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My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 281 - 282

Chapter 281 I'm Sorry

I stood by the sink and continued to wash the vegetables, turning a blind eye to Derek. He put the grocery bags down and patted Aaron's shoulder, who was making the soup base. "God, I could smell it from outside the yard. It almost made me drool." I stopped washing the vegetables, and the words slipped out of my mouth before I could stop myself. "Then, you better continue to drool. You are not invited to have lunch with us." Hearing what I said, Aaron laughed, but Derek didn't reply. As I continued to wash the vegetables, I felt something hot blow against my ear. My body stiffened on its own accord. "Then you guys have the meat and leave the soup for me," Derek whispered in my ear. His chin almost touched my shoulder, and his hair rubbed against my ear, making my scalp tingle. "Okay, you can have the soup," I muttered breathlessly, maintaining my composure. Instead of getting angry, Derek smiled at me. "The most delicious part of a hotpot is the soup base. If you leave the best to me, Grandpa and Aaron will have a problem with it later." I was at a loss for words. Once the hotpot soup was ready, Aaron moved the pot to the induction cooker that was prepared in the dining room, and we handed the vegetables and meat one after the other. The pot was boiling, and the delicious smell wafted in the air. The four of us sat at the small square table. "It's a rare chance for us to get together. You better have some drinks with me today." James grinned happily. "No drinking," I blurted out. James looked stunned. I looked at Derek and saw him casting a knowing look at me. Realizing that I might have overreacted, I decided to tone it down. "All right. Knock yourselves out." Aaron smiled as he added some vegetables and meat to the pot. "Grandpa, Derek had a stomachache and stayed in the hospital for a few days. The doctor has advised him not to drink."

The old man nodded in understanding. He looked at Derek and felt sorry for him. "Derek, you were disobedient and never took good care of yourself when you were younger. I told you that you would reap what you sowed one day," he reprimanded. Derek lowered his head and smiled helplessly. "I'm sorry, Grandpa." Although James scolded Derek, I could see the love gleaming in his eyes. The old man pursed his lips and glanced at the boiling hot pot. After a moment's thought, he said, "It will be a pity if we can't drink while eating hotpot. I have a bottle of low alcohol rice wine. Don't worry, it won't hurt your stomach. I will go and get it."

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Moments later, he returned with the wine bottle and told us that one of the villagers had brewed it. He had retired from a renowned hospital, so people here often visited him when they got sick. James never charged money. The villagers sent him gifts, like the newly brewed rice wine, or the eggs hatched in their farm, to express their gratitude. He was popular, and everyone in the village respected him. Aaron took the bottle of wine and brought several glasses from the kitchen. Then, he poured a glass for each of us. The window was open, and it was snowing outside. However, the atmosphere inside was warm and cozy. When I was a child, my mother made hotpots during winter when friends and relatives came to visit us. The hotpot wasn't about the taste but the warmth it brought to our body and soul. But, today, eating with these people made me a little uncomfortable. After all, I came here because I wanted to stay away from Derek—James and Aaron knew that. Since I hadn't made up with Derek, I couldn't eat and drink happily in front of them. However, it would be rude if I continued to show my anger, so I didn't say anything. I added mushrooms to the pot because I liked them. James was very talkative during the meal. He told us funny stories that had happened in the village and all the unforgettable memories of his youth. He laughed from time to time as he recalled the good old days. I stared at the pot and silently listened to his stories. My heart broke as I remembered his illness. I always admired his fighting spirit. We all forgot to eat as we listened to his story with rapt attention, until Derek and Aaron picked some mushrooms and put them into my bowl at the same time. The synchrony of their moves left Grandpa astounded. I ignored Derek and thanked Aaron with a smile.

My Unexpected Marriage to the CEO by Pumpkin Witch Chapter 282

Chapter 282 The Little Girl In The Photo

James continued to passionately tell us stories as he occasionally sipped on his wine. The delicious smell of hotpot and wine wafted in the room. The old man was in high spirits. He even showed us the old pictures he had collected over the years. Perhaps to make me feel included, he patiently told me about the people and the story behind each picture. He picked up a photo and looked at it for a long time. Then, he pointed at someone in the photo and looked at

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Aaron.

“Aaron, who is the little girl next to you?” Derek and Aaron unanimously looked at the picture. I was sitting opposite James, so I couldn’t see it. “She looks familiar,” he said. Aaron smiled. “Well, the little girl in the photo is sitting right in front of you.”

Understanding crossed James’ face. He looked at me and back at the photo.

“Eveline?” His eyes widened in disbelief as he handed the photo to me. “Eveline, is this you?” I looked at the picture and realized it was me. In the photo, I was standing on a big stone while Aaron was standing beside it. I remembered one of our playmates had taken this picture. But as we grew up, each of us went to different schools and eventually lost all contact. “You insisted on standing on the stone because you refused to admit that you were shorter than me.” Aaron smiled at the memory. “You were so stupid and lame back then.”

Hearing that, I burst out laughing that sounded like me.

“I didn’t!” I didn’t want to admit it.

As soon as he mentioned the past, I couldn’t stop talking.

It looked like Derek wasn’t surprised that Aaron and I had known each other since childhood. But he fell silent and listened to our conversation. 2

“That was why you refused to move. Was it all because of little Eveline?” James suddenly said. I stared blankly at Aaron. He just smiled without denying. The atmosphere grew tense after James spoke. Derek picked the glass and took a sip of the wine. “This wine tastes good.” I suddenly felt flustered as I recalled how Aaron had always been kind to me—be it when we were kids or now. I picked up the glass and gulped the drink in one go. The old man picked another photo and continued to look at it, over and over again, as if he didn’t want to put it down. “Look at this photo,” he said.

Aaron leaned over and smiled. “This was Grandma when she was young.”

James let out a dreamy sigh as he looked at the photo. “Yes, your grandma was a beautiful woman.” His face softened at the mention of his deceased wife. “She was smart, intelligent, and beautiful. Everyone adored her. She was always surrounded by young men. I was afraid that she would end up marrying someone else instead of me, so I wrote her poems every

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day. I was afraid that she would forget me. We seldom got the time to meet each other. I was always kind to her and never treated her badly because I knew how precious she was. Anyone would want to be with her. I feared that one little mistake would make her leave me and choose to be with someone else.” I wasn’t sure if I was overthinking, but his words seemed to suggest something. ? After that, he went on and on about his wife and their love story. Their love was strong and loyal despite the inconvenience in transportation and communication. They were loyal to each other. It was an extraordinary love story—the two had lived a fairy tale. 1 James enjoyed the meal. The four of us emptied the entire bottle of wine. After lunch, the old man went to take a nap. Aaron and I were fighting over washing the dishes. In an attempt to end the quarrel, Derek said he would do it. We both put down the dishes and left the mess for him to handle. Derek was stunned. It took him a while to realize we had tricked him. I couldn’t help but feel sorry for him as he silently carried the tableware to the kitchen.

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