

Ex Convict 2851

Chapter 2851

Whitney Cooper left after saying that.

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Valda Theller finally released Brian's arm slowly. "Just now... I..." She bit her lip, feeling flustered and embarrassed.

Brian said, "It was the first time I saw you so overbearing, but you're my girlfriend. You have the right to say those things to her."

Valda Theller's eyelashes quivered slightly. She did not say those words because she was his girlfriend but because she was jealous.

She was jealous of the past Whitney Cooper mentioned.

Even though she knew Brian probably only thought of Whitney Cooper as a substitute, her jealousy could not be controlled by

reason.

"She does look like Grace," Valda Theller murmured for a while.

"Yeah, she does," said Brian as he looked at Valda Theller's hesitant look. "If you have anything you want to ask, you might as well go ahead."

"How did you happen to be here today?" She asked after some hesitation.

"I knew Whitney Cooper had come to Emerald City, so I had people keep an eye on her. Then I got word that she came here, so I came," said Brian.

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Whitney Cooper looked like Grace, so he let her off the hook.

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"Then... Why didn't you ask her to be your girlfriend? Why me?" she asked a second question.

"Do you think I should've asked her?" Brian asked rhetorically.

"She... looks like Grace..." There was a faint tremble in her voice. She knew there were probably questions she should not be asking, but she could not help wanting answers.

Brian said slowly, "Yes, she looks like her, but I don't want a substitute. You know what? I've had a lot of substitutes... before I found Grace. I kept looking for her substitutes, but the one I really want won't ever belong to me."

My Gorgeous Wife is an Ex-Convict!

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After a pause, he added, "I did save Whitney Cooper abroad because she looked like Grace, but I know very well that she isn't Grace. It's just because she looks like Grace that I didn't want her to suffer again and offered her a job."

Valda Theller did not expect Brian to say so much to her.

He had never been one to explain, but he seemed to be explaining to her now.

Brian easily saw the confusion on Valda Theller's face and said, "I'm explaining this to you so that you won't get the wrong idea."

Valda Theller nodded blankly. "Oh. But she seems to know a lot about you." She sounded jealous when she said this.

"What about you? You can ask anything you want to know about me and I'll tell you." Brian caressed her head.

"If I want to know about what happened between you and Grace, will you tell me?" she blurted out.

After saying that, Valda Theller felt the air freezing suddenly.

The man in front of her only stared at her. His dark phoenix eyes were like a bottomless pool. People would not know what he was thinking.

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Valda Theller gulped uneasily.

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She knew she could lighten the mood by saying that she was only joking. Perhaps things between them would then return to normal.

However... she wanted to know him better.

Taking a deep breath, she said, "It's fine if you don't want to tell me. I'll wait for when you're willing to tell me."

Of course, she might never get that chance.

"Why do you want to know what happened between Grace and me?" Brian asked.

"It's because... I love you." She loved him, so she wanted to know him better. She wanted to know his pain better. Just like the first time she saw him. He was in the rain, looking so lonely.

Brian was silent. Just before Valda Theller thought he would not go on, he finally said, "Grace and I met when we were little. I was kidnapped back then and escaped into the hills but lost my way. She carried me down the hill. I promised her I would do my best to protect her and give her a good life, but... I forgot to ask her name and where she lived. We met again years later. She had already fallen in love with Jason when I recognized her as the little girl I was looking for."

It was the first time he had ever spoken about his past with Grace

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in front of anyone.

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His voice continued. "It's as if I'm always missing out... I met Grace first, but I repeatedly missed out on her. It was already too late when I found out the truth. The reason I chose to date you in the beginning is that Grace wanted me to move on."

His voice paused as he gazed at her. "Do you still want to love me knowing this?"

"Did you mean it when you said you liked me afterward?" she asked instead of replying.

"Yes," he said. He had no idea when he started falling for Valda Theller, but he had grown accustomed to her presence. He always wanted to see her with a smile on her face.

Even when he was in a bad mood, seeing her smile made his bad mood go away.

Valda Theller said sternly, "That's all that matters. I loved you when you didn't like me. Now that you've begun to like me, why would I not love you? Thank you for telling me all this, and thank you... for asking me to be your girlfriend and not letting me miss out on you."

My Gorgeous Wife is an Ex-Convict!

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Brian's eyes glimmered as he muttered, "Yeah, I missed out on Grace. At least I didn't miss out on you."

Maybe God pitied him and let him meet her.

"Valda, I don't know how long it'll take me to fall in love with you. But... even if I only like you and you still want to stay with me, we'll get married. I will make you my wife." His elegant voice said.

She was stunned!

"Get married? You... want to marry me?"

“Yes, I’ll make you my wife if you’re willing.” As long as she did not mind that he could not love her, he would give her everything he

could afford!

‘Is this a proposal?’ Valda Theller was still thinking about the question in a daze after Brian left the studio.

‘Or is he trying to make things up to me because he doesn’t have the confidence to fall for me? But will anyone sacrifice the rest of their life to make things up to others?’ Valda Theller was confused.

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Fortunately, her two assistants were not in the studio today,

Otherwise, today’s incident would not have escaped her two gossiping assistants.

Valda Theller lay on her work desk, but she had no intention of working. Her mind was full of what Brian had said to her today.

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She was glad he was willing to tell her about his past with Grace today. Did it mean that he was gradually opening his heart to her?

“What’s the matter? Valda, did something good happen?” Her assistant’s voice rang suddenly.

Valda Theller froze as she looked up at her assistant and asked, “Why did you ask?”

“Because you keep smiling like you’ve won a five million dollar lottery. Something good must have happened to you to put you in a good mood, Valda,” her assistant said.

Valda Theller raised her hand to touch her cheek. It turned out that even other people could see that she was in a good mood.

“Yeah, something good happened.” She smiled.

Just then, her phone suddenly rang. Valda Theller picked up the phone to see that her uncle, Ferris, was calling.

She hesitated for a moment before picking up her phone. She

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heard her uncle’s voice. “Valda, come over if you’re free. I have something I want to tell you.”

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"Is it about Aunt and my cousin borrowing money the last time?" Valda Theller asked.

"No, no, don't overthink it. Come back first," said Ferris,

"Okay, I see. I'll go back tonight," said Valda Theller. Recalling her childhood, her uncle was nice to her when her parents were still alive. She liked him very much too.

However, her parents died afterward. Her uncle became her guardian and took charge of the inheritance her parents left for her. Everything gradually changed after that.

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Although her uncle still had some affection for her, it did not mean much in the face of her aunt's repeated demands. Eventually, she

had a falling out with her uncle's family, and she stopped telling her uncle what was on her mind.

Her aunt and cousin often asked her for money. Why did her uncle call her this time?

She would find out tonight!

Valda Theller felt a dull pain in her heart when she thought of the happy times she spent with her uncle when she was a child.

How wonderful it would be if everything were as it was!

Valda Theller went to her uncle's home that night. Her uncle's family of three had been waiting for her. Meanwhile, there were black and white photos of her parents, incense, candles, and some food on the living room table. It looked as if they had done a ritual.

However, today was not her parents' death anniversary, nor was it a special day such as Tomb Sweeping Day and winter solstice.

"This is..." Valda Theller stared in confusion.

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Ferris stepped forward and said awkwardly, "We haven't paid

2/3

respects to your parents in a long time, so I thought we might as well do it today since you were coming back.”

Valda Theller looked at the face similar to her father’s. Her father looked like her uncle, so Valda Theller often stared at her uncle in a daze after her father’s death.

“Yeah, come and pay respects to your parents.” Her aunt, Rowena Santiago, also said passionately.

Her cousin, Wynne, said, “Valda, we’ve all paid our respects. You’re the only one left. You’re the most filial to your parents. You won’t reject paying your respects, right?”

He seemed to be hinting at something else.

Rowena Santiago said to her son, “What are you saying? Valda is so filial to her parents. How could she not pay her respects?” She handed the incense sticks to Valda Theller as she spoke with a smile.

Valda Theller stared at the incense sticks and took them a moment later. She lit the incense sticks and bowed respectfully to her parents’ photo three times.

She would soon find out what her uncle’s family was up to.

When the incense sticks and the candles were almost lit, her uncle and the rest put away the incense sticks, candles, and

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offerings before serving food.

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Ferris grabbed Valda Theller and said, “Come and eat. Valda, you finally came back today. Have dinner with me. Valda, you have a boyfriend now. I’m happy to know your boyfriend is the crown prince of the entertainment industry. Your parents would smile from ear to ear if they knew you found such a good boyfriend.”

Valda Theller’s eyelids twitched slightly as she vaguely had a bad feeling.

“Here, tell me how you’re doing with the crown prince. Did he say he would marry you?” Ferris asked with fake concern.

“We’ve only been dating for a short time. We’re not ready to talk about marriage yet,” Valda Theller said indifferently.

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“Really? You’d better hurry up, or else I don’t know if I’ll last till your wedding,” Ferris said emotionally.

“Don’t talk like that. Didn’t the doctor say you can be cured if you continue to receive treatments?” Rowena Santiago said.

“But the treatment costs so much money. Let’s forget it. Our family has so little money. It’s better to leave what we have to you. I only hate myself for being incompetent and not earning much. I failed to give you a good life and caused Valda to suffer with us.” Ferris gave a long sigh.

“Valda, persuade your uncle to get treatment,” Rowena Santiago shouted to Valda Theller.

“Is Uncle sick?” Valda Theller asked.

“Yeah, Dad has been diagnosed with kidney disease. The doctor said he must be treated in time. If he delays his treatment, he’ll probably need a new kidney to survive. But if he goes through treatment, he’ll need imported medication for better results. But imported medication is expensive. One treatment plan costs half a million dollars. Our family doesn’t have that kind of money,” said Wynne.

Ferris shouted, “It costs so much money. Treatment? After one

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treatment plan, there’s a second one... The treatment fee is a bottomless pit!”

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“But Valda has money now. Valda’s boyfriend is the crown prince. He can easily pay for the hospital bills. Valda, don’t you agree?” Rowena Santiago said as she looked at Valda Theller expectantly.

Valda Theller stared at her uncle’s family and figured out the intention of her uncle’s family.

They wanted nothing more than money.

“Please show me Uncle’s medical records and examination report. I’ll ask the doctor for help,” said Valda Theller.

Rowena Santiago’s expression changed. “Medical records? Ask a doctor? What’s the matter? Don’t you believe that your uncle is sick?”

“I’m just trying to find out what’s going on with Uncle. If he needs money for treatment, I’ll pay for a part of it,” said Valda Theller.

“Only a part of it? Valda Theller, you have such a rich boyfriend. How can you only pay for a part of it when my father is sick?” Wynne said, looking upset.

Valda Theller retorted, “You know he’s your father too, so shouldn’t you contribute the most? My boyfriend’s money belongs to my boyfriend. He has no obligation to lend me money. You can say you’re only ‘borrowing’ it, but you might never pay it

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back.”

3/4

“You...” Wynne’s face instantly reddened. “Isn’t it easy to ask your boyfriend to borrow you some money?”

“What happens after I ask him? Will you write an IOU? Will you put up this house as collateral? If you can’t pay, will you sell the house and other family assets to pay the debt?” Valda Theller asked rhetorically.

“That’s enough, Valda. You don’t have to borrow us money if you don’t want to. Why say such things? I think of you as family, but you don’t. If your father were still alive, he would be so angry that he would slap you in the face for haggling over everything!” Ferris snapped.

Valda Theller stared at her ‘relative’. Her father would probably have looked like her uncle when he was old, but her uncle was not

her father after all.

“If my father were still alive and knew that the inheritance he left me could only get me a small apartment after I became an adult, he would be heartbroken and outraged for the injustice I’ve suffered,” said Valda Theller.

Ferris became furious. “What’s the matter? Are you complaining now? Don’t you know how much it costs to raise a child?”

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“I knew it’d cost money, but I didn’t realize it would cost this much. The money probably adds up to several million dollars. Besides, you didn’t give me any money except for the tuition fees after I got into university. I even earned my allowance by working part-time,” said Valda Theller.

"You're bringing up old scores, aren't you? Alright, if I had known, I wouldn't have adopted you. It would've been best if you had stayed at a welfare home," Ferris snapped.

Rowena Santiago quickly comforted Zhong Qisha, while Wynne said to Valda Theller, "Valda Theller, you're too stingy. Since you don't want to pay to save my father, who's your own uncle, what else is there to talk about? Let's pretend you're not a member of our family!"

"Did you bring me back today because of Uncle's illness or money?" Valda Theller asked coldly.

"It's for his illness, of course, but the treatment costs money!"

Rowena Santiago said.

"If it's for medical reasons, give me Uncle's medical records and examination report. I'll make a copy-"

However, she was interrupted before she could finish speaking.

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"What examination report? You can either pay up or leave!" Ferris snapped.

Valda Theller looked at her uncle's angry appearance and knew what was up.

His illness might not be real, but the family definitely wanted to ask her for money.

Valda Theller said no more and turned to leave. She had given up on her uncle.

Once Valda Theller left, Rowena Santiago's face darkened. She said, "I told you the girl wouldn't give us money easily."

"Since she refused, don't blame us for using public opinion to force her." Ferris sighed. "Anyway, I've given her a chance. I don't owe my brother anything now."

Some people kept themselves on the moral high ground even when plotting a scheme.

Valda Theller took a taxi, but she gave the address of Brian's mansion instead of her home.

She was surprised when she blurted out the address.

It was as if her body's instinct was telling her that she wanted to see him!

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When she reached the mansion's entrance, she saw that the mansion was dark. It was clear that no one was at home.

'Is he not home yet?' Disappointed, she leaned against the mansion's iron gate and pulled her phone out of her bag to contact him. However, she found that her battery was dead.

The night breeze blew against her body. She felt a little cold.

Valda Theller squatted at the entrance to Brian's mansion and waited...

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She did not even know how long she had been waiting, but she finally saw a familiar car approaching. A tall figure quickly stepped out of it.

"What are you doing here? Why didn't you call me?" Brian asked as he grabbed Valda Theller's hands and frowned.

Her hands were icy.

"I just suddenly wanted to meet you, so I came to see you. But I realized my phone died when I got here," replied Valda Theller.

"How long have you been waiting here?" he asked again.

"I don't know." She shook her head. "Maybe just for a while."

He pressed his thin lips slightly. "Let's go in first."

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With that said, he wanted to lead her into the mansion when she suddenly lunged forward and wrapped her arms around his waist, burying her face deep in his arms.

Brian stiffened as he looked at her with surprise.

"Don't... push me away. Just let me hold you for a while, okay? I want to hold you like this right now." Her voice was hoarse and choking.

"Did something happen?" he asked. The air around him seemed gloomy.

She said nothing, but the arms holding him tightened slightly, and their bodies grew closer.

Brian did not ask any more questions. He raised one arm and put it around her waist while the other caressed her hair.

The two quietly hugged each other like two people needing comfort.

Valda Theller's face pressed on Brian's chest. All she could smell was his scent. It was as if holding him like this would make her feel safe and warm.

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When she was in university, she had told herself to be strong because all she could depend on was herself.

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However, she could not help wanting to depend on him. It would be best if she could rely on him for the rest of his life.

After a long time, Valda Theller finally let go. "Alright, thank you. I feel much better. I'm going home now."

"Wait, what happened?" Brian grabbed her and asked.

Valda Theller sighed. "It's nothing. It's just that I went to my uncle's house today. He asked me for money again, saying he's ill. They'll probably think of me as an ingrate if I don't pay them."

Brian frowned slightly. "Is your uncle sick?"

Valda Theller said, "I don't know if it's true. I wanted to see Uncle's medical records and examination reports, but they refused. Maybe they think I can be their ATM because I'm dating you."

"Would you like me to handle it for you?" he asked, not wanting to see her so down. Things that money could fix were nothing to

him.

Valda Theller shook her head and said, "No, I can handle it myself.

If I need you to handle every little problem, depending on you will become a habit."

"I don't mind you always depending on me," said Brian.

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A trance flickered in Valda Theller's eyes. 'Always... sounds like a beautiful promise.

'Does he understand what it means to say that word to a woman?'

"But I mind. I don't want to be dependent on others." Valda Theller smiled. "If I can't handle it, I'll ask for your help, but I want to handle it myself now."

He said, "Alright, I'll send you home, then."

"No thanks. You're already home. I'll take a taxi. It's convenient," said Valda Theller.

"Let me take you home." Brian insisted, pulled her to the car, and opened the front passenger door.

Valda Theller bit her lip slightly at this. "Thank you."

The two got into the car, and Brian drove toward Valda Theller's place. She peered at him out of the corners of her eyes.

It was not that she feared making a habit out of being dependent on him. It was just that if they ever broke up one day, she might forget how to live independently.

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In the next few days, her uncle's family did not approach her again, nor did they call her. Valda Theller found it a little strange. 'Has Uncle's family given up?'

It seemed that her uncle's illness must be fake. Her uncle would have come to her with medical records and examination reports to ask for money if it were true. How could he give up so easily?

The comic fiesta was approaching, so Valda Theller also prepared some small gifts like drawings she had drawn for her readers.

Two days before the comic fiesta, Valda Theller sent Brian the address and the booth number of the booth the company rented for her.

Though she thought he would come over after work if he had time, it sounded like he would come over during the day.

On the day of the comic fiesta, the number of readers who attended the book signing was much higher than Valda Theller had expected.

While signing autographs, some readers asked about her relationship with Brian and whether she was the crown prince's girlfriend.

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Valda Theller replied the same thing to those questions. "That's personal. I can't answer that."

Valda Theller felt her hand becoming so sore it was going to break when she finally got to rest at noon. Signing so many autographs all at once was more exhausting than she had expected.

"I think many people today aren't my readers. They're only curious about me because of my relationship with Brian," said Valda

Theller.

"Are you upset?" Camille Strickland asked.

"I'm not really upset. I'll take it as though they're here to support the event and keep the book signing from being too quiet," said Valda Theller.

As she was dating Brian, she had to deal with these situations.

The book signing continued in the afternoon. When Valda Theller was signing autographs, a man suddenly rushed up to Valda Theller and said sternly, “Valda Theller, you have the cheek to have a book signing? After your parents died, my father raised you, but you refuse to pay any money now that he’s sick. You refused without hesitation when we asked you to lend us some money. How dare you sign autographs for others?”

There was immediately an uproar all around.

Some of the onlookers pulled out their phones and began filming

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the scene.

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Valda Theller frowned. The person making a scene was her cousin, Wynne. She thought her uncle’s family had given up when they were quiet and did nothing in the past few days.

However, it was clear that she was too naive.

Camille Strickland immediately lunged forward and got between Valda Theller and Wynne. “This is a book signing. Please leave immediately!”

“Leave? Why should I leave? I’m here to show you the true colors of this rookie comic artist!”

With that said, Wynne started to play a recording on his phone.

Valda Theller’s expression changed when she heard the recording. The recording was her conversation at her uncle’s house that day, but the conversation was obviously edited.

If others heard the edited recording, she would only be seen as heartless, stingy, selfish, and ungrateful. They would think she was living comfortably and had a super rich boyfriend, but she was unwilling to pay anything for her relatives.

“That’s enough, Wynne. What’s the point in using an edited recording?” Valda Theller said.

“Edited? Is that all you can say to hide your guilt? Valda Theller,

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my father is lying in the hospital right now. Isn't it true that my father is sick? Isn't it true that I asked you to borrow us money because we can't afford the medical fees? And isn't it true that you didn't lend us money?"

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Wynne said righteously. Wynne even tried to push Camille Strickland away at the end of his speech.

1/3

Camille Strickland tried hard to stop him. Valda Theller was afraid that her best friend would get hurt, so she rushed to help her. As soon as she came forward, Wynne slapped Valda Theller in the face.

There was a loud slap.

Wynne slapped so hard that Valda Theller felt her ears buzzing and her cheek burning.

Camille Strickland immediately scolded Wynne, "How could you slap her? You've gone too far!"

Wynne said confidently, "She's heartless. Of course, I can slap her! I'll still slap her even if you call the police. Don't you guys

agree? Don't people like her deserve to be slapped?"

Several voices in the crowd said, "Yeah!"

"Heartless ingrates deserve to be slapped!"

"How dare she works as a comic artist? The works of people like her should be banned."

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It was uncertain who started it, but someone began throwing things at Valda Theller.

2/3

Camille Strickland protected her best friend and asked other staff to look for the venue's security guards.

Though Camille Strickland protected Valda Theller, someone still rushed to Valda Theller and threw drinks, cakes, and other random things at her. Valda Theller soon looked like a mess.

She tried to hide, but the insults from all sides and the things thrown at her made her feel like she was back in university when she was being insulted and treated in the same way.

“Valda, don’t just stand here. I’ll take you somewhere to hide first,” said Camille Strickland, trying to take her best friend to hide.

However, Valda Theller’s body was very stiff. She heard her best friend’s voice and wanted to walk away to follow her best friend and avoid everything here, but she could not walk.

Her hair and clothes were wet with various drinks. Someone had even picked up comics to throw at her.

It hurt when they hit her.

The insults kept stimulating her nerves, making her feel like she was suffocating. Even breathing became difficult.

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‘S-Somebody help me... Help!

‘Brian!’

3/3

The name crossed her mind.

She struggled to open her eyes to look for Brian... in the huge crowd. If Brian were here, he would definitely rescue her.

He would save her from this mess just like what had happened on the set last time. When she thought she was about to get humiliated, his subordinates showed up and rescued her.

‘Brian... Brian...’

She kept shouting the name in her head. Suddenly, she froze. She saw the familiar figure in the crowd.

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It was so familiar it made her have the sudden urge to cry.

‘That’s... Brian! He’s here! He’s really here! He’ll save me! He’ll save me!’

1/3

“Li...” She opened her mouth with difficulty to call out to him.

He was like a piece of driftwood that a drowning person like her desperately wanted to hold on to.

Just then, she saw him pick up the phone and seemingly listen to something. Then, his expression changed, and he turned around

to leave.

‘No, don’t go!’

“Brian!” she shouted hoarsely with almost all her strength.

Even though she shouted as hard as she could, she was drowned out by the noise around her.

‘Did he not hear me shout? Is he... leaving?’

However, she saw him turn and look in her direction.

‘He... saw me!’

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Valda Theller was delighted. If Brian was by her side, she would not have to be afraid... Brian would protect her. With him around...

However, her pupils soon shrank, and her face was filled with shock because she saw him turn around and hurry away.

A sharp pain instantly attacked her, and tears poured out of her eyes.

‘Why? Why did he leave? He saw me!’

Just then, the security guards finally came over and helped stop Wynne as well as those causing a scene and smashing things.

Camille Strickland said to Valda Theller, “Valda, let’s find a quiet place and clean you up.”

However, Valda Theller stood blankly in the same spot as if she had lost her soul.

“Valda!” Camille Strickland raised her volume. “What’s come over you? Don’t frighten me!”

Valda Theller finally came to her senses and said bitterly, “Camille, take me... away...”

“Alright, we’re leaving immediately!” Camille Strickland hurriedly left the venue with Valda Theller under the security guards’ escort.

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Camille Strickland drove Valda Theller back to the apartment.

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"Why don't you take a hot bath first? You're all sticky. You must be feeling uncomfortable," said Camille Strickland.

Valda Theller nodded blankly, took a change of clothes, and went into the bathroom.

Camille Strickland looked sad. Who would have thought a book signing would end up like this? Valda did not show any emotion in the car, which worried her even more.

She would have preferred Valda complain or swear on the road rather than being quiet like that.

Suddenly, Camille Strickland's phone rang. As soon as Camille Strickland answered it, she heard Raymond Bowman's anxious voice from her phone. "Camille Strickland, are you with Valda Theller now?"

"So what if I am?" Camille Strickland asked.

"How is she? Is she okay?" Raymond Bowman asked.

Camille Strickland frowned. "What do you mean?"