

Midnight 901

Chapter 901

At the hospital in Eldorria City.

Quincy had barely touched down before she was rushed into the operating room.

This time was different from the last. Previously, Everett had been unconscious, sparing her the need for any eye contact. But now...

“Mr. Lopez, I’m afraid I’m going to have to invade your personal space a bit here.”

Everett’s hand was secured on the operating table, and since it was a local anesthetic, he was awake, though his face was pale.

“Did she come?”

He didn’t respond to Quincy’s remark, his mind clearly elsewhere, probably outside the operating room.

“Ms. Sanchez? I’m not sure. I didn’t see anyone when I came in.” Quincy, now in her scrubs, began to apply disinfectant, revealing a long, deep cut.

Even though she was no stranger to the OR, the sight still made her wince.

“Ms. Sanchez did this?”

Everett glanced at her but remained silent.

“She really went all out. This looks as bad as what that guy did.”

“You talk too much.”

It was the first time Quincy had received such feedback. She fell silent, focusing on the surgery, stitching the torn tendon back together.

As seconds turned into minutes, sweat beaded on Quincy’s forehead, wiped away only to form again.

“Will my hand ever fully recover?”

Perhaps feeling a bit grateful for Quincy’s rushed effort and immediate surgery without rest, and for putting up with his gruffness, Everett initiated a conversation.

Quincy was momentarily taken aback.

“I’ll do my best. Physical therapy afterwards will be crucial too.”

“Hmm.”

Everett didn’t say more and just closed his eyes.

Time passed, and finally, Quincy finished the last stitch. She breathed a sigh of relief and unintentionally caught Everett’s eyes.

He had fallen asleep.

His features were so perfect they seemed divine, breathtaking even in sleep.

This was a man with looks, pedigree, and rare loyalty – a complete fantasy.

“Dr. Quincy?”

Her assistant’s nudge brought her back to reality.

She cleared her throat softly and whispered, “He’s asleep. Let’s try to keep it down and not disturb him. Take him back to his room quietly.”

“Got it!”

As Everett was wheeled out, Quincy turned to clean up and change out of her scrubs.

She was just leaving when Jonathan approached.

“Jonathan.”

“Yeah! How’s Everett’s hand...?” Jonathan was worried about his son, despite the latter’s rash actions.

Quincy removed her mask, offering a reassuring smile.

“The surgery went well, but the level of recovery depends on his physio. The repaired tendon won’t be the same as before.”

Jonathan sighed upon hearing this, his emotions a mix of relief and concern.

“Jonathan, I came back to perform this surgery for Everett. Can I ask you for a favor?”

“What is it?”

“Please, stop pressuring my family. I can’t marry Mr. Lopez if there’s no love between us, not out of business convenience.”

Chapter 902

Quincy couldn't imagine marrying as a sacrifice to her family!

Even though the Quincy family had raised her, marriage was for life. Quincy wasn't about to rush into it only to end up in a swift divorce once the two families had no more use for each other.

She knew it all too well.

And truth be told, her social standing didn't exactly make her an ideal match for Everett.

But compared to Dorothy, she had a slight edge.

Deep down, she was also painfully aware that Everett would never fall for her.

If... if she ended up falling for Everett, she'd be ruining her entire life.

After all, he was irreplaceable.

“I haven't pressured your family, Quincy, what are you talking about? You know how close I am with your dad!” Jonathan merely laughed, outright denying any involvement.

But Quincy wasn't surprised. She had decided to confront the issue head-on, anticipating these very responses.

The back-and-forth, the silent battles of the business world were beyond Quincy. Subtlety wasn't her strong suit; it would likely be thrown right back in her face.

“Let's just agree to disagree then. Just please, stop talking about me marrying Everett, promise me that.”

“I haven't pressured your family, that's the truth. But wanting you to become part of our family, the Lopez family, that's also true!” Jonathan took a deep breath and continued, “I thought once the

lawsuit was over, if Dorothy could just calm down, I'd let it be. But—Dorothy's just too stubborn! If I back down now, wouldn't the Lopez family be at her mercy from then on?”

“But Mr. Lopez doesn't have me in his heart.”

“Once you're married, over time, feelings will develop!” Jonathan looked into her eyes, a slight curve to his lips, “You can see, my son is stubborn. If he falls in love, he's incredibly devoted. Don't you want to be that person he's devoted to?”

Quincy paused, her lips parting slightly.

“I know it seems hard to change his mind right now, but see it as a high-stakes gamble! Even if you lose, you'd still be Everett's wife in name, the lady of the Lopez family. We won't let you or your family down. And if you win... well, you'd be the happiest woman in the world! You've seen how good Everett is to Dorothy, haven't you?”

If she could replace Dorothy, all that could be hers.

...

Why hadn't Dorothy realized that she could drink so well before?

Five beers down, and after two trips to the bathroom, she was still crystal clear!

Jeffrey watched her down another, her cheeks flushed, yet she still refused to go to the hospital. He couldn't help but speak up, “Why don't you just switch to liquor? It hits faster!”

“Liquor leaves a smell.”

“Tsk! So, how long do you plan on drinking? If it's too much, just pretend you're drunk! Everett won't know the difference anyway.”

Dorothy gave him a glance. “I'm not drinking because I'm afraid of him realizing anything.”

She lacked the courage.

In this situation, what could she possibly say to Everett?

How could she, the instigator, show concern for his wounds?

Jeffrey was at a loss with Dorothy. "So, there's no more drinks. Are we continuing or not?"

"Let's go now."

Dorothy bit her lip. Facing Everett was inevitable.

Chapter 903

Everett was absolutely wiped out when he finally drifted off to sleep.

After enduring a grueling series of flights, including layovers, then rushing straight to Dorothy only to get hurt for a couple of emergency surgeries that left him bleeding profusely, anyone's body would have reached its limit.

By the time Jeffrey and Dorothy arrived at the hospital, he hadn't yet woken up.

Jonathan had to leave, his wife had come down with the flu badly, leaving Quincy behind to look after Everett.

"When's he gonna wake up?" Jeffrey needed to be absolutely sure Everett was just sleeping, not passed out, before he could ease his worry.

"No telling, really. He'll wake up when he's had enough rest," Quincy replied. She wasn't in her usual scrubs since this wasn't her hospital, but in a simple white tee and jeans, looking fresh-faced like she just graduated from college.

Dorothy, noticing Jeffrey's furrowed brow, gently suggested, "Why don't you head back? You've been out long enough, and Karen might start worrying."

"That's exactly what I'm worried about! But with Everett here..."

"I'll stay until he wakes up."

Jeffrey looked at her, paused for a few seconds, then nodded. "Alright, I'll head back then. I'll sort things out with Karen and come back. Call me if anything happens!"

"Will do."

As he hurried out of the hospital, Dorothy turned her attention back to Quincy.

"Dr. Quincy, you have something to say."

It wasn't a question.

"How'd you know?" Quincy was genuinely surprised.

"If it wasn't important, you wouldn't still be standing here." Even after Jeffrey had left, she hadn't moved an inch.

"What is it? Is it about Everett?" Dorothy prodded.

"Yeah." Quincy hesitated before speaking, "I just wanted to ask, is this situation really what you wanted?"

Dorothy didn't answer.

"Causing such a scene, nearly turning Mr. Lopez into a cripple, almost getting him killed... How are your actions any different from what Heather did?" Quincy's gaze was firm, her tone calm, not accusatory, "Back in Swevia Country, I really thought you loved Mr. Lopez. I thought you two were in love, but now... I feel like you don't love him at all. You just love yourself."

Even with the alcohol in her system, Dorothy couldn't find the words to argue.

"I don't want to know the details, and I'm not interested. But looking at the whole situation, as an outsider, I genuinely believe Mr. Lopez has done too much for you. So much that it's not worth it."

"Yes, I'm not worth it."

"I'm not saying this to scold you, and I certainly don't have the right or position to do so. I just hope you'll think it over. Don't wait until Mr. Lopez is taken by someone else and then regret it. By then, no one would be willing to give him back to you."

Whoever finds a treasure never returns it.

After saying her piece, Quincy walked away.

Dorothy stood there for a long time before finally pushing open the door to the hospital room.

Everett was still asleep on the bed, the room dimly lit to keep it soothing. Dorothy approached cautiously, not wanting to disturb him.

His breathing was steady, his torso bare, showing bandages stained with hints of medicine and blood.

Despite her efforts to be silent, he still slowly opened his eyes as she drew closer.

"Dorothy."

Everett's voice was raspy, parched.

Dorothy froze.

"Yeah, how did you... know it was me?"

He attempted a smile and said, "I just dreamed you were here. Am I still dreaming?"

Chapter 904

"If you wish it to be real, it's real. If you think it's a dream, then it's just a dream."

Everett reached out his surgically repaired hand, slowly extending it forward.

Dorothy, afraid of hurting him, merely touched his fingers, but he insisted on grabbing her hand!

Soon, signs of blood seeping through became evident!

"Everett, let go! Have you lost your mind? Your hand just underwent surgery; you can't exert force like this!"

Now, the mere sight of red triggered Dorothy, and she turned to look for a doctor.

Because of a tendon injury, his hand was weak, but Everett grabbed her with his other hand, refusing to let go.

"Then don't leave."

"I won't leave, I promise I won't!" Dorothy was genuinely scared; she hurriedly cradled his hand, looking at it under the dim light of the hospital room, her eyes welling up, "Everett, I really don't deserve you to do this... I've lost all attachment to this world. Life has been so exhausting."

Everett looked at her weakly, his eyes not blinking.

"What about me, Abigail, and Langston? You don't care for us?"

"I know you'll take good care of them."

"And what about me?"

Everett had asked Dorothy "And what about me?" many times, and each time, she failed to give him the answer he hoped for.

This time was no different.

"Without me, you'll have a broader horizon, a soulmate who resonates more with you! Everett, we were a mistake from the start. The fault isn't yours; it's mine. I can't go on."

Every day was a mental torment. The sleepless nights, every minute and every second brought her to the brink of collapse!

"I promised you justice for your mother's case... trust me this once." He never forgot his promise.

"Everett, she's the woman who gave birth to you!"

"But she did something wrong, and she must be punished."

"Even so, the person to bring her to justice shouldn't be you. It can't be you!" Dorothy took a deep breath before saying, "Withdraw the appeal."

She couldn't let Everett be the son who sends his mother to prison.

"And then?" His gaze was urgent, pressing for an answer, "You plan to seek vengeance in your own way?"

"That's my business."

"Dorothy!"

She pursed her lips. "Everett, don't think that by taking that stab for your mother, the public won't criticize you anymore. If you proceed with the appeal, they'll label you unfilial! I can already imagine how the media will portray you!"

Everett had been free of scandals up till now, and Dorothy didn't want to be the reason for his first.

He didn't speak, just quietly watched her.

After a moment, Everett suddenly managed a self-mocking smile.

"You think I took that stab for my mother."

"What else?"

"Do you realize, if you had actually killed someone that day, everything would have been over?"

Dorothy was shocked, finally understanding. "So you were afraid I would..."

"Of course, I was!" Everett felt a bitter sweetness in his throat, making it hard for him to breathe, "If the person your knife had hit wasn't me, you'd be in jail right now, not here in the hospital. Dorothy, how good do I have to be to you, for you to trust that I'm always on your side, no matter what?"

The sarcasm in Everett's smile deepened as he asked, "Tell me, can no one really enter your heart?"

"I'm sorry, I—"

He interrupted her coldly, "Answer my question! Can I ever have a place in your heart? If I can't, for the rest of my life, then just pity me now and tell me, so I can brace myself for it."

Chapter 905

Dorothy tried to speak several times, but in the end, she couldn't muster even a whisper.

"You said before, once this is all over, you'd give me closure. Does it mean ending it all with your death?" asked Everett.

"Yes."

As long as she was gone, everything would be over.

Dorothy knew Everett would be devastated and fall apart, but she believed the acute pain of loss would eventually pass. After all, once she was gone, there was nothing he could do.

Maybe it would take ten years, maybe twenty, but eventually, he would move on.

And then, he might meet someone new to grow old with...

Given Everett's intense, loyal nature, she was certain he would find an incredible partner.

All Dorothy wished for was that once she passed away, that would be the end of her story. She hoped not to linger as a ghost, haunting the living...

She couldn't bear the thought of seeing Everett with another woman.

"Sometimes I wonder if you and I could ever spend a lifetime together..." He was staring at the hospital room ceiling, as if talking to Dorothy, but also as if speaking to himself, "Who can give me that answer? If it could end well, then I don't care how difficult or painful the journey is."

"As long as the person in your heart isn't me, you can be happy. You just need to find someone else to love!" said Dorothy.

Everett looked at her and asked, "Why do you suggest I find someone else, instead of you trying to meet me halfway for once? Wouldn't it be simpler if you held me in your heart?"

Dorothy didn't answer.

"All these times, I've been the one reaching out to you. Just this once, can you step towards me?" He sighed lightly, "Even if I am determined, I still long for some response from you."

If she nodded, Everett was ready to take not just the next thousand steps, but ten thousand!

He didn't care what others thought; he was all in!

If people back home whispered behind their backs, he would take Dorothy and the kids and move abroad.

If people abroad did the same, he would abandon his identity and run away with her.

As long as she was by his side, what did material possessions or social status matter?

Having said so much already, Everett figured he might as well lay it all out.

"Can you, or can you not, give me a clear answer?"

"Do I have to?"

"Yes."

Dorothy clenched her fists, took a deep breath, and said, "Then no, I can't."

Compared to Everett's overwhelming love, she... she longed for liberation.

Death seemed too easy, too enticing as a way out.

"I'm sorry, Everett..."

"Enough, I don't want to hear it." His voice went cold, and he looked away.

"Leave."

Dorothy stood there for a long while. She wanted to explain her choice, to make Everett understand her desire for eternal freedom, but as the words reached her lips, Dorothy felt she couldn't persuade him.

Everett was as stubborn as she was.

"I'm leaving. You take care of yourself."

Dorothy took a few steps back and reached for the door of the hospital room.

Behind her, Everett suddenly spoke in a chilling tone, "You won't get another chance to kill her."

"I know."

"As punishment for betraying me, I won't let you die!"

Dorothy listened.

"I want you to live! Even if it means chaining you to a bed every day, I won't let you take your own life!"

Dorothy froze, turning slightly to look at him. "You want to control me?"

"Yes! And as long as I wish, I can." His lips curved into a cruel smile. "If I'm still enduring this torment, why should I let you find peace?"

Chapter 906

"Everett! You can't do this to me! My life is my own to decide!"

"We'll see about that, won't we?"

For the first time, Dorothy heard a chilling tone in Everett's voice.

The terrifying thing about him was that if he said he could do something, he undoubtedly would.

"If you die today, I'll make sure everyone you care about joins you. Including myself."

"Are you insane?"

Dorothy couldn't even recall how she managed to walk out of the hospital room. Her legs felt like two heavy hammers, stiff and numb.

What was she thinking?

Honestly, Dorothy wondered if death truly meant the end of everything.

And she had no clue whether Everett would join her in death!

"Ms. Sanchez?"

Quincy found Dorothy standing motionless, seemingly lost, and guided her back to a temporary lounge.

Once inside, she handed Dorothy a bottle of water.

Taking a sip and sitting down, it took Dorothy a moment to speak up, "Dr. Quincy, do you believe in an afterlife?"

"I'm a materialist," Quincy replied, looking at her. "Why? You think suicide will reunite you with your mother?"

Dorothy shook her head. "Honestly, I don't want to meet anyone. You're right, I am selfish. I can only think about my own feelings."

Quincy frowned slightly, her tone becoming grave, "I've begged Jonathan in private to stop pressuring my family so I could avoid a business marriage and not end up with a zombie like Mr. Lopez."

Dorothy was taken aback. She didn't understand why Quincy was suddenly sharing this with her.

"But Jonathan refused! However, he mentioned if you drop the lawsuit and give Everett's mom a way out, he could arrange for you to marry Mr. Lopez. That way, I could stay out of it and continue living freely as a doctor. Ms. Sanchez, I'm sorry, but I came here to persuade you to give up."

Quincy knew their grudge was irreconcilable, but decisions were made by people. As long as Dorothy wished, she could.

"No one can persuade me." Dorothy managed a weak smile. "If I could give up, I would have done so long ago. You're not the first to try."

Quincy looked at her, blinking slowly.

"Are you sure you want to take this to the end?"

"Yes." Since Everett wouldn't let her die, she'd fight the lawsuit to the very end.

Quincy frowned, a tumult of emotions swirling in her eyes.

"You're too stubborn! You can't win against the capital! Ms. Sanchez, I really don't want to get involved. Please, just drop the appeal, marry Mr. Lopez, and have a good life with your family!"

"But she was my mom!"

"But she's been dead for years!"

Dorothy pressed her lips together and then said, "I'm sorry, I can't think like you do."

Quincy sighed heavily, seemingly making a helpless decision.

"Well, Ms. Sanchez, this is your choice. I hope you can always believe it's the right one."

Dorothy looked up at her and asked, "Would you... marry Everett?"

Quincy nodded. "Yes, because I don't have your courage to face death, nor your strength to let go of everything and fight against the capital! I need to live, and so does my family."

Chapter 907

Dorothy remained silent.

Quincy continued, "Don't go giving me your blessings or wishing me a lifetime of happiness with Mr. Lopez. Honestly, I'm not even sure he likes me."

"Everett... he's a good man."

"That's to you!" Quincy's usually gentle tone now carried an unmistakable hint of irritation and resentment. "Ms. Sanchez, Everett is a corporate CEO. You can't possibly think he's a saint, right? The business world may not be a battlefield, but it's full of cunning and chaos! To stand at the peak of power in that world, his methods must be beyond what ordinary people can imagine. Marrying Everett and being by his side means I have to be on my toes constantly. If the Lopez family takes a disliking to me, I can't even bear to think about the consequences! He loves you, and he can protect you, so naturally, you don't need to worry about these things. But he doesn't love me. If I marry into their family, all I can do is pray for peace."

In marriages of business, how many are truly in love till old age? It's all just calculations.

As long as there's mutual benefit, the relationship lasts. Once the benefits disappear, so does the marriage. Even if they don't divorce, the couple has long been estranged, living their separate lives. And if there are children involved, they are the tragic next generation, doomed to repeat the cycle.

Quincy distanced herself from her family, avoiding business and finance, choosing medicine instead, all to escape this fate.

Yet, in the end, she finds herself about to be sacrificed.

It's not that Everett isn't a good person; it's that his heart belongs to someone else, and she doesn't feel capable of taking Dorothy's place.

"Oh, right! You two have kids, don't you? Think about them, why don't you?"

Dorothy didn't respond but stood up to leave.

Quincy was momentarily stunned, then followed.

"Ms. Sanchez! If you've made up your mind, I won't try to persuade you any longer! But if you ever regret this and want to return to Mr. Lopez, we'll be on opposite sides."

Dorothy lowered her head but didn't look back, continuing to walk away.

Quincy frowned, her voice trailing off in a last-ditch attempt, "I'm not joking! I'll do everything to defend my marriage, Ms. Sanchez!"

...

A week later, Dorothy reached out to Ephraim.

"I want to file for an appeal. Please help me with that."

"Sure! I'll get on it right away."

"Thanks, and please let Everett know he doesn't need to file on my behalf. I'll handle it myself."

Ephraim felt a bit awkward.

This was essentially laying bare the relationship between him and Everett, revealing that she knew whose side he was on all along.

After hanging up, Dorothy kicked aside a bottle at her feet, making room to stand up.

Leaving the hospital that day, she didn't return to Karen's apartment but checked into a hotel instead.

She thought, if she ever drank too much and got the courage to end it all, it couldn't be in Karen's house.

But a week passed, and she had to admit, Everett's threats were effective.

Outside, night had fallen.

Dorothy wrapped herself in a coat and headed to the hotel's rooftop.

The weather in Eldorria City hadn't been great recently, windy, with frequent storms. Today seemed like it might rain again soon.

Approaching the railing, she looked down.

Truth be told, the dizzying height of a hundred meters would make anyone's heart skip.

Dorothy's grip tightened as she suddenly envisioned her mother smiling and waving at her from below.

She said, just one leap, and everything would end.

Almost involuntarily, Dorothy's hands found themselves on the waist-high barrier.

The next second—

She felt herself being pulled back by a strong force.

Chapter 908

For days, Dorothy had barely eaten a thing, so when she was suddenly pulled into a warm embrace, she didn't have the strength to resist!

Before she could even see who it was, she heard a man's pained intake of breath—

She had accidentally bumped into his injured chest.

"Everett, you—mmph!"

Her protest was cut short as her lips were claimed in a fierce, punishing kiss.

Everett's kiss was desperate, biting, as if he was venting all his frustrations on her!

Tears sprung to Dorothy's eyes as she struggled, but she ceased her movements when she detected what seemed to be the metallic scent of blood.

He was so tall, she had to tilt her head back to meet his kiss.

"Why did you stop resisting?" Everett's voice was husky, like gravel scraping together.

"Let me go!"

"You care about my pain, don't you?"

"That's not it!"

Everett's eyes were clear and cold, his lips stained with blood, making them appear even redder. "I told you, you're not allowed to die."

"Yes, and here I am, alive, aren't I?"

"But you were about to jump!"

Dorothy's vision had cleared significantly, the illusions shattered by his presence, allowing her reason to partially return.

"I wasn't. I was just looking."

"I can't trust your words anymore. You're lying to me; you want to die. You want to leave me!" Everett's grip on her didn't loosen, pressing her close to him, even though it caused him immense pain.

He even thought the pain was good, a sign that both were still alive.

Dorothy slowly looked up at him, finally softening, exhausted.

"Everett, I think... I might be sick... I can't control my actions."

"It's okay to be sick; I'll take care of you. Come with me." He took Dorothy's hand. "I've brought Abigail and Langston back from Liberty City. Don't you want to see them?"

Hearing about the kids softened Dorothy's gaze, pulling her out from her stubborn stance.

"Where are they?"

"Bay Residence."

She paused. "Haven't you already—"

"I couldn't let go."

Everett felt like he had completely lost to Dorothy in this lifetime! Seeing her lean forward on the rooftop, as if about to jump, his only thought was that he couldn't retain even the last bit of his pride.

Even if she hurt him time and again, pushing him away, dragging him through the mud, he couldn't blame her.

He was willingly submissive.

Call him a fool or whatever, he was ready to beg her, as long as he could hold her warm body, that was enough.

...

Jonathan was furious the moment he heard about Dorothy's appeal.

"Dorothy is so ungrateful! If she's going to be like this, then I can't let her have an easy time!"

He immediately called Quincy's father, his tone no longer negotiable but almost commanding!

"I want your daughter to marry into the Lopez family! Otherwise, consider the consequences."

Minutes after hanging up, a call from an unknown number came through.

Jonathan frowned before answering.

"Jonathan, it's me, Quincy."

"Speak."

"I can marry Everett, but on one condition."

Jonathan was displeased. "You're not in a position to threaten me."

"It's not a threat." Quincy paused, "Just give me some time, and I'll make Mr. Lopez willingly marry me."

Chapter 909

"Oh? You've got a plan?" Jonathan knew all too well what his son was like. "You're not just stalling me, are you?"

"With my family's reputation, you shouldn't have such doubts."

Jonathan laughed, "You are always the visionary! Alright, I'll agree to your terms, but don't take too long. Jonathan's not the patient type."

"I've got it under control."

...

Dorothy didn't immediately return to the Bay Residence with Everett.

She was all too aware of her disheveled state. She feared that Abigail and Langston would be scared if they saw her like this.

Back in the hotel suite, Everett, with his penchant for cleanliness, couldn't help but frown deeply at the sight of beer cans littered all over the floor.

"You should get some sleep."

"And you?" Dorothy looked up at him.

"I'll clean up a bit."

"I can do it myself. You're hurt."

Everett stood still, repeating with a commanding tone, "Go to sleep."

"Okay."

He watched Dorothy curl up in bed, her small figure forming a lump under the covers, let out a shallow sigh, and then bent down to pick up the beer cans.

It was clear Dorothy was now relying heavily on alcohol. She never used to be like this! In fact, she used to hate drinking.

Because of his injuries, Everett's movements were slow. Thinking Dorothy had fallen asleep, he didn't call for hotel cleaning services. Of course, he also wanted to spend more time alone with Dorothy.

Who knew, the next second she might turn cold again, hurl harsh words, and ask him to leave.

A bitter smile tugged at Everett's lips.

To have come to this point in life, he wondered if he was too successful or too much of a failure.

After tidying up the room, it was already deep into the night.

He slowly approached the bed, about to reach out, when he saw Dorothy's clear eyes looking back at him.

"Can't sleep?"

She nodded. "Yeah...I have insomnia."

"Is that why you drank so much?"

After hesitating, she nodded in admission. "Yes."

"Tomorrow, let's go see a doctor, okay?" Everett sat by her bed, gently stroking her hair repeatedly. "If there's an illness, we treat it. But let's not think about ending everything, okay? Just stick with me like this, forever."

Dorothy's body relaxed from its initial stiffness, leaning against Everett's leg.

After a while, she spoke up.

"Everett, I appealed."

"I know." His lips moved slightly. "Ephraim told me."

After receiving the call, Everett rushed to Dorothy's hotel immediately. He couldn't afford to overlook any detail about Dorothy now, fearing one day he might receive news of her demise...

"You can withdraw your appeal now."

"No need, let it be."

"Everett, you withdraw it." Dorothy's tone hardened.

He paused for a second and then nodded. "As you wish."

"Dr. Quincy said I'm selfish." She stared at the ceiling, dimly lit by the neon lights outside, her gaze gradually becoming distant. "She wasn't wrong. I am selfish."

"No matter what kind of person you are, I still want to keep you by my side, so it doesn't matter."

"There are so many better options out there..."

"Don't you get it?" Everett's hand in her hair gentled. "It can only be you."

There were better options, but he wouldn't choose them, nor did he want to see them.

Chapter 910

Dorothy bit her lip, remaining silent as they leaned into each other, listening to the rhythm of their heartbeats.

She was surprisingly starting to feel drowsy.

Before drifting off, Dorothy mumbled, "When it comes to being stubborn, nobody beats you."

Everett just chuckled, his hand softly stroking her hair, her back.

To others, he might come off as tough and temperamental.

But with Dorothy, all that was left was tenderness.

As time ticked by, Everett maintained his posture, enduring the pain from his wounds and the ache in his back, all without moving, until he heard Dorothy's steady breathing.

He slowly stood up from the bed, stretching his stiff back, and walked out of the room.

"Seal off the hotel rooftop completely. No one gets in or out."

...

Karen found out about Everett's return through Jeffrey's phone.

"Why did you keep it from me?"

"I didn't! You never asked, so I didn't mention it." Jeffrey, hesitant to bring up the fact that Dorothy was considering a dramatic end with Amanda, naturally couldn't mention Everett's injury either, so he didn't even bring up Everett's return.

Keeping the baby was a big deal for Karen. Despite her casual dismissals, saying this and that were fine, she cared deeply! Now, she was treading carefully, avoiding going out unless absolutely necessary.

"Forget it, I don't really want to know about his business anyway," Karen waved it off. "I'm planning to find out the baby's gender at today's check-up. We could have found out last time!"

Jeffrey frowned slightly. "Why? It'd be more exciting to find out at birth."

"It's better to know early so we can prepare! Look at you, buying double of everything for both a boy and a girl. What a waste."

"It's not about the money." Jeffrey was skillfully peeling an apple for Karen, a task he'd mastered since the doctor recommended she eat more apples.

Karen rolled her eyes at him. "Fine, if you don't want to know, I'll just ask Dorothy to come with me! We'll keep it a secret from you, and you can wait until the birth to find out."

As she reached for her phone, Jeffrey quickly intervened, "Maybe you shouldn't reach out to Dorothy right now."

"Why not?"

"She's probably not in the best of moods, so let her have some space." Jeffrey, not the best liar, especially in spur-of-the-moment situations, almost immediately gave himself away.

"If Dorothy's feeling down, I should be there for her even more!" Karen's gaze fixed on him as she demanded, "Tell me, has something happened that I don't know about? Something to do with Dorothy?"

"No, nothing!"

"Did Everett come back because of Dorothy?" Karen frowned. "Is he trying to win her back?"

Jeffrey hesitated, unsure of where to start.

"Their relationship has always been on and off, who knows."

"Everett even sold Bay Residence! Wasn't that to cut ties with Dorothy completely? What's he doing back now after the verdict?"

"Ah, let's not meddle in their affairs. Here, have an apple."

Jeffrey handed over the apple, but Karen turned her face away. "I don't want it. I'm going to find Dorothy."

"Don't! She probably doesn't want to see anyone right now."

"Why not?" Karen, sensing Jeffrey was deliberately hiding something, was determined to find out. Dorothy's matters were of utmost importance to her.