

# My Dreamy Old Husband Chapter 881

No matter what was being said, Sophia was Michael's legal spouse in the household registry. Initially, she pitied Irene and decided to let her off the hook, but the latter was getting overboard.

Look at how she whacked the supporting actress!

The Fletchers might have owed her recognition, but both me and the actress owe her nothing!

Upon seeing the young lady who emerged, Irene's pupils contracted as she spat out the name that she hated the most through gritted teeth. "Scarlett Mitchell! It's you again!"

Sophia walked toward the group of actors and helped the actress to her feet. Even though she was nasty with her words, she was a generally kind person.

Sophia did not spare a glance at Irene and instead looked at the group leader while saying, "I'm helping this lady here. If anyone dares to kick her off the Actors Union, they are deliberately going against my wishes."

The group leader nodded weakly. After all, between Taylor's wife and mistress, it was obvious that the former had more say...

Irene looked at the woman approaching her—the latter was blessed with fair, supple skin together with clear, beautiful eyes and a face that looked incredibly beautiful without any makeup. On the other hand, Irene could not hide her ugly, vicious expression due to her intense fury. So... Scarlett is actually Sophia. I ironically thought that she went under the knife to look like Sophia. Sophia is indeed alive! No! Sophia is already dead! This person is merely a product of plastic surgery and shamelessly pretends to be Sophia! Even if she's really Sophia, I will never acknowledge that fact!

Sophia wore the mask again, revealing only her pair of blue eyes. With the baseball cap pressed on her fair forehead, she spoke, "She's merely making remarks behind your back. Do you have to go this far? Look at you—I can see your wrinkles due to your anger. They look ugly!"

The thick makeup on Irene's face had faded by that point and clearly revealed her wrinkles due to her angry expression and agitated emotions.

"Huh! Do I have to go this far?" Irene laughed sadistically. "Scarlett, do you have to ask me that question? It's all because of you! It's because of you b\*tch that I'm in this situation! I curse you to have a terrible death!"

She was hysterical like a madwoman.

"Scarlett, even if you have plastic surgery to resemble her, so what? You will never be able to have Taylor. The only person whom he loves is me. We are together now, but you are nothing!"

Sophia did not want to speak another word to Irene and would not have stood up like that if she had not gone overboard by bullying the supporting actress.

Not in the mood to continue the conversation with Irene, Sophia merely repeated to the group leader, "Remember what I said earlier. I'll check in two days later. Make sure that nothing happens to this lady."

With that, she prepared to leave. Seems like this scene can't be filmed today. I'll bring Carmen home tomorrow since we don't need this amount of money.

However, Sophia's lackadaisical attitude had enraged Irene even more. Irene gave Sophia a chase without giving a thought on how her current look. "Scarlett, stand right there!"

Sophia turned to look at Irene without uttering another word.

Irene said loftily, "Since you're here, I'll be honest with you—I'm already in a relationship with Taylor. You won't be able to intercept our relationship in your entire lifetime! You have no idea how gentle he is with me. Last night, he hugged me in bed as he repeatedly said that he will care for me and love me forever! You are nothing to him!"

Sophia snorted. Irene has really gone insane. Because of a man, she looks like she was infected with rabies. Is it even worth it? Hence, she replied, "Yes, yes, yes, you are the most beautiful and Taylor is your man. I have no plans to compete with you. Are you satisfied now? I'm heading home for dinner now."

She removed Irene's hands on her shoulder and turned to leave.

Sophia's indifference had once again annoyed Irene, making her feel like her attacks had landed on cotton. As Sophia left, Irene viciously glared at the senior actress.

"Chase this woman and her family out from the film studio and never allow them to work here again!"

Just as the actress thought she was out of the hot soup, she fell to the ground in despair once again.

Irene looked pleased with herself as Sophia stopped walking as expected.

She merely wanted to make Sophia angry so they could fight until the end. The Fletcher Family owes me this. I'm sure Michael will side with me after this!

Sophia decided not to join the fight. With her hands in her pockets, she turned upon hearing Irene's words and calmly addressed the crowd. "I have made myself clear—I will ensure that nothing will happen to this actress. I'm Taylor Murray's legal wife whereas this woman is merely his mistress. Who do you think has more power? I'll leave it to everyone to decide."

Sophia left with her hands still in her pocket.

As Irene was still not satisfied, she chased after Sophia, but was stopped by the latter's two bulky bodyguards.

She hated Sophia to the maximum while watching her leave. Why can she be so carefree after taking my happiness away? How shameless!

"You're a b\*tch! B\*tch, I'll never let you have Taylor! You won't get anything! You are forever a b\*tch—nobody!"

Everyone thought, Damn, she's really gone crazy. She's just a mistress yet she dares to talk to the wife in an arrogant manner.

Sophia was not in the mood to continue the fight with Irene. After all, it was boring to fight with an insane woman.

Since Sophia mentioned that she would not let anything happen to the actress, she lived up to her word and even asked someone to inform the Actors Union.

The main reason why Irene was able to call the shots was because she was Taylor's 'mistress' and everyone was merely respecting Taylor. Now that his wife had showed up, the crowd respected her even more since she was his legal wife. Even if Sophia was not his spouse, her background itself was rather impressive.

Soon, Michael caught wind of what happened in the film studio.

Irene, again!

Irene had recently been showing off her position as Michael's mistress. He remembered the good deeds that her ancestors had done, so he informed his colleagues to cut her some slack so that the situation would not end badly. What happened in the end was her taking advantage of the leeway to even start a fight with Sophia.

Michael had a feeling that he needed to nip the problem in the bud before it would give him hell in the future.

However, his biggest trouble now was not Irene.

Rather, it was his father-in-law, who was difficult to appease.

He was a stubborn person who was a recluse to everything, be it good or bad, making it impossible to marry his daughter.

Apart from that, Sophia had no interest in marriage as well, but still slept with Michael after he personally approached her. However, as for marriage, she would only consider it after some time. After all, there was still a lot of time in the future. Good times were still waiting ahead of her.

Michael felt that all his recent efforts were completely useless—he had used all of his tactics until he was completely drained, yet he still could not convince Sophia to return to his side.

For the first time in his life, he doubted his attractiveness and looks.

However, he could also understand the entire situation—Sophia was no longer the same person as before. In the past, he was her everything, but now, she was a princess who received all of the love she could get. It also did not help that she did not have a shortage of brilliant men like Michael around her.

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Even if he offered his own flesh and body, it still would not have made a difference.

“Mr. Mitchell, about Sophia and I, don’t you think...” Michael trailed off when he saw the needle again.

Cooper gave him a distasteful look and answered, “Don’t you even think about it!”

Carmen was back with them and she had wrapped herself in Cooper’s arm before dozing off to sleep. Upon looking at her round face in his lap, as cute as she was, she did not have the energy to help to rally support for her father. Michael could only hasten himself.

At night, Cooper brought Carmen and Sophia back to the hotel to rest while he packed his belongings to return to Bayside City the next day. As Carmen wanted to sleep with her grandpa on the same bed, Sophia, who was alone, huddled under the covers and spoke with Michael over the phone. They even chatted animatedly past midnight. Then, under the pretext of heading to have a barbecue, she sneaked out and found her way to his hotel. She wanted to give him a memorable farewell.

Michael had no choice but to remain at the film studio for a while, so Sophia figured that they probably would not have time to meet up with each other once she returned to Bayside City. She figured that at the very least, she should have some fun on her last night there.

After they made love, Sophia wanted to take a shower before leaving, but she never expected that Michael was adamant in not allowing her to leave. As a result, she stayed the night with him.

She was enjoying her last round with him in bed when she suddenly heard a booming voice outside the hotel's window at dawn. It was a woman shrieking hysterically in a piercing voice. "Michael, you better come out now! Come out now! If you don't, I will kill myself and I will keep to my word! I'll give you one minute—if you still refuse to come out and give me an explanation, I will jump from here!"

Upon hearing the voice, it sounded like it came from somewhere close by. Because the wee hours of the morning had always been accompanied with silence, the sudden hysterical cries seemed to have traveled at a deafening volume.

Michael rose to his feet and drew the blinds to peek outside. He saw a figure standing on the roof of the hotel next to his. That person was holding a loudspeaker and appeared to be hysterically shouting into it. *Isn't that Irene Weber?* He spotted Irene standing alone at the ledge of the building, preparing to jump at any moment as she yelled into the loudspeaker for the entire world to hear.

Michael had only slightly pulled the blinds to reveal a gap, but a ray of light spilled into the hotel room and was reflected in his eyes. His eyes were as dark as black ink as it did not have any expression.

Irene arrived at the film studio and discovered that he was also in the same vicinity to film a movie. However, the film set had bodyguards there—one of them even witnessed his colleagues throwing her out. She wanted to head to Michael's hotel to harass him, but only knew the name of his accommodation without no knowledge on the floor he was on. The hotel had many entrances and exits, making it impossible for her to block them even if she wanted to. It was also unexpected that she would even threaten to commit suicide in the middle of the night.

With one final glance, he closed the double-layered and sound-proofed warming windows. The minute he did so, everything that happened outside no longer had anything to do with him.

"What's the matter?"

“Nothing. Let’s go on.”

If she really wanted to kill herself, she could easily locate one of the nearby skyscrapers and make a grand departure. Instead, she deliberately arrived in the middle of the night to cause a scene. Armed with a loudspeaker, she had created such a huge fuss for the entire world to hear, which did not resemble the behavior of a suicidal person.

In the end, Irene had managed to single-handedly arouse half the city from their sleep in a state of shock. Yet, Michael, who was living in the hotel opposite, was surprised to learn that she jumped from the building, much to his dismay.

By then, the fire brigade had already gathered at the ground floor and was prepared with an inflated air cushion, which they had conveniently prepped, to catch Irene as she landed. It was a pity that she jumped from a building that was only seven to eight stories tall, so she had only suffered superficial injuries and was immediately rushed to the hospital. At dawn, media outlets had caught wind of the story and reported on the coveted love triangle.

She naturally accepted the invitation to be interviewed and portrayed herself as the innocent, pitiful woman who had been abandoned. She even lamented that it was Michael who had a change of heart and left her.

Despite all of her pleads and cries, he never showed up to visit her at the hospital. However, the incident that happened the night before had caused Michael’s reputation to be affected; one of which was the revelation of his genuine identity. Now, the world was aware of his background—he was in fact one of the Fletchers and a descendant of the military!

It did not matter whether his true identity had been exposed. After all, he had already received the approval and recognition from the Fletcher Family. He shifted his name to the Fletcher Family’s ancestral grave and arranged for a joint burial with Theo. Their marriage application had also been approved and on Ancestors’ Day, Michael proved himself to the family by burning his original paperwork. He was no longer an illegitimate child, but rather a dignified and legitimate person by birth.

Irene had spent the night throwing tantrums at the window which faced the direction of the hotel where Michael stayed. On the other hand, he was having a good time with Sophia in his hotel room.

It was only in the morning when Cooper learned from his bodyguards that Sophia had sneaked out. He rushed to Michael's room and knocked on the door, only to find Michael in the middle of brushing his teeth.

"Hey, Mr. Mitchell. I'm guessing that you're here to look for Sophia. She's pretty bushed from last night, so she is still asleep. Since you both are leaving on your private jet, I don't suppose you're in a hurry? Come on in and take a seat," he warmly greeted while holding the door open and ushering the moody Cooper inside. A half-naked Michael purposefully moved around the room within Cooper's view, so as to make it obvious that his daughter resembled cooked rice. On the other hand, Michael wanted to remind Cooper that what had been done could not be undone and Sophia was already an adult!

Cooper grew up with the local influence and even instilled the same principles in Sophia. *Cooked rice? That's impossible; even if rice was cooked into porridge, it would still be a bowl of sloppy, innocent mush—nothing could change that. Did Michael think that he will be able to have Sophia with him after a night of fun? He must be out of his mind!*

Meanwhile, Carmen found the bed that she previously slept on and retrieved the stack of hard-earned money hidden beneath the pillow. She counted all of the money in the pile and securely tied them with an elastic band before shoving it into her backpack. Then, she happily carried her backpack before heading off. *This is all my hard-earned money!*

Even before Sophia could have enough sleep, she was already woken up by Carmen and yawned while heading out the door. Michael was dressed and ready to make his way to the film set. Before he left, he pulled Sophia into an embrace and kissed her. "Don't forget to call me," he said.

The two of them then kissed in front of Cooper. An excited Carmen also jumped up and down while she uttered, "I also want a kiss, Daddy!"

When Michael squatted and gave Carmen a peck, Cooper's exasperated expression could not help but melt away.

Once that was done, Cooper led both girls to the garage where his escort car was parked. They immediately entered the car and made their way to the airport to board the private jet that would take them back to Bayside City.

After Michael had said goodbye to Sophia, he felt a sense of emptiness in himself although he was pleased. At least he had overcome the important step and pushed it out of the way.



Once he was done with the filming and had perfectly portrayed Cooper's father, he and Sophia could be together as long as Cooper was satisfied with the film's outcome.

Meanwhile, in a hospital close to the film studio, Irene had been waiting for two whole days, but Michael still did not show up. He could not even be bothered to send his representative to visit her. In an attempt to vent her frustrations toward him, she threw any bottle that she could find in her ward.

"Michael Fletcher! What on earth do you want me to do? Go to hell, all of you Fletchers!"

A bottle of tonic, which the filming crew had sent, was flung across the room. The bottle rolled to the edge of the doorway of the ward before resting against the tip of a leather-pointed shoe.

She instantly perked up, thinking that he had sent someone to visit her. As her gaze tracked upward from the leather-pointed shoe to the person's face, it was Sandra's face which she saw instead. Irene's beaming face instantly fell and dampened her mood.

"What are you doing here? Are you here to laugh at me too?"

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Sandra wore a set of professional attire as she entered the hospital ward and removed her sunglasses, revealing a set of eyes that were cold and distant. "Irene Weber, you are fully aware that he doesn't care whether you are dead or alive and yet you still want to humiliate yourself. Are you stupid? Has he even showed up to visit you for a second? Look at yourself—how did you manage to allow Sophia Edwards to affect you like this? Even I find you pathetic!"

Although she was stoic, she wanted to fan the flames and make things worse than it already was.

Irene sneered in response. "Sandra, please don't make the matter worse by instigating. You only want to use me to get to Sophia Edwards because she caused you to be in a situation that's worse than mine! At least my skirt wasn't pulled apart on the spot."

When Sandra was younger, she only loved wearing skirts—regardless of whether it was the summer or winter season. She always wore skirts to show off her fit and long legs, but since Sophia had ripped her skirt off in public on time, she did not dare to wear skirts anymore; she even developed a deep aversion toward it after that.

"Shut up!" Sandra yelled, interrupting Irene as the latter recalled the story. The bluish-green vein on her forehead, which was as fair as porcelain, throbbed as the corners of her mouth twitched uncontrollably.

Sandra had encountered the deepest humiliation in her entire life on that day, which was having her skirt and panties ripped off by Sophia in public. On top of that, Sophia had also publicly shamed and insulted Sandra to the point where she vowed to avenge the enmity. She had already thought of a thousand ways to retaliate against Sophia, but merely needed the right timing to do so.

The two women in the ward had calmed down since it was useless to expose each other's scars as they shared a common enemy—Sophia.

Irene wanted Sophia dead—that was the only way in which she could claim Michael as her own.

On the other hand, Sandra not only wanted Sophia to die, but she also wanted to destroy the matrimony between the Fletcher Family and Cooper. Having Sophia dead was the best method in achieving that goal and Irene was an important piece to making it happen.

Sandra sat by the edge of Irene's bed and lifted her black-rimmed sunglasses before speaking frankly, "I have a plan, which will definitely have Sophia out of the picture. I just need to find someone to execute it. Do you have an interest in it?"

Irene scoffed while answering, "Are you thinking of using me as an assassin?"

“What do you mean by using you as an assassin?” Sandra responded. “I just can’t get someone who’ll be able to do the deed in a better manner than you. After all, you are the apple of Old Master Fletcher’s eyes and he treats you like a daughter. You are favored more than his direct descendants of the Fletcher Family. If you can pull this off, I guarantee you that the outcome will be twice your effort.”

Upon hearing what Sandra said, Irene’s eyebrows shot upwards as she felt pride growing within her.

It was true that she was the most favored in the Fletcher Family and treated like she was one of their own, if not better. Her own parents had sacrificed their lives for the country, which made her the child of martyrs—that inadvertently meant that no matter how much trouble she caused, Mark would never fully blame her.

Sandra watched Irene’s expression as she continued to explain, “It’s a foolproof plan. Once it has been carried out, Sophia will die without a proper place for her body to be laid to rest. Don’t you want to be the one who personally tortures her to death?”

Irene rolled her eyes as she was hesitant. Up until that point, she was merely fooling around. If it really meant killing someone... However, when she thought of Sophia and Michael being happily together, her heart felt like it was being sliced by a thousand swords.

She turned towards Sandra and responded, “Why don’t you share with me about your foolproof plan? Maybe I’ll give it a thought.”

Without missing a beat, Sandra gave voice to her thoughts. “I’m prepared to look for someone to kidnap both you and Sophia. Then, you will act like you genuinely want to save her, but in the end, you were unable to do so. That way, she’ll die and you will live life as a good person. Michael would definitely see you in a different light too.”

A suspicious Irene asked, “This plan of yours—will it actually work? How can I be certain that you won’t use this to undermine me?”

Sandra understood where Irene was coming from, nodding and gazing at the latter with envious admiration before replying, “Irene, you are nothing short of Mark’s most beloved junior, so how can I possibly dare to undermine you? The person I want to eliminate is Sophia as well as destroy the matrimony between Cooper and the Fletcher Family. How can I think of possibly deceiving you? In fact, I hope that you will be able to say a few words to the Fletchers on behalf of my father and me in the near future!”

Irene felt her own suspicions gradually dispel.

As for Sandra, she had been able to convince herself due to her identity—she had grown up with the children of the Fletcher Family and was even more favored than them. As long as she had the chance to mediate for the Fletchers, then the Fletchers would eventually support Alex.

The two ladies hit it off and launched into a detailed discussion of their plan in the ward.

After the fuss and drama that Irene created, Michael spoke up about the harassment that he received from her, which resulted in her losing her role. So, she packed her belongings and returned to Bayside City to heal her broken heart. In hindsight, she did not sustain any severe injuries and merely grazed her skin, but she was deeply hurt by what she had done for him. It was the kind of grief that she felt to her bones and muscles.

When Irene returned to Bayside City, more people came to visit her at the hospital. The first of them was Stanley, who had been sent by the Old Master to persuade her.

“Miss Irene, you shouldn’t continue to persist in the matter. Uncle Michael and Uncle Joel have their families and children... Besides, marriage doesn’t represent your entire life and identity,” Stanley blurted his words in a soft voice while slicing some fruits for Irene. He did not intend to come to the hospital to visit her, but Mark was adamant with his decision.

Irene’s parents had gone on a high-stakes mission, risking their lives without a second thought and died as a result. In the end, after successfully completing the mission, they had heroically sacrificed their own lives and did so while clutching each other in a tight embrace. The martyred couple, who had saved hundreds of lives, was awarded with first-class merit for their deeds, which was how Irene came to be adopted by Mark and brought up with much love, care, and attention.

Her parents were heroes, so how did she land herself in that mess? It must have been the trauma she endured from their deaths causing her to behave in a negative manner.

Irene laid on the hospital bed, but did not say a word in response. Stanley had washed his hands after cutting the fruits and was now preparing to leave since he already said what he needed to say. It was not his business to ask whether she would heed his advice or not.

He returned to the room and found that she munched on the sliced fruits, noticing that her pale face was now etched with wrinkles. She went under the knife for a double-eyelid

surgery a few years ago as she wanted her eyes to resemble Sophia's. However, age was catching up on Irene and her body's recovery rate evidently slowed down to the point where those surgical marks, which had been previously covered with makeup, were now obvious. Now that she had a bare face, there was nothing much to cover.

In Stanley's memory of them growing up together, he recalled Irene as the honest and intelligent skylark with a melodious singing voice. She also grew into a beautiful woman who was the darling of the kids in the Fletcher Family. How many people had tried to woo her? How did it all turn out like this?

"You must be tired from all the talking, Stanley," Irene finally spoke. "Drink some water before you leave." She took out a cup and poured some water into it.

He also felt that his mouth was parched, so he reached out with a hand and accepted the cup from her without hesitation to gulp the water. When he finished, he could not help but add, "You are still young, Irene. At forty years of age, you're merely at the beginning of your youth. The road ahead is still long..."

Those words were his sincere words and he had said it in the hopes that she would find her way back after losing track of the right path. The Fletcher Family had treated her like a jewel and gave her everything that she had asked for. It would not be appropriate if she became greedy at that point.

She did not say a word, but only continued to eat the fruits.

Stanley rose to leave, but the moment he stood up, he felt blurry, causing him to lose his balance as he collapsed next to the bed.

Once he had lost consciousness, Irene, who pretended to munch on her fruits, looked up with shining eyes. There are so many men in the Fletcher Family. Why did I have to choose Joel and Michael? Young, handsome, and with a bright future ahead of him—Stanley is a much better choice!

She dragged Stanley's body up the bed and gently unbuttoned his shirt. Back then, he could only follow other inferior boys, but now, he was already a man—it was time for him to have a lady!

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Irene had watched Stanley being delivered into the world and him growing up into the man he now was. That silly boy who once played chase with his own back ten years ago had matured into an adult. She then slowly peeled off the thin fabric of his shirt and reached her hand underneath it to carelessly knead the flesh.

After drinking the cup of water that Irene spiked, Stanley was completely unaware of what happened since he was deep asleep.

She straddled on his unconscious body, pressing her hands into his sturdy build, with a fierce and lewd look in her eyes. *Since the men of the Fletcher Family have played with my feelings and left me to fend for myself, what if I return the favor to them?*

She wondered whether Stanley would fall in love with her if she became pregnant with his child. On top of that, what could Michael and Joel do about it? Instead of vying for the two older men's attention, she should give Stanley another five—no, ten—years as he would definitely be more splendid than his uncles by then!

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Standing by the roadside facing the hospital building, Sean was in his formal suit and clutching a briefcase in one hand. He had been waiting for a long time; he glanced at his watch before looking at the street opposite the hospital and turning to his wristwatch again. He started to become anxious because Stanley mentioned that he would only sit and have a talk with Irene for ten minutes. It was already half an hour since Stanley went up and there was still no sign of him exiting the hospital doors.

His assistant was holding onto Judge, the big dog, so that it could have a walk while they waited outside. They were supposed to join Sean for a business meeting and would be late if they did not make a move soon.

"President Mitchell, do you want me to head up there and inform Mr. Fletcher?" The assistant who had brought the dog for a walk returned and asked.

Judge recently returned to Stanley's place. Although he had specially hired a nanny to look after the husky and accompany it for walks and plays, the dog still seemed lonely. Stanley would occasionally bring Judge to the office so that the dog could act as a bodyguard. When the humans left earlier for the business meeting today, Judge had insisted on tagging along.

Sean looked at his watch for the umpteenth time and called Stanley on his cellphone, but no one answered. After a long while, Sean suggested, "I'll go and take a look."

Stanley and Sophia maintained a close relationship; on the other hand, her and Irene's relationship tore into pieces when the news about the film studio was exposed in the media. It was hard to say now whether Irene would do anything to him or not.

On the other hand, he was an honorable gentleman who served as a soldier in the military. How could he honestly allow himself to suffer any losses at the hands of a woman? However, Sean was still worried about the situation as he led Judge into the hospital and found Irene's ward.

Two of Irene's assistants stood guard at the door to her ward. When they saw Sean walking down the corridor toward their direction, they hastily stepped in front of him to bar him from further advancing. One of them said, "Miss Irene is having a discussion with Young Master Stan. She specifically informed us that they are not to be disturbed."

*A discussion? Sean thought. What sort of discussion are they having that can be more important than the business meeting later today?*

It had already been agreed that today would be the day that they would negotiate with the Michel Group. Although it was safe to say that they were on good terms with Linus after burying the hatchet with him, it was still not like Stanley's style to be late. Furthermore, Stanley had always been known to be highly self-disciplined and punctual.

*Why isn't he picking up his phone? It's not like Stanley to ignore his phone for no apparent reason.*

Sean wished that he could knock on the door, but Irene's assistants were determined to stop him from doing so. Judge also anxiously pawed at the door when Sean suddenly realized something.

*Could it be that Stanley and Irene are... N-No, that's impossible.* Stanley, that idiot, had secretly admired Sophia all those years, so it was impossible for him to easily have a change of heart. He was also aware that the situation between her situation with Irene was in a dangerous territory. *He can't be this silly!*

As his thoughts ran amok, Sean decided that he would not waste any more time pointlessly talking with the assistants. He fiercely kicked the door open and released his grip on the Judge's leash, allowing the dog to be the first one to rush in. Sean and his two assistants burst in, only to notice various pieces of clothing scattered all over the floor with an almost naked Irene on top of Stanley and in the midst of removing his pants. She had seen Sean rushing in and now stared at him with hatred-filled eyes. That look in her eyes coupled with her posture made her resemble a cannibalistic old monster, leaving him and his assistants with a cold feeling when they digested the scene in the room.

Sean was flabbergasted when he saw what was before him. He understood that sooner or later, Stanley would eventually be married to a woman, but it was the first time he had witnessed his friend being naked and on the same bed with a woman. Sean felt that his heart was being stabbed with a thousand knives and that his lover had been rudely snatched from him.

Sean stayed rooted to the grounds—as if his footsteps weighed a ton. He did not move or speak and was not sure whether he should leave the room or...

Judge's reaction, on the other hand, was much quicker than his. As he snarled, the dog lunged toward the bed and Irene on her exposed butt. The dog with its titanium teeth took a bite of Irene's rotten skin, causing her to scream and roll off the bed. She now screamed her head off like a pig was about to be slaughtered as the dog lunged after her again, wanting to take another bite of her flesh.

In that instant, Sean came to his senses and immediately turned where Stanley lay on the bed. He saw that Stanley was shirtless and his pants were halfway down his thighs, but the latter was motionless on the bed. Sean realized that she could have spiked Stanley's drink since he did not react despite the commotion and her incessant yells.



With the help of an assistant, Sean hurried over and pulled Stanley from the bed. Fortunately, they were in a hospital as they found a doctor right outside the ward to treat Stanley.

As Sean left the room, he turned to see that the dog had managed to corner Irene. Hatred flashed in his eyes. *Irene Weber!* Since they were dealing with an emergency, he did not have the time to deal with her, but vowed in his heart to confront her for her actions at another time!

In the end, she had to be rushed to the emergency department in a bloodied mess as a result of Judge's multiple bite wounds. The husky was held down and given a rabies jab while Stanley was also sent to the emergency room after it was discovered that he had consumed the water that was spiked with a large amount of sleeping pills. The doctor assured that it was nothing serious and he would be alright as he needed sleep to recuperate from his ordeal.

While Stanley was being examined in the emergency room, Sean waited in the hospital's corridor where he sat on the floor with shaky hands. The image of Irene and Stanley sleeping together on the bed continued to replay in his mind—at the moment when he kicked the door to her ward open.

The look on his young, handsome face was stony and unreadable. He had outgrown his childish appearance and lost some of the femininity that once signified his youthfulness in university. It was now replaced by a deep, contemplative look.

Judge was anxiously pacing back and forth in front of the operating theater. Not long after, Sophia and Linus appeared and rushed toward them.

"What's wrong? What happened?"

It was less than two days since Sophia's return to Bayside City. After having lunch with Linus today, they had discussed heading for the scheduled business meeting with Stanley. However, a while later, Sean phoned and mentioned that the meeting had been to be canceled. They learned that Stanley was admitted to the hospital and quickly rushed over to see whether he was alright.

Sean regained his composure and stood up to greet them. "I don't really know. Stan will be awake soon and we'll find out then. But, don't worry, it wasn't anything serious," he said.

Sophia could feel that Sean was reserved and hiding something. She looked over and saw Judge wearing a muzzle, pacing in front of the doorway of the operating room. If it was wearing a muzzle, that meant it either bit someone or ate something.

Stanley slept until it was night time. Not wanting his parents to worry, they did not inform his family that he was at the hospital. Instead, Sean, Sophia, Sarah, and Linus stayed by Stanley's bedside and accompanied him throughout the entire afternoon as well as at night.

When Derek got off work that evening, he was rushed to the hospital in a state of panic. He was in charge of the company's management and Cooper had made an executive decision to change the former's name to Derek Mitchell. Derek's birth name did not sound pleasing to the ears—his last name had a domineering aura while his first name sounded rather plain. So, Cooper combined both their parents' last names and decided on the name, 'Derek Mitchell'.

At night, Stanley finally woke up from his deep, long slumber and realized that there were many people huddled around his bedside. In a state of surprise, he blurted out a series of questions, "Why are you all here? What's wrong with me? What time is it? Where is this place?"

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It was only when he woke up that everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

Upon knowing that Stanley was no longer in any harm, those who gathered around his bed took the opportunity to catch up with each other as they chatted into the night. It had been such a long time since they had a happy gathering like that.

However, after waking up, Stanley had no recollection of what happened earlier that day—he only remembered that he was talking to Irene before falling asleep. Sean did not add much except that he had found Stanley in her ward.

Stanley stayed at the hospital until the next day, which gave him a much-needed relief to take a break. Ever since Judge was beaten the last time, Stanley had worked harder to improve the company's performance at the expense of his personal time. So, he took the advantage to rest for those two days.

He returned with Sean to their sea view villas in the suburbs for a short vacation—both of them had purchased a unit each for themselves and were neighbors since their villas were adjacent to each other. However, they would drop by their villas for a bit on the weekends since they either slept at the office or at the Fletcher Residence most of the time.

Sophia had never been to Stanley's seaside holiday home, so she took the opportunity to take a look. She decided to host a seafood barbecue party at his place that weekend since he had taken a day off work.

The party did not have many attendees—most of them were their peers from university along with a buddy's two little critters. She even brought a reluctant Nathan along.

While Sarah and Sarah ate their barbecued seafood, they chattered about their family's washed-up actors and children.

"Look at our family's Sour Face—he's arguably larger in size than other kids his age. He'll surely be a one-of-a-kind, stunning mythical being when he grows up. Are you sure you're not going to consider delivering a baby doll?" Sarah blabbered. "I wanted to tell you that it's about time for you to marry and have children. Taylor's been waiting for you for such a long time that even his hair has turned white. He's still waiting for you even after you have returned. Since it's about time for you to settle down, why don't you get together with him?"

She continued with her words. "Love and marriage are not the same thing; when you're in love, you can be willful as you wish, but once you're married and have kids, things will be different. Look at me—I'm still fighting frequently with our family's Old Wolf. Only after marriage did I realize that great men also need to relieve themselves and their poop are equally as smelly! I was completely disillusioned. Perfection doesn't exist in this world, but how can I leave it all behind now since I haven't done everything?"

Whenever Sarah spoke about marriage and her kids, she always said one thing but did something else. Although she was still the same lady who had a passion for crispy duck skin and exquisite paintings and artwork, ultimately she was also a mother to her children.

However, Sophia herself thought that it was still early for her to settle down. Since she was no longer that young, she wanted to continue dating for a few more years before marrying someone. It seemed that Michael was also anxious about it as he had urged that they marry after spending a night together. He was only forty years ago, so what rush was he in? Cooper was older than Michael by several years and was not even in a hurry to settle down at all.

As she thought about Cooper, she was a tad bit worried. Although she had a relationship with Michael, Cooper was still alone. The number of women who wanted to marry Fass could have formed a line around the globe, but he still kept to himself even after many years. It was hard for him to fully overcome the pain that he experienced in his younger days, rendering him unable to love another woman in the same way as he did before.

“By the way, what is Nicole up to these days? Every time I try to call her, her phone is always being answered by her assistants. It’s as if she’s busy all the time,” Sophia abruptly asked Sarah. Nicole had not kept in contact with Sophia for a while.

Sarah shook her head and replied, “She’s in the top management of Imperial Entertainment now and also one of its shareholders—she’s super busy. You have to make an appointment two months in advance if you want to meet up with her.”

Had it not been for Nicole at that time, Sophia would probably have died in Africa. It was a friendship that required no explanation.

Even though Nicole did not admit it, Sophia knew that she had always loved Cooper. She had loved him for more than ten years and even played a huge role when Sophia was searching for him.

But, it was as though Cooper...

Meanwhile, on the other side of the party, Stanley drank one too many glasses again and held onto the dog while talking nonsense. Linus and Sean were also drinking.

Linus looked at the incoherent and drunk Stanley while taking a sip of wine before speaking in a crisp tone, “Have you ever confessed your feelings for Stanley?”

Sean was in the midst of sipping on his wine when he heard Linus' words and became silent while using it as an answer. He once thought that he could wish Stanley the best and bless him with happiness while watching him settle down with a family. However, when he saw Irene and Stanley in bed together, he realized that he had fooled himself all along. Maybe he was not as tough and liberal-minded as he had hoped.

Still, he was not prepared to confess his feelings to Stanley because he was afraid that the latter would think that he was a pervert... Although Stanley was an idiot who had not realized Sean's feelings for him, Linus had noticed it, seeing that he was not like other men.

Sean gave a bitter smile before responding, "Without the blessings and positive wishes from others on such matters, it's better to tuck the feelings away in one's own heart—not everyone shares the same courage as you, Linus."

Sean knew that he was not as flamboyant and openly gay as Linus. The man loved whoever he wanted to love—no matter whether the other person was a man or woman. Sean had no qualms over Linus's choices; the latter was free to do anything that he pleased.

Upon hearing Sean's answer, Linus simply shook his head and poured himself another glass of wine. Then, he tipped his head back and took a large swig of the entire glass of wine. He put the glass down and turned to the other side to glimpse at Sarah and Sophia, who laughed as they chatted away. "Is that so?"

The gays were able to understand each other and Sean was keenly aware of the odd look that passed through Linus' eyes a moment ago. *He seems to be watching Sophia?*

*Without the blessings and positive wishes from others on such matters, it's better to tuck the feelings away in one's own heart...* That statement could have triggered a deeply buried secret in Linus' heart.

Sean was startled since he seemed to have discovered something astonishing before breaking out in cold sweat. *This is quite a big deal*, he thought. *I need to inform Michael about this as soon as possible. Something bad might happen if I push it aside!*

The drinking and eating lasted until late at night before everyone gradually excused themselves for the rest of the night.

Sophia slept in Sean's guest room at night. Carmen was already sound asleep when Sophia gently pulled the blanket over her and allowed her to be in the safe arms of the nanny. Sophia then headed outside to feel the breeze since she was not sleepy.

It was some time during midnight when she walked toward the seaside. A cool breeze swept along the beach as she hugged her jacket closer toward her body and sat by the sea. She could feel the breezy air on her skin as she admired the peaceful scenery. Farther out in the sea, she could see the vast moon steadily glowing like it floated on the surface of the sea. *So, this is the so-called bright moon on the sea!*

"Can you see the moon from your place?" Sophia held the phone to her ear and spoke to the other person on the line—Michael.

From her cellphone, she could hear the sound of curtains being pulled before Michael's seductive voice apologizing, "It's such a pity that there's no moon at my place tonight, but that's okay. Whether there's a moon or not, it won't keep me from thinking about you. No matter whether it is windy or rainy, whether there is a moon or not, I miss you. When the sky is clear, I still miss you. When it is raining heavily, I will also be missing you. When I'm feeling sad, I will think about you. When I'm feeling happy, I will also be thinking about you. Without you by my side, every grain of rice that I eat is coated with the feeling of missing you dearly." He was flirting again.

Now that Michael used his seductive and alluring voice that he reserved for narration in films to flirt with Sophia, she felt that she had instantly turned into a heroine of an idol drama and was speaking about their love with the male protagonist. His skills in using his lines and charm had been effective to the point where she could not resist from being enchanted by those words. "It's rare to hear you say sweet nothings like these to heroines in movies..."

He replied, "That's true. I don't fancy romance films. I like movies where things are being explored in a deeper manner, so I don't have many romantic lines. The only time when I did this was probably in that gangster film when I acted as an undercover cop."