

Midnight 741

Chapter 741

Jeffrey was seething with regret.

"Why didn't I just listen..." he muttered to himself.

"Dad, I really messed up this time."

Before he met Karen, Jeffrey felt a gaping void within him that he tried to fill with a parade of women and endless partying. But once Karen came into his life, he realized that all the space inside him could be perfectly occupied by just one person.

How could he undo his past follies?

Was it Karen's fault for entering his life too late?

Huxley glanced over at Paige. "Jeffrey, what others do to you, that's their business. But if you leave yourself open to being hurt, that's on you. Don't play the victim. Remember this—you can only change yourself, not anyone else."

Jeffrey hung his head, speechless.

Over the years, he'd caroused through bars, living it up, ignoring his father's repeated chastisements, even believing that his dad, consumed with his business, didn't love him.

Now, the bitter taste of truth was his to bear.

"I was just too in love with him," Paige wept, tears falling freely. "I was young and reckless. Pregnant and terrified, I couldn't bear to tell my family. If I wasn't truly committed to him, how could I have endured?"

"That's your concern, not the Turners'. I'm dealing with my son, so stay out of it."

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Leaning against the hospital wall, Jeffrey waited for the DNA test result, not wanting to utter a single word.

His mind was consumed with thoughts of Karen and their unborn child. How could he possibly make amends?

Her concerns were valid. If he put himself in her shoes, he'd probably think Jeffrey wasn't worth a lifetime of trust either.

"Paige, are you there?"

Silence lingered until finally, the doctor came out with another test result.

Paige, being closest, snatched the document.

Her eyes scanned the page, then widened in shock.

"No way... this can't be..."

The results confirmed a biological match between her and Iris. But the child wasn't Jeffrey's.

"Jeffrey, this is impossible! I was so worried about going to the wrong room that day. I double-checked the room number before entering. I even called Arthur to make sure you were in there..."

"Then go ask Arthur about it."

Jeffrey had no time to untangle this mess now. He needed to save his child.

As he and his parents hurried out of City Hospital, Jeffrey ran headlong into Arthur, who had just arrived.

The sight of Arthur clenched Jeffrey's fists in rage.

"Son of a—! You dared to screw me over!"

Grabbing Arthur by the collar, Jeffrey landed a fierce punch.

Fortunately, they were in a hospital, surrounded by people. Several onlookers intervened and pulled Jeffrey back.

But the punch left Arthur bloodied and sprawled on the floor.

"She told you?" Arthur wiped the blood from his face, glaring at Jeffrey.

"What do you think? But too bad, the kid's not mine! Your little scheme failed!"

Arthur smirked, first propping himself up, then collapsing back onto the hospital floor, erupting into laughter.

"Of course, I know that kid isn't yours! Jeffrey, Paige's child is mine!"

Chapter 742

Jeffrey couldn't have dreamed it would turn out like this!

Chuckling at his own expense, Arthur said, "You only wanted a fling with Paige, but she fell for you head over heels. Everyone in our circle knows your game, Jeffrey. Only she was naive enough to take you seriously. But don't play the victim, man! You were the one who pursued Paige in the first place, right?"

Jeffrey had to admit that was true.

At that time, he thought the young woman was quite a catch—only 19 and already turning heads. No wonder Jeffrey was interested!

"But you got Paige pregnant, then tried to pin it on me. Don't think I'll let that slide!"

"So what are you going to do? Scare me? What's the big deal? You come from money, so what? Go ahead, try to take me down!" Arthur spat disdainfully, his smirk cold. "Paige was not even 20 when she got involved with you. You dumped her after a few months and now I'm settling the score. It's what you deserve! Jeffrey, oh Jeffrey, what goes around comes around! Aren't you about to get engaged? I'll be waiting for the day you have a daughter, just to see her get played by some guy and tossed aside like you did to Paige!"

Arthur's eyes were filled with loathing, a look that haunted Jeffrey even as his parents dragged him into the car.

The closer he got to Karen's apartment, the more he felt a sense of panic and shortness of breath.

Seeing her son's pale face, Paloma patted his shoulder. "Jeffrey, you know you messed up. Just make it right from now on. Let the past be the past, and stay away from that Paige girl."

Jeffrey kept his eyes downcast, silent, lost in thought.

As they drove into the neighborhood, he finally spoke up. "Mom, Dad, you guys go on home. I want to talk to Karen alone."

"Huh? Are you sure you can handle it?" Paloma was worried.

A mother knows her son best, and she knew Jeffrey all too well—quick-tempered and often thoughtless. Who knew what he might blurt out?

"Mom, if I bring you and Dad with me, it feels like we're pressuring Karen to agree. She hasn't done anything wrong, so whether she forgives me or not should be her choice."

"I'm just afraid you don't know how to cheer a girl up. Karen's pregnant, don't upset her!"

"Let the kid deal with the consequences himself," Huxley suddenly chimed in. "At the end of the day, it's his fault. He's right about one thing: it's Karen's decision whether to reconcile or not. We shouldn't interfere. It's good for Jeffrey to reflect on his actions over the years."

Paloma sighed, mainly concerned about the baby Karen was carrying.

What if the talk didn't go well? Would they really break up?

But seeing the firm stance of father and son, she held back further comment.

After his parents drove off, Jeffrey walked toward Everett's car.

Everett was busy with paperwork inside the car.

Noticing a shadow, Everett paused his work and rolled down the window, "You got the results?"

"Yeah, it's not mine."

"Then why aren't you upstairs talking to her? What are you doing down here?"

Jeffrey grimaced, "Got a smoke?"

"Karen's pregnant, and you want to smoke?"

"Just one, to calm my nerves! I'm going crazy here."

As Everett reached over to the glove compartment for a pack of cigarettes, his peripheral vision caught a figure in the rear-view mirror.

Kenneth! He was back again.

Chapter 743

Jeffrey peered at Everett whose expression had soured and instinctively followed his gaze.

"Uh... Your rival, man, he's really laying it on thick! His crush on Dorothy is practically neon-sign obvious."

Everett frowned, dragging his gaze back and shot Jeffrey a look. "Shut up."

Jeffrey grabbed the pack of cigarettes, lit one up, and didn't bother getting into the car. He just stood there taking a few drags.

"Seriously though, you throwing in the towel on Dorothy?"

Everett's fingers paused on his laptop, his voice barely audible.

"Yeah."

"Ha," Jeffrey chuckled, "Everett, buddy, ask yourself, can you really handle it if one day Dorothy falls for Kenneth and ends up marrying him?"

Everett's handsome face tightened, lips pressed into a thin line, "She won't end up with Kenneth."

"Then what the hell are you doing here? The Lopez Corporation run out of people?"

A private detective could've done the job cheap and easy. Why would Everett, the big boss of the Lopez Corporation, drop his billion-dollar deals to camp out in front of this apartment complex all day?

"Jeffrey, you got a death wish?"

"Not really." Jeffrey took one last puff and flicked the cigarette butt away, bending down to Everett's level, "I got played with the whole Paige thing. That kid ain't mine; she's Arthur's! He got me

hammered and set the whole thing up. Lucky for me, Arthur's got a thing for Paige, or she would've ended up in my bed for real!"

"And then?"

"Aren't you worried that one day, Kenneth might pull a similar stunt and get Dorothy drunk?"

With Kenneth's stubborn streak, it was clear he wasn't just any guy.

Who else would willingly look after Dorothy's kids with another man for years? How many men could do that?

Now that Dorothy's back on the market and Everett's apparently out of the picture, wouldn't Kenneth be over the moon?

Who's to say he won't make his move, turn the tables, and if that happens, the one losing his mind would probably be Everett!

"Jeffrey, what's between me and Dorothy... it's not as simple as you and Karen."

"Of course, I know that!" This was a matter of life and death, and Dorothy's own mother was involved, "So I'm asking you, can you really handle it if Dorothy ends up with someone else? Okay, maybe not Kenneth, but there are plenty of other guys out there. She can't be expected to live alone forever, right?"

Everett lowered his eyelashes, the reflection of Ken's figure in the rear-view mirror now gone.

"Then I hope she finds a good man."

"Damn, you're serious this time?"

"Yeah."

Jeffrey nodded, "Alright, fine!"

With that, he moved to open the car door.

Everett raised an eyebrow, "What are you doing?"

Why was he getting in the car? Shouldn't he be off wooing Karen?

"Man, Kenneth just went up! You think I should go after Karen now?"

"You scared of him?"

"Scared! He's your rival; you can step on him and nobody would bat an eye. But he's Karen's cousin. She treated him like a brother!"

Jeffrey wouldn't dare cross him!

...

Dorothy had been in touch with lawyers all day but with little progress.

One was close to saying yes, but somehow, in the end, backed out.

When Kenneth knocked on her door, Dorothy was in the kitchen cooking up some comfort food for Karen, who was feeling sleepy with the pregnancy. She didn't want to disturb her.

Quickly wiping her hands, Dorothy went to answer the door, and upon seeing Kenneth, she paused, "Kenneth?"

"I tried calling you. You didn't pick up, and I was worried something happened to you guys."

Chapter 744

"Ugh, I didn't hear it over the sizzling in the kitchen."

Dorothy quickly went to check her phone.

Sure enough, there was a missed call, but it was only ten minutes ago.

Ten minutes without answering and Kenneth showed up?

What, did he ride a rocket?

"Is something up with Karen? Still upset over Jeffrey?" Kenneth made himself at home on the sofa as soon as he walked in, his concern for Karen evident in his every word.

He always had a way of keeping just the right distance, never overwhelming Dorothy or stepping over the line.

After a moment's thought, Dorothy nodded. "You could say that."

After all, Karen's lethargy was mostly on account of Jeffrey.

"When she wakes up, I'll have a word with her! She shouldn't have you slaving away in the kitchen for her. If she's craving something, she could just tell me. You're... you've got enough on your plate, worrying about your mom and all."

"Don't be hard on her! It's just cooking, no big deal." Dorothy was cautious not to even mention Jeffrey's name around Karen these days!

Pregnancy hormones were a wild ride, and with the recent troubles with Jeffrey, any scolding from Kenneth might just push Karen over the edge.

"How about I cook tomorrow then? I can pick up some breakfast on my way over, and I'll handle lunch and dinner." Kenneth offered, then quickly added, "I'll leave right after cooking, won't stay to eat."

"There's no need, Karen will be fine once this blows over."

Dorothy dared not accept.

Aside from propriety, Karen's diet was crucial after her procedure, and if Kenneth took over the cooking, wouldn't he notice something was off?

"Alright then." Kenneth didn't push it. Seeing Dorothy busy herself in the kitchen again, he rolled up his sleeves and stood up. "Let me help you out."

Dorothy felt awkward, but this was Karen's apartment after all, and Kenneth had paid for it. She couldn't very well kick him out.

But his presence did help her make a decision.

She couldn't stay at Karen's place forever. Eldorria City was big enough; she could find her own place to rent. At least it would be her own.

By the time Karen woke up, Kenneth was gone.

She stretched and smiled like a child at the sight of a table full of dishes.

"Dorothy, sometimes I really miss our days back at the Prosperity Consortium! Even though you had to rush to the hospital after work to take care of your mom, we still had our weekends to binge and chill, free from all worries!"

A simple rant about a bad day at work used to do the trick.

Not like now, with a tangled mess of problems.

"Karen, we all have to grow up," Dorothy said as she placed the fork next to her, smiling, "Let's eat."

"Sure."

Karen had just sat down when the doorbell rang.

"Who could that be at this hour?" She got up to answer it, then paused, "It isn't my brother, is it?"

"It shouldn't be. He was just here."

"My brother was here?"

Dorothy nodded.

Karen grimaced and shuffled to the door in her slippers. As soon as she peered through the video intercom, her brows furrowed.

"Who is it?" Dorothy finished setting the table and walked over to see what was wrong.

"It's Jeffrey." Karen glanced at Dorothy and then motioned with her hand across her lips, "Shh, let's keep it down and pretend we're not home! I don't want to talk to him again."

It was probably just another plea to keep the baby, the kind of talk that drains the spirit.

Chapter 745

Karen was starting to wonder if Jeffrey had bugged her own home!

Because the next second, she heard Jeffrey's voice outside, "Karen, I know you're in there. Stop pretending you're not home, will ya?"

Dorothy, lost in thought at Jeffrey's voice from outside, couldn't help but reflect on how people differ from one another.

Everett, she reckoned, would never pull a stunt like that in his life.

In this situation, he'd probably just wait downstairs. And if she didn't show, he'd just keep waiting.

"Karen, go out and see him, will ya? His knocking is gonna tick off the neighbors sooner or later."

"But I don't know what to say to him!"

"Say whatever comes to mind, and if you got nothing to say, then don't say a word. He'll get the picture eventually and back off."

Karen understood Dorothy's point. She was just being considerate of the little life growing inside her.

Urging her to think twice about it, to avoid any future regrets.

But Karen had made up her mind!

Indecision brings chaos, and it was better to have a short misery than a long one. With her temperament, a year and a half down the line, she might not even remember what Jeffrey looked like.

"Dorothy, I used to think I could handle a wayward man. As long as he turned over a new leaf, all would be well. But now, I'm thinking that the whole thing just isn't realistic. He's let too many people down, and who knows when he'll have to pay the piper. And then, where would that leave me?"

"If you've come to terms with it, then I've got nothing more to say. Let's eat."

"Mhm."

Karen ignored the persistent knocking and turned to join Dorothy in the dining room.

It wasn't long before the knocking stopped.

Dorothy shot her a glance and suggested, "Looks like Jeffrey might have left. How about we go for a walk after dinner, get some fresh air? You've been cooped up all day, and I've been buried in lawyer meetings. Could use a breather."

"Sure!" Karen agreed without a second thought.

Dorothy sighed quietly, her gaze flicking towards the door.

Hopefully, he was just tired of knocking and taking a break.

If Jeffrey really had left, there was nothing more she could do.

Dorothy could see that Karen genuinely liked Jeffrey, and their relationship didn't have the obstacles like Dorothy's with Everett did.

If Jeffrey could win Karen back, it would be like witnessing a love story come full circle.

After dinner, the night had fully set in.

Dorothy grabbed a teal jacket and stepped out with Karen for a walk.

Once they reached the lobby of the apartment building, she scanned the area.

No sign of anyone.

Had Jeffrey truly left?

"What are you looking at?"

Karen noticed Dorothy's distraction.

Dorothy waved it off, "Nothing, just thinking how old this building's gotten. The facilities are showing their age."

"Tell me about it! Got this place back when it was all about job convenience. How many years has it been since we left the Prosperity Consortium!"

Chatting away, they continued their walk.

Suddenly, a dark figure dashed up from behind!

Before Karen could react, Jeffrey had already grabbed her.

"Karen, did you come down to see me?"

"Let go. I'm not here to see you!"

"I won't let go!" Jeffrey quickly pulled out a folded piece of paper from his pocket, smoothing it out to show Karen, "This is the paternity test for Paige's kid. Her child isn't mine!"

Chapter 746

The moment the words left Jeffrey's lips, not only was Karen stunned, but Dorothy was equally flabbergasted.

Subconsciously, Dorothy wondered if this wasn't some ploy by Jeffrey, cooked up to keep Karen and the baby tied to him.

But before Dorothy could fully wrap her head around the idea, Karen beat her to it.

"Do you think I'd buy that?"

"It's true! Everett—"

Jeffrey cut himself off mid-sentence, suddenly remembering Everett's stern warning not to let Dorothy know he was back in town. Guiltily lowering his voice and sneaking a glance at Dorothy, he stammered, "Everett helped me find out my blood type doesn't match the baby's..."

So, Everett had a part in this drama too.

Dorothy suddenly felt like she was a third wheel, standing there while they needed to hash things out. So, with a few discreet coughs, she chimed in, "You know what, you two talk. Since the kid

isn't yours, you probably have a lot to discuss. I'm going to take a walk. Karen, call me if you need anything."

"Alright." Karen knew Jeffrey wouldn't let her off the hook easily and that she wouldn't be able to shake him off for a while.

Truth be told, Dorothy really did want some air.

All day long, she had been on edge, waiting for phone calls, her heart hanging by a thread.

Now, as she stepped outside to breathe in some fresh air, she felt a wave of relief wash over her.

There was a quaint little park nearby, which she knew of, so she made her way in that direction.

For some reason, the park was unusually empty that day.

Checking her phone, Dorothy saw it was Tuesday. A chill breeze prompted her to pull her jacket tighter around her, but she could somewhat understand why there was no one there.

She took a seat on a bench and for some unknown reason, craved a drink.

Glancing around, she spotted a convenience store not too far off.

Dorothy walked in, grabbed a six-pack of beer, paid for it, and asked for a plastic bag. Bag in hand, she made her way back to the park.

As the night grew darker, the wind turned colder.

Cracking open a beer, Dorothy, perhaps truly thirsty, downed a can in several gulps.

Since her apartment wasn't far, she let herself drink freely, planning to simply head back and sleep it off.

But her tolerance was low, and it had been a while since she last indulged in alcohol. Barely starting on the third can, Dorothy felt her head spin and her legs turn to cotton.

She pushed herself to stand, but her gaze caught on a familiar figure.

Could it be Everett?

But when she blinked and looked again, the figure had vanished.

Dorothy bit her lip, sat back down, and pulled out her phone. Fueled by a slight buzz, she found Everett's number.

[Are you in Eldorria City?]

Almost a minute later, he replied: [No.]

Rubbing her temples, she reached for the third beer and began to sip, her eyes never leaving the phone screen.

Everett hadn't said anything more than those two words. He didn't even ask why she was contacting him so late at night.

That wasn't like Everett.

So, there was only one explanation—her eyes weren't playing tricks on her.

Dorothy thought for a moment, then lowered her gaze and continued to message Everett.

[Oh, okay, I'm a bit tipsy. Thought if you were in Eldorria City, you could maybe come pick me up. But since you're not, never mind.]

After a second's pause, she added another message.

[I can call Kenneth to get me. He's got a spare room, and he can take care of me.]

No sooner had she sent the message than she heard steady footsteps coming up behind her, heading straight for her.

Chapter 747

Dorothy didn't need to turn around to know who was approaching. The presence he carried with him was unmistakable, almost like the thick aroma of a freshly brewed coffee lingering in a quiet morning cafe.

"Aren't you supposed to be out of Eldorria City?" she asked, lifting her gaze to meet his. Her eyes danced with a playful light, perhaps accentuated by the wine she'd had, giving her a cheeky charm.

Everett stood before Dorothy wrapped in a black trench coat, his lips pressed together in silence, making no move to come any closer. It was as if he was there solely to escort her back to her apartment, with no intention of striking up a conversation.

Dorothy didn't press him to speak. Instead, she simply finished the drink in her hand. There was one last can left in her bag.

As she reached for it, Everett finally broke his silence with a furrowed brow, "Stop drinking. You know you can't handle it."

"Since when do you care?" she retorted.

There was a beat of silence before Dorothy smirked and stubbornly attempted to open the last can.

In the next second, both Dorothy and the can were enveloped in Everett's embrace.

He was so tall that Dorothy, in her flat shoes, barely reached his shoulder, her head nestled perfectly under his chin as his trench coat enveloped her.

"Dorothy, stop being stubborn."

"Is wanting a drink really being stubborn?" she slurred slightly, her footing unsteady. She wrapped her arms around his waist for balance, her gaze hazy yet piercing, "Everett, you say I'm not good at lying, but aren't you the expert?"

They knew each other too well for lies to carry any weight.

"I came back because of Jeffrey's situation."

"Oh, I heard about that. His ex-girlfriend's child isn't his, right? You found out?" Dorothy nodded, her eyelids growing heavier.

She tried to keep them open, but the alcohol was numbing her senses, and the strength kept fighting with her sanity.

Feeling her nodding off in his arms, Everett sighed.

"You're drunk, I'll take you home."

"No... they're still talking! Just leave me on the bench. I'll be fine!"

Dorothy gestured towards the bench she had been sitting on moments earlier.

Everett, disliking the scent of alcohol on her, frowned and effortlessly lifted her into his arms.

The sudden loss of ground made her instinctively cling to his neck.

"What are you doing?"

"If you're tired, close your eyes and sleep."

Dorothy furrowed her brows and pushed against him, "I don't need you to take care of me! Put me down."

"And who do you need to take care of you?" Everett's gaze locked on her flushed face, "Kenneth?"

Silence fell between them.

He had come out because of that text message!

Perhaps it was the alcohol, or maybe it was the sense of safety in his arms, but Dorothy fell asleep before they had even left the park. She curled up against him like a gentle, pliant kitten.

Everett could see right through her attempted provocation. But indeed, she was drunk and in a hurry. With no one else around in the park and Karen tied up with Jeffrey, if she had that fourth drink, it would be hard for her to make it back on her own. And without showing up himself, she might have really needed to turn to Kenneth.

Everett carried her to a nearby hotel and booked a room.

Then he messaged Jeffrey to inform Karen there was no need to worry about Dorothy not returning.

After placing Dorothy on the bed, he intended to remove his coat, but she clung tightly to it.

With no other choice, Everett lay down beside her, still in his coat, and held her close.

As he watched Dorothy sleep, unguarded and serene, he couldn't help but stroke her cheek, Jeffrey's words echoing in his mind.

"Dorothy, will you ever... marry Kenneth?"

Chapter 748

Dorothy was fast asleep, blissfully unaware of the world around her.

But Kenneth, as if he had heard her silent slumber, felt compelled to send a message her way. His text, delivered through WhatsApp, pierced the silence.

Ding!

Even in her deep sleep, Dorothy sensed the disturbance and, groggily, reached for her pocket.

Everett frowned, snatched the phone, and quickly silenced it.

"Go back to sleep. It's nothing important."

"Mmm."

Dorothy didn't even open her eyes, just murmured an acknowledgment and drifted back into her dreams.

Everett lit up her phone screen to find a voice message from Kenneth.

[Hey, I was thinking... Why don't I drop off breakfast for you two in the morning? That way you don't have to cook for Karen, and you can catch a little extra sleep!]

Even Everett had to admit, Kenneth was one thoughtful guy. Trying to weasel his way in with a breakfast offer? If Dorothy nodded along, would lunch and dinner invitations be far behind?

He stared at the screen, almost wishing he could punch through it with his glare.

His fingers danced across the keyboard, typing out a response. But just before hitting send, he paused and deleted everything.

No, that wasn't right.

Shouldn't he be glad that Dorothy had someone like Kenneth to take such good care of her? Otherwise, she might end up with some random Joe, good or bad, who knows?

At least Kenneth's intentions were genuine.

...

Karen, on the other hand, was skeptical about the paternity report.

But that wasn't the main issue.

"Even if that child isn't yours, there's no way we're getting back together," she stated flatly, leaving no room for argument.

"It's really because someone set me up, I swear. Even when I'm drunk, I'm not entirely out of it; I'm sure I took precautions!"

Jeffrey insisted, knowing full well that he was careful with protection, given his wild lifestyle and the fear of catching something.

Karen scoffed and gave him a cold glance. "If you're so sure, then why, when Paige claimed the child was yours, did you not even bother with a DNA test before starting to act like a dad?"

Jeffrey didn't respond.

"In your heart, you must also agree and maybe even feel a little thrilled that Paige has remained chaste just for you all these years, right?"

"No! It's just—"

"Just that Paige gave you her first time, and she's got a thing for you?"

Jeffrey was left speechless, head bowed in defeat.

"I told you, I'm not interested in competing with any woman. This whole tussle is just pointless." Karen took a step back, positioning herself for a quick exit if needed, "Thinking about it, I reckon I'm better off with someone like Levi. He's uncomplicated, no exes, no baggage."

Levi!

That name was like a dagger to Jeffrey's heart.

He looked up sharply, his eyes dark with emotion. "Karen, you're carrying my child and already thinking about other men?"

"Are you so sure the child I'm carrying is yours? Unlike Paige, I wasn't a virgin when we got together."

"I—"

"I was just using Levi as an example. After the mess you made last time, there's no chance of us getting together now! I may not know exactly what I'm looking for in a man to spend my life with, but I do know it's not someone like you!"

The thought of dealing with a potential illegitimate child was just too much hassle.

"Karen, I respected your wish not to be a stepmother, and I had nothing to say. But now that it's confirmed the kid isn't mine, can't you give me a chance?"

Chapter 749

"No way." Karen's reply was resolute. "Jeffrey, it's over between us."

Indeed, what Karen had found most distasteful was the child that Paige had brought into their lives.

Had Jeffrey not dropped the bomb about the pregnancy on the day she discovered her own, she might have considered a reconciliation.

Otherwise, she wouldn't have agreed to meet Jeffrey in the first place.

But after days of cool-headed reflection, she acknowledged the painful truth: Jeffrey was not her Mr. Right.

They were mismatched in every possible way, hence the Paige situation.

Maybe she held a slightly dearer place in Jeffrey's heart than Paige, but she could end up just like her. If she had a child, the decisions would only get tougher.

Would she divorce and join the ranks of single mothers, or would she hand the child over to the Turners and spend her days in heartache and worry?

Neither option appealed to Karen.

"So, you're set on the abortion, huh?" Jeffrey finally understood her stance. "Karen, you're too rational. You never loved me!"

His love for Karen had made him realize that love was supposed to be blind, reckless bravery.

Like Everett with Dorothy, willing to trample his pride and status underfoot.

Like him, swollen-faced from rejection, yet still lingering around her!

She was too cool, too calculating, always sorting things out for her best interest.

That wasn't love.

"Think whatever you want. As long as you have nothing to do with me anymore," she retorted.

Karen turned to leave.

Jeffrey didn't speak but clenched his fists and followed her.

She thought he was seeing her home, so she didn't protest. But as Karen swung her apartment door open and stepped in, preparing to close it behind her, Jeffrey suddenly wedged his hand in the door frame!

That was close. She almost crushed his hand!

"Jeffrey, have you lost your mind?"

"I lost it the day I fell for you. I haven't been myself since!" Jeffrey's gaze fixed on her delicate face.

"Karen, if you can bear to break my hand, then close the door!"

"You're insane!"

"Then do it! Close it!" Jeffrey even tried to wrestle the doorknob from her grasp, his body radiating fury. "Close it! Come on, break it!"

Thankfully, Karen's grip was strong enough to prevent him from taking over.

She felt the situation spiraling out of control.

"I don't want to. Let go! Jeffrey, don't lose it here!"

"Let me feel the pain; maybe it'll wake me up! I think I'm sick, I'm crazy!"

Jeffrey insisted on helping her close the door, and Karen felt her strength waning fast.

If she let go now, with the force Jeffrey was applying, his fingers in the door frame would surely snap.

"Let go. Jeffrey, I'm really out of strength!"

Karen was exerting all her might, her face turning tomato red!

Suddenly, Jeffrey's resistance faltered, and he flung the door open, trapping Karen securely in his arms.

"You can't stand to see me hurt, can you?"

She didn't even have time to process what was happening, a bit dazed.

"Karen, answer me!"

She looked up at Jeffrey's face, clenching her fists. "I can't stand to see anyone get hurt. Don't read too much into it! If it were Levi doing this, I would have—mmp!"

Chapter 750

Rather than calling it a forceful kiss, it felt more like a punishment.

Karen felt her lips sting from the bite, she gasped instinctively, only to be overwhelmed as he invaded her space, claiming every part of her.

Pinned against the wall, her hands, still trembling from the force she'd exerted earlier, pounded against his chest in vain.

Feeling her breath being stolen away, Karen had no choice but to bite down hard on Jeffrey.

Soon, the taste of iron mingled between their mouths, but he refused to back down, not even an inch!

Karen would be lying if she said she wasn't scared.

At that moment, Jeffrey seemed possessed, like he'd lost all reason!

"Mi...ugh! Jeffrey..."

Losing strength from lack of air, Karen's body went limp.

The next second, Jeffrey scooped her up and carried her into the bedroom.

The sound of the door locking was like a final verdict!

"Jeffrey, I-I'm pregnant!"

She tried to back away desperately.

But Jeffrey, gripping Karen's ankles, pulled her back towards him effortlessly.

"You're the one who didn't want the baby, remember?"

"What are you trying to do?"

"Karen, I'm asking you one last time, will you marry me and have this child?"

In the unlit bedroom, the only light in his eyes was the reflection of the moonlight, giving him an ominous presence.

Karen felt the danger but could not fathom the consequences, so she stubbornly said, "I won't! Ask me a hundred times, my answer is still no!"

"Fine, I won't ask you ever again."

Jeffrey pinned her shoulders and leaned in for another kiss.

She dodged, but she could only avoid him for so long.

When she felt the chill beneath her, panic set in.

"Jeffrey! If you touch me, I'll never forgive you!"

"Then let's be entwined in this hate for a lifetime."

After all, her hatred was better than having nothing at all!

She hadn't imagined Jeffrey could be so ruthlessly insane!

...

The next morning, when Dorothy woke up with a hangover pounding in her head, she frowned deeply.

It took her a moment to sit up in bed and realize she was in a hotel room.

Looking around, she was alone.

Dorothy recalled drinking last night, and then Everett had shown up.

No need to think further; it must have been him who brought her here.

After freshening up and gaining some clarity, she noticed a note left by Everett on the table.

[I've left Eldorria City. Next time you want to drink, call Kenneth to keep you company, lest you get so drunk you can't even make a call.]

He actually suggested she contact Kenneth?

Dorothy wasn't foolish; she understood the implications.

It seemed he had truly given up.

Well, perhaps that was for the best.

Dorothy lowered her gaze, standing motionless until her legs went numb, before finally shaking it off and moving.

Thinking of Karen's situation, Dorothy quickly called her.

After a few rings, to her surprise, it was Jeffrey who answered!

"Hello?"

"Jeffrey? Why do you have Karen's phone?"

Jeffrey chuckled on the other end, "It took me all night to calm her down. She was quite upset and probably exhausted; she's asleep right now. When she wakes up, I'll have her call you back."