

Seduced 201

Chapter 201

“Are you that oblivious, or is this your way of mocking my pathetic self? I slept with Matthew. I offered myself. What you see here are not wounds; they’re hickies!” Helen seethed. I saw loneliness and rage in her eyes.

I slumped onto my bed, unable to process the news.

“Oh? Does it sting now that Matthew and I are together?” Helen looked at me with the corners of her eyes. The contempt and sadness in her eyes made her look extra pitiable.

“No, you’re mistaken, Helen. I just... feel sorry for you.”

“He kept calling your name when he was with me until he lost his voice. And when he realized what he had done, he sobbed loudly. He said there was no hope anymore, that he was no longer pure.”

Tears suddenly fell from Helen’s eyes, rolling down her dainty cheeks. She cried despondently, “Why? How could he do this to me? He was sleeping with me yet he was thinking of you. Why? Why?”

Matthew’s text in the middle of the night came to my mind. I now understood why he apologized to me.

I did not have a bad temper, but I did have my principles. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have cut

Felix off that decisively back then.

Matthew was now dating Helen. He thought that he had betrayed me, so he apologized.

Oh, Matthew. He was such a fool.

I felt sorry.

I felt sorry for Matthew and Helen. They suffered because of me.

Helen kept to herself the entire day. She didn't attend her lectures; she didn't leave the apartment; she didn't even get up from her bed.

When I returned home at noon, she was staring at the ceiling with soulless eyes.

She remained in the same position when I came back at night. She was like a doll, unable to speak or smile.

"Helen, regardless if you trust me or not, I just want to tell you that I won't ever talk to Matthew again. Can you please give him some time to grieve?"

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"He had feelings for me since high school. It's been almost eight years now. I don't think he knows if his feelings for me are true love or the longing for a bygone past.

"Eight years is a long time. You need to give him time to heal, to mend his bruised heart. You slept with him even though you know he still loves someone else. I think that's very brave of you. Well done, you've shown him how much you love him.

"Matthew isn't a heartless man. He won't take you for granted. Give him some time. Keep him company. One day, he'll be yours.

"And Helen, please don't hold a grudge against me. I'm your friend, not your love rival."

“I know. But it’s just not fair. Why won’t he notice how much I love him? Lulu, I’m not mad at you. I’m not trying to antagonize you. I just feel very frustrated, and I needed to rant

earlier.”

“I get that. Now that he’s your boyfriend, you’ll be his responsibility. So please, cheer up. Show him your charisma. Make him fall in love with you.”

She grabbed a towel to wipe away the tears on her face. Then, she hid under it while her body trembled with each silent sob.

“You’ve cried so much today, and you haven’t eaten a thing. That’s not good for your health. I bought some chowder for you. Come, fill your tummy.”

The next day, Helen and I reverted to how we were like before. But for some reason, I felt that something had changed. There was something between us.

Chapter 202

Thinking that I was about to lose Helen as a friend, I was upset for the next few days.

One afternoon, the sky was gloomy, and it was drizzling.

My phone suddenly rang when I was painting the draft I drew.

I put down my brush and washed off the paint on my hand. My face brightened when I saw

the caller.

Colin, who had been MIA for the past few days, was video-calling me.

“Colin! You haven’t replied to my messages or picked up your phone in the past few days. I almost went to the police to file a missing person’s report!”

Colin’s husky laughter traveled into my ears, sending shockwaves through my body.

“Lulu, come down.”

I looked outside the window. The drizzle had stopped, and the sky had turned blue.

“Just come down. I have a surprise for you.”

I grabbed whatever jacket I could find and put it on. Then, I rushed downstairs.

The air purified by the drizzle felt extra fresh. Under a lush parasol tea, an unignorable presence came into my vision.

In the shade stood Colin’s tall and bulky frame. His eyes sparkled, and his sexy lips were

curled into a smile. He was so handsome.

“Colin! What brought you here?” I was over the moon to see Colin here.

For the first time in my life, I had a taste of true happiness.

I had not seen Colin for nearly three months. It was tough on me because I had grown to rely on him in those three years at Lincoln University.

I was used to him asking me out for breakfast every day when I woke up. I was used to his doting and pampering.

Maybe I was so used to being his princess that I found it miserable to live without him. So when I saw his dashing frame under the sunlight, tears welled up in my eyes.

I didn't know what got into me. I just felt so... upset.

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My vision was blurry, but I couldn't care less. I threw myself into his embrace, wrapping my legs around his waist and my arms around his neck. The tears on my face wetted his.

"Colin, what are you doing here?" I cried loudly and uglily.

The loneliness, the anguish, and the yearning for him washed over me all at once. I cried out loud.

Colin supported my weight with one hand and wiped the tears on my face with another. "I didn't want you to miss me too much, so I came. Did you miss me a lot?"

"I did! I missed you so much. What took you so long to come see me?"

Colin dried my tears and cooed, "There, there, Lulu. You're crying the moment you see me. Do you hate to see me that much?"

"No, that's not true. These are tears of joy!" I climbed down and pouted. Then, I used his shirt to dry my tears.

Indulgently, he waited until I wiped my eyes dry. There were now several dark patches on his shirt.

I playfully poked at those wet spots until Colin's eyes flashed with amusement.

Now that Colin was here, I made him buy me a meal. Somehow, it felt like that was the only way to make sure that he was truly by my side.

We engaged in a wonderful conversation on the way. I told him that Professor King was there and that he had signed me up for a competition. I also told Colin that I had already completed the draft and he could give me his input.

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Chapter 203

Colin tilted his head to look at me with a smile, listening to me yap about everything like an excited girl. Tenderness threatened to overflow from his starry eyes.

I was 22 years old. I was an adult now. In front of my classmates and lecturers, I behaved like

a gentle, elegant woman. Some of my juniors even followed me around just to learn my

mannerisms.

Unbeknownst to them, I behaved like a spoiled fool in front of Colin.

To our surprise, we ran into Felix.

His

eyes fell on Colin's and my interlocked fingers. Subconsciously, I tried to withdraw my hand, but Colin wouldn't let me go. He grabbed my hand tightly as we walked toward Felix.

"Hey, Colin," greeted Felix.

"Hey, have

you

eaten? Do you want to join us?"

Felix hesitated for a while. He then took out his phone to send a quick text before joining us.

Jinovy was way more prosperous than Southville. I found many high-end restaurants here, and out of them, Colin picked a seafood restaurant.

The establishment was well-decorated. It was quiet and filled with greenery, prompting me to think that I was in a botanical garden.

We were seated at a table for four. Colin and I sat on one side while Felix sat opposite us.

The ambient music was soothing, and the air conditioning was adjusted to the right temperature. I placed my head on Colin's shoulder as we read the digital menu on the table.

Colin's presence dispelled the unease between Felix and me. At least I didn't have to worry about Lilac making a fuss over this meal.

Before long, the food was served. The three of us dug in.

Colin wasn't a big eater. He helped me cut my food, and whenever I lifted my head, I would meet his gentle gaze. It warmed

my heart.

For a moment, in that safe corner, I almost thought that he only had his eyes on me.

Something within me was blooming.

Felix was rather reticent. He ate his food with his head lowered. He didn't look too thrilled

+35 BONUS

about everything.

During the conversation with Colin, I learned that he had finished his master's degree when I was a freshman. He stayed until my graduation because he was pursuing a doctorate.

And he often appeared in the post-grad faculty because he was the teaching assistant to his professor.

I was absent-minded in the past, so I never asked Colin about his studies. Thinking about how often I relied on his pampering, I found my behavior mortifying.

“So what are you doing in Jesselton College?” I asked the question I had wanted to ask.

“I’m here to take care of a kitten and to be a lecturer.” Colin patted my head openly in public and fed me the prawn he had just deshelled. He was spoiling me as usual.

“Kitten? I’m a grown woman, alright?” I knew who Colin was referring to.

“Yes, yes. A grown woman. Lulu is now a gorgeous, independent woman.” Colin flicked my nose affectionately. I scrunched my nose and glared at him.

This had always been how Colin and I interacted with each other. I was younger than him, and it was only natural that he doted on me.

“This is huge. Why didn’t you tell your parents?”

“Why tell them? They aren’t experts in academia, so in the end, it’s all up to me. Besides, I’m sure they’ll be happy with my decision. They always think that they owe you something.

Knowing that I’m taking care of you can put their minds at ease.”

Felix continued to remain silent. He stared indifferently at our PDA while he finished beer

after beer.

In the middle of the lunch, I turned around and saw that Lilac was standing outside, peering at Felix. Annoyed, I tapped on the table to beckon to Felix.

Chapter 204

Felix was surprised to see Lilac outside. He grabbed his phone and left immediately.

I was so annoyed by Lilac that I blurted out something rude, "Felix, let's not hang out again.

He replied with his silent silhouette. Then, he left.

"It's over. Finally," said Colin as he turned to me, a glass in his hand.

"Tsk, it already ended a long time ago. It was over when he called me shameless and asked me to stay away from him that Thanksgiving."

"So what's your plan now?"

"I'll make myself available and make many friends." I placed my palm above my brows while pretending to scan my surroundings. Then, my eyes lingered on Colin. "Then, I'll settle down with someone I like and who likes me back."

Colin's hand froze mid-raising his glass. He turned to face me, his eyes glimmering. Then, with a smile, he said, "Sure."

Oh, that smile. That lethal smile! My heart skipped a beat.

Colin was hired by Jesselton College to be a lecturer. It was his first day, so he was too busy to hang out with me after lunch.

I was bored in the evening. After dinner, I went to take a stroll in the corridor of the tiny jungle my college had.

When I first came, I thought that it looked so much like the baby rose corridor near the post-grad faculty of Lincoln University. I would visit it from time to time, and it slowly became a habit of mine. Now, I would feel like something was amiss if I did not come to the corridor once per day.

Suffice to say, I was a loyal person. Once I fell in love with something, it'd last for an eternity.

Felix was a pivotal person in my life. Looking back, I realized my feelings for him weren't love. It was just the obedience and compliance a daughter had for her parents. Or perhaps it was an adolescent girl's yearning for a beautiful story.

It'd be too difficult to describe what happened back then. I couldn't recall what I had felt either. I had suffered, I had cried, and I had tried to make Felix stay. But they were all in the

+35 BONUS

past now, and I regretted nothing.

After half an hour, I decided to go home. Suddenly, Felix appeared. He looked like he had been waiting for me.

Due to the pain he and Lilac had caused me, I was now traumatized. Seeing one of them would sour my mood and give me a headache.

I hadn't seen them for a very long time, and I thought peace had returned. Alas, I ran into them at noon. And I ran to Felix again in the evening. What a nuisance!

Not wanting to deal with him, I turned around and went toward where I came from.

Since Felix was very tall, he easily caught up to me with his long legs. Then, he positioned himself before me. "Lulu, you're avoiding me."

Seriously? Wasn't it obvious? Did he have to say that?

"I've said this many times before, so please burn it into your memory. You brought Matthew to me, and for that, I owe you a favor. I can't repay you with anything yet, but I'll return the favor one day. You have my word.

"From now on, let's not hang out again. Even if we run into each other on the street, let's pretend we're strangers, okay?"

"Why? You used to follow me around when you were little. Why are you avoiding me now?"

"You've said it yourself, it was in the past. I had to apologize to you in front of our families for what I've done. What else do you want from me?"

"I'm trying to avoid you, so please stop bothering me. It's annoying," I yelled.

I couldn't contain the rage and frustration inside me.

Chapter 205

Felix's lanky frame faltered, and a deep sense of sadness filled his eyes.

It wasn't until I finished my sentence that I realized I had returned the exact same words he told me back then.

But why was he sad? Forget about the past—we were young and naive back then. He was now dating Lilac. Why was he hurt by what I said?

Because he cared about me? No way. Back then, he viewed me as an eyesore, a pest.

And more importantly, I couldn't care less if he was upset or not.

They said time could heal everything. And indeed, I had completely moved on from the pain my tragic past brought me.

Felix was now a stranger in my life.

The pain he had once inflicted on me and the tears I had once shed were nothing but

my growth.

That was all.

“If there’s nothing else, goodbye. And quit bothering me.” Turning, I left angrily.

“Stay, Lulu,” Felix called out. He sounded vulnerable and sincere.

“Just spit it out now. I don’t have time for you. You’re getting on my nerves.”

He was irritating me.

“Just answer me this—are you dating Colin now?”

I turned back in confusion and met his eyes. I discerned desperation on his face as he scrutinized my reaction.

What made him think that I was dating Colin? Colin was like my older brother.

part of

“Why does it matter, Felix? Do you think you get to tell me who I can date? Since you brought this up, let me be clear with you. My love life is none of your business. Know that we’re strangers and that you have no right to ask me such a personal question.

“We’re not close, and I’m not obliged to report everything to you. Understood?” “Just tell me. Did you reject Matthew because you were waiting for Colin?”

What? I wish I could slap him.

+35 BONUS

Matthew was Matthew, and Colin was Colin. How could he mix both of them together?

“Who are you to me? Why should I give you my answer?”

“Lulu, I just want you to know that Colin isn’t the right guy for you. He’s so much older than you and-”

“I get to decide whether Colin is the right guy for me or not. It’s none of your business.”

“Yes, Lulu, I know your love life is none of my business. You can date anyone in this world except for Colin.”

“But I want to. I want to date Colin. What about it? Do you have a problem with it? You’re out of your mind. Bugger off, Felix. Bugger off!” I screamed.

Perhaps intimidated by my outburst, Felix took one good look at me before slowly leaving my line of sight. His tall figure swayed from side to side.

Thanks to Felix, my evening was ruined!

Just as I stomped my way back home, Colin appeared. Wearing a simple wool coat and dark slacks, he looked handsome and classy.

“Did you enjoy yourself?” I protested grumpily.

After all these years, Colin still had his bad habit of eavesdropping.

“I wasn’t eavesdropping. I came to look for you, but I ran into Felix. I didn’t want you to be affected by my presence, so I excused myself.”

“Tsk. As if I’d believe that.” I pouted. “Are you free now? You’re done with

“Nope. I still have work to do later.”

“Why are you here, then?”

your work?”

“Nothing. I wanted to check on my baby girl because I was worried about her.”

Was Colin flirting with me?

Recalling what Felix had said to me earlier, I could feel my cheeks turning red.

Urgh, I must be overthinking this. Colin was just a friend. Why would he flirt with me?

After Colin walked me back to my apartment, he returned to his work. He asked me to sleep

early and told me that he was picking me up tomorrow at noon for lunch.

Chapter 206

I was overjoyed: From now on, Colin would take care of me, and I no longer needed to worry about food. Oh, *c'est la vie!*

But life, as usual, was fond of cracking tasteless jokes. I often ran into those who I absolutely abhorred.

I woke up early the next morning. For the first time in forever, I was motivated enough to go for a jog. Unfortunately for me, I bumped into Felix and Lilac.

I was jogging on the running track and they were walking in the opposite direction. There was no way to avoid them.

I thought I could pretend they were not there and jog past them. But Lilac approached me with a bright smile and clung to my arm.

I shuddered, not liking the sudden physical contact. I took a few steps back to create some distance between us. Warily, I eyed her and said, "You can speak to me from that distance. We're not close enough for any physical contact."

Lilac, as shameless as she was, paid my aloofness no mind. She approached me, forcing me to retreat a few more steps. "Today is my birthday, Lulu. Felix and I want to buy you a meal.

You must join us!"

Ew. Why should I join them? No thanks!

“I have plans with Colin, so I can’t be there. Enjoy lunch and happy birthday.”

“Colin will be there too, won’t he?”

Lilac clung to Felix’s body and looked at him with her big, vulnerable eyes. There was nothing in Felix’s orbs; they were just like a void. Impassively, Felix said yes after a long

pause.

“If Colin’s there, I’ll be there. Just text me the address. And move, you’re in my way.”

Since Felix and Lilac were Colin’s younger brother and future sister-in-law respectively, I didn’t want to put Colin in a difficult situation. I could attend this lunch for his sake.

After the class at noon, Colin called and told me to meet them first as he would be late due to

work.

I went to the address Lilac had sent me. Felix and Lilac were already inside.

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Lilac was snuggling against Felix. Her nose was red and her eyes were puffy, as if she had cried earlier. Felix lowered his head as he consoled her gently with his words.

Wasn’t today her birthday? I had a hunch that there was more to this lunch than met the eye.

As soon as I sat down, Lilac began weeping.

I was impressed, really. There seemed to be a button for her tears. When she pressed it, tears would come gushing down her cheeks for as long as she wanted.

“Felix, can you tell what I said to Lulu? I’m so worried about her.”

What? Lilac was crying for me? What did I do this time?

Ugh, dealing with a drama queen was such a hassle.

I shouldn’t have agreed to have lunch with them.

“I see this is a trap. Just cut to the chase. I don’t need all that unnecessary acting,” I said impatiently. I didn’t have it in me to handle these two crazy people.

Often I wondered if I was too blind to see Felix’s true character when I was 18, or if Lilac was such a bad influence that she turned the well-mannered boy I knew into a toxic guy.

What happened to Felix? How did he become so... unreasonable?

“Just tell her, Felix.” Lilac’s cloy voice was giving me the heebie-jeebies.

Felix dried Lilac’s tears and thought for a while, trying to phrase the sentence as nicely as possible. Then, he uttered, “Lulu, you’re single, and because of that, Lilac feels very insecure about this relationship. Can you date someone?”

“Mhm. Lulu, I know some tall and handsome classmates in my faculty. Do you want me to introduce them to you?” Lilac added.

“A classmate of mine is a decent guy. He met you not long ago and has a crush on you. He asked me to set you and him up for a date.”

Felix took out his phone and showed me a number in his contacts. “This is his number. If you don’t mind meeting him, he’ll call you.”

Chapter 207

I sniggered internally.

So this was why they invited me out for lunch!

They wanted to find me a boyfriend. Why? Did my being single somehow bother them? Felix had told me yesterday that Colin wasn’t the right guy for me. And today, he wanted me to date someone as soon as possible.

Was he somehow afraid that I’d date Colin for real, so he wanted to hook me up with

someone else instead?

Regardless, after the weird speech Felix gave me last night, he wanted to set me up on dates tonight. His back-and-forth decision was perplexing, to say the least.

“What is wrong with the two of you? My love life doesn’t have anything to do with you, so mind your own business. Also, I don’t need to go through you before I date someone now, do I? Who do you think you are? Stop flattering yourself.”

Furious, I toppled the glass of water on the table, spilling its contents on the surface.

“Calm down, Lulu. Lili just wants some reassurance because we used to... I’m not forcing you to find a boyfriend right away. But you’re old enough to start looking. I want you to be cared

for.”

I almost snorted out loud.

They were doing this for my own good?

Oh, these two nosy individuals. Who were they to worry about my love life? Even my parents weren't worried about that yet. What was wrong with them?

"We used to what? Tell us, Felix. We used to what? And stop using 'we'. You and I are not

that close. If Lilac needs reassurance, that's your problem; not mine. Colin is taking good

care of me, so don't you worry about me.

"Felix, Lilac, let this be a warning. Stay away from me and stop telling me what to do with my life. It's annoying!"

I couldn't believe that Felix would go this far for Lilac.

They could do what normal couples did and just leave me alone. My relationship status was none of their concern. Did they have too much time on their hands?

+35 BONUS

I dropped the gifts I bought on the commercial street and left. Felix called out to make me stay, but I promptly ignored him.

I was on the verge of exploding, but suddenly, Colin came from outside and grabbed me. He asked me what happened.

“It’s all your fault. Why did you agree to have lunch with them? Are you working with them. to bully me? Urgh!” I swatted Colin’s hand away and bolted out.

I was so mad.

What they did made no sense.

I was minding my own business. I didn’t cross or provoke them. Why did they have to come and ruin my mood again and again?

I didn’t cut ties with them, but it wasn’t because I was meek. It was because I still cherished the time we spent growing up together.

But that had nothing to do with love.

Infuriated by Felix and Lilac, I took out my frustration on Colin and ran back to my school.

Fortunately, Jesselton College wasn’t too far, so it didn’t take me a long time.

The corridor was empty as it was break time. I sat in a corner and sulked on my lonesome.

Colin found me and sat next to me. Pulling me into his arms, he patted my back.

I knew that he had always been behind me. I was just too mad to talk to him.

“What happened? Tell me,” Colin patted my back and cooed.

“They bullied me.” I sniffled, feeling anguished.

“What did they do? Tell me everything. I’ll avenge you.”

“Felix said I was single and that made Lilac feel very insecure about their relationship.”

“What then?”

“They asked me to find a boyfriend.”

“Then find one. You’re 22 years old now. It’s time for you to date someone.”

“Why should I listen to them? Why should I do what I’m told?” I raised my voice abruptly, which frightened Colin.

Chapter 208

I was mad. Why was Colin taking their side? It must be because Felix was his younger brother, while I was just an outsider. Infuriated, I tried to pry Colin’s hands off my shoulder in an attempt to struggle free.

But Colin’s hands were glued to my body. No matter how hard I fought, they wouldn’t budge. Instead, they held me even tighter. My face was inches away from his chest.

“Let go of me. You’re one of them! Stay away from me!”

“I’m taking nobody’s side, Lulu. I’m just trying to reason with you. Girls your age

your age should look for a boyfriend. It has nothing to do with whether I agree with Felix and Lilac’s demand or not. You’re single by choice. But others might think that you’re single because you still have feelings for Felix, no?”

People would interpret it that way? That was news to me.

But if that was true, I should start looking for a boyfriend. Queenie and Jade had moved in with their boyfriends. Some of my friends were taken as well. I was the only single woman. That made me look quite bad.

“But boyfriends don’t grow on trees. How am I supposed to find someone right now? Besides, I want someone a million times better than Felix to piss Lilac off.”

“Your standard is quite high,” Colin raised his brow and teased me. I sensed jealousy in his eyes.

“Exactly. So it’ll take some time to find someone like that.”

Colin suddenly leaned in, pressing on my shoulder and forcing me to face him. “What about the guy before you now?”

The guy before me? Did Colin mean himself?

Was he confessing to me?

I blushed and looked away, avoiding his gaze. Either something must have gotten into Colin or he was drunk. Why would he flirt with me?

My heart began pounding, and a surge of heat returned to my cheeks.

“What? You’re my friend. Besides, there are plenty of fish in the ocean. I’m not obliged to date one of the Whites.”

+35 BONUS

That was an expression I learned from my friends. I liked it, but it could sound rude too. In the heat of the moment, those words came out of my mouth.

I regretted it as soon as I heard what I had said. Worried that Colin might get mad, I glanced at him furtively to read his facial expression.

Looking at his tender eyes and solemn expression, my wavering eyes stopped. He held my cheeks in his hands and touched my forehead with his.

“Lulu, Felix and I are brothers, but he is he and I am me. Have I ever let you down all these years? You want to piss Lilac off? The easiest way is to marry me. You’ll have the right to make their lives a living hell. They can’t even complain because you’ll be their sister-in-law.

Colin’s husky voice made my heart race even faster. I felt parched all of a sudden. I’d love to have an icy beverage to soothe my throat.

He cooed softly as he spoke. There was sincerity in his dazzling eyes, with a hint of passion

unfamiliar to me.

He was so enticing that I wanted to say yes.

“Colin, are you flirting with me?” I mustered these few words.

I was taught to ask if I had any questions.

“Yes. Have you only noticed it now?”

“But you

don't like me."

"You dummy. Is it not obvious enough? I've liked you for 22 years. That has never changed,"

confessed Colin in his masculine yet seductive voice.

22 years? That was when I was born...

I was stunned. I stared at Colin, feeling his hot breath on my face. My reflection appeared in

his eyes.

Colin liked me. And all this time, I wasn't aware of it.

Chapter 209

Colin liked me. And all this time, I wasn't aware of it.

I was shocked. I found it hard to believe.

But now that I thought about it, he pampered and spoiled me. He cared for and protected me. He even risked his life to fight Shawn. He did everything he could for me. All of this was hinting at me that he liked me.

Yet in the past three years, I simply thought that he was being a good friend, that I was just

his sister from another mother.

I recalled what Helen told me two days ago. I recalled the moment when Queenie and Julia rolled their eyes on me. Everyone knew that Colin liked me, except for me.

Was I that oblivious?

My brain had trouble processing the shocking revelation.

While Colin was right, I found it rather awkward to regard one of my best friends as a boyfriend.

I panicked. The hands on my sides fumbled for reassurance.

“Lulu, do you think I’m not as good as Felix? Is that why you want to reject me now?” Colin

lamented.

“No, not at all.” This was too much for me to handle. I didn’t expect him to confess to me all

of a sudden.

I had once fantasized about the scene where a guy confessed his love to me. I just didn’t know the person would be Colin.

Then be my girlfriend. I’ll spoil you like a princess now and forever. I won’t let you cry. Okay, Lulu?”

I blinked. I wanted to say no, but no words could escape my mouth.

His eyes bewitched me; the mole at the corner of his eyes hypnotized me.

Inside my mind, there was a war. The part of me that wanted to say yes fought against the part of me that wanted to say no.

I loved Colin. Other than Dad, he was the second nicest guy to me. We had been friends for

1/2

+35 BONUS

more than 20 years. I could count on him; I could laugh and cry with him; I could take out my frustrations and anger on him.

And he wouldn't make a fuss. He never gave me the cold shoulder and was always patient with me. I believed he would remain as sweet as he was now no matter who I became.

But I had always regarded him as a friend. If he became my boyfriend, would I be able to hang out with him like I did before?

Having a friend, whom I regarded as my older brother, turn into a boyfriend did not sit right

with me.

Furthermore, he was Felix's older brother. Everyone in school knew that Felix and I were once arranged to marry each other. The whole thing fell apart during my last year in high school. It happened back home, but for some reason, everyone in school knew what had

happened.

Fortunately, I was friends with everyone, so no one used that incident to mock me or bully me. But they still gossiped about me.

If they knew that I was dating Felix's brother, more rumors would come out.

I was young back then, so I couldn't care less about rumors. But I was an adult now. Would I be able to live with rumors?

Colin was sweet, so very sweet. I wanted to date him, but I didn't have the courage to. Not now, at least.

"Say yes, Lulu. Let me take care of you forever, please."

Colin whispered again. There was so much love in the eyes. No one could resist a confession from someone like him.

His lips slowly approached mine. My heart pounded even faster, and my cheeks were burning.

As Colin's perfect features came closer and closer into my view, an image of 18-year-old Felix waiting for me at the staircase while carrying a schoolbag emerged in my mind.

Chapter 210

No! They were brothers!

I had a sudden realization and quickly pushed him away with my hands. "Colin, give me some time to think this through."

Disappointment briefly flashed on his face, but a smile quickly took its place. "Okay, you have five seconds to think this through. If you don't say no, I'll take it as a yes. One, two, three, four, five. Time's up! You didn't say no, so from now on, I'm your boyfriend!"

"Congratulations, Luna. You're no longer single."

Before I could react, Colin leaned in once again. I could smell his warm breath on me, and I panicked.

My mind was messy. My limbs acted on their own as I began to thrash about.

At first, Colin tried to contain me. But as my movements became more and more violent, he

let

go. He was afraid that I might get hurt.

Colin, standing there like a Prince Charming, slowly put down his arms. His straight back was slightly hunched, as if he was in pain. The glimmer in his eyes dimmed until there was nothing.

The corners of his lips curled into a wry smile as he forced himself to console me, "Lulu, I... I was just joking with you. There's no need to be afraid."

I staggered backward. Only when I felt safe enough in the distance I had created that I lifted my head to look at him.

Colin was still smiling. His face was as handsome as usual. But there was no light in his eyes, only hurt and disappointment.

I reached where my heart was. For some reason, it hurt.

For a moment, I didn't have it in me to see the sad Colin. I preferred to see the Colin who would always greet me with a smiling face, the one who pampered me unconditionally.

"Please don't hate me, Lulu," said Colin seriously as he gazed at me. I thought I saw something that shouldn't be on him—desperation.

It reminded me of how desperate I was during Thanksgiving when I was 18 years old. I had offered my heart to Felix, only to have it trampled by him cruelly.

+35 BONUS

I was heartbroken.

Perhaps what they said was true—the first one to fall in love would always suffer more.

I never wanted to make Colin suffer. And I never wanted to disappoint him.

However, I wasn't ready to date him.

So please, Colin. Give me some time.

Once I thought everything through, I would give him my answer.

"I don't hate you, Colin." Colin's expression made me feel guilty. I wanted to soothe the creases between his brows. "You caught me by surprise. I need time to think this through."

Afraid of seeing the pain in Colin's eyes, I lowered my head. I kicked the pebbles on the ground with the tip of my shoes to hide my unease.

A lot of things were going through my mind. I was overwhelmed by so many emotions. Just like that, tears came gushing out of my eyes.

I bit my lip to force myself not to make any noise, and I berated myself for being a coward deep down. Whenever something happened, crying was my only response.

Colin noticed that I was weeping. He wanted to hug me, but he was worried that I might fight back violently like I did previously. Anxious, he could only console me verbally by telling me that he wouldn't force me at all.

But I couldn't control my tears. They came gushing out incessantly.