

SHATTERED ILLUSIONS: LOVE, LIES, AND REDEMPTION

Chapter 16

“So you’re up to speed on Joseph’s condition, right? I know you overheard me talking with Wilma that night.”

Lizetta nodded, about to offer Hanna a few comforting words, when she continued, “You and Remington better get cracking on making a baby.”

Lizetta choked. Clearly, her mother-in-law had taken the reins and decided for her. Whether or not to have a kid was never really her call to make.

Thank goodness she’d had enough of this life!

“There’s no way Remington and I can have a child. I just asked the doctor, and he said with Joseph’s

condition...”

Joseph’s illness wasn’t at the point where a bone marrow transplant was necessary, and even if it was an emergency, there wouldn’t be time to pop out a kid. Plus, the odds of Lizetta’s baby being a match were slim.

With medicine advancing at lightning speed, leukemia wasn’t a death sentence anymore, especially for a well-connected family like the Dashiells.

Hanna was obviously freaking out, barking up the wrong tree. If having a baby was the only way to save Joseph, with the bond between Lizetta and Joseph, she’d be willing to make that sacrifice without Hanna pulling all the strings.

“Shut your trap! You have to have this child!” Hanna cut her off.

Seeing Lizetta frown, she softened her tone.

“Don’t worry; I’m not expecting you to do this for free. I’ll throw in 10 million if you deliver, 30 million if it’s a match, and we can negotiate a separate price for each transfusion. As soon as you’re pregnant, I’ll advance you 2 million.”

Hanna sat there, all high and mighty, stirring her coffee, as if she believed Lizetta couldn’t resist such a juicy.

carrot.

Lizetta's fingers turned ice-cold. In Hanna's eyes, her child was just a bargaining chip, devoid of emotion, to be demanded and dispensed with, just like Lizetta herself.

She clenched her dress, her mind replaying the moment Jolin had left the Dashiell family for money, and

Hanna's contemptuous sneer.

"A bunch of bloodsuckers! How could Remington be outsmarted by such a woman!"

"Mrs. Hanna Dashiell, please don't be upset. It's just 2 thousand; think of it as tossing a coin to a beggar."

The bitter memories made Lizetta stand up abruptly.

"To tell you the truth, my relationship with your son is toast; we're in the middle of a divorce, so no more babies. You're 52, not menopausal yet, right? If you really think you need a baby to save your son, why don't you give it another shot? These things, you gotta do yourself; don't you think?"

She grabbed her purse and left, leaving Hanna sitting there, dumbstruck, unable to believe what she'd just heard.

Wilma hurried over from another table.

"Mrs. Hanna Dashiell, what's wrong? Did Mrs. Lizetta Dashiell get under your skin again?"

"Ungrateful wretch! The Dashiell family really wasted their time on her; even a dog knows to be loyal to its master! She's making up crazy lies like divorce just to avoid having a baby!"

Lizetta paused in her stride, and then walked away with even more resolve. She headed back to the hospital, pushed open the door to Joseph's room, and was greeted with laughter and chatter – Fiona and Remington

were both there.

1/2

33.00

Chapter 16

Seeing Lizetta, Fiona immediately waved her over, “Liz, come here! Why the special treatment for Joseph? Am I not your favorite old baby?”

The octogenarian pouted over the food, looking as forlorn as a kid fighting over candy. Lizetta chuckled, sat next to her, and linked arms with her, “So, what do you fancy, Grandma Fiona? I’ll cook anything for you.”

“I know, Liz’s sweet and sour pork is delish. That’s what I’m craving.”

Joseph passed a piece of pork her way, but before Fiona could take a bite, Lizetta caught the scent and suddenly turned her head, gagging.

Fiona’s eyes lit up, slapping Remington’s arm excitedly, “You sly dog! Is Liz pregnant? Such great news, and you didn’t tell me!”

Lizetta took a deep breath to steady herself and turned to meet Remington’s deep gaze.

Chapter 17 Property of Nô)(veI Dr(a)ma.

Lizetta frantically waved her hands, “Grandma Fiona, you got it all wrong. I just caught a chill and got some stomach reflux these past couple of days. I just got tested the day before yesterday; definitely not pregnant. Remington knows.”

Fiona, clinging to hope, immediately whipped her head around to look at Remington, who nodded, “She’s not

pregnant.”

The old lady’s face darkened, and the hand patting Remington’s arm turned into a fierce pinch.

“A man can be all high-flying in his career, but if he can’t take care of his wife, can’t have kids, he’s good for nothing! Tell me, you’re hardly ever home, leaving your lovely wife to fend for herself. What’s the point of having you around?”

Only Fiona could talk to Remington that way; the man looked helpless.

“Lizetta and I are still young; we’re not rushing to have kids.”

“You’re almost thirty; how can you not be in a hurry? I’m back this time, and I won’t rest until I see you two make a baby!”

She laid down the law, “Tonight, you and Liz are moving back to the family house, and you better get busy making that baby!”

“Alright, alright, will do,” Remington agreed.

“What about you, Liz?”

Fiona was pushing for a baby in front of the kid, and Lizetta blushed with embarrassment, worried that the old lady would add more, so she quickly nodded.

“I’ll definitely go back to keep you company, Grandma Fiona.”

Lizetta also wanted to find an opportunity to talk to Fiona about her plans to divorce and study abroad.

In the evening, Lizetta stepped out of Tempo Dance Studio and saw a familiar luxury car parked by the road.

She hurried over, opened the door, and slid into the car, telling Cedric to “Drive.”

Remington looked up from his paperwork, “Am I that unpresentable?”

She was just a part-time teacher, and being seen getting into a luxury car could cause unnecessary trouble. Besides, there were two instances before when she took his car to work, and two blocks away from the company building, he’d tell her to get out.

She had worked at the Group for over a year, and no one knew she was Mrs. Dashiell. The one who should be kept out of sight was her.

Lizetta nodded, “We’re getting divorced, and I don’t want any complications.”

Remington chuckled, picked up the document beside him, and tossed it to Lizetta.

“Take it back; I don’t agree to the divorce. Quit your part-time job; come back to work for the company. I’ll pretend your little rebellion these past days never happened.”

Today, when he couldn’t see her bustling around, his work efficiency dropped.

Remington’s tone was domineering, and Lizetta, infuriated, picked up the divorce papers that had been thrown back at her.

Why should she go back to work there?

For the past year, she was willing to do the grunt work at the company because she still had feelings for him. and wanted to make their marriage work. But even hustling under his nose every day didn’t bring him home.

1/2

23:28

Chapter 17

She was tired.

“I won’t go back. I have dreams too. I’m not as you say, that I couldn’t live without the Dashiell family. I’m doing fine now.”

“Your idea of doing fine is being a lousy dance teacher? Even when you break your leg through dancing, can you afford a necklace?” Remington’s gaze swept over the woman’s feet.

Her injured right foot was propped up, likely in pain. Silly woman, she was just asking for trouble!

His disdainful tone made Lizetta feel choked up. She thought back to the phone call she got earlier in the afternoon.

It was from the Dashiell Group’s entertainment company, offering 200 grand for her new song to be used as the opening piece for Evelina’s solo concert.

Evelina had her parents shelling out money, and even Remington was backing her dreams to the hilt, while she was just fit to be a lowly clerk?

“I want to dance! I can live without jewelry. Can’t I leave with nothing if we divorce?”

Remington didn’t expect that even after he tried to hold on to her, she was still set on divorcing. An icy chill surrounded the man as he grasped Lizetta’s chin.

“You came to the Dashiell family at eight, living in luxury until now. Do you need me to do the math for you? Divorce is fine, but I don’t make bad deals. Pay up 3 million; then we’ll talk!”

Lizetta clenched her fists, her eyes widening in disbelief.

“3 million? Mr. Dashiell, you sure know the secret to wealth. Marry and divorce once a year, and you’d get rich without lifting a finger.”

Remington snorted, “A measly 3 million a year, I wouldn’t stoop to trading my marriage for that. Besides, in this world, you’re the only ingrate who grew up on the Dashiell dime and still thinks of leaving the Dashiell family.”

Lizetta was so angry she wanted to bite him, but the man, as if anticipating her move, lifted his hand from her chin to pinch her cheeks.

Lizetta’s face was scrunched up like a duck, and she was puffing with anger.

“If you can’t pay up, then behave yourself.”

Tears welled up in her eyes, and only then did Remington let go.

He flicked open his lighter with a click and set the divorce papers alight, tossing them into the trash can.

Lizetta stared blankly at the flames, “If you won’t divorce, what about Evelina?”

“That’s none of your concern!”

So; he planned to keep both her and Evelina? What a jerk!

Lizetta turned her head away, fuming, when Remington suddenly said, “Take it off; let me see.”

Lizetta turned back incredulously, only to see his gaze fixated on her injured foot.

Chapter 18

“Shoes, you say?”

Remington didn’t utter a word, but his eyes were dripping with sarcasm, as if he was saying, “What else did you think you’d be taking off?”

Lizetta, fuming, turned her head away, ignoring him. The man frowned, forcibly lifted her leg onto his knee to check her injury, and only let go when he saw it was healing well.

The ride back was silent; neither of them spoke a word. When they arrived at the Dashiell family’s mansion, Lizetta opened the car door, ready to get out, when her right hand was suddenly gripped tight. Property of Nô)(veIDr(a)ma.

Turning around, she saw the man lifting her hand and sliding a ring onto her ring finger.

It was the wedding ring that she had taken off and left at Oakridge Heights, along with her earrings.

Lizetta was stunned – after all, this was the first time he’d put the ring on her. They hadn’t had a wedding ceremony; he’d gone abroad the same day they got their marriage certificate and was gone for months.

The wedding ring had been prepared by Fiona; Lizetta had put it on herself and never took it off again, while Remington only started wearing his a year later, after they had resumed marital relations.

To her, the ring symbolized the marriage, but what she ended up defending was nothing more than the cold

shell of it.

Lizetta thought about taking it off, but Remington suddenly intertwined their fingers, “Grandma’s been unwell lately; don’t be so headstrong!”

He warned her, his knuckles pressing hard, causing a slight pain where the wedding ring chafed against her finger.

Lizetta thought Remington was just trying to scare her, but upon entering the living room, she saw the old lady taking her medication.

The pills were in handfuls, the dosage not like before. Lizetta didn’t dare bring up divorce and went to make some of her favorite dishes instead.

Right before dinner, Hanna and Remington’s father Nathan came home.

On seeing Lizetta, Hanna let out a scornful laugh, her eyes brimming with disdain, “Making a fuss about divorce and then crawling back to the house – shameless, spineless creature!”

As Lizetta entered the kitchen, Hanna followed her in.

Stirring the soup, Lizetta turned and smiled at her, “Yeah, how could I give up the Dashiell family’s wealth and glory?”

She played along with Hanna’s insinuations, which only darkened Hanna’s mood further, “You finally admit it. I should show Remington this side of you!” Hanna spun on her heel and stormed out.

Lizetta only made the old lady’s favorite dishes, leaving the rest to the servants. After leaving the kitchen, she headed straight to Fiona’s bedroom.

To her surprise, Remington was also there. The old lady, propped up in bed, beckoned, “Liz, come here”

Sitting beside the bed, Lizetta took her hand, and the old lady asked, “Are you two getting a divorce without telling me?”

Lizetta was startled; this was her chance to tell Fiona about her plans to divorce and go study abroad.

But the old lady’s eyes were so sad and worried, as if she had aged a decade in a moment. The hand Lizetta held was thin and trembling.

Lizetta's lips moved, but the words wouldn't come out.

1/2

Chapter 18

While she was hesitating, Remington pulled her into his embrace, "Grandma Fiona, we're doing good Right, honey?" Head down, he whispered in her ear.

His breath brushed against her ear, sending a tingling sensation straight to her heart. It was the first time he called her "honey", and even if it was just for grandma's sake, Lizetta felt her defenses crumble.

Blushing, she murmured, "Yeah, we're good."

"I'm not so easily fooled. I was recuperating at the sanitarium on the outskirts, and Remington insisted on bringing me back. Was it because you two had a tiff and he couldn't smooth it over, so he dragged me back with all my old bones? I'm not confused; I see it all clearly. Are you going to admit it, boy?"

Fiona looked at Remington, and Lizetta, surprised, also turned to him. Was it just as grandma said? Unable to appease her, Remington had fetched grandma to persuade her.

Remington's expression remained calm, "Grandma Fiona, you're the sharpest tool in the shed, nothing gets past you."

He admitted it! Lizetta's heart skipped a beat, staring at Remington.

Previously, she thought his refusal to divorce was about saving face or even getting back at her, not about holding onto her.

But now, she thought perhaps, Remington wasn't as ruthless as she thought he was; perhaps, he somewhat cared about their marriage.

"Come on, say something nice to Liz!"

Urged by Fiona, Remington gave a reluctant smile, his handsome features lighting up. With a casual turn of his head, his gaze met Lizetta's straight on.

Her ears turned red on spot, and her heart fluttered even more. At the sight of Lizetta's blushing and cute demeanor, Remington's breath hitched, his Adam's apple bobbing.

He lifted his hand, gently tousled her hair, and said hoarsely, "Honey, let's not divorce, okay?"

Chapter 19

Those tender gazes, endearing touches, and lingering words, almost whispered as if from a lover.

It was all that Lizetta had ever dreamed of.

Her mouth was parched, her tongue bound with anxiety.

Her heart felt enveloped in warm water, soothing and inviting, irresistibly so.

But this sudden euphoria was as fleeting as bubbles in the mist, she cannot grasp it.

She bit her lip, wrestling with her fears, too terrified to speak up, thinking that there might be doom await her.

Seeing this, Fiona nudged Remington.

“It’s all due to you! Always gallivanting around, neglecting Liz. You must promise to be home every day from now on and treat Liz correctly! Otherwise, you don’t deserve her forgiveness.”

Lizetta’s fingers writhed with nervousness, but finally, she mustered her courage to glance up at Remington.

Would he assent?

With a subtle upward curl of his lips, Remington acquiesced, “Yes, yes, I’ll do as you say.”

The old lady nodded in content and turned to Lizetta, “Well, girl?”

The man also turned his attention toward Lizetta, scrutinizing her countenance.

A sour sensation filled her heart, but she couldn’t resist.

“Okay.”

Fiona then chortled with joy, intertwining Lizetta’s and Remington’s hands.

“Alright then, granny can be at peace. I’m just anticipating the day when I’ll hold my great-grandsons and great-granddaughters.”

Stepping out from Fiona’s room with servants bustling around, Lizetta tried to slip her hand out of his grip.

But Remington held firm. She looked up at him.

“Stay at the old house tonight. Tomorrow, I’ll help you move your stuff back to Oakridge Heights?”

Since she had agreed to granny, Lizetta decided to give it another go.

She nodded, “Okay.”

She seemed to have returned to that docile girl from the past. Remington looked deeply into her eyes, and he squeezed her hand before releasing it.

His gaze made Lizetta’s heart flutter, and she said, “I’ll go check on the kitchen.”

“Alright, go ahead.”

Lizetta ran into the kitchen, and didn’t emerge until dinner was ready.

By then, Remington and Nathan were talking in the upstairs study. Fiona asked her to go call them down.

On reaching the study door, Lizetta was about to knock but realized it was slightly ajar. Nathan’s authoritative voice came from inside.

“Starlight Group’s three key billion-dollar projects launch this year, and your personal image is linked to the company’s. We can’t risk any stock market turbulence now! You can spoil Evelina all you want behind closed doors, but now is not the time for a divorce. After this period, you can do whatever you want.”

“I know what I’m doing, just leave it.”

1/2

Chapter 19

Lizetta froze at Remington’s detached reply. He hadn’t clarified the matter with Evelina, nor had he denied Nathan’s words.

“I know what I’m doing“.

Was this the reason he wouldn’t divorce, pulling out all stops to keep her? Solely for the company’s image, and she had foolishly fell for it all!

Her legs weakened, and she spun around to leave.

In just half an hour, her heart felt shattered, pieced back together, lifted and then crushed, beyond any hope of repair.

Leaning against the wall, Lizetta gasped for air before composing herself to head downstairs, only to realize she was standing outside Lucian Dashiell's room.

Four years ago, the fifth young master Lucian decided to become a professional racer. When his family disapproved, he went abroad and never returned.

His room had always been locked, but now the door was slightly ajar.

Surprised, Lizetta pushed the door open and stepped inside, when her phone rang. It was Hogan. She picked it

1. up.

"Liz, great news! Your application was accepted, Master Dories will personally interview you during next month's tour!"

Lizetta hadn't expected such good news so soon, and she jumped with glee.

"Really? I'm ecstatic! Ah!"

She twirled in excitement, oblivious to the dark figure outside, which caught her off guard with a shriek.

Lizetta quickly moved sideways, "I have something going on here, I'll have to hang up."

After disconnecting, she turned and staggered into the man's firm chest, her nose reddening.

"Ocf. Why stalk me like that, as silent as a specter!"

Remington took another step closer. Lizetta backed against the wall.

He reached out, cornering her against the door with a jeering smile.

"Skulking in the dark, who are you longing for?"

Recalling his icy demeanor, strikingly dissimilar to his tenderness in Fiona's room, and replaying what he had just said, she scoffed at herself mockingly.

She had been so naive to cling to her fantasies.

She calmly retired, impatiently, "I was just on the phone with my senior brother. Didn't you hear?"

“Is that so?” Remington seemed skeptical, his aura frigid.

“Keep your distance.” Lizetta found it hard to breathe.

When Remington thought of the night was pressed close with Hogan in the car, he didn't relent but instead bent his knee, trapping her even more snugly between his body and the wall.

“Heh, you say I am too close, who do you want to be close with? Your oh-so-righteous senior brother?”

Chapter 20

Being a man, Hogan's intention was crystal clear to Remington.

Remington's handsome face was as cold as frost, but Lizetta found him inexplicably strange.

“He just called to tell me that my elder brother's health is stable.”

She didn't dare let Remington know that she was secretly preparing to study abroad.

After all, he hadn't even agreed to a divorce, let alone thinking about studying abroad.

But she had made up her mind and wouldn't be deceived into changing it again!

Remington, with eyes deep as the abyss, said, “Should I get you a mirror to see that guilty look on your face?” He knew her too well, including the way she lied.

The cleverest lies were those mixed with truth and falsehood, so Lizetta says, “He also mentioned that there's a medical institution abroad dedicated to awakening comatose patients, and we could send my elder brother there.”

But the old fox isn't talking about the grapes.

Remington snorted, “I'll arrange another esteemed physician for your brother.”

The man's making announcements, not asking opinions. He unilaterally ended the conversation and opened the door to leave.

Desperate, Lizetta grabbed his arm.

“I've discussed it with him! We're getting divorced, I don't want to be a bother to you anymore.”

“Bother him instead of me? What’s your relationship with him? Also, do you have a goldfish memory and have you forgotten what you just agreed to?”

Lizetta snickered, “That was just a line for granny. With a jerk like you, I’m afraid of getting clogged milk ducts if we don’t divorce!”

“Say that again, Lizetta!” Remington’s handsome face darkened, as if he wanted to strangle her.

With cold determination, Lizetta stomped hard on his foot.

Seizing the moment of his distraction, she slipped away in front of him.

At the dinner table, Remington sat down next to Lizetta with a grim face, and Fiona glared at him unhappily.

“Think you were born too fair-skinned? Who’re you scowling at? If you’re not helpful, at least serve your wife a bowl of soup.”

“Granny, she specifically mentioned not wanting to bother me.” Remington looked at Lizetta, one eyebrow raised, “Right, Mrs. Dashiell?”

He drew everyone’s attention, and Lizetta did not dare let him serve her soup.

She stood up, “I’ll serve Granny the soup. I’ve made her favorite carp, tofu, and mushroom soup. It’s very fresh”

“Lizetta’s the obedient one,” Hanna sarcastically remarked.

In the past, Lizetta would have timidly served soup to everyone at the table, trying to please Hanna.

But today, she ignored Hanna and sat down, prompting Hanna to resume her sarcastic remarks.

“It seems like we, the parents, don’t deserve to drink this soup.”

Fiona glared at her, “If you want soup, serve yourself. I bet Remington’s lack of hands comes from following you.”

1/2

Hanna tried to say more, but Nathan cut in, “Let’s eat”

Hanna shut up, but her expression turned even sourer.

Fiona wasn't satisfied and threw Remington a look.

"No hands, no heart, and no words! Only Liz would marry you out of charity, otherwise, I bet you could never find a wife or father children in your lifetime."

What on earth had this scoundrel done to make the wife he just won over slip away again?

The old lady had a headache.

Hanna, disliking Fiona's words, chimed in again, "Mom, you're being unfair. There are plenty of fine ladies out there dying to marry Remington."

Fiona was displeased, "Liz grew up under my care. How can those outside vixens compare? She's also my lifesaver! Not to mention the flood of ladies, even a fairy descended from heaven, she would have to stand aside!"

When Lizetta was five, Rachel Hawthorne brought her over for a visit. Fiona fainted from a heart condition in the secluded greenhouse, and the heavy wooden door was accidentally locked by the servants. Little Lizetta, by chance, was there, frantically banging on the door and screaming, attracting everyone and saved the old lady just in time,

Later, it was discovered that the little girl's delicate hands were swollen like buns, and she nearly lost her voice. from shouting.

Because of this incident, Thaddeus, having no other options, dared to kneel before the Dashiell family, begging them to take in Lizetta,

Only later did Lizetta learn that Fiona wasn't actually home that night; it was Remington who decided to keep her.

"Mom, those are old stories. Besides, didn't the Dashiell family raise her too? You can't play favorites forever. And as for having children, it's up to the woman's ability. I haven't spared any efforts to consult doctors and get medicine for Lizetta these past two years. Your cherished granddaughter-in-law neither appreciates it nor cooperates, so how can you blame Remington?"

Fiona frowned, "With good seeds, even a desert can bloom into an oasis! In the end, it's the man who is inadequate! Tina, serve the tonic soup prepared for Remington."

Remington didn't expect the conversation to circle back and hit him.

The dark brown soup was brought over, emitting a less-than-pleasant aroma.

"Granny, perhaps we don't need the tonic soup?"

Remington sighed helplessly, while Fiona laughed and pulled Lizetta's hand.

"Whether you need it or not, is up to your wife to decide."

Lizetta looked over, meeting Remington's somewhat amused gaze.
