

Secret Admiration Finding True Love After Prison

Chapter 351 – 360

Chapter 351 Clarify Things for You

Dalton tilted his chin, refusing to meet her gaze. He took a drag from his cigarette, exhaling a cloud of smoke that obscured his expression.

Lydia had anticipated this kind of reaction from him.

Although they had shared a table during lunch, not a single word passed between them. With so many people around, she didn't want to draw attention by discussing her issues with Dalton in public.

She placed a hand on her belly and stepped closer to the car.

“Dalton.”

“Don't touch me.”

Dalton rolled down the window, resting his arm on the ledge. He flicked the ash from his cigarette, his tone dismissive. “Dirty.”

Lydia stood outside the window, caught in a limbo of confusion.

She thought, “Should I grasp his outstretched hand **or pull** away? Dirty?”

Is he talking about the ash, or is he saying... I'm dirty?”

Her head drooped slightly, and an inexplicable heaviness settled in her chest.

Dalton smirked, as if he could read her thoughts.

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Lydia swayed slightly, nearly losing her balance.

2/4

“Dalton...” She bit her lip, disbelief etched on her face. “Is it because my status as a love child has been exposed? Do you think I'm not worthy of you?”

Recently, rumors had been swirling around Kingsdom about her being the illegitimate daughter.

She even received anonymous texts cursing her out.

It seemed her phone number had leaked online, and people were relentless in their insults.

They called her a homewrecker, shamelessly taking what wasn't hers.

Lydia thought, "What did I do wrong? I was just a baby back then. I had no say in any of this."

Once, Lydia couldn't hold back and snapped back at one of the haters, but they responded with a lengthy tirade, accusing her of playing the victim while enjoying the benefits of her situation.

Lydia even wondered if Meryl had hired trolls to provoke her, trying to push her into a miscarriage.

Dalton's comment about her being dirty felt tied to her identity. as a love child.

After all, the scandal had blown up, and he must have been affected by it, too.

But then, Dalton's face suddenly took on a more nonchalant

Chapter 351 Clarify Things for You expression.

"I've met Rocky," Dalton said casually.

Lydia froze, her face stiffening for a few seconds.

"Rocky? Why on earth would you meet that good-for-nothing gambler?"

Dalton scoffed, extinguishing his cigarette.

He raised his hand and lightly patted her cheek.

"Didn't expect you to be so cold-hearted. You can insult your first **man** without a second thought?"

His words sent a chill down Lydia's spine.

3/4

She felt a cold sweat break out on her back and the soles of her feet.

"Dalton, what are you talking about? I... I don't understand."

Dalton locked eyes with her, and for a moment, it felt like he was observing a performance rather than participating **in** it.

“Alright, if you’re confused, let me clarify things for you.”

He crushed the cigarette butt to the ground, his gaze foreboding.

“Lydia, three years ago, you orchestrated Meryl’s kidnapping, didn’t you? Rocky admitted **it**, and I heard it with my own ears

“You two were intimate, and that **was your** first time, wasn’t it?

Chapter 351 Clarify Things for You

4/4

“Turns out you were already tainted, and you were worried I’d catch on.”

Write your comment

Chapter 352 Hatred

Dalton had always prided himself on his drinking skills, but that day, after just half a glass, he was out cold, waking up to find himself sprawled on the same hotel bed as Lydia.

She had deceived him into believing it was her first time, insisting he take responsibility.

With tears brimming in her eyes, Lydia pleaded, “How can you trust someone like him? Dalton, you’d rather believe Rocky than your own wife?”

Lydia had heard the news of Rocky’s arrest.

Fearful he might turn on her, she had paid a hefty sum to send a message to him in jail, promising a significant payout if he kept

quiet.

Rocky had agreed, and the money had been wired.

But Lydia never expected that Rocky would meet Dalton before his incarceration.

She thought, “Great, and from the sound of Dalton’s words...

he knows everything! Damn you, Rocky!”

“Yeah, Lydia, I don’t trust you. You’re a habitual liar who’s deceived me more than once. You’ve lost all credibility with me. I’d rather believe Rocky,” Dalton retorted, his voice cold as ice.

Chapter 352 Hatred

He pulled a damp napkin from the car’s center console and scrubbed his fingers as if trying to wipe away a layer of skin.

“You’re not even worth a single hair on Meryl’s head.”

2/4

As he rolled up the window, shutting out the face he despised, Lydia felt a wave of desperation wash over her.

She cried, “Dalton, I’m pregnant with your child! You can’t treat me like this. The baby has a heartbeat! I even had an ultrasound a couple of days **ago** and saw his face! He looks just like you! The doctor said it’s a boy.

“Can’t you be a little warmer for the sake of the baby? Let’s try to be a family and live a good life together.”

Dalton said, “Look, from the moment you used my compassion to send Meryl to prison three years ago, any feelings I had for you vanished.

“Damn it, Lydia! If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have lost Meryl!

“I should report you to the police, **but you’re** smart enough to keep **my** mom **in** your corner. She **wants** to keep the baby **you’re** carrying.”

Dalton slammed his hand on the steering wheel, the car honking

in protest.

He continued, “You owe me, and you owe Meryl! **If it weren’t** for **my** mom protecting you, do you think you’d still be in the Aniston Villa? How can **a woman** like you deserve to have my

child?

Chapter 352 Hatred

Lydia felt her legs weaken, and she leaned against the car doorframe to steady herself.

3/4

“You think a child can tie me down? Lydia, you underestimate me. When a man stops loving you, that’s when he can truly be ruthless.

“You want to have the baby? Fine, but I won’t give him a shred of fatherly love. Don’t forget, we never even got a marriage license. That kid will be nothing but a bastard, just like you- something to be hidden away.”

Dalton knew exactly how to strike where it hurt.

Each word was a dagger to Lydia’s heart.

She never imagined Dalton could be so cruel, to the point of rejecting his own child just to get back at **her**.

With **a** decisive turn of the wheel, he drove away, leaving Lydia crumpled on the ground, her body trembling.

“Meryl! This is all your fault!”

Her eyes burned with a **mix** of hatred and despair.

Deep down, Lydia knew the truth: Dalton didn’t want this child because he still held onto fantasies of Meryl.

He wanted a child with her.

She thought, “Dalton, **you** want Meryl, don’t you?”

Fine, I’ll help you with that.

Chapter 352 Hatred

When you wake up in the same bed as her, that’s when Meryl will truly be beyond redemption.”

Write your comment

Chapter 353 An Idea

Lydia believed that Meryl was bound to suffer even more than she was **right** now. She could vividly picture Meryl caught between Chandler and Dalton, being ruthlessly scorned by the Aniston family.

A malicious glint flashed across Lydia’s face as an idea struck her, and she suddenly shouted.

The garden staff heard the commotion and rushed over. “Oh dear, what happened? Why are you sitting on the ground? Get up, quickly!”

“I just tripped,” Lydia said, using the maid’s arm for support as she stood. The hatred faded from her expression, replaced by a hint of fear. “I hope the baby is okay...”

“What should we do? Should I tell Mrs. Charlotte Aniston?”

The maid had been assigned to take care of Lydia by Charlotte, and she knew all too well that if anything happened to the baby, she’d be the first to face the consequences.

Lydia shook her head. “No, go to the pharmacy and get me some miscarriage prevention pills. A little should do the trick.”

“But I don’t know what those are...”

The maid wasn’t very educated; she could barely read. But her diligence and attention to detail had earned her this responsibility.

Chapter 353 An Idea

She swiftly scribbled a note with her left hand.

She was careful to disguise her handwriting. “Go ahead, the doctor prescribed these when I was in the hospital.”

The maid nodded eagerly, stuffing the note into her pocket. before hurrying off.

2/5

Meryl woke up to find the room empty.

As she remembered how Chandler had carried her to this room in front of the Aniston family earlier, her cheeks flushed with embarrassment.

She thought, “How can I possibly face anyone now?”

Especially since Chandler had indulged a little too much at lunch, and his spirits were through the roof.

He’d clearly seen how tired she was but still pinned her down on the bed, showering her with kisses.

The stubble he’d just shaved that morning was already starting to prick her skin, making it feel both painful and itchy./

To make matters worse, Chandler had been massaging her waist, coaxing her to relax.

By the end of their sex, Meryl couldn't help but let out a soft moan, mortified by her own lack of control.

Chapter 353 An Idea

The Aniston Villa was nothing like their little house; it was bustling with people, and today, it was particularly crowded.

Most importantly, it was broad daylight.

3/5

Even though they had their own building, there was no telling if someone might be wandering around the garden, bored and eavesdropping on them.

Meryl pleaded in Chandler's ear, but he just laughed it off.

"Old folks might know, but they won't say a word. The younger ones will just think we're close," Chandler said, his confidence bordering on arrogance.

She had never seen Chandler so brazen before.

Yet, he was nibbling on her ear, teasing her until she felt utterly powerless to resist.

After their passionate encounter, Meryl noticed that Chandler's shirt was still buttoned up perfectly.

She thought, "What a gentlemanly rogue he is."

In a playful act of revenge, she slipped her hand into his crisp white shirt, fingers grazing his abs.

But Chandler was quick to retaliate, and what was supposed to be a peaceful nap turned into an exhausting session.

By the time it was over, Meryl felt utterly drained, her back sore and her body weak. She collapsed onto the bed, succumbing to sleep.

Chapter 353 An Idea

4/5

When she finally woke up again, two hours had slipped by, and Chandler was nowhere to be found.

She glanced at the time, realizing she had dozed off for a solid stretch.

Her phone revealed a message from Chandler sent twenty minutes ago: [Water and throat lozenges are on the nightstand. If your throat hurts, suck on one and drink some warm water.]

Meryl cradled her face in her hands, blushing furiously, wishing she could bury her head in the pillow.

She took a sip of water from her glass, the temperature just right, and sent a quick reply: [Where did you go?]

[To the office, handling some international business. I'll be soon. Just stay put at the Aniston Villa and wait for me.]

Meryl couldn't help but smile..

back

She **got** up, took a quick shower, and changed into fresh clothes.

The winter daylight was fading quickly, and the sky had grown dark and gloomy.

Suddenly, she thought, "I wonder how Anne is doing? Has Dante gone to see her yet?"

With that thought, Meryl picked up the phone **to** call Anne.

To her surprise, Yancey answered.

"Where's Anne?" Meryl asked, her lips pressed. Yancey had been

Chapter 353 An Idea

5/5

staying under the same roof as Anne recently.

If Dante happened to show up, it could turn into a mess.

Yancey's voice was soft as he glanced around the room. "She's crying."

Meryl's eyes widened in concern. "Did Dante upset her?"

Write your comment

Chapter 354 You Are Free

Yancey gently touched the corner of his lips.

There was a bruise there, left by Dante's recent punch.

He thought, "How *did it all* come to this?"

1/4

Yancey placed some ingredients on the table in the living room and taught Anne how to cook.

A talk show played on the TV, and they were both engrossed in the recipe, the atmosphere between them peaceful and warm.

Anne, dressed in pajamas, curled up on the couch, her long legs tucked beneath her.

She rarely did housework, let alone cook. This was all new to her.

She gave it a try but quickly gave up. However, she was generous with her praise when watching Yancey skillfully prepare the meal.

"Your cupcakes look so beautiful. I almost feel sorry to eat them.

"Yancey, how are you good at everything? Compared to you, I feel so useless."

Yancey blushed slightly, his face reddening. "Anne, you don't need to do anything. I'll take care of you from now on."

Chapter 354 You Are Free heartily.

2/4

Yancey bit his lip gently, his gaze lingering on Anne's face for a few seconds, captivated by her beautiful smile, lost in thought.

When Anne noticed him staring, Yancey quickly lowered his head, pretending to be busy.

His heart pounded so hard it felt like it would leap out of his chest.

Anne propped her chin with one hand, looking at him thoughtfully.

"Yancey.

"You do realize I'm pregnant, carrying a new life, don't you?"

Yancey froze, vaguely sensing what Anne was about to say next.

“I’ve been funding you... No, more accurately, I am supporting you, really just to annoy Dante so I could divorce him smoothly.

“This afternoon, I’m going to finalize the divorce with him. Once it’s done, I’ll be free, and so will you.”

Yancey was stunned. “Anne, what do you mean? What do you mean I’ll be free too?”

“You’ve been living here for a while now. Sometimes, you’re up as early as six in the morning to rush to your university.”

Life as a medical student was always busy and exhausting.

Chapter 354 You Are Free

so she could enjoy it when she woke up.

Anne had noticed all his efforts.

3/4

She thought Yancey was truly wonderful. He had that youthful energy only someone his age could possess. Though he was three years younger than her, many times, it felt like he was the one taking care of her.

At first, Anne didn’t think much of it. But over the past few days, she had increasingly sensed something different in Yancey’s

gaze.

She had thought they were simply using each other, an

unspoken arrangement. But now she realized that during the three months they had lived together, Yancey had developed feelings for her.

Anne believed Yancey should be with someone pure and kind, not someone like her, who was divorced, carrying a child, and living a chaotic life.

“I’ll continue to support you until you graduate from college. I’ll also transfer your living expenses to your account regularly. But starting tomorrow, you should move out.”

Yancey was left speechless, his eyes vacant as if frozen in place.

“Anne.

“Aren’t the **stars** at my university beautiful?”

“Didn’t you say you loved watching the stars?”

Chapter 354 You Are Free

4/4

Yancey seemed to be quite well-known at school. The moment they arrived, several girls glanced in his direction.

Anne didn’t find it surprising. After all, a guy this good-looking would surely be popular in college. And Yancey carried himself with an effortless grace.

She thought to herself, “I still can’t understand how someone like him ended up in a situation where he had to sell his body in a nightclub to pay off his father’s debt.”

They lay on the lawn, gazing at the night sky. Anne was waiting for the meteor shower and was nearly dozing off.

A bold girl, noticing Yancey seemingly alone, came over to strike up a conversation.

“Yancey, is the lady next to you your sister?”

Write your comment

Chapter 355 That’s My Child

Yancey glanced at Anne, who lay on the grass with her eyes closed. His gaze softened with affection.

1/4

Gently, he took off the scarf from around his neck and carefully draped it over her.

When he looked up at the girl who had approached, there was a cool detachment in his eyes.

“No, she’s my girlfriend.”

The girl awkwardly made a face and quickly walked away.

Anne wasn’t really asleep. She had felt Yancey cover her with the scarf.

She suddenly opened her eyes, smiling. “Are you using me to fend off your admirers?”

Yancey pressed his lips together slightly.

It was the first time Anne saw such a vulnerable expression on a guy’s face, and it amused her.

At that moment, she thought that spending most of the cold winter night waiting for the Gemini meteor shower had been worth it.

When the first meteor streaked across the sky, Anne nudged Yancey to make a wish.

Chapter 355 That’s *My* Child

2/4

The medical school building was perched on a hill with little light pollution. At that time, they were surrounded by darkness.

A breeze blew through, and Yancey stood in the open field, hands clasped together, gazing at the stars **with a** deep sense of reverence.

His lips moved slightly, his voice low but clear. He looked off in the distance toward Anne and whispered a name, “Anne.”

Though his voice was soft, it was unmistakable in the quiet of the mountain night.

Anne paused, half-joking as she said, “Are there any other Annes in your life?”

Yancey was silent for a few seconds, then shook his head.

“My wish... is you.”

The air in the mountains was crisp and refreshing.

Though it was winter, the **night** wasn’t cold.

At that moment, Anne felt her heart stir deeply at Yancey’s words.

“**The** stars at your university aren’t as impressive as I thought,” she finally said after a long silence. “Well, tonight wasn’t at waste.”

She hadn't expected Yancey to take her words so seriously.

Anne thought he might have misunderstood.

Chapter 355 That's My Child

words may have given him the wrong idea.

As her thoughts drifted, Anne glanced at Yancey, a playful glimmer in her eyes.

3/4

"Yancey, you're 21, and I'm almost 25. I'm four years older than you, and I plan to keep this baby.

"Do you know what that means? I imagine you won't want to suddenly become a father in your early twenties."

"How do you know I don't want to?" Yancey's gaze dropped to Anne's belly. "Anne, that's my child. I'm its father."

At that moment, the password lock on Anne's front door beeped as Dante unlocked it.

Dante had figured out the code. As he stepped inside, the first thing he heard was Yancey's voice.

"I'm its father," Yancey said.

Without hesitation, Dante swung his fist at Yancey's face.

The blow landed hard, and blood immediately trickled from the corner of Yancey's mouth.

Dante grabbed him by the shoulders, glaring at him furiously. "Did you touch her? Did you sleep with her? Did you get her pregnant?!"

Misunderstandings spiraled like this.

Dante had convinced himself that the child in Anne's belly **was**

Chapter 355 That's My Child

In a blind rage, Dante landed punch after punch on Yancey's face.

4/4

Anne was terrified, rushing forward to intervene. “Dante, have you lost your mind?!”

“Yes, I’ve lost my mind! I want to kill him!”

The wild fury **in** Dante’s eyes was terrifying. Anne wanted to stop him but was afraid of hurting the baby in her belly.

“Dante, in an hour, we’re supposed to be at the courthouse for our divorce.

“We’re about to be divorced. Who I’m having a child with is none of your business.

“Yancey is the man I love. Dante, don’t hurt him. Don’t make me hate you.”

→Write **your** comment

Chapter 356 The Innocent One

Anne practically shouted the last sentence.

As her words fell, the room plunged into an eerie silence.

1/4

Dante’s eyes were bloodshot, while Yancey stood there, stunned.

Dante’s hand fell limply to his side.

His gaze dulled as if all the life had drained out of him in an instant.

He stiffly turned like a lonely statue.

“I won’t hit him anymore. You can stop loving me, but please... don’t hate me, okay, Anne?”

Dante, who was always so proud, sounded almost pleading as he spoke to her.

When Dante first found out Anne hadn’t terminated the pregnancy, he felt a surge of joy.

But he never, in his wildest dreams, imagined the child could be Yancey’s.

It was as if fate had played a cruel joke on him.

Yancey’s lip was still bleeding, and Dante’s hand was injured from the blow.

Chapter 356 The Innocent One

2/4

Dante stood up, turning away. “We’ll deal with it another time.”

His mind was in turmoil, and he needed to clear his head.

With that, Dante left.

Anne didn’t say another word. As soon as Dante shut the door, she locked herself in her room.

Yancey quietly tidied up the living room, faintly hearing the sound of sobbing coming from behind the door.

He suddenly realized that Anne didn’t love him.

He knew Anne was crying because her relationship with Dante had truly reached the end of the road.

After all, their misunderstandings ran too deep.

Meanwhile, after Meryl had dinner at the Aniston Villa, Chandler had yet to return.

After the meal, seeing that Meryl was alone, Lydia sent a message to a servant asking to meet her privately.

Meryl sensed nothing good would come of it.

Now that Lydia was pregnant and being heavily protected by everyone, Meryl didn’t want to risk getting blamed if anything happened to her.

Meryl was reluctant to go. After all, she had suffered too many losses in situations like this before. So, she declined the servant’s

request.

Chapter 356 The Innocent One

3/4

She strolled through the garden to help digest her food, but to her surprise, Lydia suddenly appeared ahead of her.

The unexpected presence at night startled Meryl.

She took two steps back, maintaining a safe distance of 9 feet between them.

Lydia, however, seemed undeterred, trying to get closer to Meryl.

“Stop right there!”

Meryl commanded her, “If you’ve got something to say, say it from there.”

Lydia asked, “Are you scared? Don’t worry, this baby is my only bargaining chip. I won’t use it to harm you.”

Meryl simply scoffed at her words, not trusting a single thing Lydia said.

Her eyes remained wary, and she deliberately stood at a crossroads.

It was a strategic position, ideal for either defense or retreat. Plus, there were people passing by, so she didn’t have to worry about Lydia pulling any tricks.

“Meryl, wasn’t marrying Chandler enough for you? Do you still want to get back with Dalton? Or maybe you’re trying to juggle both?

Why did you ruin my reputation in front of Dalton? You sent

Chapter 356 The Innocent One

4/4

“First of all, Rocky came forward on his own. I didn’t send him. And even if I did, I’d only be using the same tricks you’ve pulled on me. Lydia, why do you always paint yourself as the innocent

one?

“Besides, you were the one who sought out Rocky. I didn’t force you. How can you pin that on me?”

“If you really want to settle accounts, then let’s go over everything.

“Your mother took me away to give you a life of luxury. Three years ago, you teamed up with Rocky to frame me and have me thrown in prison...

“Every single one of these debts, Lydia, is something you owe me.”

Write your comment

Chapter 357 Lydia's True Color

“How dare you blame me for anything happen to you? Lydia, are you joking? You've done so m any terrible things. Sooner or later, you'll get what you deserve.”

With that, Meryl didn't linger any longer.

Lydia stared at Meryl's retreating figure, so furious that her hands clenched into fists, trembling with rage.

“Meryl, even **if** you know everything I've done, what can you do about it?

“I'm pregnant with the Aniston family's child. This baby is **my** shield.

“Even if Rocky has changed his testimony in prison, the Aniston. family will still protect me. My father **will** be on my side, so nothing will happen to me.”

Meryl merely gave her a cold smile at those words.

Just then, Dalton appeared.

He had been quietly following Meryl ever since she began her evening walk **in** the garden after d inner.

There was something magnetic about her that drew him closer without him even realizing it.

As a result, he had overheard every word of the conversation

Chapter 357 Lydia's True Color

2/4

This was the first time Dalton had faced Lydia's true nature. He had never imagined that she coul d be so vicious.

He realized then that her past sweetness and vulnerability had all been an act.

The shock and disillusionment hit him hard.

Lydia's face flickered with fear when she saw Dalton, but she quickly regained her composure a nd walked toward him.

“Dalton, when did you get here?”

“Everything I said just now was **out** of anger. I was just arguing with Meryl. Don’t take it seriously.”

Dalton’s gaze was laced with scorn.

“The thought that someone like you is carrying my child makes me sick.”

“Dalton, I told you, I was just saying nonsense. Don’t believe it.”

“You said it yourself, Lydia. You just admitted to everything, but earlier, you blamed Rocky for slandering you.”

Dalton’s eyes drifted to Lydia’s belly.

“Get rid of the baby. Take the money and go. If you do it now, it won’t be too hard on your body. Name your price.”

He was willing to pay anything to be rid of her.

Tears immediately welled up in Lydia’s eyes.

Chapter 357 Lydia’s True Color

3/4

“Dalton, how could you say such a thing in front of Meryl? You know how tense my relationship is with her. You’re trampling on my dignity!”

“You may not care about the child, but I’m his mother. I’m going to have him.”

Dalton let **out** a disdainful laugh.

“You knew all along that one day I’d leave you. That’s why you’re trying to use this child to tie me down for life, aren’t you? Lydia, you’re delusional.”

“Do you really think that after I expose everything you’ve done, my mother will still protect you?”

Dalton’s voice grew colder with each word. “The only reason I haven’t said anything yet is because I was giving you some mercy. But now, I don’t see the need to hold back anymore.”

With that, Dalton turned to leave.

“Dalton, where are you going?”

“Where do **you** think? I’m going to tell the Aniston family the truth about everything you’ve done.”

“Dalton, you can’t be this cruel to me!”

As the **two** argued, Meryl watched the spectacle from the sidelines with a detached indifference.

Though it was natural to enjoy watching the drama unfold, old

Chapter 357 Lydia’s True Color grudges like these quickly grew tiresome.

Meryl shrugged, ready to walk away.

4/4

Suddenly, she heard the sound of splashing water. Turning around, she saw that Lydia had pushed Dalton into the water!

Meryl froze in shock.

She thought to herself, “Did Lydia really just do that?”

How could she push a strong man like Dalton into the water?”

“I... I didn’t mean to...”

Lydia stammered, panic spreading across her face as she backed away. “Dalton, just wait, I... I’ll go get help!”

Without another word, Lydia turned and ran off, not looking

back.

Write your comment

Chapter 358 Out of Your Mind

Dalton couldn’t swim.

On this freezing winter day, a thin layer of ice had already formed on the pond’s surface.

He shivered uncontrollably as the cold water enveloped him.

The once proud and arrogant man now appeared utterly helpless, flailing in the water, a shadow of his usual self.

“Help... help me,” he gasped.

At that moment, brilliant fireworks exploded in the sky. The Aniston family had planned a fireworks display tonight.

The best view was from the terrace, far from the pond.

So, no matter how loudly Dalton cried for help, it was unlikely anyone would hear him.

Meryl rushed to the lake’s edge.

She hadn’t expected Lydia to truly leave Dalton to drown.

Though she had seen them argue, she never thought Lydia would actually go so far as to try and kill him.

Dalton swallowed several gulps of water. While the lake wasn’t very deep, it was dangerous enough for someone who couldn’t

swim.

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when they fall into cold water, but the more they struggle, the more dangerous it becomes.

“Give me your hand, I’ll pull you out,” Meryl said.

2/4

She knelt by the edge and stretched out a hand toward Dalton.

She couldn’t just stand by and let him die. After all, their grudges hadn’t reached the point where she’d wish death upon him.

Dalton grabbed her hand instinctively.

It took considerable effort to pull him onto the shore, and once there, Dalton’s legs began to cramp violently.

He lay on the ground, writhing in pain like a fish stranded on

land.

Meryl sighed, exasperated.

She had intended to leave once she pulled him out, but seeing him like this made her hesitate.

In the end, she decided to help him.

“Where does it hurt?” she asked.

She held his calf, massaging the muscles to ease the cramping.

The cold night wind made Dalton’s soaking clothes feel even more frigid. He shivered uncontrollably, his lips turning a deep shade of purple.

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Meryl’s voice was cold as she said, “Don’t look at me like that. Dalton, let me remind you again. It’s never going to happen between us. I belong to your uncle.”

3/4

His eyes dimmed at her words, and his lips pressed into a thin line.

He knew she was drawing a clear boundary between them, not even leaving room for a shred of hope.

“If you have no feelings for me, why did you save me?” Dalton’s voice was low, almost sulking.

Meryl responded, “Consider it repayment for the favor you did for me years ago.”

She was well aware that Dalton had once protected her from the shadows.

Back when she was in college, if it hadn’t been for his support, the classmates who bullied her would never have let her off so easily.

The car accident Dalton had at the age of eighteen was also because he was driving through the rain to pick her up and lost control, crashing into a power pole. He had fallen into a coma after that.

Dalton froze for a moment. He hadn’t expected Meryl to use saving him as another way to distance herself from him.

He let out a bitter laugh and scoffed, “Who asked you to repay

me?”

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4/4

As she spoke, she actually raised her hand, pretending to push

him back into the water.

Dalton blinked in surprise, then said, “You don’t need to. I’ll go back in myself.”

With a sudden splash, Dalton threw himself backward into the lake again, leaving Meryl staring at him in stunned disbelief.

“Dalton, you’re insane.”

This time, he didn’t struggle. He closed his eyes and let himself sink into the water.

“Dalton, have you lost your mind?”

Write your comment

Chapter 359 Sinking into the Depths

Meryl was furious. She didn’t expect that; after all the effort it took to pull him out, Dalton jumped back in.

She stood up abruptly, brushing the dirt off her knees, and turned to leave.

“If you want to die, go ahead! I’ll pretend I didn’t see anything!”

She thought to herself, “Dalton’s making a scene. Who in their right mind jumps into a freezing lake on a day like this? Has he lost his mind, or is he addicted to it now?”

Dalton’s lips were pressed into a thin line.

The water crept up, submerging his eyes, nose, and the rest of his senses.

The icy coldness seeped into every pore, but he didn’t call for help.

Dalton refused to let Meryl cut ties with him like this.

If she saved him only to repay a debt, severing their connection afterward, he would rather sink to the bottom of the lake.

Meryl had only taken a few steps when the eerie silence behind her made her pause.

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Her heart sank, and she sprinted back to the edge of the lake.

“Dalton?”

Not far from her, Dalton's coat floated on the water's surface. Panic gripped Meryl as she reached out to grab it.

"Dalton? Are you still alive?"

"Dear God, he didn't actually drown, did he?"

Meryl's heart pounded. She hadn't expected Dalton to be this stubborn.

2/5

Grumbling to herself, she shrugged off her coat, ready to dive in and rescue him again.

But before she could, Dalton suddenly surfaced, coughing and sputtering, spitting out a mouthful of water.

His face was flushed a deep red from holding his breath, and Meryl quickly hauled him out of the water once more.

This time, after all the struggling, Dalton looked even worse. He was pale, weak, and sickly.

He was trembling uncontrollably from the cold, unable to speak as his lips quivered violently.

Meryl knew that if this went on any longer, he could suffer from hypothermia.

With a frown, she said, "Come on, let's get you inside."

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She lifted Dalton's arm over her shoulder, helping him walk back toward the house.

3/5

The biting wind only worsened his condition, making him shiver more violently.

Instinctively, he leaned closer to Meryl for warmth.

"Dalton, why do this to yourself? You're risking your life just to spite me. Do you really think it's worth it?"

Dalton's lips trembled as he spoke in a faint voice, "I'm not doing this out of spite."

It **wasn't** that. It was the unwillingness to let go.

He wanted to make one final attempt to reignite Meryl's feelings

for him.

Even if it was just pity, he would take it.

He refused to believe that Meryl could let go of the seven years they had shared so easily.

Meryl had no idea what was going through his mind. She thought it was just pride driving him, too stubborn to admit he was being childish.

She helped Dalton back to his room and said softly, "Go take a hot bath and change into some dry clothes."

With that, she was ready to leave, feeling she had done more than enough for him.

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4/5

But as she was about to step out, she noticed a strange smell in the room.

Frowning, she sniffed the air again and glanced back into the room, locking eyes with Dalton.

He was slumped on the floor, soaked and clearly exhausted. A pool of water had formed around him. It seemed he had tried to get dressed but had collapsed because his legs were still too frozen to support him.

Meryl kept her distance and said, "I'll go find a servant to help you."

She found the whole situation odd and thought to herself, "Are the fireworks really that captivating? I didn't see a single person on my way here."

If that hadn't been the case, she would have handed Dalton off to someone else long ago.

"I... I don't feel right," Dalton muttered, curling up on the floor.

A strange sensation was flooding his body.

After being in the cold water, he should have been freezing, but instead, an inexplicable heat was spreading through him. He was even beginning to have a physical reaction.

Dalton found this bizarre. Although he had feelings for Meryl, it wasn't the kind of situation where his body would react like this.

Meryl hesitated for a few seconds. Seeing how pale he looked, she reached out and checked his pulse.

Chapter 360 He's Got a Fever

1/4

The confusion on Dalton's face made it clear that he had no idea what was happening. Meryl quickly realized that this chaos wasn't something he had caused.

"Could Lydia have done this?" she wondered.

Meryl glanced around the room but couldn't pinpoint the source of the strange smell.

She walked to the windows and threw them open to let in some fresh air.

Dalton's clothes were soaked through, but his cheeks were flushed with an unnatural redness. He stared at Meryl, bewildered.

At that moment, he looked like a lost, helpless puppy.

Meryl hesitated for a moment, then looked away, realizing it wasn't a good idea for her to stay any longer.

The effects of the drug seemed to be potent. Even after inhaling just a small amount, she felt weak all over.

She turned to leave, but Dalton suddenly grabbed her ankle.

His usually cold and aloof eyes were now filled with confusion, and his voice was hoarse.

"Meryl, you're leaving? You're just going to leave me here?"

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2/4

She stood rigidly, every muscle in her body tense.

She could hardly believe what she was hearing.

"Why does he sound so pitiful? Is this really the same distant, unapproachable Dalton I know?"

"What's gotten into you?" Meryl asked, her eyes wide with shock.

Dalton lowered his head, slowly leaning closer, his breathing growing heavier. Beads of cold sweat formed on his forehead.

It was clear he was trying to restrain himself, his voice filled with barely suppressed emotion.

“I’m fine.”

Seeing tears slide down the corner of his eye, Meryl was taken aback.

She pulled a tissue from her pocket and handed it to him.

“Here, wipe your tears. Don’t worry, I won’t tell anyone.”

She knew that as a public figure in Kingsdom, Dalton couldn’t afford for people to find out he had clung to a woman’s leg, crying after falling into the lake. It would ruin him.

After **saying** that, she tried to pull her leg free.

But Dalton only held on tighter.

“Meryl, what do I have to do for you to notice me? Why don’t

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“I’ve already admitted my mistakes. Can you forgive me?”

Meryl sighed. “There’s no going back for us.”

Dalton only cried harder after hearing that.

Meryl felt a wave of helplessness wash over her. She hadn’t expected him to break down like this.

3/4

“Did falling into the water mess with his head?” she wondered.

“Dalton would never have let me see him cry before.”

Meryl gently patted his back, her tone calm. “I really should go.”

She reached out, trying to gently push him **away**.

But the moment her hand touched his forehead, she yanked it

back.

Dalton's skin was burning hot. Meryl realized he had a fever.

"So, he was just rambling earlier?" She thought.

Relieved, she spoke softly, "I'll get a doctor for you."

She twisted the doorknob but found that the door wouldn't budge.

Frowning, she wondered if it was broken or if someone had locked it from the outside.

Behind her, Dalton suddenly sneezed. "Meryl, could you grab me some clothes? They're in the wardrobe right next to **you**."

Chapter 360 He's Got a Fever

Meanwhile, over on the terrace...

The fireworks had fizzled out, leaving the night sky dark once more, and the crowd was starting to disperse.

Lydia came rushing through the crowd, her face pale and stricken, as if she had seen something terrifying.

Charlotte noticed her and felt a surge of anger. She thought Lydia was being far too reckless.

4/4

However, with so many people around, Charlotte couldn't scold her directly. Instead, she shot Lydia a sharp glare.

Startled, Lydia took two steps back, accidentally bumping into Cameron.

"Well, what's the matter with you? You look awful. Did something happen?" Cameron asked.

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