

Heartstrings On Fire Chapter 1 - 10

Chapter 1

Agnes Pritchard was just five minutes late, but she was summoned to the boss's office for a one-hour lecture.

When she emerged from the CEO's office, Agnes looked like a ghost. Her face and eyes red and swollen. Clearly, she had been crying.

Everyone **in** the secretarial office felt bad for her.

Agnes was a new intern assigned to the secretarial office. Her job typically involved writing drafts and sorting out files.

For some reason, the CEO always seemed to have a bone to pick with her. He could always find a reason to summon her to his office for a dressing-down. And every time Agnes came out of the office, she looked like she had seen a ghost.

Agnes finally managed to slump back into her chair.

Anita, another intern, rolled her chair over and voiced her indignation, "The CEO is so mean to you just because you look like an easy target."

She sighed, "Agnes, what on earth did you do to piss off the CEO? Why's he got it in for you? The first thing he does when he returns from a business trip is chew you out?" Agnes hadn't quite pulled herself together yet, her mind still reeling from what had just happened in the office.

He'd been away on a business trip for two days, but his energy seemed to have doubled. She might have been stuck in there for another hour if she hadn't been crying and begging for mercy.

Anita looked at Agnes and felt terrible, but there was nothing she could do.

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So, she just patted Agnes on the shoulder, "Agnes, take it easy. The internship is almost over. Just hang in there."

Agnes was a junior majoring in news management at Lakeside College; she was just here for a month-long winter internship.

Agnes nodded, looking a bit dazed.

Anita sympathized even more, “Don’t worry too much about it. We’ll figure something out for you at the department dinner tonight.”

This snapped Agnes back to reality, “Department dinner? Do I have to go?”

Anita whispered, “Of course, you do. It’s Yolanda’s treat. Rumor has it she’s got some special privileges. But that’s not the point. The point is a lot of the senior staff from the secretarial office will be there, we interns can’t just blow it off.”

Yolanda was also an intern. She went to the same college as Agnes but in different departments. Rumor had it she had connections and was assigned to the Tim Group for her internship.

Agnes spent the whole afternoon fretting. Because earlier today in the office, her boss had told her to go straight home after work. After **an** afternoon of contemplation, she decided to go to the dinner.

If she went home, she worried she wouldn’t be able to hold it together. She never understood why the cold, handsome man, in everyone else’s eyes, could turn so brutal in front of her.

Anyway, when he whispered those words in her ear, Agnes was already exhausted, barely conscious. She might as well have pretended she didn’t hear it.

So after work, Agnes and Anita cheerfully went to the company dinner.

Even though it was Yolanda’s treat, Agnes somehow became the center of attention. Naturally, the talk of the party was why the CEO was so cold—to her.

With an innocent face, Agnes said, “I honestly don’t know.”

This only made everyone feel sorrier for her.

Halfway through dinner, Agnes’ phone rang. Seeing the caller ID, her heart rate accelerated.

She walked to a corner to answer the call. On the other end of the phone was Jared's deep, seductive voice, "Where are you?"

Chapter 2

Agnes honestly said, "I'm at a department dinner at Flavour Fusion."

Jared's voice was cold, obviously tinged with displeasure. "Get your butt home now."

And with that, he hung up.

Agnes was dumbstruck for half a minute. She returned to her seat and hurriedly said, "Something urgent just came up. I gotta scoot."

Seeing her rush like that, everyone thought something big must've happened, so they didn't try to stop her.

Agnes left the restaurant and hailed a cab straight back to Silver Oak Villas. It was a standalone garden mansion on a hillside. From the outside, it looked like a palace. The butler was at the door to welcome her. "Madam, you're back."

Agnes asked, "Where's Mr. Whitfield?"

The butler respectfully replied, "He is in his bedroom."

Agnes quickly headed upstairs to the bedroom. She hesitated at the door for a moment, but in the end, she pushed it open.

To her surprise, the room was empty. The only sign of life was the sound of running water coming from **the** bathroom.

Jared was taking a shower.

Agnes heaved a sigh of relief and plopped down on the couch, lost in thought. Her gaze drifted towards the bathroom. To be honest, she felt like everything that happened today was like a dream.

The story of her and the man in the bathroom was a whirlwind romance, a long story to tell. But when Agnes married him, she had no idea he was the youngest CEO of the Tim Group and the heir of the Whitfield family, one of the Four Families of Willowbrook.

Almost no one knew he was married.

To this day, Agnes couldn't understand why Jared chose her. Was, it just because...?

As Agnes was lost in thought, the frosted glass door of the bathroom opened. Jared emerged from the bathroom.

Agnes' gaze naturally fell on him.

Jared was only wearing a white towel. He had a great body, no extra fat, his skin was smooth, and he looked refined and handsome. His broad, muscular chest and perfect six-pack abs exuded mature masculine power and charm...

For a moment, Agnes was stunned.

Even though there was no privacy between them anymore, Agnes had always kept her eyes closed; she hadn't dared to really look.

Seeing Agnes' dazed expression, Jared said, "Are you satisfied with my body?"

Agnes finally came to her senses, blushing as she turned her gaze away, saying, "I haven't felt it yet, so I can't tell."

After saying that, Agnes wanted to bite her tongue off. What was she saying?

Maybe because of what she had experienced before, Agnes found the current Jared somewhat dangerous, especially seeing that smile at the corner of his mouth.

Jared slowly walked towards Agnes. She could feel the dangerous atmosphere getting closer.

Jared stopped in front of her and said, "Here, give it a try."

They had sex before, but Agnes had never directly touched his body. Every time, she was in a daze as Jared took control.

Agnes felt as if her fingertips had touched an electric current, unconsciously wanting to withdraw her hand.

But what was supposed to happen, happened...

When Agnes opened her eyes again, it was already 8 in the morning.

Chapter 3

Agnes overslept this morning, but it was all because she was beat from last night.

She swore she set her alarm clock, but it never rang. She jolted awake, startling the man next to her who was still fast asleep.-

Irritated, he mumbled, “Why are you up so early?”

In a fluster, Agnes replied, “It’s already 8. I’m gonna be late for work.”

She tried to spring out of bed, but Jared pulled her back.

“Since you’re late anyway, stay in bed with me a bit longer,” he said, pulling her into his arms.

Agnes didn’t dare to disagree though she wasn’t thrilled.

Jared seemed to fall asleep again, so Agnes cautiously began to inch away, hoping to sneak out of his grip without waking the man besides her.

But just as she was about to make her escape, Jared snapped open his eyes and rasped, “Agnes, didn’t anyone ever tell you it’s risky to sneak out early in the morning?”

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Before she could react, he pulled her back and pinned her beneath him...

By the time Agnes arrived at the office, it was already half past nine.

Anita asked, “Agnes, why are you so late today?”

Thinking back to the morning's events, Agnes blushed.

Anita asked, "Your face is so red. Are you sick?"

Agnes quickly covered it up, "My dog at home is too clingy; I just couldn't get away."

As Agnes finished her sentence, Anita nudged, "The big boss is here."

Sure enough, Jared walked by them, pausing slightly as if to glance at Agnes.

Agnes sucked in her breath, he didn't hear that, did he?

After Jared entered his office, Anita sighed, "I thought the boss was going to scold you for being late, Agnes. You're really lucky today. You were late, and so was the boss."

Of course, Jared would be late. They came in together. Luckily, no one saw Agnes get out of Jared's car.

Overhearing the conversation between Agnes and Anita, Yolanda asked, "Agnes, you have a dog? What breed?"

Caught off guard, Agnes blurted out, "A mini poodle."

Jared would not let it slide if he knew Agnes compared him to a poodle. But he probably didn't have time to deal with her now, as he was leaving for a business trip in the afternoon.

Before leaving, Jared sent Agnes a message: I'm going on a business trip to Tokyo. Be back in three days)

They had been secretly married for three months now. During this time, Jared had been away on business half the time, but no matter where he went, he always messaged Agnes before he boarded the plane.-

Agnes only had one week left in her internship. She only hoped to get through this period smoothly, and then she would go back to school.

Who would have thought that an unexpected event would occur the next day.

As soon as she entered the office, Agnes saw a crowd of people around her desk. When she went over, she found a huge bouquet of roses on her desk.

Seeing this, her colleagues expressed their envy, “Agnes, who sent this? He must be loaded! 99 rainbow roses, that’s like three months of our salary.”

Agnes was just as puzzled, but then she noticed a card attached to the bouquet. After reading the card, her face changed. She immediately picked up the bouquet and tossed it into the nearby trash can.

Everyone was confused, a colleague whispered, “Agnes, did your boyfriend send this? Did you guys have a fight?”

Another colleague said, “If my boyfriend tried to make up with me with 99 rainbow roses, I’d definitely forgive him.”

Agnes didn’t respond, but seeing her expression, everyone didn’t dare to ask further.

She was uneasy the whole day until she left work in the evening and saw Elton’s car parked in front of the company building.

Chapter 4

Agnes was about to turn around and leave, but Elton spotted her, got out of his car, and grabbed Agnes by the arm. “Agnes, let me explain.”

Agnes turned around, her tone icy. “Alright, speak. I’m all ears.”

Elton said, “I was drunk that day. I thought Jenny was you.”

Agnes asked, “Are you done explaining? If you’re done, I’m leaving.”

It was rush hour, and there were lots of people coming and going at the entrance. Anita happened to be driving her car out of the garage, so Agnes turned around and hopped

1. in.

Elton didn’t chase after her.

Once the car was on the overpass, Anita finally asked, “Who was that hunk? The one who brought you roses this morning? Is he your boyfriend?”

Agnes shook her head. “He used to be.”

“Oh, so he’s your ex. Looks like he wants to get back together. But why did you guys break up? He’s handsome, and seems to come from a good family too. Agnes, how could you let go of such a catch?”

“Anita, I have a headache. Please stop.”

Agnes was usually cheerful, and it was rare to see her like this, even when her boss frequently criticized her.

Anita didn’t ask any more questions.

Agnes looked at the night view outside the window, her thoughts drifting back to three months ago.

Agnes’ birthday was on November 11th. Elton’s birthday gift to her was letting her discover that he had a lover on that day.

And it was her good friend, Jenny Fitz.

Betrayed by the two people closest to her in one day, Agnes could only find solace in the bar, which led to what happened afterwards.

For three consecutive days, expensive rainbow roses showed up on Agnes’ desk, and Elton would wait for her after work at the company entrance.

Everyone in the office knew that a super handsome guy was madly pursuing Agnes. Agnes didn’t explain; only Anita knew the truth.

On the fourth day, Agnes received more rainbow roses on her desk. But in addition to that, someone else also came to the office. It was Jenny.

Agnes frowned **at** the sight of her.

Jenny hurried over and said, “Agnes, since you won’t see me or answer my calls, I had to come find you. Can we talk?”

There were already a lot of people in the office, all of them looking on curiously.

Not wanting to draw attention, Agnes said, “Follow me.”

Agnes took Jenny to the nearest conference room. Once inside, tears streaming down her face, Jenny grabbed Agnes by the arm. “Agnes, I’m sorry. Can you forgive me? I don’t want to lose our friendship.”

Agnes said, “If you really considered me a friend, you wouldn’t have done this. I remember you weren’t drunk that day.”

Jenny cried even harder. “Agnes, you probably don’t know, but I’ve liked Elton for a long time. Yes, you two have been close since childhood, and I shouldn’t have intruded, but **if** love could be controlled, then it wouldn’t be love.”

At her words, Agnes’ expression darkened.

Jenny continued, pleading, “Agnes, we’ve been friends for years. Can you let me have Elton? You are the beloved heiress of the Pritchard family. Even without him, you can find a better partner in the future. But I’m different. If I lose Elton, I’ll truly have nothing. Agnes, you’ve never been one for competition. Can you forgive him?”

Agnes was speechless. Forgive him? In fact, she had never planned to tangle with him. After what happened, Agnes knew there was no chance of her and Elton ever being a couple again.

Agnes turned around and asked, “Is this what you came here to tell me today?”

Chapter 5

Jenny’s coldness shocked Agnes, and her tone turned chilly, “So, you’re not going to forgive me? Agnes, you already have so much. Why are you trying to steal Elton from me? You just don’t want me to be happy, do you?”

Agnes was speechless, baffled by Jenny’s logic. It was Jenny who had butted into her relationship with Elton first.

However, now Jenny was saying that she didn’t want her to be happy.

Agnes said, “There’s nothing left for us to talk about. I have to work; you go do your thing”

Just as Agnes was about to turn around and leave, Jenny grabbed her arm, “Agnes, let me tell you one more thing...”

“What are you doing?”

Suddenly, a tall figure appeared in the doorway. Elton had walked over, his face full of unhidden anger, “Jenny, how many times have I told you, stop bothering Agnes.” Jenny immediately put on a pitiful face, “I came to ask her for forgiveness. I’ve been begging her. It was all my fault. It has nothing to do with you.”

Agnes never expected Jenny to be such a great actress.

Elton’s gaze at Jenny obviously softened a lot. He turned to Agnes and said, “Agnes, my father is being discharged from the hospital today. Would you like to come to my house for dinner tonight? You might be angry with me but wouldn’t be mad with my parents, right? They miss you a lot.”

The Pritchard family and the Taylor family were old acquaintances. Agnes spent almost half of her childhood at the Taylor’s. Elton’s parents, Hancock and Sarah, truly treated Agnes like their own.

Agnes asked, “When was Mr. Taylor hospitalized?”

Seeing Agnes’ reaction, Elton felt hopeful, “It’s the same old problem. He had a heart bypass surgery this time. He was talking about you **this** morning, saying he hadn’t seen you in a while.”

As Agnes was hesitating, Jenny couldn't help herself. She blurted out, "What about me? Elton, what am I supposed to do if she goes?"

Tonight, at the Taylor family dinner, she knew Elton would come to find Agnes. That's why she came here early. If Agnes went and was warmly welcomed by Elton's parents, she could soften and reconcile with Elton.

Then everything she had done would be in vain. She couldn't let them get back together.

Elton hadn't expected the usually soft-spoken Jenny to disrupt him suddenly. His face turned cold instantly. He said, "What does this have to do with you? Stop making a scene here."

Elton's hint was very clear.

Jenny said, "I didn't want to, but... I'm pregnant."

When she said this, everyone present was shocked.

Jenny seemed to have become a different person compared to who she was moments ago. She took out a stack of papers from her bag, "This is my ultrasound report." Agnes saw that it said six weeks pregnant. She said, "Six weeks, isn't that just over forty days?"

But it had been three months since that night.

A smile appeared on the corner of Jenny's mouth. Her gaze was fixed on Agnes' face, "Yes, we had sex afterwards. Many times."

Elton pushed Jenny away in anger, "Jenny, shut up."

Agnes, however, laughed. She said to Elton, "Elton, do you think I'm an idiot?"

He seemed a bit flustered, grabbing Agnes' arm, "Listen to me. Just let me explain."

On the other side, Jenny was almost knocked over by Elton's push. She felt a chill in her heart. He completely disregarded the child in her belly and only cared about Agnes' reaction. This added to her hatred for Agnes.

Just as things were getting chaotic, the door to the conference room was suddenly opened

Jared's stern face appeared in the doorway.

Everyone was gobsmacked.

Chapter 6

In the Capital, Jared's name and face were known to all.

He was every woman's dream in the Capital. The man every society lady wanted to marry, and the person every celebrity and model wanted to get close to. He was the man standing right in front of them.

His face didn't only grace the pages of finance magazines, but he was also a hot topic in entertainment news. As a journalism major, how could Jenny possibly not know him?

Jared strolled over nonchalantly, coming to stand by Agnes. His voice was low, but oozing charm, "Who are they?"

Jared's sudden appearance caught Agnes off guard. With a surge of confusion, she answered, "They're none of your business."

A rare tenderness flashed across Jared's face as he took Agnes' hand. "I brought you some gifts from Japan. Go see if you like them."

Jared seemed to be completely ignoring Elton and Jenny.

Elton immediately sensed something was off, but Jared had already thrown his arm around Agnes, ready to leave the meeting room.

Elton rushed over, grabbing Agnes' arm, demanding, "Agnes, what's your relationship with him?"

Agnes stopped in her tracks, as did Jared. Everyone's eyes landed on Agnes, including Jenny's.

Jared was also staring at Agnes, apparently waiting **for** an answer as well.

Agnes took a deep breath clearly stating, "He's my boyfriend."

Upon hearing this, both Jared and Elton frowned. Elton, in disbelief, blurted out, "Agnes, how could you do this to me?"

Seeing Elton's hurt expression, and Jenny's disbelief, Agnes admitted that she felt a rush of satisfaction.

Jared's timely arrival had salvaged a bit of her dignity, preventing her from being played like a fool.

Agnes dismissed Elton, taking Jared's arm, "Let's go to The Olive Tree for Mexican food tonight. We haven't **had it** in ages!"

Jared tapped her nose affectionately, "Whatever you say, babe."

Elton's face paled instantly, and he yelled at Jared's retreating figure, "Do you know what Agnes and I are to each other? I'm her first love!"

Elton was desperate. Even though he had sex with Jenny, he thought he would still have a chance with Agnes since they'd been close since childhood. But Jared's appearance made him feel threatened for the first time.

Jared turned around, casually stating, "I'm her first boyfriend."

With that, he left the meeting room with Agnes.

People from the secretary's office were all looking towards the meeting room, seeing a man and a woman looking for Agnes this morning; it seemed like a drama was unfolding.

But then, the big boss suddenly showed up, making the outcome unpredictable.

The company's CEO had always had a poor impression of Agnes, and now they were even more displeased that she was using the company's meeting room for personal matters during work hours. Just as the CEO returned, everyone was discussing the relationships of those people.

Anita was very straightforward, revealing that the handsome guy was Agnes' ex-boyfriend.

This was overheard by the passing CEO, who didn't even pause and headed straight for the meeting room. Everyone felt sorry for Agnes. She was already disliked by him, and everyone suspected she was about to face trouble again.

Just as they predicted, Agnes and the CEO emerged from the meeting room together. Then Agnes, head down, followed him into the CEO's office.

Chapter 7

Everyone thought Agnes was really put through the wringer

Not only did her ex and his new squeeze show up at her workplace, but her boss also dracked her into his office and gave her a talking to She was completely stripped of all dignity

It was downright brutall

The moment the door to the boss's office shut. Agnes was pinned against the door by Jared

His intense kiss left Agnes flushed and breathless. This kiss seemed to carry a punishing intention and was much rougher than any they'd shared before Agnes' mind was a mess, and she had no strength to resist.

After what felt like forever, Jared finally let go of Agnes, but he still pressed her body against the door.

Jared propped himself up and looked at Agnes. Her cheeks were flushed, looking like ripe peaches, and her eyes appeared misty, like a foggy mystery land

Agnes was pretty, but not in a drop-dead gorgeous way. It was a comforting beauty that grew on you. She was usually like a lotus in a pond, fresh and pristine.

But now, this lotus

is seemed to have transformed into a poppy. Her kiss-swollen lips looked incredibly sexy. Her skin was naturally fair, and from Jared's perspective, he could see her swan-like neck and the slight rise and fall of her chest.

Jared felt a burning sensation in his throat, but he tried to suppress his desire and said in a low voice, "You never mentioned having an old flame?"

As Agnes slowly came back to her senses, she replied, "Well, you never asked. I thought you knew."

Of course he knew. But the thought of that **guy** possibly kissing Agnes and having sex with her like he just did made his blood boil.

Agnes vaguely sensed the underlying anger in Jared's kiss, but she didn't understand why he was angry.

Jared asked, "Why did you introduce me as your boyfriend instead of 'husband', Agnes? We are legally married. Are you ashamed of being my wife?"

Agnes finally understood why Jared was angry. But they had kept their marriage a secret from everyone, including their families. She thought their secret marriage was a pact between them.

Agnes told him, "I'm a sophomore in college, and being 'married' might have negative effects on my future at school. Your talent, looks, and wealth have attracted many women who'd chase you to the ends of the earth. I tell them you're my husband, and they won't believe me. **If** rumors about us spread, they might believe it."

Upon hearing Agnes' words, Jared seemed to cheer up a bit and asked, "So, you think I'm handsome?"

Agnes immediately complimented him, "You're the most handsome man in the world!"

Jared raised an eyebrow, "For your honesty, I'll let you off the hook this time."

Some men why were they so full of themselves....

Alright. Agnes admitted, even with his vanity, Jared was still incredibly handsome.

Chapter 8

Agnes was hesitant to leave Jared's office. She knew that as soon as she stepped out she'd be the talk of the town. So, she decided to hide out in the office for a bit. Jared was ahead getting down to work. He was always swamped with work. The Tim Group was his dad, Tim Whitfield's brainchild the business empire that he built from scratch over half a century of growth. The Tim Group had its hands in everything in all kinds of industries. Tim Properties was the top dog in the field

The man front of her engrossed in his work was worth tens of millions of dollars.

Agnes grew up with a silver spoon in her mouth. Her dad was the chairman of Starlight International Group a bigwig in the media industry. Their business covered everything from talent agencies to publishing houses

But even so, there was a clear gap between the Pritchards and the Whitfields in terms of economic power. The Whitfield family, apart from their massive family business, also has a hefty political backing. Because of this, they had been the strongest among the Big Four for years.

Agnes had heard her father talk about Jared, saying he was a rare business prodigy. But what really piqued people's interest was Jared's background.

Tim was dosing in on eighty and Jared was only 27. Everyone knew that Tim had a child late, and it was common knowledge that Tim's first wife died shortly after giving birth to Jared's sister, Aissa. Tim remained unnamed for many years, but suddenly had a son when he was fifty.

Everyone had their own theories about this. Some said he was Tim's illegitimate child while others said he was an orphan that Tim adopted. But when Jared was only 17, Tim handed over the reins of the great Tim Group to him, and it had been a decade since.

Agnes couldn't understand how a 17-year-old boy could hold in such a business empire. It was said that at the beginning a few old shareholders were strongly against this, thinking that handing over the Tim Group to a child was a joke. But now everyone in the company respected him, and the business performance of the Tim Group was topnotch, its status shakeable.

Jared was seen as a miracle in the industry

Agnes, you're making me blush, staring at me like that

Jared's deep voice came from across the desk and Agnes snapped out of her reverie, realizing that she had been **staring** at Jared for quite a while.

Agnes face flushed and she immediately rose from the sofa, "Tim going back to work."

As soon as Agnes returned to her seat her colleagues swarmed her, "Agnes, are you okay? Did the boss give you a hard time?"

Agnes shook her head. "Tim fired me. Don't worry."

Yolande chime in Sven be boss yelled at you, thats still a blessing. You're in and out of the boss's office more than any of us. We barely even get a glimpse of him. Agnes, fm so jealous of you

that someone joked Yolanda are you crushing on the boss?"

Yolandas face tumes bright red. "What are you talking about? I'm not!"

Someone teased Yolande There's no harm in king him. Your family is one of the Four Families of Willowbrook. You're the heiress of the Bowman family, and you'd be a perfect mator for the Whitfield family. You're gorgeous and you're the only intern who got promoted. That proves the boss appreciates you. Maybe one day you'll be our

Yollannas face was as red as a ripe apple. She said, "What CEO's wife? I've never thought of that. Stop talking nonsense."

"Look, Yolandes blushing. Our Future CEOs wife is blushing' The group started joking around.

Everyone's attention was instantly diverted from Agnes to Yolanda, and Agnes finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Life was cruising smoothly after that, and Elton and Jenny vanished into thin air.

Chapter 9

Agnes wrapped up her internship at The Tim Group and was all set for the new semester.

The day before school started, Laura gave her a ring, Inviting her over for dinner.

Once a big shot in showbiz, Laura was now Agnes' stepmother. Agnes' mom passed away when she was 12, and to her surprise, her dad got hitched to Laura just six months later.

Her father, a gentle and loving man in her memory, had always taken care of her mother, especially when she was sick.

Agnes didn't oppose her father remarrying, but what she couldn't stomach was that Laura brought along a daughter, Beatrice. Only two years younger than Agnes, Beatrice was also her father's biological daughter.

This clearly indicated that her dad had been playing outside his marriage for years. It wasn't until Agnes grew up that she found out that her father's affair with Laura was an open secret in their circle.

Jared knocked off work early that day and found Agnes packing when he got home.

"I'm heading back home tonight, and I'm taking my luggage with me. I'll head straight to school tomorrow and won't be back," Agnes told Jared.

"Do you want me to tag along?" asked Jared.

"No need, I can handle it. My dad doesn't know I'm hitched," Agnes quickly responded.

"What if I go as your "boyfriend"?" Jared suggested.

"Even worse, they don't know I've broken up with Elton," Agnes replied.

"When do you plan to spill the beans?" Jared asked casually.

Agnes thought for a moment, "I'll tell them tonight. Elton and I are history."

Seeing Agnes' determined look, Jared couldn't help but smile. He then handed her a key, "Here's your gift."

"What's this for?" Agnes asked, looking at the key in surprise.

"It's the key to Maplewood Manor. It's not far from your school, so you can move in after school starts," Jared explained.

Maplewood Manor was a garden villa owned by Jared. Agnes had been there once. It was a typical rich-people's neighborhood with great privacy. Many celebrities lived there.

"I plan to stay in the dorm," Agnes said.

"Then what about me?" Jared asked.

"You're moving in too?" Agnes looked surprised.

"Agnes, you're a married woman now. I'm fit as a fiddle and full of energy. I don't plan on living separately," Jared replied.

Agnes' face turned beet red. Living with Jared for three months had been the boldest thing she had ever done. Jared spent **half** his time away on business trips, but when he was home, things always heated up between them. Agnes was no match for Jared's charm.

Agnes' cheeks were flushed; she looked adorable. Jared couldn't resist kissing her. Agnes was a rookie when it came to kissing, she didn't even know how to breathe properly. She was always defenseless against Jared's advances.

Jared had already unbuttoned Agnes' shirt. Suddenly, Agnes snapped back to reality. She stopped his wandering hands and gasped, "Not now. I'm about to leave."

Agnes knew that once he got started, he wouldn't stop **for** at least an hour. More importantly, she would not even have the energy to walk afterwards.

Jared didn't get what he wanted, so he left a hickey on Agnes' neck. He then buried his face in her neck, calming himself down. In a husky voice, he said, "I'm going to take a shower, then I'll drive you home."

Chapter 10

Jared was taking a shower, while Agnes was busy packing her stuff. But while changing clothes, she noticed that her chest and neck were all covered with Jared's love bites.

This guy....

Agnes reluctantly put on a turtleneck that she had never worn before.

When Jared came out, he saw Agnes in a yellow turtleneck, looking absolutely adorable. Her hair was tied into a simple ponytail, revealing a smooth forehead, and there was a blush on her cheeks.

Jared walked over, deliberately asking, “Why did you suddenly change clothes? Don’t you dislike turtlenecks? You said they make your neck uncomfortable?”

He knew the reason very well; he was such a jerk!

Agnes rolled her eyes at Jared.

Jared had to laugh inside. When they first moved in together, Agnes was like a little bird, tiptoeing every step. Now she had the nerve to roll her eyes at him. He considered it good progress; it meant she trusted him more.

Jared drove Agnes back to the Pritchard Mansion himself.

After getting out of the car, Jared left.

When Agnes entered the door, the nanny Carmen welcomed her, “Ms. Pritchard, you’re finally back.”

Agnes asked, “Carmen, where’s my dad?”

“Mr. Pritchard hasn’t come back yet, but Mrs. Pritchard is at home. She cooked tonight’s meal herself.”

Agnes nodded and then went upstairs.

Just as Agnes was about to enter her room, the door of the room opposite was opened, “You’re finally back, I thought you wouldn’t ever come back.”

It was Agnes’ half-sister Beatrice.

Beatrice, a senior in high school this year, had curly hair, wore exquisite makeup and red lipstick, dressed sexier than her age, and had various patterns on her nails. Standing next to the unmade-up Agnes, she made Agnes look even younger.

Agnes and her sister didn't get along well, and she was so used to her provocations.

While opening the door, Agnes casually replied, "Have you finished your homework? You're taking the college exam this year, right?"

After Agnes opened the door and entered the room, Beatrice walked straight **in**, asking, "Who was the guy who just dropped you off? That wasn't **Elton's** car, did you guys break up?"

Agnes replied, "It's none of your business."

Mentioning Elton, Agnes' face darkened.

Beatrice, however, began to gloat, "I guessed right, didn't I? I told you, sooner or later, Elton would find you boring and dump you. Agnes, when did Elton break up with you?" Agnes was furious, pointing to the door, "Beatrice, get out of my room!"

"Agnes, who do you think you are? You dare to kicking me out. This is my house, you're just a burden here. I'll have you know; Dad has already agreed to take me and mom to Maldives for a vacation after my exams, just the three of us. Agnes, why did you come back? You're really just an extra here."

"Beatrice, enough."

Laura walked in, sternly told Beatrice, "How can you talk to your sister like that? Get out!"

Reluctantly, Beatrice left the room. Laura sat next to Agnes, took her hand, and said, "Beatrice is still young and naive, don't take her words to heart."