

## Midnight 891

Chapter 891

Two people locked eyes, neither willing to break the silent standoff.

After a lengthy pause, Dorothy spoke first, "Did you rush back home because of that phone call I made?"

"No." Everett replied sharply, looking down at her, "It was because of my mother's trial."

The air between them tinged with a strange tension with that sentence.

"Oh." Dorothy muttered.

"I'm involved with you only because you're the mother of Abigail and Langston. Don't read too much into it."

Dorothy nodded with a cool demeanor, "I wasn't overthinking."

Everett didn't say anything in reply.

"Like I said before, it was wrong of me to disturb you after having a few too many. It won't happen again," Dorothy declared with a straightforward bow, devoid of any coyness or emotion, "I'm sorry." Her bow seemed to suggest that Everett had gone to great lengths to bring her here just to see her genuflect.

They hadn't seen each other for months, and this was how they reunited.

Everett's temper flared even more because of that, "Dorothy, what's the point of this performance?"

"No point," she replied, tugging at her lips slightly, "Though I promised it won't happen again, if you're still worried, you could... change your number."

That would settle things once and for all. And she wouldn't seek out his new number.

"Do you know how much of a hassle it is for me to change my number? This whole situation could be avoided if you just stopped drinking."

"I want to drink." Dorothy craved a peaceful, deep sleep.

Showing a rare resolution, she met Everett's gaze and said, "Everett, getting drunk is my right. I hope you won't arbitrarily take that away from me."

"Then give me one good reason you need to drink."

Everett remembered Dorothy rarely touched alcohol. Even at business functions where she couldn't avoid it, she'd dodge it if possible or drink as little as she could.

"Why do I need to give you a reason? I believe it's sufficient that I ensure and deliver on not bothering you anymore."

The rest was her freedom.

"Dorothy!"

"Everett, I'm trying to reason with you calmly," Dorothy inhaled deeply, her voice tinged with a hint of frustration, "Whether I drink at my apartment or go to a bar, or even if I find some guy to drink with, it's none of your business. We've been divorced for years. It has nothing to do with you."

That stung – 'nothing to do with you.'

Everett could never outdo her in harsh words. While he might sound angry and loud, Dorothy's cutting remarks were delivered expressionlessly, giving no face, quarter or emotional preparation.

Having said her piece, Dorothy turned to leave, not caring about Everett's darkening expression. Kevin, who had been watching the drama unfold, quickly intercepted her, "Ms. Sanchez, Mr. Lopez is just concerned about your wellbeing..."

He couldn't fathom why these two were at loggerheads.

Clearly, neither had moved on.

Dorothy remained silent, but Everett spoke up, "What does her health have to do with me? I'm only worried about Abigail and Langston getting hurt!"

"Mr. Lopez! Oh, come on!" Kevin snapped.

"I won't die before the verdict is in, so spare me the concern," she pressed her lips together. She paused after stepping away, "And stop having people follow me. I'd appreciate it if you could be a decent ex."

Everett said nothing.

"Hey? Ms. Sanchez!" Kevin started to follow her, but glanced at Mr. Lopez for direction.

With a stern face and clenched teeth, Everett ordered, "It's dark out. Make sure she gets home safely."

Chapter 892

Dorothy wasn't sure if Everett had taken her words to heart, but he had indeed stopped showing up.

To confirm this, she even made a point of shopping for wine at a remote supermarket.

It took a few trips before she was convinced that Everett had stopped having her followed.

Good riddance.

She was finally free.

Holding a bottle of wine, Dorothy cracked a half-smile and filled the glass in front of her to the brim.

The verdict had come unexpectedly.

Dorothy had braced herself for at least a month's wait given the cases piling up on the judge's table.

But less than a month had passed when Ephraim's call came through.

"Ms. Sanchez, it's not over and we can appeal! The court of state is where the final decision is made!"

From his opening words, Dorothy guessed the outcome. She pulled out a bottle of chilled Chardonnay she'd bought the day before, poured a glass, and settled onto the couch. "Heather got the death sentence?" she asked.

"Yeah, she's not getting out of it! It's just..." Ephraim hesitated before continuing, "It's just that I didn't expect Heather to suddenly change her statement, claiming she coerced Mrs. Lopez with past favors, and that she was completely unaware of the whole affair, let alone the consequences of that drug injection!"

"It was the Lopez family pulling strings to meet up with Heather, wasn't it?"

"That's what I think too." Ephraim sighed, "But don't be discouraged. We still have a chance! I will find the gaps in Heather's testimony—"

"No need."

Her interjection alerted Ephraim that something was off.

Dorothy was eerily calm, her voice steady without a trace of fluctuation. It was as if she had anticipated this result.

He had seen many clients, some emotionally charged, some who would faint and need an ambulance.

But this was his first time encountering such indifference.

Even Ephraim himself had been furious for a few minutes when he received the verdict, and the other lawyers at the firm were quite upset too. How could the client herself be so detached?

"Our evidence is solid! Honestly, this verdict caught me off guard! I won't spell out the dirty tricks... you know the score. But if we appeal, we'll be going to the state court! It won't be so easy for them to tamper, and if I can break down Heather's statement, we can overturn the initial judgment!"

Dorothy could see that Ephraim genuinely had her best interests at heart. He was a good lawyer.

"Thank you, Ephraim."

"So, you'll come to the office? I'm drafting the appeal right now. You just need to sign it."

"I won't be coming." Dorothy downed her glass of wine, feeling the slight buzz. "I won't appeal, I've said as much."

"Ms. Sanchez—"

"But let's keep my decision not to appeal between us for now, okay? Pretend I'm still considering it."

Ephraim, sensing her tone, took it she really wanted to think it over, so he didn't push further.

"Alright! Once you've made up your mind, let me know as soon as possible. Don't miss the appeal deadline."

"Sure."

After hanging up, Dorothy scrolled to the very bottom of her phone's contacts, found a number, and dialed—

The call was answered quickly.

"Dorothy?"

"Yeah, it's me." Her voice was indifferent, "You've been acquitted?"

Amanda scoffed, "Ha! You should have known that would happen."

"I want to meet you."

"What a joke! You think I'm someone you can just see whenever you want?!"

"Don't forget, I can still appeal. If we meet and come to an agreement, I'll drop the appeal."

Chapter 893

Amanda was nobody's fool. She eyed Dorothy's sudden offer of reconciliation with suspicion, "You're actually willing to drop the appeal?"

Dorothy smiled, "Yeah! I was naive before and wanted to fight for justice. But now, I see the light. You can't fight a hopeless battle."

"You should've realized that sooner! Maybe I'll consider your years of dedication to the Lopez kids and throw a little extra cash your way," Amanda said, her tone always reeking of haughty entitlement, as if speaking with her was a divine favor.

At this point, Dorothy couldn't care less about Amanda's tone.

"How about the day after tomorrow? I'll send you the address. Come alone."

"Alone?" Amanda's instincts kicked in. "What are you planning?"

"What can I do to you in broad daylight? If I harm you, I'm signing my own death warrant, especially since I don't have the mighty Lopez family's power to hide behind."

By laying it out so bluntly, Dorothy aimed to quell Amanda's doubts.

"Ha! As if you'd dare! But why insist on me coming alone?"

"It's just given my history with Everett. You know how it is—if he finds out, this won't end quietly. I'm tired, and I don't want to deal with him. I just want to take the money and vanish."

Perhaps thinking of her son, Amanda weighed her options and agreed, "Fine, the day after tomorrow it is! But don't try anything funny. Eldorria City isn't your playground."

"Relax, no place is my playground. I'm well aware."

Otherwise, she wouldn't have lost such a clear-cut case.

...

Dorothy had to down an entire bottle before she felt the buzz.

Over the past month, her tolerance had increased, and it was getting harder to get drunk.

Now, she was careful—locking the apartment door and stashing her phone to avoid drunken dialing.

Waking the next morning with a hangover, Dorothy stumbled out of the bedroom only to find two unexpected guests on her couch—Karen and Kenneth.

Seeing Dorothy, Kenneth bolted up, "You're awake, Dorothy."

"Uh-huh." She nodded and was a bit out of the loop, "What brings you guys here...?"

"You have the nerve to ask! I tried calling you, but you didn't answer, and then your phone was off. Kenneth heard about the verdict and we were scared you'd do something rash, so we rushed over!"

Karen had been so worried she nearly had a premature labor.

"I'm okay, just had a few drinks," Dorothy said, embarrassed. "Sorry for scaring you, Karen, Kenneth."

"No need to apologize; we understand you're upset," Karen walked over and hugged her. "But don't do anything foolish! Kenneth said there's still a chance to appeal."

"Absolutely!" Kenneth chimed in eagerly. "We can find a better lawyer, make an appeal! There's always a way to seek justice!"

Dorothy nodded noncommittally, "Yeah, there's always a way. I believe that. Don't worry."

"I'll go grab us some breakfast so you don't get an upset stomach."

After everyone had their say, Kenneth felt a bit awkward lingering, so he made an excuse to step out.

Once he left, Karen let out a sigh. "Ah! Can you imagine Kenneth marrying someone like Eleanor? If I were her, I'd never marry a guy like him!"

Chapter 894

"If she's willing to tie the knot, Kenneth would make a good husband."

Karen nodded in agreement, "Yeah, Kenneth is a real sweetheart and attentive, too. My aunt used to say that once he's hitched, he'll be the kind of guy who'd be totally whipped."

Karen couldn't resist sneaking a glance at Dorothy for her reaction.

Dorothy shot a look right back at her, "Drop it, Karen. Stop trying to set me up with him."

"Well, I'm not!" Karen rubbed her baby bump, "Dorothy, this little rascal inside's been kicking up a storm and thus messing with my sleep. I'm a bit on edge because of that. Could you come over and keep me company?"

Dorothy knew what she was really asking. But she had more pressing things on her mind.

"Karen, you don't need to worry about me. I'm all grown up. Whatever I do, it's after careful thought. Right now, your priority is to have that baby safe and sound."

"Oh, come on, what could possibly happen to me? Jeffrey's got that doctor on call practically 24/7! Seriously, he's downstairs right now, ready to jump at a moment's notice."

Despite Karen's playful complaints, Dorothy could see that Jeffrey was looking after her really well.

That gave her some peace of mind.

Kenneth came back with breakfast, and for once, Dorothy didn't put up a fuss. She sat down and joined Karen for a bite.

As they were leaving, Dorothy stopped Kenneth, "Eyes are in front of us for a reason, Kenneth. You've got to look ahead. No sense in always looking back, right?"

Kenneth paused for a moment, then let out a resigned chuckle, "Yeah, you're right."

After sending them off, Dorothy headed to West Legal Services, pulled out a court verdict, and then made a beeline for the cemetery.

"Mom, I feel so helpless. I'm just unable to do anything right." Dorothy squatted down and lit the court document with her lighter.

The flame took hold, and the smoke began to rise, twirling into the air before dispersing...

"While you were alive, I couldn't make enough money to cure your illness on my own. In the end, I had to sell myself to get the money. So, you had every right to be mad at me. I know you were just disappointed."

"Now that you're gone, I've been scrambling for years just to uncover the truth, to bring the one who hurt you to justice! And yet, I've failed. Heather might be facing the death penalty, but the one who really gave the orders got only a year, and is serving it from home because of 'medical issues.'"

This punishment was as good as none!

To Amanda, it was nothing.

"Mom, I've let you down. I couldn't fulfill your hopes. But don't worry, some debts of vengeance don't have to be settled in court. If they refuse to give us justice, then I'll get it my own way."

With that, she knelt down, bowed deeply twice, and slowly stood up.

"Mom, I'll be going now, but... we'll be seeing each other again soon."

...

When Everett heard the verdict, he was in the middle of a meeting in Liberty City. He immediately announced a recess and stepped out to call his father, "So you pulled some strings after all!"

"Is that what you call 'pulling strings'?" Jonathan retorted. "This is Heather telling the truth! She was the one dragging your mother into this mess. Now she's willing to confess in public to exonerate your mother. Isn't that a good thing?"

"How did you manage to get the message to Heather and to have her plead guilty without pulling some strings?"

"She could've figured it out on her own, couldn't she? Your mother just had to give Heather a few meaningful looks in court, and she got the message," Jonathan was naturally elated, knowing his wife was off the hook, "Everett, you weren't hoping for your mother to get the death penalty, were you?"

Chapter 895

Everett frowned, "But things aren't exactly like Heather claimed."

"Close enough! Your mom's just been brainwashed by her, otherwise what beef would she have with Dorothy's mom?" Jonathan rambled on, "Now we just wait for Dorothy's next move, to see if she'll appeal. I bet she will."

"She definitely will," Everett knew Dorothy's stubborn streak all too well.

She was as stubborn as a mule, the kind to hit a wall and not turn back. She would never accept the verdict.

Jonathan sighed, "Then you gotta talk some sense into her, man. No point in making a scene! Everyone looks bad if the gloves come off. Your mom got a year with probation, a slap on the wrist, really. She won't dare step out of line again! If Dorothy drops this appeal nonsense, I promise to stay out of you two's business, and I can handle your mother on my end."

It was his way of conceding to Dorothy.

The main issue was that if she did take it to the State Court, and with his son watching him like a hawk, ensuring no foul play, the outcome was anyone's guess!

Better to step back now and make peace.

Everett was silent for a long while before finally speaking, "We've already broken up."

"Then why you are still meddling in her business?"

"I have to." His voice was firm, "Appealing is her right."

...

When Everett got the call from Dorothy, it was early morning in Liberty City.

He had just left the kids' room, planning to ask Kevin to book a flight back to Eldorria City.

He couldn't help but worry about her.

Even if Everett himself thought it was pretty pathetic.

Hesitating at the unfamiliar number, he finally picked up.

"Everett, it's me."

He was silent for a few seconds, his tone unfriendly, "You're drinking again?"

Otherwise, with Dorothy's temperament, Everett figured he'd never in his life get a call from her out of the blue.

"No, I'm sober," Dorothy's voice didn't sound intoxicated; each word was clear and concise as she uttered, "Sorry to bother you again. I'm not trying to make things difficult, just... could you send me some videos of Abigail and Langston? I want to see them."

Everett glanced at the door to the kids' room, "They're still asleep."

"No rush, just send them when they wake up. You don't have to unblock me. Just email it to my work."

"What's going on?" Irritation somehow upsurged in Everett's chest, "Why the sudden need to see the kids?"

"Nothing's up! Just missing them. I may have given them to you, but as their mother, I have the right to see them, don't I?"

Everett was sure now she hadn't been drinking.

Rights, rights, rights!

She was treating him like the enemy, being overly cautious with her words.

"You've received the first trial's verdict," Everett ignored her talk of rights and steered the conversation elsewhere. He was keen on finding out the reason behind Dorothy's abnormal behavior!

Something was definitely off with her.

"Yeah," but Dorothy clearly didn't want to linger on the call, "That's it. Just send them later, thanks."

And with that, she hung up before Everett could get another word in.

When he tried calling back, her phone was switched off!

Everett tried Dorothy's number again; it rang once but then went to voicemail and soon after, it too was off.

He immediately turned to Kevin, "Book me the next flight to Eldorria City!"

"Mr. Lopez, the earliest flight back home lands in other place first, then you'd fly to Eldorria City. If you can wait till tomorrow, there's a direct flight—"

"I'll take that one."

## Chapter 896

The night before her meeting with Amanda, Dorothy didn't resort to her usual glass of wine to coax herself into slumber. Instead, she allowed insomnia to be her bedfellow until the break of dawn. Her mind was a whirlwind of thoughts, so many that it felt like her head might explode, so overwhelming that she had to pop an aspirin to dull the throbbing pain.

Finally, the appointed time arrived.

Dorothy lingered in front of her wardrobe for what felt like an eternity before settling on a crimson dress.

Her skin, already fair, seemed to glow against the red fabric, accentuating her hourglass figure without a hint of vulgarity. Instead, she exuded an air of untainted desire, her petite face delicate and unmarred by the toils of motherhood to her two children.

She arrived at the agreed-upon restaurant to find Amanda hadn't yet made an appearance.

Dorothy knew this was likely a power play. It was a deliberate tardiness meant to assert dominance and remind Dorothy of her place.

"I'll have a Blue Mountain coffee, thanks." Dorothy was unfazed. She was even sitting on her seat with a stoic expression.

Nearly thirty minutes passed before Amanda made her fashionably late entrance. She carried the same regal aura she had in the courtroom, looking down her nose with an air of haughty disdain.

"Let's cut to the chase. How much do you want?"

Amanda didn't bother with apologies for her lateness. She got straight to the point upon sitting down.



"That can wait. What I want to know is why you were so hell-bent on seeing my mother dead."

Dorothy had her theories, but she wanted to hear it straight from Amanda's lips.

"Why would I need a reason?" Amanda had done her homework; there were no cameras here, so she spoke freely. "The life of a commoner holds no value to me. Why would I waste time contemplating it?"

Dorothy didn't speak.

"The real person responsible for your mother's death is you! You are way over your head by dreaming of being with my son, and that brought this upon her. You have no one to blame but yourself!"

A chill settled at the bottom of Dorothy's eyes as she nodded in agreement, "Yes, to people like you, our lives are indeed worthless."

...

Everett's plane touched down in Lumina Bay for a layover, and he took the opportunity to call Kevin to check in on Dorothy for any unusual behavior.

Relieved to hear she had been acting normally by just casually strolling downstairs and even giving her apartment a thorough cleaning, he felt a measure of peace.

When he finally arrived at Eldorria City Airport, he received a call from Ephraim.

"Mr. Lopez, there's something I need to tell you! Ms. Sanchez instructed me not to speak of it, but I think it's best you know."

"Go ahead."

"Ms. Sanchez's decision to forgo an appeal was quite unequivocal. She mentioned it even before the first trial."

Dorothy was giving up her appeal?!

"Did she say anything else?"

"No, that's all. But after the verdict, Ms. Sanchez seemed exceptionally detached, as if the lawsuit had nothing to do with her!"

Everett strode out of the airport with long, purposeful steps, sliding into the car Kevin had driven to pick him up.

After a brief pause, he asked in a deep tone, "Did you explain the rules and benefits of an appeal to her?"

"I did! I tried to encourage her not to lose heart, but she insisted on not appealing."

Everett's brows furrowed deeply.

Suddenly—

A sense of foreboding rapidly took hold of him.

He ended the call and dialed his father's number.

"Dad, where's Mom?"

Jonathan paused, "Not sure. She said someone wanted to talk business, and she left on her own."

Chapter 897

"Get her location and send it to me! Now!"

"What's wrong?"

Everett didn't have time to explain, "Just do it!" his voice suddenly escalated.

Jonathan jumped at the urgency, "Ah, okay! I'm on it!"

...

"You know, I'm rather curious about how you managed to snag my son."

With things already out in the open, Amanda figured she might as well clear up her own confusion.

Dorothy was undoubtedly attractive, that much was undeniable. But Everett's social circle was a veritable runway of beauties! There were plenty more dazzling and beautiful than her.

"I didn't snag him. He was the one who came after me." Dorothy also spoke the truth.

But Amanda wasn't buying it, "You expect me to believe that you didn't scheme from the get-go to marry my son for his money?"

"For the money, yes."

Amanda let out a derisive snort, "So there you have it! You still deny that you were the one who lured my son in? Maybe he came after you first, but if you weren't intending on having him spend his money on you, none of this would've started!"

Dorothy's gaze fell as she picked up her coffee cup and took a sip.

Bitter with a tang of sour.

It wasn't to her taste.

"I don't have the time to waste on you," Amanda came over without even ordering a drink, clearly planning on making a swift exit. In her eyes, Dorothy wasn't worth lingering over, "So, name your price. As long as it's not outrageous, I'll consider it money well spent to rid myself of a nuisance."

Money was the only thing that the Lopez family was never lacking.

"I don't want your money."

Dorothy's reply was just as blunt. Her smile was wry, "Haven't you ever considered? If I was after money, I could've just asked Everett directly. Given how much he loves me, would he ever refuse me anything?"

It was at that moment Amanda realized something was amiss! Her guard went up a notch, but not by much.

After all, Dorothy had come alone; what was the worst she could do?

"If not money, then what do you want?" she paused, squinting her eyes, "You want to marry into the Lopez family, don't you? Well, let me tell you, I'll never consent to it! Even if Everett's father agrees, I'll never accept you as my daughter-in-law!"

But Dorothy just shook her head, "That's not it either."

"Then what in the world do you want?"

"Don't you know what you owe?" Dorothy suddenly lifted her gaze and smiled, "Have you ever heard the saying? 'The blood must be answered with—blood.'"

Exactly. Today was the day Dorothy intended to exact that reckoning on Amanda!

Since the court couldn't punish her crimes, Dorothy would personally escort her to meet Bella.

As Dorothy spoke, a knife appeared in her hand out of nowhere. She had already been eyeing Amanda's heart, even shifted her chair for the perfect angle to strike!

There was only one chance, and she couldn't miss.

Amanda, terrified, barely had time to react before Dorothy had firmly seized her arm.

"If our common lives are so worthless, then just join me in death, you high and mighty lady!"

Dorothy bit down hard, driving the knife with fierce determination—

She felt the blade pierce flesh, but the body wasn't Amanda's!

"Dorothy!" Everett's voice thundered, halting her like a blow to the head.

She hadn't expected him to arrive at the crucial moment, stepping in to take the knife meant for his mother!

In her panic, Dorothy instinctively withdrew the blade.

Blood gushed forth, spraying her face! And splattering all around.

It showed a blinding crimson red...

Chapter 898

"Everett! My son!" Amanda's voice pierced the chaos with an agonizing scream.

Bystanders caught on to the urgency, some calling for an ambulance, others dialing the police.

Only Dorothy was still clutching the knife so tightly. She watched as the blood slid down the blade and then strained her trembling hands crimson.

This was the second time in a short span that Everett had been injured.

The searing pain drained the color from his handsome face, yet his gaze remained locked on Dorothy.

Everett reached out as if to pull her close.

But Dorothy stepped back. "Why did you have to show up, Everett? Why couldn't you just let me be? I was so close to being free, to ending it all!" she yelled.

Gritting his teeth, Everett didn't answer. One hand pressed against his wound, the other stubbornly tried to grasp her wrist.

"I can't take this anymore. I'm really tired! Just think of it as my fault and my debt to you, Everett. I'll make it up to you in another life!"

Dorothy struggled fiercely, not caring about Everett's injury as she fought to break free from his grip.

In the next second, she turned the knife towards herself!

Everett's pupils constricted, "Dorothy! Don't you dare—"

But his words were drowned out by her resolve, and without hesitation, she aimed for her own heart.

Everett had no time to react; he could only reach out and grapple for the knife. His fresh blood surged once more, and she couldn't tell where did the blood come from.

Thrown off balance by his force, Dorothy stumbled and fell solid on the ground with him.

Everett's blood soaked her red dress and bit by bit, became a growing stain.

"Everett... Everett!"

"I'm not gone yet..." His lips, now pale, twisted into a grimace of a smile, "Dorothy..."

She let go of the knife and wrapped her arms around him as tears streamed down her face, "Are you insane? Why would you do this? Everett, I'm so tired. Can't you just let me be free?!"

"No..." He still managed a smile, "You look... so beautiful in that red dress..."

Dorothy didn't say anything.

"Don't wear it again." He added.

...

When Jeffrey arrived at the police station, Dorothy had already been in custody for several hours.

"Hey there, officer!" he greeted with a grin, pulling up a chair to sit, "I'm here to pick up Dorothy."

"That's not possible; she's suspected of intentional harm—"

Jeffrey cut him off with an earnest look, "There was no intentional harm, just a lovers' spat that got a bit out of hand. I'm here on behalf of the victim to clear things up!"

The officer eyed him with suspicion.

After all, he had seen the extent of the victim's injuries himself. If the guy ended up dying in the hospital, this could escalate to suspected murder.

"The victim's alright now?" the officer asked.

"He'll need stitches, so probably not in the best shape to come here himself. If you need confirmation, you can go ask him at the hospital! Do I look like I'm lying?"

"They're married?" the officer asked.

Jeffrey nodded, "Yeah! Can you believe it, they've already got two kids and still find time to argue! It's beyond me, really."

To bolster his claim, he even pulled out a photo from a vacation in Everglow City.

There, Abigail and Langston's faces were unmistakably those of their children.

The officer clucked his tongue, "Their arguments sound pretty fierce."

"They manage."

"This is managing?"

Jeffrey pursed his lips, sighed, and shook his head, "What can I say? My buddy's got it bad for love. His wife could kill him, and he'd thank her for it."

Chapter 899

Everett was utterly smitten—that was a line only Jeffrey had the guts to say.

For the sake of thoroughness, the officer accompanied Jeffrey to the hospital to hear Everett himself declare he wouldn't press charges. Only after Everett had signed the settlement did they agree to release Dorothy.

She was injured, too.

Her red dress was torn at the chest, revealing a wound underneath where the blood had already dried. It was clear from the cut that Dorothy had truly wished for death.

She followed Jeffrey to the car with a vacant stride, silent and head bowed.

Thankfully, Jeffrey was certain she no longer had any weapons; otherwise, he'd still be worried she might try something drastic again.

"Hospital?" Jeffrey finally broke the long silence with a probing question.

At the sound of his voice, Dorothy lifted her head slightly, "No."

"What about your wound? It looks... pretty deep," Jeffrey coughed awkwardly, shifting his gaze away. The location of her injury was somewhat awkward, and he couldn't very well keep staring.

"I won't die from it."

"Don't talk about dying! If something happened to you today, Karen would have her baby right now!" Jeffrey shuddered at the thought. "I just don't get it! How did I not see this extreme side of you before?"

Who in their right mind would think about a murder-suicide?

The case was only at the first trial; it wasn't as if there was no chance to turn things around!

Even Jeffrey knew that once Everett saw the verdict of the first trial, he'd definitely get involved. He might say he was done with Dorothy and didn't care if she lived or died, but his true feelings were almost written all over his face!

Speaking of Karen, Dorothy's expression finally showed some life.

"Did you tell Karen?"

"Of course not! She's in her third trimester and was already on bed rest! If she found out, she might go into premature labor!"

"Don't tell her."

Jeffrey snorted, "You don't have to tell me that."

"Mhm." Dorothy murmured in response, then fell silent again.

After a long while, Dorothy spoke up again. "How is he... doing?"

"How is he doing? He's in big trouble!" Jeffrey surely knew she was asking about Everett.

Dorothy looked up at him, her eyes clearly filled with concern.

Jeffrey nearly rolled his eyes hard enough to toss them at her.

"My buddy just recovered from old wounds, and now he's got new ones. Knife wounds would be one thing, but on top of that, he's been diagnosed with late-stage cancer!"

Dorothy's mind went blank for a moment, "Everett has... late-stage cancer?"

"Yep! No misdiagnosis! Pure, unadulterated love-struck cancer."

Dorothy fell silent.

"Well. Right now, practically the whole Lopez family is at the hospital, so it wouldn't be right for you to go. Wait until they leave, then I'll take you to see him."

Jeffrey had been tasked with keeping an eye on Dorothy, so he couldn't let her out of his sight.

Everett was worried she might despair again.

"I'm not going to see him," Dorothy said after a moment of silence.

Jeffrey was taken aback, "Why not?"

"I have nothing to say to him."

Knowing that he was alright and commanding Jeffrey to watch her was enough for her.

"Ah! In the end, you did stab him. Isn't it only right to go see how he's doing?"

"I didn't do it for him."

"I know! But the guy lying in the hospital is him!" Jeffrey rubbed his temple and let out a heavy sigh. "Dorothy, let me be frank. I know you're struggling and exhausted, but Everett... he's always going to suffer more in those respects!"

Dorothy still refused to talk.

"Just be a little patient. Make your decision after the final verdict, okay?"

Dorothy's pale lips quivered, "There's no final verdict. I'm not appealing."

"You might not be appealing, but Everett is appealing on behalf of his mother!"

Chapter 900

"Everett appealed?"

Jeff nodded, throwing his hands up in exasperation. "Yeah, you should have seen it. His mother was so mad back at the hospital that she almost went for round two with a knife!"

In criminal cases, both the plaintiff and the defendant have the right to appeal if they're dissatisfied with the verdict.

But clearly, the Lopez family was quite content with the initial sentence of one year of probation—no way they'd appeal.

Now Everett was essentially dragging his own mother back into the courtroom, risking a harsher sentence!

He knew that could mean Amanda might face a much longer sentence, maybe even the death penalty, yet he went ahead with it.

"I pushed him away because I didn't want him to carry that burden."

If he sent his biological mother to prison, the weight of public condemnation on Everett's shoulders would just be too much!

This wasn't what Dorothy wanted. She had thought of many ways to clear Everett's name and still get her revenge!

That was why, after the first trial, she decided not to appeal. Instead, she resolved to take Amanda down with her, so the scandal wouldn't taint Everett's reputation.

Once everything settled, Everett would still be the CEO of Lopez Corporation, and nobody would whisper about him betraying his own mother.

"Dorothy, do you have any idea how much he loves you?"

She was silent.

"If this keeps up, I swear Everett's going to keel over. Why don't you just end it at the hospital? Go out with a bang, together!"

Jeffrey was damn tired of it all. Time and again, he genuinely feared for Everett's life.

He'd come to a grim understanding: falling for Dorothy was a one-way ticket to heartache.

This woman's thought process was just not in sync with normal people! All Everett ever wanted was her trust, and she just wouldn't give him an inch.

Even after everything he'd done, Dorothy still didn't trust that he would ensure a fair trial.

She wasn't oblivious to Jeffrey's sarcasm, but she wasn't in the mood to retort.

"Go take care of Karen," she said, reaching for the car door.

Jeffrey was quicker, locking the doors before she could bail.

"Do you think I can let you out of my sight? What if you try to off yourself—"

Then Everett would be out for blood.

"I just need some peace."

"Well, you can find your peace right here in my car. No other options! You might want to die, but I plan on staying alive."

With that, Jeffrey fished a pack of cigarettes from the glove compartment, lit one up, and took a drag.

"You're not going to see Everett?"

Dorothy paused for a few seconds, then shook her head.

"The knife you stabbed him with didn't hit the heart. The docs said they could tell you pulled back when you saw him jump in the way," Jeff took another drag, "But his hand... it's bad. His old man flew Quincy in from overseas—said the tendons in his palm are severed. He might never be able to lift anything heavy with that hand again."

The thought of Everett being disabled in one hand...

"Why don't you go see him? You have no idea how broken he'd be if you didn't. When he woke up, the first thing he did was call me to find you, to keep an eye on you."

Dorothy bit her lip, silent.

Jeffrey could only sigh, "Love sure has a way of making fools of us all."

"Can you drive me to get some booze, Jeffrey?"

"Huh?"

She looked at him and repeated, "I want to buy some alcohol."

"Why?"

"Because I don't know how to face him sober."