

The CEO's Hidden Love Midnight Temptations and Deep Desires - Chapter 111

Before Dorothy could reply, Karen shot off a second message.

You're acting so weird! Dorothy, am I your bestie or not?)

[Of course.

Then spill the beans! Who is this boy you're all twisted up about? Don't deny it. From the looks of it, you're clearly smitten with someone.]

Smitten with someone...

Did she mean Everett?

But Dorothy's first thought was she didn't dare. Everett was a deity to a votary like her. How could she dare to have personal feelings towards a deity?

I'm just curious about guys in relationships so don't get all touchy]

Karen wasn't having it.

I knew you wouldn't admit it. But let me warn you, it's all fun and games until you lose yourself over some guy's sweetness. You think he's nice to you but maybe he's even nicer to others! If guys are overly nice to you right off the bat, they usually have ulterior motives it won't last]

Dorothy really wanted to tell Karen her situation with Everett and have her analyze it.

But after reading her message, she didn't feel the need anymore.

Because Karen had pretty much answered all of her burning questions! What's left to ask?

It seemed that rich guys were all playing the same game, or maybe all guys were

That's why Karen could guess so accurately about why she was so conflicted. She felt that way just because Everett was too gentle and too considerate.

Dorothy thought she better brace herself. Or she would be caught off guard if Everett suddenly took back all his niceness.

After leaving Dorothy's place, Everett went straight back to his room.

He suddenly realized that what stood between him and her wasn't just her slow-to-warm-un personality, but also the huge social class difference

Dorothy's earlier question was to explain why she chose to take Kenneth to meet her mem

But to Everett, it was his most thorny and unsolvable problem!

He couldn't let his parents know about Dorothy's ex stence for now, let alone take them to the hospital to see her mother.

But Kenneth could.

Everett furrowed his thick brows. He grabbed a bottle of red from the wine cabinet and took a few sips just as Amanda called.

Im in Eldoria City. Heather picked me up. She take good care of me, so don't worry."

He frowned, "I'll arrange for my assistant to take care of you. Ms. Heather has other things to do."

"No! I'm not familiar with your so-called assistant. Why are you sending him here?" Amanda sounded a bit annoyed and resentful, "finally come home for a visit and you are away on a business trip. And now you want to drag Heather into work too? Who's going to keep me company?"

Before Everett could say anything, Heather's gentle voice came from the other end.

"Amanda, Ill keep you company! Tell Everett not to worry; my work won't be affected"

Amanda was always satisfied with Heather. She nodded and praised, "You're so thoughtfull Thank God you're here, otherwise, I would be all alone coming back home. What's the point of having a son then? You two better have a bunch of granddaughters in the future. I don't want any grandsons!

Listening to their conversation, Everett felt a headache coming on

"Mom, Ms. Heather and L

"I get it! You're prioritizing work, right? i didn't say anything" Amanda chuckled "Alright, go do your work! We'll talk when you're back from your trip"

She hung up without even giving Everett a chance to explain.

A few seconds later, Heather's text came in.

15:00

Don't worry, Everett. I've got Amanda covered. Just focus on your trip.]

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He replied with a grim look on his face.

[it's a hassle for you to take care of my mam. Ill have someone take over. Thanks for your hard work.]

[You know how bad Amanda's depression is just want her to be happy, that's all.

Heather's words reminded Everett of the year his mother tried to kill herself in the bathroom. The whole floor was covered by a stinging view of blood

The cause was his refusal to follow his family's wishes and get engaged to Heather.

Ever since Amanda got severe depression, she's been increasingly controlling and throwing fits over everything. She ever tried to off herself over minor setbacks, like the time she swallowed half a bottle of sleeping pills, ust because her housekeeper war led to quit.

The doctors said she was fragile from the trauma of being kidnapped, and the only treatment was rest and indulging her as much as possible.

Everett's hand fell on the screen. He didn't reply to Heather for a long time.

A moment later, Kevin knocked on the door, "Mr. Lopez, you wanted to see me?"

"Mhm, put Dorothy's name on this research project."

"Alright

Upon hearing this, Kevin was genuinely happy for Dorothy. She was a newbie for sure but she worked hard and never complained. Plus, she did well in the previous projects. Adding her name was perfectly reasonable

"Guide her more in the future. Make sure her resume stays clean" Everett had to prepare for all possibilities

Just making a move towards Dorothy wasn't enough; he also needed her to lean towards him.

understand, Mr. Lopez”

At dinner.

Dorothy would've just nibbled on some bread and continued working if Kevin didn't give her three calls in a row to ask her downstairs.

As soon as she entered the hotel restaurant, she saw Kevin heading towards her with a beaming smile.

“I have some good news, wanna hear?” Kevin said.

“Definitely.”

“Mr. Lopez personally said that you can be credited on this project”

Dorothy was a bit confused. She couldn't figure out what Everett was up to

He left abruptly just a while ago, and she thought he was mad at her! Now suddenly he's okay with her name on the project. Why?

*Remember to thank Mr. Lopez later” Kevin didn't notice her confusion. He was just reminding his apprentice not to forget to thank the boss in her joy.

Dorothy quickly nodded, “I got it”

Soon enough, Everett appeared in the restaurant along with a few managers.

He was as conspicuous as ever, attracting gazes from all over the place as soon as he walked in.

Everett wasn't wearing a formal suit, but a black casual outfit instead. His hair was still impeccably groomed. His furrowed brows and tight lips added to his aloof demeanor, making him seem cool and unapproachable.

Before Dorothy could look away, she accidentally locked eyes with him

She instinctively looked elsewhere, pretending she hadn't seen anything.

“We sent the project credit information to HQ. Once the legal department approves it, we can start using it. I mentioned this to Everett in front of Dorothy.”

Dorothy understood that this was Kevin's way of reminding her.

new contract” Kevin

“Um... thanks for your support, Mr. Lopez. Having come this far all she could do was pluck up the courage to talk to Everett.

By nodding slightly, Everett indicated that he heard her.

During dinner, Dorothy kept her head down and ate, She didn't say a single word.

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15001

She noticed that no garlic was used in any of the dishes she shared with Everett.

Maybe he specifically requested this?

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Everett and his crew had to dip out early because they had a video conference after dinner.

Once they were out of the picture, Dorothy holed herself up in her room to get down with the paperwork.

She decided not to waste her time on things that didn't make sense. There was no point in trying to comprehend such matters. This might be her only shot at climbing up the ladder, and since Everett was giving her a leg up, she was going to bust her ass to make sure she didn't let him down.

And just like that, hours flew by.

At 1 a.m., just as Dorothy was stretching her sore wrists, there was a sudden knock on the door.

Who could it be at this hour?

She walked over and cautiously peeked through the peephole.

It was Everett!

Dorothy hesitated for a few seconds before opening the door. She was then immediately hit by the smell of booze on him.

Before she could say anything, Everett brushed past her and headed for the bathroom.

He was a clean freak who couldn't stand the smell of alcohol on himself, but he couldn't avoid the drinking either.

Dorothy knew what this meant. He wasn't going anywhere tonight.

But last night he just slept next to her and did nothing, so tonight should be the same, right?

He was extremely tired during the day and had been drinking at night, so he couldn't possibly have the energy for anything else.

Dorothy snapped back to reality, smacking herself on the forehead. Her thoughts were starting to get as dirty as Karen's,

"Pass me the towel."

Suddenly, Everett's voice rang out from the bathroom

Dorothy quickly handed him the towel, keeping her eyes averted.

Feeling the towel being taken from her hand, she was about to leave when he spoke up again.

"Do you still have the stuff we didn't use last time in your bag?"

"What stuff?" Dorothy asked instinctively.

"I remember we didn't use it all in Havenbrook."

Everett spoke so casually and naturally that it felt like they were discussing work and not an embarrassing topic.

This threw Dorothy off.

"Do you mean the SNS project forms?"

"No. I mean the contraceptives.

Boom!

Dorothy felt like her cheeks had just been placed on a grill.

The atmosphere got super awkward.

After a while, she finally replied stiffly, T... I threw it away.”

“There should be some in the drawers of the nightstand.” With that, he wiped himself down with the towel and walked out of the bathroom bare chested.

Dorothy only heard the sound of a drawer being opened. Then, in an instant, his strong arms easily lifted her onto the bed.

For a moment, it felt like the air had solidified.

Everett’s kiss was as gentle as it ever had been, and she could still feel the faint scent from the shower as his hot hand roamed over her skin.

The reflected light from the ceiling was a bit glaring.

Dorothy gripped his shoulder subconsciously as her voice trembled. “Can we turn off the lights?”

“Sure.”

After bright of burning passion, she was only let go when she was totally spent

15.00

Dorothy had to take back her previous assumptions

Turned out that even after a hard day’s work, the man still had the energy for this kind of thing.

The next day, she was woken up by her phone ringing next to her pillow.

After groggily opening her eyes, Dorothy picked up her phone with her sore hand. She looked and discovered that it was Mr. Percy calling.

What could he want?

“Hello, Mr. Percy”

“Dorothy, have you leaked any information about the SinoSuccess Enterprises project to anyone?”

Mr. Percy’s voice sounded panicked. It was as if something major had happened.

Dorothy was now wide awake, and she sat up in bed. “No. What’s going on?”

“The core technical blueprint of the SinoSuccess Enterprises project have been leaked, and the CEO of SinoSuccess Enterprises is on his way to the Prosperity Consortium!”

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The core technical blueprint of the SinoSuccess Enterprises project had been leaked?!

Dorothy suddenly recalled that when she was on a business trip in Havenbrook, Heather had asked her for it.

Heather was known as one of the Lopez Corporation’s most loyal employees. She wouldn’t leak information about their partners, right?

“Think carefully. Only you and I have dealt with this project. No third person has the authority to view it. If this blows up, both of us are screwed.”

As a partner, leaking core technical information was a major no–no in the investment banking industry.

Once it was confirmed, no one in the industry would dare cooperate with them ever again. Even if the Prosperity Consortium was a subsidiary of the Lopez Corporation, being under a big tree didn’t save it from scandal.

And as the person involved in this incident, she would be blacklisted by the entire industry.

“L. I sent the technical blueprint to Ms. Heather at the headquarters. She said she needed it.”

“Who? Heather?”

“Yes, the chief lawyer of the Lopez Corporation.”

Mr. Percy exploded.

“Why didn’t you discuss this with me? Dorothy, are you out of your mind?!”

“She’s a core member of the Lopez Corporation and has made great contributions to the company. The project contract approval also went through her. I don’t think she would leak it.

” Dorothy was also on pins and needles. “Maybe someone from SinoSuccess Enterprises leaked it.”

“You’d better

pray! it’s not our fault!” Mr. Percy paused. “Send me the evidence that Ms. Heather asked you for the blueprint. If it’s really the Prosperity Consortium’s problem, the headquarters will send someone to investigate. I can’t shoulder this disaster.”

“Okay, I’ll send it to you”

She hung up and hurriedly searched for the email Heather had sent her.

No matter how much she searched, she couldn’t find the email.

Dorothy logged into her email again, trying to find the record of the email she had sent to Heather, but was shocked to find that the email address no longer existed. It had been deleted.

Soon, Mr. Percy called again.

“Why are you so slow?! What’s taking so long?”

“Mr. Percy... I can’t find the record of the information I sent to Ms. Heather.”

“What?!”

“Don’t panic; 111 call Ms. Heather and make a recording. That can also serve as evidence, right?”

Mr. Percy was obviously very irritated.

He barely wanted to speak with her at this point. “Fine, fine. Just hurry up.”

After hanging up, Dorothy immediately dialed Heather’s number, but she was met with another setback. The number she was dialing was invalid.

She logged into the company’s internal software and found Heather’s contact number, which was not the one she used before.

“Hello, this is Heather.”

The voice on the other end was soft, like the way she usually spoke to Everett.

Dorothy pressed the record button before she spoke, “Ms. Heather, it’s me, Dorothy. You called me last time and asked me to send you the technical blueprint of the SinoSuccess Enterprises project. I wanted to find out what you specifically used it for,”

“The technical blueprint of the SinoSuccess Enterprises project? Heather raised her voice. “Ms. Sanchez, are you sure you’re not mistaken? What would our legal department need that for?”

We only handle contract checking and signing. Aren’t the details of the projects supposed to be handled by your department?”

Dorothy clenched her fists as her eyebrows furrowed in raga. “But you clearly asked me for that blueprint”

“Ms. Sanchez, as I have said, our legal department doesn’t need it.”

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At that moment, it all clicked for Dorothy.

She was being played.

Heather was trying to bump her out of the Lopez Corporation. Hell, she was trying to bump her out of the entire investment banking Industry!

She raised an eyebrow. “I’ve told you before. I’m not here to pick a fight”

Dorothy knew her place. But clearly, Heather had no intentions of backing off

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Heather’s voice was still pleasing. She even sounded kind of patient, the way an adult would speak to a child. “If there’s nothing else, I have work to do.”

“You know damn well what I’m talking about! You’re targeting me because of Everett Lopez, aren’t you? You’re trying to frame me!” Dorothy had no interest in playing along. She decided to lay her cards on the table.

“Because of Mr. Lopez? Ms. Sanchez, I suggest you think before you speak.”

With that, she hung up.

Dorothy tried to call back, but she hesitated and didn't press the call button.

Heather was basically declaring war on her

Looking back, she had been scheming since their business trip to Havenbrook. There was no way Dorothy would get any useful information now.

She had never been in a situation like this before. One wrong move could ruin her entire career. Forget about being credited for the new research project.

The Lopez Corporation would surely fire her to save dignity. With such a stain on her record, no other company would hire her.

Her phone rang again. It was Karen.

"Dorothy, what's the deal with the SinoSuccess Enterprises project? Mr. Percy is throwing a fit; he even smashed the office glass! Isn't this your responsibility? Are you in trouble?"

Dorothy's hands were shaking, and her voice went hollow. "I've been set up."

"By who?"

"Heather."

She asked for the core technical blueprint and used tech to erase our text conversation. "I can't find any record of it."

Karen's voice shot up. "Heather? Do you have beef with her or something? Are you sure? Heather's loyalty to the Lopez Corporation is well known. She wouldn't do something that could damage the company's reputation."

Even Karen didn't believe Heather would do such a thing.

Dorothy felt a pounding headache coming on and didn't bother explaining much to Karen. She just hung up.

As she looked at her phone, she couldn't think of anyone who could help her at this point.

Everett was definitely out of the question.

Even if this didn't affect the Lopez Corporation, the mere fact that Heather was involved meant she knew whose side he would be on.

If she told him that Heather leaked the core technical blueprint just to frame her, he would never believe it

What about Kevin?

She couldn't just all around and wait for the end.

Dorothy decided to call Kevin. After finding out that he was in a meeting with Everett at the branch office, she quickly cleaned up and hailed a cab to wait for him there.

In the meantime, Mr. Percy nearly blew up her phone with calls. But none of which Dorothy answered.

She thought she'd ask Kevin for advice first.

Dorothy felt pathetic.

Here she was, having to rely on Kevin, a recent acquaintance with whom she had little rapport.

When she arrived, the meeting ended shortly after

Kevin invited her upstairs.

Dorothy took the elevator to the branch office meeting room, knocked on the door, and the first thing she did when she entered was to see if Everett was there.

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Thankfully, it was just Kevin.

She quickly briefed him on the situation, and his face grew more serious as she spoke.

"I always thought you were cautious. How could you do something like this?"

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"It was Ms. Heather who asked for it, and she said she was in a hurry, so I didn't think too much."

“Even if it was Mr. Lopez who asked, you still had to go through the application process. Kevin tried to calm himself down, but this was a dead end situation.

The core technical blueprint was leaked, and he had to explain this to SinoSuccess Enterprises. Plus, you and Ms. Heather haven't been interacting for long. You need to have a reason to claim that she framed you”

Even if he, Kevin, wanted to believe it, the public needed solid evidence. Without it, she would come off like she was just making up a story to save herself.

Dorothy opened her mouth, but she didn't say anything

She couldn't tell people that the reason Heather disliked and targeted her was because she was now Everett's Lady

“Speak up. It's crunch time, so don't hide anything. If you want me to help you brainstorm you have to tell me everything. Do you have any conflicts with Ms. Heather?”

“I don't know.”

Kevin frowned and stood up from his chair in frustration. “Well, I can't help you with this. Lets wait and see how the company decides to deal with you.

He gave Dorothy a disappointed look and started to leave, but stopped at the door.

the industry alone, you would be toast.

“You need to know that once this stain is confirmed, not only could you end up in jail, but just in th You'd have to forget about any future.”

Dorothy knew the consequences all too well.

She lowered her head and thought for a few seconds, then suddenly looked at him. “Kevin, do you believe that Heather framed me?”

“Belief alone doesn't help.” Kevin subconsciously answered while raising an eyebrow “Why don't you go to Mr. Lopez? Aren't you guys classmates?”

“But Ms. Heather is his crush”

Kevin knew that too.

“Let me figure it out myself. Let me see if I can recover my text messages with Ms. Heather.” Dorothy bowed to him. “And.. thank you for believing me.”

Although he didn't come up with any solutions, she was still grateful

After taking a few deep breaths, on her way back to the hotel, Dorothy took Mr. Percy's call.

He was already fuming. He started cursing as soon as he opened his mouth

"Are you tired of living? If you want to die, don't drag me down with you!"

sorry,

Mr. Percy Give me some time, I will find evidence that Heather framed me,"

"Give you time? Who will give me time?! Besides, Heather is the chief lawyer of the Lopez Corporation; would she frame you, a little

Who would believe that?

Dorothy frowned, knowing that Mr. Percy must think she was making excuses.

"I was wondering how your mother suddenly had money for her surgery.

Turns out you sold the core technical blueprint to other companies!"

"I didn't!" She immediately retorted. "I didn't betray our company!"

"Then tell me, where did the money for your mother's surgery come from? At the time, Keren even called me to ask if she could borrow some money, which I declined. Later, when I asked her she said you had solved the medical expenses problem. That's when I found it strange. how did you get the money so quickly?"

Mr. Percy's suspicion was well-grounded, and it even matched the incident perfectly.

After his outburst, Dorothy suddenly realized something.

Heather was really clever

She must have known about the agreement between herself and Everett

Heather must have known that she couldn't tell anyone about the contract marriage; otherwise, it would be a breach of contract and she would have to pay a penalty.

In this way, to others. Dorothy's motive for leaking the core technical blueprint for her mother's medical expenses was complete. Who would believe her now?

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"The money for my mom's surgery absolutely didn't come from this! The company can check!"

"There's no need to play innocent with me. The company will definitely send someone to investigate. No one can escape!" Mr. Percy yelled out, "Damn my luck for recruiting you into the third group!"

Dorothy could almost imagine Mr. Percy's face at this moment. He probably wished he could tear himself apart.

The busy signal from the other end suggested that he might have smashed his phone.

Dorothy dug her nails into her own palm, forcing herself to calm down.

The bigger the problem, the less you should panic.

Besides, she wasn't the one who leaked the information.

She thought carefully. If she wanted to prove her innocence, she had to find the record of Heather asking for the core technical blueprint. That way at least when the company sent someone to investigate, they would lock into Heather as well.

Otherwise, Heather would be completely out of the picture, and the final conclusion would be to put all the blame on her.

But if Heather used this method, she must have planned it carefully.

She turned on her computer, attempting to find something from the account that had been deleted.

But when Dorothy finally deciphered the initials of that email account, she was left dumbfounded. The company that got the core technical blueprint of the SingSuccess Enterprises project was called Regal Dominion Ventures, and the initials of the email account were RD.

If the company's investigators see this, it would only further confirm that Dorothy directly leaked the core technology diagram to the rival company.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the hotel door,

Dorothy was startled and subconsciously looked through the peephole

She saw a tall figure, and she knew who it was at a glance.

She hesitated for a moment, then opened the door

Everett strode in. Without even putting down his laptop, he immediately asked, “Did you send the core technical blueprint of the SinoSuccess Enterprises project to someone else?”

“Yes.

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“Dorothy!” He rarely spoke to her in such a stern tone. “Do you know what the consequences are?”

Of course she knew.

But who brought on this disaster?

Before Everett appeared in her life, she didn’t even know who Heather was.

Dorothy had a fleeting impulse to confront Everett, but reason told her it was not the right move.

Unless she could find solid evidence to prove that Heather had indeed asked for the core technical blueprint, challenging the woman who held the position of Everett’s true love would be futile

If she annoyed Everett, she would be in even more trouble.

Moreover she was indeed the one who provoked him

From that night on the business trip and later, when she took the initiative to agree a marriage agreement, it was all her doing. It wouldn’t be accurate to say that it was all Everett’s fault.

*I accept any investigation from the company. I’ve never been in contact with anyone from Regal Dominion Ventures, nor have I – received any benefits from them.”

“The investigation will take time. You won’t make it to the signing of this

“I know”

is research project.”

Everett rubbed his forehead, his handsome face now looking even colder. "Who did you send the core technical blueprint to?" Dorothy's lips moved, and after a long while, she whispered, "Heather."

Anyone else?" He asked almost subconsciously.

She suddenly smiled as she looked into his eyes. "You also think that Ms. Heather wouldn't jeopardize the company's reputation Jun_to_ framème, right?*

There was no need for Everett to answer. His reaction had already proven his stance.

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"I'm talking to you."

"Yes, I never shared it with anyone else. Only Mr. Percy and I, as the project leader, have access to the core technical blueprint."

"Got it

Everett frowned and coldly dropped the subject before going into the bedroom with his phone.

While watching his retreating figure, Dorothy twitched the corners of her lips.

It was impossible to expect Everett to play the hera. She had to fend for herself,

She returned to her computer tirelessly searching for ways to retrieve deleted text messages. But every method she tried was a scam.

Dorothy called the service provider, only to be told that retrieval was impossible

Was her future and all her previous hard work going to be ruined by Heather just like that

Suddenly, the phone beside her lit up

Kenneth sent her a message.

But Dorothy wasn't in the mood to check it. She simply got up to pack her bags, ready to rush back to the office to confront Heather

This matter was related to her reputation and future, she couldn't just let it go.

When Everett came out, he saw Dorothy packing

"Heather asked you for the blueprint, right? Do you have proof?"

"No."

Upon hearing this, Everett frowned and stepped forward, grabbing her wrist. "Leave this matter to me."

"No need; I can handle it myself!" Dorothy pulled her hand away. "If I didn't do it, there must be a way to prove it!"

"Dorothy, as I said, let me handle this"

She stopped and looked at him. And then what? Just wait for the company to fire me and carry this stain for the rest of my life?"

"If you didn't do it, no one can frame you."

"That's true.

But the reality is that Heather deliberately asked me for the blueprint, then wiped the evidence to frame me. If the truth comes out, the Lopez Corporation would lose her as their chief lawyer Dorothy met his deep gaze. "Could you bear that?"

Could he bear the loss of Heather's contribution to the company ruining Heather's future, and losing his beloved?

This seemed like a corporate struggle, but in reality. Heather did this to bring Everett; to a crossroads, betting that he couldn't bear to let her go.

A chief lawyer versus a junior assistant? It was a no-brainer.

As the seconds ticked by, Everett remained silent.

Dorothy didn't expect an answer; she knew clearing her name was up in her.

Once she finished packing, she picked up her luggage and prepared to leave.

complicated."

Everett stepped forward and blocked the door. His voice was slightly hoarse as he spoke "Give me some time. This is... Armanda was currently in the country with

Heather by her side. If she found out about the incident, she would definitely demand that he side unconditionally with Heather, even asking him to outright fire Dorothy

Considering her previous suicide attempt simply because he refused the arranged marriage, he couldn't predict the consequences if he defied her wishes now

So, if he wanted to help Dorothy, he couldn't intervene directly

"Mr. Lopez, I understand your predicament and appreciate your willingness to talk to me and give me the chance to defend myself. But I also know that the evidence is up to me to find. I just hope that when the truth comes out, you can be fair,"

"Can you trust me once?"

Trust him to handle the matter?

But clearly the answer was written all over Dorothy's face.

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She couldn't believe him.

If the one framing her was someone else, maybe she could choose to trust Everett.

But it was Heather she was up against

She was someone who held a major place in Everett's heart and had contributed a lot to the Lopez Corporation,

Whoever weighed the pros and cons would know how to choose. Would the truth even matter then? Who would care?

Dorothy even doubted that Everett, as the CEO, was meddling in this intentionally to destroy evidence and protect Heather.

Yeah, at this point, she trusted no one.

If the accusations of her leaking confidential documents and betraying the company were confirmed, she'd have to carry them for the

rest of her life

Tim sorry”

Dorothy uttered this sad apology and left the room with her suitcase.

She bought a ticket for the earliest flight back to Eldora City. It wasn't until she was sitting in the terminal that she checked her phone.

She hadn't even opened the message from Kenneth yet

[Karen told me about your situation. If you need help, I'm pretty savvy with computer hacking.]

Since the last time Dorothy had a heart-to-heart with him, this was the first time Kenneth had sent her a message on his own.

She hesitated, then replied: [Can you recover suddenly disappeared messages from a phone?]

He replied almost instantaneously, as if he had been waiting for her message.

[I can try. When are you coming back to Eldora City?

[arrive at Eldornia City Airport around midnight. Don't let me disturb your rest! I'll come to find you tomorrow if you're free.]

[Are you alone?]

[Yeah.]

[Then I come pick you up]

As if he were afraid she would refuse, Kenneth quickly added: I'm worried the longer we wait, the harder it will be to recover the data.]

Dorothy lowered her head and thought for a moment, feeling disgusted at her own actions

It was as if she only called Kenneth when she needed him, knowing full well his feelings for her yet never giving him an answer.

It's been so long, one more night won't make a difference. I'll come to find you tomorrow when you're free. Don't let me interrupt your plans |

After replying, she put her phone aside, feeling waves of headaches and irritation.

Though the main reason for this mess was her lack of defense against Heather had she not been careless, it wouldn't have escalated to this point.

She also hated that she was so easily trusting. After knowing her hostility, she should have been more guarded against Heather.

Dorothy looked out at the airport, at the red letters that spelled out Lumina Bay!

When she came, she was ecstatic about being part of a core project. But now she was leaving.

Heather had shattered her dream, telling her that quick success was impossible.

Just before boarding, Dorothy saw two missed calls on her phone from Everett.

She hesitated and didn't return th She turned off her phone and got up to check in

The whole trip was silent, and Dorothy's delicate face locked visibly hap

Who wouldn't be upset over something like this?

At two in the morning, the plane landed on time at Eldomia City Airport.

She walked off the plane with her luggage, not turning her phone back on until she was almost at the arrivals section.

The first message that popped up was from Kenneth.

I'm waiting for you at the airport. Contact me when you land; otherwise, I just keep waiting here.

The time stamp showed it had been sent three hours ago.

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Kenneth didn't have a clue when Dorothy's flight would land. He only knew it was in the wee hours of the morning. So he'd been here since eleven in the evening, waiting.

Before Dorothy could even respond to his message, she heard Kenneth calling her.

She looked up, and there he was at the arrivals gate, donned in a dark coat, looking all beat.

“Dorothy, over here!”

She started walking toward him with her luggage, and, just like that, Kenneth took it from her.

“Tired, huh? Hop in. I take you to Karen’s. You need a good sleep. I’ve got a bunch of pals coming over tomorrow morning to help figure things out. They’re all hotshots in this field. I wouldn’t trust myself with this, so I called them.”

Kenneth was talking a mile a minute, reminding her of Karen.

But in the dead of night, his words felt like a warm, comforting, and familiar embrace.

“What’s up?” Upon seeing her stand still, Kenneth raised an eyebrow

“... I can’t reciprocate your enthusiasm, Mr. Nelson. I can’t just take your help without a second thought”

He paused for a moment, then let out a resigned chuckle. “Why overthink things? Aren’t you Karen’s good friend? Plus, my project’s tied

up with the Lopez Corporation because of you. If anything happens to you, it affects me too. I’m just doing my bit.”

That was what Kenneth said, but Dorothy wasn’t born yesterday. She knew better than to take everything at face value.

She got in his car and was silent throughout the ride.

As they were approaching Karen’s place, Dorothy finally broke the silence. I haven’t been honest with Karen. Im not single”

Even though her manage to Everett was more of a pact, she was, after all, a married woman.

Kenneth seemed taken aback, but he quickly regained his composure. “Your boyfriend’s a lucky guy then. It must’ve been a tough chase.

“Knowing that I’m not single, are you still going to help me?”

“Like I said, I’m helping you because you’re my friend.” He glanced at her through the rear-view mirror. “Dorothy, I’m not the kind of guy you think I am. I don’t have ulterior

motives for everything. I admit that I admire you, and I'd like to be your boyfriend. But even if we put that aside, I'm still Karen's brother"

Let's focus on the problem at hand. I may not be a corporate shark, but from what Karen told me, I understand the gravity of the situation. Let's gather evidence to clear your name first. As for the love stuff, just pretend it never happened. I won't pursue you anymore.

"

Kenneth flashed a gentle smile and parked the car at the front of Karen's building.

"Get some rest. You can't avoid the inevitable, and staying awake all night won't do you any good. Take it easy"

Dorothy nodded, accepting his well-meaning advice.

Karen had been waiting upstairs; she was on the brink of falling asleep. After hearing a noise, she quickly ran downstairs.

"Dorothy, you're finally here! Don't worry, my brother and I are always on your side!"

Karen was such a straightforward and honest person. Her outburst prompted Dorothy's first genuine smile of the day.

"Alright"

Kenneth helped her carry her luggage upstairs and even cooked her a plate of pasta before leaving.

After a satisfying meal, she washed up and lay down on the bed when she noticed a message from Everett.

Have you arrived?]

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