



Chapter 8

The week passed by quickly — or maybe Marian simply stopped keeping track.

Days bled into nights, and mornings came without warmth. Everything after the confrontation with Daniel felt different — muted, dulled, drained of color.

She went back to work the very next day. On the surface, she was ne. She smiled when greeted, replied to emails, attended meetings. But underneath, everything hurt. Her laughter felt hollow; her reection in the oce window looked like a stranger.

Gone was the comforting rhythm of their mornings — the smell of coffee she used to make for Daniel, the quiet hum of the radio, the soft kiss on her forehead before they both left for work. Now, her mornings were silent. The house, once lled with small rituals of love, had become a museum of memories she could barely look at.

Daniel still texted her every day. Good morning, love. Have a safe drive. Did you eat?

Before, those messages used to ll her with warmth — a reminder that she was loved, that someone was thinking of her.

Now, they only reopened the wound.

She would stare at the screen, heart heavy, then set the phone down without replying.

Each evening, Marian stayed at the oce a little longer. She told herself it was to catch up on work, but really, she was just avoiding home — avoiding the silence, avoiding the sight of him.

Once, dinner time had been sacred. They'd always made sure to come home before seven, laughing over burnt pasta or ordering takeout when neither of them felt like cooking. But that was gone too. The dining table had become just another empty surface, another reminder of what used to be.

At home, Daniel tried to keep his distance. He had moved to the guest room after that night — the night Marian had nally broken.

He had tried to slip into their bedroom quietly, thinking maybe enough time had passed, that perhaps she would allow his presence. But the moment she saw him near the bed, something in her snapped. She couldn't remember all the words that came out of her mouth — only the rage, the shaking, the ood of tears that followed.

Whatever she had said must have cut deep, because Daniel never tried to come back again.

Now the guest room light was the only one that stayed on late at night, and the soft creak of the door closing had become the sound of their distance.

It was past eight one evening when Marian nally came home.

Her heels clicked softly against the hardwood oor as she stepped inside, exhaustion written in every line of her posture. The air in the house was still — except for one light, glowing faintly from the kitchen.

Daniel was there, sitting at the table with his hands clasped in front of him. He looked like a man waiting for a verdict he already knew.

As soon as he saw her, he stood.

“What happened? Why are you just coming home now?” he asked, his voice low but edged with worry. “It's past eight, Marian. You didn't even texted me. I was worried.”

She dropped her bag on the counter and exhaled tiredly, her tone at.

“Why are you worried? I was at work. Working.”

The words landed between them, cold and distant.

Daniel took a step closer. “Marian... please. We need to sit down and talk. Really talk. I know I hurt you — I know — but you have to believe me, I never meant to. I love you. I love you so much.” His voice cracked, raw and pleading. “Please, don't give up on us. Don't let my mistake end everything we've built. Please, Marian.”

For a moment, she simply looked at him. His eyes were red, heavy with sleepless nights, and full of the same desperation she had once prayed to see — but now it only pained her.

There was so much she wanted to say, but the words twisted in her throat. Since the day he confessed, she had been living in shadow — a constant, suffocating darkness. Every morning felt heavier. Every night, lonelier.

All she wanted was to rest, but even lying in bed had become unbearable; the sheets still smelled faintly of him, of what used to be theirs.

That bed had once been her sanctuary. Now it was just a reminder — of laughter, of love, of everything she thought unbreakable.

And now, all she could see was ruin.

“Daniel...” she said nally, her voice trembling, “you keep saying you love me. But if you really loved me — if you truly did — how could you hurt me like this?”

He inched but said nothing, his jaw tight with regret.

“You know,” she continued, tears beginning to gather in her eyes, “I didn't even know you wanted children yet. We never talked about it. We weren't even trying. Then suddenly, just one drunken night — and it's all gone.” Her voice broke, a sob caught halfway in her throat. “How can I look at you now, Daniel, and not feel like I'm being torn apart from the inside out?”

Daniel's face crumpled. He stepped forward, reaching for her, his voice breaking. “Oh God, Marian... I'm so sorry you feel this way — because of me. I regret it every second. If I could turn back time, I would. Please, let's just... sit down. Have dinner together, talk, try to reconnect. Please. I can't lose you, Marian.”

She stared at him for a long, heavy moment. His words hung in the air like smoke — desperate, fading, fragile.

“I'm tired, Daniel,” she said quietly. “So tired. I can't do this right now.”

Her voice was calm, but it carried the weight of nality.

She turned toward the hallway, her footsteps soft but certain. The bedroom door loomed ahead — her room now, no longer theirs.

Behind her, Daniel stood frozen, watching her retreat. She could feel his gaze on her back, heavy with sorrow, but she didn't turn around. She couldn't.

If she looked into his eyes, she knew she would see pain — and she had no space left inside her for anyone's pain but her own.

The door clicked shut behind her.

Daniel remained standing in the kitchen, staring at the empty hallway where she had just been. The silence that followed was deafening — the kind that lls a house when love has nally run out of words.