

# The Last Goodbye Chapter 1

I was known throughout Brightville as the hopeless romantic, devoted to my wife, Valerie Lindberg, as if she were my very life.

But to her, our marriage was nothing more than a cage she desperately wanted to escape.

We were locked in this struggle for a full decade. I humbled myself completely, just to hold on to the title of her husband.

However, she did everything she could to break free, cycling through one young lover after another—even bringing them into our bed to indulge in their wild pleasures.

I thought we'd continue torturing each other like this for the rest of our lives.

Then the doctor told me I had late-stage brain cancer.

Holding that diagnosis in my hands, I looked back on everything I'd been through and felt nothing but exhaustion. Thus, I made my decision—I'd divorce Valerie and enjoy the three months I had left.

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After sitting alone in the hospital corridor for what felt like hours, I finally put away the piece of paper that sentenced me to a countdown on my life. Reluctantly, I dragged myself back to the suburban villa.

To my surprise, Valerie was home.

As I listened to the escalating sounds coming from the bedroom, my heart twisted in the familiar sharp pain it had experienced countless times before.

But this time, it quickly faded, leaving only a bitter smile on my lips.

"Maybe this is for the best. At least I won't have to go around searching for her."

After a brief hesitation, I knocked on the door.

In the past, I never would've disturbed her at a time like this.

She had a fiery temper, especially when she was interrupted. And if her pleasure was cut short, she'd fly into a rage, smashing all the antiques I painstakingly gathered, just to vent her anger.

I used to feel the sting of my wasted efforts, hating myself even more for not being able to satisfy her in bed. As such, no matter how much my heart felt like it was breaking, no matter how bloody my hands became from pounding the walls, I never once interrupted her.

But now, I wasn't going to waste another second.

I didn't know how long I'd been knocking before I finally heard those familiar footsteps inside.

The door swung open, and there stood Valerie, her hair in disarray, a light sheen of sweat on her forehead, and an unnatural flush still coloring her cheeks.

The first words that escaped her lips were, "What's the matter? Couldn't handle eavesdropping anymore? Want me to help you get laid?"

She blocked the doorway with her slender frame. Her brows knitted tightly together, and her cold eyes were filled with nothing but disgust.

"Valerie, I want to talk to you."

Though I'd known for a long time that she didn't love me, the moment her gaze pierced me with that unmistakable disdain, it felt like a knife had been driven straight into my heart.

The pain made my voice catch in my throat, but my tone was more resolute than ever.

She hissed, "It had better be something urgent!"

Perhaps it was the determination in my eyes, but Valerie finally pulled her robe tighter and headed downstairs, throwing one last dagger of a glare my way as she walked past.

I eventually mustered the courage to say to her, "Let's get a divorce. I've already prepared the divorce papers. All you need to do is sign them."

Watching Valerie reluctantly sit on the couch, I forced myself to swallow the bitterness and handed her the papers. She didn't even bother to glance at them, only scowling deeper with impatience.

"It's been years, and this is the best you've got? Don't you find this little act boring, Jeffrey?"

"I'm serious this time. I've already signed them. You can give them to your lawyer and make it official right away," I said calmly, ignoring the contempt and hatred in her eyes.

Valerie glanced up at me, as if trying to gauge whether I was telling the truth. After what felt like an eternity, she reached out and took the papers at last.

“What’s this? You’re giving up the house, the savings, the shares? You don’t want anything?”

She flipped through the pages and frowned at me in disbelief.

I replied, “Yeah, they’re just material things. They’re of no use to me now.”

Over the years, I’d saved up a little money—not much, but enough to live worry-free for the next three months.

With my parents long gone and no other family left, there was nothing holding me back. I didn’t want a penny from her; I just wanted a clean break.

But instead of signing the papers like I expected, Valerie threw them down in irritation.

“Who do you think you’re fooling? Trying to play the victim by walking away with nothing, so everyone will point fingers at me? If you want a divorce, fine, but have the lawyer draft a new agreement.

“The villa is yours, pick any sports car you want, and I’ll throw in another ten million dollars. Don’t think you’re going to make me look like the bad guy here.”

She shot me a withering look and stormed off.

I wanted to call after her, but my head suddenly throbbed with such intensity that the world spun around me.

“Are you trying to fake being sick again to get sympathy? Jeffrey, even if you died right here, I wouldn’t spare you a second glance.”

Just before I lost consciousness, her voice echoed in my ears, as cold and full of contempt as ever—but this time with a faint trace of panic.

When I came to, I found myself lying in a hospital bed. Sensing someone nearby, I looked up instinctively, but Valerie wasn’t there.

Instead, Andrew Stuart was in a chair, clumsily peeling an apple.

Andrew joined the company three years ago. Back then, he was barely over 20 years of age, in the prime of his youth. He had a face that looked as harmless as a puppy’s, a six-foot frame, and a body rippling with muscle—perfectly playing up that irresistible contrast.

He quickly amassed a legion of adoring fans and caught Valerie's eye as well. She spoiled him endlessly, not just with luxury cars and villas, but with the best opportunities the industry had to offer.

She even gave him company shares and made an exception to let him attend board meetings.

Valerie devoted every free moment she had to him. They were inseparable, indulging in their desires wherever they pleased—at the company, hotels, even in the villa we once shared, leaving their mark everywhere.

Emboldened by Valerie's affection, Andrew transformed from an innocent young man into an ambitious wolf who treated me with blatant disrespect.

He constantly leaked information to the press, suggesting that he would soon replace me as the husband of Brightville's richest woman, with every intention of taking over my place in her life.

During his time in the spotlight, Valerie mentioned divorce almost daily, even openly declaring to the media that she planned to marry Andrew.

But I clung to our marriage and refused to let go, which only prolonged their frustration. Because of that, Andrew saw me as a thorn in his side, the one obstacle standing in his way.

"Jeffrey, you're awake. Are you feeling any better? Oh wait, I forgot. You're in the late stages of brain cancer. There's no getting better for you now."

Andrew paused his movements when he noticed I had woken up. He feigned concern while his voice, only loud enough for us to hear, dripped with mockery.

The satisfaction in his eyes was evident.

I didn't have the strength or the desire to argue with him, so I slowly closed my eyes. Then, out of nowhere, I heard a set of familiar footsteps approaching the door.

Valerie came to see me in the hospital? Could it be that she found out about my cancer and was starting to feel regret, maybe even a bit of pity?

The sudden wave of hope that washed over me drowned out the bitterness in my heart. I snapped my eyes open, only to be met with the same icy expression.

"It's just a cold and fever, and here you are acting like you're on your deathbed. You're pathetic. Didn't you want a divorce?"

“Well then, sign the papers, pack your things, and get out of my sight so I don’t have to look at your face again!”

Valerie shot me a glare full of disdain, her words full of contempt. It was as though she were addressing something unworthy of being acknowledged as human.

“Valerie, don’t be mad. Jeffrey’s just too in love with you. He wants you by his side so badly that he’s pretending to be sick. It’s pretty sad, actually.”

Andrew stood up and draped his arm around Valerie’s shoulders, pretending to be understanding while falsely explaining on my behalf. Yet, he deliberately touched on her most sensitive nerve.

Ever since Valerie revived the Lindberg family with the support of my family, she had come to despise anyone mentioning my so-called devotion to her.

Andrew knew exactly what he was doing, adding fuel to the fire.

As expected, Valerie exploded in anger. Abandoning her polished socialite facade, she let out a harsh, cold laugh directed at me.

“Love me? He’s not even worthy of that! Sign the papers now, take the money, and disappear from my life. If not, don’t blame me for what happens next!”

With that, she grabbed her handbag and stormed out. Andrew quickly followed, but not before casting one last mocking glance at me, silently mouthing, “Die, loser.”