

## Midnight 981

### Chapter 981

"I just don't want folks thinking I got my job at Lopez Corp riding on your coattails," Dorothy said, then paused and chuckled to herself.

Everett raised an eyebrow, "What's so funny?" "It just hit me... I guess I kind of did get this job because of you." Otherwise, she'd have to slog it out at Prosperity Consortium for a decade or so before even dreaming of getting a transfer to the headquarters, right? "It was my call to bring you into the Lopez Corp headquarters for training, but staying on? That's all you, your merit," Everett assured her.

He had always recognized Dorothy's work ethic. After all, there's no room for mere decoration at Lopez Corp! Being able to work harmoniously with someone as notoriously hard-driving as Kevin, learning heaps from him, was a testament to Dorothy's dedication and effort.

"Mr. Lopez, are you praising me?" Dorothy asked, a playful note in her voice.

Everett gave her an affectionate smile, "Yes." Dorothy gave him a formal nod, "Thank you for the compliment, Mr. Lopez." "Alright, Abigail and Langston will be out of school soon! I promised them both their mom and dad would pick them up today." "Wait, you didn't tell me! I need to delegate stasks quickly then head out," Dorothy said, rushing towards her office.

Everett followed, a smirk playing on his lips. He thought, if life could always be this simple, this good.

A few steps later, Everett's phone rang.

Glancing down, he saw it was a call from his father, Jonathan.

He didn't answer, nor did he hang up. Just muted it.

After the call eventually dropped, a text cthrough.

[Everett, your mom's been hospitalized! It's serious, she woke up briefly and asked to see you!] Everett's brow furrowed, sensing, perhaps for the first time, that his father might not be lying. Normally, he and Amanda would pull this kind of stunt to lure Everett back home. He shouldn't believe it.

After wrapping up her work, Dorothy hurriedly grabbed her bag and joined Everett to leave the office.

In the car, she glanced at Everett driving and hesitated before speaking up, her expression troubled.

He noticed immediately and turned his handsface towards her at a red light, "What's on your mind?" "Yeah," Dorothy nodded.

"Just say it. No need to overthink around me." He didn't want Dorothy to feel like she had to tread lightly around him.

Dorothy bit her lip, "It's about the lawsuit." It was a sensitive topic between them, the root of many issues, so Dorothy hesitated to bring it up especially during such a tender moment. et "The court accepted the appeal, Ephraim will fill you in on the details. As for my mother... she seems to be in the hospital, so she hasn't been taken back into custody," Everett laid out all the updates in one go.

Dorothy blinked, her gaze dropping, "I told you, I'm dropping the appeal, dropping the lawsuit." Everett's hands tightened on the steering wheel, and after a moment, he exhaled deeply.

"If this lawsuit ends now with you dropping charges, making it seem like you're compromising for me, how can I ever look you in the eye again?" "Sw"Everett, I told you it's not because of you-" et "Wrongdoing deserves to be punished by the law," Everett said sternly. "Your mother was wronged. Seeking justice for her is your right."

Chapter 982

Dorothy's brow furrowed slightly, a sign that she was on the verge of saying something more, but Everett gently patted the back of her hand in a comforting gesture.

"You've sacrificed so much to get to where you are today, I can't let you give it all up because of me," he said, his voice laced with empathy and concern.

The thought of Dorothy, pregnant and receiving the devastating news of her mother's passing, still haunted Everett.

He couldn't bear to think of her shattering at that moment.

Nor could he bear the thought of her enduring a difficult childbirth, working tirelessly to provide for her children while also gathering evidence to seek justice for her mother.

Everett couldn't convince himself to let nearly six years of Dorothy's relentless efforts dissipate into nothing just because she wanted to be with him-especially since the defendant in question was his own mother.

"Everett, I chose this," Dorothy assured him, her voice steady. "You're not forcing into anything." He offered her a small smile, "I love butterflies, but I wouldn't trap one. Instead, I'd plant the flowers they love and wait for them to cto me, to choose to stay by my side. Dorothy, I want you to always feel free." Rather than feeling as if she had to give up on things she wasn't ready to let go of, just for his sake.

Dorothy looked down, her eyes slowly filling with tears. She had once thought her life meaningless, believing that without her, Everett would merely be saddened for a few days before finding someone more suitable.

But hearing his words today, Dorothy felt a deep sense of shame. It was an overwhelming feeling of unworthiness. "You're so stubborn," she muttered.

Everett gently ruffled her hair, "I prefer to call it devoted." The car filled with noise as they picked up Abigail and Langston from school.

"Mommy! A big brother wrote a note today!" Abigail exclaimed, pulling a crumpled piece of paper from her backpack and handing it to Dorothy. "He even said I'm pretty and liked my eyes!" Before Dorothy could even glance at the note, Langston breezed in with a cooler tone, "He's the sage as you, not even older than us by a birthday. He's not your 'big brother,' he's a 'little brother'!" "I can still call him big brother!" Abigail rarely retorted against Langston, but this time, she wolclearly upset by her brother's diminishment of her "big brother." "If you call him big brother, doesn't that makeyounger than him too? Abigail Sanchez! We share the sbirthday!" "Okay, okay, whether it's a big et brother of a little brother, it doesn't matter. Let's not fight," Dorothy interjected, hoping to quell the sibling dispute. "SwShe looked down at the note in her hand.

It read, in crooked handwriting: I love you.

Langston, unable to resist, peeked over and snorted, "So young and already throwing around 'I love you's. Kids are so naive!" He seemed to forget his earlier claim of sharing the sbirthday as Abigail.

"Hmph!" Abigail pouted, ignoring him and carefully folding the note back up.

Langston pointed at his sister, turning to Dorothy, "Isn't she too young for love? Mom, aren't you going to say something?" Dorothy hadn't anticipated navigating these parenting waters so soon.

Everett, driving, glanced at them through the rear-view mirror before softly asking Abigail, "Do you like this boy?" Abigail nodded, "I do!" "Then talk to him more, as long as it makes you happy, that's what matters." "Okay!" Abigail beamed, feeling validated by her father's approval, but Langston sulked. After all, his little sister, who usually shadowed him, was now showing interest in another boy. "Speaking of which," Dorothy suddenly remembered, "maybe it's tto rethink Abigail and Langston's names."

### Chapter 983

"Got any nchanges in mind yet?" Everett's voice was always gentle and warm when he spoke to Dorothy.

"I was just spitballing with Abigail and Langston's nicknames back then, now that they're growing up, it's tfor a change! I've named them once, this time, it's your turn." "The one who went through hell to bring them into this world was you. You're the only one who has the right to nthem." Dorothy sighed, "Since when are there so many rules?" "I want you to decide." Since he had already declined twice, Dorothy didn't push it further. She thought about it for a moment, then smiled, "Alright then." "See, as long as you're okay with it," Everett had no objections, "And they can keep the Sanchez surnif you want, don't worry about anything else." The Lopez clan, he could handle. To be precise, he didn't need to explain anything to his parents. A change is a change.

"Let's not stick with Sanchez," Dorothy shook her head, "It's less common for kids to take their mother's surname. Usually, they follow their father's! I don't want Abigail and Langston to have to explain this stuff later on. Let's go by the book." Everett turned and gave her an indulgent smile, "Alright, your wish is my command." She leaned her head against the car window, racking her brain.

"How about Aurora Lopez for Abigail?" "That works." Everett nodded, and Abigail immediately chimed in, "I love it! Mommy, I wanna be Aurora!" Dorothy then turned her gaze to Langston.

Knowing Langston wasn't as easy to persuade as Abigail, she directly said, "How about you pick a nfor yourself?" "I don't know what I want to be called, but I know what I don't want to be called." Dorothy sent a pleading look towards Everett. He raised his eyebrows and spoke softly, "Helabout Miles Lopez?" S "Why didn't I think of that?" Dorothy clapped her hands excitedly, seeking approval from her son.

Langston furrowed his brows, pondered for a moment, and finally nodded.

"I'm good with that." "Then it's settled! I'm going to text Karen right away, she'll be thrilled." Dorothy didn't waste a moment, pulling out her phone to chat with Karen.

Everett watched her, his lips curving into a smile. He adored this version of Dorothy. Happy and vibrant.

Upon seeing Dorothy's text, Karen immediately grabbed her phone to find Jeffrey.

He was wandering around the nursery with their daughter in his arms, mumbling something under his breath.

Seeing his wife approach, Jeffrey squinted with a smile, "You won't let it, my daughter just called dy!" SW "Have you lost your mind?" Karen glared at him, "Look at what you've done." Jeffrey, thinking he was in trouble again, quickly put down their daughter and took the phone.

"Abigail and Langston are now Aurora and Miles?" "Isn't this what you wanted? Pretending our Felicity is a real sibling to Aurora and Miles." Despite Karen's irritation, Jeffrey was Felled. "How great is this! C suddenly has an older el and sister!" "Great my foot! I was hoping Langston would be my son-in-law one day!"

Chapter 984

Jeffrey had little faith in the whole affair, a stark contrast to Karen's attitude.

"Think about it, Langston comes from an impressive background, has looks, wealth - everything. The girls trailing behind him could form a line. And you're okay with handing over your daughter to him?" "But there's a whole bunch of women who'd kill to be with Everett, enough to circle the globe three times, but he's still dead set on Dorothy, ain't he?" Jeffrey stomped his foot in frustration. "Everett's an exception! How many guys do you know like him?" Karen scoffed, "Don't think I don't know what's really bugging you. It's that curse Arthur mentioned, right? But think about it, Langston grew up in a loving home. He's bound to be faithful. Even if we're talking genetics, Dorothy and Everett are both loyal to the core." She was more worried her daughter would take after her dad's flirtatious ways and end up hurting Langston.

"My parents were lovebirds too, always had a solid relationship, and yet here I am—" Jeffrey caught himself before he could finish, suddenly realizing where the conversation was heading.

"Knowing yourself, that's what counts," Karen quipped.

"Babe...I'm sorry..." Karen waved him off, "Let it be. Whatever happens when they grow up, who knows? Maybe Langston won't even fancy our daughter. I read somewhere that childhood friends rarely end up together 'cause the spark just isn't there." All she wanted was for her daughter to end up with Langston, then she and Dorothy would truly be family. And if they had kids, they'd be bound by blood.

"That would be for the best..." Better not to spark with anyone! Jeffrey had only recently started to recover, haunted by visions of Arthur's words in the days following his daughter's birth.

Though it might seem superstitious, he couldn't entirely dismiss it.

"You want our daughter to end up alone?" Karen frowned, displeased.

"I know she'll have her romantic escapades, but I'd rather she pick someone less stellar than Langston. Someone average, with a background that doesn't outshine mine," Jeffrey said, his laugh dark and menacing. "That way, if he ever dares to hurt my girl, he'll answer to me!" Karen felt sorry for their daughter. Blessed with such a protective, if not slightly controlling, father.

As Everett's car rolled up to Bay Residence, his phone buzzed again.

He didn't pick up or even glance at it. When Corang a second time, Dorothy phone's ringing..."ngs 't help but mention, "Your to englisht belongs SW "Yeah." Everett nodded but made no move to answer it.

Dorothy hesitated, then offered softly, Let's inconvenient to answer in front of me, I can take the kids inside. You can take the call." It could be important business, after all.

"No, I just don't wanna answer it." Everett stepped out, heading to the foyer to change his shoes.

Dorothy, leading Abigail and Langston, followed him inside.

"Go to your rooms and start on your homework." "Okay, Mommy!" Abigail chirped, sprinting off in a good mood.

Langston nodded and followed.

Only then did Dorothy take a moment to study Everett. Something was off in his expression.

Privacy

Chapter 985

It was rare for Everett to seem so restless. His brows were furrowed in worry, yet he made every effort to appear as if nothing was amiss.

Dorothy knew that the reason for his turmoil was undoubtedly herself. So, she stepped forward and looked up at him.

Everett instinctively averted his gaze. "What's up?" "Look at me," Dorothy insisted, catching his eye again. "Tell me, what's wrong?" He slightly furrowed his brow, "It's nothing." "Be honest! Everett, do you really wantto start jumping to conclusions? You said you'd teachhow to trust you, but now you won't tellanything. Is this what you wanted to teach me?" While she spoke, his phone rang again.

Everett didn't move, just pressed his lips together.

"Givethe phone," Dorothy said, extending her hand with an unusual firmness.

"I don't want to answer it." "Hand it over." She repeated.

Everett, with a heavy brow, took out his phone and handed it to Dorothy.

It was a call from Jonathan.

"Your dad's been calling you so many times, must be something important. Take it," Dorothy handed it back, "If it's something I shouldn't hear, I'll go to the bedroom." She turned to leave, clearly trying to give him space.

Everett caught her wrist as she turned, "There's nothing you can't hear. It's my mom, he said she's gotten seriously ill and is in the hospital again, wantsto cover." "Then why aren't you already on your way?" Dorothy asked instinctively.

Then she realized where Everett's dilemma lay! "Everett, that's your mom! Even if she and I were sworn enemies, she's still your mother!" "I was worried you'd be upset, and besides, they always use this to trick me." "But what if this tit's true?" Dorothy sighed, holding his hand, "You toldnot to walk on eggshells around you, but then you do this! How could I get mad over something like this?"

Whatever you do for your mother, I can understand, just like... you no understand everything I do for my mother." Though she wasn't experienced in relationships, Dorothy knew that for a relationship to last, it must be built on mutual understanding.

"But she's done so much to hurt you." Unforgivable things, one after another.

"That's between your mother and me. It doesn't involve you." Dorothy patted his hand, "Go! Check on her." Everett's tall frstiffened for a moment before he spoke, "I thought... you wished her dead." "I don't wish your mother dead! I only hope she faces legal consequences for her actions." After all, Dorothy had never gone so far as to wish death upon Heather. All Dorothy wanted was justice.

Seeing he still hesitated, she took a deep breath, "Everett, if we're going to spend our lives together, we need to move past this. It can't keep being a rift between us! Otherwise, we can never truly be a family." "Mm." "Go!" Dorothy thought for a moment, "Maybe... we should take Abigail and Langston with us? Just in case. I mean, if what your father said is true, Abigail and Langston are still her grandchildren." Even though Amanda had always shown little regard for the two children.

Chapter 986

"She did that, nearly causing Abigail and Langston to never cinto this world. I won't take the kids to see her." Everett said.

Seeing Everett's firm stance, Dorothy had said all there was to say. The rest was up to him.

"Then you better go. I'll be here waiting for you. Callif anything comes up." "Alright." Everett's brows, previously furrowed like a deep river, finally smoothed out. After all, being caught in the middle was uncomfortable for anyone.

He didn't want Dorothy to back down for his sake, nor could he truly ignore his mother's critical condition.

As Everett had anticipated, Amanda was indeed hospitalized. The situation was grim.

When he arrived at the hospital, Jonathan was sitting outside the emergency room, his usually upright posture now slumped. Given Bella's lawsuit, he hadn't had a proper rest in days. In the glitzy, high society they lived in, Jonathan's level of care for his wife was rare.

Most couples at this point would wish the other dead sooner, just so the assets wouldn't be split.

Hearing footsteps, Jonathan turned and saw Everett. He immediately stood up, his expression shifting from surprise to displeasure in an instant.

"You're just getting here? Did Dorothy not let you come?" Hearing his father attack Dorothy right off the bat, Everett frowned, "She's not like that." "You're tellingyou didn't answer any of my calls because it wasn't her doing?" Jonathan scoffed, though he knew this wasn't the tto argue with his son, he couldn't hold back his displeasure.

"I am telling you, why wouldn't I?" Everett retorted coldly, "Including the fact I'm here now, it was Dorothy who persuadedto come." "The person inside there is your mother!" "That's why I'm here." If it wasn't his mom lying there, he wouldn't have bothered coming.

"You!" Jonathan was so angered he couldn't form a complete sentence.

Everett, however, was indifferent, glancing at the emergency room's illuminated red light and pursing his lips, "As long as you target Dorothy, reconciliation is impossible." "Fine! I, Jonathan,

raised a son, only for Dorothy in the end! You'd abandon your own parents!" "I've always wondered, in your eyes, is Dorothy's lack of family background a mistake?" It all cback to them believing Dorothy wasn't good enough for the Lopez family, unworthy of stepping through the Lopez family's vel.n threshold, didn't it? But one's background isn't something they can choose! "Aiming too high for the Lopez family, that's her mistake! She can be poor, but she should've found man of her own standing, no one would've spoken ill of her!" velvet Jonathan, too, was heated, his words harsh. Hearing his son consistently defend another woman, ready to confront his own parents, as if he wished to sever ties, Jonathan couldn't stay calm.

"I told you, it waswho pursued Dorothy." Everett stared at him, each word deliberate, "It wasbegging her, forcing her to accept me." "With so many women out there, it had to be her?" "With so many women out there, it has to be her!" Jonathan, furious, realized he was powerless! He paced back and forth, then raised his head to look at his son, "Now, your mother and I have compromised. The one unwilling to let go is Dorothy!"

## Chapter 987

"Wanting her to let it go now? What about when she and her mom were begging for mercy?" Everett couldn't help but regret not realizing how ruthless his mother could be, swayed by a few words from Heather into plotting something so vile.

He knew all too well, his mother considered lives as disposable, thinking she could bully Dorothy and her mother without consequence because they had no one to defend them.

"So, what you're saying is, you can't forgive your own mother?" Jonathan gestured towards the closed door of the emergency room, "She's in there, hanging by a thread. Are you happy now?" "No," Everett replied, curt and to the point.

"Ha! You just want your mom out of the picture so you can be with Dorothy without any guilt. What a devoted son you are!" Each word from Jonathan felt like a slap to Everett's face.

But what's done is done, and those who refuse to admit their mistakes don't deserve forgiveness.

"What should I do, marry Heather like you all want?" Everett had been holding back, not wanting to dredge up the past since it wouldn't change anything. But he had reached his breaking point, "Yes, I'm your son, and I'm grateful for your upbringing. But that doesn't give you the right to control my life or anyone else's. Who I marry is my choice, as the law sees fit." There's no law saying parents get to choose their children's spouses, right? "Your mom was just trying to look out for you-" "Am I better off now? Happy? Joyful?" Everett retorted coldly, "When Jeffrey's daughter was born, and he cried with joy holding his baby, do you know how much I envied him? If it wasn't for you, I should've been outside the delivery room, waiting for Dorothy to give birth to my children, holding my son and daughter for the first time!" Who could he share these regrets with? "I..." Jonathan hadn't expected his usually reserved son to spill so much in one go. And he had no words to counter any of it.

"Four years, for four whole years, I didn't even know my children existed in this world!" "But Dorothy didn't tellshe was pregnant then." Everett laughed bitterly.

"If she had, I wouldn't have my children today." et And Dorothy might have been. silenced just like her mother. After all, if they could plot to kill Dorothy's mom, what's stopping them from killing Dorothy too? "Your mom was just misled by Heather! You know she's mentally ill," Jonathan

sighed, "I know she was wrong, and I've wanted to scold her, to argue with her! We've fought about this! But... she's still my wife, and if I don't stand by her, who will?" "My mom might be ill, but she's an adult responsible for her actions." This had been Everett's firm belief ever since he learned the truth.

Jonathan covered his face with his hand, "I thought I had it all figured out, but look at us now, a complete mess! Everett, this isn't what I wanted."

## Chapter 988

Everett was drowning in regret, and Jonathan felt the sting of his decisions just as sharply.

If only he had known it would come to this, he would have just focused on elevating Dorothy to a level where she could mingle with the Lopez clan without causing a stir. He should have ousted Heather, the source of all their troubles, before she could turn their lives upside down.

"It's done. I didn't want to talk about it because it's pointless," Everett said, his voice heavy with resignation. "I'm here today because, despite everything, she is my mother. She wronged Dorothy, but she never wronged me." "Everett, we can't let our family fall apart like this! Your mom and I, we only have you. You can't abandon your own parents over Dorothy!" Lately, Jonathan felt the weight of his years more than ever. Gone were the days of his youth when he made swift, decisive decisions that brooked no opposition.

Seeing his only son drifting away, caught in an irreconcilable conflict, how could he not be afraid? "It's too late for that now." Jonathan hurried to add, "It's not too late! I'll accept Dorothy into the family, and I won't force her to drop the lawsuit anymore. Isn't that enough? With your mom in her current state, who knows if she'll even make it through this! As for Quincy and her family, they're easy to handle, not a problem I can't solve for you." Quincy's family.

Mere mention of Quincy soured Everett's expression further.

"Just take care of yourself. And stop making my life more complicated." With Everett away, Dorothy took the time to organize company documents before heading to the children's room to play with Abigail and Langston.

After tucking them into bed, she returned to the living room. She hesitated over her phone for a long while before deciding against making a call, opting instead to send a message.

[Everything okay? Don't worry about replying if you're busy. Just wanted to check in. Everything's fine at home, just missing you.] A while later, Everett replied.

First, he sent a photo of Amanda's critical condition notice from the hospital, followed by a message.

[The doctors say it depends on how she does tonight. She's in a deep coma now, and if she doesn't wake up within 24 hours, she might never wake up.] Dorothy instinctively wanted to type a response, but nothing seemed appropriate.

As she pondered, Everett's call came through.

"Hello? What's up?" she answered, slightly startled.

"Nothing. Saw you hadn't replied, didn't want you overthinking," Everett's voice was cool and steady, betraying no emotion.



But Dorothy knew better. Things must be tough on his end. The colder his voice, the more it meant he was struggling to keep calm, to maintain control.

"I'm the one who asked you to go to the hospital. What am I supposed to overthink?" she looked out the window, noting the gathering clouds. "Looks like it might rain tonight. If there's no progress at the hospital, stay there. Don't bother coming back. I'm not scared being alone at Bay Residence. The kids are here too." "Okay." "And... you're the one who shouldn't be overthinking. Fulfill your duties as a son. As for me, you've done more than enough. Don't carry any guilt. And don't let be the reason for any regrets." Dorothy understood the pain of losing a mother all too well. For Everett no matter Amanda's faults, she was still his mother. If she were to pass away, it would undoubtedly leave a void in his heart.

## Chapter 989

When it's your time, there's no coming back. No do-overs, even if your heart aches with regret.

"Alright," Everett replied, his tone subdued, clearly not in the mood for conversation.

Dorothy didn't press him further. After hanging up, she texted Kevin, asking him to drop off sextra clothes for Everett at the hospital. The emergency room's chill could seep into your bones, necessitating layers more than usual.

Everett didn't chthat night.

Dorothy ended up crashing on the couch until the early hours.

The next morning, she was jolted awake by the doorbell - Kevin had cto take Abigail and Langston to school.

Without Everett, her nights were restless, sleep only claiming her in the wee hours.

"Thanks for this, Kevin," she said as she handed over the kids.

"No problem at all. I'm here to assist Mr. Lopez in any way I can." "By the way, I'm headed to a due diligence meeting this morning, so I won't be back at the office. Callif you need anything! And... if there's any news from Everett at the hospital, could you letknow?" Dorothy knew it was a big ask for Kevin, but reaching out to Everett directly might make him overthink things. She just wanted to stay informed, nothing more.

Kevin, sharp as ever, caught on immediately and agreed to keep her posted.

"Don't worry, Mr. Lopez will be fine! When I dropped off the clothes yesterday, and he knew it was you who sent them, he even cracked a smile!" Seems like Dorothy's the only one who can lift Everett's spirits.

After seeing Kevin off, Dorothy quickly got ready and headed to the Bureau of Industry and Commerce.

Getting back into the swing of things at work felt a bit awkward after a break, and coupled with the lack of sleep, she found her concentration slipping. She almost messed up filing sdocuments, catching the mistake just in time. Emerging from the Bureau, her phone pinged with a message from Everett on WhatsApp.

[Remember to have breakfast before diving into work.] She could almost hear the concern in his voice, the epitome of a "dad boyfriend." Just as Dorothy was about to reply, someone called out her name from behind. Turning around, she saw Quincy.

"Ms. Sanchez! I thought that was you from afar!" Quincy approached, her outfit of a simple white tee and jeans giving off a fresh, collegiate vibe, as harmless as a kitten. Normally, Dorothy would greet her warmly. After all, Quincy had saved Everett's life, not once but twice, and one of those times, it was Dorothy's fault he was in danger! But...

Everett had made it clear he wanted Dorothy to keep her distance from Quincy, so she couldn't help but feel wary.

"Dr. Quincy, what brings you here?" "Just borrowing pharmaceutical books from a friend who lives nearby!" Quincy replied with a smile.

Dorothy's gaze drifted to a man standing behind Quincy, prompting Quincy to follow her gaze and chuckle. "Oh, don't get the wrong idea. He's not my boyfriend. He's my bodyguard, hired by Mr. Lopez."

Chapter 990

"Lopez?" Dorothy immediately picked up on the significance of that slip, even though the conversation had abruptly stopped. She had zeroed in on that particular word. She noticed a flicker of embarrassment cross Quincy's face.

"It's nothing! Are you busy with work? I'll just leave you to it, then," Quincy said, turning to leave.

In that moment, Dorothy suddenly realized where the sporadic pangs of jealousy she'd been feeling lately were coming from.

It seemed like before, Quincy never went behind her back to contact Everett. Whenever she mentioned Everett, she always seemed like an outsider, without any hint of intimacy.

But now it was different.

From the moment she called, asking for Everett to call her back privately, to today's accidental slip of the word "Lopez," it all hinted to Dorothy that Quincy and Everett had been in contact behind her back, and it hadn't stopped! Even though Dorothy had made it clear to Everett that she would get jealous seeing him interact with Quincy, it seemed he hadn't completely cut Quincy off.

"Wait a minute!" Dorothy didn't dwell further and immediately called out to her.

Quincy paused, half-turning, "Ms. Sanchez, did you need something else?" "Dr. Quincy, I noticed you mentioned Everett's last name just now, so I assume you were referring to him. Then you stopped mid-sentence, which can easily lead to misunderstandings! I think it's better if you just say it all, to prevent any potential arguments between Everett and later. I'm sure you wouldn't want to see that." "Dr. Quincy, you need a bodyguard in Eldorria City?" "Yes." Quincy nodded, "There's been some internal issues in my family, and I felt unsafe, so I got someone to follow around! Since Eldorria City is Mr. Lopez's territory, I asked him for advice. Mr. Lopez was kind enough to recommend this bodyguard to me." Mr. Lopez being kind.

Ha. Honestly, Dorothy was almost convinced by the explanation; it made sense logically! But the idea of Everett being kind and enthusiastically recommending a bodyguard for Quincy? That she couldn't believe at all.

"It seems like Everett and Dr. Quincy have been in contact quite a bit lately," Dorothy said, trying to make her tone sound casual, as if she was just making an offhand comment.

Quincy was no fool. In fact, she was quite shrewd, just not one to engage in scheming usually.

"We haven't been in contact much. Mr. Lopez usually contacts about finding ways to treat your illness." "Dr. Quincy, you have really gone out of your way." "It's no trouble. It's my job! I didn't expect it to cause any misunderstanding with you, my apologies Quincy said, and at that moment, she should have walked away. But she paused, unable to resist adding, "I can understand your sensitivity. Given Mr. Lopez's excellence, it's natural to feel threatened."