

## The Contracted Ever After Chapter 21 - 30

### Chapter 21

Feeling thirsty, Cordelia took the glass and had a sip.

After finishing, she felt something was wrong. “Isn’t the air conditioning on? Why is it so hot here?” Cordelia asked.

“It’s on, you’re still feeling hot?” Adrian’s gaze never left Cordelia, full of smugness.

Cordelia instinctively felt something was wrong, she backed off a few steps and sat on the bed. Her gaze became unfocused; she was pulling at her clothes complaining about the heat.

She realized what happened. Adrian had spiked her water!

Despair and a chill filled Cordelia’s heart, she angrily said, “Adrian, you!”

Seeing Cordelia’s reaction, Adrian was very pleased, “I’m doing this for your own good. Jamie will be here soon, just be nice to him, and we’ll be rolling in dough!”

“You sold me out for money, you scumbag!” Cordelia was livid, struggling to sit up and slapped Adrian, but she was so weak it barely hurt him. Instead, he sneered at her, pushed her back onto the bed, then called Jamie. Adrian gave him the address and told him to hurry over.

Adrian tucked Cordelia in, encouraging her before leaving, “Put on a good show!”

The room fell back into silence, Cordelia’s vision started to blur, then the doorbell rang. Soon, a man walked through the door.

“Adrian, are you here?” Jamie asked.

Through the haze, Cordelia saw Jamie. He was tall and handsome, quite a sight for sore eyes.

Cordelia felt her body getting hotter. As Jamie was taking off his shoes and talking, he saw a feverish and enticing Cordelia lying on the bed.

“Cordelia? What are you doing here? Are you sick?” Seeing Cordelia looking all flushed and provocative, Jamie realized what was going on, his heart skipped a beat. He was not a cold fish. He had been drawn to Cordelia’s beauty at the first sight. But he would never take advantage of her in a vulnerable state.

“I’ll take you to the hospital. Jamie said, concerned.

Cordelia breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed like this was Adrian’s idea and Jamie knew nothing about it.

“Stay away from me. My brother is a jerk!” After saying that, Cordelia stumbled out of bed and ran into the bathroom. She shut the door tight and turned on the shower, then she stood under the cold water. Despite it being summer, the cold water still felt icy. Thankfully, the discomfort was washed away.

Jamie stood by the bathroom door, asking, “Cordelia, are you sure you’re okay? Come out, I’ll take you to the hospital.”

Cordelia thought, if Ronan found out about this, it would be a disaster. She just got out of his car and this happened, he might think she was being reckless. So, she definitely couldn’t let him know.

“Mr. Colby, could you check the drawer for a needle or something?” Cordelia asked, feeling dizzy.

“Cordelia, I suggest we go to the hospital. Jamie’s voice was very serious.

Cordelia didn’t respond. With a “thud” sound, she rushed out from the bathroom onto the carpet in the living room. Her hair and body were wet, crawling towards the nightstand.

“What are you looking for?” Jamie was startled, “Let me help you.”

“A needle. Help me find it.” Cordelia murmured.

Jamie frantically searched the drawer, found a needle and handed it to Cordelia. Without saying much, Cordelia pierced her fingertip with the needle. The pain jolted

her awake.

Jamie was silent for a moment. “Get up, lie on the bed.” He helped Cordelia up and took her to the bed.

Perhaps because she was soaked in cold water, Cordelia was shivering. Her temperature dropped and her face wasn’t as flushed.

“Mr. Colby, thank you.” Cordelia’s teeth were chattering.

“Stop talking nonsense!” Jamie touched Cordelia’s forehead, “Silly girl.”

## Chapter 22

Cordelia was worried that Adrian might return and come up with other nasty ideas. She told Jamie, “Mr. Colby, let’s leave here before my brother comes back.”

“Don’t worry, I got your back. Go get some rest first.” Jamine said.

“No way, you don’t know my brother. He might be scheming against both of us.”

Cordelia, already risen from the bed. She wore a white dress. It was a girly style, but soaked and clung to her body, revealing her sexy figure. The scene caused an awkward silence.

Jamie blushed and turned away after a quick glance. He took off his jacket and put it on her.

When they reached the hotel lobby, Jamie offered to escort Cordelia home. However, Cordelia was afraid of being spotted by her dorm mates and the news reaching Ronan. Unable to explain, she said, “It’s fine, thanks though, Mr. Colby.”

“Can you manage on your own?” Jamie was still worried.

“It’s close by, I’ll be there in no time.” Cordelia managed to force a smile.

“I think it’s better if I send you home.” Jamie was worried that she might get into trouble.

While they were debating. Suddenly, two car horns sounded from the roadside!

Cordelia turned her head and her face turned pale. It was Ronan’s car.

“Mr. Evans, why are you here?” Cordelia felt guilty for no apparent reason.

Ronan’s face was gloomy. His eyes were like lightning, sweeping slowly over the two of them. His wife, alongside another man, was messing around outside a hotel and wearing his clothes!

How embarrassing!

In the blink of an eye, flames seemed to burst from Ronan’s eyes. His voice was filled with anger, “Are you two on a date?”

Cordelia was in a tight spot, knowing that Ronan had misunderstood, and hurriedly tried to explain. But at that moment, Jamie pulled her into his arms and stared defiantly at Ronan, “Who are you? Why are you interfering with her? Do you know what Cordelia has been through?”

Ronan responded coldly, “It’s not your job to worry about her!”

With that, he glared at Cordelia, questioning, “Aren’t you coming over?”

Cordelia hurriedly freed herself from Jamie, “Mr. Colby, I’m sorry, I’ll explain to you later.”

She quickly ran to the car and obediently sat in the back seat. The driver started the car immediately. After a while, the rear window opened and a man’s jacket was thrown out.

Jamie was at a loss for words.

Cordelia knew that Ronan had misunderstood and quickly explained, “Mr. Evans, please let me explain. It’s not what you think, my brother tricked me into coming to the hotel. Then he drugged me, and Jamie was just trying to help...”

As she spoke, she clumsily took out her phone, trying to show Ronan the message her brother had sent her.

Unexpectedly, Jamie had sent a message: [Was that Ronan just now? Cordelia, how did you get involved with him? Be careful, Ronan is not a good guy. Don’t let him fool you!]

Clearly, Jamie had quickly looked up Ronan’s information after they left.

“So, I’m the bad guy?” Ronan scoffed, “And he’s the good guy?”

Ronan gave Cordelia a once-over, increasingly annoyed, “So, he’s Jamie? Is he your boyfriend?”

Cordelia felt like she was losing control. She really had dug herself into a hole! One lie led to another, and she needed another to cover up the previous ones!

She quickly deleted Jamie’s message and hurriedly found her brother’s message to show him. But Ronan completely rejected her explanation and simply asked, “Did you two sleep together?”

Cordelia felt a pang in her heart and a sense of shame washed over her. So, this was what he cared most about. He found it disgusting,

She bit her lip, lowered her head, and whispered, “No.”

“Good thing you didn’t!” After that, Ronan remained silent.

Although she had already said no, Cordelia felt that he didn’t believe her. He probably didn’t continue questioning because he had other matters to deal with.

They drove in silence to the company. After Ronan got out of the car, he told the driver, “Take her back to the employee dormitory.”

Then, Ronan coldly walked away.

## Chapter 23

Ronan walked into the company lobby, then he glanced at a striking woman. He paused for a moment.

Deanna, who had been admiring a painting on the wall, turned around at the sound of him.

“Ronan? Long time no see” Deanna approached with a smile.

She was dressed in an opulent, emerald green dress, paired with matching heels that showed off her dainty legs. Her hair was lush and lustrous. Adorned on her finger was an exquisite emerald ring, giving her an air of mature sophistication.

“Long time no see. Let’s head to my office.” Ronan suggested, noticing the crowd around them.

“Sure.” Deanna responded with a chuckle.

With that, she followed Ronan into the elevator.

As they watched her graceful figure disappear, the receptionists began whispering among themselves.

“Ms. Deanna is so stunning, she’s a total knockout.”

“Totally, and her status isn’t ordinary either. When has our boss ever invited a woman into his office? But Ms, Deanna could come and go freely.”

“You guys don’t know?” The head receptionist said with a knowing smile, “Ms. Deanna isn’t just anybody. I heard she used to be Mr. Evans’ ex-girlfriend. They were even close to getting engaged, but then...”

“Then what?”

“I can’t spill the beans on the boss’s private life, but just know that Ms. Deanna is not your average visitor. We better roll out the red carpet for her next time.”

“What about Cordelia? I heard she’s been getting real cozy with the boss lately.” The gossip train had left the station.

“She’s trying to climb the social ladder, thinking just because the boss has personally greeted her a few times, she’s suddenly top dog. As if the boss would ever give her the time of day.”

“Exactly!”

And with that, the receptionists erupted into laughter.

Ronan’s office was spacious, the black and white theme a perfect match for his demeanor.

Ronan lit a cigarette, asking, “Back in town?”

“Of course. However, you didn’t even come to pick me up.” Deanna replied, a hint of discontent in her voice.

“I’ve been tied up with work.” Ronan said.

Deanna frowned slightly, “It’s fine. I decided to come find you. I brought you a gift. Do you like it?”

Ronan glanced at the gift and placed it on the table, “Thanks.”

“Aren’t you going to look at it?” Deanna pouted, “I specially bought it for you from abroad. It’s for your eyes. Try it on.”

With that, Deanna stepped forward, unboxed the gift and slipped the eye mask onto him:

The warmth of the eye mask seemed to soften Ronan’s demeanor, “My eyes are fine now, you don’t need to worry.”

“How could I not worry? You almost went blind, couldn’t see anything. It broke my heart to see you like that. We waited so long for a corneal transplant.” Deanna sat on the couch,



her eyes welling up with tears, “You were just starting your business then; it was a massive setback. Sometimes I think it was fate, as if my father had left me in your care. Later on he passed away, and you recovered at the same time.”

At her words, Ronan removed the eye mask. He walked over to Deanna and gently patted her back, “Why bring up the past?”

Deanna clutched Ronan’s hand tightly, “Ronan, I was wrong then. I’m sorry. I came back this time just to apologize to you.”

As she spoke, she softly held Ronan’s hand and gave it a gentle shake.

Ronan felt inherently uneasy. He pulled his hand away. “Let the past be the past. I’m doing well now.”

Deanna looked up at Ronan, her eyes pleading, “Ronan...” Tears rolled down her face, a heart-wrenching sight.

But Ronan cut her off, “Where are you staying since you’ve been back? I’ll drop you off.”

Deanna wiped her tears and glanced at the clock on the wall, “Alright, there have been paparazzi tailing me lately.”

She stayed in Ronan’s office until the company clocked off at five.

Considering the number of employees leaving work, Ronan took her in the private executive elevator. However, some employees still caught sight of them. Soon, the news of Ronan’s ex-girlfriend Deanna visiting the company spread among the employees.

After getting back to her apartment, Cordelia took a shower and changed clothes to shake off the drug-induced discomfort. Lying on her bed, she thought about what had happened just now and grew angrier.

How could she have such a brother who not only didn't care about his mother, but also plotted against his own sister? Moreover, Ronan didn't even want to hear her out, which left her feeling super frustrated.

At that moment, Brooklyn came home from work and asked with concern, "How're you doing, Cordelia? You alright?"

Cordelia replied weakly, "I'm fine, what's up?"

Remembering the gossip she heard from her colleagues, Brooklyn was worried, fearing that her friend might have been bullied. She hurriedly asked, "You didn't have a fight with Mr. Evans, did you? I heard someone came to look for him at the office and he even took her in the private elevator."

"Huh, what about it?" Cordelia asked.

"They say she was Mr. Evans' ex-girlfriend." Brooklyn said.

Actually, Brooklyn had already sugarcoated it. The colleagues' original words were.

"Cordelia is ordinary employee. She got all cocky after riding in Mr. Evans' car twice. She really needs to look in the mirror and see what she really is."

"You're right on the spot! Today, Ms. Deanna came to see the boss, she's the elegant and smart type that Mr. Evans should marry. She even got to ride in the boss's private elevator. Cordelia never had that privilege! Looks like she never will in her lifetime."

Hearing Brooklyn's words, Cordelia was a bit shocked. She didn't expect the woman from the photo to show up so soon. And sure enough, Deanna did have a past with Ronan.

Cordelia felt a twinge of regret. With Deanna back, Ronan might end their agreement sooner. Then, she'd have no income and wouldn't get to see his eyes again.

That eyes which made her feel so familiar.

The next day, Jordan went to the president's office to submit this year's Lumos Star list from the Finance Department.

Every year, Lumos Enterprises would select Lumos Stars from the new official employees who were previously interns. These selected employees had the potential to enter management level.

Normally, this would be Jordan's call. After all, Cordelia was the only intern that got a full-time job in the Finance Department this year. Whether she got this honor was totally up to him. But considering Cordelia's situation, Jordan purposely came to test Ronan's attitude. After all, the office gossip suggesting Cordelia and Mr. Evans had broken up was making him unsure of whose side to take.

Ronan glanced at the form and simply said, "Let's keep it professional."

"Alright, got it." Jordan replied.

-Cordelia took over the position that should have been Manda's the last time when an intern was promoted to an official position, and it irked Jordan. Manda knew

how to please him and was convenient to manipulate. But Cordelia always did everything by the book and was meticulous, which was great for the Finance Department. But if she got into management level, that'd be trouble. He'd definitely have a problem.

Therefore, the Lumos Star place that originally belonged to Cordelia was also cancelled by Jordan.

## Chapter 25

On Thursday, Cordelia received a message from Ronan: [Take a leave on Monday and pick up my grandfather with me.]

[Monday?] Cordelia, irked by Ronan's frequent leave requests, asked for clarification.

[Is there a problem?] Ronan asked.

Cordelia was at a loss for words with Ronan's retort.

[What time do I need to leave?] Cordelia asked.

[Three in the afternoon. We'll be back Tuesday morning.] Ronan replied.

Just as Cordelia was relieved that she was only taking a two-hour leave, she received another message: [Cordelia, I found another one of Logan's diaries, do you want it?]

This was from Whitney, Logan's mother.

[Of course I want it. Where is it?] Cordelia replied.

[It's at the place where Logan used to teach. We've already collected all his belongings, but this diary was found later. I thought you might want it. You can contact the principal

of the elementary school where Logan used to volunteer.] Whitney replied then sent Cordelia the principal's contact info.

The principal told Cordelia that the area was pretty poor and didn't have delivery services, so Cordelia had to go get it herself.

Cordelia had already made plans with Dr. Devon to visit her mother over the weekend, so she knew she wouldn't be free. Since Ronan wanted Cordelia to visit Barney's at three on Monday, she decided to take the whole day off and go to Cedar Hollow in the morning.

She thought getting a day off would be a piece of cake, but her boss Jordan wasn't too pleased.

"Cordelia, you just got confirmed and you're already taking leaves so frequently. Is that appropriate? Monday is our busiest day, and you always take leave on Monday. Do you realize how much work your colleagues have to cover for you?" Jordan said.

Cordelia thought to herself, ever since Deanna came, even Jordan's attitude had changed.

Seeing that her leave request might be rejected, Cordelia said, "It's Ronan who asked me to take leave."

After a while, Jordan replied, "Go and come back as soon as you can."

Turns out, dropping Ronan's name did work.

Cordelia happened to bump into Ronan at the first training session of Lumos Star. Her good friend Brooklyn had been selected as a Lumos Star and had to attend a one-hour staff training after work on Friday.

Cordelia waited for Brooklyn next to the training room.

Ronan arrived to pick up some documents he had left behind. He seemed taken aback when he saw Cordelia, and she was equally surprised.

“You haven’t left—yet?” Ronan asked her.

Cordelia quickly stood up, responding with the respect an employee should show to their superior, “Uh, no, I haven’t left yet.”

Lumos Star was Ronan’s training program, and he was supposed to attend the first training session.

“You better explain what happened last time.” Ronan said to Cordelia as he was about to leave. After all, they hadn’t really cleared up the last incident, and Ronan had been angry at the time and hadn’t listened.

“Well, Ronan, don’t you think you owe me an explanation about you and Deanna?” Cordelia looked up at Ronan.

Ronan grinned smugly, “Do I need to explain anything to you?”

His meaning was clear, no, he didn’t.

“A husband and wife should be loyal to each other. Mr. Evans, you don’t think our marriage license is fake, do you? Our relationship is for real! Why is it that you can do whatever you want in this situation, and I am left feeling trapped? You owe me an explanation first.” Cordelia said.

Ronan had just wanted to remind Cordelia not to overdo it, but she had countered him.

“Are you jealous?” Ronan said, casually rolling up his sleeves.

Cordelia chuckled, “I’m not that petty. But ever since Deanna arrived, my position in the company has become difficult. I’m just defending myself. If our marriage is made public, everyone will think I’ve been deceived. Also, Mr. Evans, being labeled as two-faced isn’t flattering. Any flirtatious behavior with your ex during our marriage can affect the company’s stock price. You’d better be careful.”

Ronan paused in adjusting his cuffs. Every word Cordelia said made him feel seen through. Yet Ronan didn’t let his emotions show for too long, “So in the future, you’d better stop hanging around hotel entrances wearing other men’s clothes.” Thinking about what happened that day, Ronan was a bit upset, his tone becoming harsher.

“I always act above board. I won’t embarrass you, but don’t give me a hard time either.” Cordelia said. Ronan left the room, his face dark. She might have forgotten, he had spent fifty million dollars on her.

## Chapter 26

At four in the morning on Monday, after a two-hour bullet train ride and three bus transfers on winding mountain roads, Cordelia finally reached her destination at ten

By the time she arrived at Evergreen Primary School, where Logan had once taught, Cordelia felt sick to her stomach.

Ricardo, a genuinely friendly and warm-hearted guy, told her that Logan was the only one who had come to teach there out of the goodness of his heart in all these years. Everybody else only came to boost their image, but Logan genuinely cared for the students.

Ricardo handed over Logan’s diary to Cordelia. Tucked inside were photos of Logan with the children, his warmth and kindness even more pronounced with them by his side.

When Cordelia saw the photos, she bawled her eyes out. Her heart ached for Logan.

After touring the campus with Ricardo, Cordelia checked the time. It was almost noon. She was due at Barney's at three in the afternoon. However, while waiting for the bus on the mountain road, Cordelia saw a private car parked on the side. The driver, a young lad, looked rather flustered, kicking his tires in frustration.

"Need a hand?" Cordelia approached and asked.

The guy seemed relieved to see her. "I ran out of gas and there's no signal here in the middle of nowhere." He explained.

Cordelia remembered the storeroom she had seen at the school earlier, which had a few barrels of gasoline, Ricardo had said it was for heating in the winter.

"Go straight and then take a left. Look for a big tree, and you'll find Evergreen Primary School. They have gasoline." Cordelia pointed out.

Seeing his blank face, Cordelia sighed, "Come on, I'll take you there."

He locked his car and followed Cordelia to Evergreen Primary School. Along the way, they started chatting. Turns out the lad was also from Millstone. He worked in a small company and was here on a business trip. He thought there was a gas station nearby, but couldn't find one. He would have been stranded on the mountain overnight if it hadn't been for Cordelia.

They were both from Millstone and bumping into each other in this remote area felt like a homecoming of sorts. They exchanged contact info

The guy's name was Edwin.



With Ricardo's help, Edwin's car was refueled. He was incredibly grateful and offered to drop Cordelia off at Cedar Hollow train station.

Once on the train, Cordelia checked her phone and found a dozen missed calls from Ronan, probably due to the lack of signal. She only got one WhatsApp message: [Where are you?]

Cordelia quickly replied, [Sorry, just got your message. No signal until now.]

Instead of texting back, Ronan called. His tone was frosty, "You took the day off. Where did you go?"

Even over the phone, Cordelia could hear the chill in his voice and the anger he was holding back. "Weren't we supposed to pick up Barney at three? Why were you calling me in the morning?" Cordelia quickly redirected the conversation.

"Where did you go?" Ronan wasn't sidetracked and continued to ask calmly.

Considering she had just lectured Ronan about not to see two women at the same time and now she was picking up her ex-boyfriend's diary. It could be misunderstood, so Cordelia decided to lie, "I went shopping. I was upset about not being chosen as the Lumos Star, so I blew off some steam."

Ronan knew Cordelia was miffed about the whole Lumos Star thing. He was involved in it and he was angry at the time too. So, he didn't probe further.

"I was originally planning to go to Barney's this afternoon, return to Millstone tomorrow morning. But there's a meeting tomorrow, so I decided to go in the morning and return in

the afternoon. I'm on my way now, so you don't need to go back to Birchwood. I'll text you the address, go back to the villa and wait for Barney." Ronan's tone softened a bit.

"Okay." Cordelia replied.

She thought to herself, "Barney's sick. Living alone in Birchwood is worrisome, so it makes sense to bring him over. But does this mean Barney's moving in with Ronan? Am I supposed to move in with Ronan too?"

Just thinking about it gave Cordelia the heebie-jeebies. She was always at Ronan's mercy. But Cordelia didn't allow herself to dwell on it. She started reading Logan's diary. From when they first met, fell in love, and he went off to teach in the rural area, it was like reliving every day of their

past.

Tears dropped onto the pages of his diary. In his entries, Logan mentioned several times about the gap between Cedar Hollow's children and the outside world. His greatest wish was to buy each child at Evergreen Primary School a computer, but he didn't have the funds.

Cordelia clenched her fists. She would make sure Logan's wish came true. But after doing some math, she realized she didn't have enough money. After signing the agreement, Ronan gave her twenty grand in one go, and a few trips to Barney's earned her less than ten grand. That was still less than thirty grand dollars in total. Most of that money went towards her mom's medical bills. Dr. Devon was hiring a caretaker, and she needed the remaining money for that.

Cordelia wondered how could she make more money.

Chapter 27

“Where’s Della, why didn’t she come with you?” Ronan’s grandfather seemed a bit grumpy in the car. To him, Cordelia was more like a child. Being with her always brought a sense of warmth and homeliness.

“She’s still at work, you wouldn’t want to interfere with her job, would you?” Ronan added, “Stay with me this time. I’ve already arranged everything with the doctors. We have all the medical facilities at home, so you don’t need to go to the hospital.”

Ronan drove into Pearl Palms where he lived. It was four o’clock in the afternoon. The house staff were all out to meet them, but Cordelia was nowhere to be seen.

With a slight frown, Ronan asked the staff, “Hasn’t the lady returned yet?”

“Not yet. Do you want us to call her?” The maid asked.

Ronan had already briefed the staff about his wife, so they all appeared calm in front of Barney.

“No need, don’t disturb Della at work. She’ll be home when she finishes. I’ll go tidy up a bit.” Barney said.

Ronan looked back, expecting to see Cordelia, but there was no sign of her. As he searched for Cordelia, another woman drove up.

“Is it some kind of telepathy between us? As soon as you turn around, I’m here.” Deanna got out of the car and said to Ronan in a suggestive tone. At that exact moment, the trunk of Ronan’s car was opened, revealing Barney’s luggage.

“Let me help.” Deanna volunteered to carry the luggage.

Looking at Deanna, Barney slightly frowned. However, he didn’t say anything.

“Let the staff take care of it.” Ronan said and walked into the house.

Cordelia had clearly unsettled him again. He was not in a good mood.

Deanna had already accompanied Barney to his bedroom for rest.

“Barney is exhausted. He’s already asleep.” Deanna came out of Barney’s room, light-footed.

Ronan was still sitting on the sofa, lost in his thoughts.

About twenty minutes later, Cordelia rushed back. Her face was flushed, her hair messy, as if she had hustled back from a far-off place.

“Where’s Barney?” She started looking for Barney as soon as she stepped in, only sparing a glance at Deanna. She recognized Deanna at once. This was the woman she had seen in photos and heard about from her colleagues.

“He’s in his room. Turn left on the first floor. He’s sleeping. Don’t disturb him.” Ronan said.

This was Cordelia’s first visit to Ronan’s house, and he nonchalantly showed her the way. At this point, Deanna also noticed the wedding photo of Ronan and Cordelia hanging on the wall. Her face instantly turned pale.

“Why are you back so late?” Ronan pulled Cordelia onto his lap, and naturally leaned in to kiss her cheek.

Deanna was sizing up Cordelia. She was tall and slim, with big eyes that shone like droplets of water. Her nose was upturned, lips soft, making her look adorable. Even without dressing up, she was beautiful.

“Who is this lady?” Cordelia asked. She knew this woman was Deanna, and she also knew that Ronan was doing this deliberately to make Deanna jealous. She was just a tool for him.

Due to the fact that Ronan couldn’t find Cordelia this morning, she decided to fully cooperate with his show to calm his anger.

Cordelia’s hand reached up to Ronan’s neck, “I missed you too. Why are you back so late?”

When Cordelia acted all cute, she was very charming. The fresh scent from her body filled Ronan’s nostrils, making him feel so good that he wanted to take her to bed right then.

“Oh, by the way, who is this lady?” Cordelia glanced at Deanna.

“An old friend of mine.” Ronan said.

“I’ll go upstairs to put away my bag.” Cordelia said and went upstairs, thinking, “Just friends?”

She had no idea where Ronan’s room was. She just wanted to give off the impression that she would be visiting this house frequently. The villa was extravagant yet understated. Cordelia almost tripped on the staircase.

“You’re married? You didn’t mention it last time.” Deanna said, trying to smile despite her pale face.

“You didn’t ask me last time.” Ronan replied.

He wasn’t sure what his feelings were. Perhaps because he was unsatisfied with Cordelia’s behavior this morning, he decided to be affectionate with her, making Deanna jealous, and then punish Cordelia in bed later.

“Is she your wife?” Deanna asked Ronan.

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Seeing Cordelia and Ronan being intimate earlier had made Deanna very jealous. She was itching to push Cordelia away and take her place on Ronan’s lap. She never got the chance to do that before. She even wondered if they were putting on a show for her, but they didn’t seem to be

acting.

Ronan lit a cigarette, seemingly proud as he looked at Deanna, “Isn’t she beautiful?”

Deanna just nodded, not answering the question directly. “She’s your wife. If you think she’s beautiful, then she is, I leave now” Deanna said.

## Chapter 28

Ronan found Cordelia in the study on the second floor. She was engrossed in an original German novel.

\* need to talk to you about something” Ronan tapped on the study door.

Cordelia jumped, thinking Ronan was going to bring up the events of this morning. Ronan walked towards his bedroom, with Cordelia nervously trailing behind.

When they entered the room and shut the door, Cordelia looked around at the size and grandeur of the room. It was so extravagant that it wasn't an exaggeration to say it was like a separate luxury villa.

As Ronan casually changed clothes, his six-pack abs were on full display, which made Cordelia feel a chill down her spine. She quickly looked away.

Ronan smirked mischievously, "What's wrong? Can't bear to look? Or are you just playing hard to get? We've had sex before. You've touched every part of me. Are you pretending to be shy now? Was it all an act of pretending to fancy me?"

"I didn't pretend to like you." Cordelia responded. Ronan's words made her blush, how could she not?

"So, it was all in my head then?" Ronan retorted sarcastically. He had put on a grey shirt and was buttoning it up, "From now on, you're moving in with me."

"What?" Cordelia was surprised. Even though she had anticipated moving in, the news still took her by surprise when it came from Ronan.

"What? In Barney's eyes, you and I are a couple. It's inappropriate for you to be living elsewhere. You make me feel like I've been cheated on. I wouldn't want Barney to worry that we are separating." Ronan said.

Cordelia understood his point. After all, the price tag of five million wasn't small. But she thought of Logan's wish, and the five million wasn't out of her reach now.

However she wasn't even sure if she could come up with the money.

Determined, Cordelia licked her lips, "I want more money."

Ronan paused while buttoning up his shirt, "How much are you asking for? Ten thousand a night?"

Cordelia did the math. If a regular computer cost four thousand, she would need eighty thousand for 200.

So, Cordelia gathered her courage, “Ten thousand a night is too little. Pay me one million upfront. If you do that, I’ll move in tonight.”

Ronan’s shirt still had the top two buttons undone. He didn’t bother fixing them, leaving his chest partly exposed. He walked over to Cordelia, sizing her up. This intern was proving to be more difficult to handle than he’d anticipated.

‘So, you’ve learned to haggle?’ he eyed Cordelia sharply.

‘A person has to adapt to the circumstances.’ Cordelia stood straight, “Living together every day, I’ll need to pay attention to a lot of details. It’s a mental strain.”

“So, if I don’t raise your pay, you’ll quit?” Ronan asked coldly.

“Yes. After all, he’s your grandfather. Morally speaking, he’s just a stranger to me.” Cordelia said righteously.

Every word she said was well-placed during their chat last Thursday,. Now, she chose this moment to make her high-stake demand, leaving Ronan no room to negotiate.

This was the first time Cordelia had haggled with him. One million for a single time, she was indeed ruthless.

“Aren’t you afraid I might divorce you?” Ronan scrutinized Cordelia’s flushed face.

“Barney likes me a lot. If you divorce me, he’ll definitely be upset with you.” Cordelia said, a hint of cunning flickered in her eyes.

“So you’re sure to stick with me? Or do you think I’m an easy mark?” Ronan asked.

“No. I just think I’m worth that much.” Cordelia said casually.

Ronan took a deep breath, his face darkening as he transferred one million to Cordelia. Then he said quietly, “Stay here tonight. Move your stuff over tomorrow. Don’t let Barney see.”

Cordelia finally breathed a sigh of relief. She got the 200 computers!

During dinner, Cordelia and Barney had a wonderful chat. She was Barney's little ray of sunshine. Barney even said, "With Cordelia here, I can live longer."

"I hope you live long and stay happy!" Cordelia said with a smile.

She glanced at Ronan, who was also watching her. He was probably thinking, "If Barney lived till 200, wouldn't he be stuck in this marriage forever?"

The next day, during her lunch break, Cordelia went back to her dorm room to pack her things. When she saw Logan's diary, she felt troubled. In the end, she locked the diary in her suitcase. She thought, "Even if Ronan was interested in her stuff, he didn't know her suitcase's password, so he couldn't snoop around."

In the afternoon, she rode back home in Ronan's car. When Barney wasn't looking, she carried her suitcase upstairs. After unpacking her clothes,

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going out of her way to keep Barney happy every day

emed to be pretty chuffed. Ronan would give her some money now and then, Cordelia didn't care that much. The computer ere covered already

Sunday, Cordelia took a day off to join a CPA training course. However, she bumped into an old colleague, Manda, in the hallway of the training

"Mande? You're studying for your CPA too? How come I didn't see you here before?" Cordelia asked.

Seeing Manda, Cordelia felt a pang of guilt. After all, she had taken Manda's position at Lumos Enterprises.

\*just started a new job and enrolled in this course last Wednesday Manda casually mentioned, sipping her coffee.

"You found a new job?" Cordelia asked,

Mands replied nonchalantly, "Mr. Evans hooked me up with a CPA firm that pays double the salary of Lumos Enterprises. If I pass the exams, I'll be a licensed accountant



Cordelia breathed a sigh of relief at hearing Manda's words..

Just then, Jamie appeared from the opposite side, and Manda's face lit up with a smile, Jamie was Manda's old classmate from Liberty University. They shared the same mentor and had bumped into each other a few times. Manda had always had a soft spot for Jamie.

"Jamie, I got you a coffee" Manda said, handing Jamie a cup,

Jamie shook his head, saying, "Thanks, but coffee messes with my sleep. I'll pass,"

Then, he pulled Cordelia aside, frowning. "Did Ronan do anything to you last time?" Jamie asked with concern.

Cordelia blinked, shaking her head, "No. What's up?"

"I thought he seemed a bit off the rails. I'm glad you're okay, I was worried he might lay a hand on you!" Jamie recalled the scene where Ronan had thrown his shirt out of the car.

Looking at Cordelia, he asked, "What's the deal with you and Ronan? Why did you get into his car that day?"

This question left Cordelia speechless. After all, her marriage with Ronan was supposed to be under wraps. Although Ronan didn't seem to care much about this, she could tell that Ronan and Jamie were not on good terms. If she spilled the beans to Jamie, Ronan would definitely be pissed.

"He's my boss at work, and we are friends in private life. After some thought, Cordelia decided to downplay it.

"Just friends? For some reason, Jamie seemed relieved and even a bit pleased to hear this.

"Yep." Cordelia nodded, thinking to herself, "Sorry, I have to keep you in the dark for now, to avoid ticking off Mr. Evans."

They chatted for a while, whispering to each other. Manda saw this from a distance and clenched her fists. Why did Cordelia always want to compete with her for everything?

Manda sneakily took a picture of Cordelia and sent it to her brother Lionel, with a message: [Look at this girl. Do you like her? She's my classmate and she's really pretty! You can sneak a peek at her when you pick me up tonight.]

Lionel responded with a smiley face emoji and agreed.

Manda knew her brother loved to play with women's feelings. It would be strange if he didn't stir up some trouble!

The bell for class rang, and everyone headed to their classrooms. Jamie was teaching, but he kept stealing glances at Cordelia. Manda saw this and felt a pang of jealousy.

After class, Cordelia lingered in the classroom to study a bit more.

As she walked out of the building, she saw a man approaching. He was reaching out to touch Cordelia's face.

"You're pretty." He said.

Cordelia looked at him coldly, "Who are you? There are cameras here, so don't even think about harassing me."

"What are you doing?" Manda pretended to stop her brother, but she didn't really care. This was her brother after all. She wasn't worried about the consequences. In fact, the more chaotic the scene, the more entertained she was.

"Come on, let me buy you a drink." Lionel tried to put his arm around Cordelia without a second thought.

Cordelia slapped Lionel hard across the face.

Lionel's face burned, and his eyes were bloodshot, "You dare to hit me? You bitch."

Manda saw that a fight was about to break out and was thrilled.

Just as Lionel was about to slap Cordelia back, his hand was caught.

"This is a place of learning, not for you to make a scene. Stop!" The one who spoke was Jamie. He had just come downstairs to see the chaotic scene, and some punk was harassing Cordelia.

12.00

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Seeing Jamie defending Cordella made Manda even angrier.

“Who are you? Cordelia’s boyfriend?” Lionel was rude

“Mind your language Jamie’s eyes were red. No one had ever spoken to him like that before

I’m gonna kill you! Lionel started, pulling out a switchblade from his

“Watch out!” Cordelia yelled.

Then, she instinctively grabbed her bag and smashed it hard against Lionel’s head. The zipper of the bag hit Lionel’s head, and the heavy books inside caused blood to start flowing.

The crowd immediately called the police.

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When the cops showed up, Lionel and Cordelia were in the middle of a spat. They escorted both Lionel and Cordelia away.

Jamie followed in his car, but could only loiter outside the police station. It was getting dark and starting to rain, stirring up Jamie’s anxiety. Eventually, the police asked for a bail from Cordelia’s family or friends. Afraid of tipping Ronan off, Cordelia didn’t dare call him. Not to mention, they were only contractually connected. Ronan had no obligation to help her. So she called Adhan instead.

“You need money? Sorry, I’m broke ” Adrian hung up right after

He had drugged Cordelia before and was scolded by Jamie when he found out. Adrian almost lost his job, so he knew that last incident just brought trouble. Why would he help Cordelia, when he held a grudge against her?

The sound of the call ending made Cordelia extremely embarrassed. This was her own brother. Cordelia didn’t have high hopes in the first place, but he was her closest kin. How could she not reach out to him?

But she didn’t want to bother Jamie either.

“Can’t find anyone?” The officer asked Cordelia.

“No.” Cordelia felt a bit heartbroken.

The police investigated Cordelia’s social relations and found out she was married to the famous Ronan. They called him.

“A fight? Who did she fight with?” Ronan was incredulous but remained calm, “I’ll be right there.”

At the jail, the police told him what happened. Ronan’s face darkened as he listened. After paying the bail, the police let Cordelia go.

“You just attended a training course and you’ve caused me all these troubles? Outside the jail, Ronan lit a cigarette and asked Cordelia, “Do you even understand what ‘married’ means?”

“How much was the bail? I’ll pay you back. I’m sorry for causing you trouble.” Cordelia felt guilty and wronged.

“You want to pay me back? Then give me six thousand dollars.” Ronan sneered, looking somewhat amused. This woman who just took one million dollars from him and he only asked her to return six thousand dollars.

“No problem.” Cordelia took out her phone and transferred six thousand dollars to Ronan’s bank account.

Ronan didn’t check his phone or take the money. It was his money in the first place, so it made no difference.

“Don’t tell Barney about this.” Cordelia pleaded.

“I’m too lazy to tell Barney about your mess.” Ronan replied.

Ronan left the jail lobby. Cordelia, with her backpack, followed him.

It was already dark and the rain was still falling.

Ronan didn’t bring an umbrella. He walked in the rain, water droplets falling on his hair. Cordelia was a bit dazed. She was supposed to be walking beside Ronan, but his strides were too big for her to keep up with, so she fell behind.

Ronan never liked using umbrellas when it rained. Cordelia jogged a few steps and held her backpack over his head. She was much shorter than Ronan, so she had to tiptoe.

“Why do you always refuse to use an umbrella when it’s raining?” Cordelia genuinely wanted to know, her question filled with emotion, “What if you catch a cold?”

Ronan glanced at Cordelia, his eyebrows slightly furrowed.

“I usually park in the underground parking lot, so I rarely get wet.” Ronan replied succinctly.

“But you still need to have an umbrella ready.” Cordelia insisted.

Ronan didn’t respond.

When they reached the parking lot, Jamie saw Cordelia coming out and quickly asked what happened. Ronan’s face darkened further. Cordelia felt extremely embarrassed, as Ronan had just mocked her for attracting so much trouble.

“What’s your relationship with Cordelia?” Jamie was angry when he saw Ronan’s cold expression and Cordelia shielding him from the rain.

“Didn’t you tell him?” Ronan frowned and looked at Cordelia.

Cordelia didn’t reply. She felt extremely awkward.

“Why didn’t you protect her?” Ronan interrogated Jamie, looking enigmatic.

“I didn’t know what was happening inside. No one called me.” Jamie said.

Ronan gave a small smile, “But the police called me.”

“So, Cordelia, did you tell the police he’s your friend?” Jamie was somewhat tense, “You could’ve asked me for help. I don’t mind.”

Ronan sneered again, looking at Cordelia.

Cordelia was mortified.

“Cordelia. Jamie had a bad feeling.

“The police found out, he’s actually my husband.” Cordelia said.

Jamie remained silent at Cordelia’s words.