

Trapped 451

Chapter 451 Hidden Agenda

Scott didn't prevent Caroline from entering.

Caroline glanced up at the noise and quickly averted her gaze when she spotted Paige.

She uttered hoarsely, "You're here."

Paige approached and sighed upon seeing Lily. "Carol, please take it easy. I'm sure Lily wouldn't want to see you like this."

Caroline stood up and grabbed a white cloth.

"Lily endured a tough life. Her husband passed away long ago, and she sent her child abroad to study with her hard-earned money. Yet, he turned out ungrateful. I thought she'd be happier with me, but ultimately, I caused her harm."

Paige looked at Caroline with concern. "Carol..."

Caroline covered Lily's face with the white cloth. "Isn't it ironic?"

Paige inquired, "What do you mean?"

Caroline replied, "People around me keep passing away."

Paige was genuinely scared. "It's not your fault. Those foreign doctors are to blame."

“Foreign doctors...” she thought.

Caroline recalled that Evan had arranged those doctors for Lily’s treatment. He forcibly transferred Lily to Grand East and persuaded her to undergo surgery. Lily wouldn’t have died if it weren’t for that surgery.

‘Is he seeking revenge against me? Is it for hiding from him for a few years? Or is it because Lily concealed my whereabouts from him?’

Caroline pulled back her trembling hands, overwhelmed by these terrifying thoughts.

Rage began to consume her.

That night, Lily’s body was taken to the funeral home. Since she had no close friends or family,

12

+15 BONUS

Neil approached Scott outside. “Did you agree to the surgery for Lily?”

Scott nodded. “I couldn’t give up a chance to treat her condition and possibly bring her back to consciousness. But craniotomy always carries risks.”

Neil said, "I can't deny that, but it happened at Evan's hospital."

"Do you suspect foul play from him regarding the surgery? Scott asked.

Neil replied, "I'm just speculating. However, given his personality, I don't think he'd stoop so low."

"It's odd. You're suspicious, yet not entirely. What do you mean?" Scott asked

Neil explained, "Even if it wasn't him, it doesn't rule out the possibility of someone else having a hidden agenda."

"What do you mean?"

Neil looked at Scott seriously. "People close to Carol have been facing misfortunes one after another. Don't you sense that someone might be targeting her?" 1

Scott shook his head. "I doubt it. Caroline's mother's condition worsened due to her emotions.

Jamie's incident was an accident, and I was present during Lily's first surgery. It's medically normal for the body to struggle with a second operation"

"Even if that's true, it doesn't mean Evan isn't seeking revenge against me." Caroline's voice suddenly cut in, cold and resolute.

Neil and Scott turned to see Caroline.

Neil said, "We need to investigate further, Carol. My earlier comment was one-sided."

Caroline asked, "How do we investigate this? Do you think he'd leave behind evidence for us to find?"

Scott advised, "Carol, try to stay calm."

Caroline pursed her lips. "Can I stay calm when Lily is lying in there?"

Chapter 452

Scott advised, "Being excessively emotional isn't good for your health."

Caroline took a deep breath. "I won't give up! I'm meeting Evan to clear things up."

Neil suggested, "Do what you need to, but we might have to postpone our Christmas Eve plans."

Neil turned to Scott. "Go inside with Carol first. I'll make a call,"

Scott nodded and left with Caroline

Neil's suspicion arose during Lily's first surgery. Why would an oncologist specialist attend a

craniotomy surgery? Was it solely for Carol?

However, Neil soon dismissed the idea.

Even if Scott seemed suspicious, he likely couldn't manipulate Evan's hospital. Furthermore, his

love for Caroline would prevent him from hurting her.

The next afternoon, Richie handed Evan the test report.

Axel had been diagnosed with intermediate–stage acute leukemia from the expedited tests. Evan’s grip tightened upon reading “intermediate stage”.

He looked at Richie seriously. “Do you have a treatment plan?”

Richie replied, “We’ll start with one round of chemotherapy, but the best option is a bone marrow transplant as soon as possible. It can lead to a full recovery if done swiftly.”

Evan remained silent momentarily. “Could my bone marrow be a match?”

Richie explained, “We need to test it, but generally, there’s a 50% chance of a match. As a

precaution, we should also search for a full match bone marrow.”

Suddenly, hurried footsteps approached.

“Evan!” Daniella’s voice, hoarse, reached him.

Her voice visibly repulsed him. He turned to her. “What is it?”

Daniella glanced at the room. “I know Axel is in there, and he’s sick. Will you allow me to see him?”

1/2

+15 BONUS

Evan sneered, thinking, 'See Axel? Have you forgotten how you treated him?'

Evan replied coldly. "No."

Daniella bit her lip, her swollen eyes pleading. "Even though I made mistakes, I raised Axel. We may not be blood-related, but there's still love."

Evan couldn't be bothered by Daniella's act. "Axel doesn't want to see you."

Daniella persisted, "What if I have the bone marrow to save him? Will you still not let me see him?"

Evan was about to re-enter the room but stopped. He turned abruptly to Daniella, incredulous.

What did you say?"

"If I can find bone marrow to treat Axel, will you let me see him?" Daniella asked.

"If? If you can find it, so can I," Evan mocked. He entered the room, closing Daniella out

Axel had already awakened. He looked at Evan and slowly sat up. "Daddy."

Evan approached quickly. "You're awake. Are you feeling unwell?"

Axel's gaze dimmed, and he lowered his head. "Do you blame me, Daddy?"

Evan felt his heart ache at his son's guilty demeanor. In a gentler tone, he said, "I've neglected you.

Rest, and I promise I'll ensure your recovery."

Axel nodded, then met Evan's gaze after a moment of silence. "Can you promise me something.

Daddy?"

"Go ahead."

Clutching the blanket tightly, Axel said, "Please don't tell Mommy about this. I don't want to worry her."

Chapter 453 I Can Help You

"I can promise you that," Evan assured. "However, you must behave and cooperate with the doctor during your treatment."

Axel felt a wave of relief and nodded vigorously. He was willing to do whatever it took, as long as his father kept his promise not to inform his mother.

After leaving Grand East, Daniella drove to Villa Foresta. Upon arriving, she parked her car and entered the living room to find Casey resting there.

She greeted him with a warm smile, saying, "I'm back, Casey."

Casey opened his eyes and looked at Daniella gently. "How's Axel?"

Daniella blurted out, "It's a bone marrow issue," as she sat beside Casey.

Casey paused, puzzled. "Bone marrow?"

Daniella quickly realized her mistake and corrected herself, saying, "He needs a bone marrow transplant."

She was startled, fearing that Casey might discern she knew his true identity. She decided to keep this information to herself until their relationship had solidified, worried that Casey might turn against her.

Casey averted his gaze. "With enough resources, finding a suitable donor should be straightforward. I'm concerned Evan will face difficulties despite having money."

Daniella cautiously asked, "So, you're considering cutting off Evan's access to bone marrow?"

Casey met Daniella's eyes with a faint smile. "What do you think?"

"That would give me leverage with Evan!" Daniella exclaimed. "If I possess something that can save Axel's life, something Evan doesn't have, he'll surely welcome me back."

Casey nodded approvingly. "I can assist you with this. You can focus on other tasks with peace of mind."

Daniella was elated. "I'll stay close to Evan for you!"

1/2

+15 BONUS

Later that night, Neil ordered Caroline and Paige to return home and rest.

Paige quickly succumbed to sleep in the car's backseat despite Caroline's attempts to wake her.

They arrived at Bayview Villa, where the children eagerly greeted Caroline.

Paige, still groggy, asked, "Are we home, Carol?"

Caroline held the children's hands and replied, "Yes, we're home. Come inside."

Paige stepped out of the car, yawned, and followed Caroline into the villa. She then lay down on the sofa and fell asleep.

Liora wanted to greet Paige, but Caroline stopped her. "Don't disturb your godmother, Lia. She hasn't slept all night."

Confused, Liora asked, "Why not?"

Tyler sensed something was amiss when he saw Caroline dressed in black. "Who passed away,

Mommy?"

Caroline's heart ached, but she composed herself and knelt to speak softly. "Lia, Ty, I have something to tell you, Lily has passed away."

Liora and Tyler were shocked, their eyes welling up with tears.

Liora's voice quivered as she asked, "Wasn't she still in the hospital? How did..."

Unable to contain her grief, Liora began to sob. "Mommy, please don't make this kind of joke. It's not nice!"

Tyler remained silent but teary-eyed, waiting for Caroline to explain.

Caroline hugged her children tightly. "Lily didn't make it through surgery. I'm sorry I couldn't save her."

Liora cried loudly, and Tyler buried his head in Caroline's shoulder, both mourning their loss.

Chapter 454 Christmas Presents

+15 BONUS

Lily cared for the two children for five years, and they had come to see her as family. When Lily passed away, it deeply saddened the children.

Caroline released her hold on the children and said, “Lily’s funeral will be on December 25th. I’ll take a leave of absence to be there with you.”

The two children nodded with tears in their eyes.

Meanwhile, at Villa Foresta.

Casey offered Daniella a place to stay for the night. She sat in his room, aware that their two-day time limit was about to expire, yet Casey showed no sign of checking his phone.

As Daniella undressed in the bathroom, her phone suddenly rang. She quickly picked it up when she saw Hector’s caller ID.

“Hello, Mr. Hendrix? Daniella leaned against the bathroom door, trying to listen for Casey on the phone.

Hector spoke. “I’ve found the bone marrow, which can be delivered anytime. You can name the price.”

Daniella didn’t hear Casey’s voice from outside. She wondered if the room was soundproofed exceptionally well.

“How much will it be?” Daniella gently opened the bathroom door.

*27,000 dollars,” Hector replied just as she fully opened the door.

Seeing Casey still on the phone, her heart raced, and she hastily closed the door.

This time, the evidence is solid! It’s Casey!’ she thought.

Clearing her throat, Daniella asked, “Alright, how can I send you the money?”

Hector said, “I’ll send you my account number later.”

“Sure, Mr. Hendrix.”

2

+15 BONUS

After ending the call, Daniella received a text message. She transferred 10,000 dollars to the provided account and received another text from an unknown number, giving the location of the bone marrow.

On Christmas Eve, Axel woke up to a text from Caroline. It read: [Merry Christmas, my dear.]

Tears welled up in Axel’s eyes as he read her message. Seeing Evan working on the sofa, he hid under his blanket to wipe away his tears. He missed his mother immensely.

Axel: [Merry Christmas to you. How are you spending the day, Mommy?]

Caroline texted back: [I'm taking Ty and Lia to the funeral home.]

Axel was shocked.

Axel: [Has someone passed away?]

Caroline: [Lily is gone.]

Axel knew about Lily. Even though they had never met, he knew she was very kind.

Axel: [Don't be sad, Mommy.]

Caroline: [Hmm, I'll be strong. After all, I still want to see my three children grow up healthy.]

'Healthy... Axel thought about his own health but pushed the idea aside.

Axel: [You be good too, Mommy.]

Suddenly, Evan's voice interrupted Axel's thoughts.

Axel quickly hid his phone and looked at Evan. He was surprised to see Evan looking exhausted

with stubble on his chin.

Axel felt a pang of guilt. I make daddy worry, don't 17' he wondered

"Daddy," Axel called out, looking away.

Evan sat beside him and asked, "What would you like to eat today? Shall we go out on Christmas Eve?"

Axel thought momentarily and said cautiously, "Can we go to the mall?"

"For food?" Evan asked.

Axel replied, "I'd like to get Christmas presents for Mommy, Ty, and Lia."

Chapter 455 Why Should I Stop You?

+15 BONUS

Initially, Axel wasn't sure if Evan would agree to it. He didn't expect his father to agree so easily.

Axel's eyes slowly brightened, and he said, "Thank you, Daddy."

Evan smiled, but he felt a pang of sadness. He hadn't anticipated Axel being so overjoyed about something so trivial.

In the afternoon, Evan took a leisurely stroll through the mall, holding Axel's hand after lunch.

Axel had already thought about the gifts, so he headed straight for the shop. He picked out a scarf for Caroline and a thermos flask for Tyler, knowing how much he liked warm drinks. He chose a large doll for Liora that she could cuddle with. Then, he purchased a tie for Evan.

Evan was visibly surprised by the gift. "For me?"

Axel nodded. "Daddy, you deserve a Christmas gift too."

Evan leaned over and gently ruffled Axel's hair.

Axel was taken aback because Evan was beaming with an infectious happiness he had never seen before. He couldn't hide the joy on his face and said, "Daddy, you should smile more often. You look really good when you do."

Evan's smile froze momentarily, and he appeared somewhat awkward. Clearing his throat, he asked, "What else do you want to buy?"

Axel replied, "Nothing."

A puzzled Evan asked, "Aren't you getting something for yourself?"

Axel's eyes twinkled with hidden delight. "My gift is seeing the happiness in all of you."

Evan held Axel's hand warmly "I remember you were browsing for desktop computer parts once, right?"

Axel blushed. "I was just looking at the components, thinking about trying to build one..."

Evan said, "Make a list of the parts you need and give it to Reuben for purchasing."

+15 BONUS

Axel raised his head in astonishment. "Aren't you going to stop me from doing things unrelated to learning?"

Evan replied, "Why should I stop you if you're capable of it?"

Back at the hospital.

Evan instructed Reuben to deliver the gifts Axel had purchased to Caroline's house, along with three Christmas cards personally written by Axel.

Initially, Reuben intended to hand the items over to the bodyguards. However, as soon as he drove into the yard, he spotted a woman's figure—Eira.

Startled, Reuben rolled down his window and asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm Eira, the nanny Ms. Shenton hired," she replied. "Are you here with Ms. Shenton's consent?"

Reuben shook his head and admitted, "No."

Suspicious, Eira asked, "What brings you here, then?"

Reuben pointed at the gifts on the passenger seat. "Ms. Shenton's son entrusted me with.

delivering the Christmas gifts he bought.”

Eira leaned over to inspect the passenger seat and smiled upon seeing the gifts. “Alright, sir, you may hand the gifts to me.”

Reuben nodded, exited the car, and handed the gifts to Eira.

She nodded back and said, “I’ll pass them on to Ms. Shenton. Goodbye!”

Reuben replied, “Sure, thank you.”

As he watched Eira disappear into the villa with the gifts, he wondered, ‘Are there still young nannies like her these days?’

Later that night, Caroline returned with the children.

Eira had already prepared dinner and approached Caroline with a smile. “Ms. Shenton, there are gifts for you and the children in the living room.”

Liora rushed to the living room, and her eyes sparkled with delight when she saw the large doll.

“LinaBell! Mommy, it’s a huge LinaBell!” Liora exclaimed.

Chapter 456 Are You Staying?

Tyler lifted the thermos flask, remarking, “I know who sent this.”

Caroline grasped the scarf-packed gift box, asking, “It’s from Axel, right?”

Tyler nodded. "I have a gift for Axel too, Mommy. Could you arrange for its delivery?"

"Mommy, I've got a present for Axel too!" Liora said.

"Alright," Caroline replied, contemplating who should handle the gift deliveries, when Eira approached.

"I'll do it! I met the man who came this afternoon! He looks plain, but he has enormous eyes and a graceful face," Eira stated.

Caroline realized Eira was referring to Reuben but didn't expect her to describe him as dull.

Caroline instructed the children, 'Fetch the gifts from upstairs. There's a watch on my bedside table. Please bring it as well.'

Liora playfully teased Caroline, "You secretly bought a gift for Axel too, Mommy."

Caroline affectionately patted Liora's head. "It's the same watch you have."

The two children hurried upstairs to retrieve the gifts while Caroline provided Eira with Villa Rosa's address.

After dinner, Eira delivered the gifts to Villa Rosa while Caroline prepared the children for bed. They needed to wake up early the next day.

Alex visited Evan in the hospital. Observing Axel asleep before 7:00 p.m., Alex whispered, "Why is he asleep so early?"

With a deep frown, Evan held up the test results sent by the doctor. "He has a high fever, and they drew a lot of blood."

Alex sighed. "When does chemotherapy start?"

Evan looked up. "After his infection clears and his fever subsides, probably the day after tomorrow."

Alex asked, "What about the bone marrow?"

+15 BONUS

Evan's suspicious expression deepened. "I've sent someone to check the black market and reach out to major hospitals, but they haven't found a suitable match yet."

"You don't need to rush it. I heard the transplant can only happen after the initial treatment," Alex reassured.

Evan placed the report on the shelf. "Hmm. Watch over Axel for me tomorrow."

Alex agreed, "Of course. What will you be doing?"

Evan replied in a deep voice, "I have to attend Lily's burial."

"Ah. Leave it to me," Alex offered.

On December 25th, Caroline brought the children to the cemetery early in the morning.

Scott had chosen the same cemetery where Caroline's adoptive mother rested.

As Caroline stepped out of the car, her tears flowed uncontrollably. Paige handed her a tissue and

said, "Don't cry, Carol. Ms. Smith wouldn't want you to be sad."

Caroline nodded, and they entered the cemetery together. A funeral celebrant led the burial

ceremony at the tombstone chosen by Scott.

After the procedures concluded, Caroline sank to her knees in sorrow. Meanwhile, the two

children sobbed in Paige and Neil's comforting arms.

As the group prepared to leave, an unexpected figure appeared.

"Why is my boss here?" Paige exclaimed.

Caroline's gaze turned icy as she spotted the man in a black suit approaching with Reuben.

Caroline spoke coldly. "Take the children and wait in the car."

Paige looked concerned but complied, "Are you staying?"

Neil added, "Carol, it might be best if we stay."

Chapter 457 Don't Want to See You Again

Kenny hesitated to leave. "What if those bullies bother you?"

Caroline glanced at him. "They won't. We're in the cemetery. Neil, Scott, please escort the funeral.

celebrant."

The group noticed Caroline's determination and chose a different path without commenting

further.

Once they departed, Evan approached the tombstone Caroline's icy glare met him, and she

slapped him without a word.

Reuben's eyes widened in shock at the crisp slap. "Ms. Shenton!"

Caroline suppressed her anger. "How dare you come here!"

Evan turned solemnly, matching Caroline's intense anger with his own cold stare. "Do you realize

what you're doing?"

Caroline closed in on Evan. "I'd like to ask you: what have you done?"

Evan's temples pulsed with veins. "Explain yourself!"

Caroline's eyes turned bloodshot. "You sent the doctor to get my consent for Lily's surgery, and she died during the operation!"

Evan emanated an eerie presence.

"Can I control the surgery? Can't you see I hired the best medical team for Lily?" Evan retorted.

Caroline refused to listen. "I won't tolerate your arrogance. You're trying to hurt me, aren't you?"

Evan retorted, "If I wanted revenge, do you think you'd still be here?"

"You're known for exploiting people's vulnerabilities. Now you've succeeded. You're enjoying my pain, aren't you?" Caroline accused.

Evan felt a tightening in his chest. "Am I truly that despicable? Would I harm a comatose person to get back at you?"

Caroline sneered. "Lily is here. Will you swear on her grave you never wished her harm?"

1/2

+15 BONUS

"I didn't do it. Swearing is unnecessary," Evan replied coldly.

“Unnecessary? Can you claim a clear conscience without swearing?” Caroline taunted.

Evan frowned. “What must I do for you to believe me?”

“Getting impatient, Evan? How does it feel to be doubted?” Caroline chuckled and pointed to

herself. “I’ve endured your doubts repeatedly, but you’ve only faced it once.”

Evan’s gaze shifted, his fists clenched tightly.

“Go away! I don’t want to see you again!” Caroline said sternly.

Evan looked at Caroline with mixed emotions. “Lily’s death isn’t my fault, and I’ll say it just once.”

“Fine. Show me the evidence, then,” Caroline challenged.

Evan sighed. “How can I prove it? I hired the medical team. Even if there’s documentation, you’ll

still suspect me, right?”

“So, what’s your defense?” Caroline asked indifferently.

Evan’s expression grew tense. “Carol, why are you being so unreasonable?”

Caroline sneered. “I learned from my ex-boss!”

“Reuben, set down the flowers!” Evan called out.

Evan turned away, and Reuben hurriedly placed the bouquet before Lily’s tombstone

Chapter 458 Please Explain

Reuben gazed at Caroline and spoke. "Mr. Jordan isn't that kind of person, Ms. Shenton. You worked for him for three years. Have you ever seen him use such unethical tactics?"

"Mr. Jordan invested a lot of manpower and money into commissioning the medical team. You've crossed a line today, Ms. Shenton."

With those words, Reuben departed.

Caroline stood in front of the tombstone, silent.

She thought, Have I gone too far? I wanted to believe that you intended to save Lily willingly, too.

Yet, Lily died during the surgery performed by the doctors you hired! You won't even swear to it.

How can I trust that your conscience is clear?

After some time, Caroline walked toward Katie's tombstone, placing the bouquet she had prepared before it. She retrieved a tissue and used it to clean the tombstone.

"Mom, I'm here. Do you blame me for not visiting in so long?" Caroline managed a weak smile. "I changed my name and hid for five years abroad. I'm a fashion designer now, with a few small

achievements since my return.

“You must watch over me, ensuring my career goes smoothly, right? Mom, I have three adorable
you next time, okay?” and intelligent grandchildren. I’ll bring them to visit

Caroline looked at Katie’s name on the tombstone, her eyes welling with tears. “Mom, please forgive me
for not visiting. I haven’t yet defeated my enemies, so I don’t have the courage to face
you. Please forgive me.”

In the car on the way back, Evan looked displeased. He stared out the window, feeling suffocated. He
had faced doubts from others, but when Caroline doubted him, it stirred a furious but dumb
response within him.

“Mr. Jordan, Ms. Shenton’s words may be harsh due to her overwhelming sadness,” Reuben said,
feeling uneasy.

Evan glanced at him. “How would you feel if you were repeatedly doubted?”

“Well... I would distance myself.” Reuben hesitated. “Mr. Jordan, there’s something I’m uncertain

“Go on,” Evan urged in a deep voice.

+15 BONUS

“I believe Ms. Shenton wants to understand why you never trusted her,” Reuben said. “Mr. Jordan,
maybe you could try putting yourself in her shoes after today’s incident. Perhaps Ms. Shenton

didn't harm Mrs. Jordan, just as you never intended to harm Ms. Smith."

Evan contemplated this, feeling as if his heart had been hollowed out, flooded with memories. He recalled Caroline's disappointed gaze, sorrowful expression, and powerless explanations, all of which he had never truly believed.

That night, Caroline locked herself in her room upon returning to the villa.

Kenny took off his jacket and approached Paige, who was eating heartily. "What's going on with G? Is she still grieving?"

Paige rolled her eyes at Kenny before turning to Neil. "Can you please explain to this clueless guy. Neil?"

Neil clarified, "Lily was just buried. Caroline can't move on from the grief so quickly. Besides, there's more than just grief on her mind."

The puzzled Kenny asked, "What else?"

He sat down and took a hearty gulp of the soup. His eyes widened in delight. This tastes amazing!"

Eira chuckled. "Thank you for the compliment."

Chapter 459 Too Rational

Scott casually mentioned, I glanced back before leaving and remember seeing Carol slap Evan.”

“What? She slapped that scumbag?” Kenny exclaimed.

Neil nodded. “She believed Lily’s passing was closely linked to Evan.”

“I’d think the same if I were in her shoes, given that my boss commissioned the medical team,”

Paige said between bites of her food.

The group turned their attention to Paige.

Paige, feeling bewildered, asked, “Why are you all looking at me?”

“Women think straightforwardly. If the scumbag wanted revenge on Caroline, he wouldn’t use

such an obvious tactic,” Kenny remarked.

Scott added, “Vital signs can drop during surgery, resulting in death.”

Neil chimed in. True, mishaps occur, but we can’t rule out the possibility of tampering.”

Kenny looked perplexed. “You make it sound so mysterious. Have you been reading too many

mystery novels?”

Neil asked, “What do you mean?”

Kenny put down his spoon and clarified, "The hospital belongs to the scumbag. The person must be skilled to attempt something in his presence. According to your theory, they likely have a grudge against him and aim to involve him with Carol."

Paige gasped. "In that case, Daniella seems the most motivated."

Neil disagreed, "I don't think she's capable of this."

Paige retorted, "What do you mean? She's even capable of hiding a murder."

Kenny, shocked, asked, "A murder? How did I miss this?"

The group collectively judged Kenny for being so uninformed.

Scott cautioned, "Don't make unfounded speculations without evidence."

Paige sighed in Scott's direction. "You're too forgiving."

+15 BONUS

Scott clarified, "Strong evidence speaks louder. I'm just analyzing objectively."

Neil observed Scott and wondered why he remained so impartial when someone he loved had been hurt in these incidents.

Did Scott have a unique perspective or hidden intentions?

Scott seemed to notice Neil's gaze, so he met Neil's eyes and smiled calmly. "Do you find me too rational?"

Neil looked away, unsure of what experiences had made Scott so analytical.

Scott continued. "Maybe I've seen too much death and separation."

Neil played with his mug, pondering Scott's cryptic statement. He found Scott hard to read but hoped he was the kind and pure-hearted person he appeared to be.

After dinner, Paige went home, and Neil left for some work matters. Kenny entertained the two children while Scott delivered a meal cooked by Eira to Caroline.

He knocked on her door.

Caroline's hoarse voice invited him in.

Scott entered and frowned as he saw Caroline curled up on the sofa. He placed the food tray on the coffee table. "You should eat."

"I don't feel like eating," Caroline replied apathetically.

Scott sat beside her and offered gently, "Would you like to hear a story?"

Caroline looked at him and agreed, "Sure."

Scott picked up a glass of water and began, “When I was five, I witnessed my mother threaten my father with her own death for abandoning us. I’ll never forget the look in my father’s eyes. He

watched my mother hold a knife to her wrist without a trace of pity. In fact, his eyes were filled

with contempt and disgust.”

Chapter 460 Offering

“He asked my mom to make her death quick so she wouldn’t leave a bad last impression on him.

In the end, she couldn’t do it because she knew I’d be left alone if she was gone.

“But after that incident, she fell apart. She started drinking and smoking excessively with the

money my dad left. She’d hurt herself after drinking, covering her arms and legs in scars.

“I was terrified to go home, fearing I’d find her dead or hear her cries. I suffered for five years until

she got diagnosed with cancer. I begged her to get treatment, but she held me with her frail,

scarred hands, saying she wouldn’t burden me.

“She left me some money, hoping I’d grow up well. She told me not to resent my father—he was

the devil. She wanted me to grow up as a pure-hearted angel because I kept her alive for those.

five years.”

As Scott briefly shared his life story, Caroline cried.

“Don’t you hate your father?” Caroline asked.

Scott handed her a glass of water. “What’s the point of hating him? Hate only torments the mind.”

Caroline disagreed, “Your life wouldn’t have ended up like this if not for him, right?”

Scott smiled. “I used to resent him and even tried to find him. But I found out his life isn’t great either.”

Caroline was confused. “What do you mean?”

Scott’s eyes were clear as he gently explained, “He doesn’t have sincere people around him.”

Caroline looked down. That doesn’t mean he didn’t live a good life-

Scott interrupted, “A wealthy person can buy anything except sincerity.”

Caroline sighed. “True, without sincere people, life feels empty.”

Scott assured her, “You have me, friends, and family. We’ll face life together. People who come into your life, both causing pain and joy, teach valuable lessons. Don’t hold grudges. It’ll torment you.”

Caroline smiled sadly. “Easier said than done.”

Scott admitted, "True. It's not easy for anyone."

Caroline was surprised but then chuckled, "You're human too, aren't you?"

Scott raised an eyebrow. "My soul's already been offered to Bael."

Caroline frowned. "What do you mean?"

Scott stood up. "The Angel of Light will get you more water."

Caroline couldn't help but laugh at Scott's teasing.

+15 BONUS

Neil sat in his office at Xander Residence, staring at his laptop during a phone call

A woman's voice came from the speaker, "I'm almost done processing the client data. When are you planning to proceed?"

"No rush. Carol hasn't made a move, so I'll wait, too. How's the new company?" Neil asked.

The woman chuckled, her voice crisp. "Hehehe, I've completed staff recruitment! They start officially tomorrow."

Neil relaxed in his seat. "What about the projects?"

“You signed off on several major projects that were handed over to us. As long as you’re here, the partners can’t object,” she replied.