

## I Just Loved You Chapter 23

By the time Gianna finished her work for the day, Steven was standing nearby, his voice raspy as he called out to her.

“Gianna... can we take a walk?”

She turned to look at him. After a moment of thought, she agreed—partially because there were things she needed to clarify. She didn’t want him lingering around, causing unnecessary attention. That day alone, her patients and colleagues had peppered her with questions about her connection to him.

As they walked, Steven broke the silence with a seemingly random remark.

“Gianna, you’ve really succeeded.”

Gianna glanced at him, puzzled.

“I remember you once said, back in that mountain village, that your greatest wish was to become a doctor who could save lives. And now you’ve done it.”

His words took her by surprise, stirring a faint memory. It was her 22nd birthday, the 13th day after she had saved Steven’s life.

There had been no cake or candles that day -just a poorly crafted wreath he had woven from wild grass.

Gianna’s lips curved slightly at the memory, but the emotion behind it was no longer love, only a bittersweet sense of nostalgia.

“I can’t believe you still remember that,” she said softly.

Steven hesitated, his lips parting as if to say something more, but the words caught in his throat.

That day, he had also made her a promise- a vow to love her forever and to return with her to that tranquil village to live peacefully from time to time.

But he had broken that promise.

Once they left the village, Chloe re-entered his life, and Gianna became an afterthought.

The weight of his guilt was suffocating. He despised his past self—the one who had been so easily swayed, who had abandoned the woman he loved for fleeting temptations.

If only he had been more steadfast, truer to his heart, perhaps he wouldn't have lost her.

"Gianna," he said, his voice filled with regret, "I'm sorry. I was foolish and hurt you deeply. I hope... I hope you can forgive me."

Gianna maintained a faint, composed smile—neither overly warm nor distant.

"I've already forgiven you."

"Really?" Steven's eyes lit up, hope surging through him. He had prepared countless apologies, yet none of them were needed.

"Yes, really. But now that we've said what needed to be said, it's time for you to go back home. This isn't where you belong. It's not good for you, and it disrupts my work."

Her forgiveness was light as a feather—just two simple words that carried no weight. But the idea of returning to the way things once were? That was impossible.

Gianna turned and headed back to her dormitory, leaving Steven standing alone in the dark.

He didn't need further explanation to understand what she meant. This was the answer he least wanted. She had forgiven him, yes, but only because she had let him go. There was no anger left, no lingering resentment—only indifference. She didn't need him anymore, and that realization crushed him.

Both of them were lost in their own thoughts. Unbeknownst to them, far off, hidden in the shadows of another building, a pair of eyes watched them intently, the figure unmoving.

In the days that followed, Steven refused to leave. After finally finding Gianna, how could he walk away so easily?

He began trying to care for her in any way he could, asking after her well-being, bringing her small comforts. Even when Gianna grew impatient and sent him away, he would leave with a smile, only to return the next day.

One afternoon, the team encountered a particularly difficult case—a patient in critical need of surgery. Gianna, however, had come down with a high fever, likely caught from one of her patients.

Without hesitation, Steven donned a white coat and stepped in to perform the surgery in her place.

After the successful procedure, he rushed back to the dormitory to care for Gianna, who lay weak and feverish in bed.

“Gianna, you don’t have to push yourself so hard,” he said gently, reaching out to check her forehead, But before his hand could touch her, she instinctively recoiled, “Steven, you don’t need to do this,” she said, her voice soft but firm.