

Seduced by My Childhood Sweetheart's Brother

chapter 421-430

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After Felix listened to what I had to say, he told me calmly that since it was a major incident, his parents had the right to know. Besides, he needed to discuss it with his family, so he asked me to give him some time.

We agreed to call each other after ten minutes before we hung up.

Queenie and Andrew looked at me with an incredulous expression. They must have assumed that I was a naive, spoiled princess. Moments ago, I was a wailing wimp. Hearing me relaying everything to Felix clearly and interrupting him boldly twice must have changed their view of

1. me.

I shrugged. "Colin is in danger. I can't be a crybaby anymore. I must stay strong."

Then, I called Professor King to ask if he knew that Colin had encountered a mudslide.

He told me that he was about to call me, but I had reached him first. He had seen the news and learned about the mudslide in Lagado. He then told his superior about the disaster and Colin's loss of contact. The school held an emergency meeting and decided to send out a team to aid

the rescue effort.

Based on the current information, Colin was at the school. Together with him were a few volunteer construction workers who were rebuilding the school, including females. There were no death reports for the moment.

Fortunately, the mudslide was not a serious one. It did not affect a lot of places, so the chances of survival were quite high.

My heart sank deeper and deeper into an icy pond following every word Professor King uttered. Tears blurred my vision again.

I knew he said those words to console me.

But Mother Nature was powerful. Humans were insignificant in front of the destructive force

of nature.

I didn't have it in me to imagine what I should do if Colin died. I could only hope that Colin was still alive. That was my only wish. I wanted him to be alive.

It did not matter if he was blind or crippled. As long as he still breathed, I would take care of him my whole life.

Please live, Colin.

While we waited, Andrew served the dishes he cooked and asked us to eat.

But I was fraught with worry and had no appetite. Queenie cried with me and refused to eat

too. However, Andrew said that we had to remain calm in this kind of dire situation.

Also, we had to take care of ourselves first. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to do anything. The school most definitely would not allow two sick people to join the rescue effort.

I knew he was right, but I was anxious and stressed. All I could think of was Colin's safety. I didn't have the mental faculty to eat.

Queenie dragged me with her. She told me to eat something. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to make it to Lagado. When that happened, regardless of Colin's situation, I'd live with this regret forever.

I relented and forced myself to finish the food on my plate. It was my favorite food, but it didn't taste good at all. It felt like I was munching grass.

Felix called back 23 minutes later. He said that after a discussion with his family, Uncle Austin and he would come to Jinovy while Aunt Mel would stay home. They would take the night train at around midnight and were expected to arrive at around 5:00 am.

They would join the school's special team right away and head to the disaster area.

They wanted me to stay back, saying that that area was dangerous. Rain was continuing to pour down, and a second mudslide might take place. It was simply a place far too dangerous for women. As everyone would be occupied by the rescue effort, no one had time to look after

1. me.

But I wanted to get any firsthand news about Colin. I wanted to be there when he was in danger. I wanted to be the first person he saw when he was safe.

When he was safe, I would rush to his side and hug him tightly. I needed to feel his warmth and breathing to reassure myself.

Asking me to stay back was like asking me to wait endlessly. No, I did not want that. I wanted to save Colin myself.

Somehow, before I knew it, my love for Colin had become so deep. So much so that I was willing to spend the rest of my life with him.

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I turned Felix's suggestion down. I told him that even if no one wanted to bring me there, I'd find a way to go there.

I was willing to forgo my life for Colin. A mudslide was no threat.

Also, if something bad truly happened to Colin, I didn't mind being taken by the second mudslide either. At least Colin and I died together.

Colin's phone remained switched off. With my phone in my hands, I sat on the couch. I continued to dial his number repeatedly.

Originally, Andrew planned to go home. But seeing how distraught I was and fearing that Queenie couldn't handle me alone, he stayed.

I did not feel sleepy at all that night. Queenie tried to console me, but I was still too afraid to close my eyes. Every time I did, I'd see a mudslide that lay waste to everything it passed through.

Andrew then told me that if I did not sleep, I would be tired tomorrow. Someone without sufficient sleep would not be allowed to join the rescue effort. He told me that if I wanted to find Colin, I'd need to eat and sleep properly. Otherwise, I might have to trouble someone else

to look after me.

He was right. I closed my eyes and forced my mind to stop thinking about everything.

Queenie patted my shoulder from behind. Before I knew it, I fell asleep.

In my sleep, I had a terrible nightmare. Colin was standing among the rubbles, telling me to

come to him.

Seeing Colin safe and sound made me overjoyed. I began running toward him. But no matter how fast I ran, I could never shorten the distance between us. Eventually, I ran out of stamina

and slumped to the ground.

Colin looked at me with sad and disappointed eyes. His body turned translucent before it faded completely.

“Colin, come back!”

I opened my eyes. The window curtains I was so familiar with appeared before me. Sighing, I clasped my hand above my beating heart.

Thank goodness it was just a dream.

“You’re awake already?”

“Queenie, I dreamed that Colin disappeared before me. Is he dead? Did his soul just visit me in

my dream?”

Queenie comforted me gently, “Dreams are the opposite of reality. Your dream means that Colin is safe. He’s waiting somewhere for you to find him, to bring him back.”

“Yes, I’ll find him tomorrow. I’ll bring him back. You’re right. He must be waiting for me.”

As Queenie cooed, I fell asleep once more. When I opened my eyes again, it was already 6:00

1. am.

The flight departed at 9:00 am. I still hadn’t packed my luggage, so I got up and began packing my belongings and daily necessities.

When I left the bedroom, I saw various items laid out in an orderly manner on the table. Andrew, who was shy of 20 years old, was double-checking the list of items with his phone.

When he saw me, he offered his hand. “Give me your luggage. I’ll pack it for you. Bring several sets of clothes to me and then go wash up. Mr. White and Felix will be here soon.”

Before he finished his sentence, the doorbell rang.

I answered the door and saw Uncle Austin and Felix, who were fraught with worry.

Uncle Austin, who was senior in age, looked terrible after spending the night without any sleep. His eyes were bloodshot, and he wore a distressed expression.

“Are you

ready, Lulu? When are we leaving?” Within a night, Uncle Austin was so worried that some of his hair had turned white.

“Calm down, Mr. White. I’ve made breakfast. It’s still early now, so let’s eat something. The plane leaves at 9:00 am. We’ll gather at the school at 7:40 am. We have time.”

Queenie helped me pack my luggage. I sat down and had breakfast with Uncle Austin and Felix.

I had to say, I was impressed by Andrew.

After we received the bad news, he remained composed like a reliable adult. He was level-headed and offered efficient and useful advice. He took good care of everyone. His reassurance

calmed my nerves.

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If Queenie dated him, she might be able to get her happy ending.

Even the most delicious food would turn bland and tasteless when one was at the receiving end of tragic news. Nevertheless, I forced myself to eat as much as possible as I knew a battle of attrition awaited me. Without sufficient rest and stamina, I wouldn’t be able to last long. I’d be a burden.

That said, I had no idea what I was expected to and should do when I arrived at Lagado. I was going there without a plan.

After being pampered by my parents and Colin for more than 20 years, I had become sheltered and complacent. When things went awry, I did not know what to do except to cry.

Once I found Colin, I had to learn to become stronger and more independent.

The school sent three teachers and three students. The students were all from the student council in the undergrad and postgrad faculties. They were also popular figures on the campus. They were studious and diligent.

Notably, the tall and handsome Winston Moyer was there. He was the champion of the Varsity Bodybuilding Competition three years in a row. And he had once confessed to me on the

Confession Wall.

It wasn't until Helen told me that he wrote to me on the Confession Wall that I learned that he had confessed to me. There were tons of confessions there every day, so I didn't think much of it. I let other confessions slowly bury it.

Felix knew that he had confessed to me too. When he saw Winston there, his expression darkened.

Winston, on the other hand, was easygoing and paid no mind to Felix's animosity. He sat next to me, like it was something ordinary, and greeted me cheerfully.

I was in a bad mood, and I did not want to talk. I also wasn't close to him, so I didn't know how to reply. I just nodded politely.

The flight from Jinovy to Lagado would take four hours. I turned on airplane mode on my phone, wore an eye mask, and decided to get some sleep. I needed the energy for the war later.

It was summer, and the air conditioning was at full blast in this small, confined area. I was only wearing a short-sleeved top and a pair of ankle jeans. I felt sleepy, yet the cold was keeping me awake. I hugged my arms to make myself warm.

Right when I wondered in my half-asleep state if I should get up to retrieve the hoodie from my bag, I felt something warm with a light, citrusy scent on me.

It felt cozy, and I fell asleep just like that. I did not manage to see who put it on me.

I slept deeply and soundly. I was only awake when someone nudged on the shoulder.

“We’ll land in half an hour.”

I opened my eyes and stretched my body groggily. I still felt the warmth, so I looked around but was unable to locate the source of heat. The air conditioning continued to blast cold air at

1. me.

Huh? Was I dreaming? No way. I smelled the citrusy scent.

I raised my arm and sniffed at it. There was no scent whatsoever. How weird.

If someone had put their hoodie on me, I owed them a thank you.

Well, it couldn’t be helped since I couldn’t find the kind helper. I shrugged the whole thing off. Saving Colin was my priority, after all.

“What’s the matter?” Winston asked with a raised brow.

“Nothing.”

Winston turned around with a grin, The curves of his Cupid’s bow were mesmerizing.

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I withdrew my gaze. While Winston was pleasing to the eyes, I already had a Prince Charming named Colin. I wouldn’t be enticed by other handsome men anymore. That said, everyone. loved eye candy. I loved Colin, but that did not stop me from appreciating handsome men.

Still, now wasn’t the time to indulge in eye candy. The tragic news involving Colin filled me with worries and fear.

As soon as we exited the airport, the two other lecturers from Jesselton College based in Lagado came and ushered us to a bus.

Professor King went ahead and discussed the latest update with them in a hushed voice. I was sitting behind him, but regardless of how hard I tried to eavesdrop on their conversation, I couldn’t hear a thing. Their voices were practically miniscule.

I grew more anxious. If only I could grow a pai

of wings and fly to the mountain.

“My grandmother often told me that in dire situations, men proposed while God disposed. Mudslides are destructive, but people have survived them before. I heard that this particular mudslide wasn’t that serious. There are no casualties so far.

“Instead of panicking, why don’t you think about what you’ll do when you’re there? You know Colin very well. Maybe you can guess where he could be.”

“You know Colin?” I was surprised as Winston mentioned his name right away.

Since Colin was a lecturer at Jesselton College and I was a student there, we were worried that our relationship would be frowned upon by the school.

“Of course. You two are famous. A lot of people secretly ship you two. But not me, for the record.”

I grew even more confused. I wasn’t aware that I was famous at the college. And some people shipped me and Colin?

“It’s not funny.”

“I’m not pranking you. The Princess of Watercolor is dating the new watercolor lecturer. Everyone knows that,” Winston said.

Everyone knew that? Wait. EVERYONE?

I laughed wryly and said, “You flatter me.”

The bus stopped before a motel. We put our luggage in the rooms we were assigned. I was so eager that I wanted to rush to the mountain after I dropped my luggage. However, Professor King stopped me. He said we lacked information, so we needed a professional guide and team.

Besides, experts from Lagado were already administering help as we spoke. We could only watch from the sideline. Professor King also added that the rainfall made the rescue effort more challenging. Several spots were at high risk of mudslides. Without thorough preparation, we wouldn’t be allowed in.

Unable to do anything, I could only do my best to suppress the anxiety within me and wait patiently in my room for the school’s instruction.

I had never felt this uneasy. My heart was beating so loud that I thought it’d jump out of chest soon and fly to where Colin was.

Perhaps God heard my plea. An hour

thinned. It might turn sunny soon.

later, the rain stopped. The dark clouds in the sky

My gloominess disappeared with the rain too. Continuous rainfall might trigger another mudslide, which would make rescuing the victims more difficult. Now that the rain had stopped, the rescue effort would become easier.

my

I unpacked and lay down to rest. Half an hour later, Professor King texted me and asked me to get ready. We would be leaving in half an hour.

I quickly changed into my sports attire and my sports shoes. I used a rubber band to tie my hair into a bun and filled my bag with necessities such as water, a phone, a power bank, and wet wipes. Then, I went out to group up with Professor King.

As soon as I left my room, the door opposite me opened wide. Winston came out with a bag

a military camouflage uniform. He was stunned to see me, and his eyes scanned me from head

to toe.

Then, he smiled. "What a coincidence. Let's go together."

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The bus we boarded was followed by two trucks covered by wraps. I didn't know what they were transporting. Perhaps tools for the rescue mission and logistics.

The atmosphere inside the bus was rather stuffy. No one spoke.

We left the city center and headed to a muddy path. The mountains should be right in front.

The dangerous path was narrow and muddy. Several days of heavy downpours only made the bumpy path even more slippery. No one could tell if we were traveling on a straight path or water puddles.

The bus proceeded very slowly. The constant rocking motion made me sick. I almost threw up several times.

Colin's phone remained switched off. It had been two days now. I grew more and more anxious as news of him continued to elude me.

Looking at the endless path before me, tears welled up several times in my eyes. But I forced myself not to cry.

I told myself not to cry when it wasn't the time to cry, I needed the energy when I searched for

Colin later.

As we ventured deeper, several passengers on the bus began to curse as their bodies kept bumping into one another. Some even protested loudly.

We weren't the only group on the bus. There were several other volunteers and staff members from the relevant departments. The ones protesting were two volunteers.

"If you don't want to come with us, you can get off the bus. No one is forcing you to be here. Complaining will only drag the entire morale down. Is this what a volunteer should be doing? If you can't handle the challenge, don't come.

"This is a place for you to play the hero. Both of you look young. You must be university students. What year are you guys in? What are your names?"

Winston stood up and glared at the young people behind us. His jaw was tense, but he still looked handsome.

Being scolded by Winston, the students were worried that he would bring the complaint to the school and thus ruin their purpose for joining this trip. They could only shut up grouchy and close their eyes, pretending to be asleep.

The bus stopped at the valley between two mountains. All of us then alighted from the bus. The guide told us that the mudslide took place in the area ahead of us. As the affected area was huge, the bus couldn't go in. We had to walk to the destination.

Everyone got ready to enter the mountains.

When we arrived at Lagado, we asked the relevant authorities for permission to enter the mountains. However, our demand was declined because they had already sent in a professional team. Laymen like us lacked the knowledge and the tools. Plus, we might injure ourselves.

However, Professor King and his colleagues talked to the authorities several times. They swore to protect our safety and to never be a burden to the rescue team. Only then were we

allowed in.

Winston turned to the guide, who was also the organizer of this rescue mission. His name was John Michaels. “Mr. Michaels, how far do we have to walk?”

“Around five to six miles. It’s not far, but the track will be challenging. It’s getting dark soon, and the weather forecast says that it’s going to rain today. We don’t know when it’ll start pouring, so we must make haste. Let’s try to get to our destination before it rains.

“One more thing, as we don’t have any information, you can’t act recklessly regardless of who you’re trying to rescue. Only act when you’re sure that you’re perfectly safe. When you work, work in a group of two. Obey orders and bring the communication device with you at all times. Check its battery.

“Furthermore, keep the torchlight we gave you. It might save you when you’re in danger.”

Professor King approached me and verified the equipment on me. Then, he helped me put on the bag and patted my shoulder. “Come. I’ll team up with you.

I was moved, and I thanked him. It was so reassuring to have him with me.

“No need to thank me. Colin wasn’t supposed to attend the conference. I was the one who nominated him to the school. Colin has shown promising potential. Volunteer work has recently become a nice bonus when one wants to apply for a promotion.

“Now, don’t say that I’m being vain or opportunistic. Academics like me are humans too. And I want my students to prosper.”

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So that was why. I knew it. If Colin had made the decision himself to attend the conference, he would have told me earlier.

I whispered to Professor King, “I would’ve done the same.

He felt guilty after hearing what I said. “I can only hope that Colin is safe. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to forgive myself. He wouldn’t have been in danger if I hadn’t nominated him. He’s my best student. His safety means everything to me.

“Don’t say that, Professor King. No pain, no gain. This is a trial Colin must undertake. Come. I have faith in him. He must be waiting for us to rescue him somewhere.”

It was my turn to console him. Moved, he patted on my shoulder and nodded. Tears welled up in his eyes. “Yes, we must have faith. Let’s go.”

Professor King and I helped each other as we walked with John to lead the way. Behind us were staff members who wore the same uniform from an organization. They were around 27 or 28 years old, and they carried many things with them. They seemed to be struggling.

Winston caught up to us from behind and asked if he could team up!

Truth be told, I was reluctant to have him.

1. us.

When Colin heard that he had confessed to me, he threw a huge jealous tantrum. It took a lot of consoling and coddling to calm him down. If I found him with Winston, he might throw another tantrum. I wasn’t going to take that risk.

Winston was smart. He noticed that I was reluctant to have him and understood

my concerns right away. Instead of saying that I was wrong, he explained that I was a woman and Professor King was senile. We might struggle to handle an emergency.

He then emphasized that he was young and strong, so he would be an extra safety net. Besides, we weren’t traveling alone. Professor King was there too. So, he told me to put my mind at

ease.

Professor King agreed with him so he let him join us. Not one to defy my professor, I went along with it.

The sky turned dark eventually. I saw stormy clouds gathering, foretelling the impending downpour.

The windy and bumpy mountain trails became more challenging because of the mudslides. There was mud, stones, and broken twigs everywhere. With each step taken, our feet were buried inside the marsh. It was a laborious undertaking.

As we couldn’t locate the original path, we could only hike by following the faint footsteps left

by the previous individuals.

The ground was coated by a thick layer of mud. The shallowest puddle could swallow our shoes while the deepest puddle could reach our knees. I almost lost my shoes in the marsh several times. After walking for less than 30 feet, my legs were already sore.

In the beginning, I could still chat with Professor King. But as we proceeded, we no longer had the energy to talk. We could only focus on our legs.

Professor King led the way while Winston stayed behind. I was sandwiched in the middle. I stepped on where Professor King previously stepped on and proceeded carefully.

When John said that we had traveled for more than one mile, I looked at the time. It took us one and a half hours. The road ahead could only become more challenging. It'd take even longer to reach.

Our traveling speed irritated me. My throat suddenly felt dry, and I began heaving.

Uncle Austin and Felix caught up to us. Felix overtook Winston and walked with me. Worried, he asked, "Did you catch a cold? You keep coughing."

"I'm fine. Look after Uncle Austin," I said, not wanting to talk to him too much.

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If possible, I'd stay very far away from Felix. Whenever I saw him, I'd be reminded of whatever happened earlier on. Colin's safety was my priority now. I did not want to be distracted by him.

Felix wasn't deterred by my coldness. He asked if I wanted a throat lozenge as he had some.

I did not want anything from him, be it a throat lozenge or a miracle pill. The damages he had done were irreparable. Not wanting to entertain him, I asked Winston to keep up with me.

Winston heard me loud and clear and closed the distance. He inserted himself seamlessly between Felix and me, blocking Felix.

Felix's expression froze. He understood that I did not want to see him. He didn't want to force me to change my mind, so he followed behind me silently.

“Are you not fond of Felix? I know many girls have a big, fat crush on him.” Even guys loved to gossip.

I pouted. “Well, they must be blind.”

Winston covered his mouth and chuckled. He said that I had a sense of humor.

I inadvertently looked back and saw that Felix was only slightly behind Winston. He must have heard what I had said just now because his expression was as dark as the sky above us.

Felix glared at Winston. He most certainly said that just to make me insult Felix.

What would normally take less than an hour to reach took us six and a half hours. When we arrived, the sky was completely dark. There was a drizzle too.

As the temperature dropped, everyone put on a hoodie and a one-time-use raincoat. John then told us that the school was right in front. He instructed us to pick a dry, vantage point to set up our camps. We were to get some rest.

Everyone was exhausted, so we found a nice spot to rest. Some ate their food; some checked their equipment. Those young volunteers were massaging their shoulders and back tiredly.

I was the only one who couldn't sit still. I tried to ask John to begin the rescue mission several times, but Professor King stopped me. He told me that visibility was low at night. And since we did not have any prior experience, we had to refrain from acting alone and listen to the organizer.

Lacking anyone to fall back on, Professor King became the only pillar I could rely on. I'd listen to anything he said.

Not far in front of us, I heard human voices. The moving lights had to be the lights from the

rescue team, not fireflies.

As I gazed at that area, many tragic, scary scenes appeared in my mind. I grew more and more fearful.

Why? Why did I have to sit here and do nothing when Colin's life was a stake? Did they not know every minute counted in a rescue mission?

“Be patient. They must have a reason for asking us to stay put. We must obey the instructions. Now is not the time to play the hero. We don't have a lot of manpower here,

so we can only act strategically,” Winston consoled me. He noticed that I was getting anxious.

I knew what he said made sense. But Colin’s life was at stake. How could I not be worried?

Right before I had an emotional meltdown, John waved and told us to depart.

Within 30 minutes, we had arrived at the school—the nucleus of the disaster.

John explained that since this place was a basin, it was the most affected area of the disaster. Preventive measures had been installed, so the damages done were lighter than anticipated. Only a good half of the building in the middle of the school was buried by the mudslide, so chances of survival were high.

I was delighted by the news.

At around 160 feet in front of us, a pole was protruding from the ground. Its tip was tied to a fabric, but the color could not be identified. It had to be a flagpole.

Surrounding the muddy mound were a few rectangular fences. Those had to be the school fence. Several buildings were on shaky ground due to the mudslide. Their square windows appeared in public view.

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The official rescue team sent us a young instructor to teach us the dos and don’ts of the rescue mission, how to protect ourselves, and what to do during an emergency. Then, he distributed

all of us some tools.

“The front line is installing lights now. However, please be careful. Tell us right away should a problem arise. Don’t act alone. Your reckless decision might complicate the whole operation. To avoid further complications, you must do your job well and proceed with caution.”

As the mudslide took place during the summer break, there weren’t a lot of people at school. There were only 11 students who were staying for a summer art camp, the principal, four teachers, Colin, and the woman who was leading the volunteer construction work. In total, they were 18.

It wasn't a huge number. But locating 18 individuals within a muddy mass spanning 500 square feet wide and four feet thick was a challenging task nevertheless.

Black sand was everywhere.

The mudslide took place more than 48 hours ago. The water in the mud traveled downward, leaving the sand on the surface hard and tough. Digging through it was very difficult.

There were no excavators. It'd take a very long while to dig out the sand by hand. I felt despair, and my heart ached.

I cried as I cleared the sand with a spade.

The professionals continued to excavate the disaster scene while we could only stay behind

them to clear the sand. I was the only woman on the scene. The head of the rescue operation prohibited me from joining, but I stubbornly insisted. I believed that helping them would

allow me to find Colin sooner.

What was the purpose of traveling there if I was only allowed to sit on the sideline? I had to do something for Colin.

I was given the task of bagging the sand dug out by the man before me. Then, I would carry the bags of sand on a wheelbarrow to discard them.

Within half an hour, my arms were so sore that I could no longer feel them. I fell several times, injuring my face. Felix and Winston told me to rest somewhere and let them handle the hard labor.

But I wouldn't have any of that. Stubbornly, I continued to bag the sand with my shovel. When I could no longer lift the shovel, I bagged it with my bare hands.

In my mind, I believed that if I continued digging, I would find Colin eventually. He was probably waiting for me in a safe corner inside the school. And I was going to save him.

It had been two days, and I hadn't been able to reach Colin. I didn't know if he was dead or alive. He had no food and water. He was walled in by sand, feeling despair and fear. Any one of these things was enough to drive someone crazy.

With how slow the operation was progressing, when would the victims be rescued?

I prayed that Colin was safe. I prayed that everyone was safe.

Colin, wait for me. I'm here to save

you!

Noticing that we were still 60 feet from the classroom, I wondered if we could change the rescue tactic.

"Professor King, if we can estimate the position of the building entrance and all of us dig together to create a tunnel that leads to the classroom, will that be more efficient than our current strategy?

"When the mudslide took place, the kids were having a class. The teacher and the principal must be close to the classroom."

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GET IT

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"I'll talk to the head of the operation."

to consult the people in charge.

essor

King thought about my suggestion and went

After 20 minutes, he returned. He told me that the head of the operation proposed we dig two tunnels from two directions. We would dig the tunnel that passed through the building entrance to save the ones trapped inside the classroom.

And if not all victims were there, we would slowly expand the area. The victims were only trapped for two days, and the mudslide wasn't a serious one. There had to be survivors. Once we found out where the rest of the victims were, the operation would go even more smoothly.

One of the tunnels would connect the school entrance to the classroom door, while the other tunnel would connect the classroom's backdoor and the toilet.

Now that we had a clear understanding of the rescue mission, the head of the operation said that we were making good progress. Everyone was in high spirits.

I noticed that many volunteers were residents of nearby villages. We came to save Colin while they came to save their home and family. We worked tirelessly.

I had never done heavy labor before. My limbs hurt so much that I couldn't feel them anymore. However, I persevered. I steeled my will to power through. Whenever I thought I couldn't continue anymore, the strong

the strong desire to save Colin lent me strength.

None of us spoke or complained. None of us gave up.

At around midnight, everyone was at their limit. The head of the operation asked us to stop working and eat something. He then told us to rest for three hours before we continued.

The people behind us when we entered the mountains served some canned food. The food was warm, and everyone was given a generous portion. Those who wanted more could go for seconds. The cutlery and tableware were gathered in one spot, free for anyone to help

themselves.

It wasn't the best place to enjoy the meal, but no one uttered a complaint. We sat on the makeshift beds made from wooden planks and regaled ourselves.

I was still worried about Colin, so I didn't have any appetite. Before I came, I had thought that the situation wasn't grim. But being at the scene proved how wrong I was. Yet, I was powerless

to change it.

I had never felt this useless before. Other than crying and being an anxious mess, all I could do

was clear sand with a shovel.

The clock continued to tick, and the digging progress was slow. I worried that I could not save

Colin.

"Eat something." Felix brought a bowl of soup to me. "If you fall sick, you'll burden everyone since we'll need to look after you."

What he said! made sense. I was a woman with a weak constitution. If I did not take care of myself and fell sick, I'd only add to everyone's already full plate.

I forced myself to finish the bowl of soup. It warmed my body, and I felt invigorated. Then, I got up, ready to resume digging. However, Winston dragged me back.

sleeve while Felix's right I turned around and glared at him. Winston's left hand grabbed my hand froze in the air. It was too late to withdraw his limb. The men shot eye daggers at each other. It was a silent duel where no one was willing to back off.

From an outsider's perspective, Winston won the battle. After all, he was grabbing my wrist. However, now was not the time to be self-obsessed even though these two men were vying for my attention. Colin's safety was the only thing on my mind. I did not care about the rest.

"Let go of me. I need to work now."

"No, you're resting," said both men unanimously. For once, the rivals saw eye to eye.

"Let go! I'm not tired!"

No, I was very tired. But I did not dare to take a break. What if Colin suffered even more because I took this break? What if this delay brought more danger to Colin? I'd never be able to forgive myself.

Both men cornered me, and I couldn't break free. I struggled violently.

Seduced by My Childhood Sweetheart's Brother

My loud voice turned the heads of those resting around us. They looked at me, and I realized that I must have disturbed them.

"Calm down, Luna. You alone won't be able to do much. We must listen to the organizer. Get some rest now. How are you supposed to take care of Colin if he turns out to be injured and you're too tired to look after him?"

Professor King chastised me sternly. Uncle Austin came and told me that the professor was right. I should behave.

He also added that he was just as desperate as me, but now wasn't the time to play the hero.

Unable to argue against four other people, I found a spot next to Professor King and lay down obediently.

Perhaps I was truly tired. The adrenaline that sustained me just now finally wore off. Within minutes, I fell asleep. I slept so soundly that I didn't dream at all.

It was a very long slumber, and I was woken up by thunderous cheers. I opened my eyes. The sky was blue, and the flowers around me were blossoming. I was on the wooden plank that doubled as a bed.

Before me, the tunnel we dug had finally reached its end. The whole group cheered loudly inside as they tossed their helmets to the sky.

While I was asleep, not only did they finish digging the tunnel, but they saved everyone too. That explained why everyone was celebrating.

I was over the moon and excited. I got up swiftly and made a beeline for the tunnel.

The rescue mission was a resounding success. Workers exited the tunnel with a bright smile- all of them in their early 20s. They wore a wide grin on their faces as they discussed where they should go tonight to celebrate.

The tunnel was narrow but crowded. It took me a while to reach the end of the tunnel.

Inside were several rundown houses that couldn't even be called houses anymore. My friends. were standing by the entrance and looking inside.

Professor King saw me and shot me a big smile. Then, he pointed inside. "Colin is safe. He'll

be out soon."

"Yes! Let me go inside to get him out." I hopped, jumped, and skipped to the entrance, disregarding the mud water on the path and the mud caked to my body.

When I passed by Felix, he looked at me with a mix of emotion. Then, he broke his gaze.

My heart fell into an icy pond, and my exhilaration suddenly vanished.

As I wondered why Felix gave me that cryptic look, I saw Colin come out while carrying someone else in his arms.

His face was covered by mud, and the suit on him was tattered. He carried the woman in his arms like she was a precious object. He didn't even lift his head to look at everyone. He only gazed at her gently and cooed, "We're safe now. Let me send you to the hospital."

One of the woman's arms was wrapped around Colin's shoulder, and she was burying her face into his chest. She uttered something, but I couldn't hear it.

Colin walked past me in broad strides. He looked so worried that he did not register that I was right in front of him.

I finally understood why Felix had given me that cryptic look.

During these two days, or even during this whole month in Lagado, what had happened that made Colin treasure another woman so?

That look of affection and that gentle tone I thought were exclusive to me were used on another woman.

Who was she? What was her relationship with Colin?

My mind became a mess. I felt jealous and betrayed. A lot of thoughts bombarded my brain, making my ears ring.

They faced a life-and-death situation together for two days. It didn't matter if nothing had happened between them. This incident would leave an indelible mark in both their hearts.

My voice only came back when he was several steps ahead of me.

"Colin."

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