

The Last Goodbye Chapter 3

"It's not your fault; he's just acting out," Valerie said, looking up at Andrew with a tenderness I had never been the recipient of.

"Valerie, you don't have to comfort me. I'm not as smart as Jeffrey, and I'm always so careless. If it weren't for me, Jeffrey wouldn't have run off and left you suffering from stomach pain while you searched for him."

Despite Valerie's attempt to soothe him, Andrew didn't back down. Instead, he leaned into his role, eyes slightly reddened and voice softened, painting himself as the epitome of innocence.

He looked like the most harmless person on earth, and Valerie's heart melted instantly. Her delicate fingers brushed against his cheek, her voice full of sympathy. "Alright, don't be sad. It's not your fault."

Watching the two of them being so affectionate, I felt a sharp pain in my heart, as if a thorn had lodged itself deep within.

But I quickly forced myself to let go, realizing how foolishly fragile I still was.

Valerie had never hesitated to flaunt her relationship with him in front of me, even going so far as to bring him into our home, letting him wear my clothes, and sleep in our bed.

A few sweet words from her to him were nothing in comparison.

A wary smile crossed my face as I felt my heart harden. I stepped aside, intending to leave. But before I could, Valerie grabbed my wrist.

"Jeffrey, how long are you going to keep this up? Don't push your luck—my patience is limited!"

She glared at me, her patience worn thin as if I was the one being unreasonable.

"Valerie, we're divorced. You don't need to tolerate me any longer," I replied, a deep sense of exhaustion washing over me. I didn't want to argue anymore. "I have things to do. I'm leaving."

I wrenched my wrist from her grip, my tone calm, though I could see that my composure took Valerie by surprise. Her eyes widened in shock before narrowing with renewed fury.

"Jeffrey, I warned you not to test my limits. The Page family is finished. Crushing you would be as easy as crushing an ant!"

Her eyes blazed with rage as she hissed the words, her voice filled with venom.

Her outburst barely registered with me. All I could think of was leaving and finding somewhere quiet. I started to walk away, not even sparing her another glance.

But that only pushed Valerie further. She suddenly shoved me against the wall, her slim but strong fingers closing around my throat.

“Jeffrey, what do you want? If you keep pushing me, I won’t show you mercy!”

Her voice was low and dangerous. For a split second, I thought she might actually kill me. Given her current status, her powerful legal team could easily cover it up even if she did.

The old me might have welcomed death at her hands. It would have spared me from witnessing her with someone else, from the agony of loving her, trapped in a hellish existence where every effort was in vain.

But now, I only wanted to live out my remaining three months in peace, not for anyone else, but for myself. I took a deep breath, summoning all my strength to break free from her grasp.

However, no matter how hard I tried, her hand remained firmly around my neck, unyielding.

For the first time, I realized just how strong Valerie truly was.

After our marriage, I defied my parents’ objections and used Page Group’s working capital to rescue the Lindberg family business from the brink of collapse.

This decision strained the company’s finances, and it wasn’t long before we started going downhill.

As the reality of our situation set in, Valerie’s true nature began to surface. She was no longer the gentle, caring woman I had married; she became distant, forbidding me from even getting close to her.

She hired two highly skilled bodyguards who followed her everywhere. And when that didn’t seem sufficient, she took up kickboxing and trained diligently for years.

I watched her every move, understanding her intentions all too well. The pain of it was overwhelming, but I never touched her again.

Her martial arts skills never had a chance to be tested.

“You’ve always wanted freedom, haven’t you? I… I’ve signed the divorce papers.” My voice came out strained, gasping for breath as the air in my lungs was slowly squeezed out.

“We were once married. Just let me go, and let yourself go too,” I pleaded.

“Yes, I want freedom,” Valerie hissed. “But you forced me to marry you and ruined my life. You will never escape, not ever! Even if we divorce, with my family’s power, you’ll never be out of my grasp.”

Her words dripped with hatred, and her grip on my throat tightened until her knuckles turned white, as if she wished to snap my neck.

A wave of bitter despair washed over me. Yes, I had proposed the marriage, but she was the one who had come to me, tearfully begging for my help to save her family.

I had given her a choice: either agree to Page Group’s acquisition of Lindberg Group, making it a subsidiary under her management while keeping all the old employees, or I would invest a significant sum to ensure the success of their life-saving project, but she would have to marry me.

She chose marriage.

As a businessman, investing Page Group’s working capital into Lindberg Group was a high-risk move. Naturally, I expected a high return.

To me, Valerie was the most satisfying return on that investment. Even now, I didn’t see my actions as wrong, yet she despised me for it.

“Marriage was your choice. I didn’t force you. Valerie, don’t you think this has gone too far?”

I struggled to speak as the suffocating pressure grew unbearable, and my vision blurred as my mind teetered on the edge of consciousness.

Nevertheless, I forced myself to stay awake, to keep my eyes open and fix them on Valerie, whose face twisted with hatred.

For ten years, I had never once defended myself, enduring her loathing and resentment in silence, hoping that one day she would realize the truth and return to my side.

But I could no longer bear to leave this world burdened by unjust accusations. I had to clear my name, even if it meant dying at her hands.

“Shut up! It’s all your fault! All your fault!”

Valerie's fury reached a fever pitch, her eyes wild and vicious, like a feral animal driven mad. Her teeth clenched so hard I thought they might break, and she squeezed my throat with all her might.

My neck felt like it was about to snap. I struggled to breathe, but there was no air.

Suddenly, a bitter, metallic taste filled my mouth. I felt something warm and thick rush up my throat, spilling out from my lips.