

## Midnight 861

Chapter 861

It wasn't Everett.

It was Kevin.

"I'm fine," Dorothy said, her eyes dimming before she mustered a strained smile. "I just need to rest here for a bit. Don't worry about me."

Kevin hesitated, but he didn't leave. "Should I get you some antacid?"

"No need. I've got some in my bag, and I've already taken it. Really, I'm okay."

"Alright then." Seeing her so insistent on not needing help, Kevin nodded and began to walk away.

He hadn't gotten far when Dorothy suddenly called out to him.

"Kevin, wait a second!"

He turned around to see Dorothy clench her teeth and stand up straight, walking towards him.

"Could you... not mention this to him?" she asked.

She didn't want Everett to know anything about her, not even a stomachache.

Kevin, being the sharp guy he was, knew exactly who 'he' was.

"Don't worry. Mr. Lopez is off to Liberty City, and he didn't bring me along. I don't bother him outside of work hours." The implication was clear – he wouldn't have the chance to tell Everett anything.

Dorothy nodded. "Thank you."

"No need to thank me. Besides, Mr. Lopez hardly checks in domestically anymore. The surveillance and bodyguards he had around you before... they've all been called off."

In other words, Dorothy could do whatever she wanted without Everett knowing immediately, like before.

She had sensed it, too.

It was one thing to figure it out herself, but hearing it from someone else stirred different emotions.

"That's good, isn't it? Now I'm free."

Kevin forced a smile. "If you see it that way, that's good. I should get back to work."

"Sure."

Watching Kevin walk away, Dorothy let out a heavy sigh and clutched her stomach, only to realize that the pain was not just there anymore.

She made her way back to the office, took out the antacid from her bag, and swallowed it down, but it barely helped. She then took an ibuprofen.

Lately, her bag was stocked with more than just antacids; she also carried painkillers because sometimes the stomach medicine wasn't enough. To get through the workday, she needed something stronger.

"Ms. Sanchez, the morning meeting is starting." Her assistant knocked on the door.

"Coming." Dorothy took a few deep breaths and stood up to leave her office.

At the conference room door, she ran into Austin.

"Ms. Sanchez, perfect timing. After the meeting, come by my office."

"Hm?" Dorothy couldn't recall anything that required a private discussion with Austin today.

Austin smiled, "The company has appointed a new director to take over the project. They should be arriving in the next few days. It'll give you both some time to handover properly."

"Oh, so that's it. Alright, after the meeting, I'll bring the documentation I've prepared for the new director to review."

Seeing her so calm and collected about it, Austin couldn't help but speak up, "Ms. Sanchez, are you really okay with letting go of this project? You even gave up your credit on it! This project... it's a big deal."

In the Lopez Corporation, a project of this magnitude was commonplace, but elsewhere... just this one project could sustain an entire company.

"If I didn't give up my credit, what would the new director do?"

"That's easy. You could ask Mr. Lopez..."

"Austin." Dorothy cut him off sharply, "We're discussing my business here; it has nothing to do with Mr. Lopez."

Chapter 862

Austin slumped in his chair, his tone tinged with frustration.

"I'm just looking out for you, you know? You're about to leave the Lopez Corporation, but you'll still need to work, right? Are you done with investment banking altogether?"

A resume always comes in handy when job hunting!

Austin truly had Dorothy's best interests at heart.

"I've already made plans for all that, but thanks for your concern, Austin." Dorothy offered a distant smile and then strode into the conference room.

Clearly, she didn't want to discuss it any further.

"Man, I just don't get it," Austin sighed before following her in.

The morning meeting was pretty standard stuff: everyone shared updates, nothing out of the ordinary.

After the meeting, Dorothy returned to her office, gathered the documents she had organized and headed over to Austin's.

"I've sorted everything that needs the director's attention into different folders for easy access," she explained. "This way, it's easier to manage, and the new director can hit the ground running."

Seeing how thoroughly she had prepared everything, Austin felt even more indignant on her behalf.

"Once you've done all the heavy lifting, any Tom, Dick, or Harry could step in as director without breaking a sweat!"

"It's only right to leave everything in order for the next person. I don't want to hold up the project."

Even though she wouldn't see it through to the end, Dorothy had poured her heart into the project and naturally wanted it to succeed—she wanted everyone on the fourth project team to get their holiday bonus!

"What can I say about you?" Austin shook his head, perplexed. Maybe this was the confidence of the Lopez Corporation boss's lady?

"Alright, leave this stuff with me. I'll pass it on to the new director. When your notice period is up, just wrap things up with HR."

"Got it." Dorothy nodded and left Austin's office.

Back at her desk, she felt her stomachache had subsided enough to start working. She stood up, poured herself a warm cup of water, and instinctively checked her phone, only to see a tweet from Kenneth at the top of her feed.

[Got a girlfriend.]

The picture showed a man's hand holding a woman's.

Dorothy had never paid much attention to Kenneth's hands, so she couldn't tell if it was really him. But his quick announcement took her by surprise!

It looked like the blind date went well!

Karen was the first to comment: [What? Bro, when did you get a girlfriend? That came out of nowhere!]

Sure enough, Kenneth replied: [Met her yesterday, made it official today.]

Karen replied: [Epic! Set up a date; I wanna meet her!]

Kenneth responded, [OK]

Dorothy didn't really know what to say, so she just liked the tweet and put down her phone.

Kenneth taking the step to find a girlfriend was a weight off her shoulders—no need to carry that heavy stone around anymore.

She looked at her computer screen, filled with construction material details and price lists from vendors. She took a deep breath before diving into the sea of numbers.

Several hours passed with Dorothy engrossed in her work until, finally, it was time for lunch.

She stretched and checked her phone again, spotting a few unread messages from Karen.

[Kenneth really got a girlfriend?]

[Kenneth's serious about this? Did he tell you?]

[I can't help but feel he just randomly picked a girl. It's like he doesn't care who he marries as long as it's not you. It seems so rushed!]

Chapter 863

Rushed?

It did seem a bit hasty, but wasn't that the very nature of a blind date? If things click, you're suddenly in a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship, and the next step could be walking down the aisle.

Dorothy's fingers paused over her keyboard before typing a response.

Dorothy: [You better not go spreading that around. Kenneth's finally ready to take this step.]

Karen: [I know, I know! I'm just whispering to you. I'd never say that to Kenneth.]

What she truly feared was that her cousin would hastily pick someone to marry and end up unhappy. Whether they stuck it out or ended in divorce, neither outcome boded well.

After exchanging a few more messages with Karen about pregnancy tips, Dorothy tidied up her desk and stood up to head to the company cafeteria.

She had missed breakfast in the morning rush and needed to grab something substantial for lunch to avoid a trip to the ER by evening!

Upon reaching the bustling cafeteria, Dorothy scanned the options, but her appetite was missing. She settled for a small plate of salad and a couple of mini sandwiches, finding a quiet corner to sit down.

The lunch crowd was in full swing, with colleagues gathered in small groups, mostly discussing work matters.

Dorothy ate quietly, overhearing two guys behind her talking about the recent uptick in stress.

"To land a job at Lopez Corporation, you gotta expect high pressure, right? Have you seen our CEO? Rolled up his sleeves and snagged several major cross-industry projects in the past month alone - from telecommunications to renewable energy. Talk about a learning curve! If we're not careful, we'll be left in the dust!"

"Alas... Sure, it's a learning experience, but it's exhausting too! I haven't had more than five hours of sleep per night for almost a month, and my weekends are spent working overtime!"

"Dude, Lopez Corporation pays tenfold for weekend overtime."

"I love overtime."

Dorothy figured they must be from the project management department.

She was well aware of Everett's work capabilities and how relentlessly he pursued projects, leaving no room for personal downtime.

She worried about his health, and suddenly, she didn't have the stomach for her meal anymore. She bagged up her food and decided to take it back to the office.

Once back at her desk, she called a colleague scheduled to conduct due diligence on the market pricing of project materials. "I'll join you. When I was verifying prices earlier, I noticed discrepancies in two areas."

Usually, such discrepancies meant either an error in the submitted pricing data or someone tampering with prices to skim some profits.

Whereas another director might have skimmed over the details, Dorothy was meticulous, checking every item and naturally spotting the irregularities.

"Okay, I got it, Ms. Sanchez," her colleague replied after a pause.

After confirming the markets they needed to visit, Dorothy left Lopez Corporation to meet up with her colleague.

At the construction materials market, she discovered that not only Gideon, the main person in charge, was there, but also Ophelia.

"Ms. Sanchez," Ophelia greeted her upon arrival.

Dorothy nodded slightly in acknowledgment, not particularly surprised.

Ophelia being there probably meant Austin had sent her to gain some field experience. The hands-on task of price due diligence in construction projects was foundational yet challenging, with many nuances to keep track of. Mastery required practical application and the accumulation of experience.

Chapter 864

"Ms. Sanchez, could you point out where you think there's an issue with this quote? I'll have a look."

Gideon was the one who had just taken the call, and he hurried over to Dorothy, looking all kinds of anxious.

"I've put together a detailed spreadsheet," Dorothy explained, her voice tinged with concern.

"Comparing it to the quote this company gave to the Lopez Corporation last time, the prices haven't gone down—they've actually gone up. There haven't been any whispers about a price hike lately, so scarcity isn't an issue. What's with the sudden spike?"

Before Dorothy could continue, Ophelia flashed her a smile, "Ms. Sanchez, could I have a word with you in private, please?"

Dorothy was confused. She glanced at Gideon and then back at Ophelia, a seed of doubt planted firmly in her mind.

She couldn't fathom why she and Ophelia would need a private chat. Even though Ophelia had sent her flowers as an apology and Dorothy had reciprocated with a thank-you gift, their communication hadn't gone beyond that.

Without waiting for Dorothy's consent, Ophelia took her aside.

"Ms. Sanchez, here's the thing... The issue with the pricing—it's not Gideon's fault. It's on me. I was helping him out with the price list and accidentally entered the wrong figures!"

Dorothy frowned, "Entered the wrong figures?"

"Yeah."

"Do you realize that if I hadn't caught this mistake, just with these two materials alone, your error could have netted Gideon two million, maybe even more?"

Ophelia's guilt was written all over her face as she awkwardly fiddled with her lip, "I—I had no idea..."

"That's quite the oversight, don't you think? I might not be so inclined to believe you." Dorothy was no stranger to this sort of thing. There had been others who tried to funnel company funds into their pockets, so her mind naturally went there first.

"It's true! As soon as Gideon pointed it out, I double-checked and realized it was my mistake! Ms. Sanchez... please, could you possibly not report this? Let it slide?"

If Dorothy pushed for an official investigation, then even if Ophelia's mistake was just that—an accident—she'd likely be reassigned and wouldn't have a chance to work on financially sensitive projects ever again.

Dorothy paused but ultimately decided to go by the book. "I'm sorry, but I can't let it slide. Someone has to be held accountable for this blunder."

"But it was just a mistake! Can't I just correct it now?"

"Do I need to repeat myself?" Dorothy's stance was firm and stubborn, "What you did could be construed as tampering with the quotes. This isn't a trivial matter."

Otherwise, she wouldn't have dropped everything to check the material costs in the market personally.

"Why can't it be a trivial matter? As long as you don't talk today, it's like it never happened!" Ophelia was desperate, speaking without thinking, "Ms. Sanchez, you're on your way out anyway; why do you have to be so by the book? Why not leave us with a good impression, huh?"

A good impression?

Dorothy couldn't help but laugh. "And when did you consider leaving a good impression on me?"

Ophelia was rendered speechless.

"Ophelia, from the moment I stepped out of the car, and you pulled me aside, your so-called honesty lost all credibility with me! But whatever comes of the investigation is not my concern. It's up to the company to deal with it. I'm only responsible for reporting the situation."

Seeing Dorothy was determined to blow the whistle, Ophelia lost her temper, too. "Do you really think you're above it all, Ms. Sanchez? That's called being heartless! You're like a cold-blooded creature! No wonder everyone's whispering that Mr. Lopez has dumped you. I think you're just not good enough for him!"

Chapter 865

Gideon was by Ophelia's side when he heard her raising her voice, and he hurried over.

"Ophelia, what are you going on about?"

"I..."

"I'm sorry, Ms. Sanchez! She's just a little hot-headed, didn't mean anything by it, don't take it personally!" said Gideon.

Dorothy's gaze swept over the two, piecing together a bit of the puzzle in her mind.

They clearly had something more between them; she figured they were probably an item.

Ophelia was clearly trying to dump the blame on Gideon, cozying up to Dorothy in hopes of smoothing things over.

"What's going on with me and Everett is none of your business, right?"

"Since you're reporting it anyway, it's no use for me to try to negotiate with you, is it? I'll say what I want! Mr. Lopez hasn't been here in ages, obviously avoiding you. What are you playing at, acting all boss-like when you're on your way out? Go ahead, report me; I'll face the music if I have to!"

"Ophelia!" Gideon wished he could just gag her right then and there.

But Dorothy didn't care about her rants; she just turned her cool gaze to Gideon and spoke calmly.

"Since you're both here, I suggest you come with me and take a tour of the marketplace. That way, if there's an inquiry from upstairs, you can say you discovered the problems during your visit. Otherwise, if I report that I found the issues, it'll look a lot worse for you."

"Got it! I understand!" Gideon nodded, nudging Ophelia covertly.

Dorothy was being as merciful as she could be.

It wasn't that she was afraid of Ophelia; she just didn't want to get entangled in a pointless dispute.

It was exhausting.

The three of them walked through the material market with their own agendas, after which Dorothy hailed a cab and left.

Just as she settled back into her office to compile her report, her vision suddenly went dark!

Thankfully, she was sitting down and didn't fall over. After a moment, her vision cleared up.

Dorothy realized it was probably due to pulling an all-nighter and decided she needed to wrap up her work quickly and catch up on sleep back at her apartment.

Turning on her computer and starting to import data, she watched the progress bar inch forward when her phone rang.

Looking down, she saw it was Ephraim from West Legal Services.

"Ms. Sanchez, we've got a court date set! Early next month! Just got the word from the court."

"That's great news. Are the suspects... in custody?"

"Yeah, the suspect's family is being cooperative. Her son agreed to extradition, just asking for a medical escort."

Dorothy remained silent.

"Ms. Sanchez?" Ephraim called softly.

Dorothy snapped back, forcing a dry laugh. "That's good, very good..."

"We just wait for the trial now. I'll keep you updated on any developments."

"Thanks, Ephraim. I appreciate it."

"It's no trouble at all. Just doing my job."

After hanging up, Dorothy covered her heart with her hand, feeling a dull ache starting to set in.

Everett, always making her feel indebted.

She had told him not to get involved under all this stress!

Suddenly, that thread that had been fraying for so long finally snapped.

Dorothy, as if possessed, desperately wanted to hear Everett's voice, even if it was just a word.

Reaching for her phone in a daze, she opened Everett's WhatsApp.

Before sending a voice message, Dorothy had her story straight. She'd just say she was missing the kids and wanted to check in on Abigail and Langston.

That way, Everett wouldn't suspect a thing.

But after steeling herself with countless justifications, when she finally pressed the call button, the screen flashed.

[You are not his/her friend.]

Chapter 866

Everett had deleted her, and somehow, Dorothy felt a wave of relief wash over her.

Thank goodness... thank goodness the call didn't go through.

Dorothy was convinced she had lost her mind; the more she thought about it, the more certain she became.

From the moment she wanted to hear his voice, she knew she wasn't herself; she was bewitched!

If the call had connected, the fallout would have been unimaginable. All the harsh words she'd previously hurled at Everett would have been overturned, and even worse... he might have caught on to her scheme.

She quickly set her phone aside as if it were a hot potato.

...

Liberty City.

Everett was driving back to his residence after wrapping up a meeting. He was no longer shacking up with Abigail and Langston at a hotel but had instead purchased a property in the area.

As he was about to reach home, his phone rang with a call from Jeffrey.

"What is it?"

Everett answered through his hands-free headset.

"Man, why do you always greet me with that line?" Jeffrey sounded a bit miffed, "As if I can't call you unless there's something pressing!"

"Because you rarely call about something serious, and I rarely have time to chat about trivia."

Jeffrey couldn't help but laugh at his friend's blunt manner.

"Alright, alright. But I do have something this time."

"Spill it."

"You asked me to help you sell Bay Residence, right? I got contacted by a couple who had just returned to Eldorria City from abroad. They really like the tranquil vibe of Bay Residence."

Everett's grip on the steering wheel tightened ever so slightly before he replied, "Handle it as you see fit."

"I hope you're serious about selling it, man. Don't make me take a deposit and then you get cold feet. You know what Bay Residence means to you."

"I won't change my mind." Everett's voice was firm, "I won't be returning to Eldorria City for the next few years so that property is of no use to me now."

"Whoa, you're planning to stay in Liberty City for years?!"

"If all goes as planned."

His work was more accessible here, and many high-end tech conferences chose this city as their venue. Staying in Liberty City saved Everett the trouble of constant travel.

"Dude, you're not seriously moving halfway across the world just to avoid her, are you?"

Jeffrey was taken aback by his friend's decisiveness.

"I'm not avoiding anyone." Everett's response was calm.

But Jeffrey wasn't buying it, not a single word.

"Okay, okay, Mr. Lopez has spoken! I'll go and sign the contract with the buyers of Bay Residence tomorrow. You're leaving behind the furniture and appliances as well, correct?"

"Yeah, anything I wanted has already been taken care of."

"Alright then! So, it looks like you won't be coming back even when Karen has our baby?"

After all, if Karen was giving birth, Dorothy would surely be there! It was obvious Everett didn't want to see Dorothy again.

"I'll come back for that. Just inform Karen about my return; she'll take care of the rest."

Karen would definitely tell Dorothy, which meant she wouldn't visit the newborn on the same day Everett was there, avoiding any awkward encounters.

It took Jeffrey a moment to catch on to his friend's plan.

"OK, that's settled then!"

After ending the call, Everett noticed a missed call from the person keeping an eye on Heather.

He dialed back.

"Mr. Lopez, we have a date for the suspect's extradition. As for the child she's carrying..."

Everett's voice was ice-cold. "Deal with it before she's extradited. Make sure it's done cleanly."

"Understood! You can trust us; it won't delay the sentencing."

Chapter 867

Everett ended the call with the same detachment one might show when instructing an underling to take out the trash.

In his eyes, Heather was probably less than that. She was the instigator of all this mess.

Had it not been for Dorothy's insistence on a verdict demanding the death penalty, Everett would never have let Heather live this long with all her limbs intact.

...

In the dimly lit basement, a musty, moldy stench hung heavy in the air.

Heather had become a shadow of her former self, all skin and bones, save for the slight bulge of her pregnant belly. It was clear she was with child.

Her seduction of a guard and the subsequent pregnancy had been reported to Everett promptly. After all, such matters were serious business, and no one wanted to be held accountable should things go south.

But Everett showed no interest, saying only to let her be as long as she didn't die.

This led the guards to speculate that he intended for the child to be born. But it turned out it was just another means to torment her...

"Heather, take this pill," a guard ordered, part of the new rotation put in place to ensure no further... indiscretions. They feared being responsible for her death on their watch.

Heather looked up, her eyes dull, her face etched with defeat. "What's that? I won't take it..."

"You're in no position to bargain," the guard said with an exasperated eye roll. "Your choice is simple: take it willingly, or we'll make sure you swallow it."

"You want to harm my baby!" Heather clutched her belly and shook her head vehemently. "Please, no! I'm begging you!"

"We're just following orders. If we don't do it, we can't do our jobs," the guard confessed, revealing the pill's purpose. "And don't kid yourself into thinking that kid will save you."

Shock flooded Heather's features.

She had thought her pregnancy would be her salvation since Everett had known about it for so long and yet had done nothing. But was it all just a cruel game?

"I want to see Everett. I need to speak with him personally! Tell him I have information about Dorothy!"

"Nobody cares about what you have to say," the guard dismissed her plea and signaled for two other men.

"Hold her down. I'm going to administer the medication."

"Understood."

As the two burly men approached, Heather's desperate struggles and pleas were in vain. Her hands were restrained, rendering her helpless.

"You should've listened and not resisted," the guard scolded. "You crossed the Lopez family, and you think you're gonna get off easy? That's just wishful thinking."

"I never wronged the Lopez family!"

"Save your breath; if you were innocent, you wouldn't be here." The guard grasped her jaw and forced the pill down her throat.

Heather choked, coughing violently.

"My child... you're committing murder!" Her cries were heart-wrenching.

She sounded truly like a mother in agony over the loss of her child, but her anguish swayed no one.

"Cut the act! We all know how that child came to be. Did you actually fall for that guard? You're just trying to save your own skin!"

Chapter 868

Heather was shoved back into the corner after they force-fed her the pills.

Soon, the drugs took effect, and the pain came crashing down upon her...

She clutched her stomach, her face a mask of agony.

"Please," she begged, "call a doctor, I'm dying. It hurts so much!"

"Of course, the miscarriage hurts. Just bear with it, you won't die."

Heather's face was ghostly pale, like someone just dragged out of a lake, her clothes drenched with sweat.

"It hurts... it hurts so bad... I don't wanna die, please, I don't wanna die..."

Her continuous wails finally got to the guard, who stood watch for over an hour before he felt she was too weak to scream and went to fetch a doctor.

They had their orders, after all—she wasn't supposed to die.

...

Dorothy didn't expect the new director to arrive so quickly.

Just three days after she handed over the files, the new director had already made his way to the fourth project team.

When Austin saw Dorothy coming to work, he enthusiastically pulled her over to introduce her, "Ms. Sanchez, meet Stephen, your replacement as project director."

Dorothy paused, then saw Stephen extending his hand, "Pleased to meet you, Ms. Sanchez."

"Hello," she smiled faintly, only lightly touching his hand. "I assume Austin has transferred all the project details to you? If you have any questions, feel free to ask."

Stephen nodded, his voice deep and resonant, like the sound of a cello.

"Thanks, Ms. Sanchez! How about we add friends on WhatsApp? It'll make communication easier."

WhatsApp...

Dorothy was reluctant. But rejecting him now would make the situation awkward.

After a moment's hesitation, she agreed, "Sure, I'll scan your code."

She reassured herself internally, just be sociable for now, and once he fully took over the project, she could delete him.

Once they were friends on WhatsApp, she pocketed her phone and said, "Well, I should get back to work! And Mr. Stephen, if you want to take over sooner, you can tell me directly."

"I need some time to familiarize myself, to get a better grip on the project before taking over!" Stephen's gaze lingered on Dorothy, his admiration clear.

Austin, noticing his intent, coughed lightly. "Um... Ms. Sanchez, you should get going. I have a few things to discuss with Mr. Stephen."

"Alright." Dorothy nodded, gave Stephen a polite smile, and then turned to leave.

After she left, Stephen couldn't help but ask Austin about her. "Is Ms. Sanchez single?"

"She seems to be, but I'd advise against getting your hopes up," Austin knew about the fate that befell Lane; he wouldn't dare entertain thoughts about Dorothy.

Stephen's interest was piqued, his eyebrows lifting. "Why? Is there someone she likes?"

"I can't really say more. Just don't set your sights on her; it won't end well."

"Can't say?"

The more Austin held back, the more intrigued Stephen became.

Men! Always the same.

"Ahem, let me put it this way," Austin began, "ever heard of Lane from East Star Enterprises?"

"Sure, the one acquired by the Lopez Corporation?"

Austin nodded. "He pursued Ms. Sanchez."

"Oh?"

"And you see where he ended up? His massive company gone, just like that. Pretty tragic, right?"

Chapter 869

Stephen's eyes bulged in shock! "East Star Enterprises got bought out because of Ms. Sanchez?"

How ludicrous!

"Yep, all because of her," said Austin.

Stephen blinked and then laughed, waving his hand dismissively. "Come on, Austin, you're laying it on thick! Even if you don't want me to go after Ms. Sanchez, there's no need to scare me off!"

"Hey, you think I'm trying to scare you?" Austin smacked his lips. "Then go ahead, give it a shot. I wish you luck, man."

As long as it doesn't affect the fourth project team, that's cool.

"Pfft, challenge accepted!"

...

Dorothy returned to her office and finished all her work for the morning. When lunch break rolled around, she started packing up her personal belongings, making it easier to leave when her resignation came through.

Truth be told, she didn't have much to pack. After all, she knew when she joined the fourth project team that she'd be leaving in six months.

Once everything was packed, Dorothy wasn't in the mood to eat. She decided to just sit in her chair and check her phone.

Before she could even open her news app, Karen's call came through.

"Dorothy!"

If it were anyone else on the receiving end of Karen's booming voice, they might think some catastrophe had struck. But Dorothy was used to it.

"What's up?"

"How can you be so calm? Brace yourself because what I'm about to tell you is big news!"

Dorothy's brow furrowed slightly. What was with the mystery?

"Go ahead, I'm ready."

"Everett! He actually sold Bay Residence! The buyer finalized the payment today, and I saw the transaction on Jeffrey's account with my own eyes!"

"Oh, didn't you already tell me about that?"

Bay Residence was a peaceful and spacious place, a real gem, so it was no surprise it sold easily.

"You're this calm?" In contrast, Karen sounded more like she was the one involved. "Dorothy, this means Everett's truly let go of what you two had. After all, wasn't Bay Residence practically your love nest?"

Dorothy thought for a moment.

That seemed about right. Bay Residence held too many memories of her and Everett.

Each and every one now felt like they were fresh in her mind, though things had changed.

"Karen, I told him to move on and stop wasting his energy on me."

"But just because you told him doesn't mean he should actually give up!" Karen had always thought the two of them were just going through a rough patch. She figured, sure, the grudges between the older generations weren't easy to settle, but since they both held a place in each other's hearts, there would come a day when all would be resolved, and they would inevitably reunite.

But now... Everett's actions made it clear he had truly let go.

What's more, it had been months since he had returned to Eldorria City, and he hadn't asked Jeffrey for any information about Dorothy!

All the signs were hard to ignore.

"Why can't he let go for real? He's Everett."

The value of his time was beyond words! He shouldn't have been waiting for her all this time.

"Dorothy, didn't you say before that if the lawsuit went well, you'd go after him?"

"I did say that, but not to make him be with me. It's to repay the effort and time he invested in me, to experience the bitterness of longing for someone," Dorothy pressed her lips together, "I can't just chase him and expect him to agree."

Besides, the closer the court date got, the more she felt the chances of pursuing him post-lawsuit were slim.

As the trial approached, she had nightmares repeatedly, dreaming of losing the case, of seeing Amanda's face twisted in a smug, taunting smile.

## Chapter 870

Dorothy dreamed Amanda taunted her with that typical snooty tone of hers, "See, even if I killed your mom, you couldn't do a thing about it!"

Every time, that nightmare jolted her awake, leaving her staring at the ceiling until dawn's early light.

"I really thought you two were inseparable," Karen confessed after seeing the Bay Residence listing marked as 'sold'. That was when she began to believe their story was coming to an end.

Dorothy pondered for a moment, her voice dropping to a whisper. "Truth be told, right from the start, I felt we were never meant to be."

Such a vast chasm between them, so many hurdles; how could it last with only Everett hacking through the brambles alone?

"Let's drop the gloom and doom! From now on, I won't even mention that name around you. Besties forever, right? So, let's put this behind us. Are you dropping by after work?"

"Not today, got plans."

The last thing Dorothy wanted was another uncomfortable run-in with Jeffrey after their last bitter encounter.

"Alright then, you're busy; I won't keep you."

"Alright."

After hanging up, Dorothy noticed several WhatsApp messages from Stephen.

Stephen: [Ms. Sanchez, I came across a few points in the due diligence files that I'm unclear about. Would you be able to clarify?]

Dorothy frowned slightly but replied: [Send them over.]

Stephen: [It's a bit complicated. I think it might be easier to discuss in person. Can I swing by your office?]

Her office? Dorothy definitely wouldn't agree to that.

[Wait for me at Austin's office, I'll come to you.]

She wasn't keen on being alone with a man, especially since she'd become more aware of the undercurrents in the workplace over the years.

After all, a new acquaintance asking to meet privately in her office? Anyone could guess what Stephen was insinuating.

A while later, Stephen replied: [No need to trouble yourself then; I'll ask Austin for help. You carry on with your work, Ms. Sanchez. Sorry to bother you.]

Dorothy snorted softly and put down her phone. Leaning back in her chair, her thoughts were a jumbled mess, feeling empty, unable to grasp onto anything solid. Her gaze caught the calendar on her desk.

Seven days left at Lopez Corporation, seventeen until the court date.

...

At the villa, Karen lounged on the couch, sighing deeply. Her belly was growing larger by the day, and she found the bedroom less comfortable, preferring the softness and back support of the couch.

"What's wrong? Feeling uncomfortable?" Jeffrey approached with freshly cut fruit, "Need help sitting up?"

"No need," Karen waved him off, not even in the mood for fruit. "I saw your phone."

Jeffrey froze, then quickly responded, "What on my phone upset you? Or did someone say something out of line?"

Since the Paige incident, his fair-weather friends had mostly kept their distance.

"Look at you, all guilty. Got something to hide?" Karen eyed him skeptically, arching an eyebrow.

"Absolutely not! My phone's pass code is even your birthday! I'm just worried you're upset about something and not telling me. Just say the word, and I'll make it right."

Karen settled back down. "You can't fix this."

"I can! Just tell me!"

"I don't want Everett to give up on Dorothy."