

## The Last Goodbye Chapter 9

I had no choice but to close the drawer and say, "Let's go."

I could get a copy of my medical report easily enough. However, it wasn't polite to keep Zoe waiting.

Before I even entered the room, I could hear the two ladies conversing. Valerie was in a pretty good mood. Her tone was a little more lively than usual.

The other woman spoke at an even pace, and her tone was warm. That voice had to belong to Zoe.

I couldn't resist increasing my pace. If possible, I wanted Zoe to drag me to the hospital right away to get tested.

A few steps forward took me to the end of the stairs. The two ladies talking in the living room came into sight then.

Valerie was wearing a black silk dress, and her long hair was draped over her left shoulder. She had put makeup on, so her eyebrows looked amazing, and her red lips were stunning. She was like a blooming rose on a stem.

When she spoke, her gaze was warm. Her usual stoicism that kept people away was gone.

The woman sitting opposite her was wearing a white dress. Only a section of her dark hair was tied up, and her face was breathtaking. Her gaze shone with love and serenity. She was wearing a pair of glasses with silver frames.

A small grin remained on her lips the entire time. She had her full focus on Valerie and was listening to the latter's words intently. Every now and then, Zoe would nod in response.

In a way, Zoe was more like a lotus flower. She seemed innocent yet gracious, and was the kind of beauty that could be admired from a distance.

I couldn't believe that the Zoe in question was that young.

For a moment there, I hesitated. I had just lifted my leg to take a step forward, but I stopped short.

I wondered if a doctor as young as her was really that capable.

Zoe noticed me then. She tilted her head and shifted her gaze toward the stairs.

When she saw me, she was momentarily stunned.

Valerie traced her line of sight and turned around as well. When she saw me, her lips curved into a mocking grin. She turned her attention back to Zoe and said, “The patient is here.”

I walked down the stairs and sat on the other couch.

“You do look rather pale. Do you have your medical report with you?” asked Zoe, getting straight to the point.

Ever since I began walking down the stairs, Zoe’s sight had been fixed on me. She was observing me as a trained medical expert.

I shook my head in response. After all, I didn’t have my medical report—not anymore, at least.

I heard a scoff then. Valerie had one hand over her lips. She said, “Zoe is a renowned neurologist. She has so many patients that people can’t even queue to have her see them. Don’t show her a report that says you have a dumb flu or something. It’d just embarrass you.”

Her nonchalant stance and her mocking tone suggested that she didn’t care about me at all.

I had already gotten used to Valerie’s attitude. Hence, my emotions didn’t go into overdrive. There wasn’t even a ripple in my heart.

My hands, which were on my lap, slowly clenched up. The cloth I gripped in my palm was drenched from my sweat. The icy wind from that night blew over me, and its chill seeped into the deepest part of my bones.

My body trembled uncontrollably once.

When I looked into Valerie’s eyes, I suddenly felt the urge to ask something. I wondered if she knew what Andrew did.

“What are you looking at me for? The doctor is waiting for you,” said Valerie sarcastically. She jutted her chin to urge me to respond.

That was when I came around and replied, “Dr. Sanders, I don’t have my medical report with me. When I’m free, I will retrieve it from the hospital and get it to you. Will that do?”

Zoe frowned and glanced at Valerie.

That sideways glance hinted that she wasn't happy with me. However, she didn't want to make Valerie feel bad, so she didn't complain out loud.

The ambiance in the room temporarily turned cold.

The silence only lasted for a second or two, but it made me feel on edge.

I could have been direct and told them that Andrew had hidden my medical report away. However, I knew that as soon as I spoke up, Valerie would defend him. There was so much drama happening behind the scenes.

Causing more uncertainty was not something I wanted.

Hence, the only thing I could do was claim that the report was at the hospital. That still wasn't the appropriate way to do things, though.

I had already known that Zoe would be there that day. Yet, I did not get my medical report ready in advance. That was a mistake on my end.

I couldn't let Valerie mislead Zoe, though.

"Dr. Sanders, I took some photos of my reports and have a record on my phone. Please take a look at them," I said. I fished my phone out and got the photos in question on display. After that, I handed my phone to Zoe.

She didn't show her distaste in the matter. She simply accepted the phone and examined the photos closely.

Valerie sneered. She didn't say a word until after Zoe finished scanning the pictures. She said, "Zoe, take a good look. Don't miss any transparent watermarks that might be there."

"I took these photos myself. These weren't downloaded from the internet. You can see the time and date the photo was taken," I said to defend myself.

Zoe checked the location and time. She kept her lips shut and never said a word. In a way, she agreed with me in silence.

Valerie took the phone just then. When she saw the details of that photo, a hint of suspicion flashed past her eyes.

The time and date indicated that the photo was taken when I first got hospitalized.

Valerie looked up at me. Her gaze, which had always been icy toward me, actually showed that she was swaying.

“Dr. Sanders, can you tell me a little more about my condition?”

I did my best to avoid looking at Valerie. I simply waited for Zoe to answer.

My intention was for Zoe to speak of my condition out loud while Valerie was sitting right there.

Valerie might not believe me, but she would believe Zoe.

I wondered what would happen after Valerie learned that I wasn't lying to her and did, indeed, have a brain tumor. I didn't know if she would feel even a shred of guilt or sorrow.

“From the looks of this photo, your condition is not ideal. There is a mass in the left hemisphere of your brain. I can't dismiss the possibility of a tumor being there. I can give you a more accurate diagnosis if I can get my hands on the original x-ray,” replied Zoe.

She spoke at an even pace. After she finished speaking, she turned her attention to me and used her finger to push her glasses up. Her lips curved into a grin before she added, “Naturally, that diagnosis is completely dependent on the basis that this photo is not a fake.”

A single sentence was all it took to deliver a fatal hit to my heart.

At the end of the day, she trusted Valerie more. She had shown that she didn't buy what I said about not having a medical report with me.

A sense of helplessness bubbled up from the deepest part of my heart.

I truly wanted to grab everybody by the collar and ask them why they didn't believe me.

I wondered if I had to die right in front of them to make them believe that I truly was sick.

“Don't worry, Dr. Sanders. That photo is absolutely true,” I replied. In the end, all my feelings were distilled into a powerless defense.

“Is that your brain scan?” asked Valerie.

I no longer had the energy to answer. All I could do was respond in silence.

If only Valerie believed me, even a little. Given the ample influence she held, she could easily figure out if I was lying simply by investigating it.

Unfortunately, she refused to look into it. All she believed in was her own deductions.

That was, in a way, my fault.

Valerie had always had men on her side. That never stopped, and she replaced them as frequently as she changed her clothes. I had long convinced myself that I didn't care.

It wasn't until both Andrew and Valerie repeatedly showed up on the headlines of gossip magazines did I sense the looming danger. Thus, I bribed a doctor to tell Valerie that I was sick back then.

The relationship between Valerie and I wasn't that bad at the time. When she learned that I was sick, she still came to keep me company. The two of us had a comparatively peaceful period.

That only lasted until my lie was exposed, of course.

"Let's not talk about this anymore. Is Jane still working here? I want to eat her meatloaf. I couldn't find any good food while living overseas, and the dish I missed the most was her meatloaf," said Zoe.

She skillfully changed the topic. Zoe no longer wanted to dwell on my issues.

I eagerly stared at her, looking for an opportunity to voice up. I needed to catch the opportunity to make my next appointment.

After all, Zoe wasn't the kind of specialist that anyone could get in touch with. I needed to hold onto the opportunity while I still could.

Unfortunately, Zoe never even looked at me the entire time I was there. She was chatting and laughing with Valerie and refused to give me the chance to speak up.

"I already had that prepared for you," replied Valerie. She got up and wrapped her arm around Zoe's shoulder before heading over to the dining room.

Just like that, the words were stuck in my throat.