

Marriage

Emma sat in her pale white office, eyes on the glowing screen, fingers resting still on the keyboard. She wasn't typing. Outside the window, the city moved on without her.

He stood in the doorway.

"Emma, we need to talk."

She didn't look up. "You should go."

"I'm not leaving until we talk." He stepped in, closing the door behind him.

She took a slow breath. "Talk, then."

Jack wore his usual white shirt, tucked too neatly into his slacks, the tie slightly off-center. Always presentable. Always performing. Even now.

"I know you're upset. I shouldn't have forgotten your birthday, okay? But it's not a reason to blow this whole thing up."

Emma still didn't look at him. Her voice was calm. "It's not just the birthday."

"It was just a message. She's a colleague. You always overthink these things."

Silence filled the space between them.

She'd waited so long for him to care. To notice. To change.

She had once imagined that if he held her hand and just listened, even once, really listened, things could be different.

She remembered every time he dismissed her feelings.

“Stop being so emotional.”
“Why do you always make things worse?”
“You never appreciate what I do.”

And she believed him. For a while.

Until yesterday. When he forgot her birthday. When she waited all evening while he texted another woman. When he came home and said, “You’re overreacting,” and then, “Fine. Maybe we should just get a divorce.”

And something in her snapped.

He thought he could come here now, say sorry, play nice.

“Emma,” he said, voice low, almost gentle. “I know I mess up sometimes. But we can fix this. My dad—he could help us talk to someone. I’m serious about working on this. We can’t let it go just because you’re upset.”

Her head turned slowly to face him.

She studied him.

“You told me to go if I couldn’t accept it,” she said. “So I’m going.”

Jack blinked. “Wait, just—don’t be like this. We’ve been through worse. My dad—”

“Your dad can’t fix this. He can’t make this marriage mean something. He can’t make you hear me.”

Jack’s face darkened. “You’re really doing this? You’re going to throw everything away?”

“You already did. I just finally noticed.”

He stared at her for a long moment. Then he left.

She didn't cry. She didn't scream. She didn't even sigh.

She turned back to her screen. Her resume draft was still open. The cursor blinked.

She began to type.