

Illusions 191

Chapter 191

When Lizetta stepped out of the elevator, her face was back to its serene composure, but Inside, the hurt was raw. She felt a sense of relief that she hadn't broken down in tears.

Truth be told, she was pretty wiped out. She had been running around like a headless chicken, catching barely four to five hours of sleep a night, especially now that she was preggers and could really use some extra z's.

But deep down, she felt a buzz of happiness, convinced it was all worth it. Sweet Just a little longer, and she'd have the 3 million in the bag to pay back Remington, and she wouldn't owe the Dashiell family squat.

From then on, she could chill out and just do her own thing. Taking a deep breath, Lizetta straightened her spine even more and lifted her head with a smile.

But she hadn't expected to bump into Evelina and Elara right off the bat

"How can you still smile when Joseph's in and out of the hospital like a yo-yo?" Elara frowned, laying into Lizetta.

Evelina grabbed Elara's arm, playing the peacemaker, "Mom, don't be hard on her. She's obviously worried about Joseph too, or she wouldn't be here at the hospital"

Evelina's understanding act could make Lizetta want to hurl even with her eyes closed. Lizetta didn't break stride and was about to breeze past them when Evelina grabbed her

"Don't stress too much about Joseph, Sis. In a few months, my baby will be here, and it's a sure bet for a match with him. We'll kick his illness to the curb for good."

Evelina said this with her hand on her stomach. Lizetta's gaze fell on Evelina's belly, not sure if it was Evelina sticking out her tummy or the kid was just thriving, but there was a slight bump already.

Lizetta's breathing hitched, and her heart felt like it got jabbed.

Elara chuckled and patted Evelina, "Silly girl, who knows if she's here for Joseph or to snag Remington!" Then she turned to Lizetta.

"Liz, I know you and Joseph are tight. Now that he's sick and could be knocking on heaven's door, only the bun in Eve's oven can save him. It's fate. If you really care about Joseph, you'd better hustle and get the divorce with Remington sorted, so you don't stand in the way of Eve's engagement."

Lizetta looked down, a self-deprecating smile curling her lips. Seemed like the whole world couldn't wait for her and Remington to split.

But Evelina was the other woman; what right did she have to be so bold and brazen? Lizetta lifted her head, a sly smile playing on her lips, "Engagement? But my hubby seems to think he won't be popping the question to your daughter."

How can that be? Eve's carrying his child, and that kid is the key to saving his brother's life. How could he not marry Eve?" Elara frowned.

Evelina stroked her belly, "Sis, Remi's just hung up on his sense of duty to you; that's all. He loves the baby. Don't you remember, Remi even bought a little asterold for the baby."

Lizetta suddenly gripped Evelina's wrist, "Are you sure the baby you're carrying is Remington's? Well then, let's go do a paternity test right now."

Evelina started to panic, trying to pull away, "Let go! Let go of me; I'm not going!"

Lizetta eyed Evelina, her eyebrows raised in amusement, "Weren't you just swearing up and down that the kid is Remington's? What's got you scared all of a sudden?"

Evelina managed to break free from Lizetta's grip, I'm not scared. I'm just worried about the amniocentesis harming the baby!"

She clung to Elara, “Mom, let’s not get dragged into her madness. We need to hurry and see Joseph; I’m so worried.”

“Yeah, let’s go.”

Elara supported Evelina, and they both rushed into the elevator.

Lizetta turned back to take one last look at Evelina. Her reaction was pretty intense just now. She couldn’t actually be feeling guilty, could she?

But then again, Remington did seem genuinely concerned about the baby in Evelina’s tummy, which hurt Lizetta all the more when compared to his attitude towards her own

pregnancy.

Love life, steer clear of Remington, and all troubles be gone! Lizetta repeated this. sentence twice in her head and quickly walked away.

A week later, Lizetta wrapped up a collaboration with Skyward Studios, and her bank. account happily welcomed a new deposit.

Stepping out of the game company and into a cab, she got a call from Tina, saying Fional had passed out all of a sudden.

Lizetta immediately had the driver reroute to the Dashiell family mansion.

She burst into the mansion in a frenzy, only to find Fiona sitting in the courtyard, “Grandma Fiona, why are you out here? Where’s the doctor?”

Fiona took Lizetta’s hand, “Be honest with me, have you and Remington really not made up?”

Lizetta paused, taking a closer look at the old lady's complexion, and realized she'd been played by her.

She sighed, "Grandma Fiona."

Fiona's face fell, I may be old, but I'm not senile or blind. Look at you, you're not even wearing your wedding ring.

Lizetta was at a loss for words.

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She thought back to the last time she went back to the house with Remington, how he had slipped a ring on her finger to pull the wool over the old lady's eyes.

They had stood by the old lady's bed, promising to patch things up. But truth be told, they never did make amends. Some things one just couldn't hide under the rug.

*Grandma Fiona, nothing forcibly done is going to be agreeable. Remi and I have decided to let each other go; we're really getting a divorce."

Lizetta gritted her teeth, took the old lady's hand, and decided to come clean.

Fiona's face turned ashen, her pale lips trembling, her breathing becoming ragged. Lizetta's heart raced, her eyes welling up with tears, I'm sorry. I've let you down. You can yell at me or give me a piece of your mind; just don't work yourself into a state over this!"

She patted Fiona's chest to help her calm down and then signaled to Tina to fetch the medicine. After popping a couple of pills, Fiona's breathing eased, and her complexion lost its ghostly pallor.

But Lizetta was scared stiff, tears streaming down her face, soaking her cheeks. Clutching the old lady's frail hand, she kept on repeating, "I'm so sorry, Grandma Fiona; so sorry."

She felt utterly ashamed facing the old lady, knowing how much she had hoped Lizetta and Remington would walk hand in hand through life.

Yet she had let Fiona down; she just couldn't hang in there any longer.

Terrified, she was afraid Fiona might be so upset by her that something terrible would happen, and even more scared that the old lady wouldn't forgive her and would withdraw her affection.

But Fiona, seeing Lizetta reduced to tears, wrapped her in an embrace and soothed her, patting her back, uttering, "Kid, stop saying sorry. I know you've done your best. If there's someone to blame, it's Remington that brat's fault. I'm not upset, and I'm not blaming you either."

The old lady patted Lizetta with her frail hand just as she did when Lizetta was a child.

Lizetta leaned on the old lady's stooped shoulder, her tears flowing even more, choking on her words, "Thank you for not blaming me, Grandma Fiona."

There, there, no more tears. Tell me, is it all because of that Evelina? Just spill the beans, I've got your back!"

Fiona let go of Lizetta and used her wrinkled hands to wipe away her tears. Lizetta, trying

to stem the flow of tears, shook her head, "It's not because of Evelina."

"Nonsense! How could it not be her! It all kicked off when she showed up, didn't it? I only found out today about the welcome-back party where you ended up taking a dive! Did that no good Remington rescue Evelina instead?"

Lizetta froze; the incident of falling into the water had happened a month ago. She was puzzled "How did you find out about the fall, Grandma Fiona?"

Shirley had visited the house today, spilling the beans over the phone to her toxic friend, mocking how Lizetta had been a complete mess then.

The video of Lizetta's most embarrassing moment was still making the rounds in the high society chat groups.

Fiona had overheard and demanded the video from Shirley, and watching it had made her blood boil.

"Don't worry about how I know. Just tell me, is that why you're divorcing Remington?"

Lizetta hastily shook her head again, managing a wry smile.

"Honestly, Grandma Fiona, it's not. The spark between me and Remi has gone out. You saw it yourself; he doesn't care about me anymore. That's why he chose to save Evelina when we both fell into the water. You don't know how frantic he was."

"Baloney! Remington is my own flesh and blood; do you think I don't know whom he cares about? He cares about you! And I'm going to prove it to you today!" Fiona interrupted Lizetta sternly.

Lizetta was dumbstruck. How could she possibly prove that? As she stood there bewildered, Tina came back and said, "Mrs. Fiona Dashiell, Mr. Remington Dashiell has returned."

Fiona immediately stood up, dragging Lizetta behind a dense thicket, instructing her firmly, "Liz, you stay put here; no matter what happens, don't come out! I'll prove to you that Remington does care about you!"

Fiona let go of Lizetta and left. Lizetta was confused but from a distance, she saw Remington's tall figure striding toward them.

It had been a while since she'd seen him, and whether it was the angle or just the desolate early winter scene of the garden setting him off, the man in the long coat still stood ramrod straight, yet his handsome face seemed somewhat thinner.

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The cooler the guy, the more he seemed to exude this chill vibe of self-control, totally unruffled.

Even though it was the same old face she'd seen for years, the guy she was determined to boot out of her heart always managed to tug at her heartstrings every time she saw him.

Lizetta chalked up this flutter to the sad plight of being a sucker for a pretty face. Just as she was trying to force herself to look away, she suddenly heard a splash.

Startled, Lizetta remembered that it was Fiona who had headed towards the pool. Could it be that the old lady accidentally took a dive? Lizetta was about to dash to the pool when Tina popped out of nowhere and grabbed her.

"Easy does it, Mrs. Lizetta Dashiell. Mrs. Fiona Dashiell says you're not to go out there."

By now, Fiona's cries of alarm were ringing out from the poolside.

"Help! Somebody! Help!"

It was clear that Remington had caught wind of the commotion too. As Lizetta turned her head back towards the pool, the man's tall figure was already sprinting over, pulling Fiona

to safety.

"Grandma Fiona, what's going on?"

"Liz! Liz got plastered and fell in. What do we do? Remington, you, hey, Remington!"

Fiona's face was a mask of panic, wobbling so much she couldn't finish her sentence. Then, with a flicker of a shadow, Remington dived into the pool.

From her slightly elevated vantage point, Lizetta was able to catch the sight over the pool; she couldn't believe what she was seeing.

Then she spotted the crafty old prankster turning to look her way, even giving a wave to Lizetta who just poked her head out, signaling her to stay hidden.

Just moments ago, the old lady said she'd prove something to Lizetta, who was still in the dark about what

that proof might entail. Well, now she'd got the picture.

"When it comes to pranking the grandson, nobody beats Mrs. Fiona Dashiell," Tina held onto Lizetta, relishing the drama.

Lizetta was speechless, "She's really..."

"Mrs. Lizetta Dashiell, hide quick; don't let Mr. Dashiell spot you."

Seeing Remington's head emerge from the water, Tina quickly pulled Lizetta down to crouch. Through a crack, Lizetta still caught glimpses of the scene at the pool.

Remington clearly hadn't found anyone. As he came up for air, Fiona pointed to the other side of the pool.

"Remington, over there, search there. My Liz! I shouldn't have let you drink! How come you haven't been found yet? Liz, if anything happens to you, how am I supposed to go on!"

Fiona's lifetime of acting chops must all be spent here, putting on a show of panic and crying every time Remington surfaced.

Initially indifferent to Fiona's antics, Lizetta started to feel a complex tranquility watching Remington dive in search after search.

It was early winter, and the pool water was ice cold. Remington plunged in without warming up or even remembering to take his coat off.

Lizetta frowned; unable to watch any longer, she shook Tina off and strode quickly towards the pool.

"Liz, didn't I tell you to stay hidden? What are you doing running out here? Quick, go hide, I will take care of him!"

Fiona wasn't pleased to see Lizetta approaching. Lizetta took the old lady's hand, "Grandma Fiona, I've seen it all! Please let Remi come up, what if he gets a cramp?"

"Worried now? In our family, you're the softest at heart!"

Fiona tapped Lizetta's forehead, resigned, and then called out, "Did you all hear that? Look how much your wife cares about you, get out of the water already."

Lizetta's spine stiffened as she turned to see Remington, who had already swum over from who knew when, gazing at her from the water.

Their eyes met, and the man, propping himself on the pool's edge, suddenly rose from the water like a swift beast emerging from a cold, dark pit.

He was drenched, water cascading down his hair and cheeks, his coat heavy and dripping with cold water.

His handsome face seemed chilled to the bone, pale with a cold gleam, but his eyes were. calm and steady, fixed on Lizetta.

Lizetta felt his intense gaze, her spine tingling, and she involuntarily shrugged her

shoulders.

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Fiona touched her nose and pulled Lizetta behind her with a huff, “It’s all your own doing! You know darn well how you ended up with everyone turning their back on you! And cut the crap about it all being my idea; stop trying to spook Liz with those looks!”

Lizetta hung her head, thinking to herself that “everyone turning their back on you” was a bit much, but even though the idea wasn’t hers, she still felt a bit guilty.

The man didn’t say a word, just took his eyes off them and headed towards the villa.

Fiona nudged Lizetta, “Hey Liz, do you think I went a bit overboard? Maybe you should go. check on him for me?”

Although she felt Fiona was being kind of a fair-weather friend at the moment, everything. she did was for her.

She felt responsible too, worried that Remington might really get screwed over by Fiona, so after a moment’s hesitation, Lizetta nodded and hurried after him..

Remington was walking fast. By the time Lizetta chased him into the villa, he had already gone

upstairs, leaving wet footprints behind.

She followed him into the bedroom and heard noises from the bathroom, so she ran over and pushed the door open, starting to explain in a fluster, “Are you okay? About what happened just now.”

She didn’t expect to see Remington throwing his coat on the floor as soon as she pushed the door open, his thin cashmere sweater half-off, revealing his solid, pale abs.

She closed her eyes in panic, "I'll go out first, ah!"

But as she turned around, her arm was grabbed. The next second, Lizetta was pulled into the bathroom and pinned against the wall.

Her back was against the cold tiled wall, and in front of her was Remington's equally chilled body, his large hand gripping her waist, the cold seeping into her skin.

Lizetta's chin was also seized by two long, strong, but icy fingers, tilting it up.

"Amused, are you?"

Water was still dripping from Remington's hair, drop by drop onto Lizetta's eyelids and nose bridge. She dared not look into his piercingly cold eyes that were so close.

She blinked and started explaining anxiously, without thinking.

"I didn't mean to play games with you; don't get it wrong! Grandma somehow found out I had fallen into the water at the Hawthorne family and that we were getting a divorce. She thought it was because you saved Evelina instead of me, and that's why I was heartbroken and angry, wanting a divorce, so she just."

Realizing her words sounded like she was shirking responsibility and letting Fiona take the fall, Lizetta stopped talking.

She took a deep breath, looked up, and finally said to Remington, "I'm sorry. I owe you an apology."

Remington's eyes still had a hint of frost, and he didn't let go of Lizetta's chin.

"So did it break your heart?"

Lizetta pressed her lips; how could it not? She still vividly remembered the scene underwater from that day, as clear as if it were yesterday.

The water that day was just as chilling as now. But Lizetta forced a smile.

“That’s all in the past. Anyway, I only told grandma that I wanted a divorce because it felt like you didn’t care about me, only about Evelina’s safety. But she is stubborn and misunderstood you too, insisting that you still cared about me and wanted to prove it to me. I had no idea she was going to prove it like this.”

Lizetta didn’t finish her sentence because Remington suddenly bent down and gently.

kissed her forehead.

The kiss was so soft and unexpected, like it was filled with endless tenderness. Lizetta was stunned and a bit dazed. Wasn’t he mad? Why did he suddenly kiss her?

While she was still puzzled, she heard Remington’s voice, husky and low, “Lizetta, grandma isn’t being stubborn, and she hasn’t misunderstood me.”

Lizetta was dumbfounded, staring at Remington with a wooden expression, her fingertips trembling involuntarily before they were pressed against the wall.

What did Remington mean by that? As her heart pounded with uncertainty, Remington rested his forehead against hers, gently rubbing it, and seemed to sigh, “Silly girl, I do care; how could I not care about you?”

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Remington’s voice was barely above a whisper, yet Lizetta’s heart felt like it had been sucker-punched, stirring up a storm of sour, swelling pain.

She just stared at the guy in front of her, her eyes uncontrollably misting over. She wanted to turn her head away, not wanting to show him her fragile side.

But Remington's hand, which had been pinching her chin, shifted to cradle her face, not letting her dodge the moment.

Tears rolled down Lizetta's cheeks, one by one, splashing onto his knuckles, sinking into the palm of his hand.

"Hey, don't cry. Sorry, it's all my fault."

Her tears were warm, but to Remington, they felt scalding, as though each one was searing his heart.

He thought back to the video Fiona had sent him on his way back. The video captured the chaotic scene by the pool.

He saw that after he left with Evelina in his arms, the pool remained eerily quiet and Lizetta didn't come up for air on her own.

He also saw that it was Cassius who finally dove in to rescue License. Her face was so pale at the time, her eyes tightly shut, her whole being as silent and lifeless as could be.

It was Cassius who laid her flat and performed emergency aid, making her cough out the water she'd inhaled.

When she opened her eyes, they were red and vacant, truly the eyes of someone who had nearly drowned.

She could have died right in front of him. And he was totally clueless.

He couldn't bear to watch the whole video, quickly snuffing out his phone's screen, not daring to see more.

He couldn't bear the thought of what might have happened if Cassius hadn't dived in to save her – if she had sunk to the bottom of the pool forever.

At that moment, he felt a surge of panic and fear like never before, wishing he could stab himself. And now, at the sight of Lizetta's involuntary tears. Remington's heart was in agony, a mix of heartache and helplessness.

His thumb gently traced her tear-streaked face, treating her as delicately as if she were made of fragile glass. But the more he tried to wipe them away, the more the tears seemed to flow.

Remington wrapped his arms around the softly trembling Lizetta, holding her tight as if to

merge her into his body to ease his guilt and lingering fear.

He stroked her hair, bent down to plant a gentle kiss on her, and cooed in a softened voice like when he used to comfort her as a child.

"Liz, stop crying. it's all my stupid fault. I didn't realize you were drowning. I thought you were a good swimmer, that you'd be fine, but I forget that accidents can happen.

I messed up, made you feel cold inside, right? Don't cry; how about you hit me a few times to make it better?"

Lizetta nestled in Remington's arms, her tears soaking his chest. She couldn't believe that even Fiona's rough acting had fooled Remington.

No wonder there were so many slip-ups. Remington had been splashing around in the pool for so long, diving over and over, letting Fiona spin him around.

So it was because he knew she'd nearly had a mishap in the water that day. He was punishing himself, and in his way, apologizing to her.

Fiona wasn't mistaken. Remington did still care. He hadn't disregarded her life. Lizetta had never cried like this even when she fell into the water that time.

She thought the incident was long past, but it turned out the hurt and resentment weren't because she was strong enough to get over it on her own, but because she felt nobody cared, so she put on a brave face.

But they were already at this point; she shouldn't keep longing for this bit of tenderness. Remington's current pity was just for his sister, after all.

Suddenly, Lizetta bit down hard on the spot over Remington's heart. His body tensed for a moment, and then relaxed.

He let her bite him hard, like a little beast taking its revenge. After a while, she eased her bite, and Remington let out a long breath.

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The man's thin lips curved up ever so slightly, as he tousled Lizetta's long hair.

"Alright, alright, did you hurt your teeth? Think you can forgive me, Liz?"

Lizetta let go of him, and hearing his voice laced with amusement, she felt utterly pathetic. Just a few sweet nothings from him, and the knot in her heart started to untie, her grudge against him melting away.

She hung her head, too embarrassed to look up, and just nudged him away with a gruff voice, "Why don't you go take a hot shower?"

She was ready to leave, but Remington held on, not letting her go.

“So, are you still mad? Can you forgive me this time?”

To Lizetta, it seemed pointless. Forgiven or not, what difference did it make? After all, they were on the road to divorce, and this wouldn't change a thing.

She looked up at him, her eyes red, “Didn't you say we were gonna cut ties for good? Does my forgiveness even matter to you?”

Remington furrowed his brows, “Of course, it matters.”

Lizetta's nose tingled again, “Then I don't blame you anymore. Can you let me go now?”

Her response was overly indifferent, leaving Remington with a lump in his throat that he couldn't swallow or spit out.

But Lizetta pushed him away firmly, “I really don't blame you.”

He never had an obligation to rescue her. Even now, his concern was more of his affection

for a sister.

Lizetta thought if there were a next time, between her and Evelina, he would probably choose Evelina again.

Still, his reaction today did give her some peace of mind. She didn't want to hold any resentment towards him. That was enough for them now.

She left the bathroom, closing the door behind her for Remington. But she didn't see him. standing there, motionless for a long time.

Eventually, the man leaned against the wall, feeling somewhat powerless. With a mix of irritation and resignation, he ran his hand through his damp hair and finally turned on the shower, letting the water droplets cascade over him.

Lizetta walked downstairs; the villa was eerily quiet, not a soul in sight. Most likely, everyone had been summoned away by Fiona to give her and Remington some space.

Lizetta, somewhat resigned, went to the kitchen and brewed a cup of tea to chase away the chill for Remington.

She brought the tray back to the bedroom just as Remington was coming out of the bathroom. Wrapped in nothing but a towel around his waist, he was drying his hair with one hand and holding his dripping wallet and phone in the other.

Remembering the crying in the bathroom, Lizetta felt somewhat uncomfortable. She felt embarrassed to look at him; her gaze fell on the phone in his hand.

“That’s a goner, huh? If you knew Grandma Fiona was up to something, you could’ve at least taken your phone out before jumping in.”

Remington tossed the phone and wallet onto the dresser and said, “I didn’t have time to

think of it.”

He had seen the video on the way home, and just as he walked through the door, heard Fiona say Lizetta had fallen into the water drunk.

He panicked, not bothering to take off his coat or pull out his phone. It was after diving in twice and not finding anyone that he came back to his senses.

But Lizetta didn’t quite catch Remington’s drift; feeling all awkward, she bent down and placed the tea on the table.

"I made you some tea; have some. I'll head out now."

She didn't know how to face him, half-dressed as he was. Remington said nothing and didn't stop her. Lizetta hurried to the door, yanking hard but it wouldn't budge.

She frowned, twisting the doorknob and trying again, but the door still wouldn't open. She was flabbergasted when footsteps approached from behind, and Remington came over. "Grandma's usual tactic. Seems like neither of us is getting out today unless we make up."

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Lizetta let go of the doorknob and swung around, fishing her phone out of her pocket.

"Gotta give granny a ring."

Just as she's about to dial, a man's slender fingers swooped in and snatched the phone right out of her grasp.

Lizetta looked up, locking eyes with Remington's deep gaze; his lips were pressed together ever so slightly.

"Is hanging with me really that unbearable?"

Lizetta shook her head hastily, chuckling, "Nah, not at all."

But Remington can tell she's fibbing. His brows knitted together briefly as he swallowed the frustration building inside him, and he spoke softly.

"Let's hold off on that call for a bit. Even if you do call her now, granny's not gonna open the door for us."

Lizetta figured that he's probably right and nodded in agreement.

Silence fell over them again.

Remington was still lounging in a loose-fitting bathrobe, leaving Lizetta clueless about where to rest her eyes. She pursed her lips.

"Drink your tea first.

But Remington stood his ground in front of her without budging an inch. Lizetta looked up, feeling puzzled, as a shadow fell over her.

It's his hand brushing over her eyelids. Lizetta instinctively closed her eyes.

"Do your eyes hurt?"

Remington's fingers gently grazed the reddened corners of her eyes.

She'd been crying her heart out just moments ago, so her eyelids were now puffy.

His touch tickled, causing Lizetta's eyelids and lashes to quiver. She twisted her head away from his touch and opened her eyes, beaming at him with a smile.

"Nope, not hurting. I'm not that delicate."

But that's a lie too.

Remington's hand fell to his side, his thumb and forefinger rubbing together as if they can still feel the damp softness of her eyelids.

He remembered when she first came to the Dashiell family—tough yet silent.

Like a wounded little critter, always on edge, bracing herself against the world, never crying out even when hurt

But she relied on him; she would curl up in his arms at night, sobbing, sharing her woes with him alone.

He wasn't exactly Mr. Nice Guy, because his patience was wearing thin often with her antics.

Back then, he'd pat her head, and sometimes he would scold her with a stern face.

"Get a grip, will ya? Can't you stand up for yourself when you're wronged? You're embarrassing me. Next time, cut the brother act if you're gonna be such a wimp."

He was tough on her, yet she'd just look at him with those teary eyes and smile like a goof.

It melted his heart, making him want to shield her under his wings for life, and keep her hidden away from the world.

But the sweet little girl had to grow up; with her thoughts growing more complex, she no longer spilled them out to him.

He couldn't pinpoint when, but she began to hide herself from him, and the real talk dwindled; now she wouldn't even show her vulnerability easily.

Remington's at a loss on how to cheer her up, unsure what to do with her.

He pushed down the sour feeling in his heart, gently touching the top of her head, saying, "Go take a shower, change your clothes. You're all wet."

Lizetta looked down and sure enough, she's damp from being in his arms earlier in the bathroom.

Not really in the mood to face Remington, she nodded and agreed, "Alright, just make sure to drink your tea, I'm off to shower."

Lizetta grabbed some fresh clothes and headed into the bathroom, where Remington's shower scent still lingered, and the floor was still wet.

She stood there a moment before starting to undress and wash up quickly.

But when she stepped out of the bathroom, fresh and dressed, Remington's nowhere to be seen in the room.

An empty cup sat on the table—he's had his tea.

Lizetta walked up to the door and unlocked it.

Weirdly, it's still locked from the outside; clearly, Fiona didn't let Remington out.

What's the deal?

Lizetta was pondering when a noise came from the window

Drying her hair, she headed toward the sound

Just as she got to the window, it suddenly swung open, a tall, swt shadow veted on the sill from outside

“Ah Lizetta yelped, while stumbling backward her slippers got omen in the carpet, and she toppled over

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Remington hopped through the window and swiftly strode forward, grabbing the woman by the waist and pulling her back to him.

Lizetta threw herself into Remington's arms, while clutching at his clothes; her eyes were wide with shock as she looked up at him.

Their eyes met and Lizetta froze.

Remington was dressed casually in sportswear, his hair, not as meticulously styled as usual, fell loosely around his face.

Not bothering to dry his hair, he left it damp and hanging in front of his eyes. The sunlight streaming in from the window danced in his tresses, making him look years younger, even boyish.

He reminded Lizetta of that handsome young man who used to make her heart race and her cheeks blush when she was younger.

Lizetta's heart skipped a beat; she felt her pulse racing, and her mind going blank.

Then, Remington's eyes twinkled with amusement as he asked, “Scared ya? Why so chicken?”

Lizetta snapped back to reality and pushed Remington away.

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“How on earth did you get in through the window? This is the second floor! If you were in such a hurry to leave, I could have told Grandma.”

She didn’t get to finish her sentence before Remington opened his palm to reveal a few orange candies.

Lizetta froze again as Remington raised his hand, offering the candies to her.

She felt breathless, like she was in a dream.

Boys would climb up to their beloved girl’s window just to give her a single candy; it was an act so sweet and innocent that it almost didn’t seem real.

“What are you spacing out for? See if it’s your favorite orange candy,” Remington said with a laugh in his voice. Seeing her not moving, he unwrapped a candy and brought it to Lizetta’s lips.

Instinctively, she opened her mouth and took it, then the sour–sweet taste of orange spread through her mouth.

Lizetta felt a similar sweetness in her heart.

“Is it good?” Remington asked, reaching out to ruffle her hair.

With the candy he gave her melting in her mouth. Lizette felt his rare tenderness; it felt like she was on cloud nine. Then she looked up.

“It’s very sweet”

Remington seemed pleased with her reply, his face softened as he bent down to look her in the eyes

“Sull mad?”

Lizetta's nose tingled, but she couldn't help but smile genuinely.

Her cheeks flushed a little as she shook her head and said stubbornly, "I told you that I'm not mad anymore."

Remington chuckled, clearly seeing right through her; he was now convinced that she was truly over the incident of falling into the water.

With a mix of exasperation and amusement, he tapped Lizetta on the head.

"Such a no-hoper, other women would demand gifts, cars, jewels, houses when they're mad. Why are you still as easy to please as when you were a kid, all happy with just a candy?"

Lizetta, still with the orange candy in her mouth, took the remaining candies from Remington's palm and said with pursed lips, "I just love candy, it's sweet."

She turned around, but Remington reached out with a laugh.

"Let me taste how sweet it is, how could it be better than a bank card or jewels."

But Lizetta clenched her fist, stuffing the candies into her pocket and guarding them, "You found the candies yourself, and you can get more if you want. These are mine now."

The woman guarding her candies was like a cat protecting its food, or like a child.

Adorable.

Remington found it amusing, and he bent down to scoop her into his arms. Lizetta let out a yelp of surprise, while instinctively holding onto him and looking up at him.

Before she could get a good look at his face, a shadow loomed over her.

He leaned down and kissed her, his tongue exploring, finding the half-eaten piece of orange candy and sharing the sour-sweet flavor with her.

Blushing in annoyance, Lizetta punched him with her fists. Remington walked a few steps, with her in his arms, then laid her down on the bed and pressed down for a deeper kiss.

His lips and tongue were hot, and the orange candy didn't last long under their fervent movements; its lingering taste quickly dissipated.

Lizetta's face was flushed, and her body turned weak; she was kissed into a dizzy state.

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slid down her back to her waist and hips, and his body also responded

ngly the air between them was hot and charged.

A breeze blew in from the wide-open window, bringing with it a hint of coolness.

Chapter 199

The coolness suddenly snapped Lizetta awake.

Her eyes flew open, and in a flurry, she shoved the man on top of her.

Remington felt her resistance and let go, lifting his head.

Lizetta's face was flushed as she turned her head away, gasping for air with a soft whimper.

“No, don’t.”

Remington froze, with his Adam’s apple bobbing; he had used all his self-control to roll off

her. He unzipped his hoodie and stood up, heading over to the window.

Lizetta sat up silently, awkwardly fixing her messy clothes and hair.

She hung her head low, trying to calm her nerves.

Behind her, Remington’s voice broke the silence, “Your hair is still wet, come over here.”

Lizetta looked back and saw him back to his normal self; with a hairdryer plugged in, he gestured her to come over.

With her hair still damp, she got up and walked over.

“I’ve got it.”

But Remington pressed on her shoulders, making her sit on the bed.

He flicked the switch, and warm air started to blow onto her scalp.

Lizetta sat up straight, feeling his fingers gently weaving through her hair.

Her hair was nice—silky and straight, thick and dense. Remington seemed quite taken, spending a long time drying it.

When he finally turned off the dryer, Lizetta suddenly looked up and said,

“Remember the orange candy you fed me that day? Do you still remember it?”

Remington put down the dryer, “Which day are we talking about?*

“The day you brought me back to the Dashiell family, fourteen years ago.”

Remington thought for a moment, but the details were a blur, even though he remembered how he brought her back.

Seeing the look on his face, Lizetta knew he had forgotten it, and she said,

“That day, I nearly died at the hands of Hans Gardenia. It was a close shave, and all I could see was red, and the taste of blood in my mouth. You brought me back, called the

family doctor, but I wouldn’t let the doc near me. Then you popped an orange candy in my mouth, and I still remember what you said.”

A faint smile played on Lizetta’s lips, “You said, ‘Eat the candy, and it won’t hurt. Is it sweet? Let the doctor check you out, and I will give you a whole jar of these candies, okay? There are other flavors too. Liz, wanna try them?’”

Hearing this, Remington seemed to grasp at a faint memory.

He chuckled, with his lips curving slightly, “So, I managed to cheer you up with just a candy back then?”

Lizetta nodded with a smile, while her gaze dropped to hide the surge of emotions.

He didn’t know that this was the first candy she had tasted in two years since being abandoned by her parents from the Hawthorne family at the age of six.

That candy was from him.

After that day, she was a child with candies again, and it was like a beam of light shining into her world.

The next day, Remington did give her a jar full of colorful fruit-flavored candies.

But all these years, her favorite remained the orange-flavored ones; she always remembered the taste of that candy from that night.

“Yeah, after all these years, that’s the only trick you’ve got!” Lizetta playfully stuck her tongue out at Remington.

Remington clicked his tongue, while his deep eyes showed an unusual hint of amusement, which made him look very tender.

“Teasing me, huh? But it seems like this trick works just fine on you.”

Lizetta’s ears turned a bit red as she looked down.

She sat there, looking exceptionally soft and tender.

Remington leaned forward slightly, cupping her small face and lifting her head.

“Still need candy to be cheered up at this age, feeling shy?”

Lizetta’s cheeks warmed, with a touch of bashfulness in her expression.

Remington suddenly said, “Back then, a candy sweet-talked a little sister. Now, can a candy sweet-talk you into being Mrs. Dashiell again?”

Lizetta's hands clenched suddenly on the edge of the bed.

Her breath hitched for a moment; looking at Remington's now serious, intense gaze, she gently but firmly shook her head, smiling,

"But I've grown up, not so easily fooled anymore, cut it out"

She reached out, pushing away Remington's hands from her face, and hood us

Chapter 200

"I'm gonna give granny a ring. Got work to do this arvo, bet you do too, right."

She hightailed it to the door, where her phone had been left on a low cabinet by the entrance, courtesy of Remington.

She didn't dare look back at Remington, as she felt all kinds of emotions mixed up; part of her hoped that he'd grab her and spill some sweet nothings to make her stay.

But fear had the upper hand—she was scared that if he did try to hold her back, she wouldn't have the heart to walk away

Turns out she'd overestimated her place in his heart, though. She made the call, and Remington didn't peep another word.

Guess his earlier chit-chat was just him blowing smoke.

After Lizetta hung up, Tina was summoned by Fiona to get the door.

“The old lady’s waiting downstairs,” Tina said.

So Lizetta and Remington went down together, and Fiona gave them the once-over as soon as she laid eyes on them.

The old lady’s heart skipped a beat.

This doesn’t look like a pair who’ve kissed and made up, does it?

“Remington, I told you to sweet-talk your wife. Did you? Did you apologize properly?”

Granny’s brows knitted in anger as she waved Lizetta over.

Lizetta went to her, taking Fiona’s hand and sitting beside her.

“Granny, Remi did woo me, and he apologized. I’ve forgiven him. Now I know Remi didn’t mean to not save me that day, and I truly don’t hold it against him.”

“So, are you two good now?”

Granny took another look at them.

Maybe they had made up but were too shy to show it?

Lizetta glanced at Remington, who had a frosty look as he settled into an armchair.

He said to Fiona, “Granny, you don’t need to worry about us. Even if we split, she’ll still be the Dashiell family’s daughter.”

With those words, “still the Dashiell family’s daughter,” Lizetta felt like her heart was being yanked hard.

She felt her nose tingled, and she almost burst into tears.

She'd been so set on getting a divorce, longing to return to being the younger sister.

Now that she'd got her wish, she should be over the moon, but all she felt was a spreading bitterness.

Yet, she managed a smile and nodded, "Yeah, Granny."

"What divorce! Why on earth would you split up? I won't have it! Over my dead body!" Fiona fumed.

Lizetta hurried to calm the storm, coaxing, "Granny, it's something Remi and I have agreed on. We both think it's for the best, and we hope you'll respect our decision."

As Remington watched Lizetta's eager and hopeful smile, a flicker of scorn crossed his eyes. His knuckles whitened on the armrest from his grip.

"No way! Remington, say something for crying out loud! Liz is young, she's impulsive, and what about you? Are you just playing around, trying to give me a heart attack?"

Granny was furious, glaring at Remington, who glanced at Lizetta again..

He saw her anxious look; probably she was scared he'd change his mind and block her escape route.

With Granny steaming up, this woman still wasn't budging an inch; she was hell-bent on divorce like a bull that won't be pushed.

If the Dashiell family and the Mrs. Dashiell title had become chains that kept her from smiling, why keep forcing things?

He said firmly, “Granny, she’s not a kid anymore. She knows what she’s doing, and nobody can stop her. I’ve got an important meeting this afternoon, gotta head back to the office.”

“Damn it! I’m not done with you, get back here!”

Fiona was so mad that she started thumping the couch, but Remington didn’t look back.

His tall figure quickly disappeared into the foyer; his exit was all cold shoulders and impatience.

Lizetta’s eyelashes drooped, but her right hand clenched the candies in her pocket.

Their story started years back with a single candy.

And now, it ended with these few sweets—full circle, wasn’t it?

Guess that’s that.