

## **Seduced 41**

### Chapter 41

I told myself I could do it. I could still be that cheerful young girl named Luna without him.

torrential rain had caused a brief flood to rise above curb-level. I couldn't see the road or what was beneath my feet save for dark, muddy water.

It was a perfect metaphor for my current state after deciding to let go of Felix and stay away from him. I still hadn't found a way nor knew what my next step should be.

I carefully felt my way into the water, tears falling down my eyes and blurring my vision.

I was aggrieved and angry. Why was I always the one left behind? What did I do wrong? I liked Felix so much and treated him like my everything. Why did he have to treat me this way in return? 1

Was shame the only result of liking someone?

I couldn't hold back the tears as they fell.

I told myself not to cry. I had walked this street countless times that I could go back home with or

without Felix.

But I couldn't control my aching heart. Tears continued falling as I saw Felix and Lilac running together, laughing in the rain in my mind's eye.

I was so sad and aggrieved, yet I had no one to talk to.

Sadness filled my entire being.

The strong wind upturned my umbrella. I dragged my broken umbrella, wiping away the rainwater and tears from my cheeks.

I faced the thunderstorm alone like an abandoned puppy, sadly licking my own wounds.

The strong wind slowed my path forward. The way back usually took only about 20 minutes, yet every step I took was strenuous. For every step I took forward, I'd be pushed back two steps by the wind.

I tossed the umbrella away after it became a nuisance.

The wind and rain were so strong that I couldn't open my eyes. I could only walk back home based on intuition.

I kept on consoling myself that I would be home soon. I just had to hold on a little longer. Mom, Dad, and

the warm light of home would be waiting for me.

As the night grew darker, the strange shadows cast by the streetlamps flitted through the buildings. They seemed like deadly beasts and monsters in the dark.

It was too late by the time I realized something was wrong with the ground. I couldn't retract my foot fast enough. It felt like a large hand had dragged me down into a giant whirlpool,

The world swam before me as I landed on solid ground. Dirty water fell down on me like a waterfall.

I suddenly remembered Mom had told me this morning about an abandoned storm drain on the street. It was dangerous as it didn't have a lid.

Based on her words, I recalled where it was and was certain I had fallen into it right now.

I was in a life-or-death situation less than two weeks past the last one.

I had Jade and my friends beside me the last time. But this time. I was all alone.

I thought my luck ended with Felix on that year's Thanksgiving. Now, he was the bane of my existence. I would surely be down on luck with him around.

I fell off a cliff last time and down a drain this time. What about next time?

I didn't dare imagine.

As the water level quickly rose, I forced myself to stand up through the pain.

My right leg was numb. A large gash had opened up on my left arm. Blood gushed out profusely but was quickly diluted by the rainwater above. It then trickled down and disappeared into the water.

I leaned against the drain walls, watching sullenly as the water continued rising. The bells of death tolled

faintly in my ears.

Chapter 42

I was regretting my decision.

I shouldn't have believed Felix's bullshit nor decided to eat that shitty barbecue with him.

I cursed myself angrily. Had I never had a barbecue before? Did I have to make myself so pathetic all just for a barbecue?

Yet I had barely taken a few bites before nearly dying in this damned drain! I really did deserve this!

But I couldn't accept dying just like this!

"Is anyone there? Can someone help me?" I cried out as loudly as I could, hoping some passerby in the rain could hear my voice and pull me up.

I didn't have high hopes, but I didn't want to give up either.

There was nothing else in the street besides the roar of thunder and lightning.

Dread and fear swarmed me.

I tried getting myself out of the drain several times with my own strength. It wasn't a large hole. I thought

I could do it.

But the walls were too slick to climb. My injured leg wasn't helping either. My chances of climbing out of here were basically nil.

Was I going to die without a trace just like this?

Dying like this was actually a good thing. At least I wouldn't need to remember how painful my days with

Felix were.

But I couldn't die.

I still had Mom and Dad. They'd be devastated without me.

Strangely, Felix didn't cross my mind at this point in time. It was my dear parents that I missed.

Felix had wounded and disappointed me too much.

I yelled like an angry beast in the drain, desperation filling my cries.

When the water in the storm drain reached my chest level, an old scavenger found me.

He toled at me from the edge of the drain. It only by the dimm flashlight in his shabby raincoat pocket

Teb mesti Im hurt cried for help. Dirty rainwater filed my mouth. It tasted bitter and acrid

Don't be scared go get some things to come and help you"

The oilt man leit, leaving the world cold once again.

Il faced all my worst fears alone on that silent night. I wated quietly, believing in the old man's kindness

and using that he would return

I don't remember how to cry only wanted to get out of this dangerous old storm drain as fast as could

The old man soon returned. He trossed down a long, thick rope. "Wrap the rope tight around your waist.

must've been fighened because I studied and failed to be the rope several times.

When I finally dic. The old man used all his might to pull me up. The veins in his bony hands throbbbed also used my fingers to push onto the drain walls, trying to reduce my body weight

We tried several times but to no avail. I fell back into the well again and again, the wounds on my body only increasing in number. I was exhausted.

As I cried fearfully gathered all my strength and continued trying

The old man looked weaker now, yet he was still encouraging me, so what reason did I have to give up?

On the 14th my summoned all the energy in my body and used the old man's strength to hoist myser up along the dran wals.

it

Through my swimming vision. I looked at the familar streets, unrelenting rain, and kind, worried old man. I forced out a sank you and finally blacked out.

1 had many strange dreams. All of them were memories of my past.

Chapter 43

When I was five years old, Mom bought some fish back home and kept a few lively ones in the tank. A scrawny young boy and I lay near the tank and happily watched the fish swim about. We wanted to raise them and then release them into the ocean.

When I was seven years old, I got really into movies depicting powerful skilled female warriors riding on horses, roaming the world, and exacting justice with a sword in hand. So, I started practicing martial arts, wanting to become a famous, righteous Robin Hood-like vigilante.

But I ended up falling from a fence and hurting my kneecap. I wailed painfully on the ground.

Felix's brother, Colin, consoled me with a lollipop. He said, "Warriors never cry."

I looked up at him and asked, "Do warriors eat lollipops, then?"

Colin thought about it for a moment before nodding. "They do. Warriors love lollipops."

When I was ten years old, I skipped a grade. All my classmates called me a freak, someone who was more capable than them, even though I was younger. They gossiped about me behind my back, yet no

one wanted to play with me.

I sat on the field with my bag on my shoulders, crying. A young teen I had never seen before came up by my side and handed me an exquisitely boxed cake. "You'll only have more energy to cry once you finish

eating. Good luck to you."

I finished eating the cake but forgot to continue crying.

I turned 13 years old in the blink of an eye. Three hooligans surrounded demanding I give them my

allowance.

I was young but knew to defend my wealth already. I shook my head, one hand clutching my pocket tight

and refusing to give them my money.

Just before they started swinging punches at me, a teen appeared out of nowhere and came to my defense, standing in front of me. He said to hurry up and run if I didn't want to get beaten up.

When the three hooligans ran off, the teen carried me home on his back. I suddenly felt like I might actually be a princess.

That year, I wore a light blue ruffled dress and brought all 999 paper stars I folded by hand to Aunt Mel's house. It was Felix's birthday, and I wanted to give him all the luck in the world.

I ran behind Felix as he marched forward on the way to the school, yet I was never able to catch up. I asked him to wait for me, but he only said coldly. "You can still make it in time. Slow down."

The dreams of the past played on. Even in dreams, Felix was still able to wound me so much that I wanted to cry.

Oh, right. I saw Colin. It had been nearly two years since he had been home. It had been so long that I nearly forgot about his existence.

years of absence. Colin rarely updated his social media status. I had no other way to understand what was going on with him. I didn't know how much Colin had changed. Was he still the boy who would give me sweets and cakes when I was sad?

We would only greet one another on holidays on these two

Colin was the only source of warmth in my dreams.

I followed the brightly lit road ahead. A sudden cloud of mist appeared ahead. I soon got lost in it, unable to remember where I wanted to go.



“Lulu, come back, Lulu!” I heard Mom’s voice calling for me to come home.

Mom’s voice was nasally and panicked. It sounded like she was crying!

All of a sudden, I was a child again.

Mom was

walking through an empty street while carrying me in her arms. The sounds of her shoes. scraping the street were especially loud.

A large net suddenly fell on us from somewhere. Mom pushed me away with all her might, yet she

herself was caught under the net. Spikes suddenly shot out of it, glowing a faint blue light. Mom’s skin was cut by the spikes, and the injuries started to bleed.

Chapter 44

“Run, Lulu!” Mom’s voice grew weaker as the net tightened around her.

“No, Mom. I don’t want to go alone. Can you please come with me?”

Mom shook her head as she grew more distant. I got up to chase after her, terrified.

“Wait for me, Mom!”

I opened my eyes all of a sudden.

Bright sunlight shot right into my eyes. I quickly covered them.

A warm yet dry hand touched my shoulder immediately. A voice called out, "Don't move. You're still healing. Dear, Lulu's woken up."

I returned to my senses. The sharp smell of sanitizer filled my nostrils. There was an IV drip bag right above my head.

I was still alive!

I remembered now. That kind old man saved me.

I survived yet another catastrophe!

"How are you feeling, darling? Do you feel sick anywhere?" Mom's delicate yet loving face appeared in my vision. How long had she been crying? Her eyes were frighteningly swollen.

"Mom, I called softly, caressing her cheek.

Mom pressed my hand to her face as tears of joy burst forth. "Sweet child. I'm so glad you're okay."

Her voice grew quieter and quieter until it only became painful sobs. Tears coated my hands. "I thought I would never hear your voice again. I'm so happy you're still here to call me 'Mom'!"

"Don't cry. Mom. I'm okay." I consoled her. I then turned around to look for my father.

"Dad's here, Lulu. Don't be scared." Dad was by the other side of the bed.

When I saw his face, I wanted to cry.

Was this still my handsome and elegant father? His hair was a mess, his face swollen, and stubble all over his chin. Only those eyes radiated the familiar light of love.

“Why don’t you keep Mom in check, Dad? She’s going to drown me again.” I teased.

The three of us laughed. Mom gently patted my head while playfully reprimanding me. Dad turned around and hugged both of us, chuckling happily.

As we laughed, all of us burst into tears again. This time, it was tears of joy.

Mom said that I was so cold and lifeless when they got to me. Even my breathing was shallow. They had been so scared.

Dad said they thought I might never open my eyes again. They cried so much it felt like they had no tears

left to cry.

I looked at Mom’s and Dad’s frail faces and knew I had really worried them now.

Sorry, Mom and Dad. I messed up this time. It wouldn’t happen again.

After crying and laughing again, I asked Mom where the kind old man who saved me was and whether!

could still find him.

I had passed out the moment I exited that drain.

It was the old man who went to the shops nearby and called an ambulance via one of the shop owner's phones. He then waited by my side for the ambulance to arrive, accompanied me to the hospital, and even paid for my ER fees with what little cash he had.

"Thank goodness for the old man, or else my daughter Mom's eyes teared up again before she could finish speaking.

Dad patted her shoulder to console her, telling her that I was watching and that she shouldn't make me start crying, too.

"When I'm all better, I want to thank the old man myself, Mom," I said.

I would've died if it weren't for him. He saved my life.

"Okay. When you're all healed, we'll all go and thank the old man."

"How did you know I was at the hospital, Dad?"

Chapter 45

Mom's and Dad's faces turned gloomy in an instant. Mom's jaw pulled taut as rage boiled in her eyes.

I hadn't returned home even when it was nearly 9:00 pm that night. When Mom called my number, she found my phone on the couch in the living room, left behind. Felix's phone had been shut down.

Mom said she was really worried because the thunderstorm was too violent. So, she went to knock on Aunt Melinda's door to ask my whereabouts.

But when Mom opened the door, she saw Felix sitting on the couch, cuddling with Lilac and feeding her fruit.

When Mom asked him where I was, he was confused. "Luna isn't back yet? We parted ways on the street

earlier."

When Mom and Dad figured out where exactly Felix and I parted ways, they ran out looking for me without even taking an umbrella.

No one was out in the streets while the rain poured.

Mom and Dad panicked. They knocked on every single shop door to ask whether anyone had seen me.

The storm was strong that day. Most of the shops had closed for the day. There were very few people Mom and Dad managed to ask.

Only afterward did they hear from a pet shop owner that an ambulance had come by earlier. It seemed that someone had fallen into a storm drain, though the owner wasn't sure if that person was who Mom

and Dad were looking for.

When Mom and Dad arrived at the hospital, I was already being treated in the ER. Beside me was that

kind old man.

I smiled faintly after hearing their explanation. Sadness trickled into my heart like a small stream.

“I really didn’t expect Felix to be so irresponsible... Mom’s face grew red with anger as she recalled what happened.

“Don’t be angry, Mom. Don’t blame Felix. It made sense for him to leave with his girlfriend. It’s not like our relationship is anything special.

“If you want someone to blame, blame me for going out to eat with him in the first place. This won’t happen again, Mom.”

+15 BONUS

Mom’s and Dad’s eyes were filled with tenderness when they looked at me.

Mom cried again, mumbling, “Oh, my silly child,”

After consoling the both of them, someone knocked on the ward door.

To no one’s surprise, it was Uncle Austin and Aunt Melinda. They had brought all sorts of gifts over. Behind them was Felix. Lilac didn’t tag along.

“Has Lulu woken up, Harper? This is all Felix’s fault. I’ve brought him here for Lulu to deal with. She can hit him or yell at him for all I care. I won’t take no for an answer,” Aunt Melinda said.

When she saw that I was awake, she caressed my cheek. Guilt filled her eyes.

Aunt Melinda had watched me grow up since I was a young child. She treated me very well over the years. It wouldn’t be too out of place to say that she treated me as her own daughter.

Aunt Melinda placed the things she brought on the table and began unpacking them. “I favorite honey cakes and jellies. There’s some extra honey in these, just the way you like it.”

labour

Mom went over to stop Aunt Melinda. She put back all the foodstuffs Aunt Melinda had prepared into the bag. "No need. We don't need anything here. Thank you for making the trip, but we can take care of Lulu.

You guys should go now."

Aunt Melinda could tell Mom was being distant. Her eyes reddened with tears. "Don't be like this, Harper. It's just some food I prepared for Luna. Please don't push me away."

Aunt Melinda set down the things in hand and pulled Felix over. "Apologize to Lulu right now."

Felix didn't look well. His eyes were dodgy as he stumbled over. "Luna Lulu, I'm sorry, I didn't know-

"It's fine. You did nothing wrong. Why are you apologizing? I'm fine. You should go home."

He was the one who asked me out and abandoned me by the side of the road on the same evening.  
What

was the point in apologizing now?

Chapter 46

If it weren't for the kind old man I encountered, I would be a lifeless body by now. And a simple sorry couldn't reverse the situation.

If I had known that the barbecue dinner with him would lead to this. I wouldn't have gone, even if it meant death. I blamed it on my lack of willpower.

So, it was my own fault, not his. I didn't need his light-hearted apology after he left me alone to face it and death.

Felix seemed to sense my indifference. He leaned forward and reached out to check my forehead temperature. He was about to say something when I avoided his touch and cut off his yet-unspoken words. "I'm tired and need rest. Leave, and don't come back."

Perhaps my coldness made him uncomfortable. Guilt appeared in his eyes as he tried to justify himself. Lulu, you never used to treat me like this."

With a faint smile, I squinted my eyes against the harsh sunlight. "The past is the past, and I've already apologized for my mistakes. There's no need to bring it up again."

It had been over a decade, and I had always treated him like a deity.

I turned away and closed my eyes, shutting out everyone.

The hospital room fell into silence, disrupted only by the quiet rhythm of a few people breathing.

"Gerald, Lulu endured severe injuries and nearly lost her life this time. It was all Felix's fault. We've come

to sincerely apologize, and you..."

My usually refined and gentle dad abruptly cut off Uncle Austin. His typically warm voice now held a rare trace of anger. "Austin, Lulu doesn't blame Felix, so don't worry."

He continued, "She was lucky not to have lost her life in the storm drain, and we're grateful for that. The doctor just said Lulu needs rest. I won't send you off."

"That's right, we'll take care of her ourselves. We don't need Felix's apology, and we won't seek further



connection. Lulu needs rest. You can go back now. You don't need to come again."

Mom had never been so indifferent to Aunt Melinda. She was doing it for me.

"Lulu." Aunt Melinda stood at the edge of my bed, softly calling my name.

I opened my eyes and smiled at her. "Aunt Mel, I'm fine, really."

+15 ROP

Uncle Austin knew my parents were upset, so he decided not to say much. He glared at Felix and led the way out.

Aunt Melinda advised me to take care and promised to visit again, but Mom and I declined.

Felix was the last to leave. He lingered by the door as if he had many things on his mind.

i pretended not to notice him and asked Mom to peel a peach for me.

Our paths had crossed in that drain, and now, it was all over.

From now on, we would just be neighbors. I would keep my distance, but I wouldn't harbor hatred.

In the end, he hadn't really done anything wrong. He just didn't like me, a

It was he who had invited me to the barbecue, but it was my choice to go with him.

Leaving me on the street and taking Lilac with him made complete sense.

The mistake lay in the heavy rain that day, the fact that no one promptly covered the drain's lid, and my own carelessness that led to my fall

I had liked him for so many years, and the affection I invested might not be quickly retrieved. However, my rationality would always remind me to distance myself and forget about him.

The injuries this time were much worse than the previous fall off the cliff. Apart from extensive

abrasions, my lower back had a wound stitched with 16 stitches. It had been soaked in sewage for too long, resulting in various degrees of infection.

Today's Bonus Offer

GET IT NOW

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+16 RONUS

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Chapter 47

In the following days, I started running a fever, feeling disoriented and uncomfortable with pain all over

my body.

Jade and the others visited me and shared jokes to cheer me up every day. Yet, I couldn't muster any interest. Seeing my lack of enthusiasm, they fell silent and quietly kept me company throughout the day.

Ever since the Whites left that night, my parents and I tacitly avoided mentioning the incident.

I wasn't sure if Aunt Melinda had visited me again. But my parents didn't bring it up, and I preferred not to

dwell on it.

My parents devoted all their attention to me, seemingly cutting ties with the White family.

I observed Mom several times, especially two days ago when she turned Aunt Melinda away during her visit. There was a subtle hint of concern in Mom's eyes.

I sighed inwardly, realizing that my condition had strained the relationship between Mom and Aunt

Melinda.

Having a daughter as fragile and helpless as me could be both a blessing and a curse for my mom. However, judging by the current situation, the latter seemed more likely.

Felix visited once with Lilac when my parents were meeting with the doctor to discuss my condition. I woke up from a nap to find them standing by my bedside.

Lilac leaned delicately against Felix, and her big, watery eyes were fixed on me.

I couldn't be bothered to pay attention to her act and remained silent.

Surprisingly, Felix didn't dwell on my indifference toward Lilac. Instead, he sincerely apologized for leaving me alone on the road and asked for forgiveness.

I felt indifferent to his words.

He had already said the same things before, and I didn't need any apology. I calmly told him that the severe injuries were my own fault and had nothing to do with him.

If I hadn't been so stubbornly infatuated with him, I wouldn't have agreed to go out with him in the first place.

It would have spared me from this pitiful and embarrassing situation.

12.

Felix kept apologizing, and I grew a bit annoyed. I patiently informed him that I didn't blame him. If anyone were to blame, it would be the property management.

If they had identified and corrected the hidden danger promptly, I wouldn't have suffered this. I even mentioned that I planned to confront the property management once I recovered.

I maintained a calm smile throughout the conversation. I didn't place blame on him, nor did I engage in any verbal exchange with Lilac, who remained silent throughout.

Despite growing up together, Felix harmed me. I certainly wouldn't have expected Lilac, who supposedly considered me a rival, to be kind to me.

I truly held no grudges as I knew my place in Felix's heart.

Since Felix had no feelings toward me, I'd free myself from holding onto any feelings for him.

When Felix left, his expression seemed somewhat unpleasant. However, I couldn't discern if it was due to guilt or regret.

Hence, I chose to disregard it.

I guessed it was time to let go of Felix.

The next morning, when Mom returned from buying breakfast, her face was stern and unhappy.

I asked her what happened.

She told me that she ran into Lilac and Felix downstairs. Lilac wanted to come up and see me, but Felix refused, leading to a heated argument in the hall.

“What’s there to see? Clearly, they’re not up to any good. That girl doesn’t seem innocent. Lulu, stay away

from them in the future.”

I just shrugged it off.

Later, I learned that Uncle Austin and Aunt Melinda had a major confrontation with Felix and Lilac because of my situation. They explicitly stated that they considered me their daughter-in-law.

Even if I didn’t want anything with Felix, the White family’s daughter-in-law could be any girl in the world, but Lilac would never step past the White family’s doors.

Chapter 48

I believed Lilac’s visit that day was to prove that she had won Felix over me.

I initially had a good impression of Lilac, thinking she was fragile and pitiful. If they truly loved each other, I could give them my blessings.

After all, Felix’s dislike for me had nothing to do with Lilac.

However, Lilac's actions left me disappointed after a few incidents.

I always believed that one should have a pure heart regardless of one's background or wealth. Lilac was under 20 years old, but she appeared to have been tainted by worldly matters and was too scheming.

I wondered it, with time, Felix would come to regret discovering her true nature. Could their present love endure, allowing them to age together?

During breakfast, I brought up the topic of moving again. Dad mentioned that they had already found a house and paid the deposit.

It was in a new community farther away in the city center. However, the house was still under construction and wouldn't be ready until next year.

I felt a tinge of regret. Ideally, I wanted to leave immediately and sever ties with Felix completely.

Reality didn't permit it, but I accepted the situation. Moving out next year still felt promising. At least there was something to look forward to.

After a full ten days in the hospital, my physical scars were healing, but a wound in my heart seemed impossible to mend.

When I got home and lay on my big bed, there were no IV bags hanging above me, no pungent smell of disinfectant, and no doctors and nurses routinely checking me like a pancake every morning and night. I was at ease.

Around 5:00 pm, Aunt Melinda came to visit. She first put down two big bags of fruits and snacks, then brought in two large plates of freshly cooked ravioli.

At that moment. Mom was unaware that I had just woken up from a nap. She told Aunt Melinda that I was still sleeping.

Aunt Melinda didn't express much, but I could sense her disappointment. She probably came to visit me.

Mom and Aunt Melinda chit-chatted in the living room. My room door wasn't fully closed, and i could hear their conversation very clearly.

Aunt Melinda first mentioned Felix's situation and repeatedly apologized to Mom.

Mom calmly told her it wasn't his fault and that it had nothing to do with him.

Then, she talked about how our family had already chosen a house and would move out next year when it was ready.

Aunt Melinda fell silent for a while and then teared up.

"Harper, whether you believe it or not, I truly feel sorry for Lulu. It's our fault that she suffered so much and almost lost her life. If I had known Felix was such a mess, I wouldn't have mentioned that agreement

back then."

her tears a

Aunt Melinda wiped said, "It was just a joke that's not meant to be taken seriously. Nowadays, the younger generation can choose their relationships freely, and we shouldn't interfere."



After a brief pause, she continued, "I want to intervene, but the kid is all grown up, and he doesn't heed my words. Harper, Lulu is a good child, and she treats Felix very well. Passing up on Lulu will be a loss for him throughout his life. He will surely regret it later on."

After Aunt Melinda finished speaking, she silently shed tears again. Mom's heart softened as she listened to Aunt Melinda's sincere words, and their decades-long friendship became less strained. Mom reassured her not to dwell on it too much and that everything would eventually pass.

#### Chapter 49

"Harper, we've been friends for over 20 years. Staying at your place feels as comfy as my own home. But with you moving, it's like there's an emptiness in my heart.

"If it weren't for Felix's mistakes, this wouldn't be happening. Just the thought of being apart from you

hurts," Aunt Melinda said.

"This isn't his fault. We're moving because we like the new place and the neighborhood's architecture. It really has nothing to do with Felix. Don't overthink it," Mom comforted her.

"I know, Harper, I know everything," Aunt Melinda said, breaking into tears again.

I fell asleep again at some point and had a particularly frightening nightmare.

I found myself falling into an abyss surrounded by towering mountains with no visible peaks. Water relentlessly cascaded from above, swiftly engulfing me up to waist level.

All around, there were only barren mountains and tumultuous waters. I was trapped in the water, completely immobilized. When I tried to scream for help, my throat felt constricted, and I was unable to

voice a word.

Terrified and desperate, I suddenly woke up, realizing my clothes were drenched in cold sweat, making me feel sticky and uncomfortable.

After a shower and a glass of warm water from the kitchen, I returned to bed but couldn't fall asleep again. I opened my phone to watch videos.

Felix's message came in at that moment, with only a few simple words that read. "Is it because of me?"

After thinking for a while, I understood he was referring to our family moving.

Presumably, Aunt Melinda had told him about our new house, and he came to ask me about the reason.

I thought for a moment, wondering how to explain this to him. Then, I realized that buying a house was a family matter, and I didn't need to justify the reasons to him.

We eventually reached a point where neither of us spoke, and I didn't bother replying to him.

About half an hour later, he sent me a voice message on WhatsApp lasting 47 seconds. I deleted it without listening, exited the page, and immersed myself in a book I had been eager to read.

The weather the next day was exceptionally good. The autumn sky was a clear azure, and the gentle

breeze was delightful. I reclined on Dad's lounge chair in the small yard, savoring the

I wasn't sure when Felix came over, but when I noticed, he seemed to have been standing beside me for a while.

"Why didn't you reply to my messages?" He was standing against the light, and I couldn't discern his expression.

“Did you text me? I haven’t been feeling well these days and have been constantly wanting to sleep, so I didn’t pay much attention.” I said calmly.

y words.

He looked at me intensely as if he was trying to figure out the truth in my

I let him scrutinize. It didn’t matter whether it was true or false. Felix’s feelings and thoughts were no

longer my concern.

After a long while

he asked, “Lulu, will we still be friends in the future?”

“Go with the flow.” I replied with a hint of coldness and detachment.

I had given him the chance to be my lover and friend, but he didn’t value it.

The chaotic summer break finally came to an end. Under Mom’s concerned reminders and Dad’s reluctant gaze. I embarked on the journey once again.

For some reason, Felix insisted on leaving on the same day as me.

I didn’t care. If we’re leaving together, so be it. It was just a short journey from home to the airport.

The paths of our lives had long diverged.

Chapter 50

When we arrived at the airport and got out of the car, Colin's video call suddenly came in. Without much thought, I walked aside to answer.

Speaking of Colin, he truly lived up to being amazing and talented. However, there was one habit of his that I didn't understand. He rarely called for matters and always preferred video calls.

I once asked him why, and he said video calls have a loud ringtone, making them less likely to be missed.

It turned out that the institute was organizing a competition in collaboration with several prestigious schools. Renowned classical painters would serve as judges, and schools could form teams to participate. Colin asked if I wanted to join so he could team up with me.

To be somewhat precise, I came from a literary family.

My dad was a high school English teacher. If not for my mom's restraint, he could spend all day reciting poems at home for me and Mom.

My mom worked in interior design. According to my dad, she was a rare talent in her youth.

If not for family upheavals, she would have become a renowned painter by now. Working in interior design was the result of my mom's compromise under certain circumstances.

From a young age, I inherited my mom's talent and developed a deep love for drawing. For over a decade, I had persistently considered excelling in watercolor as my lifelong aspiration.

Apart from painting, Colin and I didn't interact much. Yet, his watercolor skills were impressive. His bold and precise style complemented mine perfectly, and I learned a lot from him.

He was both a mentor and a friend to me.

Watercolor was my passion, and the opportunity to team up with him in the competition was something I

truly desired.

Before concluding the call, Colin mentioned that he had returned to school and would come to pick me up.

I was glad I didn't have to carry the heavy suitcase back to school alone this time.

After ending the call, I saw Felix waiting for me on the roadside with a pile of suitcases. Lilac was leaning on his shoulder, wearing a soft smile.

+15 BONUS

"Who were you video calling?" he asked me coldly.

I was taken aback. "Someone you don't know."

Felix seemed displeased.

"Isn't it obvious? It must be her boyfriend since she's been chatting happily for so long," Lilac suddenly chimed in.

"But Lulu, your boyfriend isn't up to par. You suffered serious injuries, and he never bothered to visit you throughout the entire two months of summer vacation. Look at Felix. He finds time to accompany me.

That's how a boyfriend should be."

Sure enough, Lilac's words were nothing but a stream of unpleasant remarks.

I didn't bother with Lilac and proceeded to grab my suitcase.

Getting into a verbal spat with Lilac felt like lowering my own standards.

She tearfully hid her face in Felix's neck. "Felix, did I do something wrong? Did I offend Lulu? I tried to talk to her out of goodwill, but she just ignored me."

Felix patted her back. Surprisingly, there were no warnings or accusations directed at me this time.

I felt disgusted and quickly walked a few steps away, distancing myself from Lilac's toxic attitude.

I couldn't understand why Lilac couldn't grasp the concept of emotional exhaustion. Crying once would elicit sympathy, and crying twice would have the same effect. However, after a hundred tears, what would one feel other than annoyance?

As the plane touched down in the evening. I checked my phone to find several messages from Felix.

"Lulu, have you landed? Is someone there to pick you up? Steer clear of guys. You're too trusting, and I'm

worried you might get hurt."