

Chapter 277 Buddies

Noble continued to kick Rayan as he lost himself in the pain and misery of his past. He treated Rayan like a sandbag, ready to take in all his merciless blows.

"Enough, Noble!" Janessa screamed again, her eyes welling up with tears. Rayan was covered in blood, his face all bruised and swollen.

But Noble paid her no heed and continued what he was doing. He was an unstoppable madman at this point.

"It's all your fault! If it weren't for you, my sister wouldn't have died! Only your death can appease my anger now!" His men stood silent and motionless to the side. All that could be heard throughout the wharf were the lulling roll of the waves, and the sound of flesh hitting flesh.

Despite her personal feelings at the moment, Janessa could not deny that she understood where Noble's hatred was coming from.

She could not blame him for thinking that his sister had died because of Rayan. Indeed, Ally had died for Rayan.

But that was a long time ago. What was the point in taking it out on Rayan now? What was his revenge worth to a dead person?

Janessa couldn't let this bloody scene go on, and in front of her, no less.

They said that people had unlimited potential waiting to be unlocked. Powered by adrenaline and her desperation, Janessa broke free from the men that held her down and threw herself at Noble.

She pushed him away with all her strength and knelt beside Rayan. "Rayan, are you okay?"

The table was some distance away, and she hadn't been able to see him clearly. Now that he was in front of him, she realized that Rayan was in the brink of death. Noble truly was a cold-blooded and barbaric bastard!

At the sound of Janessa's voice, Rayan tried to pry his eyes open beneath all the swelling on his face. The moment he did, it was as though a red veil was hanging over his vision. He had been holding back all this time for fear that he might endanger Janessa. He had never expected this reckless woman to rush over like this.

Even so, his heart warmed with gratitude.

Perhaps he still had a chance, after all. Perhaps, when this disaster ended, they could carve out a different ending for themselves.

"You're still trying to protect him?" Noble spat out. "Didn't you hear a word I said? Those who love and protect him only meet the worst fates in life. My sister is a testament to that. Why are you being so stubborn?" He couldn't even begin to presume Janessa's way of thinking. Did people always act so foolishly for the ones they loved?

Ally had lost her virginity and sense of self because of this same foolish impulse. In the end, she had chosen to leave this world on her own terms.

Noble's mind was clouded with thoughts of his late sister. Janessa's look of desperation was so similar to Ally's, and he couldn't help but see his sister in her.

His mood shifted, and he turned gentle in the blink of an eye.

"Ally, get over here. That man is dangerous. You should stay away from him. Come to your brother." Noble opened his arms and put them around Janessa.

"Get off me, Noble. I am not your sister! Ally sacrificed herself in order to save Rayan, so why are you holding her death over his head? Did you ever stop and think whether she would be happy with what you're doing now? Will she thank you for avenging her this way? One of you is her precious brother, while the other is the man she had loved the most in her life. If anything, Ally would probably hope for you two to forge a bond over her selfless actions." Janessa got to her feet, standing between Noble and Rayan.

Despite her dreadful state of undress, she looked fierce and determined.

"Come and take her away," Noble ordered his men. He had been living all these years for the sole purpose of his revenge. Only when Rayan died could his sister finally rest in peace. Nothing else was more important than that.

His subordinates moved according to his command, but Janessa was quick. She wasn't about to let them touch her again. She whipped out a piece of razor blade from the waistband of her underwear.

She had kept this little self-protection method just in case, and now seemed like the perfect time to use it.

Janessa stood in front of Rayan and brandished her weapon at the approaching men.

Groaning with pain, Rayan struggled to his feet. He buttoned off his bloody shirt and draped it over her shoulders.

"Rayan?" Janessa called out instinctively. He shouldn't be on his feet given his current state.

"I like hearing you say my name," he murmured. Then, with a cheeky grin, he raised one hand. Before anyone knew what he was up to, a signal flare burst toward the sky.

Janessa scoffed at him in disbelief. How could this man still be flirting with her in this situation? She averted her eyes, her cheeks flushing with embarrassment.

She had said his name subconsciously.

Why in the world would he react like that?

"What did you just do?" Noble barked. He had finally come back to his senses, and his clear eyes were on the flare streaking across the clouds above.

"Noble, we have been friends for so long. I never imagined there to be so much tragedy between us. I never knew that Ally... But that isn't enough reason for you to discard your life so easily. The police will be here soon. They've heard everything, and they know what you've done. Despite everything, we've always been buddies. I didn't want to do this to you, but I feel like you've already gone beyond redemption." Rayan gritted his teeth. He was hurt all over, and he was barely keeping himself conscious, let alone upright. But he didn't want Noble to see just how weak and vulnerable he was.

Nor did he want Janessa to worry about him.

"You called the police?" Noble asked, grinning humorlessly. "Does that mean you also have a bug on you?" He wasn't stupid; he knew how these things usually went. It was really over for him.

"Like I said, we're still buddies. So I'd like to offer you some advice. None of us wanted what happened to Ally. You can demand any compensation you want from me, but you must never hurt other people. If you do that, then you're no different from the man who abused and tortured your sister. What you did to her just now..." Rayan choked on his words. He couldn't bear to imagine what Janessa would do if these men had succeeded in taking advantage of her. Would she also commit suicide like Ally had?

Never had he known true terror until he thought of this possibility.

"Buddies?" Noble said in a dry tone. "If we're really buddies, then why would you send me behind bars?" Of course, he knew that Rayan had no choice in the matter, but he couldn't help the wave of disappointment that washed over him. Disappointment in Rayan, but mostly in himself. If he was locked up, then Ally's death would never be avenged.

Soon, the police were upon them. Numerous officers had already been hiding around the wharf, waiting for the right time to ambush the gangsters. Rayan and Noble stood in the middle of the commotion, separated by just a few feet, with Janessa on the sidelines.

"Listen to me, Noble. I will appeal to the court to lessen your sentence. Once you get out of prison, you can come to me, and we can work together as good friends. I will not run from the truth that Ally died because of me. In order to make it up to her, I swear to take care of you in her stead." Rayan meant his every word, too. He didn't want his friend to waste away in prison.

They must live their lives to the fullest—both he and Noble, for Ally's sake.

"Well, I'm relieved to hear that. I suppose my efforts weren't entirely in vain. To be honest, it really is a good thing to have you as a friend. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that we are simply not destined to stand side by side." With one last smile at Rayan, Noble ran to the edge of the dock and jumped into the open sea.

The waters were dark and cold. The authorities rushed over to rescue him, but Noble had already resolved to die. One couldn't exactly save someone who had no will left to live.

Rylan burst into the scene then, helping the officers to subdue some of the thugs. Now that their leader had disappeared, they all surrendered without much struggle.

Janessa slumped to the ground, and Rayan was barely able to catch her in time. She had finally let her guard down when she saw the police running over, and all the fight left her body.

She was spent, and passed out in Rayan's arms.

He quickly looked her over, making sure that she wasn't hurt anywhere. When he was at last satisfied, Rayan smiled in relief and promptly fainted, still clutching Janessa.