

The Last Goodbye Chapter 11

I quickly fished my phone out of my pocket and added Zoe's number to my WhatsApp contact list.

When I tilted my head up, I happened to see Zoe's discriminating gaze on me.

When our eyes met, she said, "The more you do this, the more you'll push Valerie away."

What she was implying was that I faked my illness to get Valerie's attention.

"Dr. Sanders, you should check my medical record first," I said to interrupt her train of thought. "A professional should draw her own conclusion, rather than listening to gossip."

The glow in Zoe's eyes shifted a little. She tilted her head down and added my own number to her contacts. After that, she said, "I will contact you in advance if I have the time."

She shifted her eyes up and looked right at me. Her gaze carried no warmth and was sharp. Her tone was filled with mockery when she said, "Please take care of your medical report. You wouldn't be able to blame Andrew the next time this happens."

After she returned to her car, Zoe honked once to indicate she was leaving. The headlights suddenly lit up, and the bright light prompted me to use my hand to shield my eyes.

Zoe honked again to urge me to move aside.

I waited until my vision had returned a little before I moved to the side. Only then did the car slowly drive away.

I quietly stared at the car as it disappeared into the night. I was calm to an eerie degree.

It seemed Zoe and Valerie were alike. It didn't matter how kind she acted. At the end of the day, she hated me from the bottom of her heart.

When I turned around, I saw two people standing by the door. The darkness of night hid half of Valerie's face, and her expression was indecipherable. All I knew was that both of her clear eyes were staring right at me.

Andrew stood beside her. He was smiling and reveling in my misery. He asked, "Jeffrey, what did you talk to Zoe about?"

"What does that have to do with you?" I refuted while putting my phone away.

I put on a stoic expression before I added, "You might be able to hide my medical report this time, but what about the next time? You're better off going to the hospital and deleting my record entirely."

When I spoke, I glanced at Valerie every now and then.

If she cared even a little, she wouldn't blindly believe one side. She would send someone to investigate the matter at the hospital. She'd be able to figure out who was lying then.

A hint of panic appeared on Andrew's face.

He instinctively turned to Valerie and spoke before anyone else could. He said, "I honestly know nothing about your medical report, Jeffrey. I don't know why you keep coming after me, either. All I did was ask about your conversation after seeing you and Zoe chatting away like that."

I scoffed and ignored his blatant lie.

Advancing by taking a strategic step back had always been one of Andrew's key moves.

As suspected, Valerie spoke up to defend him. She demanded, "How long are you going to keep this charade up, Jeffrey?"

"It wasn't an act. I simply asked for her contact details so that I could confirm our next appointment. Do you want to tag along next time?"

I was being stubborn when I asked that question. However, the second those words left my lips, I felt like a clown.

I didn't know why I wanted to prove to Valerie that I truly had brain cancer.

It was likely because I wanted to see how Valerie would react when she learned the truth.

I laughed mockingly at myself as I walked past the two of them.

Behind me, Andrew's even voice came. He said, "You got Zoe's contact information? I would have asked for it if I had known it was okay. I thought about how she's Valerie's friend. It'd lead to misunderstandings if I took the initiative to ask for her contact information. That's why I never did so."

I stopped in my tracks just then.

I thought about what he meant by that. It made me wonder if he was implying that he had boundaries while I didn't. Or perhaps he was implying something else entirely.

Valerie caught what Andrew was implying as well. She hurried over, grabbed my wrist, and forcefully pulled me backward. She made me look right at her.

Her beautiful palm was shown in front of me.

I shifted my gaze down to look at her.

I couldn't help thinking how dumb she was for believing in everything Andrew said.

"Give me your phone."

"Why?"

"Delete Zoe's contact information. Are you going to do it yourself or shall I do it for you?" asked Valerie. Her tone was firm. When she saw that I wasn't moving a muscle, she reached out to snatch my phone.

I instinctively stepped back and blocked her hand. I also hid my phone behind me before I said, "I only saved her contact for the sake of treating my illness."

When I looked into her eyes, I chuckled mockingly. I said, "Also, given the current status of our relationship, you have no right to butt in on whether I talk to other girls or not."

Valerie was stunned. She chuckled sinisterly and replied, "You think I'm jealous? You can go to anyone else, but you shouldn't get close to the people close to me."

She used her forefinger to poke my chest. Her sharp nails stung my skin despite the shirt I was wearing.

I stepped backward while she advanced. That kept going until my back was to the wall, and I no longer had anywhere to go.

"Everyone in our social circle knows about our marriage. If you show up beside Zoe in the future, she and I will be the ones mocked."

I replied, "I'm not that petty or vengeful."

I no longer wanted to discuss that problem with her.

She had never been able to listen to whatever I said—and she never believed me, anyway. Hence, anything I said would just be a waste of my breath.

"Delete it," insisted Valerie.

I didn't budge. We were both glaring at each other, and the tension in the air was thick.

Andrew broke the tension and suggested, “Jeffrey, don’t upset Valerie. Just delete it. This is a good opportunity to prove that you don’t actually have an ulterior motive.”

I was quiet for a moment before I asked, “What gives you the right to make me delete anyone from my contact list, Valerie?”

“The fact that we are legally married gives me all the right.”

The moment she blurted those words, silence filled the entire place.

Valerie slowly lifted her head high and said, “You are doing your job as a husband.”

“My duty as a husband?” I repeated and lingered for a moment before I shifted my gaze up and looked at Andrew. After that, I said, “Our duties and responsibilities are equal.

“If I am obligated to delete someone else’s contact information, does that mean that you are obligated to chase the home wrecker out of here as well?”

“Are you negotiating with me?” asked Valerie. She narrowed her eyes a little. When she saw that I had no intention of compromising, she scoffed and replied, “Fine, I have my ways to deal with this.”

Valerie held Andrew’s hand and made her way toward the bedroom. She didn’t take many steps before she turned around and looked right at me. She said, “Jeffrey, you lost the power to negotiate with me a long time ago.”

The door was closed right in front of me, and the light was blocked. All that was left was a small section coming from the streetlight above—and a deep, unsettling darkness.

I stood in the same spot and never moved. My body was leaning against the wall and using it to support my weight, so I didn’t fall.

I lifted my hand to wipe the sweat off my forehead before I sighed deeply.

Valerie and I hadn’t been able to converse on equal grounds ever since Page Group went bankrupt.

I thought that perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the two of us had never been on equal ground since the beginning.

In the past, she was the one in command because I was in love. Now, she was in command because she held more power.

I never had the power to fight back.

Someone opened the door a little just then. Alfred noticed that I was standing in the shadows, so he spoke in a very gentle voice. It was as though he was worried about scaring me. He said, "Sir, it's cold out here at night. Hurry back in."

That ray of light from inside the house landed on me. It shouldn't bring any heat, but I felt warm nonetheless.

I stepped through the front door and held my phone tightly. It was as though I was holding onto my hope of surviving.

When I walked past my old room on the second floor, I heard a muffled voice coming from the other side. Andrew said, "Jeffrey is right, Valerie. I'm a homewrecker. I will pack and leave now."

"He's being ridiculous. Don't just listen to him," said Valerie. Her voice was filled with exasperation and love. Right now, she was showing the patience she rarely ever had.

I had no intention of continuing to listen, so I returned to the temporary room assigned to me. I rested on the bed and decisively sent a text to Zoe. The message read, "Dr. Sanders, is it okay if I go to the hospital tomorrow morning?"

"If you don't think that my medical reports are real, then you can run the tests directly there."

The message wasn't sent. The red exclamation mark stung my eyes.

The hand holding the phone was right in front of me, and the unsent message was obvious to anyone who saw it. Yet, my lips curved into a smile.

I wondered if that was what Valerie meant by having ways to deal with it.