

Midnight 951

Chapter 951

Now, Dorothy finally understood the truth of her lack of jealousy in the past. That was simply because Everett never let other women get close enough for her to feel threatened.

Had it been any other time, Everett would have catered to her every whim without question. But today, he hesitated with his fork in hand, pulling at his lips slightly, "Babe, the most important thing is getting you healthy."

"So, is she the only doctor that can help?"

"As of now, yes."

Dorothy opened her mouth to argue but swallowed her words instead, muttering a resigned, "Oh."

Everett glanced at her, his brows knitting together as if sensing her unrest, "What's up? Did Quincy say something to you?"

"No! She hasn't reached out. The last call was just to find you because she couldn't reach you."

"From now on, don't go meeting Quincy on a whim. If she calls, don't pick up. Just let me know, okay?"

Dorothy felt something was off with his instructions.

"Why? It seems like... you don't like me talking to Dr. Quincy?"

"Dorothy." Everett's tone suddenly became serious, "Do you trust me?"

After a moment's hesitation, she nodded, "Yes, I've said I would."

"Then listen to me. That's all I need you to do."

Despite having myriad of questions in her heart, Dorothy nodded in agreement. She had promised to learn to trust him, to rely on him, and she intended to keep that promise.

...

After breakfast, Dorothy planned to visit Karen and her newborn at the hospital.

Abigail and Langston wanted to come along, but she refused.

"Aunt Karen just had surgery and needs to recover. The baby needs quiet, too. We'll visit them when Aunt Karen is better, okay?"

Abigail seemed ready to argue, but Langston agreed first, so she reluctantly nodded in assent.

Once in the car, Everett spoke softly, "You could spend more time with Karen at the hospital. I've got some stuff to handle with Jeffrey."

"Okay." Dorothy had no clue what they were up to, and she didn't pry, assuming it was business-related.

Being a CEO, Everett couldn't possibly spend all his time by her side.

Arriving at the hospital, Dorothy knocked and waited for Karen's voice before entering.

"Dorothy!" Karen almost burst into tears upon seeing her, "The baby cried so much last night. I feel like breaking down!"

Dorothy chuckled, "Already overwhelmed by motherhood?"

"I thought she'd be as easy as Abigail and Langston, but she's so fussy, and I... I can't bear to hand her off to the nanny..."

Karen looked exhausted with the dark circles under her eyes.

Understanding the new mom's struggles, Dorothy approached and gently lifted the baby from the crib, "See? She's quite calm now."

"That's because she cried herself out last night!"

"Karen, how about I stay with you tonight? You need to rest properly after giving birth, or you'll never recover."

Karen sighed, "I know I should let the nanny take her so I can have some peace, but... the moment I close my eyes, I feel uneasy, like something precious is out of my hands. I just can't relax!"

Dorothy smiled, "Welcome to motherhood, huh?"

Chapter 952

"If only I'd known, I would've—"

"Would've what?" Dorothy cut her off, a playful edge to her tone as she cradled the baby closer.

Karen pouted and said, "If I'd known, I wouldn't have gotten involved with Jeffrey at all! I would've stayed single, child-free for my entire life!"

Dorothy sat by her side, held the baby, and laughed, "Look at your daughter! Can you really say that now?"

The infant in her arms was sleeping soundly, peaceful and undisturbed. Even though she was premature, with more wrinkles than a full-term baby and her skin so delicate and pale, her big eyes and pronounced nose were unmistakable.

As Karen gazed at her, tears suddenly sprang to her eyes, which startled Dorothy. "What's wrong? Are you feeling okay?"

Karen shook her head, wiping away her tears. "Dorothy... it feels like just yesterday we were clocking in at Prosperity Consortium, and now here we are, with kids of our own. It's like I'm living in a dream."

It seemed like only yesterday when they were navigating their careers, never imagining where life would take them. Dorothy hadn't expected to find herself with Everett, the CEO of Lopez Corporation, of all people. And she certainly hadn't anticipated any ties with the man who once pined after Heather Garcia.

"How time flies," Dorothy mused, understanding Karen's hormonal-driven emotional roller coaster.

She reached out an empty hand, offering a comforting pat on Karen's shoulder. "Even if it feels like a dream, it's a beautiful one. I have Abigail and Langston, and Everett has been by my side through thick and thin. And you, you have Jeffrey who adores you so much. We should count our blessings."

"Yeah..." Karen sighed, then looked at Dorothy with renewed focus. "Have you... have you made peace with it all?"

It seemed she was no longer as obsessed with the lawsuit as before.

Dorothy paused, then nodded. "Yeah, I haven't had the chance to discuss it with Everett yet. He's been swamped, and I've been thinking that maybe it's time to drop the lawsuit."

"Really? But then—"

"Dropping the lawsuit doesn't mean I've forgiven Everett's mother. But I don't want to hold back Everett any longer. I can't ever see eye to eye with Amanda."

Karen nodded in understanding. "I'd feel the same if I were you."

"You do?"

"Of course! I've told you that I would be with you all the time, Dorothy, whether you pursue it or let it go for Everett's sake. You've always lived for others; it's time to do something for yourself. Your mother, bless her soul, wouldn't blame you."

Dorothy felt the weight of her own expectations more than anyone else's.

"I'll talk to Everett once he's less busy," she decided, unsure of how he would react.

But one thing was certain; he wouldn't be overjoyed. He might even feel more indebted to her.

...

Jonathan Lopez had been trying to reach Quincy with no luck, and he had a sinking feeling something had gone awry. But he hesitated to reach out to his son for details, fearing whatever mess Quincy had gotten into might drag him down too.

Eventually, though, he knew his son would come to him.

"Did you orchestrate Quincy's scheme?" Everett's icy voice came through the phone the moment Jonathan answered.

Their relationship was nothing like that of a father and son anymore. The two were more like rivals in a cutthroat business world.

"What scheme?" Jonathan retorted, his patience thinning. "I'm in the dark about whatever Quincy did! Everett, remember this — I am your father. Aside from wanting to protect your mother this time, when have I ever done anything to hurt you?"

Chapter 953

Everett was the only heir to the Lopez legacy, and he was known for being soft-spoken, never uttering a harsh word. How then, for Dorothy's sake, had things between father and son soured to this extent?

"You claim not to hurt me, but hurting Dorothy is out of the question too."

"That's even more ludicrous! Do you think I couldn't have dealt with Dorothy if I wanted to? Do I need Quincy to lay a finger on her?" Jonathan's voice rose. "Everett, think about it. If I wanted to

target Dorothy, I've had plenty of chances. I didn't do anything to her because I didn't want to escalate things with you!"

"It's always been you pushing Quincy into the Lopez family."

"Don't I have the right to choose a daughter-in-law for myself? Sure, the Lopez Corporation has flourished with you on board, but who laid its foundations? Who introduced you to all your contacts and networks? Me! I don't think Dorothy is a good match for the Lopez family. It is my right to choose a suitable partner for the family!"

Isn't this how it works in high society? Everyone is looking for a match that benefits both families!

He was just planning for his son's future. What was wrong with that?

"Business matters can be negotiated, but marrying Dorothy is non-negotiable." Everett had decided this when he first fell in love. And once decided, there was no turning back.

"I want Quincy to marry you, that's all because it would make Dorothy drop the lawsuit and spare your mother! Everett, you're smart enough to see that!"

"I don't want to hear those. Now that Quincy has targeted Dorothy; this is all on you."

If he hadn't insisted on Quincy joining the Lopez family, she wouldn't have been involved in the first place!

Not to mention her now taking action against Dorothy.

"What did Quincy do to Dorothy?" Jonathan was genuinely in the dark! He was still waiting for some good news from Quincy's end, but instead of a promised update in three days, there was radio silence.

"You really don't know?"

Now Everett doubted everyone!

"Of course, I don't! But go on, think what you will."

"She poisoned Dorothy, trying to use that as leverage against me."

Jonathan was taken aback, his heart sinking, "You mean, Quincy wants to use Dorothy as a mean to control you in the future?"

"Why else would she have any reason to poison Dorothy?"

Jonathan immediately said, "This can't stand! We can't let this girl chokehold the Lopez family! What poison did she use? Isn't there any other way to cure it?"

He knew how significant Dorothy was in his son's heart. If Quincy controlled Dorothy, it indirectly meant controlling Everett!

What would happen next? The Lopez family would be dancing to Quincy's tune!

"I've had Jeffrey contact doctors for tests and antidotes, but there's no better solution right now."

"Where's Quincy? I'll confront her!"

Everett scoffed, "She won't give you the antidote."

Jonathan fell silent.

"Sometimes, I really don't understand what you and mom are playing at. You brought a perfectly good family to this state; are you satisfied now?"

Jonathan was about to respond when the call was abruptly ended. Staring at the dark screen of his phone, he finally slammed his fist onto the table in frustration.

"Who would enjoy seeing their family torn apart!"

After a moment of calm, Jonathan grabbed his blazer. No, even if he didn't care for Dorothy personally, he couldn't let the entire Lopez family fall prey to Quincy's scheming.

Chapter 954

Karen, the rookie mom, was still all thumbs despite having had a trial run with Abigail and Langston. Luckily, having Dorothy around made her postpartum anxiety a bit more bearable.

When Everett and Jeffrey got back, Dorothy was cradling the baby, and Karen had just dozed off from sheer exhaustion.

"How come you didn't get a nanny? You should be taking it easy." Everett said, his concern for his lady evident as he approached.

Dorothy chuckled, "The little one likes me, and besides, Karen wouldn't feel at ease handing her off to a stranger."

"I'll hold him!" Jeffrey, not wanting to disturb Karen's sleep, stepped forward and reached out to Dorothy.

She carefully handed the baby over to Jeffrey, trying not to laugh at his awkwardness.

Jeffrey indeed looked lost. Fighting and brawling were one thing, but holding such a tender newborn was a whole different ball game!

"Everything sorted on your end?" Dorothy asked, more out of politeness than anything. But she caught a fleeting look of evasion in Jeffrey's eyes as he glanced at Everett.

The latter spoke softly, "Yeah, let's head back."

As Dorothy stood up, she couldn't help but shoot a curious glance at Jeffrey, ultimately swallowing her questions.

"Alright then."

The ride back was oddly silent. Dorothy didn't speak, and Everett didn't make the first move either.

It was only as they neared Eldorria City's central district that he finally broke the silence, "Dorothy, I regret not being there for Abigail and Langston when they were born."

Seeing Jeffrey's cautious way with the baby today had struck a chord in him.

"Hey, they're with you every day now. That's not such a big deal." Dorothy reassured him with a smile. "Honestly, I never expected them to warm up to you so quickly, especially Langston!"

Langston thought a lot. With Dorothy being away so often, his view of a father figure was skewed, almost to the point of disdain. Dorothy had been worried it might cause trouble or loss for Everett,

but Everett had managed to win his son over in no time! Father and son were now as tight as could be, united in everything.

"It's beyond my wildest dreams that you'd have two kids for me."

When he first learned about the kids, the answer was right there before him. It wasn't that he couldn't guess, but rather... he dared not believe!

That revelation was just too unexpected and too joyful!

"Yeah... I never saw it coming either." At that time, Dorothy truly hadn't wanted the children. She thought of cutting ties with the Lopez family completely, so when the evidence finally surfaced, there would be no further entanglements.

Everett, driving, suddenly reached out and took her hand, "Dorothy?"

"Hmm?" She looked over at him.

"After you've recovered... could we maybe have another child?" Everett asked, then quickly added as if afraid, "I'm just saying. Please don't stress over it. If you don't want to, just tell me! I don't absolutely need it."

He just wanted to make up for lost time. He wanted to be like Jeffrey, receiving directly from the doctor's hands his own child - his and Dorothy's child.

Seeing his eager explanation, Dorothy couldn't help but laugh, "You don't have to go on about it. I'm not so opposed to the idea of having kids. Seeing how you care for Abigail and Langston, I know you're a good dad. You're nothing like Maxton Sanchez."

Though she, like her mother, chose to keep the children, Everett's approach was completely different from Maxton's.

Chapter 955

Everett, the CEO of Lopez Corporation, was swamped with work, yet he never failed to carve out time for his kids, putting Abigail and Langston first. Compared to Maxton, or literally most men for that matter, Everett was doing an outstanding job as a father.

To outsiders, it seemed like taking care of kids was nothing too challenging. But only those who'd been through it could understand the vast difference between life with and without children.

For instance, when a child caught a cold or fever, it demanded all-night vigils which would consume all of an adult's energy.

Yet, Everett never delegated the care of his children. He did everything he could himself. Seeing how close Abigail and Langston were to him spoke volumes about his dedication.

"So, you're... agreeing?" Everett wanted to make sure he hadn't misunderstood.

Dorothy nodded, "Yes, I'm willing to. But we should ask Abigail and Langston what they think. They're old enough to have a say."

"They're fine with it!" Everett said immediately, "I've asked."

Dorothy couldn't help but smile at his eagerness. It seemed he had laid the groundwork well, just waiting for her to dive in.

"If they had any objections, I wouldn't insist! Really, I should be content having Abigail and Langston... It's just that..."

Before Everett could finish, Dorothy took his hand in reassurance.

"Everett, you've done so much for us three already, truly."

"It's not enough, not nearly." He wanted to give them his all.

Dorothy looked up and gently touched his hair, "Please give me a chance to contribute too. Don't do everything yourself."

"You don't need to prove anything. Just don't push me away." He dared not ask for more.

Dorothy sighed softly, "Are you being stubborn? You have so many easier paths to choose from, yet you insist on staying on this one with me, even if it means hitting a wall."

Everett gave a wry smile, "I've never seen those as real choices. Without you, they don't count."

She laughed, "That's what they call being stubborn."

"Let's call it devotion." Everett corrected.

"Alright, devotion it is."

...

Karen didn't sleep long after Dorothy and the others left. She woke up within half an hour.

"Dorothy..." She called out instinctively, then saw Jeffrey sitting by the bed.

"Where's Dorothy?"

"They've left." Jeffrey put the baby back in the crib and approached, "Honey, are you feeling alright? I've been worried about you all day but didn't want to disturb your sleep by calling."

Karen was still recovering from the childbirth. She needed frequent rests.

"You're busy, please don't worry about me! The company's business should be more important." Anything Everett asks him to handle, Karen assumed it was business-related.

Jeffrey paused but didn't explain. The matter involved Dorothy, and he feared upsetting Karen, which might destabilize her mood.

Then, Jeffrey's phone rang. He got up to answer, but Karen's gaze stopped him, "Why? Just answer it here. Are you afraid of me listening?"

"Of course not! What would I have to hide?" Jeffrey prayed the call wasn't about Dorothy.

But as he checked the caller ID, he found out it was from his man assigned to keep Quincy in check.

"Mr. Turner, this woman is insisting on leaving. What should we do?"

Chapter 956

Woman.

That word alone set off alarms.

Karen immediately turned to Jeffrey, "Huh?"

"Just, just wait a sec! Keep her in check, and I'll call you back!" He hung up abruptly, then gripped his wife's arm, "Karen, let me explain!"

"Explain what? First, tell me, who's this woman you're talking about!"

Jeffrey hesitated, only to hear Karen continue, "Jeffrey, if you dare to lie to me today, it's over between us! And forget about seeing our daughter ever again!"

"I'm not lying! It's... it's Quincy..."

At this point, Jeffrey had no choice but to tell the truth. He was genuinely afraid Karen would leave him for good! He knew that she was capable of that.

"Quincy?" The name felt unfamiliar to Karen, "Wait... is that the doctor from our time in Swevia Country?"

Jeffrey nodded, "Yeah... that's her..."

"And why are you keeping her around? What's going on between you two?"

"Hand on heart, Karen, there's absolutely nothing between Quincy and me!" Jeffrey swore, raising his hand, "You're the only one for me!"

Karen glared at him, "Don't think you can smooth talk your way out of this. Get to the point."

"It's about Everett."

At the mention of Everett, Karen's expression turned even more guarded and shocked, "Quincy and Everett got involved?!"

She remembered Dorothy telling her about the Lopez family arranging for Quincy to marry Everett!

"No! Oh gosh, it's complicated. Everett asked me not to say anything, so please just let it be." Jeffrey's handsome face crumpled in distress.

Speaking out might lead to uncontrollable consequences. Keeping silent, though, made it look like he had something going on with Quincy!

"Then tell me, does this involve Dorothy?" Karen wasn't interested in Everett's affairs, but now that he was with her best friend, she felt obliged to keep an eye out!

Jeffrey was stumped by the question and didn't know how to respond.

Seeing his hesitation, Karen's tone became stern, as if interrogating a criminal, "Tell me the truth, is Quincy... does she have something with Everett? Did Everett betray Dorothy?"

Jeffrey was so startled by the accusation that he nearly jumped. "How could that be?! Everett would die for Dorothy! How could he ever betray her?"

"Then explain, what's going on? You need to lay it all out clearly!" Karen sat on the edge of the bed, determined not to end the conversation until everything was clarified.

Jeffrey licked his now dry lips and finally shrugged in defeat. "It's Dorothy. She got sick, you see? Then Everett wanted Quincy to treat her, but Quincy refused, so we... we took some measures."

He was half-truthing, mainly worried that revealing the poisoning to Karen would only make her worry endlessly.

"Dorothy's sick? What kind of illness?" Karen had only noticed her friend seemed a bit depressed but was unaware of any illness.

They were all keeping it from Karen, who was pregnant.

Jeffrey tilted his head, pondering how to phrase it, "A rather rare illness."

"Quincy's the only one who can treat it?"

"Seems like it, for now. She's the only known cure."

As soon as Jeffrey finished, Karen slammed the table, "Then you and Everett better make sure Quincy cures Dorothy! By any means necessary!"

Chapter 957

The conversation took a sharp turn, leaving Jeffrey struggling to keep up.

"Huh?"

"What do you mean by 'huh'? Hurry up, go find Quincy, and sort this out! We need her to cure Dorothy!"

Karen stood up abruptly and pushed Jeffrey out of the room, "If anything happens to Dorothy, it's on you! I'll never forgive you!"

"But I just got back! I haven't even spent any time with my daughter yet!" Jeffrey protested with a look of despair.

She waved dismissively, "Your daughter's right here; she's not going anywhere. Get Quincy on board, and you can spend all day, every day, playing daddy!"

Bang!

Before Jeffrey could respond, the door slammed shut in his face.

"Ah, man—"

He opened his mouth to protest but instead ran his fingers through his hair in frustration.

Pulling out his phone, he dialed a number, "Tell them, do whatever with her, just don't kill her!"

After hanging up, Jeffrey quickly added another instruction.

"And don't mess up her mind! We don't want her turning into a vegetable, clueless about everything!"

"And keep her hands safe! We need them for the antidote!"

"Forget it, I'll handle it myself. Don't touch her until I get there."

...

Upon her return to Bay Residence, Dorothy first spent some time playing with Abigail and Langston.

She felt guilty towards them.

In fact, she felt guilty towards everyone.

As she prepared herself to discuss her decision on withdrawing the lawsuit with Everett, she headed towards the living room. There, she found Everett by the window, deeply engrossed in a phone call, his brow furrowed with concern over some vexing issue.

Dorothy paused, deciding not to interrupt.

He had enough on his plate, and her issue wasn't urgent. It could wait.

After a refreshing shower, she changed into her loungewear and thought it would be the perfect time to talk with Everett when he came to bed.

But soon after, Everett entered the bedroom, clearly not ready to rest.

"Dorothy, I've got something to take care of and need to step out for a bit."

"Hmm?" She sat up, concerned, "Something at the office? Then go ahead, don't worry about me."

Everett's lips twitched, as if he wanted to say more. But he simply nodded.

"I'm not sure when I'll be back. If you're tired, just go to sleep; don't wait up."

"Okay!" Dorothy nodded obediently, wanting him to focus on his matters without worry. She even got out of bed to straighten his jacket for him, "Don't overwork yourself, though. Work never ends, but you only have one body."

Everett looked down at her delicate, pale hands fussing over his clothes and cracked a smile, "You care about me."

"Of course, I do!"

"Alright, I'll try to come back early."

"Okay."

Dorothy insisted on walking him to the door, and Everett immediately bent down to hand her slippers, making sure she wore them.

"No walking barefoot."

"I was just in a rush to see you off!"

"That's no excuse. You don't have to see me off, but you must wear slippers."

Seeing him sternly lecturing her, Dorothy couldn't help but chuckle, "Okay, okay, I get it!"

Finally, after sending off this dear man, she returned to the bedroom. But tossing and turning, sleep eluded her.

After some thought, Dorothy picked up her phone and found Quincy's WhatsApp contact.

"Dr. Quincy, if Everett has upset you in any way, please be patient with him. He's just anxious about my condition, not trying to make things difficult for you on purpose. I apologize on his behalf."

Chapter 958

After a while with no reply from the other side, Dorothy checked her phone multiple times, contemplating what she'd told Everett upon his return: asking for help with a medical issue meant he couldn't afford to be too forceful in his approach.

Even if Quincy wouldn't dare to provoke the Lopez family, pushing too hard was still not an option. She knew Everett all too well.

The concept of chivalry was foreign to him. Apart from her, any woman who as much as brushed against him would send him reeling.

Dorothy couldn't pinpoint when she dozed off. Initially, she was perched on the couch, flipping through a finance magazine. Feeling drowsy, she had a glass of ice water and soon found her eyes nearly closing and falling asleep.

In a daze, time seemed irrelevant until she felt herself being lifted.

The familiar scent that was distinctly Everett's assured her of his presence without needing to open her eyes.

She reached out, circling her arms around his neck.

"I thought I told you not to wait up for me?" he said.

"Hmm... You always wait for me. I wanted to try waiting for you for a change."

After her words, Dorothy heard him sigh softly.

"I can never seem to stay mad at you."

With long strides, Everett carried her towards the bedroom.

Resting against his chest, Dorothy felt the warmth of his body, and a comforting heat spread through her.

"Everett."

"Yes?"

"I want to marry you."

He stiffened, suddenly pausing mid-step.

Dorothy opened her eyes to look at him, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing. It's just... unexpected."

"I was starting to think you didn't want to marry me," Dorothy said, unaware of any underlying tension. She snuggled closer after smiling, "I want to marry you. Let's drop the lawsuit."

He didn't say a word.

"It's not because of you!" Dorothy rushed to clarify, worried Everett might feel burdened. "After this illness, I realized I don't have the energy to fight over right or wrong. I want to spend my time on those who love me and whom I love."

Dorothy didn't wait until he replied, but she felt his grip tighten.

“Did I... rush into this?” she asked softly, arms still around his neck. “Just tell me what you’re thinking, okay? I’m not good at reading people, and I don’t want us to misinterpret each other. So just tell me, okay?”

Everett nodded, “Don’t drop the lawsuit. You’ve pushed so hard to get it this far, and I don’t want my presence to...”

“I told you that it’s not because of you! And definitely not because of any deal your father offered. Marrying you is about us, not the Lopez family.” Dorothy paused, then lowered her voice, “Your parents... they’ve crossed a line. I can’t accept them as my in-laws, but that doesn’t mean I can ignore what happened. Marrying me might put you in the middle.”

She was tired of fighting but couldn’t bring herself to treat Amanda as her family. That chasm would never close, not truly.

“Dorothy, focus on getting better for now. We can take our time with... the marriage,” Everett gently laid her on the bed.

But Dorothy didn’t let go, instead tightening her grip around his neck.

“Everett, how can you...”

Chapter 959

It was nothing like she had expected!

His explanations were clearly evasive, and that sent Dorothy's heart racing.

She thought all she had to do was bring it up, and Everett would be thrilled, nodding in agreement without hesitation! She even fantasized he'd be so eager that he'd bring her to the city hall the very next day!

Compared to her daydreams, his actual response was worlds apart.

"When we got hitched last time, Dorothy, it was all in a rush, and I don't want to live with regrets. You're not in the best of health right now, so you need to recuperate. Once you're better, I'll get cracking on planning our wedding, okay?"

"Is it really just because I'm not well?" she pressed.

"What else do you think it could be?"

Dorothy pursed her lips, silently telling herself to trust him.

"It's just... I was worried you might've changed your mind, that you didn't want to marry me after all." She smiled, pulled him closer, and planted a kiss on the corner of his mouth.

Everett wrapped his arms around her, deepening the kiss, "Remember, Dorothy, you're the only woman I, Everett, want to marry. That was true in the past, it's true now, and it'll be true forever."

...

Jeffrey had Quincy go without food for three days.

Since neither scolding nor shouting worked, starvation seemed the only option.

But even after Quincy fainted and was rushed to the hospital, she still wouldn't hand over the antidote!

This time, she really had Everett's fate in her hands.

And she won the gamble.

"Quincy, here's your phone." Kevin personally delivered her luggage to the hospital.

"Thanks." Quincy, now a bit better after receiving IV fluids, took her phone with a cold expression.

The phone had turned off due to a dead battery.

"Mr. Lopez said he hoped you remember our agreement. Otherwise... even if you're free to roam Eldorria City for now, it'd be easy for him to find you if he wishes."

Quincy managed a weak smile, her lips pale, "Don't worry, I'm not running. With Dorothy as my shield, why would I? But tell Mr. Lopez, he has one month. Don't let the deadline pass, or Ms. Sanchez might suffer a relapse of her condition."

Kevin clenched his fist in silence but eventually turned away and left the hospital room without a word.

Once Quincy had her phone charged and turned on, her father's call came through immediately.

"So you are in Eldorria City?! Why has your phone been off?!" he snapped.

She could hardly detect any concern in his voice.

"It died." Quincy's reply was a light one.

"I'm already in Eldorria City now. Where are you? I'll come to you."

After she gave him the hospital's name, she hung up. Her father's purpose in Eldorria City was clear, no guessing needed. It must have been Jonathan pressuring him in business matters!

Otherwise he couldn't possibly be here just because he was concerned about his daughter's safety, right?

Ronin arrived quickly, his steps heavy as if laden with anger. He stormed in, heading straight for Quincy on the bed.

"SMACK—"

A loud slap just landed on Quincy's face like that.

Instantly, a handprint, bright red and clearly defined, appeared on her cheek.

"You had to cross the Lopez family? Are you trying to drag our whole family to our downfall?!"

After his outburst, Ronin, still fuming, raised his hand to strike again but noticed the IV needle in Quincy's hand.

"Don't think you can fake being sick and hide in this hospital! Get in touch with Jonathan right now and tell him our family won't break our promise. We'll marry you off to Everett as agreed!"

Lying in her hospital bed, Quincy looked up at her biological father with a mix of emotions.

Suddenly, she couldn't help but smile.

"Dad, have I ever made you wonder if I'm really your daughter?"

"Cut the nonsense! Do you know that the Lopez family have withdrawn their funding because of your disappearance? Without that money to fill up this hole, decades of my hard work will go down the drain!" Ronin was so agitated that he paced the room. "And after all, haven't you already agreed? Didn't we have an understanding? Once you've established yourself within the Lopez family, you can do whatever you want. I just beg you to do one thing for the benefit of our family!"

Ronin was completely blindsided when he received a call from Jonathan. After all, the fate of their family was tightly gripped in Jonathan's hands.

"One thing? You've ruined my life!" Quincy couldn't understand how her parents could so casually decide her fate in a family alliance via marriage.

This was about marriage, a commitment for life!

"What have I ruined? Is marrying into the Lopez family beneath you?" he asked.

"I have no feelings for Everett!"

Ronin almost laughed in frustration, "Why do you need feelings? Money and power are what truly matter in the world. What's the use of feelings? When you're down and out, love is nothing but a joke!"

"That's only what you believe," Quincy pulled her lips. "You want to give the whole family away to your son, I don't mind. I never wanted anything from our family's fortune, but you're determined to sabotage my chance at happiness!"

"Quincy!" Ronin's voice was stern. "Being born and raised in our family, don't you think you've spent a dime of its money? You think you're above it all and think you are chasing some fairy tale of love? Let me tell you, that's utterly impossible! If only you hadn't been born into privilege, if only you hadn't enjoyed the life of a lady in our family!"

Raising a child to become a doctor was so expensive. From university tuition to independent research labs and hiring renowned medical mentors... It's not something an average family could afford!

Ronin had thought that if the family fortune couldn't go to his daughter, at least she could choose her own career path as long as it didn't threaten his son's inheritance.

"You could've just not had me. A son would have been enough." Quincy knew what her father was about to say. He had used the same reasoning before.

"Quick, go make the call to Jonathan. If the funding is pulled, then our family is really finished!" Ronin had no patience for argument now; the calls demanding money were nearly bombarding his phone.

"I'll make the call, but on one condition." Quincy closed her eyes, knowing she was giving her father one last chance he hadn't cherished.

It didn't matter. He had never truly cared for his daughter.

"What's your condition?" Ronin asked impulsively.

"After the Lopez family funds ours this time, I will have nothing to do with our family anymore. I've repaid every penny you've ever spent on me!"

"Your life was given by your mother and me. How can you repay that?" Ronin, almost reflexively, tried to negotiate.

After all, if his daughter truly married into the Lopez family, that... that would be immensely beneficial in the future.