

Chapter 484 Between Us, No Memories To Cherish

Laura's gaze fixed upon the incoming call.

The phone persisted in its insistent ringing, and after a moment's contemplation, she answered it.

A heavy silence enveloped the other end.

Laura, too, maintained her wordless stance.

Their breaths danced in delicate harmony, a fragile equilibrium neither dared disturb. Finally, it was Laura who broke the silence. "Everything in the apartment remains untouched. You might want to check it. If anything is missing, instruct Tina to get in touch with Dylan. There's no need for us to contact each other anymore."

The urge to end their conversation tugged at her.

"Wait," Edwin murmured, a soft plea against the fading echoes of their shared history.

Laura's voice dipped to a hushed tone, barely above a whisper. "Is there anything else you require, Mr. Evans?"

Edwin paused, his thoughts gathering like storm clouds, before he uttered, "Let's meet one more time."

Laura's laughter danced in a dreamy haze tinged with irony. "Edwin, it seems your blind date is a success today. You're now a man with a girlfriend! Is your resentment and vendetta against me merely because my mother clung to your father? Rest assured, Edwin, I'll never stoop as low as her. Never!"

Laura declared, her resolve unshaken, "By the way, stop bothering me."

She ended the call, the final thread of their strained conversation.

With deliberate steps, she turned off her phone, extracted the SIM card, and planned to ask for Dylan's aid in procuring a new number.

Laura was no social butterfly; Dylan capably managed her professional affairs.

Changing her number, she mused, would scarcely disrupt her life.



On the other end of the line, Edwin sat ensconced within his car, the persistent dial tone a vexing accompaniment to his restlessness and frustration.

He sank into the car's embrace, shrouded in contemplative silence, a cigarette between his fingers.

Smoking was not a vice that held him captive; it was merely a habit that had recently crept up on him. His phone stirred to life with a WhatsApp notification, so he checked it in a rush.

A new friend request awaited his attention.

The name displayed was Vanessa Smith.

Edwin's gaze remained fixed on the screen for what felt like an eternity, his eyes tingling with fatigue before he ultimately accepted the request.

A week elapsed before their paths converged once more. He finally saw Laura again.

It occurred within the confines of an Evans family-owned shopping haven.

There stood Laura, engaged in retail therapy alongside Lina, who cradled a multitude of bags as though bracing for an imminent polar expedition despite the calendar's insistence that it was still autumn. A pair of down jackets had found their way into her shopping conquest.

Edwin's serendipitous encounter with them unfolded during his routine rounds.

His stare honed in on Laura, rendering Lina a mere specter by her side.

Ever the shrewd observer, Tina instantly sensed the palpable tension and blurted out, "What a coincidence!"

Edwin snapped back from his reverie and inquired with gentle concern, "Mrs. Garcia, are you going on an overseas journey?"

Lina was already nettled by his presence.

She didn't bother concealing her emotions. "It's Laura who's bound to go abroad. In search of solace, a wellspring of inspiration."

"Are you accompanying her?" Edwin pressed, seeking clarification.



Lina's retort came swiftly. "Hey! No, not at all. We've got Dylan, remember? He's a world traveler, knows the lay of the land like the back of his hand, and he's the epitome of kindness and consideration. I couldn't be more at ease entrusting Laura to his care! If, by some cosmic miracle, sparks of romance were to fly between them, Peter and I would be relieved for the rest of our lives since Laura would be in good hand."

Edwin's expression soured.

Once Lina concluded her words, she then led Laura away.

Yet, Edwin seized Laura's wrist, his plea earnest. "Just a few words."

Laura, unwilling to engage, delicately disentangled herself, stating firmly, "We've got nothing to discuss."

Edwin's grip tightened.

His gaze was unwaveringly intense. "Just a moment, please."

Observing the tenacity of his hold, Lina's tone somewhat softened. "It's better to address matters once and for all. Edwin, you should let go of her hand first. It's inappropriate for a man in a relationship like yourself to hold Laura's hand like that."

With evident reluctance, Edwin released her.

Laura cast a fleeting glance toward a nearby cafe and whispered, "Let's talk there. Five minutes. That's all you have."

A sigh of relief escaped Edwin's lips.

Unperturbed by the brewing drama, Lina opted to bide her time in the car downstairs.

Edwin and Laura entered the cafe, where Tina took charge, arranging for coffee and inquiring about Laura's flavor preference.

The fact that they had limited time together hung in the air.

Laura's lips curled faintly. "Anything will suffice."

Edwin made a choice. "Fetch her a Frappuccino."

Tina efficiently tended to her duties elsewhere, granting them a secluded enclave of silence.



After an extended pause, Edwin finally spoke up. "I'm sorry."

Laura's eyes welled with subdued emotion.

The person she had once deeply regretted causing pain was none other than Mark, and there sat Edwin, facing her and offering his remorse.

Was it for toying her feelings?

Was it because she had unraveled his real identity?

Would he have extended his apology if she had remained kept in the dark?

Tina arrived bearing coffee and tactfully retreated, leaving them ensconced in their private exchange.

Laura absently nibbled on her straw, a subconscious refuge when words proved elusive.

Yearning for her to find her voice, Edwin tenderly overlaid his hand upon hers.

Laura's hand sent a chill through Edwin's fingertips.

Startled, Laura swiftly retracted her hand, shaking his loose.

The atmosphere hung heavy with discomfort, casting a pall over Edwin.

He bowed his head, his voice strained and subdued. "Laura, whether you choose to believe it or not, I carry the weight of my transgressions towards you. This is reparation."

With deliberate intent, he retrieved a checkbook, penning a sequence of figures.

The sum held the power to bestow a life of comfort, even opulence, upon Laura for the remainder of her days.

Laura's gaze fixed upon the check resting on the table.

After a contemplative pause, she blinked gently, her voice tinged with detachment. "There's no need for your remorse, Edwin! After all, not every relationship finds its way to fulfillment, and I was really happy during that time. So, you don't need to compensate me."

"If you feel this indebted, then kindly stop looking for me!"



She continued, "Let's pretend nothing ever happened between us. It would serve you and Miss Smith best. I believe she'd prefer to remain unburdened by our past."

Laura concluded her words and retrieved her handbag.

"My apologies. Time's up!"

She stood to leave, devoid of hesitation, yet Edwin grabbed her hand once more, his plea persistent, "Laura!"

Laura, her head bowed, asserted, "Release me! Our connection has run its course, with nothing remaining to revisit!"

In truth, Laura's overseas sojourn was primarily for medical intervention.

The physicians had prescribed that she distance herself, a complete release from the shackles of her emotional burdens.

Edwin steadfastly clung to her hand.

Laura, with a sudden upward glance, posed a gentle query, "What do you think you're doing? Beyond mere checks, what else can you offer me, Edwin? You have a girlfriend. Are these checks your gambit to make me your secret lover? Aren't you the one who despises people like my mother the most? Do you aspire to transform me into such a figure?"

With those words, her eyes welled with unshed tears.

Laura was firm on her departure, her gaze never once retracing its steps.

Throughout her lifetime, Laura's affections had been reserved for one man only. It was Edwin.

Yet, within her existence, there existed values more paramount than love.

One such principle was tenacity.

She had traversed a formidable journey to arrive at that point, embraced by the Garcia family's benevolent care. She possessed a family, a treasure she wouldn't jeopardize for the sake of Edwin.

As for the bygones that once burdened their hearts, Laura had settled those accounts with both her emotions and her body.

Laura left the mall, bound for the awaiting car.



Lina sat there, her apprehension palpable, dreading the prospect of old flames reigniting between the young pair, an outcome she sincerely wished to avert.

Laura took her seat.

Leaning gently against Lina's shoulder, she whispered, "Morn, I'd like to reschedule my flight to an earlier date."

Lina concurred with Laura's decision.

She inquired, "Shall we consult Dylan? When would you like to reschedule it?"

Laura's soft sniffles accompanied her reply. "Tomorrow."

Lina was taken aback by the swiftness of the request.

However, she faithfully carried out Laura's wishes. After a brief conversation with Dylan, he readily assented.

Later that afternoon, Peter hastily made the journey from Czanch.

The passage of years had etched lines of age upon his face.

His hair was adorned with streaks of gray.

Unaware of the complexities underlying Laura and Edwin's relationship, Peter assumed Laura was merely feeling despondent. He harbored no blame, understanding her penchant for profound contemplation and the occasional bout of illness that befalls even the hardest souls.

Lina was busy cooking within the kitchen's confines.

Peter and his younger daughter were watching in the living room.

The TV screen displayed the ceaseless antics of Tom and Jerry. His brow furrowed in contemplation as he observed the animated spectacle. "How about we switch to a different channel, maybe one of those saccharine romance series? Don't girls your age prefer those?"

He yearned for his daughter to be more discerning, perhaps to usher a potential son-in-law into their lives.

Being single forever didn't seem ideal.

In a bid to emphasize his point, he offered an example. "Take Edwin for



instance. His blind date was a success, and they're set to be engaged on New Year's Day!"

Edwin was getting engaged, huh?

Laura's gaze remained fixed on the television screen, her response deliberate. "Then, congratulations to him."

Even within the kitchen, Lina couldn't remain oblivious to her husband's resounding voice.

Fury coursed through her veins.

Peter always picked the most inopportune conversational topics.

She emerged from the kitchen, wiping her hands clean, and hummed lightly. "Come, let's eat! You talk too much."

Peter, oblivious to the tumult within her mind, said casually, "Is it wrong to bring this up? Over the years, every birthday of Laura's, Cecilia always arranges a gift or something of the sort! That girl might be stubborn, but she's got a softer side. With our ties with the Evans family, Laura can't avoid them forever, can she? We're raising a daughter, not a kitten or a puppy. Even prisoners see the light of day eventually, right? And everyone adores our Laura."

Lina rolled her eyes inwardly.

Oh, how naive he was!

The past was never swept away, but the grudge only deepened.

Bolstered in his convictions, Peter held forth when the doorbell chimed.

He hastened to the door.

Peering through the peephole, he saw Edwin.

As he swung open the door, he gleefully declared to his wife and daughter, "See, Edwin's come to pay me a visit the moment he learned I was in Duefron! I won't let him off lightly. The boy wears his corporate facade like armor, much like his father, all veneer. Today, I'll outdrink him!"

Laura and Lina harbored intentions of stopping him, but time had slipped through their fingers.



Peter had already flung the door ajar.

Before them stood Edwin, immaculately attired, his handsome countenance undiminished.

Peter gave his shoulder a hearty pat, grinning. "Look at you, tracking us down in Duefront! Well then, let's indulge in some spirits today!" "The chilly weather provides the perfect excuse to warm up. I'll have the driver take you home later."

Lina finally broke her silence.

"Do you believe all people are like you, with nothing better to do? I'd wager Edwin, with his bustling social calendar, rarely finds the time to linger here for five minutes, let alone a meal. Isn't that right, Edwin?" she inquired further.

Edwin shifted his gaze toward Laura.

She remained engrossed in the antics of Tom and Jerry, leisurely savoring each potato chip.

Edwin mustered a smile. "Your home cooking smells positively delightful. It's been quite some time since I enjoyed a meal of this caliber!"

Internally, Lina rolled her eyes.

The audacity of it all!

In the midst of it, Peter, enveloping Edwin in a hearty embrace, quipped, "Pay no heed to Lina's chatter! Today, it's you and me enjoying a good drink together. Don't disappoint me, alright?"

Edwin responded with a gentle smile, "Certainly!"

As he passed by Laura, his stride momentarily wavered, his voice carrying a faint huskiness. "Laura?"

Lina's anxiety surged, dreading that their daughter might inadvertently reveal something.

If Peter caught wind of it, a heated confrontation could ensue. She didn't seek to sweep things under the rug, not because she opposed justice, but because preserving a young girl's reputation was clearly more important. She had no wish for their cohabitation to become public knowledge. Laura



already bore the weight of being Cathy Wilson's daughter; if the world learned about her connection with Edwin, how could she live with it in the future?

Thankfully, Laura simply offered a subtle nod.

Peter chuckled. "To think Laura's actually a year your senior! She's such a child, still watching Tom and Jerry."

Edwin's gaze appeared inscrutable.

In a soft murmur, he responded, "But she appears at least three or four years younger than me."

Peter harbored some dissatisfaction with that assessment.

"She's been stuck at 5.2 feet, no matter how many nutritious soups Lina whips up for her. But a girl's petite and dainty stature has its charm; lends her an air of youthfulness," he opined.

Edwin offered a slight, knowing smile.

On the other hand, Lina shot a scathing glare at her husband. "Would you kindly engage your brain?"

Peter grumbled, "Seems the tigress is out again!"

He graciously beckoned Edwin to take a seat. After rummaging through Laura's liquor collection, he retrieved a bottle of premium Golden Blossom wine to share with his guest. He even tasked his wife with preparing a modest hot pot so they could partake in conversation while enjoying the meal and libations.

Lina was frustrated but there was nothing much she could do without spilling the beans.

Once everything was ready, Edwin turned his attention toward Laura, who remained engrossed in the animated spectacle.

"Why don't you join us for a meal?" he proposed.

Laura harbored no inclination to partake in their repast.

She dabbed at her fingers with a napkin and remarked casually, "I'm quite full. You can carry on."



Peter appeared poised to interject, but Lina, bearing a selection of stir-fried dishes, came to Laura's defense. "Young girls often prefer nibbles over full-fledged meals! Furthermore, she likely doesn't find your current conversation topics all that enticing. You two enjoy your meal and chat away; we'll manage just fine on our end."

Peter couldn't help but deem the arrangement rather unreasonable.

Their household was far from an archaic, patriarchal domain where women were banished from the dining table.

Laura rose from her seat. "I'm experiencing a slight headache. I'll retire to my room to rest."

Peter's demeanor swiftly softened.

He urged, "Then go rest. Maybe take some pills if you're feeling really unwell."

Laura emitted a noncommittal hum and retreated to her bedroom.

Lina trailed behind her. Laura leaned against her bed, immersing herself in reading comic books, pastimes as straightforward as a child's.

Lina tenderly brushed her fingers against Laura's forehead.

After a protracted silence, she inquired softly, "What's his intention?"

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