oh, Paul, take me.”

“Calista Everhart, look at me. Who am I?”

The lights were switched on. Calista's eyes widened the moment she recognized the man's face.

“Lucian Northwood? What are you doing here!”

Lucian held her chin with a cold expression. “If you dare to send yourself to my bed, you should know I'm not easy to deal with.”

“It's not what you think. I was wrong ...”

She tried to free herself, but it was too late. Agonizing pain consumed her the entire night.

After the deed, Lucian tossed a credit card at her. But she slapped him across the face.

He licked the corner of his lips and sneered. “Isn't this what you came for?”

His words destroyed her, but there was no turning back now.

“Lucian Northwood, I don't want money. I want you to marry me!”

Three years later.

Calista was watching the entertainment news at Everglade Manor. The report covered a dancer named Lily Scott, who accidentally fell off the stage. The scene was a mess.

A man in a suit walked through the crowd with a cold expression. He carried the injured Lily and left the scene.

Although it showed only his side profile, Calista could recognize him. They had been married for three years, after all. She would recognize him no matter what.

Last night, in bed, that very same man told her that he would be back home early today.

She turned to look at the cold food on the table. She had spent the whole afternoon cooking.

She got up and threw the food into the trash can. Her emotionless act made the two blisters on the back of her hand appear ironic.

Following that, Calista headed upstairs to pack her luggage. On the day she and Lucian registered their marriage, she had also hired a lawyer to draft a divorce agreement.

She remembered it like it was yesterday.

According to the agreement, their marriage should only last for three years. Then, they would divorce. It was the exact same time Lily spent studying abroad.

There were three months left before the agreement officially ended. But, with Lily back in the country early, Calista figured the agreement was in effect.

She carried the luggage downstairs. Then, she called Lucian before leaving the house.

His impatient voice resounded over the phone. “What?”

His indifferent tone made her grip tighten around the luggage handle. Clearly, he had forgotten the promise he made last night.

Well, how could she actually believe his words when the promise was made in bed?

“Have you eaten?”

There was few seconds of silence. He didn’t want to answer such a boring question.

“If there’s nothing else, I’m hanging up. I’m busy.” As soon as he offered this brief answer, he ended the call.

After that, Calista drove away the most expensive car in the garage.

It didn’t stand out in the lines of luxury cars. But on the road, it was different. Its cool features alone could give onlookers an adrenaline rush.

Calista drove to a seven-star hotel in the city.

She handed over a black card to the receptionist. “A presidential suite for three months.”

The receptionist accepted it with a smile. “Of course, miss. The total is 15 million dollars. Since it is a presidential suite, we demand a 30 percent penalty if you check out earlier than expected.”

“I’ll pay with the card,” Calista said expressionlessly. She might not be able to spend Lucian’s money starting tomorrow.

The divorce agreement stated that the assets would be split equally.

However, Lucian could always decide to go against the agreement. That would make things difficult for her, and she might not receive a single cent.

After all, Northwood Corporation had the best lawyers in the industry. There was nothing they couldn’t do.

As an afterthought, she might as well spend the money while she was still “Mrs. Northwood.”

If she didn’t do that, the money would then belong to the homewrecker.

After swiping the card, the receptionist handed a key card to Calista. “Please keep it safe, miss.”

At that moment, people stared at her in awe of her wealth.

As Lucian stood outside the operating room, he saw the credit card usage.

He frowned. It wasn’t because of the amount, but where it was paid to.

A seven-star hotel.

Just as he was about to call Calista, a doctor pushed Lily out of the operating room.

She was still in her dance outfit. When she fell off the stage, the decorations left cuts all over her arms. The stitches made the injuries seem even more horrifying.

Her complexion was as pale as a sheet.

“Mild concussion and soft-tissue injuries. She injured her spine slightly. However, it isn’t that serious.”

Nevertheless, Lily was deathly pale. After all, she had fallen off from such a high place.

Nervously, she asked, “Will it affect my career in any way?”

“We have to keep observing things for now. We can’t eliminate that possibility.” The doctor’s answer was vague.

Her eyes reddened almost instantly. She fought back her tears and gazed at Lucian.

“Thank you, Lucian. You can go home now. I can handle it alone—”

Before she could finish, the doctor interrupted, “That won’t do. Someone has to look after you. A mild concussion isn’t something to be taken lightly.”

She wanted to say something, but Lucian beat her to it. “I’ll stay for the night. You should get some rest.”

They had known each other for a long time, so she knew his personality well. “Thank you. But ... should I contact Calista to explain the situation?”

The incident was so huge that it was reported on the news, so Calista might be aware of it.

Lucian went silent for a few seconds. Then, he frowned impatiently. “No need for that.”

He stayed until the next morning. By the time he returned home, the housekeeper, Mia, was cleaning up the place.

Upon noticing his arrival, Mia greeted, “You’re back, sir. Would you like some breakfast?”

“Yes.”

He hadn’t slept all night, so he had a headache. He rubbed his forehead and asked casually, “Where’s Calista?”

“She must’ve gone to work. I haven’t seen her since I arrived.”

Lucian never liked the idea of having outsiders stay in his house, so Mia didn’t live there.

He checked his wristwatch for the time. Usually, Calista would still be having breakfast at this time.

“Does that mean she paid the hotel for herself? She spent the night out,” he concluded in his head.

His face darkened.

Mia didn’t notice and served him breakfast. Then, she held up a package. “Mr. Northwood, you have a package.”

His residence’s address was kept personal. Packages and mail were usually sent to Northwood Corporation.

The secretary would always check their contents before handing them over to him.

Lucian didn’t give much thought to the package. He happened to be free, so he accepted it to check what it was.

Once he realized that it was a divorce agreement, his face fell. He went through the document quickly. Then, he reached the terms for asset distribution.

He scoffed. “She already has the details listed, huh?”

According to the conditions, all the houses, vehicles, cash, and stocks he owned were to be divided equally.

“She has some nerve,” he commented.

Mia didn’t dare to say a word as she saw the word “divorce” clearly. She desperately wished for herself to vanish on the spot.

Lucian held the agreement and dialed a number.

Calista’s sleepy voice resounded from the other end of the line. “What?”

Chapter 2 Wanting to Live Separately

“Calista Everhart, what do you mean by this? A divorce agreement?”

Calista woke up as soon as she heard Lucian’s voice. “Literally, a divorce.”

He smiled coldly. “Before you go to work, come to my office and take this trash away. I want you to be at Everglade Manor at 8 pm. Bring your luggage too.”

She sneered. “Lucian Northwood, are you—”

Before she questioned his sanity, she suddenly understood why he was contacting her.

“You don’t have to worry about Lily being called a homewrecker. The only people who know about our marriage are our parents and close friends.

“To the outsiders, you’re still the good guy willing to fully support your girlfriend’s career and suffer the loneliness. Now that your sacrifice has born fruit, everyone is happy for you.”

Pictures of Lucian sending Lily to the hospital had been taken and released last night. And now, Calista was bringing up a divorce. Lily would take the blame as the homewrecker if words got out.

When Calista finished, she realized that Lucian had long ended the call.

“That son of a ...” she cursed in her head.

The hotel she was currently staying at was near Northwood Corporation. So, she wasn’t in a rush at all. She slowly enjoyed her breakfast before taking the subway.

When she first got married to Lucian, she agreed to her mother-in-law’s request to be Lucian’s personal assistant.

To be more precise, it was more like being a nanny.

Her job was to handle his meals and trivial personal matters. That was all it took for her to get paid at the end of every month.

No one at work knew that she was the boss’ wife.

It seemed like a pathetic situation from her point of view.

Everyone knew about Lily, the homewrecker. However, Calista, the supposed wife, was on a spy mission. She had to avoid attention.

Whenever Lucian and Calista took the same car to work, she had to get off the car two blocks from their destination.

She arrived at work and began writing her resignation letter. They were going to divorce anyway. What was the point of being his nanny?

Someone walked past her desk and asked, “Ms. Everhart, are you resigning? Are you getting married to your loaded boyfriend?”

Calista paused. Previously, someone caught her getting out of Lucian’s car. The surprised witness had questioned her if it was his car.

At that time, she wished to keep the relationship a secret. So, she lied to her colleague. She said that it was her boyfriend’s car.

The next day, everyone in the company knew she had a rich boyfriend. They even knew that he drove the same car as Lucian.

No one linked the clues with Lucian because he never ate the meals she prepared. They deemed her foolish for preparing meals all the time despite knowing his attitude.

“No. We broke up.” Calista denied it.

“How could you bring yourself to give up the chance of becoming rich? If I were you, I would’ve cried buckets!” one of her colleagues exclaimed. When in fact, the colleague was secretly gloating over Calista’s misfortune.

Calista thought of Lucian before saying with a soft yet sharp tone, “The only asset he has is a sharp tongue. Why should I keep him?”

“What about that asset?” asked a curious colleague.

A sudden cough interrupted the conversation. When they turned to see who it was, they were scared out of their wits.

“Mr. Northwood ...”

The person who coughed was Lucian’s executive assistant, David Brown.

He glanced at Lucian standing next to him. “Please refrain from gossiping, especially on this kind of topic.”

Lucian's gaze swept across them before landing on Calista. His eyes were dark. "Come to my office, Ms. Everhart."

He continued, "Everyone involved in the conversation will receive a pay cut. Report yourselves to the Finance Department."

They all dispersed almost instantly except Calista. She kept typing on her keyboard expressionlessly.

...

The interior design in Lucian's office was simple. When she entered the room, he was flipping through a document casually.

She knew what that document was. It was the divorce agreement. It had been sent to him by her request this morning.

She stood confidently before the desk. "Mr. Northwood."

He raised his gaze. But his expression remained unreadable. His tone was cold. "The only asset I have is a sharp tongue. How did you come to this conclusion, Ms. Everhart?"

Calista pursed her lips in an attempt to play dumb. She must've been out of her mind to keep talking about that topic.

The silence lasted a few moments before he let the question slide. Lucian threw the divorce agreement on the table.

"Mind explaining the reason for the divorce written here?"

She went silent for a few seconds before answering politely, "It is what it means literally."

She wrote it very clearly. Anyone would be able to understand it.

"Lack of intimacy throughout the marriage. The other party is unable to fulfill the wife's basic needs. I suspect that the other party may be dealing with sexual dysfunction."

Every word he said got her on edge. She thought he might lose control and strangle her at any moment.

But it was an objective statement. Lucian didn't touch her at all for the past three years.

When he read the terms for asset distribution, a glint of coldness flashed across his eyes. "It looks like you've learned something from your position as my assistant.

"You're aware of every detail of my properties, huh? But, Calista Everhart, do you think that you'll be able to receive a single cent from me?"

She was mentally prepared to leave the game empty-handed. Thus, she was unbothered by it.

Her aloof attitude seemed to provoke him. He held her chin. "How are you going to feed yourself after the divorce? With that monthly pay of yours? Forget about rent, will it even be enough to buy you the necklace you're wearing?"

It was a downright mockery.

She turned her head sideways, trying to break free from his grasp. But it didn't go as she wanted. Instead, he tightened his grip on her chin.

Calista endured the pain. "That's none of your business."

He scoffed coldly as though he was going to tear her apart. "Did you find yourself another target?"

He took her silence as a confirmation and suddenly smiled disdainfully.

He released her. "I think there's something I have to straighten out with you. You don't have the right to ask for divorce. There are three months left according to the agreement."

Still, it made no difference to Calista. He never treated her as his wife. So what was the point of following the agreement?

He was acting this way because she was the one who brought up the divorce. It was a humiliation for Lucian and Lily.

"That stupid ego of his!" she thought.

It seemed impossible to get him to agree to the divorce today.

So, she decided to make herself clear. “It doesn’t matter how much time we have left. I’m not going to move back.”

He looked at her. “Are you saying that you wanna live separately?”

Chapter 3 She Will Never Go Back Again

The words “living separately” squeezed Calista’s heart. It was a sad and painful feeling.

She could count how many times Lucian came back to Everglade Manor after they got married. It was no different from living separately.

“There are only three months left. I don’t see the point in living together.”

He stared at her for a few moments. Then, he smirked.

“I decide if it’s pointless or not. Ask David for a two-hour break today. Bring your luggage back to the manor.”

“I—”

A knock on the door interrupted her.

David was outside. He reminded Lucian, “Mr. Northwood, the meeting will start soon.”

Lucian buttoned up his sleeves. “Get out.”

Calista remained unfazed. “Lucian Northwood, I am not going back.”

“You keep saying the same thing over and over.”

This wasn’t the first time they had fought. So, he was unbothered.

It wasn’t the first time she had moved out, either. But it usually took her a few days before she returned.

She knew he wasn’t buying it and thought it was a waste of time to argue further. Eventually, he would understand the situation as time passed. This time, she was never going back.

She left the office and headed to the washroom. She needed to fix her makeup. Her chin had a bruise from where he pinched her.

After that, she was going to take her resignation letter to the HR Department.

Right then, someone called out to her. “Calista, the printer ran out of ink. Go refill it quickly. We’re waiting.”

She was used to getting such orders every day.

As Lucian’s personal assistant, she had to take care of his meals and handle other trivial matters. Yet, he disapproved of her.

He had David do her job instead. As a result, she ended up running errands for the staff.

“Calista Everhart, I’m telling you to refill the ink.”

It was Jenny Winchester. She never liked Calista. Jenny was the one that sneered at Calista for breaking up with her rich boyfriend.

“Even if you’re resigning, be professional. Your resignation isn’t official yet.”

“My job is to follow Mr. Northwood’s orders and take care of his meals. Do you think you can give orders in his place now?”

In fact, a lot of people wanted to be Lucian’s personal assistant. They were all waiting for their chance.

Jenny was one of them. She desperately wished for Calista to leave so she could take her place.

Jenny shot her a disgusted look. “Calista, have you left your brain somewhere? Taking care of Mr. Northwood’s meals? Have you seen him eat the food you order?”

Calista’s heart ached at the thought of all the wasted food. Then, her chest hurt. Jenny had thrown some documents at her.

Arrogantly, she said, “Print 20 sets of these by 2 pm. Ms. Everhart, you need to know your place.”

Calista frowned at that. Soon after, she heard footsteps behind her. She turned and saw Lucian and David leaving the office.

Lucian met her gaze and smirked. He seemed to be mocking her, as if saying, “What makes you think you can divorce me when you can’t even handle a simple task?”

She scoffed and threw the documents back at Jenny right in front of Lucian. Papers scattered all over the floor.

Before Jenny could react, Calista turned around and walked away.

“Ms. Winchester, we not only need to know our places, but we also need to understand what no means. I’m not going to refill the ink or print the papers. You can file a complaint to Mr. Northwood if you dare.

“Besides, his type is someone brainless with a hot body. You’re brainless, but you’re kinda flat.”

She dared to offend others because she was going to resign anyway. It was worth it, as she could speak ill of Lucian.

Lucian’s face turned grim, and he pursed his lips.

After that, Calista went to the HR Department to hand in her resignation letter.

The manager looked at it and said, “Ms. Everhart, you should take this back with you. You’re Mr. Northwood’s personal assistant. We can only proceed after he gives permission.”

“I won’t be coming in starting tomorrow. Take it as an absence or a leave, your choice,” she said firmly.

The manager was confused. “This goes against the contract. Even if you resign, there’s a two-week transition period.”

“Why bother when the job is to take care of someone’s meals? Am I supposed to teach the newcomer what Lucian doesn’t eat? I bet he’ll starve to death because I’ve basically ordered every kind of food,” she roasted Lucian in her head.

She couldn’t care less about it. “Mr. Northwood can take it to court then.”

As she left Northwood Corporation, she received a call from Yara Quinn, her best friend.

Yara asked Calista out for a drink. She was worried about Calista being sad after the news yesterday.

Calista felt tired, so she declined. She returned to the hotel, skipped dinner, and went to sleep.

Later, a knock on the door woke her up. She checked the time only to realize that it was 7:30 pm.

She got up from bed and opened the door.

It was the hotel manager. He stood there with a professional smile. "Hello, Ms. Everhart. There seems to be an issue with your room, so we need to repair it."

"Give me a new room, then." She didn't make things difficult for him. Instead, she was going to go to her bedroom and pack her things.

However, he stopped her and said, "I'm sorry, but we have no more rooms available. We've refunded the money. Considering that it's our mistake, the compensation fee is waived."

Calista stopped in her tracks, recalling that Lucian demanded she return by 8 pm. With the hotel manager driving her away at 7:30 pm, she'd be a fool not to see the real reason behind all this.

"Is it that scumbag Lucian Northwood? I'm not leaving!" She was so angry she couldn't hold back her words.

The hotel manager had no intention of keeping it a secret. "Ms. Everhart, please don't make things difficult for me. We're just running a small business."

"What small business easily earns 15 million dollars?" she asked herself, finding it ridiculous.

No matter how reluctant she was, she had no choice but to check out.

The hotel manager was firm and willing to waive the compensation. Meanwhile, the repairmen stood by the door, claiming that a fire might break out due to a problem with the circuitry.

In the end, she left the hotel with her luggage. There was a car waiting for her at the entrance. It belonged to the Northwood family.

Jonathan Whitman noticed her and quickly got out of the car to help her with the luggage. “Madam Calista, Mr. Northwood instructed me to pick you up.”

“Tell Lucian that I’m not going back.” She avoided him and went to a nearby hotel.

He didn’t stop her, and soon, she knew why.

The receptionist returned her card. “I’m sorry, but your card is disabled. Do you have another one?”

Chapter 4 A Celebration for Escaping Misery

Calista was using Lucian’s credit card. She thought it would be a waste to use her money to stay at a hotel.

She called Yara to ask for her address. Then, she drove there.

Jonathan followed her the entire way, but she ignored him.

An ornament scratched her hand as she took her luggage out of the car. It was bleeding, but fortunately, it wasn’t serious.

Yara lived on the 17th floor. She was expecting Calista, so she left the door slightly open.

She was momentarily stunned when Calista brought her luggage into the house. Calista hadn’t mentioned it over the phone.

Yara thought Calista looked like she ran away from home.

She skipped putting on her face mask as she helped Calista with the luggage. “You should’ve told me about your luggage. I could’ve waited for you downstairs ...”

Then, she said, “You have a scratch. What happened?”

Yara was worried and wanted to get a medical kit. But Calista stopped her.

“It’s fine. It’ll heal in no time.”

“You spent so much money taking care of your hands. Can’t you be more careful? Look at those pianists. If they could chop off their hands and keep them in a safe, I bet they would’ve done it long ago.”

Yara’s exaggeration made her laugh, adding some color to her gloomy day. “It’s not that serious, though.”

Yara paused. Since the topic had come this far, she brought up that matter again.

“Remember what I told you before? Have you made up your mind?”

Calista remained silent because she hadn’t decided yet.

“Jacob has reached out to me several times. He’s the top historic preservationist in the country! Only the top dogs can work in that field.

“Think about it. You must be really important for him to come in person. If it weren’t for you wanting to keep your identity a secret, I would’ve given him your number long ago.”

Calista was a skilled historic preservationist. She learned the craft from her mother at a young age, making her exceptionally skilled. She also took relevant courses in college for it.

At first, she planned to work in a museum after graduation. But something unexpected happened. Then, she had no choice but to marry Lucian.

All these years, she was able to accept jobs as a freelance conservator through Yara.

Now, things were different. She was going to divorce Lucian and start a new life.

Calista thought about it for a moment and nodded. “I accept the offer.”

“For real?” Yara was surprised by the answer. After all, Calista had always refused before.

“It’s worth a shot. I can go and start anytime.”

“Anytime?” Yara was surprised again. “What about your job at Northwood Corporation? Did you quit?”

“Yeah. I did,” Calista casually replied, as if it didn’t involve her.

Yara clicked her tongue. The trending news she read this morning was enough to fuel her imagination.

“You should’ve quit earlier. Lucian Northwood is a total jerk! He wouldn’t eat the meals you prepared anyway, so why bother asking you to order them?”

“A snob like him should end up in the gutter with Lily. You should take the chance to divorce him too. There are only three months left anyway. It’s better to end things earlier.”

Tired, Calista leaned into the couch. It had been a rough day for her. “I brought it up, but he’s against it. He told me to wait until it’s time.”

Yara rolled her eyes. “Snobbish to the core, isn’t he? Lily rejected his proposal and went abroad to pursue her career. I bet he won’t let you go and get back with her that easily.

“How low can he be? He’s trying to show that he’s a great catch, so she won’t leave him again.”

Calista hadn’t thought that far. It only hit her when Yara pointed it out.

“Lucian Northwood, you jerk! How dare you take advantage of me!” Calista thought.

“Do as I say. Save the courtesy. Share your marriage certificate online before you divorce him. Let justice deal with that couple. Let people call Lily a homewrecker!”

“No. Just let them be. If we make a big deal out of it, it might be hard for me to look for a boyfriend.” Calista shook her head. She didn’t think it was a good idea.

Yara’s eyes twinkled as she thought, “A boyfriend?”

It looked like Calista was really leaving Lucian for good. This was great news! They should celebrate!

She grabbed a pack of beer from the fridge and gave Calista a can. “Here. Let’s celebrate. My best friend is finally out of misery!”

Just as Calista was about to grab it, the doorbell rang.

“I wonder who it is,” Yara muttered as she went on to open the door.

It was Jonathan. Unlike a few hours ago, he was now desperate to complete his task.

He craned his neck to look at Calista in the living room. “Madam Calista, Mr. Northwood is waiting for you downstairs. Please come with me.”

Calista frowned. She didn’t look back and sounded impatient. “Let him wait, then.”

She had beers to drink and a bed to sleep in at Yara’s place. Meanwhile, Lucian was waiting in the car.

No matter how spacious the car was, he wouldn’t be able to lie down and rest properly.

She had nothing to be afraid of.

As soon as she finished, she took a sip of beer.

Jonathan wouldn’t dare to deliver that message, not unless he had a death wish. Feeling at a loss, he added, “Madam Selena called Mr. Northwood. It looks like she’s not feeling well—”

Calista’s phone rang while he was speaking. It was Lucian’s mother—Selena Jenkin.

She could ignore Lucian if she wanted, but she couldn’t ignore Selena’s phone call.

Over the years, Selena treated her better than he did.

Whenever Selena came across anything nice or expensive, she always made sure to get one for Calista. Plus, she always took Calista’s side whenever Calista and Lucian fought.

“Mom.”

“Calista, I called Lucian. He said you’re not with him. Is that brat spending the night out again?”

Selena was probably the only person who dared to address Lucian that way. She always checked that he was home every time she called.

“No. I’m at my friend’s place. It’s her birthday, so she’s treating me to dinner.” Calista didn’t mention the divorce, worried that it would upset Selena.

Selena had had heavy bleeding after Lucian’s birth, leaving her with lasting issues. She wasn’t in the best of health in recent years either.

Meanwhile, Yara rolled her eyes. It was suddenly her birthday that day. Calista had lied so smoothly.

Selena suggested, “You guys should come back to Stansend Manor after that. Lucian’s father is out for work, and I’m not feeling well.

“Have you called the doctor?” Calista asked. She was concerned about her health.

“No. It’s nothing serious, anyway. I bought a bracelet from an auction. You should see it. I wonder if it’s to your liking.”

“Okay.” Calista finally agreed after a moment of silence.

Had Selena contacted her to give her a gift, she would’ve turned it down. After all, she was going to divorce Lucian. However, Selena said that she wasn’t feeling well.

Yara knew it was impossible to change Calista’s mind. So, she personally sent her off. “Trust me, she’s calling you back on purpose.”

The familiar car was parked near the entrance of the apartment building. Lucian leaned against it while smoking.

Hearing the noise, he looked at them with dark, broody eyes.

Chapter 5 His Shirt

The journey to Stansend Manor was quiet. Jonathan didn’t dare to change the speed in such a tense atmosphere.

It wasn’t until he stopped at the parking lot that he heaved a long sigh. He got out of the car to open the door for them.

Unlike Lucian, Calista didn't particularly enjoy such service. She was about to open the door, but he suddenly asked, "I like someone brainless with a hot body?"

Calista almost choked on her saliva. She forgot that she said that.

She only wanted to speak ill of him. Who even knew what type of woman he was into?

She looked back and noticed his gaze. It fell just below her collarbone. Calista wasn't sure if it was intentional.

Something was brewing in his gaze, one that she took as disdain.

"Don't men like big boobs in general?" That would explain his lack of arousal throughout their marriage.

But Lily wasn't that curvy either.

Lucian frowned. "I don't."

Calista could only smile.

Her beauty had a fierceness to it. And with that smile, she could easily captivate any man. But even with that, he stared at her indifferently.

"Your preference is none of my business, but I like it nice and big," she said. "That's the main reason I'm divorcing you."

His face fell almost instantly. The atmosphere in the car turned icy.

Jonathan was waiting for them outside. The soundproofing wasn't great, and he could hear the conversation loud and clear.

Cold sweat formed on his forehead. He noticed Lucian getting angry, so he forced himself to open the door. “Mr. Northwood, Madam Calista, we’ve arrived.”

Calista got out of the car first. At the same time, Selena walked out of the house with a warm smile.

She held Calista’s hand and led her inside. “Callie, I told Macy to make tomato soup. It’s good for your skin.”

Lucian was still in the car, completely forgotten.

Once inside the house, Selena lowered her voice. “Did that brat bully you?”

Selena had seen the news yesterday. She was worried that Calista would be upset, so she invited them over for the night.

“Mom, we—”

Calista wanted to tell her about the divorce. But Selena cut her off, “Just say the word if he does. I’ll ask his father to teach him a lesson. You have to stand up for yourself.

“I’ll give you a list of food he doesn’t like. You should order him those starting tomorrow. I’ve also told David not to prepare food for Lucian, or I’ll fire him.”

She didn’t mention a word about Lily to avoid upsetting Calista.

Soon after, Macy came over with a shawl. “Madam Selena, why didn’t you wear a shawl? Madam Calista, please tell her to look after herself. She keeps neglecting her health.”

“Mom, are you feeling alright? Did you call the doctor?” Calista asked. She didn’t have the chance to bring the divorce up at all.

Selena waved her hand. “It’s the same old thing. I’ll get better soon. There’s no need to call a doctor at this hour.”

Indeed, it was quite late. Selena kept Calista company until she finished the tomato soup. After Selena tried on the bracelet, she went upstairs to sleep.

Before heading up, she shot Lucian a glare. “If you don’t make Calista feel better by tonight, it’ll be the end of you!”

Lucian was speechless. He hadn’t said a word since returning but was still targeted.

Their room was located on the second floor. Knowing that the couple would return, Macy had changed the bedsheets beforehand.

Calista wanted to take a shower. She was about to bring her pajamas with her, but when she opened the wardrobe, her pajamas were gone.

Instead, in their place were various revealing lacy nightgowns. Two sets were even made for role-play as well.

Everyone in the manor knew that Selena wished to have a grandchild. She had prepared a baby room right after Lucian and Calista got married. Toys and clothes for a baby boy and a baby girl were stored in the room.

She had prepared the nightgowns and role-play costumes for them. All so that her wish could come true.

Calista felt sorry for Selena. If her mother-in-law found out that theirs was a sexless marriage, she wondered if Lucian would be driven out of the family.

She looked back at him.

Lucian glanced at the clothes without much interest. Then, he gave her a once-over and said, “They don’t suit you.”

His comment left her speechless.

As she reached for the least revealing nightgown, he threw his shirt at her. “Wear this.”

Given his height, his shirt hung down to her knees. It was definitely a better choice than those weird nightgowns. She coolly accepted it and headed to the bathroom.

According to the law, she owned half of his belongings. So, it was reasonable to say that the shirt was hers.

After drying her hair, Calisa emerged from the bathroom. Lucian was smoking on the balcony. The faint wisp of smoke covered his face, softening his features.

She wondered if she was imagining things, but she noticed a brief change in his gaze when he looked at her.

He snuffed the cigarette out and walked past her to enter the bathroom. Calista was so used to his behavior that she now felt numb instead of disappointed.

Not long after, Macy knocked on the door. She had a bowl of soup with her.

“Madam Calista, Madam Selena personally made it for Mr. Northwood. Please make sure he finishes every drop of it so her effort won’t go to waste.

“She even burned her hand making this soup. Although she doesn’t speak to him, she genuinely cares about him. She’s worried that he hasn’t been eating properly. That’s why she asked me to bring this over for him.”

“Okay.” Calista could understand Selena’s concern. After all, Lucian was her son.

He took a short while to wash himself up. When he came out of the bathroom, he noticed the bowl of soup on the table.

“Mom personally made it. Finish it,” Calista said.

He glanced at it wordlessly, showing no intention of drinking it.

She was reminded of Macy’s words and how he never ate her food. It irritated her.

“Lucian Northwood, Mom accidentally burned her hand just to make this soup for you. Do you want to disappoint her?”

He understood her words differently. Then, he flashed an ambiguous smile at her. “Are you sure you want me to drink it?”

Chapter 6 He Wants to Force Her

Calista didn’t notice anything wrong with what Lucian said. Besides, she was still angry about his indifference. So, she responded with a sullen hum.

Lucian took a sip of the soup. He placed the spoon back with a little force, and it clanged against the bowl.

He then lifted the blankets and lay down. Calista still had her back to him as she turned off her bedside lamp. After that, she closed her eyes, ready to sleep.

For the past year, they would sometimes sleep in the same bed. But there was always space between them. The bed was big enough to fit two people.

However, that night was different.

Calista was fast asleep when Lucian suddenly pressed his body against her. His firm chest pressed against her back, and she was wrapped in his embrace. She could feel his muscles through the thin layers of his clothing.

His hot and rough breath brushed against her ear, raising the temperature in the room. It was scorching.

Before Calista could react, she felt something pressing against her waist. She froze for a moment before understanding what Lucian wanted.

“Lucian ...”

Her voice trembled as she spoke. It was mostly from being startled, though nervousness was also part of it. She was scared Lucian would force himself on her.

Calista had anticipated this happening when she first got married. However, his indifference over the years had worn away any of her hopes. Now, with the divorce looming, they couldn't afford to complicate matters by sleeping together.

Some mistakes should only be made once.

“Hmm?” Lucian's hoarse voice sounded above her head. The hint of dominance in it was impossible to ignore.

In the next second, Lucian turned her over and pinned her beneath him. He gazed into her eyes from above.

Calista calmed herself down. “I don't want it,” she said. She tried to push him away.

“Didn't you complain that I don't satisfy you? You seemed pretty eager when you gave me the soup. I thought you were horny enough to sit on me and start moving. But now

you're saying that you don't want it. Playing hard to get, huh?" Lucian's lips were inches from hers.

Calista could tell that Lucian was saying something was wrong with the soup. "I don't know what's happening," she tried to explain.

"Do you think I'll believe that? It's not the first time you've done something like this."

"You ..."

Calista felt helpless whenever he brought it up. He always found a way to force her to recall that night.

"I'll say it again. That happened because ..."

Lucian covered her lips with his before she could finish. She was forced to swallow back her words.

Calista was surprised. With her hands on his chest, she tried to push him away. However, Lucian deepened the kiss in response. It wasn't at all gentle but was forceful and possessive.

He bit her lip, and she could taste a hint of blood in her mouth. Her mind spun from the lack of oxygen. Then, Lucian's scorching hand touched her. With a jolt, she realized that the buttons of her shirt had been undone.

Calista turned her head away to stop him from kissing her. "Lucian, let go of me."

She struggled with all her might to break free from his grasp. However, women were naturally weaker when it came to strength.

Lucian's lips were swollen from the kiss. "Didn't you want a divorce because of my sexual dysfunction and inability to meet your needs? Now that there's nothing wrong with me, your reasons are invalid."

Lucian propped himself up and half-knelt on the bed. He grabbed her chin and tilted her head toward him. Just like that, Calista was forced to look at him.

Calista could see his bulge in that position.

Although Lucian was as indifferent as ever, his every word caused Calista to tense up. "Are you happy with what you see?"

Calista was rendered speechless.

Her expression was grim. However, his phone rang just as she was about to refute him. He quickly grabbed it from the bedside table. When he saw who was calling, he furrowed his brow.

It was Lily's manager.

Lucian swiped his phone to answer the call. "What's the matter?"

Lucian tried to move away from Calista as he talked. However, she suddenly extended her hand despite avoiding him just now.

Lucian stiffened when her soft lips came near him. He lowered his lids, and his darkened eyes were murderous. His teeth ground in frustration.

The person on the other end was still talking. Calista could only manage to hear some of the conversation.

As she thought, the person told Lucian something was wrong with Lily again. It was just a way to get him to go over and check on her.

Lucian sent a warning gaze to Calista. However, she lifted her chin at him provocatively.

She answered his earlier question, "I'm more than satisfied. You even last quite long in bed. I can't take it any longer. Go slower."

Her voice was just enough to let the person on the phone hear.

Calista had done it on purpose. After all, she didn't mind using every trick in the book to steal a man.

Lucian felt a lump in his throat. His grip on the phone tightened, making his knuckles turn white.

The voice on the other end of the line spoke again. "Mr. Northwood, Lily's dancing career will be over if she's disabled."

The person continued, "She had endured a lot at the beginning of her career. She wanted to become a renowned dancer as soon as possible to not hold you back with her background. Now she's hurt and needs physical therapy every week."

Lucian pursed his lips. He then got down from the bed. "Keep a good eye on her."

Calista didn't try to stop him from leaving. She didn't want to embarrass herself. She already knew he wouldn't bother with her.

She didn't plan on stealing Lucian back. However, she wouldn't pass up the chance to annoy Lily and take revenge.

Lucian immediately got changed. He left the room without saying a single word to his wife.

Everyone was fast asleep. Only the dim hallway lights were switched on.

When he walked to the entrance, the enormous crystal chandelier in the living room suddenly lit up.

Selena was standing at the kitchen entrance. She was holding the light's controller. "It's so late. Where are you going?"

Lucian furrowed his brow. "Mom, why haven't you slept yet?"

"I'm asking where you're planning on going. You're abandoning Calista in the middle of the night."

Lucian pursed his lips. He answered calmly, "I lost control just now and accidentally hurt her. I'm going to buy some medicine for her now."

Chapter 7 Bad in Bed

Lucian didn't make it obvious. But Selena understood what he meant.

The effect of the soup was evident. After all, Selena had asked for the recipe from a famous doctor.

A smile appeared on her face. "Are you a teenager? Don't you know to be more gentle? Go on and buy it."

She added, "Wait. Take Calista with you too. She should go to the hospital. It'd be bad if she gets an infection."

Lucian was at a loss for words.

However, he couldn't say no to Selena's hopeful gaze. Ultimately, he could only call Calista and ask her to come down after getting dressed.

Calista thought that something had happened since Lucian's tone seemed off. So, she quickly ran down after getting changed.

She didn't expect to see Selena and Lucian standing there.

Lucian's deep voice was rather indifferent. "You're not feeling well. Come with me to buy some medicine."

Calista couldn't help but wonder when she ever said she was sick.

She glanced at Selena. And finally, she understood what was happening. Lucian was caught by his mother. He was just using her as an excuse.

Calista couldn't help but roll her eyes at Lucian. "What a jerk!" she thought.

Selena was too happy to notice the tense atmosphere between them.

She noticed that Calista wore tight jeans and said, "Go and change into loose pants. You won't heal if you're wearing such tight clothing. It might even get infected if covered in such hot weather."

"Mom, what are you ..."

Calista was confused. She didn't understand which part of her body Selena thought was wounded.

However, Lucian pulled her over. Calista lost her balance and stumbled into his embrace. "We're leaving now. You should rest earlier," he said while holding her waist.

Selena glared at him. "Why are you still so rough with Calista when she's already hurt? I wouldn't have needed you if our family doctor were a female. I would have called her over ages ago!"

"Okay," Lucian replied casually. Meanwhile, Calista seemed to be in a daze. She even forgot to resist when he took her by the waist and led her outside.

"Wait." Selena suddenly thought of something important and rushed to the kitchen.

She came back holding a bag of ingredients. "Take this. It's quite effective. When you have time, ask the housekeeper to make this for you and drink it at night."

Lucian pursed his lips. “You can leave it for Dad to drink.”

Selena simply replied, “Your dad doesn’t need this.”

At that, Calista was rendered speechless.

She wondered, “Does she mean that her husband was naturally good in bed or terrible enough that even the soup won’t help? This isn’t something someone like me should hear.”

Lucian didn’t take the bag. So, Selena shoved it to Calista. “Hurry up. Don’t just buy the medicine. You need to go to the hospital for a check-up.”

Calista could finally talk after exiting Stansend Manor and getting into the car. “What did you tell Mom?”

Lucian didn’t want to continue with the conversation. He lifted an eyebrow after seeing the bag of ingredients in her arms.

“What? Are you really planning to bring it back and make it for me every night?” He was mocking her.

Calista came back to her senses. Afterward, she dumped the bag on the back seat like trash.

“That’s why mothers know their sons best. She prepared the soup for you because she knows you’re awful in bed,” she bit back.

“I’m awful in bed?” Lucian drove with one hand while contemplating the words. “How about your first time? I wondered who got stitches and ended up lying in the hospital for days?”

He glanced at her again.

She looked at him with pity. “Did it never occur to you that needing stitches wasn’t because of how good you were but how terrible you were? Have you ever seen any woman rushing to get stitches after her first time? It’s such a unique case. Why don’t you take a moment to reflect on your skills?”

Lucian narrowed his eyes, feeling extremely displeased and furious. He slammed on the brakes.

“Get out!”

It was easy to hail a cab as they were on the main road. Calista knew that he was rushing to the hospital to visit Lily. She didn't have any interest in following him. Nor did she want to witness them being lovey-dovey with each other.

Calista didn't hesitate. She opened the car door confidently and got out of the car.

As the engine roared to life, a cloud of dust billowed into her face.

Calista yelled at the car merging into the traffic, “Why are you so impatient? It's not like she's dead!”

Only silence responded to her.

After that, Calista stood at the side of the road and waited for a taxi. However, a black Bentley stopped in front of her.

Jonathan got out of the car and politely said, “Madam Calista, Mr. Northwood ordered me to send you home.”

Calista understood what Jonathan was trying to imply. Although Lucian dumped her by the road, he still looked out for her by calling Jonathan.

She didn't have a reason to be hard on herself. So, she got into the car.

Her thoughts were consumed by revenge on the way back. “Lucian is so concerned about his image, he'd be furious if I announced our divorce to the public!”

However, it would be more trouble than it was worth to provoke him now.

There were only three months left, which was approximately 90 days. It would be over in a flash.

But based on what happened tonight, Calista knew that Lily wouldn't be able to wait for three months, knowing her personality. She had already returned to the country, after all.

...

It was late at night when they arrived at the hospital.

When Lucian got to the hospital ward, he heard Lily scolding her manager, Queenie Yates.

“You should listen to me. I’m the one who pays your salary. Who told you to call Lucian without asking me?”

Queenie was also firm. “Lily, you’re not taking care of yourself. You’re injured, but you still ignore our advice and secretly practice.”

She didn’t relent and continued, “You don’t listen to the doctor and me, so I can only call Mr. Northwood.”

“That’s my business. You shouldn’t disturb him with it. He’s already married. It’s going to make things difficult for him.”

Though her words were indifferent, her tone carried a hint of sorrow. It would evoke sympathy to anyone who heard her, especially the way her voice trembled.

“You went overseas because Madam Selena disapproved of your family background. You should have told him instead of enduring it. Your aspiration to become a world-class dancer wasn’t just for yourself but also to be worthy of him. But what about him? He already married—”

Queenie paused mid-rant because Lucian had come in. She could only force out, “Mr. Northwood.”

After looking at Lily in bed, she added, “You can look at Lily’s injury. I’ll head out first.”

Once Queenie left, Lucian walked to the bed and looked at Lily. “Roll up your pants. Let me see your injury.”

When Lily fell off the stage yesterday, there was a long gash on her calf. It had needed more than ten stitches.

However, Lily didn’t listen. She shook her head and said, “Don’t listen to Queenie’s nonsense. She’s just exaggerating because she’s worried about me—”

However, Lucian interrupted her. His expression was calm, but his tone revealed his impatience. “Roll it up.”

Lily bit her lip. Seeing his firm look, she had no choice but to roll up her pants.

Chapter 8 Mr. Northwood Wants You to Wait

The wound on Lily’s leg was wrapped in gauze. It was difficult to tell whether it was infected. However, the area was indeed swollen and bulging.

“Has the doctor looked at it yet?”

Lucian was too indifferent. He didn’t seem concerned or bothered when he looked at her swollen leg. Lily couldn’t tell what he was thinking, so she didn’t dare butter him up.

“I’ve let the doctor change the dressing. It’s probably because I accidentally splashed some water on it while showering ... That’s why it got infected.”

Lucian took out a cigarette and placed it between his lips. He ignored the no-smoking sign on the wall. With a click, the lighter sparked to life. It cast a warm glow on his defined features.

He took a drag before looking back at Lily’s leg. “Lily, you should stick to this path since you chose it. Don’t ruin yourself by giving up. You gave up everything to pursue this dream.”

Lily didn’t expect him to say that. She thought he would at least feel distressed or comfort her when he saw her wound.

After all, Lucian would frown at the sight of her getting splattered by oil back then. He would even get some ice to apply on her skin.

“Lucian.” Lily was a bit choked up. “Do you still blame me? Back then ...”

“I don’t blame you. It’s your choice. As for me, I’ll choose to fulfill your wish.” Lucian extinguished his cigarette. “It’s your legs. You can do whatever you want to them if you no longer wish to dance. I won’t come to the hospital again.”

With that, Lucian left without turning back.

Queenie entered the ward a while after he left. “How did it go? Did Mr. Northwood say anything when he saw your wound?”

“He said that he won’t come to the hospital anymore.”

“Didn’t you act weak and butter him up? I told you that men like women that rely on them. You can’t be as proud as you usually are. It will only push him away further.”

When Lily thought of Lucian’s indifference, a mocking smile appeared on her lips. “He’s so calm. Even if I were to die in front of him just now, he would have the same impassive face while handling my funeral.”

Queenie went silent for a moment before shaking her head.

“Men are concerned about their reputation. It’s especially true for men as powerful and influential as Mr. Northwood. When did he ever face setbacks because of a woman? You were too proud back then!”

Lily didn’t answer her. A hint of mockery flashed across her eyes as she thought, “Back then ... Was it really the case, though?”

...

The next day, Calista didn’t need to go to work at Northwood Corporation. Thus, she slept until she woke up naturally.

Yara was already at her shop. She sent her a WhatsApp message, “The appointment with Jacob is set for tomorrow. However, I can’t go with you as I have a meeting with a client.”

After Yara graduated from college, she opened an antique shop with her family’s funds. She was also responsible for introducing new clients to Calista.

“Okay,” Calista replied. After having breakfast, she headed out.

Calista wanted to find somewhere to stay after moving out from Everglade Manor. It would be more convenient if she found somewhere near her work.

So, she went to the real estate agency. In just one morning, she chose an apartment with one bedroom and two living rooms. It was close to where she worked and didn’t come with too much furniture. It allowed her to convert the second living room into a workspace easily.

Most importantly, the management was quite responsible. Those who needed to enter the apartment would be asked to register their ID card.

After signing the contract, Calista went to the mall since it was still early. Yara’s birthday was soon. So, Calista decided to get her a bag.

Yara had been talking about the newest collection of a certain brand. Coincidentally, the brand’s store was in this shopping mall.

Calista took the elevator to the seventh floor.

“Miss, do you have anything you’re interested in?” The salesperson approached her.

People who bought such luxury items usually already knew what they wanted.

“Do you have the bag featured during the summer collection?”

The salesperson smiled apologetically. “I’m sorry. The bag is a limited edition. Someone has already booked the one in our shop.”

Calista was a bit disappointed. “Okay, thank you.”

Just when Calista was about to turn around and leave, a woman dressed in professional attire walked inside.

“I’m here for the limited edition women’s bag Mr. Northwood booked,” she told the salesperson.

Calista stopped in her tracks. She slowly clenched her fists. Northwood wasn’t a common surname. And Calista happened to know the woman in front of her.

The woman had appeared in the news before. She was Lily’s manager.

The salesperson replied, “Okay. However, I need to call Mr. Northwood to check. Can you give me your name?”

“Ms. Lily Scott asked me to come. I’m Queenie Yates, her manager.”

The salesperson turned around and searched for Lucian’s contact number on the computer.

Calista didn’t intend to linger. All she felt was numbness after the momentary heartache. As she was about to get a divorce, she couldn’t care less about who he wanted to buy a bag for.

She was about to leave when Queenie called her, “Ms. Everhart.”

Calista didn't expect she would know her. "What's the matter?" Calista raised an eyebrow.

Queenie didn't beat around the bush, "You're so beautiful. There's no need to cling to a man who doesn't love you. The sooner you let go of him, the better. You're young enough to find someone better."

"Did Lily tell you to say that?" Calista raised her chin arrogantly. "Times have changed. Back then, mistresses used to hide and cover things up. They feared the consequences of being found out. Now, they even dare to be arrogant before the wives."

Calista's stance had completely overpowered the Queenie.

But Queenie didn't want to admit defeat. "The one who isn't loved in a relationship is the mistress. Lily and Mr. Northwood were a couple to begin with."

"You're not married, right?" Calista narrowed her eyes, a seductive charm emanating from her. "I'll introduce your husband to a few charming ladies once you're married. You're so generous. I bet you wouldn't mind."

Queenie froze. Before she could refute her, Calista spoke again, "As for that bag, please ask Ms. Scott to transfer half of the money to my account. Although Mr. Northwood gifted her that bag, it's still considered a joint asset of mine.

"After all, I am his wife. She can expect a lawyer's letter if I don't receive the funds within three days." Calista's tone was gentle yet dominant.

Queenie hadn't expected this seemingly quiet woman to have such a sharp tongue. She was so difficult to deal with.

For a moment, the usually eloquent Queenie fell silent.

Just as Calista was about to leave, the salesperson stopped her. “Mrs. Northwood, Mr. Northwood ... He asked you to wait for him here,” he said, voice trembling.

The salesperson didn't expect to see something so shocking before dialing the number. She was even more surprised that Lucian was the one who took the call and not his assistant.

Chapter 9 Her New Date

Calista thought something must be wrong with her to wait for Lucian. However, she had underestimated how fast he was.

Just when she was about to walk out the door, she saw a tall figure heading her way.

Lucian was dressed in a fitted black shirt and perfectly pressed tailored pants. He looked handsome and refined, befitting someone of his stature. He carried himself with a natural arrogance, causing him to stand out.

He was handsome, graceful, young, and rich.

If one disregarded the fact that he was a scumbag, Lucian was definitely the perfect heartthrob.

David was walking beside him. When compared to him, Lucian's presence was impossible to ignore.

Calista was momentarily stunned.

Lucian stood in front of her. “Jonathan told me you didn't go back yesterday night?”

His furrowed brow showed that he was not in a good mood.

Calista wondered if he had come just to ask her this.

“Didn’t Jonathan tell you what I said? Not only did I not go back yesterday night. But I also won’t be back again.”

Calista turned around. She wanted to leave.

However, David stopped her, “Ms. Everhart, Mr. Northwood only came after finding out you’re here.”

“So what? Does he expect me to cry?” Calista wondered.

David was one of the few around Lucian that knew of the couple’s actual relationship. However, he always referred to her as Ms. Everhart.

Despite Calista having been at Lucian’s beck and call for three years, Lucian and everyone around him never thought of her as his wife. They couldn’t even be bothered to pretend that they cared.

Calista was enraged when she saw David blocking her way. “David, do you know what they call people like you? A lackey!”

“Calista.” There was anger in Lucian’s voice. “A couple’s fight is part of the fun in marriage. But it’s unnecessary to go too far.

“You left all your stuff at home. Aren’t you just trying to make me win you back you? David, go ahead and make a dinner reservation.”

After ordering David, Lucian told Calista, “Let’s have dinner tonight. You can choose whatever you like in the jewelry store after.”

This was how Lucian would pacify her after a fight. He would give her bags, clothes, jewelry, anything money could buy.

Back then, Calista used to console herself that he was just an ordinary guy. He didn't know how to treat women right. It wasn't until she saw how he cared for Lily that she knew how wrong she was.

Calista sneered.

“It's not that I didn't take those things, but I left them for Lily. She seems to enjoy collecting people's unwanted junk. You can consider that trash to be your wedding gift!” she said in a shrill voice.

Beside her, Queenie said, “Madam Calista, you've misunderstood Lily. Although she likes Mr. Northwood, she never considered breaking up anyone's marriage!

“She only asked Mr. Northwood to reserve this bag since she isn't a member of this brand. If you like this bag, we can give it to you. You don't need to keep insulting her by repeatedly saying she's a mistress.”

If bitches had levels, the woman standing before Calista would be in the top tier.

Since she brought up the bag, Calista turned around and smiled alluringly. “Okay, then. Thank you very much.”

The bag was hard to get. Plus, Yara would definitely like it.

Most importantly, Calista wouldn't need to pay for it. There was simply no reason for her to turn the offer down.

She didn't care what Lucian thought.

However, Lucian grabbed her wrist when she was about to head to the cashier. “Stop playing around. I can reserve another one if you like it. It won’t take long.”

Calista’s heart sank. She could feel tears welling up in her eyes.

She thought of the lonely marriage she had for the past three years. How hurt she was because of it. She could not help but compare herself to Lily. That woman had always been favored.

Calista understood what Lucian meant. She couldn’t touch this bag. It was for Lily.

She didn’t let Lucian see how her face paled.

“I want to buy this men’s bag.” She turned around and pointed at a bag to the salesperson.

Lucian pursed his lips. Although he didn’t like the design in particular, his solemn attitude over the past few days improved slightly.

She wasn’t angry anymore. She had even bought him a gift.

His voice softened. “Let’s have dinner tonight, okay? I’ll ask someone to bring your luggage from Yara’s place.”

Calista ignored him. She continued to ask the salesperson, “Can you write a card?”

The salesperson nodded. “Yes.”

“Write ‘Happy Valentines Day, Mr. Quigley.’”

Lucian’s eyelids twitched. His grip on Calista’s wrist tightened. He asked, “Who’s Mr. Quigley?”

Calista replied casually, “My date for tonight.”

She forcefully pulled her hand out of his grasp. “Don’t play around. I can reserve another one if you like it. I’m sure it won’t take long.”

Lucian’s temple throbbed when he heard the words he said being repeated to him. His jawline tensed up as he gritted his teeth.

The salesperson had already prepared the bill. However, she didn’t dare to say anything in such a situation.

Calista took out a card and handed it over. “Here.”

Lucian’s expression darkened even more. “Do you think you can buy this bag with your monthly salary?”

He had already canceled the black card he had given her. Apart from spending it at the hotel the previous night, she had never used that card.

Even if she didn’t eat or drink for one year, the amount she saved wouldn’t be much. She couldn’t even afford to buy a bag worth half the price.

Unexpectedly, the transaction had gone through. The POS machine started to print out the receipt.

Calista took over the gift box from the salesperson before leaving.

Lucian’s eyes were filled with anger as he watched her leave.

Calista was impassive after coming out of the mall. She decided to call a taxi to Yara’s antique shop. It was getting late.

Yara wasn’t busy. So, she quickly went up to Calista after seeing her. “Why did you come? Didn’t you say you want to make a stew for me tonight?”

Calista flung the gift box over to her. “Don’t even talk about it. I have such shitty luck.” She sat down on the couch, exhausted.

Yara was excited as she looked at the box. “What is this? Is this my birthday gift?”

Calista closed her eyes and mumbled, “Yes.”

At that, Yara eagerly unwrapped the packaging. When she saw the men’s bag inside, she was disappointed. “I know you don’t think I’m a woman. You don’t have to remind me like this.”

“You can give it to your boyfriend.” Calista didn’t care.

Yara was speechless.

“What boyfriend? Do all the men I met in the club count?” she wondered.

Calista rested for a while. After calming down, she told Yara what happened in the mall.

Yara thought it was weird that Lucian insisted on Calista moving back. She was silent for a while. Then, she asked, “That jerk! Has he really fallen in love with you?”

Chapter 10 Live Like a Widow

Calista looked at her in horror.

“Would you let someone you like basically live like a widow for three years? You have a distorted view of love if you think that’s normal.”

Yara agreed. “You’re right. But why does he insist on you moving back? You’re going to need to move out in three months. It’s just unnecessary.”

Calista didn’t know why. But she wasn’t interested in finding out, either.

During dinner, they eventually chose to go out and have stew.

Calista chose a super spicy stew that caused her to sweat from how hot it was. She felt refreshed after the meal.

She was scared Lucian would stir up trouble. So, she turned off her phone that night.

She woke up early the following day.

She placed her luggage in the car and moved to the apartment she rented.

After that, she fixed her appearance and went to her future workplace—Justa Workshop.

Jacob Xanders was in charge of the workshop. He was a short man with glasses and was about 60 years old. However, he seemed shocked to see Calista.

“Are you the conservator that Yara called Callie?”

Calista nodded politely. “Yes.”

Although Calista didn’t take on much work, all the work she chose was extremely challenging. Thus, she was popular in the industry.

However, she didn’t use her real name as she didn’t want to be exposed to the public. The name she chose was simple, which was Callie.

Jacob had only seen the conservation projects completed by her. He had never seen her in person.

Calista’s skills were exquisite, and her techniques were top-notch. She even restored a few pieces that seasoned professionals couldn’t.

As a result, Jacob always thought Callie was about the same age as him. He didn’t expect her to be a young woman!

“I’ve seen the projects you’ve restored. You’re amazingly skilled for your age!”

Calista chuckled. “You’re too kind. I still have a lot to learn.”

While chatting, Jacob led her to an empty seat. “This is your desk. Bryan, get a few items over for your new colleague to identify.”

It was a fundamental requirement for a conservator to identify the artifact's time period and its characteristics, as well as its authenticity.

At first, he had wanted to exempt her from the entry exam. After all, he had personally hired her. However, he decided to follow the protocol.

Calista wasn't what he expected.

Bryan Lawson quickly took a few artifacts from different time periods. He carefully placed them on the table.

When the others in the workshop saw what was happening, they quickly gathered around.

Whispers were exchanged.

"Didn't they say the person coming over today was extremely talented? What is someone so young doing here?"

"I guess she pretended to be skilled. She just wants to earn a name for herself. I bet she didn't expect to meet someone as stubborn as Jacob giving her a test."

"I heard Jacob made several trips for her. He's going to be so disappointed!"

While they chatted, Calista had already identified the artifacts on the table. She accurately named the time period, origins, characteristics, and even some minor details of each.

Bryan was surprised. "That fast?"

Bryan was Jacob's student. It had been ten years since he had entered the field after graduating college.

If he were being honest, he wouldn't be able to identify these items so quickly, even with his experience.

Jacob nodded favorably at her. He seemed to approve of Calista's knowledge. However, the actual test would be during her practical work.

As Jacob never watched Calista restore artifacts before, he didn't dare to give her a genuine one. Thus, he ordered Bryan to fetch a replica for her to restore. It was what they usually used for assessments.

“Don’t take it personally. This is just one of our studio’s procedures. These artifacts are precious and irreplaceable. That’s why we’re more cautious when choosing who we work with.”

Calista nodded understandingly.

Recovering artifacts was a long and tedious process. Plus, no one had high hopes for Calista. After all, a young woman like her would most be an apprentice with her experience. The crowd dispersed after losing interest in her.

Everyone was stunned when they saw the restored artifacts before getting off work.

Someone sighed, “It took me three days to restore these pieces when I first joined ...”

They were all amazed by Calista’s quick and skillful restoration work, except for Jacob. He silently examined the restored fragment in his hand.

It wasn’t difficult to notice his fingers shaking uncontrollably if one looked carefully.

Jacob was puzzled as he looked up at Calista. “What relationship do you have with Rachel?”

Something flashed across Calista’s eyes when she heard that name. However, nobody noticed it as it happened so fast.

“I’ve heard of her but never met her,” she replied after some time.

Rachel was once the most beloved and brilliant preservationist in the circle. She was an all-round restoration genius.

One could describe her skills as something beyond this world. Everyone in the industry had heard of her name. However, she vanished shortly after gaining fame.

Nobody knew about her whereabouts all these years.

Jacob continued, “But your conservation technique ... It’s almost the same as hers.”

“My grandfather is also a conservator. I learned everything from him.”

Jacob’s expression darkened. In the end, he nodded without asking anything else. It was obvious that he was disappointed.

Regardless, it was evident that Calista was up for the job. Jacob could only acknowledge her talent.

He formally introduced her to everyone. “This is Callie. She’s your new co-worker.”

Standing to the side, Bryan was stunned. “Callie? Is it the same Callie? Shouldn’t she be older? Why ...”

Jacob glared at him. He signaled him to be quiet.

“Callie, don’t mind him.”

Calista only smiled in response. After that, Jacob introduced others to Calista.

Justa Workshop wasn’t big. There were only eight to nine people in the workshop, including her.

All of them were easygoing and gave sincere compliments. It was nothing like the bullying Calista faced at Northwood Corporation.

Calista loved the working environment in the workshop, not to mention that she was working her dream job.

After they got off work, everyone in the workshop wanted to head out for dinner. Justa Workshop’s tradition was to have a meal when a new staff member joined. It was considered a welcoming ceremony for them.

They picked a seafood stall to have dinner. Meanwhile, there was a high-class restaurant right across the stall.

Cade Carter stood before the floor-to-ceiling window on the restaurant’s second floor. He casually glanced at the city below while smoking.

He raised his chin slightly. “Look. Isn’t that Calista?” he asked Lucian beside him.

Lucian looked in the direction Cade pointed. As expected, he saw Calista chatting and laughing with other people.