

Midnight 1001

Chapter 1001

"Dorothy, you're skinny enough already," Everett teased, a playful smile tugging at his lips.

Dorothy couldn't help but laugh, covering her mouth as her eyes crinkled in amusement. "Well, I'm not dieting anymore. Remember you mentioned wanting another baby? I figured I should get all healthy and plump for that." Everett's hands face froze for a moment, then softened. "Yeah." "This time, let's fill all the voids in your heart," Dorothy said, reaching out to hold his hand, feeling the warmth of his skin. "Everett, I love you." Caught off guard, Everett stood frozen in the elevator for a few seconds before snapping back to reality. "Dorothy, what did you just say?" "If you didn't hear it, never mind." Dorothy quickly turned her face away, her cheeks already burning.

Everett wasn't about to let her off the hook that easily. He physically turned her to face him. "Say it again." "No, you heard me." "If you don't say it now, you'll have to say it tonight in bed," Everett teased, a playful threat in his voice. "Either way, I'll make you say it." Dorothy pushed at him playfully. "You can't bully into it! You know I'm not as strong as you..." "Then just say it, so it doesn't cto that." "Not going to say it? Then let's head back to Bay Residence," he said, pretending to pull her away. Dorothy quickly caved, "Stop! Okay, okay, I'll say it, isn't that enough?" As she looked up, she saw the triumphant smile on Everett's face. He was just playing with her... "I... I love you." "That's not quite right," Everett corrected her, serious now. "It should be, 'I only love you.'" He wanted to be the only one in her heart and mind.

Quincy had another night haunted by Ine nightmares and decided to stay awake on in the early hours, curled up the sofa in her suite watching TV.

Eventually, she must have fallen asleep because she woke without remembering the nightmares that had plagued her.

Today, she had to head to the lab, so after getting ready and applying a touch of makeup to hide her fatigue, she left the hotel with her bodyguard closely following. Sitting in the car, she casually scrolled through her phone and stumbled upon a rare tweet from Dorothy.

"Turns out there's a difference between lovingand only loving me." Although the picture was just a shadow, Quincy could tell it was Everett's.

So, Everett told Dorothy he only loved her.

Quincy stared at the picture for a long tbefore saving it. Just before getting out of the car, she decided to tweet herself.

"I might be getting married." Her tweet exploded with likes and comments in no time. Being a doctor for years meant she haulwide de from classmates a mentors, to former patients. The comments ranged from "Congratulations!" to "Really?" Among the responses, Quincy's eyes landed on Dorothy's profile. She had seen it.

Dorothy just liked it, no comment.

As Quincy read through the reactions, she suddenly found it all rather pointless and deleted the tweet.

Chapter 1002

Quincy felt like she was veering off the planned course of her life. Deep down, she knew things were spiraling out of control, but... it felt like there was nothing she could do about it. She couldn't move forward, yet there was no turning back either.

After diving back into the workforce, Dorothy felt like she'd found her calling. It gave her a reason to get out of bed every morning and push through the day. Sure, sitting through endless meetings was draining, but there was a silver lining. The exhaustion helped her sleep soundly at night.

Knowing Everett was swamped with work, Dorothy planned on hailing a cab back to Bay Residence after her team wrapped up for the day. But as soon as she stepped out of the office, she saw him. His presence was like a lighthouse in her life, signaling the direction she needed to go.

"Everett." She approached him and gently touched his shoulder. Everett naturally took her hand. "Abigail and Langston's school had a late release today. Do we head straight back to Bay Residence, or do we sneak in a date?" A date.

The word felt somewhat foreign between Everett and Dorothy.

"Let's go on a date," Dorothy chose without hesitation.

"Alright." Everett led the way, with Dorothy closely following. While they were waiting for the elevator, Dorothy suddenly remembered Quincy's tweet and brought it up.

"You have Dr. Quincy's number, right?" "No, I deleted it," Everett didn't lie. He had it once but had since gotten rid of it.

"Oh." Dorothy wasn't surprised by his action. "Then you didn't see? Dr. Quincy tweeted today that she might be getting married." Everett stiffened for a moment. Dorothy felt the hand holding hers tighten.

"What's wrong?" "Nothing." "It seems like Dr. Quincy's marriage news... bothers you?" Everett pressed his lips together, "I'm not close with her." "So, you don't know who she's marrying?" Dorothy raised an eyebrow. "Didn't your dad once want you to marry her? Has he given up on that idea?" Otherwise, why would Quincy suddenly announce her marriage? "I won't marry her." Everett's voice was cold emotionless. Since Dorothy was quite shorter, she didn't notice his uneasy expressions as long as she didn't look up. "I know you won't marry her! I was just asking, no other reason." Just when Dorothy thought the topic was about to pass, Everett, stepping off the elevator, suddenly asked, "That Quincy, besides mentioning getting married, did she say anything else?" "Nope, no pictures, just a few words." Dorothy looked up at him, teasingly saying, "The person she's talking about marrying isn't you, right?" Everett didn't respond, causing Dorothy's previously cheerful face to freeze.

"Dr. Quincy, she wants to marry you?" "It's none of my business, and I don't want to know." "She wants to marry you, and it's none of your business?" Dorothy recalled what Quincy had told her back in Swevia Country, wishing for a man as devoted as Everett. She couldn't possibly have failed to find someone else and set her sights on Everett, could she? "Everett, tell the truth, what exactly happened between you and Dr. Quincy? It feels like there's something off with both of you."

Chapter 1003

"Dorothy, you should delete Quincy's number from your phone." He didn't answer her question but instead offered a straightforward solution.

"Why should I?" "It'll stop you from overthinking," Everett said, gently stroking her hair. "Sweetheart, have you decided where we're going for our date?" With just a few words, he had labeled Dorothy as an overthinker.

It was as though pursuing the matter further would only show her lack of understanding.

Dorothy looked at Everett, sighed softly after a long pause.

"Everett, I feel like I'm not even myself anymore." "Oh?" "Sorry, please don't think I'm overly suspicious, okay? It's not that I don't trust you, it's just... I'm afraid of losing what we have." Dorothy ended up blaming herself for everything.

She thought she was being too sensitive.

Everett had repeatedly assured her he would never choose Quincy over her, his disdain for Quincy evident in his eyes. Yet here she was, questioning him over and over again, which surely wasn't right.

After all, the only reason he had any contact with Quincy now was because of her own insecurities.

Everett stood up straight, avoiding Dorothy's gaze as if unsure how to face her.

He seemed to prefer her making a scene rather than apologizing.

What did Dorothy have to apologize for? The date for the appeal hearing was set.

Early next month.

Ephraim called Dorothy while she was in a meeting and couldn't answer. She returned the call after the meeting ended.

"The court's decision to hear the appeal means we have a good chance of winning! Defendant Heather Garcia is definitely facing severe punishment; the court has already recognized her as the mastermind. As for the other defendant... the sentence might not be as severe as you'd hope. If Heather insists on protecting her, we lack the evidence to argue for more." "Sthings in this world can never be perfectly fair.

The law can only do so much to curb the basest human instincts.

Ephraim was worried Dorothy wouldn't be able to handle the final verdict, so he wanted to prepare her mentally.

"Okay." Dorothy took a while to respond with just one word.

This made Ephraim even more anxious.

"Don't worry, Ms. Sanchez, I'll do everything in my power! Even if the other defendant isn't sentenced to death, it won't be as lenient as the initial verdict." "She's been in the hospital recently, just got through a tough patch." Dorothy stated calmly, "I used to insist that she must be punished by law, that she must face sentencing, but now... I don't have so many demands anymore, Ephraim. Just do your best." "Ah?" Ephraim was momentarily stunned, "You're not..." "She killed my mother. I hate her, wish I could avenge my mother myself. But I can't bring myself to be as ruthless as she was. Since I chose the path of litigation, I'll accept whatever the outcome." Dorothy had struggled immensely during her most obsessive period.

She couldn't forgive herself, haunted daily by the thoughts! But ultimately, the only person the obsession was hurting was herself.

Now, it wasn't about letting Amanda off the hook; it was more about Dorothy allowing herself to move on.

There has to be a new beginning, right? "That's great to hear! Ms. Sanchez, I'm relieved you feel this way! Honestly, with Heather facing the maximum penalty, you've essentially avenged your mother. The other defendant, she was indeed misled, though her actions are still condemnable."

Chapter 1004

Ephraim didn't dare to directly call Everett's mother by her name, referring to her instead as "the other defendant." It was quite the predicament for him, really. When he first got wind of this case, Ephraim couldn't believe his ears! Who in their right mind asks a lawyer to help another woman sue their own mother? The mere thought was ludicrous.

"You don't have to stress too much, Ephraim. Thanks for all your hard work." "It's no trouble at all! It's what I'm here for." After hanging up the phone, Dorothy took a deep breath of relief. Her gaze drifted to the floor-to-ceiling windows of her office, taking in the bustling sights of Eldorria City under the clear blue sky. The world was still a beautiful place. Though it had taken things from her, it also brought the most precious thing into her life. Dorothy's lips curved into a smile. Having Everett in her life made her suddenly lose all thoughts of giving up. She didn't want to end her life anymore.

To Dorothy's surprise, before the second trial, Heather got a chance for a meeting. The prison guard thought she'd want to see her lawyer, or maybe her parents. Instead, she asked to see Dorothy.

"Don't go." Everett made a point of leaving his CEO office and finding Dorothy in her project team when he heard about it. He had finally gotten Dorothy to embrace life and abandon thoughts of suicide. He feared Heather might upset Dorothy again! "But I already agreed," Dorothy said, smiling at his concerned expression. "Don't worry, Everett. I'll be fine." "So what if you agreed? If you don't want to go, nobody can say a thing," Everett replied, his expression darkening. "I'll take care of it." "No!" Dorothy quickly grabbed his arm, her voice soft. "I want to see Heather." She had wanted to see her before, but hesitated. This time, when Heather asked to meet, Dorothy agreed almost immediately. Since her death sentence was unavoidable, confirmed in the first trial, and Heather didn't even appeal, this meeting was likely their last. After all... they were still sisters by blood. "Why see her?" Everett thought Heather was unstable, unpredictable about what she might say to Dorothy. Even a visit could upset Dorothy.

"Consider it my way of seeing her off." The seeds of evil she sowed, she must now reap. As for the seeds sown by Maxton Sanchez... They really had nothing to do with Heather. No one gets to choose the family they're born into.

"Then I'll go with you," Everett conceded, seeing how adamant Dorothy was.

"Why would you do a chat between us two?" Dorothy teased, squinting her eyes with a smile, knowing how worried he was about her. "Really, I'll be fine. I promise Heather won't affect in any way. Just let go." Everett pursed his lips, his tall figure standing at the project team's door, drawing discreet glances from several people. But they didn't dare to stare openly. After all, this was Mr. Lopez! Gossips were better left unapproached... "I always end up giving in to you." "Because

you care about me." Everett sighed, a hint of resignation in his voice, "Then I'll drive you there and wait outside the prison." "You're so busy, I know about the new big projects the company has signed. You'll be too busy to even rest, don't worry about me!" "What big project is more important than you?" Everett was extra cautious now, fearing Dorothy would encounter another Quincy. One was already too much to bear.

Chapter 1005

Everett, I don't want to be a burden on you anymore! Go be the CEO you are meant to be, focus on your work, and don't make exceptions for all the time. You know it makes me feel guilty.

She didn't want her relationship to be muddied with guilt or obligations.

Everett had already sacrificed so much for her in the past. Dorothy knew that standing shoulder to shoulder with him might be a far reach, but at least she didn't want to be the one holding him back.

I do what I do out of my own free will.

Mimicking his tone, Dorothy smiled and teased, Con, be a sport, will you? I promise you, I won't stay long. Just a few words with Heather and then I'll leave! She's at the end of her road now. If I don't go, I'll regret it once her sentence is carried out.

Throughout her life, Heather had always been competing with Dorothy, always trying to best her. Dorothy understood that a lot of Heather's resentment stemmed from their childhood experiences.

Her mother was the other woman, which inevitably led to Heather being the subject of gossip.

With Bella's scandal making rounds, Heather had to live a life of hiding from a very young age. It was normal for her to harbor a distorted form of hatred.

But now, everything was coming to an end. Her malice, her hatred, it was all drawing to a close.

Putting all that aside, as her sister, Dorothy wanted to be there for her in her final moments.

Even though Dorothy managed to convince Everett not to accompany her to the prison, she couldn't dissuade Karen Miller from joining her.

On the day they went to see Heather, Jeffrey Turner drove them, with Karen accompanying Dorothy.

Dorothy, she's on her deathbed. No matter what she says, don't take it to heart. I'm worried she might say something awful or try to scare you... Maybe we should just go shopping instead? Karen feared what Heather might say, something along the lines of never resting in peace until she had her revenge.

Anyone would feel uncomfortable hearing that.

Arthur's curse still bothered Jeffrey to this day! Karen, I'm really okay.

Dorothy had considered this possibility. So. After all, Heather's death sentence was something she had pushed for. Of course, Heather hated her.

SW But after much deliberation, Dorothy decided to go through with the visit.

After all, she had done nothing wrong and had not wronged Heather. There was nothing to feel guilty about. Alright, then go see her. Jeffrey and I will wait for you.

Okay.

Dorothy dressed in a solemn black outfit for the occasion, signifying the gravity of the visit.

Led by the prison guard, she entered the area where Heather was held.

Soon, Heather appeared, supported by two guards on either side. Dorothy was prepared, yet she couldn't help but be taken aback.

et Heather had becsso thin she was almost unrecognizable. Had Dorothy not known she was there to see Heather, she might not have recognized her at first glance. Heather slowly lifted her head, her gaze murky, glanced at Dorothy, the t down with the guardserenglish I bet you didn't expect this. I gave up my last chance to plead for myself to see you.

Typically, death row inmates would request to see their defense attorney during their second trial.

Dorothy pursed her lips, Because you knew there was nothing left to plead for.

The crimes announced in court, Heather was guilty of them all.

Heather chuckled, her short hair swaying with the motion, Dorothy, you and Everett must be very happy now.

Chapter 1006

When she spoke, it was with a familiar warmth never used for anyone else.

Dorothy had never called him "Everett." It was clear, even now, that Heather still harbored love for Everett. Call it obsession or foolishness, but to love so fiercely was rare in this world.

"Yeah, I'm happy," Dorothy admitted without hesitation, nodding in agreement. "I've accepted him, and I've decided to really give this relationship my all." Heather looked up at Dorothy, as if trying to peer through her facade, longing to see the face she missed day and night... "Dorothy, I've messed up my life, but in the next one... can you lethave Everett?" "No." Dorothy's rejection was swift and cold. "He was never mine to give. I don't have the right to decide who he belongs to. Besides, if there really is a next life, I still want to be with him." She thought, this taround, she'd be the one to chase after Everett.

He had been through so much.

"I'm already like this, and yet you still compete with me." Heather forced a smile. "In prison, I often thought how great it would be if we could swap lives! I'd rather have grown up fatherless, with a mother constantly battling illness, so I could work and earn money, living your dignified life!" Dorothy just smirked, choosing not to respond.

Heather always thought she had it hard, growing up ridiculed and living in the shadows, feeling aggrieved. But she didn't understand true despair, the feeling of life dragging you forward by the hair.

She could easily talk about swapping places, enduring the hardships.

But those hardships weren't as simple as lip service...

Every day, every night, every penny, wasn't easy to cby.

"Dorothy, did you cto visitout of pity?" "No," she shook her head. "I just wanted to see you." Dorothy wasn't lying.

There was no need.

"Why don't you keep up the act?" Heather raised an eyebrow. "You love playing the innocent, don't you? Now's the to say you're here for your sister, to see her off one last time, making Everett see you as a good person! Dorothy, you're the best I've seen at this act, keeping Everett on a leash, making him do everything for you, while claiming you don't love him and want to leave." Heather's malice was hard to hold back.

But Dorothy expected as much.

"If you think I'm pretending, then so be it," Dorothy responded. "I think the biggest difference between us is that don't intend to hurt others to get what I want." Św"I hurt others?! It's others who hurt me!" Heather grew agitated.

A guard immediately issued a warning.

"Heather, be mindful! Or we'll have to end this visit." Clearly, Heather was frightened; she W tempered into conce had here and shrank back at the words. MS Dorothy sighed softly. "After seeing me, will you have the chance to see your mom... and Maxton?" She couldn't bring herself to call that man her father.

"Before the execution, there should be one last chance to see family, but I don't want to see Maxton."

Chapter 1007

Despite all the material comforts that man had showered on her and her mother, he also ushered in their darkest days. Heather would have rather her father be a garbage collector, a security guard, or even a homeless man, rather than a scumbag like Maxton! "It's been a while since I've heard from him too." "Yeah." After Heather's words, both women fell into a deep silence.

As the end of their meeting tapproached, Heather suddenly said, "This is probably the last twe'll see each other, huh?" "Unless something unexpected happens." "Do you have a recent photo of Everett on your phone? I want to see him." She knew asking Everett to visit her in prison was out of the question! But she still desperately wanted to see him.

Dorothy frowned slightly, showing this expression for the first ttoday. After a moment's hesitation, she pulled out her phone and scrolled to a candid photo she had taken of Everett at work.

Heather immediately leaned in, peering through the glass, looking at the photo over and over again.

"He's lost weight! Why hasn't he been eating properly? Dorothy, please make sure he eats! Everett's a workaholic, he forgets everything when he's busy!" "Yeah." "Don't just placate me! You... take good care of him." After speaking, Heather lowered her head. As Dorothy was about to put her phone away, Heather spoke up again, tapping on the window, "Don't! Lethave one last look, just one more glance!" That last glance, as if she wished to etch it into her memory forever.

Finally, their twas up. Heather reluctantly moved her gaze away from the photo.

"Can I say one last thing?" she asked, negotiating with the guard.

Dorothy, thinking Heather had something important to say, stayed put. Granted permission, Heather moved closer, her face against the glass, "Dorothy, take good care of Everett for me, I'm leaving. S Leaving the prison, Dorothy walked with her head down, barely speaking. Seeing her like this, Karen grew concerned.

"Dorothy? What's wrong? Did Heather say something to upset you, like I thought?" Dorothy shook her head, managing a small smile, "No, don't worry! I'm just feeling a bit sentimental." It was the last tshe would ever see Heather. There was a complex mix of emotions inside her, hard to articulate.

"Sentimental about what! She's a criminal, deserving of her fate!" Karen could hardly contain her disdain for Heather, "She's the reason your mom died, left you homeless, and even tried to snatch Everett away from you, Dorothy, don't you go soft on me! "I haven't gone soft, truly." Dorothy clasped Karen's hand, "Karen, thank you for being by my side all this way." The journey had been rough and fraught with obstacles. She was genuinely grateful for everyone who stood by her. "Don't mention it, aren't we best friends?" Driving them, Jeffrey chimed in, "In Karen's heart, you're more important than I am!" "Of course! Men cand go, but sisters are forever." At that, Jeffrey puffed up in annoyance but dared not say a word.

Dorothy smiled helplessly, pulling ne out her phone where the photo of Everett she had shown Heather was still displayed. Who would have thought that one day, she would becthe envy of someone else? Having something someone else could only long for.

Chapter 1008

After wrapping up the meeting, Everett immediately dialed Dorothy.

His voice couldn't hide the underlying anxiety.

Had Dorothy not objected, he would have ditched the meeting in a heartbeat to be by her side.

"Are you out now?" "Yeah," Dorothy responded obediently.

"What did Heather tell you?" Dorothy knew he would ask about this. He must have been thinking about it even during the meeting.

"She toldto take good care of you," she relayed Heather's words to Everett without any alterations.

|| II "Actually, Heather really wanted to see you, but she was afraid you'd refuse." "I'm not going," Everett's response was sharp and decisive, just as everyone expected.

After a brief pause, he added, "Don't try to convince me. I'm definitely not going." Dorothy laughed, "I wouldn't dream of convincing you! Why on earth would I want you to visit my rival in a prison of all places?" Even though Heather no longer posed a threat, she was still someone who competed for Everett's affection.

However, Heather's reaction today took Dorothy by surprise.

She had always thought Heather's interest in Everett was driven by ambition, liking the idea of stepping on others to reach the top. Marrying Everett was a way to secure that high status for herself.

But today, she saw that Heather's love was genuine. There might have been multiple reasons, but her desire to marry Everett was pure.

"As long as you understand," Everett felt truly relieved hearing Dorothy joke about it, "Are you with Jeffrey and the others?" "Yeah." "Tell them to pick a restaurant. I'll join you guys for dinner." who hadn't thought much about it initially, frowned slightly at his suggestion.

"Why the sudden urge to see your daughter? Or is it someone else you want to see?" "Someone else? Who?" Jeffrey was completely lost.

Her sudden sarcastic tone threw Jeffrey off, leaving him speechless.

Dorothy, feeling helpless, intervened on Jeffrey's behalf, "Let's not dwell on the past. Why bring that up?" "Exactly..." "It's just that his gloomy attitude killed my mood! I was actually happy, and he wants to rush home!" Karen, having recently become a mother, was understandably a bit emotionally unstable.

Having just embraced motherhood, it was normal for her to feel a bit resistant to seeing her child after finally getting a chance to go out.

"Fine, we won't go back. Let's head to the restaurant," Jeffrey quickly conceded.

"Let's just drop it, Karen," Dorothy gently patted her shoulder, "It's natural for him to miss his daughter. If he didn't care about her, that's when you should be worried."

Chapter 1009

Karen rolled her eyes. "Dorothy, you have no clue what's happening! Jeffrey has been acting like he's possessed at home, constantly going on about 'my daughter this, my daughter that.' I feel like he doesn't even care about anymore." "That's on you, Jeffrey," Dorothy said, trying to be fair. She knew that women could be quite sensitive and in need of extra affection right after giving birth.

Jeffrey frowned in frustration. "That's unfair! At home, Karen is treated like royalty! Whatever she wants, I get for her, be it food, drinks, clothes, you nit. How can she say I don't care about her?" "Is it just food and drinks I need?" || "Before we had the baby, Jeffrey would spend all day in the bedroom with me, watching movies, even giving advice on work stuff! Now, he spends twenty out of twenty-four hours in the nursery, almost never coming back to our bedroom at night!" Karen's words were punctuated by tears starting to well up in her eyes.

Dorothy understood this was likely postpartum depression. Even though it's something many try to avoid, the hormonal imbalances after childbirth could still lead to discomfort.

Seeing Karen cry, Jeffrey immediately surrendered. No, he had actually surrendered earlier.

"Please don't cry! Dorothy, help comfort her. From now on, I'll stay with you in our bedroom, okay? I won't go see our daughter anymore, I promise!" Jeffrey's panicked reaction reassured Dorothy. At least her friend was being cherished and cared for. She had helped Jeffrey in the past, and it seemed her efforts weren't misplaced. If she had been wrong, Dorothy would have felt incredibly guilty.

It was a rare occasion that the four of them were together. Jeffrey and Karen, now with a daughter, were even busier than Everett. Halfway through their meal, Dorothy's phone suddenly rang.

Everett glanced at her. "Who's calling?" "I don't know." She checked her phone; it was Ephraim. What did he want at this time? "I'll take this." Dorothy excused herself and stepped outside the restaurant to answer the call.

"Ms. Sanchez, the defendant Heather suddenly changed her statement, claiming another defendant was the main planner and denying her involvement." || || "This could complicate the case. We need to investigate further, and they're preparing to interrogate Heather for the truth." Dorothy felt Heather's change of heart might be related to their meeting earlier. But...

Her sentence seemed a done deal, so why change her statement now? "Will this affect us much?" "Not really, it might just delay the appeal court date and... we'll need to review the other defendant's case as well," Ephraim cautiously added, "We can't tell if this is good or bad yet: Heather's change might actually help fulfill your wish for both. defendants to face the death penalty." Previously Amanda had managed to escape punishment thanks to Heather taking all the blame. If Heather's change in statement affected this, the appeal's outcome was uncertain. "I'll accept whatever the court decides," Dorothy said, suddenly noticing someone nearby. Looking, she saw Everett. He had followed her outside.

Chapter 1010

"What did Ephraim want?" Everett casually took her hand in his as they walked.

Dorothy gave a light laugh, "Nothing much, just mentioned that the second trial for the case might be delayed." She didn't want to burden Everett further; he already had enough on his plate.

"The reason?" "I'm not sure." Everett's eyes flickered briefly but he didn't comment further. "Let's go back for dinner." In the restaurant's private dining room, Jeffrey was being particularly attentive to Karen. He kept asking if she wanted to try this dish or that, if she was too cold or too hot. Even Everett frowned at the sight.

Dorothy quietly shared the incident from the car ride with him, which finally brought a smile to Everett's lips.

"Jeffrey liking Heather and not even telling about it." He might have played matchmaker for them, had he known.

"After all, I never had any romantic interest in Heather from the start." "And what did Jeffrey say? Knowing well that Heather has had eyes only for you." Everett looked at her, "Are you jealous?" "Not at all. But I didn't expect Heather to be so deeply in love with you." Honestly, after getting out of prison, Dorothy felt... as if she had indeed stolen Heather's love.

"What if I wasn't here..." Everett softly interrupted, "There are no 'what ifs.' From the beginning, when I first began to understand feelings, it was always you." In middle school, he was swamped with studies. Between school subjects and extra-curricular activities, Everett had no time to think about romance. Even though his basketball mates had girlfriends, and girls had been sending him love letters since elementary school, Everett never felt a spark? Until he saw Dorothy. The girl who always pursed her lips in defiance.

Despite being the subject of rumors, she never argued back. She would just grab her backpack and leave immediately after school, never sparing anyone a glance. Even if her desk mate was the most popular guy in school. "Did you know Heather then?" "I knew of her, just as a friend of the family, nothing more." Everett never gave her any special attention.

"But she truly loved you." "The next thing, you won't ask to visit her in prison, will you?" Everett said this half-jokingly, squashing any such thought Dorothy might have entertained, else "Don't be too kind-hearted, sending your man away on a mission." She squinted her eyes and smiled, "I just

think she's pitiable. When people are about to die, it feels like suddenly you can forgive them for anything." Dorothy didn't consider herself a saint or particularly compassionate, but... maybe it was the blood relation with Heather that made her want to help fulfill Heather's last wish.

"You might forgive, but I can't." Everett was more rational.

"Why? Do you hate Heather?" "What do you think? If it weren't for her meddling, I... wouldn't have lost you for four years." All those days and nights, he had endured alone. Including now, with his own mother getting involved, wasn't it all Heather's fault? Without her, none of this would have happened.