

## The Love that Never Really Dies chapter 381

All of a sudden, the woman on top of the pile of rubble turned around and glared at the man with bloodshot eyes.

Why is she holding a grudge against me when I have done her a huge favor by rescuing her in the nick of time?

Her response took him by surprise and rendered him incapable of motion.

Sasha grabbed the opportunity and continued searching for Lance.

Truth be told, no one could possibly make it out alive since the militants had blown up the entire place into pieces. It was an impossible mission to locate the survivors without the aid of professionals.

Nevertheless, Sasha had no intention to give up and continued digging her way through the pile of rubble with her bare hands.

As a result, the disheveled woman ended up with bruises and cuts all over her body.

When she was about to climb her way through a narrow passage and make her way to Dickson's office, she heard someone yelling at her in a familiar voice, "What are you doing?"

"Huh?"

Sasha, who was on top of an air conditioning pipe, shuddered instantly.

When she turned around after a few seconds, she saw a familiar figure with a disheveled appearance looking at her.

Although he was drenched in blood, she could see his eyes gleaming in the dark.

“Lennie! It turns out that you’re fine! Boohoo—”

Sasha burst into tears, hugging the air conditioning pipe. The woman in her mid-twenties started crying like a helpless little girl.

As the emotions she had been holding back came flooding out, no longer could she pull herself together anymore.

Lance finally made his way to her and brought the woman down. As he did so, he couldn’t help but wonder how she managed to get up there in the first place.

“What are you doing on top of the air conditioning pipe?”

Immediately after he brought her down, he noticed that she had bruises and cuts all over her body. Instantly, the color drained from his lips.

Unable to stop herself from weeping, Sasha sniffled when she heard his question. “I was trying to find you! I thought you were dead! W-Where have you been?”

As soon as she finished her question, she started wailing at the top of her lungs again.

Initially, Lance felt a strong urge to take things out on her, but when he saw her weeping in front of him, he stopped holding a grudge against her.

Knowing that she truly cared about him, his rage vanished into thin air.

“I had been staying in the corner over there.”

“Huh?” Sasha wiped her tears dry and asked, “Y-You had been staying over there? W-Why didn’t you look for me? W-Weren’t you worried about me at all?”

I can’t believe that’s what she’s thinking right now...

He did not feel like answering her questions. After he took a peek at her bruised legs, he removed his shirt and placed it over them.

Instead of answering her, he suggested, “It’s time to make our way back to the hotel.”

Sasha was slightly upset when he dismissed her questions. However, she thought it wouldn’t be wise to make a fuss out of something so trivial.

She knew that they had no other choice but to go back to the hotel. But the moment she inched closer to him, she noticed the wound on his forehead.

Immediately, she asked, “Are you hurt as well? Come over and let me have a look.”

The moment she stretched out her hand in an attempt to check his wounds, he inched away from her.

He asserted, “It’s not a big deal! I’ll tend to it as soon as we’re back at the hotel.”

As the young man crouched down and removed her pair of shoes, the confused woman felt the racking sensation in her feet.

Only then did she realize that her feet had been injured all this while.

“O-Ouch—”

Once again, her eyes started brimming with tears.

As Lance glared at her, he felt a strong urge to reprimand her for not taking care of herself.

Has she lost her mind or something? How was she not aware that she is heavily injured?

He was on the verge of losing his cool, but he tried his best to suppress his wrath when he saw her pair of teary eyes. It was evident that she had been having it tough without him by her side.

He suggested, “I think you have accidentally hurt yourself. We’ll take a detour to the hospital before returning to the hotel.”

“Now?”

After surveying the surroundings, Sasha deemed the idea impossible as there weren't any cars available. Out of the blue, she saw Solomon in front of them the moment she raised her head.

Solomon mustered his courage and made his way over in a final attempt to earn their trust. "Nancy, allow me to give you a ride to the hospital."

To his dismay, the woman, who had been conversing in a gentle tone with the young man next to her, retracted her gaze the moment she saw him.

It seemed as though she would turn into another person whenever Solomon was around.

"Lennie, can you carry me on your back? I'm afraid we won't be able to hail any cab here, but we can head over to the streets nearby to try our luck."

"Okay."

Lance brought himself up and lifted Sasha in his arms instead of carrying her on his back.

What is he doing?

Sasha's eyes widened in shock.

As she wrapped her arms around his neck, she could feel her heart racing as though it was about to jump out of her throat.

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What the heck is wrong with me? Why am I getting flustered when he's my freaking cousin? You need to calm down, Sasha!

In an attempt to calm herself, she looked elsewhere to avoid her cousin's gaze.

“Sir?”

Meanwhile, Solomon's assistant, who stopped the car in front of the pile of rubble, noticed that he had his eyes fixated on something.

His assistant couldn't help but wonder if Solomon's plan had failed once again.

The moment his assistant approached Solomon, he asked, “Have you figured out the identity of the mysterious men?”

“My apologies, but we couldn't find out their whereabouts since they have been conducting their operations in secret.”

Solomon's assistant started perspiring in fear as he wasn't able to complete the assigned task.

Truth be told, he was surprised that there was not a single piece of information on the mysterious bunch after he spent an entire day investigating them.

In spite of being adequately influential, their effort was to no avail as there was nothing they could learn about the mysterious men.

All of a sudden, Solomon muttered, “He has made it out alive once again.”

His assistant gaped at Solomon’s statement and said in disbelief, “What?”

He escaped again?

How can that be? We only informed the militants after they had entered the building! It’s impossible for him to make it out alive without help!

When his assistant was lost in thought, Solomon added, “On top of that, he came back.”

His confused assistant asked, “What do you mean?”

Ignoring his assistant’s question, Solomon immersed himself in his thoughts.

I have been observing Lance throughout the past few days. It’s obvious that he has never once thought of Sasha as his cousin.

It’s not surprising for Lance to get full of himself in front of me. However, he couldn’t care less to show Sasha some respect even when I wasn’t around.

In fact, he seemed irked by Sasha’s presence. Why would someone hold such a strong grudge against his cousin?

That was why I came up with this plan in order to find out the truth.

Immediately after I took her away and left him behind, despair was written all over the young man's face!

When we fled without him, I saw him glaring in our direction with his hatred-filled eyes! It was as though the last shimmer of hope in him was gone.

I thought he would be out of the picture after that. However, he came back for her even when she only returned half an hour later.

There's no way they're just cousins! I'm sure there's something going on behind the scenes!

As Solomon went dead silent, his assistant continued asking, "W-Who's the young man? Is he really just a fresh graduate?"

Solomon answered with a vicious smirk, "I have never once believed that!"

"What do you mean?"

"I need to verify his identity! If he's indeed the person I have in mind, it's time to—" Out of the blue, a strong murderous intent could be seen in his glistening pair of eyes.

Solomon's assistant understood his words immediately.

If he's really the one we have been searching for, we no longer have to waste our time and effort to locate him!

On the other hand, the duo at the hospital found out that Sasha sustained a severe injury after a piece of fractured cement pierced through her foot.

Previously, she couldn't feel the pain at all because the only thing she had in mind was locating her cousin.

“You need to refrain from engaging in vigorous activities for the time being. Keep your wound dry at all times and change the wound dressing frequently.”

After the doctor had Sasha's injury treated and handed the prescribed medicine to her, he dismissed them.

However, Lance was against the idea and insisted on having Sasha hospitalized for the night. “What the heck is wrong with the doctor? How can he turn us away when you're heavily injured?”

Sasha tried to talk some sense into Lance, “It's fine! I mean, just take a look at the patients here! You don't seriously think the hospital can accommodate me, do you? Since I'm also a doctor, I can just take care of myself!”

After she repetitively reassured him, he finally relented.

As soon as they returned to the hotel, Sasha, who couldn't wait to get out of the warring country, purchased tickets for the next available flight back to their home country.

This time, Lance didn't stop her from doing so. Instead, he made his way back to his room.

Someone is coming after you.

The moment he returned to his room, he received a text from a certain someone.

Is that so ?

A disdainful smirk crept up on his face. Instead of getting worked up, he calmly tossed his phone aside and went into the bathroom.

When he finally came out ten minutes later, the person on the other end seemed to have sorted out everything on his behalf.

Nonetheless, when he caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror, he frowned and retrieved his phone, drafting another text.

Lance: Where's the Crimson Pimpernel ?

His subordinate: Huh ? What do you need from him ?

Lance: I need another mask since the one I have has been ruined.

His subordinate was on pins and needles as it was no easy task to acquire the aid of the Crimson Pimpernel. In fact, it took them a few days to persuade the Crimson Pimpernel to make them two masks.

How are we supposed to locate the Crimson Pimpernel ? Isn't he aware that it's going to cost us a fortune just to acquire a mask that suits him seamlessly!

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Sasha finally booked flight tickets to depart tonight.

She thought she had to leave as soon as possible because the place was unsafe.

After booking the flight tickets, Sasha began to pack her things.

However, it was inconvenient because she could only stand with one leg. Hence, she went to the next room to ask Lance to pack their belongings together

“Lennie, what are you doing now? Can you help pack the luggage for me?”

Sasha hopped on a single leg to the next room and knocked on the door twice, yet no one responded.

It appeared that no one was in the room.

That’s weird. Where is he?

Sasha turned around and hopped back to her room to get the room card.

In fact, Sasha and Lance always gave a spare room card to each other whenever they were outside.

When Sasha opened the door, she was shocked to see that the room was pitch dark. Although it was bright outside, Lance deliberately pulled the curtains to block out any light.

“Lennie, what are you doing? Why did you pull the curtains?”

Sasha fumbled her way in and wanted to open the curtains.

“Don’t do it. I want to sleep. My head hurts!” Lance finally responded.

However, Sasha could hear that Lance’s throat was tightened, probably because he wasn’t feeling well.

Ah? Headache?

Sasha recalled that Lance's forehead was injured. As such, she stopped opening the curtains and came up to Lance.

Sasha's eyes had gradually adapted to the darkness because she had been in the room for some time. At present, she could vaguely see where Lance was and his face.

“Is your forehead hurt? I asked you to let a doctor check up on you, but you didn't listen. See, you have a headache now,”

Sasha came up to the bed and said to Lance caringly, but he ignored her completely.

Annoyed by her nagging, Lance turned around and had his back on Sasha.

What a rascal!

As Sasha was a little anxious, she pulled his blanket away and said, “Lance, turn around and let me see!”

With that, she wanted to turn on the light next to the bed.

All of a sudden, Lance lifted his hand to grab Sasha's slender wrist. Then, he mustered up his strength to pull Sasha onto his bed.

“Ah...”

“You're noisy. Didn't you hear me saying that I'm fine?”

Lance pinned Sasha on the bed and nearly pressed against her with his body entirely. Although there was a blanket in between them, she could feel his heat.

At that moment, Sasha's mind went blank.

“Lennie, you...”

“Keep quiet. My hurt hurts now,” Lance added impatiently but slightly loosened his grip.

Sasha heaved a sigh of relief but dared not move, for she felt that Lance was still grabbing her arm.

Lance was either worried that Sasha would annoy him if he let go of her or feeling extremely unwell.

Sasha felt silent while maintaining the weird posture on the bed. She intended to wait until Lance fell asleep to leave the bed.

Unexpectedly, she fell asleep ten minutes later.

After all, she had gone through a terrifying incident today and was also tired because dusk had fallen.

As Sasha breathed steadily, the man, who lay by her side, lifted the blanket and opened his eyes.

He wasn't Lance but someone who looked graceful and handsome.

However, there was a glint in his eyes.

Shortly afterward, Sasha unknowingly snuggled up to the man like a kitten.

The man fluttered his eyelashes, turned around, and took Sasha into his arms.

“Mmm...”

Perhaps due to the familiar warmth, Sasha, who was sleeping soundly, couldn't help but snuggle up to him closer.

Instantly, the man's eyes darkened.

This damned woman!

He hugged her tighter and buried his face in her neck to indulge himself in her scent. Eventually, both of them slept soundly on the bed.

Roxanne, who was in Avenport, felt that something was off after Sebastian left on a business trip for the third day.

“Wendy, is Mr. Hayes not back yet?”

“Not yet. What's wrong, Ms. Rocke?”

At that moment, Wendy was cleaning the second floor. She felt a little bewildered, for Roxanne came out from the study with two bottles of medicine in her hands.

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Why did she get the pills early in the morning?

Meanwhile, Roxanne's expression darkened upon seeing the two bottles of medicine that she prescribed for Sebastian.

Although Sebastian was okay throughout the month, he still had to take medicine for the time being. After all, mental illness wouldn't go away entirely but only subside until the patients' bodies could produce certain hormones at a normal rate.

Therefore, Roxanne had been prescribing medicine for Sebastian throughout the month.

Roxanne grabbed the two bottles of medicines and went to Hayes Corporation.

She arrived at the penthouse suite of Hayes Corporation half an hour later.

“Mr. Scott, please be honest with me—where is he now? He said he would leave for only two days. Now that it's already the third day, why hasn't he come back? Do you know he has to take his medicine every day?”

“Ah?”

Cold sweat was dripping down Luke's forehead.

Although Luke was aware of Sebastian's schedule, he couldn't control the turn of events—Sebastian couldn't return as planned due to some emergencies.

Luke tried his best to explain, “Ms. Rocke, Mr. Hayes has indeed planned to go on a business trip for two days. However, he has to delay his plan because something untoward happened.”

Luke didn't lie, for Sebastian told him so before he left.

Initially, the business trip wasn't on Sebastian's schedule at all.

Sebastian decided to leave at the last minute only after someone from Moranta met him specifically. Besides, it was supposed to be a short trip, for Sebastian planned to come back once he finished dealing with the matter.

Nonetheless, no one expected something untoward from happening.

Roxanne stared at Luke doubtfully. "Is there anything more important than Sebastian's health? Do you know the consequences that he stops taking medicine? Is this how you be his secretary?"

Anger clouded Roxanne's face, and she couldn't help but scold Luke right away.

Luke was scared to death. After quite some time, he asked feebly, "In that case... what should we do?"

"What should we do? We've to ask him to come back as soon as possible! You can also tell me where he is now, and I'll try to send the medicine over to him," Roxanne proposed angrily.

Luke instantly chose the first option. "Alright, I'll ask Mr. Hayes right away to come back as soon as possible."

Well, how can I possibly let her send the medicine?

I'll be as good as dead as I do it!

Sasha finally woke up after the sound sleep.

The room was lit with orange light. Besides, Sasha was dazed by the twinkling lights of the city at night from the window.

Not long afterward, she saw a man sitting at a table next to the window.

The man wore a blue hoodie and a pair of black-rimmed glasses. At that time, he lowered his gaze and frowned as he stared at the phone.

Oh my goodness! My flight!

When the thought flashed through her mind, Sasha instantly got up and yelled, “My god! What time is it now? Did I miss my flight?”

Lance, who was about to reply to a text message, said, “You’re awake.”

“Yes, Lennie. What time is it now? Please check it for me. I’ve already booked flight tickets for tonight.”

Sasha forgot that one of her legs was injured when she jumped from the bed. As such, she gasped in pain the moment she landed.

Lance’s lips twitched upon seeing it.

Nevertheless, he still looked at his watch on his wrist and replied, “It’s 9.15 p.m. now. What time is the flight?”

“What? 9.15 p.m.? Why didn’t you wake me up? I booked tickets for 8 p.m., and the flight has certainly left. What should we do?”

Sasha was on the verge of total breakdown.

It was extremely difficult to book a flight ticket these days. After all, many people wished to escape the city due to a series of terrorist attacks.

Hence, Sasha waited patiently for quite some time in the afternoon to grab the tickets.

On the contrary, Lance seemed rather composed.

“It’s okay. We can book the flights for tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?” Sasha whined, “Don’t you know how dangerous it is now? The longer we stay, the more likely we are in danger.”

“In that case, do you think we’ll be safe on the plane tonight? Everyone has the same mindset as yours in the warzone. Also, since everyone desperately wants to escape, those who fail to do so might trigger riots,” Lance stared at Sasha coldly and rebutted in disdain.

Sasha finally went silent.

Is that so?

My goodness. Fortunately, we didn’t go to the airport tonight. I can’t imagine what we could do if something happens there.

At that time, Sasha's anger and disappointment faded away.

“Okay then. I'll book tickets again tomorrow. By the way, have you had dinner? We...”

Sasha was about to suggest to have dinner.

As a thought flashed through her mind suddenly, Sasha turned around and realized that the room was different from hers. She finally recalled what happened before she fell asleep.

My god! What did I do in the evening?

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“Lennie, I... this evening...”

“Have you finally realized it? Why did you come to my room out of the blue? I couldn't even sleep on my bed!” Lance questioned Sasha coldly.

Nonetheless, one could tell that Lance wasn't angry at that moment. Instead, he was merely complaining without gazing at Sasha.

Instantly, Sasha blushed.

She remembered that she was here to check up on Lance. Since Lance said he was unwell, she touched his forehead but was pinned onto the bed by Lance.

He pressed against me on the bed, all right? However, I fell asleep very soon.

Sasha was awkward upon remembering everything. She stole a glance at Lance and realized that he was emotionless, as though he didn't remember what she did.

Her heart couldn't help but sink at that thought.

“I... I didn't. Since you said you were sick, I stayed beside your bed for a while but unknowingly fell asleep. I didn't mean to do it.”

Since Lance probably didn't remember what happened, Sasha lied to him.

Just as Sasha thought, Lance merely raised his eyebrows and glanced at her for a few seconds in response.

Sasha took a deep breath.

Well, we should have dinner now.

Sasha hopped back to her room. After freshening herself up, Sasha asked the hotel staff to deliver some food.

Since they couldn't leave that night, Sasha decided to get some rest and depart the next day.

After the food was delivered, Sasha sat at the table and began eating the soup.

She initially thought that Lance would be here to have dinner soon. However, she didn't hear any noise outside her room even though she had finished the bowl of soup.

What's going on with him? Is he not going to eat?

Sasha had no choice but to stand up and hop to Lance's room.

“Lance? Why don't you come over to have dinner? Are you not hungry?”

The room fell into a dead silence just like what happened in the evening.

Humph! Whatever!

Sasha didn't act recklessly again to save herself from embarrassment. Since the room was silent, she returned to her room and continued eating.

Well, I'll just leave a portion of the food to Lance.

However, Sasha wasn't aware that Lance wasn't in the room.

In fact, Lance had already left.

“Mr. Hayes, I've everything planned out. Howard will be back in your room by midnight. So, Ms. Wand won't suspect anything when she opens the door and sees him.”

After a series of terrorist attacks that happened in the day, flashes of fire would appear high in the air occasionally at midnight. The air was filled with the smell of gunpowder, and one could hear people moaning bitterly from time to time.

Lance was still wearing blue hoodies, a pair of slacks, and sports shoes. He didn't utter a word and looked like a mature man.

At that moment, he was no different from a university student.

“Keep an eye on her!”

After giving the short instruction, Lance got into the car and left.

Ten minutes later, a black car pulled up by the hotel’s entrance.

“Excuse me, may I ask if a lady named Nancy stays here? I’m her friend. Would you mind telling me which room she stays in?”

“I’m sorry. We can’t provide you with the information, for it’s related to our customer’s privacy.”

The principled hotel’s staff declined the woman’s request right away.

Unexpectedly, the woman wasn’t upset but took out her name card smilingly. “It’s fine. Just tell her that I’m Willow. She will know who I am.”

The staff hesitated for a while.

Well, it doesn’t matter if I make a phone call to confirm her identity.

Finally, one of them grabbed the phone to call Sasha.

“Hello?”

“Is this Ms. Nancy? May I ask if you have a friend called Willow Fischer?”

Willow ?

Sasha was having dinner when she received the call. She was a little shocked upon hearing the name. “Yes, what’s the matter ?”

The hotel’s staff continued, “She’s here to see you and is waiting in our lobby. Would you want to come down to meet her ? Or should we allow her to go upstairs ?”

Sasha was shocked and rendered speechless.

Why did Willow come here ? What’s going on ?

Is she here for business ?

At that moment, Sasha was confused but also happy to meet her best friend here.

“Alright, please let her come up. Since my leg is injured, it’s not that convenient for me to go down.” Sasha excitedly asked the staff to bring Willow to her room.

It had been quite a long time since Sasha met Willow.

A few minutes later, Sasha felt a little weird because Willow wasn’t here yet. Nonetheless, the man, who stayed next to her room and didn’t answer the door previously, showed up.

“Lance ? You’re finally here. Are you hungry ?”

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She grumbled while staring at Lance, but he ignored her completely.

With a gloomy look on his face and both hands in the pocket of his blue hoodie, he kicked open the door behind her and stepped inside.

I swear, this guy's rudeness knows no bounds!

Having no other choice, she could only stand by the door and wait for Willow.

“What are you doing standing there like that?”

“I'm waiting for Willow! She's right downstairs!” Sasha shouted into the room in response, only to have Lance come back and drag her by the back of her shirt collar.

“Ah! Hey! What are you doing? Let go!”

“Did you get so scared that you've lost your mind? There's no way Willow would come to a place like this!”

Lance was so angry that his veins were bulging out of his neck as he dragged her inside. Damn it, I wish I could just pack her into a bag and send her back to Moranta! How can she just believe everything people tell her? Is she an idiot or what?

Sasha continued to struggle. “You're the crazy one! The lady at the front desk called me and said a woman named Willow had come to see me!”

“Then why didn’t Willow call you on your phone instead? Did you block her or what? Why would she have to call the hotel’s front desk just to see you?”

“Huh...”

Sasha stared blankly at Lance, unable to say a single word in response.

He’s right! Willow could’ve just called me on my phone, so why didn’t she? Why would she go through the trouble of calling the front desk instead?

She felt a shiver down her spine as the sudden realization dawned upon her.

“I-If that’s not Willow, then... w-who is it?”

Noticing the pale look on Sasha’s face, Lance continued dragging her to the dinner table as he said, “How the hell would I know? Maybe it’s one of those organ-trafficking syndicates that target ignorant girls like you! They lure you downstairs by pretending to be a friend or family member, then knock you unconscious and harvest your organs after kidnapping you!”

Sasha felt goosebumps all over instantly upon hearing that.

“Shut up!”

“Oh, but I haven’t even gotten to the worst part! Human traffickers could sell you to...”

“Shut up! Shut up! How dare you scare your cousin like this? I’ll slap you to death if you don’t stop this nonsense right now!”

Sasha pounced on him angrily and clamped his mouth shut with her hands to stop him from going any further.

A faint smile formed on Lance’s face as he stared at Sasha who got so scared that she literally climbed on top of him.

In the face of danger, Sasha couldn’t care less about her ego. She locked and barricaded the room door with a few chairs before returning to the bedroom shakily.

“Hey, Lennie... We have to get the hell out of here first thing in the morning, okay?” Sasha said as she lay down in bed.

Lance, who was lying on the couch in the corner, mumbled in agreement, “Yeah...”

I’d get in trouble too if I don’t head back...

The night went by peacefully, and Lance was already packing their bags by the time Sasha woke up the next morning.

There was even a simple breakfast prepared and laid out on the table.

“Morning, Lennie... Y-You’re packing up? Did you already purchase the flight tickets?”

I knew this would be the first thing she’d think about upon waking up...

Lance shot her a quick glance while folding her clothes and said, “Yeah, the flight is at nine. You should be able to make it in time if you go through your morning routine quickly.”

Sasha sprung out of bed immediately after hearing that and ran straight into the bathroom.

The two of them left for the airport about half an hour later.

To Sasha’s surprise, Lance only handed her one ticket for herself.

“Here, this is your ticket. Make sure you don’t lose it.”

“Huh? What about yours? Give me your ticket too! That way, I can get us both checked in at the same time when we reach the airport,” Sasha said.

Her idea was to have one person watch over the baggage while the other one did the check-in at the counter.

However, she never saw Lance again after boarding the flight as the tickets he managed to book were for different cabins each, one of them being a first-class seat while the other an economy class seat.

Lance quickly offered to take the economy class seat, so Sasha had no choice but to remain in the first-class cabin.

What the hell?

Sasha wasn’t all too pleased about it. She wanted to swap her ticket out with someone from the economy class cabin so she could sit next to Lance, but he refused.

“You’re injured, so you should stay here in the first-class cabin where it’s more comfortable. Remember to avoid moving around too much, all right? You need to take good care of yourself now that I’m not by your side,” he said after sending her to her seat in the first-class cabin.

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Sasha couldn’t help but feel uncomfortable about the way he had phrased that sentence.

Why does it sound like he’s giving me a sad farewell speech or something? Is he still worried about me being abducted while onboard? Jeez...

Not liking the oddly melancholic atmosphere, Sasha gave him a slap on the back and said, “What do you mean you won’t be by my side anymore? You’d better be sure to come to carry me down the plane when we land!”

She then returned to her cabin while Lance stood there with his gaze fixated on her.

It wasn’t until the door to the first class cabin was shut that someone approached him. “Let’s go, sir. Howard has just come on board.”

Lance then turned around and left without looking back.

It was already evening when Sasha landed in Moranta.

For some reason, she had been restless throughout the entire flight and came out of her cabin looking for Lance as soon as she could.

Had passengers been allowed to leave their cabins during the flight, she would've done so a lot sooner.

Sasha quickly made her way into the economy class cabin and saw Lance about to get up from his seat.

“Hey, Lennie! How was the flight?” she asked, feeling glad and relieved as she stood beside him.

Lance looked a little surprised to see her come over, but was quick to regain his composure and got to his feet.

“It was all right. What about you? How's your leg? Does it hurt?” he asked while looking worriedly at her leg.

Sasha waved at him. “I'm fine! Come on, let's get off the plane. Vivi must be missing us like crazy after our prolonged absence!”

“Okay,” Lance replied, and the two of them made their way out of the plane.

With the security being a lot better in Moranta, people could be seen walking about with relaxed looks on their faces. “Here, watch our bags while I make a quick trip to the bathroom!” Sasha said as she handed the baggage over to Lance.

Her tone was so polite that even Lance froze for a moment before reaching out to hold her baggage.

“Sure, go on ahead. I'll wait here for you.”

“Huh?”

This time, it was Sasha's turn to pause in surprise.

Wait... Did my ears deceive me? Does he not hate me anymore? I can't believe he actually offered to wait for me!

Sasha thought to herself as she stared at him in confusion before making her way toward the bathroom.

Lance hadn't noticed that he had changed a lot throughout the past two days and was no longer the same man he used to be.

He had been filled with uncontrollable rage, disgust, sadness, and self-hatred when he was with her at first.

In fact, his mood had been so terrible that he almost thought his mental illness was acting up again.

Vivian's call came in all of a sudden when Sasha stepped out of the bathroom, causing her to completely forget about Lance's weird behavior when she heard Vivian's sweet and adorable voice on the phone.

"Are you guys back yet, Mommy? Mr. Rind said you two would be coming back today!"

"That's right, Mommy's back! We're at the airport right now. Are you still at Mr. Rind's house?" Sasha asked.

By "Mr. Rind", they were referring to Andy Rind.

I can't believe Lance actually had Andy look after Vivi! Then again, judging by how happy she sounds, I'd say he's been treating her pretty well...

“Yeah! Mr. Rind buys me a lot of delicious food every day! He even bought me two very cute bunnies! Can I come over to Mr. Rind’s house in the future, Mommy?”

“Huh?” Sasha was shocked.

I didn’t take Andy for the type of guy who would be so nice to children!

As much as she found it hard to believe, she hung up the phone feeling glad that Vivian was doing great.

The two of them then made their way home, and Sasha couldn’t wait to go pick her daughter up.

“Lennie, go buy us some groceries from the supermarket. The refrigerator at home must be empty after our prolonged absence. I’ll make us all dinner after picking Vivi up.”

“Okay,” Lance replied as he placed the bags down.

As he was about to leave the house, Sasha called out to him once again.

“Wait! Here, take this money. We made quite a lot during our trip there, so you should treat yourself to a nice meal or something!” she said while pulling a card out of her purse.

Lance nodded obediently and held his hand out to receive the card.

At that moment, Sasha realized something was off about his hand when she gave him the card.

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His fingers were slender, but they weren't pretty due to the huge knuckles. In addition to that, there was a thin layer of callus on his palm, which wasn't something one would see on the hands of a pampered individual.

Sasha felt her head go blank before another pair of hands appeared in her head.

Yes, this is exactly how I remember that pair of hands! The fair and slender fingers... The huge knuckles that looked like they were sculpted out of marble... The fingernails that look so smooth and shiny...

Sasha was so shocked that she froze on the spot.

“Sha? What's wrong? Um... You know what? Maybe we should just keep the money in our savings instead. The Wand family is going to start over again soon, and we'll be needing a lot of money then,” Lance said, thinking she was reluctant to hand over the money.

He knew Sasha's family would need a lot of money as Rufus would be released from prison soon, so he decided not to accept the money she offered.

After he left the house, Sasha staggered for a bit and threw herself on the couch as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Why didn't I believe it? I had a clear view of it back in Corleon, but I kept telling myself that it was just in my head, and that it

wasn't real. Damn it, how could I lie to myself about something I saw with my own eyes?

Sasha clutched her heaving chest tightly as she felt an overwhelming combination of joy, pain, and shock surge through her.

Regardless of what happened between them, he had always been the one she truly liked deep down inside.

She had liked him for so many years that she couldn't possibly let go of those feelings so easily.

But... Trevor erased his memories through hypnosis, didn't he? So, why did he come back to me all of a sudden in such a fashion?

Sasha's mind went blank at the thought of that, and she simply lay on the couch for what seemed like eternity.

The sky was dark by the time Lance had bought the groceries and brought Vivian home.

"Hmm? Why are the lights off? Could your mommy have gone out or something?" Lance mumbled when he saw that the lights were off in the house.

Vivian climbed out of his arms when she heard that and ran into the house. "I'll go check inside! Maybe Mommy's in her bedroom!"

Naturally, Lance knew that was unlikely the case as Sasha was often busy with errands even at night.

He then unpacked the groceries in the kitchen and took about twenty minutes to make dinner.

As Lance was about to serve the poached salmon he had made, a slender hand reached out and passed him a plate from behind.

“Here you go...”

“Ah, Sha, you’re back!” Lance jumped in surprise when he saw Sasha standing behind him.

Sasha then took a step back, and that was when he noticed her grim expression and the redness in her eyes.

“Sha?” Lance gave her a strange look.

Sasha averted her gaze and said, “I’m fine. Go ahead and serve the food. I’ll go get Vivi.”

She then ran out of the kitchen in a hurry, leaving a confused Lance rooted to the spot.

What on earth has gotten into her? She’s dressed in her casual clothes, which means she’s been home the whole time... If that’s the case, why didn’t she turn on the lights?

The sound of Vivian’s voice snapped Lance out of his train of thoughts, and he quickly plated the dishes before serving them up.

After that, the three of them sat down at the table and had dinner as usual.

Lance was a little hesitant at first but decided to speak up anyway. “Sha, you don’t have to tell Andy about the extra money you made, right? I mean, that’s tens of millions! With Uncle coming out of prison soon, we’re probably going to need that money.”

Sasha, who was feeding Vivian at the time, looked up at him upon hearing that. “Of course not. Why do you ask?”

It’s not like I wanted to bring this up, okay?

With that thought in mind, Lance quickly avoided her gaze and said, “Oh, no reason in particular! I mean, it’s a lot of money, so I was worried that Andy would find out about it. Just thought I’d remind you, that’s all!”

Sasha paused in her actions.

Remind me? Is it Lance reminding me, or is it the other guy?

Sasha felt her heart that had finally calmed down begin to ache once again, and it hurt so bad that she could barely hold her spoon steady.

Lance went to bed in his room shortly after dinner.

Sasha gave Vivian a bath and was about to tuck her in as well when she asked all of a sudden, “Are you feeling sad, Mommy?”

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Sasha paused briefly in surprise before replying, “No, I’m not.”

“I know you are, Mommy! You haven’t been talking much tonight, Mommy! Did someone bully you? You can tell Vivi! Vivi will avenge you!”

Vivian waved her meaty fist in the air as she said that, and Sasha couldn’t help but smile in response.

She’s such a sweet child, but there’s no way I could tell her even if I really was bullied!

Sasha returned to her bedroom after Vivian had fallen asleep, but her suffocating restlessness kept her awake.

Feeling like she needed someone to talk to, she whipped out her phone and began scrolling through her list of contacts.

After a bit of scrolling, she finally saw a name that caught her eye.

“Willow?”

“Well, well, well... If it isn’t the great Ms. Nancy? I didn’t think you’d call!”

A familiar voice could be heard saying that in a joking manner the moment the call got through.

Sasha let out a helpless chuckle and asked, “Haha! What are you saying? Anyway, what have you been up to lately? Where have you been?”

Willow sighed the moment she heard that. “What else could I be up to? I’m still working the same job every day, shuttling

between my house and the office. Life is as boring as watching paint dry if you ask me!”

Sasha went silent as she recalled how someone who claimed to be Willow had come looking for her at the hotel in Corleon.

Had Lance not been there to stop me, god knows what would've happened to me...

Her fingers went pale as she tightened her grip on the phone.

“Hey, what's with the silence? What about you, huh? What are you doing?”

“I just took a shower a while ago. Willow, can I ask you a question?” Sasha was a little hesitant at first, but decided to bring up the topic anyway.

Willow froze when she heard how formal Sasha sounded and realized she was getting serious.

“Sure, go ahead! What is it?” Willow responded in a more serious manner as well.

“What if I told you that I feel like getting back together with him? What do you think?”

“Pffft!” Willow was drinking a glass of water when she heard that and spat it all out in shock.

What the hell is wrong with this woman? Why on earth would she want to get back with that scumbag?

“Are you crazy? Have you not suffered enough because of him? What, dying once wasn’t enough for you?” Willow lashed out at her as she remembered how he had hanged her out on the deck back then.

Sasha’s face went pale instantly, and she began to regret talking to Willow about it.

Oh, right... Willow doesn’t know the truth about us... Damn it, why did I ask for her opinion?

“Calm down, Willow! I was just kidding!”

Willow wasn’t buying it at all and pressed on even when Sasha had tried to drop the topic. “Kidding? I’m not a fool, Nancy! We’ve been friends for so many years now! Do you think I don’t know you well enough? You wouldn’t just bring this up for no reason!”

Sasha simply pursed her lips and kept quiet.

“Come on, out with it! What’s going on? Is he that charming that you ended up having such funny ideas?”

“No, it’s not that. There are a lot of things between us that you don’t know about.”

“Such as?”

“It’s true that I died for him once, but I had also made him suffer quite a lot since we were kids,” Sasha replied as she came to realize that neither of them owed the other anything.

Back then, I decided to cut ties with him because I found out the truth behind my marrying into the Hayes family. On top of that, Xenia's death made it impossible for me to face Uncle Jackson and Aunt Sharon. But now, I realize that he doesn't play much of a role in this tragedy of mine... Just like me, he had always been a mere piece on the board. First of all, he never agreed to marry me, let alone live with me. Second of all, Robert was the one who killed Xenia and caused the Wand family to go bankrupt. He had nothing to do with any of that, so I shouldn't be pinning the blame on him like that. In fact, I don't hate him all that much anymore.

“So, that's the reason why you want to get back together with him? Remember, the damage that the Hayes family has caused you and your family is irreversible. Are you sure you can forget about everything and pretend none of it has ever happened?”

Willow had calmed down a lot more after hearing her explanation, but she still couldn't quite comprehend the logic behind it.

Of course I can't possibly forget all that has happened, but he has done a lot for me time after time, so I'm willing to take that first step. He is the father of our children, after all!

Sasha's lips twitched slightly at the thought of that.

Having made her decision, she hung up the phone shortly after.

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Meanwhile, it was late at night in Avenport when Sebastian returned to Royal Court One.

Luke had called him multiple times out of concern, but Sebastian ignored all of his calls until he got home.

“Mr. Hayes, you’re finally home! My goodness, you look so pale! What happened to you?” Wendy came out to greet him, only to be shocked by how weary he looked.

No longer trying to put up a tough front, Sebastian staggered his way to the couch and slumped against it.

“Call the family doctor, and don’t tell Roxanne about this.”

“Right away, Mr. Hayes!”

Wendy quickly called the family doctor who then arrived about ten minutes later.

The doctor administered a sedative, and Sebastian was finally able to fall into a deep sleep.

He had collapsed from exhaustion after forcefully suppressing the violent urges within him for too long.

“His current condition is still unstable, so please make sure he takes his medication on time as prescribed by Ms. Rocke. It takes half a year of constant medication just to treat depression, and what he has is far more serious,” the doctor reminded Wendy on his way out.

Wendy could only nod in response.

As if I don't already know that... But what am I supposed to do? Mr. Hayes has always rejected Ms. Roche's treatments. Even now, he refuses to let me call her for assistance.

With that in mind, she helped Sebastian to his bedroom on the third floor, and the night went by peacefully.

The next day, however, Roxanne somehow found out about what happened and rushed over to Frontier Bay early in the morning.

"Hey, Wendy! I heard Sebastian is back! Is that true?"

"Yes, Ms. Roche. Mr. Hayes came back last night and is still asleep right now," Wendy replied with a smile.

Roxanne then ran upstairs after hearing that, only to find the two boys inside his room by the time she got there.

"Could you send us to school today, Daddy? You haven't done that in a long time!"

"Yeah, sure..."

The sight of those cute yet handsome twins leaning against the couch was so adorable that no one could possibly say no to their request.

Sebastian was feeling a lot better after a good night's rest.

Seeing his kids looking at him with those puppy eyes of theirs melted his heart completely, and he gave them both a pat on the head as he said, "All right, go have breakfast downstairs with Ms. Dolivo, okay? Daddy will take you two to school in a bit."

“Yay!”

Roxanne watched as the kids ran past her down the stairs before making her way into the room.

“Sebastian, why didn’t you inform me when you came back last night? How are you feeling?”

“I’m fine,” Sebastian replied coldly while retrieving a necktie from his closet.

He hadn’t been to the office for four days, so he had to head over after dropping the kids at school.

Standing in front of the mirror, Sebastian was about to put the necktie on when Roxanne stepped forward and snatched it out of his hand. “Here, let me help you. By the way, could you come over to my place for lunch this afternoon?”

“Why?” Sebastian asked, fighting back the urge to avoid her.

“It’s my mom’s birthday today, but we don’t feel like having a huge party, so we’re inviting those close to us for lunch instead. I heard my dad calling your dad last night, so I’m guessing he’ll be there too.”

Sebastian nodded after a brief pause, and Roxanne froze as she was captivated by his handsome face and mysterious eyes.

Where did he go? Why was he gone for so long? What was he doing there? There are so many questions that I want to ask him, but I can’t seem to get those words out of my mouth after seeing that look on his face... For some reason, I feel like there’s this

distance between us now. I know he still listens to me, but I can no longer bring myself to act as I please like I always did. Am I just imagining things?

Roxanne was so lost in thought that she stood rooted to the spot even after Sebastian had left with the kids.

“Is something the matter, Ms. Rocke? Are you going to have lunch here today?” Wendy asked when she came in and saw her standing there.

“Oh, no, my mom will be celebrating her birthday in the afternoon, and Mr. Hayes will be coming over to my place for lunch. I’ll be on my way now!” Roxanne said as she grabbed her handbag and left the villa in a hurry.

For reasons unknown, she even made a call home and convinced her family to have lunch at a hotel instead.