

## Midnight 771

### Chapter 771

"How did he know..."

"I'm not sure myself, but I've got to dash," the executive assistant said, making a beeline for the door. Just as he reached the threshold, he spun around, a reminder flashing in his eyes. "Don't breathe a word about my candor, okay? Mr. Lopez won't take kindly to the impression that his staff had disobeyed him."

Watching him leave, Dorothy picked up the antacid tablets from her desk and popped two into her mouth.

They were bitter with an indescribable aftertaste—and she wasn't just talking about the pills.

...

Karen had only felt overwhelmingly sleepy, but suddenly, upon waking, she was hit with waves of morning sickness.

In the early hours, when she should have been in the throes of deep slumber, she found herself rushing to the bathroom, clinging to the porcelain god for dear life.

"I've called the doctor, Karen! Open the door!"

She had locked herself in, leaving Jeffrey with no choice but to pound helplessly on the bathroom door.

When it became clear she wasn't going to let him in, he contemplated busting the door down.

Luckily, Karen emerged just in time, a ghastly pale shade, looking utterly drained of life.

"For what? It's just morning sickness, a normal part of pregnancy."

Hadn't he ever heard of such a thing? Morning sickness was common knowledge, right?

Jeffrey's brows were knitted together with concern that he couldn't quite shake off. "You look awful. Maybe the doc can help. Isn't there something that can be done? I'll have her prescribe you something!"

Speechless, Karen couldn't be bothered with a biology lesson and exited the room.

The doctor of obstetrics and gynecology was already waiting in the living room. Upon seeing Karen, she quickly asked, "Is the morning sickness that bad? Did you eat something greasy before bed?"

"No, I was asleep and then suddenly felt sick."

"Ms. Miller, morning sickness is a typical pregnancy symptom. There's no special cure, but sometimes sour foods can offer relief. It really depends on the individual."

Karen nodded in understanding. "I'll be fine."

She hadn't intended for the doctor to come at all—it was all Jeffrey, making mountains out of molehills.

After sending the doctor off, Karen went to freshen up and change.

When she came back, Jeffrey was still in the living room, lost in thought.

Karen paused before asking, "Aren't you heading into the office today?"

"Nothing pressing today. I'll go in tomorrow."

Perfect, tomorrow she could find an opportunity to...

Before Karen could finish her thought, Jeffrey unexpectedly asked, "So, this morning sickness... the doctor thinks it might last a while?"

"Some experience it for just a month, others until the baby comes," Karen replied. While she hadn't been through pregnancy herself, she had been there for Dorothy through hers. Besides, women generally knew a thing or two about such matters.

"There's really no remedy? I could look for a top specialist..."

"There's nothing to be done! It's a natural bodily response. Not even the best doctor can change that." Karen's complexion had yet to recover, but the worst of the nausea had passed after this morning's ordeal.

Breakfast was served in the dining room by a nutritionist.

Karen had started to head over, but after just a few steps, she felt the tumultuous upheaval in her stomach again!

She clamped a hand over her mouth and dashed for the bathroom.

This time, Jeffrey was quick on his feet, following her into the bathroom and avoiding being shut out.

After her first round of retching, Karen looked up at him, frowning. "Can you please leave?"

"No, I can't leave you alone like this."

"I really don't want you to see me like this."

Chapter 772

Which girl would ever want to be seen hugging the toilet, her face the very picture of misery as she retches her soul out?

It was enough to make her feel embarrassed about the act of throwing up itself!

"I... I just want to be here for you," Jeffrey stammered, caught off-guard by her reasoning.

"Just go. I'll be fine in a bit."

"I'll just turn around. You go ahead; I won't peek."

"Jeffrey, seriously!" Karen was at a loss for words. His meddling had somehow managed to quell the urge to vomit that had been rising within her. "Just step out. I'll splash some water on my face and join you shortly."

"Alright."

For once, Jeffrey did as he was told and made his way to the door, but Karen stopped him.

"And tell the nutritionist to clear away all that greasy, heavy stuff. I'll just have some plain oatmeal."

She really wanted to indulge, but the nausea was too much to bear. Better to play it safe.

"Okay, oatmeal it is."

Karen took several deep breaths in the bathroom, then looked at herself in the mirror, feeling a wave of emotion.

Being a woman is no walk in the park!

She remembered how Dorothy struggled through her pregnancy, how it had affected her, even declaring she'd never want kids. But without experiencing the discomfort firsthand, it was easy to forget. Now that she was living it, she understood Dorothy's ordeal all too well.

As soon as she stepped out, Jeffrey was there to offer support.

Karen waved him off. "It's just morning sickness. I'm not so weak that I need to be propped up."

"I just want you to be comfortable. The doctor said something sour might help ease the nausea. I've got someone preparing things like pickled plums. When they come, eat what you like and toss what you don't."

She nodded and took a seat in the chair Jeffrey had pulled out for her.

Suddenly, she remembered Paige and asked, "You kept your promise, didn't you? You left Paige alone?"

Caught off guard by the mention of his ex, Jeffrey's lips tightened.

"You know I wouldn't dare break my promise."

"Jeffrey, I get that you're trying to prove your devotion to me and set an example, but don't you think it's too cruel towards Paige? She really loved you."

Jeffrey's brow furrowed deeply. "But I don't love her, and she dared to challenge you. Isn't our relationship the way it is now all because of Paige?"

He vividly remembered those days when he felt like his heart had been ripped out, the pain so intense he could barely stand.

When he found out Karen was pregnant, he was overjoyed. Learning that she might have to terminate the pregnancy was just as devastating.

It felt like suffocation.

"She was just the catalyst."

"Karen, can we not talk about her, please?"

The mention of Paige brought back unpleasant memories for Jeffrey.

Karen pursed her lips and decided not to press further.

Soon, the nutritionist brought in the oatmeal.

She was famished, her stomach utterly empty. But for some reason, as soon as she tried to eat, the urge to vomit was overwhelming!

Karen was about to leave when Jeffrey suddenly grasped her arm. "It's okay; just let it out wherever. Someone will clean it up!"

"I don't want to!"

In her haste, she dashed back to the bathroom too quickly to even shut the door behind her.

Following her, Jeffrey rubbed her back gently and whispered, "You can't go on like this, or you'll be a wreck in no time."

"What am I supposed to do?"

His lips moved slightly, his voice rough as he said, "Karen, this baby... I don't want it anymore."

Chapter 773

Karen furrowed her brow, "Do you even hear yourself?"

"I do." Jeffrey walked over and took her hand, "I mean, I wanted us to have a child, but... I don't want you to suffer like this."

His words were clearly ridiculous. Yet, when Karen looked into his eyes, she believed he meant every word.

"Jeffrey, you..." She opened her mouth but found herself at a loss for words!

It was a bit over the top.

Who decides to have an abortion just because of morning sickness?

But truth be told, if she weren't stuck in this situation, she really wouldn't want the child either.

"Does an abortion hurt?" Jeffrey had never dealt with anything like this before, let alone tried to understand it. His only concern was not to hurt Karen.

"I've never had one. I don't know."

"Then I'll ask the doctor! Don't worry, I'll make sure... any harm to you is minimized."

Jeffrey tried his best to hide the disappointment in his eyes, but Karen could still see it.

He had been looking forward to this child for a long time.

Now, he was frantically trying to keep her trapped here, all just to keep the child.

If he just wanted to register their marriage as he said, there was no need for her to be involved, let alone all this fuss.

"We'll talk about it later. Let's go have breakfast."

She had been through enough turmoil, and Jeffrey hadn't eaten anything either.

As for the child, she wanted to give it more thought. Her mind was too cluttered right now to think clearly.

...

For Dorothy, a day's work was still physically draining.

By the time she arrived at West Legal Services, her voice was a little hoarse.

"Ephraim, I'm here."

"Take a seat!"

Ephraim had been waiting for her since early morning and handed her a few sheets of paper as soon as she arrived. "We've got the evidence sorted and have filed a criminal lawsuit with the court. We're just waiting for the case to be investigated before arresting the suspect."

"Will there be many obstacles to getting the case filed?"

Dorothy asked tactfully, knowing that the suspects included the powerful and internationally-based mother of Everett.

"Definitely, but at least it's moving forward! Ms. Sanchez, don't worry. We'll get the justice we're due. You have to believe in the law."

"Alright."

Dorothy carefully put away the indictment.

Ephraim looked at her and suddenly asked, "Ms. Sanchez, even though I know your stance, I still have to ask. Are you really not open to any settlement? You might want to consider it."

It was a lawyer's duty to ask. Experience told them that settlements often yielded more tangible benefits; holding onto anger was futile.

Though the principle of a life for a life was just, the dead could not be brought back, and the living needed to carry on.

"Sorry, I'm not interested in settling."

"Not even for a substantial sum of money?" Ephraim paused, then added, "Here's the thing: once criminal proceedings are established, even if you agree to a declaration of forgiveness, the other party will still face sentencing! They won't get away scot-free! It would be a way for you to vent."

Dorothy shook her head, her voice soft as she said, "I can't forgive someone who had a hand in my mother's death. No amount of money can change that."

"Alas! I understand how you feel, then. Alright."

Dorothy stood up and left West Legal Services. As soon as she got into her car, she saw a notification on her WhatsApp.

Everett had sent a message but deleted it.

Chapter 774

Then, Dorothy saw Everett's name changed into the "typing..." indicator.

But nothing came through, and it reverted to just his name.

A few seconds later, the typing resumed.

Dorothy waited with bated breath, curious about what he might have to say, so she kept the chat open, her gaze fixed on the screen.

After what seemed like an eternity of indecision, Everett finally sent a message.

[Sorry, sent it by accident.]

[Oh.]

She half-expected Everett to use the kids as a shield, claiming they were messing around with his phone.

Dorothy's eyes lingered on her own response, the single "Oh," feeling as though the conversation had crashed and burned.

Wanting to keep the dialogue going, she typed out: [Are you with Abigail and Langston?]

Karen had once told her that if she wanted to prolong a conversation, she should keep asking questions. After all, if someone wants to keep talking to you, they'll answer any question.

Sure enough, Everett replied promptly.

[No, they're at the hotel. I've arranged for a tutor to give them lessons. Just finished a meeting, I'm in the car.]

As he recounted his whereabouts, Dorothy felt a pang of nostalgia, almost as if they had never separated.

She really wanted to ask Everett if he would go along with his father's wishes to be with Quincy, but she knew that asking would tear down too many pretenses.

For now, she was content with this dynamic—ex-wife and ex-husband, the occasional WhatsApp message, and two kids as the link between them.

At least, that was what Dorothy told herself to ease her mind.

Unsure of what else to ask and seeing that Everett had said all there was to say, Dorothy was about to put her phone away.

But then another message from Everett popped up.

[You want to see them today?]

Dorothy tilted her head, pondering for a moment, then replied: [Aren't they busy with their tutor? I don't want to interrupt. Just sneak me some videos.]

[Alright.]

She arrived at her apartment and fixed herself a simple meal. As she pulled her laptop out of her bag, she inadvertently caught sight of the antacids Everett had his assistant bring her.

Dorothy was still curious—how did he know about her stomachache?

Surely, he couldn't have installed a camera in her office. No, she'd have to check her office thoroughly tomorrow.

...

In the car, Everett had already coughed several times as he settled into his seat.

Kevin, the driver, glanced at Everett through the rear-view mirror and said, “Mr. Lopez, should I take you to the hospital to get checked out? You don’t seem well today.”

“It’s just a cold.”

Everett’s voice was slightly rough, raspy even.

“You’ve got that conference in Liberty City tomorrow. We should at least stop for some medicine so you can get a good night’s sleep.”

“Have you looked over the guest list for the Liberty City summit?” Everett deftly sidestepped the concern, flipping through his schedule on his tablet.

Sighing, Kevin murmured, “I’ve checked the list. Companies that have crossed us before aren’t invited this time. I would’ve declined otherwise.”

“Okay, good.”

Everett nodded, then rubbed his temples.

He kept saying he was fine, but the discomfort was real. Ever since that incident with Heather, his health had taken a hit. Just a brush with the cold air, and he was already feeling under the weather.

Taking advantage of a red light, Kevin bit his lip and spoke up nervously, “Mr. Lopez, if you’re not going to take care of yourself, I might just have to tell Ms. Sanchez and let her handle you.”

Chapter 775

Everett's lithe fingers paused, and he looked up sharply.

"Threatening me?"

"Wouldn't dream of it."

Of course, he wouldn't dare to threaten the CEO, but he knew that Ms. Sanchez would, and that was enough.

Everett's gaze lowered again, returning to the tablet in his hands.

Kevin fell silent, no longer speaking, just focusing on driving.

For a few moments, the air in the car was thick with awkwardness.

Finally, after a few minutes, Everett spoke in a deep tone.

"Take me to the hospital."

"You got it, Mr. Lopez!"

...

The next morning Dorothy was up at dawn and headed straight to the office.

For the Lopez Corporation, this project was central but not exceptionally large. However, for the fourth project team, it was like a pie falling from the sky. And devouring that pie wasn't going to be easy.

Dorothy had no intention of being the weak link, so she was determined to give it her all.

As she arrived at the office, she saw Austin and Ophelia walking side by side ahead of her, deep in conversation with grim expressions on their faces.

After putting Ophelia in her place the day before, Dorothy had no desire to start another confrontation, so she took a detour and took another elevator.

Opening the door to her office, she was about to set down her computer when she saw Austin heading her way with breakfast in hand.

"Ms. Sanchez, this is for you!"

Dorothy blinked in surprise, gesturing no. "I'm not really in the mood for breakfast."

She was always wary of any kind of advances from men, regardless of their intent, preferring to avoid them when possible.

But Austin quickly explained, "I didn't buy this, I swear! I just saw you coming in and thought I'd bring it over."

"Then who did?"

"It's from the Lopez Corporation! Word is Mr. Lopez noticed everyone's so caught up in office politics that they're neglecting their health and skipping breakfast. So he decided that from now on, in addition to lunch and overtime meals, the company will also provide breakfast, delivered right to each department."

Dorothy hadn't expected that.

Austin chuckled, "Working at the Lopez Corporation sure has its perks! I'd live and die for this company. Ms. Sanchez, I'll just leave your breakfast here, okay? We've got an early meeting. See you there."

"Sure."

Dorothy nodded, and after he left, her eyes finally settled on the breakfast.

Everett? This wasn't all because of her, was it?

It was a significant expense to cover breakfast for the entire company staff.

She shook her head, deciding not to flatter herself.

It was probably just a coincidence.

The fourth project team's morning meeting was mostly about assigning due diligence tasks. After some thought, Austin picked two suitable candidates.

Ophelia wasn't one of them.

After the meeting, Dorothy was jotting down some notes and was the last to leave.

As she stepped out, she overheard Ophelia and Austin talking around the corner of the staircase.

"Austin, you're that scared of offending Dorothy? Tell me the truth, are you falling for that vixen? Cuz I'm about to spill the beans to my aunt!"



"Would you shut it? Please?"

"Me, shut up? You're practically kicking me off the project team. Isn't it obvious what you're thinking?"

Austin's voice was hushed, laced with frustration. "Do you even know who Ms. Sanchez is? Stop making wild guesses! I'm telling you, if you don't want to be kicked out of the Lopez Corporation, you better behave. Steer clear of Ms. Sanchez from now on, got it?"

"I don't care! I want to be part of the due diligence!"

"If you hadn't provoked Ms. Sanchez, maybe I would've considered it. But now, definitely not!"

Listening in, Dorothy pieced together that this must have been what their earlier conversation was about.

Chapter 776

Dorothy didn't want to be a wallflower, so after hearing those few words, she retreated to her own office.

It wasn't that she had anything against Ophelia, but she wasn't exactly Mother Teresa, going out of her way to ask Austin to let Ophelia in on the due diligence.

Firing up her computer, Dorothy smoothly logged into the Lopez Corporation's system.

These days, she couldn't help but sneak a peek at the meeting channel to see if Everett had anything scheduled.

Even though she swore she'd never sit in on one of those meetings again, there was still this feeling that keeping an eye on the channel somehow brought the elusive Everett just a bit closer.

The ringtone of her cell phone cut through the silence on her desk.

Glancing down, she saw Kenneth's name flashing on the screen.

"Kenneth."

"You're not at the apartment?"

"Uh, no, I started working at the Lopez Corporation."

There was a pause on the other end before Kenneth asked tentatively, "Did Everett set that up?"

"I was with East Star Enterprises before they merged us into Lopez Corporation, right? Working here is normal, not his doing."

"Oh... So, what time do you get off? I'll come and pick you up."

"I..."

"Today's my birthday."

Dorothy froze, the words of refusal stuck in her throat.

"Then, I'll let you know when I get off."

"Great!"

Hanging up, Dorothy organized her workload before seeking out a local bakery to order a birthday cake.

You can't show up empty-handed on someone's birthday.

But he wouldn't just invite her, right? Surely Karen would be there? And if Karen was going, Jeffrey would be tagging along, no doubt.

Just in case, Dorothy shot a quick text to Karen on WhatsApp.

Better to avoid the awkward possibility of it just being her and Kenneth.

...

Karen's morning sickness seemed to be getting worse, not better.

The day before, she had managed only a bit of oatmeal, which she'd promptly lost not an hour later!

Jeffrey was beside himself, looking as though he wished he could whisk Karen off to the hospital for an abortion right then and there.

"You can't keep going on like this, not eating! Surviving on pickles is going to wreck your stomach."

Curled up on the sofa, Karen was a pale shadow of herself, drained of energy.

At least the sour pickles seemed to offer a momentary respite.

"Just let me eat them. I feel awful."

"Karen, should I just go ahead and schedule the procedure?"

Jeffrey couldn't bring himself to sit, pacing with anxiety.

Karen's brow furrowed as she looked at him. "Have you decided?"

"Yeah! You've only been pregnant for a short while, and it's already this tough. I can't imagine what ten months will do to you! I don't want a child anymore. Let's just be child-free forever!"

"But didn't you say you wanted to be a dad before? Weren't you envious of Everett having Abigail and Langston?"

Jeffrey shook his head. "Not anymore. I've got you, and that's enough."

"Can you pass me my phone, please?"

Jeffrey remained silent.

"We're officially together now, and you're saying we don't need the baby, so why do you insist on keeping me cooped up here?"

Jeffrey's lips were dry as he pressed them together, "I'm scared you'll leave, disappear to someplace I can't find you."

"To a place even you can't track?" Karen extended her hand, "Give me my phone; maybe if I play around with it, I won't feel nauseous!"

"Really?"

"You never know! Ever heard of distraction techniques?"

Jeffrey hesitated, then quickly said, "Wait here, I'll get it!"

He took a few steps forward before abruptly stopping, rooted to the spot.

"What's wrong?"

"Karen, do you... not want to go through with the abortion?"

Her suggestion of using the phone as a distraction—wasn't that a sign she was still looking for a way to keep the baby?

Chapter 777

Karen's face froze, then she awkwardly shifted her gaze away.

"I'm just... afraid of the pain."

Upon hearing this, Jeffrey immediately promised with utmost seriousness, "Don't worry, I'll get you the best medical team there is! We'll minimize your pain and any surgical risks!"

Karen frowned.

It suddenly made sense to her why Everett was the CEO and Jeffrey was still working under him.

With his kind of straightforward thinking, a guy who couldn't see around corners, any company he'd run would probably go belly-up.

"Can you just go and get my phone?"

"Oh, okay."

Being a woman, Karen couldn't very well be the first to say, "I don't want an abortion anymore; I want to have your baby," could she?

Initially, she truly didn't want it, but she was under the assumption that she would cut ties with Jeffrey completely and start afresh on her own. Now that they were legally married, well... having kids was just a matter of time.

Worried about the toll pregnancy might take on her, Jeffrey was even prepared to give up the baby he longed for. Karen found that touching. But she wasn't ready to let Jeffrey know she had accepted him, lest he stir up more trouble.

...

When Karen called Dorothy, she was on her way to the Bureau of Industry and Commerce.

For a private investigation like this, Dorothy didn't trust anyone else to handle it, so she had to make the trip herself.

"Kenneth didn't send me an invite to his party!"

"Maybe he's upset. He's still not happy with the whole thing between you and Jeffrey. Why don't you try to sweet-talk him today?"

Karen paused, then hummed in agreement. "Alright, I'll give him a call."

As they were about to hang up, Dorothy quickly added, "Are you going to Kenneth's birthday dinner tonight? If you're not, I need to let him know that I... I can't make it either."

"Ah, I know! Don't worry, I'll be there." Karen chuckled. "I wouldn't want to put you in an awkward spot. Even if Kenneth doesn't invite me, I've got to show up! It's just that..."

"Just what?"

"Dorothy, I've started getting morning sickness. If I see Kenneth, I won't be able to hide it."

Derek and Serena didn't even know yet!

Karen continued, "When the time comes, you've got to put in a good word for me! I'm afraid Kenneth might give me an earful."

After thinking it over, Dorothy spoke calmly, "Karen, avoiding the issue won't help. Why don't you bring Jeffrey with you and explain things to Kenneth? Jeffrey's good at sweet-talking, isn't he? Sooner or later, he'll have to win over your family."

After all, Karen's pregnancy was confirmed. Whether Derek and Serena found out sooner or later didn't change the fact that Jeffrey would have to face the music.

Karen sighed. "I know you're right, but I still want to hide just a little longer."

"Stop hiding. It's better to settle down sooner; it's good for your pregnancy. Otherwise, you'll be distracted by all these worries."

"Yeah, you're right. See you tonight, then! I'll discuss it with Jeffrey and figure out what to say."

"Okay, see you tonight."

After hanging up, Dorothy finally breathed a sigh of relief.

If Karen didn't go, she would definitely have to concoct some excuse to bail. Celebrating Kenneth's birthday alone with him? That would be totally inappropriate.

Looking up, she saw the Bureau of Industry and Commerce right in front of her.

Dorothy grabbed her bag and got out of the car, ready to go in, but then she noticed an unread message notification on her phone from the Lopez Corporation, sent by Kevin.

Worried it might be something important, she stopped to check it.

It was a photo.

A picture of Everett in the hospital, hooked up to an IV drip.

Chapter 778

Everett was sick?

In the photo, Everett lay on a hospital cot, eyes closed, and his face a tad pale.

It was clear as day that Kevin had snapped and sent it on the sly.

Predictably, a few more messages followed.

[Ms. Sanchez, I snagged this shot of Mr. Lopez secretly. He doesn't know, so let's keep it on the down-low, okay?]

[He'd be ticked off.]

[Mr. Lopez has been under the weather for days now, really out of sorts. Could you play dumb but drop him a line to check in on him?]

Dorothy's fingers hesitated over her keyboard before typing back: [If I pretend I don't know he's sick, then suddenly start fussing over him, he'll smell a rat.]

Everett was too sharp; such simple tricks wouldn't fool him.

[No worries. Give Mr. Lopez a ring, and you'll hear in his voice that he's not well!]

[Call him in about two hours; he should be awake by then. Mr. Lopez just fell asleep not long ago after pulling yet another all-nighter. Nobody can handle that kind of grind!]

Dorothy frowned, picturing Everett in work mode, driven as if his life depended on it.

[Alright, got it. Thanks, Kevin, for having his back.]

[Don't mention it. Just doing my bit.]

After signing off with Kevin, Dorothy found herself inexplicably scrolling back to the top of the chat, clicking on Everett's photo, and studying it intently.

Her fingertip gently traced his cheek on the screen, over his furrowed brow, and lingered on his closed eyelids.

Even from the long shot Kevin had taken, Everett's thick lashes were clear, his features sharp, and his usually plump lips now pale, adding a sickly but striking beauty.

Everett was too outstanding. So outstanding that Dorothy often felt their years together were a dream.

How could such a blazing sun have fallen into her lap?

It felt stolen, making her anxious and incredulous.

Her work at the Bureau of Industry and Commerce wasn't going smoothly. The staff there were stalling with all sorts of excuses, reluctant to provide the detailed information she needed.

After much persistence, she got a peek, but with strict conditions—no photocopies, no taking documents away, just a quick look.

As the two-hour mark approached, Dorothy had to let it go.

“Okay then, I won't hassle you any longer. I'm heading out.”

Grabbing her bag, Dorothy hurried out of the Bureau and hailed a cab. As soon as she settled in, she dialed Everett's number.

It rang a few times before he cut the call.

Immediately after, a WhatsApp notification popped up on Dorothy's phone.

It was from Everett.

[What's up?]

It was only at this moment that Dorothy realized that this was the first time she had called him since they parted ways.

[I have something to ask you. Can you talk?] She had to cobble together an excuse.

But Everett wasn't biting.

[I'm busy.]

Busy?

Kevin had just told her Everett was in the hospital getting an IV shot, not at the office.

Not wanting to interfere with his actual work, Dorothy screenshotted the conversation and sent it to Kevin through the company's backend.

In no time, Kevin replied: [Mr. Lopez is pulling your leg. He ain't busy. We just left the hospital.]

Exiting the app, Dorothy tried Everett's number again.

He cut the call once more.

[I'm busy. If you need something, WhatsApp me.]

Dorothy's brow furrowed. [But I'd rather call. Typing on WhatsApp is such a hassle.]

[Then send me a voice message on WhatsApp. I can listen to that.]

Chapter 779

“So, he's not gonna pick up the phone, huh? Fine.” Dorothy thought.

[Okay then, no worries. You do you.]

Dorothy typed out the message on WhatsApp and slid her phone back into her purse.

The cab pulled up to the towering glass facade of Lopez Corporation, and Dorothy strode through the revolving doors. She rode the elevator up to the fourth-floor offices, where her project team was based.

Just her luck, as soon as she stepped out, there she was—Ophelia—looking like trouble with a capital T.

Dorothy really wanted to avoid any drama, but she kept her cool and walked toward her office in her clicking heels.

Ophelia's eyes narrowed as she watched Dorothy's confident stride, her irritation growing by the second.

“Dorothy, hold it right there!”

She knew Austin was out of the office discussing business with a business partner, and without him, there was no one to back Dorothy up.

“Yes?” Dorothy asked, pausing and turning to face her.

Ophelia scoffed, arms crossed as if she ruled the place. “Look at you, strutting around like a vixen. You think just because Austin has a soft spot for you and wants to chase you, you can throw your weight around here?”

Dorothy frowned. “What are you on about? I have no clue what you're saying.”

"Oh, please! Drop the act. It's so obvious what you're after. If it's not Austin, who else here could possibly meet your high standards?" Ophelia rolled her eyes and spat on the floor in disgust.

"Pathetic! Going after married men, you're really something..."

Smack!

It was a loud, resounding slap that Dorothy delivered without a moment's hesitation.

"You hit me?"

"Why wouldn't I? Ophelia, I've been lenient with you because Austin asked me to be, but don't mistake my silence for weakness. Your uncle pulled strings to get you a job here at the Lopez Corporation; you should be trying not to waste his efforts."

Dorothy turned around and was about to leave, but Ophelia instantly grabbed her hand.

"Don't you think you can bully me! Hey everyone, come see this—Project Team Four's Ms. Sanchez is a violent thug! She gets parachuted into a cushy job, and now she thinks she can walk all over us!"

Dorothy hated making a scene, so she shoved Ophelia off.

"If you think there was no reason for me to hit you, feel free to call the cops."

"You think I won't?"

Ophelia reached for her phone.

Their colleagues, sensing the situation escalating, quickly intervened. Some tried to calm Ophelia down, while others went to inform Austin.

Soon, Ophelia's phone buzzed. It was Austin, furious. "What the fuck is wrong with you? Didn't I tell you to leave Ms. Sanchez alone?"

"I can't stand her, so what? She's a director, but that doesn't mean everyone has to like her! Plus, you're my uncle, not even divorced from my aunt yet, and here you are, always siding with Dorothy. Real classy!"

"You're really asking for it, and I can't help you anymore. Just wait to get fired by the Lopez Corporation!"

"Fired? For what? I'm the one who got hit! Can't I even voice my opinion?" Ophelia was still convinced she was in the right, completely blameless. "Trying to cover for her, huh? What, haven't won her over yet? Playing her lapdog?"

Austin was about to explode. "I don't have any right to associate with Ms. Sanchez! Ophelia, just so you know, Dorothy is Mr. Lopez's woman—hell, they even have kids together!"

"What? Who?"

"Mr. Lopez! Everett Lopez!"

Chapter 780

Everett Lopez, the CEO of Lopez Corporation?!

"No way..."

"Why not? I told you not to mess with her, but you wouldn't listen. Now look where we are. I can't save you this time! Heck, I might even get the boot along with you from the Lopez Corporation!"

Ophelia stared in disbelief, looking up at Dorothy.

The latter's face was stern as she turned and walked back to her office.

The commotion had drawn the attention of the company's security, who asked, "What's going on here?"

"Nothing, just a little tiff between colleagues!"

Others quickly stepped in to usher the security away, then turned to Ophelia, who was still dazed.

"Ophelia, you alright?"

"Did she actually get her bell rung? Ophelia?"

After a few shouts, Ophelia snapped back to reality.

"Where's Ms. Sanchez?"

"She's in her office," a female coworker said cautiously, pointing towards Dorothy's office, then quickly added, "I know you don't like her, but try not to make it so obvious. It doesn't look good for any of us. Please, just go back to your desk."

Ophelia shook her head, biting her lower lip.

"I need to talk to her."

"Don't! If you make a scene, security will report it to HR! It could... look bad, you know?"

"I... I'm going to apologize."

"What?"

Everyone was puzzled. No one knew what Austin had said on the phone, but they could tell Ophelia had changed her tune quickly.

Back in her office, Dorothy had just sat down when her phone started to ring.

She reached for it just as the ringing stopped.

Six missed calls from Everett and several WhatsApp messages.

[What's going on?]

[Dorothy, talk to me.]

[Dorothy, answer your phone. Let's talk.]

[Dorothy, text me back now.]

[Answer your phone!]

She must have missed the calls because of the noise. A smile crept onto Dorothy's lips as she was about to call back when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in."

It was Ophelia.



Dorothy's face hardened.

"Can't you give it a rest?"

"No, no... It was all my fault earlier. I'm here to apologize!" Ophelia lowered her head, her posture as submissive as could be.

"I'm sorry, Ms. Sanchez. I misunderstood you!"

Dorothy knew Austin must have set things straight with Ophelia. She gestured dismissively. "Get out."

"Please don't fire me, okay? I really realize my mistake. It wasn't easy for me to get into the Lopez Corporation! I thought... I honestly thought my uncle was into you, and I was trying to stand up for my aunt, but I had no idea... that you... you're Mr. Lopez's..."

The CEO of the Lopez Corporation!

If Austin had told her, Ophelia would never have dreamed that the CEO's partner would be working in the project team as a director, so low-key that nobody had a clue!

"Whether you're fired or not is up to HR, not me."

"If you don't report this, they won't know anything! Please, have mercy on me. Don't hold this against me, okay?"

Dorothy sighed. She hadn't intended to get entangled with an assistant over this.

"The things your uncle told you, you can't share them with anyone else, got it?"

Ophelia nodded eagerly. "Don't worry! I won't breathe a word of it!"

"Alright, you can go."

Just as Ophelia was about to thank her, she noticed Dorothy's phone on the desk, with a call coming through.

The screen showed it was Everett.