

This Time, I Will Get My Divorce, Mr Chapter 539

“It just isn’t, okay?” Sonia let out a weary sigh and went on to say, “Look, a term of endearment like this should only be used if you and I are lovers, but we aren’t. We’re just friends, and calling me ‘baby’ is a little over-the-top.”

Charles laughed, but it was cold and devoid of his usual humor. “Oh, suddenly it’s ‘over-the-top’? I’ve been calling you that for over a decade, and you’ve never said there was anything wrong with it until now. Did somebody talk to you about this and make you stop me from calling you that?”

Sonia’s eyes widened by a fraction, but that was enough to make Charles understand the truth behind this unexpected shift. He clenched his fists and said through gritted teeth, “So somebody does want me to stop calling you that. Let me guess—is it Toby?”

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There was no answer from Sonia, but something flashed in her eyes that looked a lot like admission.

“I’m right, aren’t I?” Charles sneered in disgust. “Look at you being an obedient little girl and asking me to stop calling you a decade-long nickname just because he told you to.”

Guilt rose within her when she heard this, and she chewed on her lip as she tried to explain, “I’m sorry, Charles. I’ll admit that Toby was the one who asked me to do this. He said to tell you that he wants you to stop calling me ‘baby’ because it’s inappropriate, but when I seriously considered it, I found myself agreeing with him. A nickname like that really is inappropriate between the both of us.”

Sonia hadn’t given much thought to this matter until Toby brought it up. After he had, it was as if something clicked in her. The nickname Charles had given her was far too intimate and flirtatious to be considered platonic.

However, Charles was less than understanding as a contemptuous smirk tugged on his lips. “No, this has nothing to do with whether the nickname was inappropriate or not. You’re just worried that if you let this continue, you’re going to make a certain someone very unhappy, and you don’t want that.”

Sonia stiffened. “W-What?”

“Nothing!” Charles took a step back and returned to the driver’s side of the car. He opened the door, then ducked to retrieve the key from the ignition. “I’m going to ask you one last time: do you really want me to stop calling you by that nickname?”

She parted her lips, hesitation overwhelming her. But at that moment, Toby’s face flashed in her mind and batted away the doubt that threatened to cloud her judgment, and she finally nodded with a firm hum.

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Upon hearing her answer, Charles felt his heart drop to his stomach, and the hope he had been clinging to disappeared.

There was bitterness in his eyes as he drawled, “Got it. I can see that you’ve made up your mind on this, and if that’s what you want, then I’m fine with it. From now on, I won’t call you ‘baby’ anymore, but you know what? As soon as I stop calling you that, our relationship will no longer be the same.”

She frowned. “What do you mean? All we’re dropping is the nickname, but that doesn’t have to change anything between us.”

“If it’s a real friendship we’re talking about here, then of course, nothing will change. But we’re different.” He tightened his grip on the car keys and took in a breath. “You were the only person I’ve ever called ‘baby’, because doing that makes me feel like I have a special place in your heart, like I’m irreplaceable. Now that you’ve taken away my privilege to do that, it only goes to show that I’m no

different than any other friend you have; I'm not as important or irreplaceable as I thought. So I guess this is it."

With that, he put the keys on the car's hood and turned to head for the pavement.

"Charles!!" Sonia cried out at the sight of this, suddenly growing frantic.

However, it was as if Charles hadn't heard her at all. He didn't look like he was going to turn around or stop in his tracks as he marched toward the pavement, then raised an arm to hail an approaching taxi. The next second, he got into the idling car and left.

Seemingly frozen in place, Sonia watched the taxi speed away with indecipherable emotions rushing through her.

She had picked up on several things from Charles' soliloquy earlier, and one of them that she was suddenly made aware of was his feelings for her.

She felt her nails dig into her palms, and she shook her head to clear her thoughts as disbelief colored her expression.

Needless to say, she couldn't believe that Charles had never treated their friendship as a platonic one all along and that he actually had developed romantic feelings for her over the years.

If he hadn't said all that, then Sonia would have been completely kept in the dark.

So that was why he wanted to call me 'baby' and why he reacted the way he did when I asked him to stop.

Indeed, had he seen her as just a friend and nothing more, then he wouldn't have reacted quite so dramatically when she asked him to stop calling her 'baby'. He might be wounded, but not to the extent of wanting to keep a distance from her.

“Oh, Charles...” Sonia muttered under her breath ruefully, staring in the direction where Charles had gone.

Although she grew sad at the sour turn their relationship had taken and how they would no longer be as close as they had been, she didn’t regret what she had done.

Maybe she would regret it if she had never discovered Charles’ hidden romantic feelings for her, but right now, she was sure she had done the right thing. If she had allowed the nickname to go on between them, then Charles’ feelings for her would only grow deeper and take root, so much so that he wouldn’t be able to let them go.

But she could never love him back, and whatever sentiments he had for her could never be reciprocated. She would only hurt him in the end.

Having him give up his affectionate nickname for her had as good as clarified her feelings toward him. Her stance in the matter was clear: she saw him as just a friend and nothing more. Perhaps all this had happened soon enough to keep him from falling even more for her, and he could save himself from inevitable heartbreak.

At the thought of this, Sonia sighed ruefully and walked up to the car. She picked up the keys Charles had left on the hood and turned to head into the apartment building.

Meanwhile, Toby went back to the Fuller Residence after Sonia had left his office, and he had only just gotten down from the car when his phone rang.

He raised his hand, signaling Tom to stop pushing the wheelchair, and answered the call.

“President Fuller, we have escorted Miss Reed safely back to Bayside Residence,” the man on the other line reported.

Toby hummed. “Well done. Any sightings of strange cars along the way?”

“No, sir.”

A frown etched upon Toby's face as he replied stoically, "I see. From now on, I want the both of you to watch over Sonia and keep her safe, but stay hidden throughout."

"Yes, sir," the man on the other line said solemnly, nodding.

Without another word, Toby hung up the phone.

Upon seeing Toby put his phone down, Tom proceeded to wheel him through the doors of the Fuller Residence.

As soon as Toby entered the living room, he was greeted by the sight of Jean sitting with her back turned to him on the sofa.

She appeared to be holding a mirror in one hand while the other was placed on her collarbone, her fingertips brushing against something. She was also muttering something along the lines of, "Absolutely gorgeous."

Toby quirked a brow and asked aloud, "Mom, what are you doing?"

Startled by his voice, Jean faltered, and the mirror she had been holding nearly clattered to the ground. It dropped onto her lap instead with enough force to bruise her skin, and she hissed at the impact.

However, she paid no mind to this as she threw the mirror aside and rubbed the sore spot where the mirror had landed. With one hand pressed to her collarbone, she hurriedly spun around and flashed Toby a nervous smile as she said, "Toby, I didn't know you were coming home today. I thought you'd be staying at your own place."

Seeing the panic that lay behind her forced smile, Toby narrowed his eyes and explained flatly, "I'm just here to take a couple of things. What's wrong with your neck, Mom? Why are you covering it?"

His piercing gaze made her all the more uneasy as cold sweat threatened to roll down her temples. She gazed at him with wide, watery eyes as she said, "I-I'm having allergies, so my neck—"

Before she could finish speaking, her phone rang and cut through the brewing tension in the room. Upon hearing the ringtone, Jean reached for her phone instinctively, but she realized what she had done the moment she lifted her hand away from her collarbone. A cry nearly escaped her as she thought, Oh, no! He caught me!

Standing behind Toby, Tom felt his jaw drop in surprise when he saw the necklace Jean was wearing and demanded incredulously, "Is that the Ocean's Heart?"

Having seen it too, Toby frowned and asked darkly, "Mom, isn't the Ocean's Heart supposed to be in Sonia's possession? Why do you have it on you right now?"

Jean swallowed when she heard his confrontational tone, and her gaze darted from one corner of the room to the other as she tried to come up with an excuse. "T-This is a knock-off! A premium knock-off! It's not the real thing!"