

Midnight 1031

Chapter 1031

"I've got money, get her a doctor, the best damn doctor you can find! Go!"

Everett clenched his teeth, holding back the tears that threatened to spill.

He knew this day was inevitable.

Ever since his mom started making those frequent trips to the ER, it felt like a countdown had begun on her life.

But when the moment actually arrived, he realized just how powerless humans are.

No matter if you're a CEO or an average Joe, when death stares you down, all you can do is cry or scream in despair. There's nothing you can do to turn back time, not even by a minute, not even by ten seconds.

Not even a chance to say goodbye.

Dorothy didn't know when she had fallen asleep.

It was only when Abigail and Langston had to leave for school that she woke up, realizing she was still on the couch.

"Mommy! Where's Daddy?"

Abigail was always the enthusiastic one, rushing to give her mommy a warm hug as soon as she saw her.

"Daddy's busy, sweetheart. You and your brother be good and head to school."

"Can we see him after school?"

"Maybe, but once Daddy's done with his work, he'll have time for you!" Dorothy said, patting her daughter's head before turning to Langston, "Look after your sister at school, okay?" "Yeah, I got it."

After sending them off, Dorothy went back to the couch and took out her phone.

She wanted to call Everett to check on him.

But then she thought he might have been up all night. What if her call woke him up?

Just as Dorothy was about to put the phone down, Ephraim's call came through.

"Ms. Sanchez."

"Yeah, what's up?"

"It's like this... I just got a call from the court clerk, saying... saying the defendant passed away early this morning."

"..." Dorothy felt her mind go blank for a moment, then asked with a trembling voice, "Was it Heather?"

"No."

Then it was Everett's mother.

Dorothy couldn't find the words for a long moment, feeling as if she had been frozen in place.

"The court's planning to halt the proceedings, likely sticking with the original verdict."

"Ephraim." Her voice was soft, "Thanks for everything. Let's leave it at that."

"Alright, understood."

After hanging up, Dorothy felt dizzy spells hitting her.

But she couldn't worry about that now and quickly threw on a coat, heading for the hospital.

On the

tried calling Everett

several times, but no one Finally, she had no choice

contact Kevin.

"Are you with Everett?"

"No, Mr. Lopez isn't picking up his phone."

"...Okay, thanks."

Dorothy hung up, feeling even more worried.

Everett never went incommunicado like this.

When she arrived at the hospital, Dorothy rushed towards the ER!

But there was nobody in sight.

Just as she was about to ask Jeffrey, Everett finally called back.

Dorothy immediately answered, "Everett, where are you?"

"The funeral home." Everett's voice was so hoarse it barely sounded like him.

"I'm coming to you! Don't shut me out!"

"Don't."

Everett repeated, "Don't come, my mom... she wouldn't want to see you."

Dorothy stopped in her tracks,

suddenly feeling like anything sheet

hollow. get

could say would be inadequate,

"I... I just want to be there for you."

"I told

you." Everett's voice was heavy, each word

wouldn't want to see I down with griefch

your mom's debt is paid."

Chapter 1032

Dorothy opened her mouth, feeling as though she'd been struck mute, unable to find her words.

Yes.

There was a time when she wished nothing more than for Amanda to perish, to meet an ill fate, to experience the agony of having loved ones still walking the earth while she could not.

But ever since Dorothy let go of her stubbornness, those thoughts had faded away.

It wasn't that she didn't harbor resentment towards Amanda anymore, but rather, she found it pointless. She believed in leaving the rest to the courts of law.

"Letting it all out might make you feel a bit better, so feel free to talk," Dorothy's voice was soft.

"But, would you let me stay by your side? I promise, I won't say anything, won't do anything, just be there for you.'

"I need some peace and quiet."

"Then I-"

"Dorothy, are you not getting it?"

His voice rose, the irritation clearly evident.

"I'll be at Bay Residence waiting for you."

What Dorothy really wanted to say was that she and the kids would be waiting for him at home, but she worried it might upset Everett even further.

Having lost her own mother, she knew all too well that pain, so no matter what Everett would say, she wouldn't get angry or blame him.

The call ended on Everett's end, leaving Dorothy with no choice but to leave the hospital with her phone in hand.

At the funeral home, Jonathan turned down everyone who called to offer their condolences.

He was simply too exhausted and too shaken to face reality, so... he decided to focus on taking care of the arrangements with his son. Everett hadn't wanted Dorothy there, but he had called Jeffrey.

Upon hearing the news, Jeffrey donned a black suit and rushed to the funeral home.

"Everett..."

"Mm." The dark circles under Everett's eyes were a testament to his sleepless nights.

He stood silently against the wall, not much for talking.

Jeffrey gave his shoulder a supportive pat. "Condolences! Amanda... she suffered a lot with her illness. Maybe this is a sort of release for her." After being released from jail, Amanda's health had rapidly declined.

It was a battle fought with every penny they had, clinging on for dear life.

"Jeffrey." Everett suddenly spoke.

"I'm here, go ahead."

"I've decided to keep Dorothy out of this mess."

Jeffrey paused, "Hmm?"

"There couldn't be a better reason now."

Jeffrey was lost in Everett's words, not quite understanding. What did he mean by a better reason?

"Everett, don't overthink things for

we

now! Let's just focus on giving Amanda a proper farewell, then we can deal with the rest! Quincy gave Dorothy the antidote, right? She'll manage to keep going, and she wouldn't dare let anything happen to Dorothy!"

Exhausted, Everett didn't have the energy to explain further, simply lowering his gaze, lost in thought.

Jeffrey's presence was a big help.

With the family bereavement, both and Everett were

emotionally drained and

overwhelmed. Naturally, Jeffrey stepped in to take care of things.

In Eldorria City, he was their only hope.

The funeral was set for two days later at the farewell hall.

After getting Jonathan settled in a hotel to rest, Jeffrey glanced at Everett in the passenger seat.

"Back to Bay Residence?"

"Back to the office."

"You can't keep going like this! You need to rest! Dorothy and Abigail and Langston are waiting for you at home."

At those words, there was a brief flicker of emotion in Everett's demeanor.

But it was fleeting.

"Back to the office."

Chapter 1033

He was in no shape to work back at the office. But the last place he wanted to go was back to Bay Residence. He feared his act wouldn't hold up, that his eyes would betray him when he looked at her, and Dorothy would see right through him.

Standing outside the towering glass building of Lopez Corporation, Jeffrey watched him attempt to exit the car, his usually composed figure swaying slightly. Worried, Jeffrey hurriedly opened his door to steady him.

"Are you sure you're up for this? Maybe you should head back to Bay Residence and rest. Dorothy must be waiting for you at home, she sounded really worried when she called me!"

"Jeffrey." Everett looked up at him, "I've decided, I'm pulling Dorothy out of this mess."

It took a moment for Jeffrey to grasp the full meaning of his words.

"Starting now?"

"After my mom passed, it just seems like the natural course of action."

Otherwise, distancing himself from Dorothy suddenly wouldn't make Quincy believe it either! Given their past, it would add a layer of credibility.

"..." Jeffrey pursed his lips, his throat dry. Although it was his idea and he had advised Everett twice, thinking about their tumultuous relationship still made him sigh. After all this drama, who knew how long it would take for them to get back together?

"Today, at the funeral home, watching my mom lying there, do you know what I was thinking?"

"Dorothy?"

"Yeah, I can't bear the thought of her lying there too." He'd rather die first!

Jeffrey let out a long sigh, "What do you think Dorothy would do if you told her everything?"

Everett knew Dorothy better than anyone, his prediction would be the most accurate. After all, if it was all an act, they just needed to deal with Quincy as the adversary.

"She'd do everything in her power to push me away." She might even consider ending her own life to avoid being a burden to him.

"Just finding out I was financially,

supporting the Caldwell family upset her, she insisted I shouldn't compromise with the Caldwells because of her." If there was a better way, he wouldn't choose this path.

"She really is Jeffrey started to say but then stopped, unsure how to describe Dorothy. It's not that she didn't love Everett, she was just

overly cautious about me

Yet, looking back at their struggles over the years, her actions were undeniably filled with love,

"Nothing incomprehensible about it, if you or I were in her shoes, we wouldn't want to be a burden either."

Jeffrey sighed, "Yeah, especially Dorothy. She's not as carefree as Karen, always overthinking!"

At the heart of it, Dorothy felt

unworthy of Everett. That's why she was always so cautious and worked so hard, stemming from her insecurities. Unlike Karen, who had no such issues. Whether she wanted to cry or throw a fit, Jeffrey had no choice but to treat her like royalty,

his

Achilles' heel. Just the mention

of going back to her parents' house

was enough to scare him; fearing her parents might actually support their divorce if they thought their daughter was unhappy.

"Since you've made up your mind, don't overthink it!" Jeffrey said sternly, patting his shoulder, "Let me know if you need anything."

Everett hummed in agreement. He was about to walk away but then paused.

"Don't tell Karen about this."

She was terrible at keeping secrets.

Chapter 1034

"Don't worry! I won't let your stuff get messed up on my watch."

But...

Jeff could already foresee the moment Karen found out Everett had "ditched" Dorothy, he'd be caught in the middle, squished like a sandwich!

She'd spend the day ripping into him, finding fault in everything about him!

Watching Everett walk inside, Jeff finally headed back to his car.

Thinking about all this mess, he couldn't help but feel sorry for his buddy.

Sometimes, Jeff felt both sympathy and frustration!

Out of all the women, Everett had to fall hard for the most complicated one! If it were any other girl, Everett wouldn't have to be so proactive, treading on eggshells; he could just snap his fingers, and women would be throwing themselves at him!

But then again...

Maybe it was Dorothy's cool demeanor that Everett fell for, or perhaps her background, her story, that made him feel protective. With anyone else, he probably wouldn't have cared as much.

Just like himself.

Surrounded by women, yet he ended up falling for Karen, who wasn't particularly outstanding in any way.

"Ah, it's all fate!"

Without any clue about Everett's whereabouts, Dorothy felt like a small boat adrift at sea, aimless and soulless.

She messed up the documents Austin asked for.

The files her assistant sent her? She had no idea where she put them.

Sitting in front of her computer, staring at the Lopez Corporation's software, she noticed President Everett's account was offline.

It had been so long, she wondered if he had managed to catch a wink of sleep.

Was there anyone by his side, comforting him?

She remembered how devastated she felt when she found out Bella had passed away, as if nothing else mattered, as if she had lost her reason to go on!

If it weren't for the pregnancy discovery, her depression might have overwhelmed her already.

Dorothy couldn't focus on work, and after some thought, she told Austin she wasn't feeling well and asked for the day off.

He could tell she wasn't up for it and advised her to rest well.

Rest well.

How could she close her eyes?

Holding her phone in the office, Dorothy wrestled with her thoughts for a long time before she finally mustered the courage to call Everett again.

This time, it went straight to voicemail.

That must mean he was sleeping!

Somehow, that gave her a bit of relief.

Ready to leave, she bumped into Kevin right at the doorway.

Dorothy hurriedly rushed a few steps to stop him, "Kevin! Wait up."

"

"Ms. Sanchez, need something?" When Everett was unavailable, Kevin was always swamped with work.

"Yeah."

to ask.

dded, "I have a favor

you let me know where

Everett is when you get in touch with

him?"

Kevin paused, pointing upstairs.

"Mr. Lopez? He's in his office! But I think he's resting, I didn't dare go in."

"Alright, got it."

Hearing Everett was in his office, Dorothy quickly headed to the executive floor on the elevator.

She knew the passcode to Everett's office, so the door was no barrier to her.

Dorothy tiptoed inside and, sure

enough, saw Everett's tall figure slumped on the sofa, asleep despite

the uncomfortable

seemingly exhausted.

The moment she saw him, Dorothy's heart settled.

She walked over, picked up a blanket, and gently covered him.

"Dorothy..."

Suddenly, Everett murmured in his sleep.

It was just a dream.

Chapter 1035

Dorothy reached out and grasped his warm hand, silently cursing herself for not being able to help him. The recent tension with his mother only added to her worry that her presence might be making things harder for him.

She didn't hold any grudge against Everett for the harsh tone he had used with her before. If the roles were reversed, she feared she might have said something even harsher.

When people are in pain, their emotions can become unpredictable and hard to control.

All Dorothy wanted was to see Everett with her own eyes, to see his face and know he was okay. That was the only way she could find some peace.

After watching him silently for a while, she decided to leave before he woke up.

But just as she reached the office door, Everett suddenly grunted, stirring in his sleep.

Instinctively, Dorothy turned to look at him, their eyes locking in an unexpected gaze, both caught off guard and falling into silence.

Finally, Everett sat up from the couch, his voice still laced with an edge. "What are you doing here?"

"I just wanted to see you."

"...Then leave," he said, with no indication of wanting her to stay.

Dorothy was prepared for his coldness, but his words still stung. She lowered her gaze, fighting back the tears. "Okay, just make sure to rest. And if work gets too much, Kevin can handle it."

Without hearing a response from Everett, Dorothy opened the door and stepped out. Once she was safely back in her own office, she allowed her tears to fall. She closed the door behind her to cry in privacy, wary of curious eyes.

Back in his office, Everett watched Dorothy leave. It wasn't until the door clicked shut that he allowed himself to rub his temples, feeling a headache brewing.

Soon after, Kevin knocked on the door. "Mr. Lopez, are you awake?"

"Come in."

Kevin entered, bringing in some documents that required Everett's

signature. "These need your

immediate attention, Mr. Lopez. I've

taken care of the rest."

"Alright, leave them there," Everett nodded.

As Kevin was about to leave, Everett stopped him. "Did you tell Dorothy I was in my office?"

Caught off guard, Kevin hesitated but knew he couldn't lie to Mr. Lopez. "Yes..."

"From now on, if she asks about me, tell her you don't know."

Though Kevin was puzzled by the tension between them, he respected Mr. Lopez's request, despite having many unasked questions.

"Understood, Mr. Lopez."

Just as Kevin thought he was dismissed, Everett spoke again, his voice heavy. "Actually, use work as an excuse to check on her. If she's... if she's not feeling well, let her go home."

He knew Dorothy well enough to guess how his words might have hurt her.

"I'll go right now!"

"Alright."

Once Kevin left, Everett tried to focus on the documents in front of him, but the words blurred together unreadable. He regretted not

office sooner; it would have saved him from guessing now.

Chapter 1036

Kevin knew the drill as soon as he left Mr. Lopez's office. With the task in hand and aware of how Mr. Lopez operates, he made a beeline for Dorothy's office. Finding her door shut, he hesitated for a brief moment before knocking.

No response came after two knocks, making Kevin almost believe Dorothy wasn't in. Just as he was about to turn away, a voice finally came from inside.

"Who's it?"

"Ms. Sanchez, it's me," Kevin paused, "I need to discuss the project progress report with you."

Dorothy didn't come to open the door but instead answered, "Alright, I'll email it to you."

"...I need a hard copy."

The request was a blatant improvisation. Who needs a paper report these days?

Fortunately, Dorothy didn't seem to overthink it. Although she took her time, she eventually opened the door.

"Kevin, I haven't printed it yet. Go back, and I'll send it to you once it's ready."

Kevin glanced at Dorothy. She had wiped away her tears and tried to appear normal, but it was evident she had been crying. "Okay, or you can just let me know when it's ready. I might not be in my office."

It was a good excuse to come back and check on her later!

Dorothy nodded, "That works."

Kevin smiled, turned, and headed back to Mr. Lopez's office.

"Mr. Lopez...Ms. Sanchez was crying."

Everett's hand froze on the documents he was holding, and he instinctively stood up, ready to rush out. But he halted at the door.

"Mr. Lopez?"

"Kevin, could you pick up Abigail and Langston from school early? Tell them they're feeling unwell, then ask Dorothy to head back to Bay Residence early." "Mr. Lopez, maybe... it'd be better if you talked to her yourself?"

Was involving the kids really necessary? A direct conversation from him would surely fix things right away.

Everett shot him a look, his brows furrowed, "Just do it."

"Alright."

Kevin quickly left, leaving Everett alone in his office, feeling a headache coming on. His head ached, but his heart ached more.

...

After Kevin's interruption, Dorothy managed to stop crying.

She printed the progress report and placed it on her desk when the school called.

"Hello! Abigail and Langston are not feeling well, can you come pick them up?"

"Of course! I'm on my way."

Dorothy hung up and rushed out of the office. She was in such a hurry that she didn't even inform Austin until she was in the cab, sending him a message that she was taking leave.

After sending the message, Dorothy started to feel something was off.

For instance!

The school always contacted Everett about Abigail and Langston because he didn't want Dorothy to be overwhelmed. He took care of all the minor details concerning the Kids.

So, if they were unwell, the school should have contacted Everett today as well.

But Dorothy reasoned it out. Maybe the school couldn't reach Everett and then asked Abigail and Langston for their mom's number.

The school wouldn't make a mistake with something as serious as the kids' health, especially since they were Everett's children, and the teachers were extra cautious.

Dorothy sighed, her thoughts once

again drifting to Everett. He was so upset he wouldn't even answer calls, including the school's, and she felt helpless watching him suffer, unable to do anything.

Chapter 1037

Dorothy picked up Abigail and Langston from school, immediately checking their foreheads for any signs of fever. Relieved to find them normal, they headed back to their cozy home in Bay Residence. Abigail was thrilled about getting the afternoon off, but Langston seemed a bit off.

On their way home, Langston kept glancing at Dorothy, concern etched on his young face. It wasn't until they were safely inside their home that he tugged at her sleeve and asked, "Mommy, why are you crying?"

Dorothy bent down, brushing her son's cheek with a gentle hand, "I'm not crying, sweetheart. Just got something in my eye."

Langston frowned, "That excuse is kind of overused."

"Did someone at work make you upset?"

"Of course not!" Dorothy chuckled, trying to keep the mood light. "Your dad is at the company, who would dare upset me?"

Langston nodded, seeming to accept her explanation for now.

"Why did your teacher call me, though? You and Abigail seem fine."

Abigail chimed in, "Unwell? I feel great, mommy!"

Dorothy paused, puzzled, until Langston nudged his sister aside and confessed, "We coughed a bit, and the teacher called you!"

Turns out, Kevin had advised Langston to fake being sick but didn't inform Abigail, leaving only Langston in on the plan.

"Is it a sore throat? Or a cold?" Dorothy asked, concern creasing her brow. "I think we should still see a doctor."

"No need, lying down for a bit will do!" Langston insisted, dragging his sister back to their room before Dorothy could protest further.

Something felt off to Dorothy, but

before she could ponder further, her phone rang. It was Karen, with news that her cousin Kenneth had been in an accident and was now

hospitalized. Without hesitation, Dorothy knew she had to go see him.

Karen and Jeffrey arrived swiftly, Karen's eyes red from crying. The news that Kenneth might have to undergo amputation was a shock to Dorothy. Kenneth was a vibrant soul; the thought of him facing such a drastic change was unbearable.

Karen blamed Kenneth's girlfriend for the accident, her words laced with anger and grief. Dorothy tried to calm her, knowing that blaming anyone wasn't going to help.

Upon reaching the hospital, Karen

rushed ahead with Jeffrey close behind, leaving Dorothy to follow at her own pace. The absence of Kenneth's girlfriend at the

emergency room entrance was a

small relief to Dorothy.

However, that relief was short-lived as Kenneth's mother, Sienna, approached her with a mix of grief and fury, slapping Dorothy across the face.

"You've brought my son to this state, and yet you have the nerve to show up here!" Sienna's accusation was like a blow, leaving Dorothy stunned and heartbroken amidst the cold, sterile corridors of the hospital.

Chapter 1038

"Auntie! What does this have to do with Dorothy? It was his girlfriend who had the fight with him!"

Karen was the first to snap back to reality, quickly positioning herself in front of Dorothy.

"Why don't you ask what the fight was about, and who caused it!" Sienna couldn't hold back any longer, even lashing out at her own niece, "And you're defending her? Do you even care about Kenneth's well-being anymore? If it wasn't for your introduction, Kenneth wouldn't have ended up meeting such a person! Dorothy, right? I see you as nothing but trouble! If you didn't want to be with my son, why didn't you make it clear sooner? Let him move on? Instead, you had him help take care of your kids for years!"

In that moment, Sienna let out all the anger she had been harboring.

"My son wasted so much time because of you, and with a simple 'we're not right for each other, I don't have feelings for you,' you just left him hanging, and then had the nerve to say 'let's be friends'? What kind of friend does that? You were just leading my son on!"

"Auntie, Dorothy wasn't leading Kenneth on, she had already rejected him! And Kenneth was paid for helping with the kids. How can you blame Dorothy for that?"

"If she wasn't leading him on, then why has my son been unable to forget her for so long? Kenneth already had a girlfriend, they were even talking marriage, and yet, he still accidentally called out Dorothy's name!"

Dorothy understood then.

That was the real reason.

It was because Kenneth had called out her name in front of his girlfriend, which angered her and led her to storm off.

So much time had passed, and Dorothy thought...

That Kenneth had moved on from her.

"Dorothy, are you hurting?"

Karen pulled her aside, her voice filled with guilt.

"I'm fine, really." Apart from a dull ache, the pain had mostly subsided.

"I'm so sorry, I didn't know the whole story when I brought you here..." Karen said, lowering her head, feeling awkward, "This has nothing to do with you, Sienna is just frantic. Don't hold it against her." "I won't, if Kenneth really has to undergo amputation, I'd feel terrible too, let alone his mother."

Dorothy could very much empathize with that feeling.

"Jeff, could you drive Dorothy home? It's... not really appropriate for her to stay here."

Jeff nodded, "Sure."

Knowing it was best for her to leave, Dorothy agreed.

As they drove off, Dorothy leaned against the car window in silence.

Jeff cleared his throat a few times before breaking the silence.

"Do... do you need to get some ointment for your face?"

"It's not necessary, really, it's just a slap." Dorothy shook her head, "Thank you."

"Oh."

Jeff didn't know what else to say, so he focused on driving.

Suddenly, Dorothy spoke up, "Jeff, could you... could you please look after Everett a bit more lately? His mother passed away, and he's been really down. You know, with

everything going on, it's difficult for me to be there, and lately, he doesn't really want to see me."

He paused, gripping the steering

wheel tighter, then replied, "Don't et

worry about it too much. Besides me, Dr. Quincy has been looking out

for him, too."

"You didn't know? Everett and Dr. Quincy have been spending a lot of time together lately." After saying that, Jeff feigned surprise and quickly covered his mouth, "Oh, sorry, I thought you knew."

Dorothy felt her heart squeezed by an invisible hand, pain spreading through it.

Yet facing Jeff, she forced a smile, "It's okay, I knew."

Chapter 1039

She replied in such a way that Jeffrey was totally thrown off his game.

"You know about it?"

"Yeah, he told me. Dr. Quincy has been by his side... looking after him. Everett's dad and the Caldwell family go way back, and his mom was quite fond of Quincy too."

It seemed like, maybe Quincy was indeed better suited to be with Everett at this time.

Jeffrey furrowed his brow, driving in silence for a while before he couldn't help but ask again.

"Don't you ever suspect something between Everett and Dr. Quincy...?"

Dorothy shook her head, "No, I don't."

"Why not?"

"Because I know Everett's heart is with me," Dorothy lowered her lashes, her voice soft, "Everett and his mom had their differences, which were profound. I understand why he's hesitant to see me now, at a time when he's lost someone so close."

But it's okay. He'll come to accept his mother's passing, just like I had to.

Once everything settles, Dorothy believed he would still be the Everett who loved her.

"You can understand all that!" Jeffrey was genuinely impressed.

He knew he couldn't.

"What else can I do?" Dorothy looked up at him, "Cause a scene in front of Everett right now?"

"I know you've always felt like I don't love Everett enough, that our relationship is imbalanced, but... I've tried my best, I really have."

That was the most love she could possibly give.

Jeffrey was speechless for a moment, unable to find the words.

He had wanted to help Everett move on, to accelerate the end of their relationship so Quincy would quickly see the rift between Dorothy and Everett. But now, he found himself feeling sorry for Dorothy...

But.

Everett had it tough too.

Jeffrey knew how painful this decision was for him.

Both of them, carrying their own burdens, finally arrived at Bay Residence.

Dorothy got out of the car, and Jeffrey suddenly called out to her.

"Dorothy."

"Yeah?"

"You were Karen's best friend. I believe you deserve happiness, to end up with the one you love."

Dorothy gave a small smile.

"Thank you."

Watching Jeffrey's car drive away, Dorothy didn't head back inside but stood at the entrance of Bay Residence.

The cool breeze outside was refreshing, giving her the space to breathe deeply.

She felt so suffocated inside,

needing the fresh air to clear h

thoughts on what she should shouldn't do.

Jeffrey returned to the hospital, finding Karen standing alone, her expression troubled.

There was still no news from Kenneth, but his girlfriend had shown up.

Eleanor stood quietly to the side, a clear handprint visible on her cheek.

No surprise there, it must have been Sienna's handiwork.

"Karen." Jeffrey walked over to Karen, instinctively protecting her.

Perhaps feeling supported, Karen again started lashing out at Eleanor.

"You said you had someone else in your heart, so how come you can't stand Kenneth having someone else in his?!"

Kenneth had mentioned this to her.

were ore, saying he and Eleanoet

once

had

good match since they both someone else in their hearts.

"After being with Kenneth for so long, do you really think I'm heartless, without a shred of feeling?" Eleanor was filled with grievances, "I've slept with him, lived with him, and yet, when he speaks up, it's Dorothy he calls for! Don't I have the right to feel something? Am I supposed to be just a stand-in for someone else?"

Chapter 1040

Eleanor had always carried a torch for someone else. Yet, circumstances had made it impossible for them to be together, leading her to start dating Kenneth.

But that didn't mean she couldn't fall for Kenneth over time! It's a common tale; spending day in, day out with someone, it's hard not to develop feelings.

Every time Kenneth called her "Dorothy," Eleanor's heart ached with curiosity - which "Dorothy" was he really calling for? Yet, she never asked, she kept her feelings buried deep. As long as she didn't voice it out, the "Dorothy" Kenneth called for was her, in her heart.

Could this charade go on forever? Get married, have kids, what did it matter if she was just a stand-in? Eleanor couldn't help but feel she was even less than an old flame that Kenneth hadn't seen for ages. With enough time, he would forget, she hoped. But when push came to shove, it was still "Dorothy" that escaped his lips. Always her!

"Kenneth has liked her for ages, and you knew it! He never lied to you! If you can't handle it, why not just break up?" Karen was fiercely protective of her friend, and she had never liked Eleanor much to begin with. Now, she liked her even less.

"Karen, that's so unfair! I get that Dorothy is your friend and you're biased, but I'm Kenneth's girlfriend right now! At least for the moment, I am! If Kenneth were to, say, lose a limb, I'd still stand by him. Why don't you get Dorothy to come and be with Kenneth if you're so keen on defending her?"

"You" Karen was at a loss for words, and Jeffrey quickly intervened with a stern look, "Watch your tone, or I'll have you removed." He didn't care about the fairness of the argument; his people were not to be trifled with.

"Oh, so it's like that, huh? Bullying me because you've got the numbers? Fine! Let's see who else besides me would want Kenneth if he were to lose a limb!"

With that, Eleanor stormed off,
regret and frustration boiling within

her. She had intended to have a calm, rational conversation with Kenneth about their relationship, but it had never happened. Maybe what they needed was simply more communication. Yet, here she was, driven away by Karen's words, feeling more alienated from Kenneth's family than ever. If that's how it was going to be, then so be it. It wasn't her fault she was leaving a potentially disabled Kenneth behind!

After Eleanor left, Karen began to cry softly. "Jeffrey... do you think there's any chance for a miracle? Kenneth won't be able to handle amputation!"

Jeffrey hugged his wife close, comforting her, "Don't worry, I've contacted the best doctors. If there's any chance to save his legs, we won't let Kenneth face amputation." He sighed, "The doctors are doing their best to save his life."

Losing Kenneth would be a far greater tragedy than any physical disability. Karen knew this logic well, but guilt gnawed at her.

"Why did I ever think to set Kenneth

and Dorothy up? If I hadn't, none of this would've happened!" Perhaps Kenneth would have been happily married with children by now. Given his background and capabilities, he should have been leading a blissful life.

"It's not like you're psychic, Karen. You couldn't have predicted any of this. It's not your fault Kenneth fell too deep Jeffrey reassured her,- then sighed to himself, "Even someone as influential as Everett can't control everything in life, let alone us..."