

Midnight 601

Chapter 601

Levi didn't even have time to brace himself before a barrage of punches rained down on him!

Karen tried to pull Jeffrey away, but she might as well have been a leaf trying to stop a hurricane.

Jeffrey was like a man possessed!

The commotion was so loud that even his buddies at the nearby steakhouse heard the ruckus and came running out.

But their first instinct was to break it up!

“Jeffrey, what the heck is going on? Stop it, man!”

“Chill out, bro!”

But it was like trying to hold back a bull; a bunch of grown men couldn't stop a raging Jeffrey.

It was only when Karen shouted, “I’m calling Dorothy and getting Everett here!” that Jeffrey finally paused.

Karen rushed forward to Levi, who was looking like he'd gone ten rounds with a heavyweight, and dialed 911.

Jeffrey gave them a glance, then pulled out a card from his pocket and tossed it over, “I caused this so I'll cover it.”

Karen was seething at his rich-boy act! Thus, after calling for an ambulance, she grabbed her phone to report the fight to the police.

But before she could finish, her phone was snatched.

Looking up, there was Jeffrey again.

“Weston, take him to the hospital. I'll handle this.”

“You got it, Mr. Turner!”

Before she could grasp his intentions, Jeffrey had scooped her up from the ground and was carrying her fireman-style!

“Jeffrey, put me the hell down!”

“Why? So you can go to the hospital, play the caring girlfriend, then get a room to ‘talk’?”

Karen thrashed and fought, clawing and biting at him, but he neither dodged nor released her.

“You really think I won't call—”

“I know, but your phone's with me.”

Karen seethed her teeth.

“Tomorrow, when Dorothy and Everett have cooled off, I'll explain!” Jeffrey tapped his cheek with his tongue. “Tonight, you'd better play nice because I'm not in the mood!”

He'd left the diner at noon in a foul mood, and his friends had to drag him out for some grub, insisting he needed the company. They chose a casual spot over a bar, so Jeffrey agreed.

But who'd have guessed? He ran into Karen there!

Jeffrey never believed in fate, but after bumping into Karen twice in one day, he started to think maybe they were meant to be.

Seeing she had no leverage, Karen gritted her teeth, “Can you at least put me down? You've hurt Levi bad; I need to see him at the hospital! Our parents know each other!”

“I told you that Weston's got it.”

“Jeffrey!”

“I know my punches. He'll live.”

Karen, furious, bit down hard on Jeffrey's shoulder. That made him wince, but his grip didn't falter.

“Keep biting. Maybe you'll take a chunk out of me!”

Karen was at a loss with Jeffrey. She dreaded the consequences. How would she face Levi's parents tomorrow?

But Jeffrey just looked down at her, who was trapped in his arms, and asked in a deep voice, “So, how serious were you two anyway?”

Chapter 602

"You can't control me!"

"Did you kiss him?" Jeffrey's gaze fell on her lips, "Or did you sleep with him?"

Karen wasn't about to back down. She clenched her teeth in defiance.

"Yeah, we slept together! His little friend is bigger than you, more skilled, way better in bed, and a million times more caring!"

She had no idea how deeply such words could wound a man.

"Alright, fine."

Jeffrey pulled out his phone and dialed a number with one hand.

The call was picked up quickly on the other end, "Mr. Turner! We're in the ambulance now, don't worry!"

"Weston, make sure that punk gets what he deserves."

Hearing this, Karen panicked, "Jeffrey, I was lying to you! We never did anything, not even a kiss. It was our first meeting. We just had dinner and that's all!"

Jeffrey glanced at Karen and then relented with a chuckle, "Forget it, Weston. Just take good care of our friend Levi who thought he could pry away my girl."

Only when he hung up did Karen breathe a sigh of relief.

"You are just that worried about him, huh?"

"I regret that I was involved with a lunatic like you!" She cursed herself for being blinded by his charm, not considering the consequences that she couldn't afford.

She thought Jeffrey could handle a fling!

"What can you do, there's no antidote for regret." Jeffrey walked to his car and shoved her inside, "Just come with me, will you?"

"I don't want to! I want to go home!"

"Home? You think I don't know what you're up to? As soon as you leave here, you'll be running to the hospital to see that Levi, won't you?"

"I won't. I really want to go home, okay?"

Karen banged on the car window, but it was a Rolls-Royce, not something her fists could break!

Jeffrey locked the doors outright and drove towards his place.

Even he didn't realize that the irritation and restlessness that had plagued him all day had vanished the moment Karen got into his car.

...

Late at night, after Everett was asleep, Dorothy tiptoed out of bed.

She first checked on the kids' rooms, ensuring they were sound asleep and tucked in before she could settle.

Whether it was jet lag or sleeping too much on the plane, Dorothy had lain in bed for a long while without feeling sleepy.

She went to the living room and booted up her laptop, planning to finish the work Kevin had left undone.

It was her responsibility at first. Kevin had only stepped in to help out in a pinch.

Considering how Everett was away and she had added so much to Kevin's plate, she figured Kevin must be on the verge of burnout.

As soon as she logged in, she saw Kevin's account still online.

Dorothy typed a message and sent it, "Kevin, you can rest. I'll take it from here."

"Ms. Sanchez, you're still up?" Kevin replied almost instantly.

"Yeah, can't sleep with the jet lag, might as well get some work done! You go sleep. You still need to be in the office tomorrow."

Kevin didn't hesitate mainly because he was truly exhausted, "Okay then, I'm off to bed. Don't overdo it, you should rest too. I'll handle it tomorrow."

"Thanks, I appreciate it!"

She closed the chat with Kevin, but out of the corner of her eye, she noticed her phone light up.

A text message had come in.

[Back in Eldorria City?]

The message was from an anonymous number, but she knew it had to be from Byte 7.

[Yeah, back now. How did you know?]

After a short wait, another message came in: [Your phone's IP is in Bay Residence.]

Dorothy gasped.

Chapter 603

Dorothy never expected that someone would actually track her IP address in real-time!

Was Byte 7 really that concerned she'd run away from him?

Before she could ponder further, another text pinged through: [Who's living it up at Bay Residence, the swanky spot in Eldorria City? The Lopez family, if I'm not mistaken.]

Dorothy wasn't too keen on this invasion of privacy, feeling disrespected as if she were under a microscope.

But respect seemed to be a foreign concept to Byte 7.

[It's personal.] She texted back tersely.

[Oh! Your flash drive's got issues. Meet me at the roundabout in front of Bay Residence.] Dorothy blinked in surprise, her gaze involuntarily flicking toward the still-shut bedroom door.

[Now?]

[Yes.]

She wasn't thrilled about the idea of meeting a man in the middle of the night. Despite anything else, Byte 7 was a man who asked her out now, which indicated he had more than a professional interest in her. But he said the flash drive had an issue, and that was something she couldn't just ignore. She was really afraid that to be true.

[Can't it wait until tomorrow? It's late.]

[I'm not free then. Either show up or forget it—I'll drop your case.]

As soon as he threatened to bail, Dorothy scrambled into her slippers, typing: [I'll be there. Wait for me.]

She didn't bother with anything else, just grabbed a light jacket, slipped into her shoes, and dashed out the door.

Thankfully, the outside world was still bathed in a comforting glow. Dorothy jogged towards the roundabout and sure enough, there was a shadowy figure.

This guy really had a knack for popping up like a ghost in the night.

Seeing Dorothy, Byte 7 pulled off his hoodie and sized her up under the moon's glow.

"What's wrong with the flash drive?"

"Someone tampered with it," he said nonchalantly, the pale moon made his skin paler and highlighted the blue veins on the back of his hands.

"Figures. Otherwise, I wouldn't be asking for your help," Dorothy admitted. She knew Everett's mom was thorough, especially with incriminating evidence. It would have been wiped clean. Otherwise, she wouldn't be able to act so innocently in front of Dorothy without a hint of guilt.

"It's hospital surveillance footage," she divulged.

"You've recovered it?" Dorothy was taken aback.

Byte 7 snorted, "You think it's that easy? Only a few frames have been restored."

"Right, this is the hospital surveillance. I need to see who was with my mother before she passed and what they said to her."

Byte 7 squinted. Hands shoved in his hoodie pockets, his lean frame could be blown away by the night breeze.

"I don't usually take on jobs like this. Too messy," he confessed.

Restoration could lead to questions of authenticity and the footage might end up in court. He could even be summoned to attest to its legitimacy.

He found it all a hassle.

Dorothy's heart sank, but she insisted, "You took my deposit! You can't back out!"

"Could you let me finish?" he interjected with a click of his tongue.

Dorothy nodded.

Byte 7 glanced at her, "You're planning a lawsuit, right? To take down those who hurt your mom?"

"Yes!"

"Then I'll get you an HD video copy. Wouldn't want the court to go blind."

Dorothy was stunned, "Is that possible?"

"Doubting me?"

"No, no," she quickly shook her head.

Byte 7 eyed Dorothy, who was shivering slightly in the night air, and gestured dismissively, "Go home. I got what I needed."

And with that, he turned and walked away with no hesitation in his step.

Dorothy watched him disappear into the night before she tiptoed back to Bay Residence. As she walked in, she looked up.

There sat Everett, lounging on the couch.

Chapter 604

Clad in a moonlit robe, his long legs crossed at the ankles. He appeared to have been seated there for some time.

Dorothy wasn't feeling guilty; she simply didn't want Everett to know the real reason behind her clandestine meeting with Byte 7.

"Did I wake you? Was I too loud?" she asked, slipping off her shoes and stepping into the living room.

Everett didn't interrogate her. Instead, he stretched out his hand, beckoning her closer, and pulled Dorothy into an embrace. He then gave a soft murmur, "Chilly outside, isn't it? You're not dressed warm enough."

"It's fine, nothing to worry about."

He rubbed her hands to warm them but didn't press for details.

It was Dorothy who couldn't hold back, "Aren't you going to ask where I've been?"

"If you want to tell me, you'd tell me."

He didn't want to coerce Dorothy into sharing.

"You don't think I was out seeing Kenneth, do you?" Dorothy wanted to clear the air, fearing Everett's jealousy might be aimed at Kenneth again. "It was Byte 7. I asked him to help recover some data from my flash drive. He ran into a problem and came to ask me about it."

After explaining, she showed him the text messages on her phone as proof.

He took the phone, glanced at it, and set it aside.

"I trust you."

"But you're upset," Dorothy could feel it.

Everett gazed into her eyes with his grim ones, "Because it feels like even though you're close, you're always just out of reach."

She kept her secrets, refusing to let him in, not even granting him the courtesy of knowing.

It felt like he was a criminal who perpetually awaited a verdict. He never knew when and where he might be cast aside.

"You're overthinking it," Dorothy patted his hand, "What's with this fear of loss after you've stared death in the face?"

This was Everett, for heaven's sake!

Even he was prone to insecurities.

"Because you're always prepared to leave, keeping secrets, and you've even mapped out your exit routes, haven't you?"

Everett wished he could be completely oblivious.

He wished he could be blissfully unaware and guessing nothing out as long as she stayed by his side.

Dorothy started to look away and dodge the subject again, "Maybe after we return to Swevia Country, you should let Dr. Quincy find you a shrink to check if there's some underlying psychological issue with you. I'm right here. Why worry so much?"

"That might be good. Get me a shrink and see if I can be cured."

She sighed in resignation and reached up to wrap her arms around Everett's neck, pressing a kiss to his lips.

Everett wanted more, so he decisively moved to pin her beneath him, taking the lead.

"This is the living room. What if Abigail and Langston wakes up?"

"The Bay Residence is soundproof."

"But..."

"Dorothy, I'm not looking to that. What are you thinking?"

With that, Dorothy's cheeks flamed with embarrassment.

Lately, she'd found her thoughts drifting to such matters far too often.

"Then get off me and stand up!"

"I won't." Everett insisted on holding her.

Dorothy didn't dare struggle, wary of his injuries, so she could only let him hold her.

The evening breeze continued to stir outside, the rustling of leaves whispering through the room.

She looked up at him, their gazes locked.

They remained that way.

Time slipped by until he finally broke the silence with a heavy question.

"The secret you're keeping... it's about your mother, isn't it?"

Chapter 605

Dorothy's body tensed up, her reaction nearly answering the question for him.

She desperately wanted to ask Everett when he'd started suspecting her. She thought she had hidden it so well.

Seeing her silence, Everett pressed on, "It was Heather, wasn't it? I'll call her over and you can deal with her as you see fit."

"Don't!" Dorothy finally spoke up, "I don't need you to intervene. I can handle this myself."

"Don't worry about my mom. I'll talk to her."

By hook or by crook, he would get what he wanted.

Amanda surely wouldn't turn against her son over Heather. And Heather had definitely tarnished her standing in Amanda's eyes after the recent accident in which she hurt Everett.

"I really don't need it, Everett. Please, stay out of this."

Dorothy tried to walk away, but Everett pulled her back.

"There's really nothing between Heather and me."

"I know that!"

If she still doubted anything between Everett and Heather now, she'd be out of her mind.

"Dorothy..."

"I'm just a bit tired. Can we go back and rest? Please?" Dorothy gave him a weary smile, clearly wanting to drop the subject, "Everett, I don't want to incriminate anyone without evidence. If we just

use your family clout to pin this on Heather, that's not what I want."

She needed the truth, a fair and just verdict!

Dorothy was well aware that if she asked Everett to take Heather out, he would do it in a heartbeat. But that wasn't her goal.

If she had wanted that, she could've just confronted Heather and Amanda back in the day, making sure they all went down together. Why bother gathering evidence or recovering files from a USB?

"I'll help you find it."

"Everett, stop. I need to do this on my own."

Because once the evidence was there, he might not be willing to hand it over anymore.

...

Karen was dragged back to Jeffrey's place without any room for discussion.

She had thought Jeffrey, who clearly had no respect for anyone, would force her hand again!

But surprisingly, all he did was lock the door and take her phone away.

"What the hell are you playing at? I need to get home!"

"Cut the crap, it's late and your parents are asleep. They have no idea you're out meeting guys!"

Karen rolled her eyes at him, "Ever heard of being nice?"

"What for?" Jeffrey grabbed himself a glass of iced water, and only then noticed that his knuckles were bleeding and bruised from the scuffle with Levi.

"Better let me go, or I'll tell Dorothy first thing tomorrow! I'll have Everett come after you!"

Jeffrey couldn't help but laugh. He downed his iced water and then licked his mouth, "He's all cuddled up with his wife and sleeping soundly. Why would he bother with me?"

Karen frowned.

"Besides, I agree to your terms," Jeffrey said as he spread his hands, "Bright and early tomorrow, I'll have my folks come over, take you to the bank to check the balance, and then we'll swing by the deeds office and the DMV for the name changes."

"Have you lost your mind? Jeffrey, have you been drinking?"

"Nope, why would I drink? Still got work tomorrow. Everett wants me at a meeting first thing. If I showed up drunk, I might as well sign my death warrant." Jeffrey was already peeling off his shirt, nonchalant as ever.

He did it so carelessly as if she was not there.

Karen quickly averted her gaze, but not before hearing his chuckle, "Don't be shy. I thought you loved the view."

"I do not!"

Chapter 606

"No worries, you've got a lifetime to figure it out."

Jeffrey had thrown in the towel. He was utterly defeated!

So what if it was about wealth? At the end of the day, it didn't really matter who owned his properties.

He wasn't that attached to his cars and assets.

"Jeffrey, can you just stop?" Karen, sensing he might be serious, pleaded, "We're not a good match!"

"You think you and that Levi are a good match?"

"He's not a match after the beating you gave him." She feared that even if she reached out to Levi tomorrow, he'd probably block her.

And explaining this mess to her parents? That was a tangled web she dreaded to unravel!

Karen was absolutely fed up with Jeffrey's temperament. Impulsive, quick to anger, never considering the consequences or anyone else's feelings.

Jeffrey was leagues behind Everett in this respect!

"A match or not, you're mine," Jeffrey declared, settling back into the couch with a thin smile, eyeing her. "Tomorrow, you'll join my folks in ironing out my assets. After I wrap up the meeting at the office, I'll come straight to pick you up."

"I'm not going. I don't want any of it."

"Like it or not, you have to take it! Karen, you're an adult, aren't you? You've got to stick to your word."

Karen glared at him, "You said you didn't like me one bit!"

Jeffery was speechless.

"Anyway, I'm telling you that I still won't marry you even if you give me your fortune. I said that just to get rid of you! Just let me go. I really need to check on Levi at the hospital. Or how can my parents face Levi's after this?"

She truly regretted dragging Levi into this mess!

For him, this was an unprovoked disaster.

"Well, for the record, once you say something, I take it to heart." Jeffrey casually crossed his legs and gave a little shake of his foot, which exuded a roguish air. "What do your folks like, anyway? I've never done the meet-the-parents thing. No experience."

"What?!" Karen frowned. "You want to meet my parents?"

"Isn't it standard to meet the family before getting hitched?" Jeffrey raised an eyebrow. "You thinking of pulling off some secret marriage? Don't even go there! What if your folks don't know you're already spoken for and set you up on dates? How would that work?"

He had no intention of being a secret affair for any woman!

"Jeffrey!"

"Master bedroom with me, or the guest room on your own. Take your pick?" He gestured towards the two adjacent rooms, skipping the financial talk.

"I want to leave! Don't you understand?"

"I won't let you leave. Don't you understand that?"

Karen rolled her eyes and clenched her teeth, "Guest room!"

Jeffrey gave her a thumbs-up, "Then goodnight and sleep tight! My folks will be here first thing in the morning."

Karen was in shock. She thought he was bluffing, or at least there was a chance. She couldn't fathom how a seasoned player like Jeffrey, who was notorious for his romantic escapades, could suddenly fall for her and be willing to hand over all his assets just to marry her.

But when she saw Jeffrey's parents sitting in the living room waiting for her the next morning, she was convinced.

"Karen!" Paloma waved enthusiastically. "You're up! My husband and I hope we didn't come too early to disturb your rest."

Karen blinked. She was now completely numb.

Paloma smiled and approached her, "Jeffrey's off to the office, but he asked me to take care of things. Once you're ready, we'll head to the bank. My husband and I have talked it over. Jeffrey does have some assets that can't be transferred. So here's what we'll do: we'll liquidate our own assets and deposit the cash into your account. How does that sound?"

Chapter 607

Honestly, it was hard for Karen to comprehend how someone as level-headed as Paloma could have raised someone like Jeffrey, a real bonehead.

She took a moment to compose herself, then gave Paloma a small smile, "Jeffrey and I, well, we had a bit of a misunderstanding."

"He told me!" Paloma ushered Karen onto the couch, her tone tinged with exasperation, "That boy of mine has got a temperament, and I'm sure he's been nothing but a headache for you! The truth is, his father and I—we're partly to blame. Always buried in work, we never had enough time for him. He was left to his own devices abroad and picked up some bad habits like smoking and drinking."

Karen blinked.

"But you can rest assured, Jeffrey is not a bad kid. He just acts like he's never grown up." Paloma couldn't help but sigh when it came to her son, "He told me this morning that he saw you dining with a friend and ended up punching the poor guy! His dad and I gave him an earful, then sent someone to check on your friend at the hospital. After work, we'll drag Jeffrey over there to

apologize in person. Please don't be mad. Don't let this little tiff end things between you lovebirds. My son really likes you!"

"It's not like that, we..."

"Your request—to have him transfer his assets into your name in case he messes up again, leaving him with nothing—I fully support it! That's exactly what he needs. We've wanted to rein him in for a while now, but nothing seemed to threaten him. With you in the picture, we can finally breathe easy!"

Paloma could tell this time that her son was genuinely smitten.

A mother knew her child well. She might not say much, but she was aware of all his carousing with fair-weather friends. Yet, what could she do? He always brushed her off, saying it was all just networking.

Now, someone had finally made him take things seriously, and that was such a huge relief for her.

"You go freshen up, and then let's head to the bank! I've got a meeting with the bank manager."

At the mention of the bank, Karen quickly waved her hands in protest.

After hesitating, she simply told the truth when she was unable to find a more delicate way to put it.

"Paloma. Jeffrey and I... are not dating!"

Although Karen agreed with much of what Paloma said and could see her sincerity, she couldn't just marry Jeffrey because of it. That would be so absurd!

"Huh?" Paloma was taken aback, clearly not expecting such a bombshell.

Her husband, Huxley, also frowned and sat up straighter to look at her.

Karen felt a little awkward.

She couldn't exactly say that she and Jeffrey had just slept together for the heck of it—that she was just sampling what their son was like without any intention of being responsible.

This whole situation was totally unexpected!

"I was visiting a friend in Swevia Country, and since my friend was rather busy, Jeffrey was just asked to look after me for a bit. That's the only connection between us."

There was never any romance.

"That can't be right. Jeffrey told us you two were an item, that it was even your idea. Oh, no, that's not what I meant. I thought maybe you liked Jeffrey too!"

"I only ever saw him as a friend. Maybe Jeffrey read too much into it."

Paloma exchanged a puzzled glance with her husband.

After a moment, Huxley spoke up in a deep voice, "Call that boy and find out what the heck is going on."

Chapter 608

Jeffrey had just left, saying he was filling in for Everett at a meeting, which meant he is probably in the boardroom by now. Wait up, I'll just shoot him a text and see what's up."

Karen knew she had to skedaddle before Jeffrey got back; if he returned, she wouldn't stand a chance of leaving.

"Alright, you guys catch up with Jeffrey for the full scoop. I better head out."

"What's the rush? Have some breakfast! I asked the housekeeper to whip up something special." Paloma didn't let Karen's words sour her mood; she was still all smiles. "After you've eaten, whether you and Jeffrey are an item or not, I'm making him go to the hospital and apologize to your friend. We'll sort out any compensation that's due; we can't muddle it through and have you caught in the middle of this mess."

"No worries, my friend probably doesn't need his apology. I'll have a word with him, that's all."

Karen was terrified that if Jeffrey faced Levi, he might throw punches before he could even apologize!

Nobody knew what he's gonna do next with his temper.

Coercing her, throwing his phone in a fit, lashing out...none of that was normal behavior.

"Karen, Jeffrey has to face the consequences of his actions. Don't worry, with his dad and me around, he wouldn't dare step out of line." Paloma's sincere gaze didn't carry a trace of high-society arrogance.

For a moment, Karen wished Everett's parents were like this too.

Then Dorothy and Everett would surely be living their happiest life together.

...

Dorothy slept like a log back at Bay Residence, as if Everett's presence magically improved her sleep quality.

If it weren't for the kids' ruckus, she might have snoozed the day away.

After freshening up, she stepped out in her robe to find Everett making breakfast while Abigail and Langston were tossing a ball back and forth, chirping with laughter.

Looking down, the plush carpet was a disaster zone.

Dorothy hurried over to tidy up, putting the toys back in their place.

"Mommy, I wanna keep playing!" Abigail pouted, "Daddy said we could play whatever we want!"

That was a quick switch. She just fit in so naturally.

Dorothy sighed and called Langston over.

"Kids, listen up. Daddy is a bit of a clean freak; he doesn't like a mess, so let's keep things tidy, okay?"

"But Daddy said it's okay!" Abigail was already using Everett as her shield.

"That's because Daddy loves you. But you gotta love him back, right? Don't you want Daddy to be happy?"

Abigail blinked innocently and nodded, "I do."

"Then let's clean up together."

Abigail agreed while Langston snorted, "Mommy, you're so good at brainwashing!"

Dorothy gasped.

"Breakfast's ready." Everett set the table and looked up to see the trio huddled over the toys.

No prizes for guessing who orchestrated this "activity."

"Stop that. I'll clean up later. Abigail, Langston, come eat."

"Yay, breakfast time!" Abigail cheered at the prospect of ditching chores and darted off.

Dorothy looked helplessly at Everett.

He smiled tenderly, wrapping his arms around her from behind, "My world, my rules. I don't mind at all."

"No more clean freak?"

"Not when it comes to you."

Chapter 609

Dorothy gave him a girly gaze, "Double standards much? Dr. Quincy said she tried to give you a hand last time, and you wouldn't have it."

Everett thought for a moment before he remembered the incident at the hospital in Swevia Country.

"She sure likes to talk, doesn't she?"

"It's not every day she meets someone like you." Dorothy pulled out a chair and sat down, watching Everett hoist both kids into their seats. "She said you'd rather suffer than accept help."

Everett placed a glass of milk in front of her, "I just don't like other women touching me, that's all."

"You're not worried about me getting jealous, are you?" The thought suddenly popped into Dorothy's head.

It seemed like he was always especially cold and distant towards Quincy, much like how he had been with Heather at first.

Everett smirked at her, "Would you get jealous?"

"I'm not as petty as you are. Dr. Quincy's just treating you."

That would be so unreasonable if she started getting jealous of his doctor.

"I kind of wish you were petty."

For years, his self-discipline was all that kept him in line. Dorothy didn't seem to care or bother.

Dorothy shot him a glance. She said nothing but her smile lingered.

“I had Kevin book us flights to Snowfall City.” After breakfast, Everett tidied up the toys that Abigail and Langston had been playing with.

Dorothy knew that his obsession with cleanliness wasn’t cured, just temporarily subdued.

“Great,” she said, wrapping her arms around Everett from behind. “It’s a shame Snowfall City isn’t living up to its name right now.”

“It will snow eventually.” Everett turned around to embrace her fully. “We can stay in Snowfall City for a while.”

“What about your work?”

“Jeffrey’s got it covered.”

Dorothy shook her head with a smile, “Let’s not. Your health is what’s important. We need to get you back to Swevia County as soon as possible.”

“Dorothy, I don’t want you to have any regrets.”

She shook her head in his arms, “I don’t have regrets anymore.”

To have someone cherish her like this, treasure her and protect her so carefully, she really had nothing to regret about. If she had to name one, it might be the impossibility of growing old together.

...

Jeffrey had just finished a meeting at the office and stepped out of the conference room when he saw a call from his mother.

Picking up the phone, he signaled to his secretary, “Take the meeting summary to the CEO’s office, hand it to Kevin, and tell him I’ll be out this afternoon.”

“Right away, Mr. Turner.”

Once he finished, Jeffrey spoke to his mother, “Hey, Mom!”

“Are you done with your meeting?”

“Yeah, heading down to the garage now. Where are you guys? I’ll come find you.”

He spoke as he made his way to the elevator, car keys in hand.

Paloma paused, then whispered, “What’s going on with you and Karen? She told me you two aren’t even dating!”

“She said that?” Jeffrey raised an eyebrow as he got into his car.

“Yes! Your father and I are completely confused. What’s the deal?”

“Oh, well, I just ticked her off so she’s playing hard to get! Haven’t you heard her say she’s my girlfriend?” Jeffrey chuckled. “I’ll just need to sweet-talk her a bit, and everything will be fine.”

Paloma was still somewhat skeptical, “Really?”

“Really! I’m heading home to charm her now. You didn’t let her leave, did you?”

“No, no, we just didn’t want her storming off in a huff.”

Jeffrey breathed a sigh of relief.

“Alright, I’ll head home now and we’ll talk soon!”

Chapter 610

Jeffrey barreled into the driveway, his car coming to a brisk halt. He burst through the front door, and sure enough, there was Karen, trapped in an intervention circle by his folks.

Before Jeffrey could make his presence known, Karen was in full defense mode, “Jeffrey and I are not an item! We’re just friends, honest!”

“I get it!”

“You finally understand?”

“I know you’re ticked off. Jeffrey can really be a piece of work! Just wait till he gets home. His dad and I are gonna read him the riot act!”

Karen, feeling utterly helpless and at a loss for words, caught a glimpse of Jeffrey striding in.

She shot up from the couch and pointed at him, “Jeffrey, get over here and explain!”

Paloma, seeing her son return, heaved a sigh of relief.

The last thing she wanted was her future daughter-in-law making a run for it, leaving her to face the music when her son asked about her whereabouts.

Jeffrey sauntered over with a grin and stood beside Karen. His eyes crinkled with mischief as he announced, “Alright, let me clear the air—”

“Karen here is my girlfriend, and I’m going to marry her.”

Paloma’s heart settled back into place at his declaration.

But Karen? She was on the verge of tears.

“Are you nuts, Jeffrey? Since when am I your girlfriend?”

“How many nights have you spent in my bed? If not my girlfriend, then what?”

Karen was utterly dumbfounded.

Hearing this, Huxley coughed awkwardly, excusing himself to get some fresh air.

Paloma, now all smiles, chimed in, “How about you two chat for a bit? Your dad and I will take a stroll around the block. If you decide to hit up the bank today, we’ll join. If not, we’ll head out.”

“Sounds good, Mom. I’ll sweet-talk her. She’s just throwing a tantrum.”

Once his parents were out the door, Jeffrey turned around only to be greeted with a sharp pain in his foot!

Karen had zeroed in on his flip-flops and stomped down hard.

“Yeow! Are you trying to cripple me? My leg’s just healed!”

“You deserve it! Why don’t you just become disabled?” Karen glared at him and outstretched her hand, “Give me back my phone! This is like house arrest. Do you know that, Jeffery?”

She was desperate to get in touch with her parents and to straighten out the whole Levi thing!

“I had no choice. The minute I let you go, you’d be straight to the hospital to find that pretty boy!” Jeffrey tugged Karen back to the couch, fixing her with a serious gaze, “I’m not kidding. I agreed to your terms for real. My folks are here to help us with the title transfer. You wanted security and I’m giving it to you!”

Jeffrey was different today.

Dressed up for a company meeting, he was wearing a rare look: crisp suit, tie knotted just so, hair slicked back – he looked every bit the aloof business tycoon instead of the rakish heartthrob.

Maybe it was an illusion, but she could actually sense a shred of sincerity in his words.

But still...

“If you’re serious, then answer me, why me?”

Karen tried to keep her emotions in check to have a real conversation.

But that genuinely stumped Jeffrey.

“What reason? The reason is you!”

“Among all your exes, there are prettier ones, ones with better figures, more sensible ones, and ones who’d cling to you. Why would you want to marry me?” Karen laid her deepest doubts all out, “Is it because I refused to stay in touch, so you find me different and refreshing?”

Jeffrey rolled the tip of his tongue against his cheek, loosening his tie, “You’re overthinking it... I don’t just say yes to anyone who asks.