

Chapter 83 A Nitpicker

Alicia had grown used to Caden's odd behavior, so she didn't bother arguing.

Deciding to be the bigger person, she went ahead and ordered groceries to be delivered.

"What do you want to eat?" she asked, trying to keep it simple.

With his eyes closed, Caden replied lazily, "Whatever. I don't care."

Even though he claimed to be indifferent, Alicia knew better by now.

"How about fish soup and a light beef stir-fry?" she suggested.

Just as she expected, Caden was a picky eater. "I don't like fish soup."

"Then how about beef?" she offered.

"I don't want beef either."

She was dumbfounded by his response.

Trying to keep her patience, she said, "You're sick, and your throat's sore. Maybe something easy to digest? How about a light soup?"

"I'll get hungry again too quickly. I have work later."

"In that case, eat something heavier," she countered.


"That'll just make me run to the bathroom more. It's too much trouble."

Once again, Alicia was annoyed.

"What do you think about pasta? It will be good with mushrooms," she suggested.

"I hate the taste of mushrooms," said Caden.

Through gritted teeth, Alicia asked, "Then what the hell do you want to eat?"

Caden tapped his forehead lightly and said, "Anything is fine." 

This time, Alicia couldn't stand it any longer.

She had lost her cool. "Eat whatever the hell you want. I give up!"

At that moment, Caden's phone rang.

He calmly picked up his phone, and answered, "Hello?"

Hank's voice came through clearly. "Mr. Ward, there's a meeting scheduled this afternoon. Will you be joining online?"

Without missing a beat, Caden casually responded, "Oh? Do you have more information about what Randolph did?"

Hank felt a wave of confusion wash over him. He had no idea what his boss was doing.

"Who are you talking to? I never mentioned Randolph," Hank thought, puzzled by the sudden shift in the conversation.

As Alicia glanced in his direction, Caden rubbed his forehead in irritation. "There's no need for that. I've changed my mind; I don't want them anymore."

Hank was bewildered. "What do you mean?"

Alicia stood up, clearly annoyed. "What about shrimp? I can whip up some scrambled eggs for you, too."

Hank caught the voice of a woman and quickly turned up the volume to listen more closely.

Caden ended the call with a satisfied smile creeping onto his face. "I can live with that."

Once again, Alicia was left speechless.

How annoying!

Caden chuckled inwardly, aware that she was silently cursing him, yet he chose to remain quiet.

Before long, the groceries arrived at the door.

Alicia carried them into the kitchen.

Every now and then, she could hear him cough softly from the other room.

Glancing back, she noticed he was already seated at his desk, engrossed in his work.

When he kept quiet, he appeared quite handsome. It was a shame that he had such a sharp tongue.

Alicia peeled a pear and set it in a small pot.

Next, she sprinkled a bit of sugar on the peeled fruit.

The doctor mentioned today that he was weak.

She thought this would serve as a good source of nourishment for him.

After covering the pot, she looked around and discovered the cupboards were completely bare.

It was as if no one lived in the apartment at all.

She then pulled out her phone and ordered a variety of items.

Buying all those items cost her a lot of money.

"Caden, you're going to reimburse me for the stuff I bought, right?" she asked.

Caden raised an eyebrow. "How much was it?"

Alicia glanced at the receipt, which totaled over three thousand dollars.

She exclaimed, "Three hundred ninety thousand dollars!"

"What on earth did you buy, gold?" said Caden.

"Are you saying you can't afford it?"

"Correct," he said.

Alicia found herself at a loss for words.

He was incredibly stingy.

As Alicia peeled shrimp, Caden set aside his work and approached her to supervise.

She had just finished washing the shrimp.

Now, she used scissors to snip off the fins of the shrimp.

Before long, she had a pile of shrimp with the shells completely removed.

Alicia was impressive.

Whatever task she undertook, she excelled at it, whether it was studying or competing. No matter where she was, she radiated confidence.

Even the simplest chores took on a warm and inviting atmosphere because of her gentle and calm presence.

Alicia had never had anyone oversee her before. She looked up and asked, "Are you hungry?"

The softness in Caden's gaze diminished slightly. "I just want to remind you that I have OCD. I can't have even a tiny piece of shell around."

She found herself speechless.

Then, he walked closer to the table and pointed at the peeled shrimps.

"Do you see that? It's a shell," he complained. "Do it again."

"Caden, what the hell is the matter with you?" asked Alicia.

Caden took advantage of being the sick and pushed his luck. "Shells really ruin my appetite."

Alicia countered, "I could poke you in the eyes. If you can't see, it won't



bother you."

Not long after, a bubbling noise emerged from the kitchen.

The pear soup was boiling.

Alicia reduced the heat and lifted the lid to take a look.

A lot of water had evaporated, so she realized she needed to add more.

Caden loomed over her, making it hard to ignore him. "What are you making?"

The sweet and calmly refreshing scent of the pear broth filled the air.

Alicia replied, "Take a look for yourself."

Caden understood it had properties that could help soothe a cough.

He smiled but chose not to press the matter further.

Alicia fetched some water, and then an idea struck her, and she paused. In one swift motion, she gulped the water down.

Concealing the disposable cup behind her, she said to Caden, "Keep an eye on the stove for me. I need to grab something."

Caden noticed her subtle move.

"Sure."

Once Alicia was confident Caden wasn't watching, she quietly slipped into the bathroom.

She lifted the toilet lid and filled a disposable cup with water.

As she stared at the clear liquid, a mischievous grin spread across her face.

"You're always so picky about food, and constantly criticizing everything, huh? Enjoy this toilet surprise. Maybe it will improve your appetite and make you more willing to eat anything," she thought.

Alicia discreetly concealed the cup and made her way to the bathroom



door.

She then glanced toward the kitchen.

Caden was nowhere in sight.

Perhaps he had stepped out to the balcony to work.

She took a few cautious steps forward, stretching her neck to peek at the desk.

Nobody was there.

Suddenly, a cool voice interrupted from behind her. "Ms. Bennett, who are you searching for?"



Chapter 84 Toilet Water

Alicia jumped and spun around.

At some point, Caden must've quietly positioned himself behind her.

His gaze was as cold as ice.

Feeling a wave of guilt, she nearly dropped the cup she held.

She forced a smile and said, "Didn't I ask you to stay in the kitchen? What are you doing here?"

Caden replied ominously, "If I hadn't come, would I have discovered the big surprise you've prepared for me?"

Alicia found herself at a loss for words.

Though her prank had been a spontaneous idea, she remained cautious.

Even so, he still managed to catch her.

Feeling the icy tension radiating from Caden, Alicia knew better than to argue.

With a reluctant sigh, she poured the toilet water down the drain.

Then she straightened up, placing her hands behind her back.

She bowed her head, falling silent.

Caden towered over her, his broad chest giving him an imposing presence.

When his expression shifted to one of stern authority, he resembled a strict schoolmaster reprimanding a misbehaving student.

Alicia stayed quiet and compliant, but the defiant posture she maintained indicated that she wouldn't back down easily.

He then stared at her hand.

"Why are you still holding onto that cup?" he asked. "What? Are you thinking of filling it up again once I leave you alone?"

Alicia's lips twitched slightly as she tossed the cup aside.

She could tell that Caden was genuinely angry. But after knowing him for so many years, she had witnessed his worst moods and felt no fear.

Her curiosity got the better of her. "How did you know I was planning to prank you?"

Caden felt a wave of nausea wash over him as he recalled the earlier scene.

Initially, he hadn't been suspicious, but something in his gut urged him to check on Alicia.

When he caught sight of her scooping water from the toilet, his expression darkened instantly.

He felt a sense of relief that he had walked in when he did. What would happen if he hadn't?

In all honesty, he was looking forward to that pear soup.

If he had accidentally consumed it, his obsessive cleanliness would have made him vomit for days.

Caden's voice was icy as he spoke succinctly. "Wash your hands thoroughly before returning to the kitchen."

Alicia remarked, "You still haven't explained how you knew!"

Caden replied sharply, "Your foolish eyes gave you away!"

Alicia felt a surge of anger. "Well, your eyes are even more foolish!"

Following the earlier incident, Caden scrutinized her every move.

Alicia, too, felt cautious around him.

She kept her behavior in check.

Before long, the shrimp finished cooking.

Alicia even found time to whip up a dipping sauce.

The dish was a vibrant blend of color, aroma, and flavor.

Caden stood behind her, watching her skilled movements. He was fully aware that she had perfected this routine over time.

She practiced tirelessly; all for Joshua.

As Alicia reached for a plate, she quickly pulled back her hands when she realized the rim was too hot.

Caden stepped in effortlessly, lifting the plate with one hand.

Alicia touched her ear and went to grab cutlery.

The dining table wasn't large by any means.

Once seated, they were positioned just the right distance apart.

Feeling hungry, Alicia dove into her meal without hesitation.

She ate slowly, with grace and poise, showing no signs of rush.

With a shrimp in her mouth, she glanced up at Caden, who sat upright and motionless.

"Why aren't you eating anything?" she asked tentatively. "Is it not to your taste?"

Earlier, while she was cooking, he appeared quite satisfied.

Caden maintained a neutral expression and asked, "Is it too hot for you?"

Alicia moved the food around in her mouth and blew on it lightly. "Yes."

"Then tell me this, if I placed my hand on the plate, would it burn?"

Alicia found his question strange and tilted her head in confusion.

She instinctively glanced at his hands.

They were empty.

Then realization hit her. "Oh, I'm just used to only serving myself."

Her comment unexpectedly softened Caden's demeanor.

Thereafter, he stood up to grab cutlery for himself.

Noticing Caden savoring the meal, Alicia took the opportunity to ask, "When will you give me the rest?"

Caden continued to eat leisurely and responded, "The job isn't finished yet. There's no need to hurry."

Alicia countered, "But you promised you wouldn't sleep with me!"

Caden lifted his gaze slightly.

"I wasn't saying that. I was referring to the pear soup."

Alicia found herself momentarily at a loss for words.

Feeling frustrated, she exclaimed, "Can you please stop giving me mixed signals?"

Caden replied with a calm demeanor, "Which of my words misled you? Did I say anything alluding to sex?"

Alicia countered, "You knew exactly what you were suggesting."

"I can't speak for that, but your mind certainly seems to wander," Caden replied after he took a leisurely sip of his soup. "But I understand. With my skills, it's only natural that women can't resist me after we've been intimate."

His comment left Alicia at a loss for words.

Did that imply he had been with many women?

She tightened her grip on the fork and said, "Have you been with a lot of them?"

Caden smirked and asked, "What do you think?"

Alicia studied his handsome face, trying to gauge his response.

He was a handsome man, and he was in the prime of his life.

In all honesty, he looked like a playboy with a string of sexual affairs and numerous illegitimate children all over the world. He might even have an STD.

The fact that she lost her virginity to someone so vile made her feel uneasy.

As a result, when she brought the pear soup to him, her movements were somewhat clumsy.

"Eat this, and then settle your debt with me," she said, making her impatience visible.

Noticing her irritated expression, Caden remained still.

"I'm too exhausted," he replied.

Alicia furrowed her brow. "What do you mean by that?"

"Feed me," he said.