

The Last Goodbye Chapter 4

“Jeffrey, what are you playing at?”

Valerie’s voice cut through the air, sharp and distrustful. The sight of blood on my lips seemed to momentarily unsettle her, and she instinctively loosened her grip.

Her brows remained furrowed while her eyes were still indifferent and filled with contempt. It was as if she believed I had bitten my cheek on purpose, faking the blood just to win her sympathy.

“Valerie, I don’t have time to play games with you anymore.” I wiped the blood from my mouth, my voice flat and emotionless. My eyes reflected nothing but a hollow emptiness.

“We’re done. From now on, we owe each other nothing.”

“Jeffrey, you—” Valerie began, her eyes narrowing as she glared at me.

She looked as if she wanted to stop me from leaving, but then her gaze fell on her blood-stained fingers. A flicker of something—perhaps guilt—crossed her face.

I took advantage of her hesitation and walked away.

Andrew, who had been lurking nearby, shot me a triumphant look, his lips parting as if he was eager to spew some snide remark.

I had no patience for him. With a hard glare, I silenced him.

He froze, his words catching in his throat.

After leaving the hotel, I didn’t head to the old Page family estate as planned. Instead, I made my way to the cemetery on the eastern outskirts of Netherwood, where my parents and child were buried.

Yes, I once had the chance to be a father. But Valerie, in her cruelty, couldn’t even allow that.

Shortly after we married, she unexpectedly became pregnant. Yet, instead of joy, she was filled with loathing for the tiny life growing inside her.

Without so much as a word to me, she decided to get rid of the baby.

By the time I arrived at the hospital, the child I had longed for, who shared my blood, was already gone, reduced to a pool of blood and tissue.

I remembered that day vividly—collapsing in the hallway outside the operating room, nearly losing my mind with rage and grief. However, I couldn't bring myself to blame Valerie.

I convinced myself that we had time, that we would have another chance, and that eventually, she would come to share my longing for a child.

But from that day onward, she never let me touch her again. Instead, she began to surround herself with a string of young men, becoming more brazen with each passing day.

Unable to bear the thought of losing my first child, I asked the doctor to preserve what was left and had the remains made into a specimen. I then found a beautiful spot and laid her to rest.

Now, kneeling beside the small grave, I gently touched the headstone, feeling a deep, painful gratitude that I had made that decision.

At least I had a place to mourn—to remember. After I died, this little headstone would be the only proof that she ever existed.

I swept the dust from the headstone, placing a pink princess dress and a Barbie doll in front of it.

The ultrasound had shown that Valerie was carrying a girl. If she had been born, she would be nearly nine years old now, hence the gifts.

After saying my goodbyes, I forced myself to stand, leaning on my knees for support. Then, I moved to the nearby double grave where my parents were buried.

“Mom, Dad, I'm so sorry. It's all my fault. If I hadn't stubbornly insisted on marrying Valerie, our family wouldn't have fallen, and you both could have enjoyed your old age in peace.”

My voice cracked as I knelt, staring at the smiling faces on their headstone. The pain in my heart was unbearable. Tears I had been holding back for so long finally fell, and I choked on my sobs.

If I hadn't diverted a large sum of Page Group's working capital into Lindberg Group, the company wouldn't have faced a financial crisis.

Dad wouldn't have suffered a fatal heart attack under the pressure of impending bankruptcy, and Mom wouldn't have succumbed to depression, passing away from the sorrow of losing him.

My vision blurred with tears as the weight of regret bore down on me. The pain was overwhelming.

If I could go back in time, I would never have gotten involved with Lindberg Group—I wouldn't even want to know Valerie. But there was no changing the past; some mistakes could never be undone.

Perhaps it was due to the grief, but my head grew heavy, and I leaned against the tombstone, my eyes closing involuntarily. As I drifted into what felt like unconsciousness, I had a vision.

On the distant lawn, I saw my parents, holding hands with a little girl dressed in a pink princess dress, playing happily. She had a Barbie doll in her arms, and when she turned to look at me, her eyes sparkled like the stars.

She was the most adorable child I had ever seen, exactly how I imagined my unborn daughter would grow to be.

"Mom, Dad, Nina, wait for me... Soon... We'll all be together again," I whispered, leaning against the cold stone, eventually losing consciousness.

I thought I would die miserably in some forgotten corner just like that, but to my surprise, I woke up again.

When I opened my eyes, the first faces I saw were Valerie's and Andrew's.

The sight of them brought a wave of exhaustion over me. I didn't want to engage in any more meaningless arguments, so I let my eyes close again.

But Valerie wasn't ready to let me go. The moment our eyes met, her impatience turned to anger, a fury that consumed her.

"Jeffrey, how long are you going to keep up this act? You talk about divorce, refuse to go home with me, then run off to the cemetery to cry and pass out, just to get photographed by reporters. Now everyone is accusing me of being ungrateful. Are you happy now?"

Valerie's voice was seething with rage, her eyes blazing with a fire that only made her look more striking. Even in her fury, she was stunning.

Once, her beauty was the most powerful weapon against me—a single tear could soften my heart, and a simple smile would make me fall for her all over again.

Now, all I felt was indifference, tinged with a growing resentment.

If I had never met her, I would still be the proud, respected heir of the Page family. I wouldn't be reduced to fighting with a pretentious guy, losing each time, and even risking my life.

But most of all, I hated myself for failing to see the ruthlessness behind her beautiful face.

"Jeffrey, it's all my fault. I shouldn't have come between you and Valerie," Andrew chimed in, his voice filled with feigned sincerity.

"If you're willing to clear up this misunderstanding and tell the media it was all false reporting, I'll leave Brightville for good and never come back."

Seeing the murderous look in Valerie's eyes, Andrew couldn't resist showing a flash of triumph before launching into his act. His words were so earnest that even I felt a twinge of emotion.

As expected of a top actor, his acting skills were flawless.

"Valerie, don't be angry. You'll hurt yourself," Andrew said, turning back to Valerie. "When I'm gone, please take care of yourself. Eat your meals on time, and don't drink alcohol."

His eyes began to well up with tears, and he looked as if he was torn between staying and leaving.

"Andrew, can you please stay out of this?" Valerie's tone shifted from anger to concern as she instinctively reached out to stop him. But before she could, she suddenly gagged, a dry retch escaping her lips.