

Resent Reject Regret by Aqua Summers

Chapter 459-490

Chapter 459 I Want 100,000 Dollars

“That’s good.” Charlene softened and demanded, “Take him aside and check if there is any hidden

camera before throwing him out.”

“Yes!”

When Blake was dragged aside for inspection, he raised his hands and dared not make a sound. Meanwhile, Charlene tidied up her hair and walked toward the door..

“Miss McKinsey.”

Charlene was blocked just when she took a step forward.

Charlene frowned. “It’s been two days, yet Bren is still unwilling to meet anyone?”

The bodyguard smiled obsequiously. “Yes. Mr. Brighthall is in poor health and in a bad mood, so he just wants to stay in the room alone.”

Charlene appeared to be Impatient, but she still said softly. “But at this juncture, Bren needs companions the most. If he is alone in the ward, doesn’t it mean that no one will take care of him when he is thirsty? Open the door. I’m going to persuade him.”

“Miss McKinsey, I’m really sorry. It’s not like you don’t know what happened last time. Mr. Brighthall hates others disobeying him the most. Please wait a little longer. I’ll let you know when he calms down!”

Charlene could only hand over the porridge to the bodyguard, even though she was reluctant.

And Blake, who was kicked again after the search was over, staggered toward the elevator door, feeling strange as he walked..

‘What did the bodyguards pretend that Mr. Brighthall was still in the room? Isn’t there no one in the room?’

After Blake got to the ground floor, he didn’t leave in a hurry but squatted at the door. After a while, he saw Charlene coming out with sunglasses, and he hurried up to meet her. “Miss McKinsey? You’re Miss McKinsey, right? Hello!”

Charlene recognized Blake at a glance as the reporter who had broken into the ward. She rolled her eyes secretly and ignored him.

But Blake said anxiously, "Miss McKinsey! You will regret it if you don't talk to me! I have a secret that will absolutely amaze you!"

After taking two steps forward, Charlene stopped.

Blake hurriedly took this opportunity to show her the photo in his pocket. "Look! This is the photo I took, and this woman is Charlene McKinney! And! And I also know Brendan Brighthall's secret!"

When Charlene saw the woman in the photo, her face suddenly turned pale. She looked around and said, "Chat in another place."

They got to a cafe. As soon as they sat down, Charlene asked, "Where did you get the photo? Who gave it to you!?"

"Naturally, I was the one who took the photo!" Blake was pleased with himself. He ordered the most expensive coffee, took two sips, and then spat it out. He was really not used to the taste.

"Looking at your reaction in the ward just now, you must be Miss Charli McKinsey, Mr. Brighthall's fiancée, right?"

Charlene crossed her arms and looked at Blake coldly. "What do you want to say?"

"*100,000 dollars!" Blake said cheekily, "I want 100,000 dollars! I was the one who exposed the news not long ago. If I can't get the money, then this photo will appear in the news media in the next second. The matter that the Brighthall family ignored the law and took criminals out of prison will become a real fact!"

Blake was very excited. On the other hand, Charlene took off her sunglasses and sneered. "Mr. Reporter, do you think I'm stupid? You took a picture of a disfigured woman and now threaten me to give you 100,000 dollars? Who gave you the guts? And who would want to believe you that the woman in the photo is Charlene McKinney?"

After being questioned twice, Blake was stunned and realized that this woman was not stupid.

He began brainstorming for the next step. Meanwhile, Charlene, who had found out what Blake's angle was, picked up her bag and got up.

She originally wanted to test whether this man had a backup plan, but it seemed that he didn't. Now she just needed to give a warning to the media.

There was absolutely no possibility that these photos would reach Brendan!

Chapter 460 Maeve O'Keefe's Call

"I advise you to delete the negatives immediately and then find a place to live honestly. Otherwise, you not only won't be able to release your photos but you will also be imprisoned for several months. The choice is yours!"

As soon as Charlene finished her sentence, she turned and left

Blake became anxious and said, "Miss McKinsey, aren't you afraid that Brendan Brighthall is lying to you?"

"What do you mean?" Charlene abruptly stopped and turned to Blake gloomily and sinisterly "What nonsense are you talking about?"

Blake bit the bullet and replied, "Brendan Brighthall and Charlene McKinney are dating without you knowing!"

Charlene looked distorted as she approached Blake and said in a low voice. "If I find out you are lying, I guarantee that you will not be able to get out of here intact

Blake was frightened. He had never expected that Charlene, who appeared pretty, would look so vicious.

He cheered himself up. "Why would I lie when I can take pictures of Charlene McKinney? I saw it with my own eyes!"

Blake rolled his eyes and said nonsense. "I just didn't manage to take a picture, but we can cooperate. If you give me money, I can help you remove this Charlene McKinney

Charlene narrowed her eyes. "Since you said you didn't take a picture, how can I believe you?"

"T-The room," replied Blake falteringly.

"The room?"

"If you don't trust me, you can go to Brendan Brighthall's room now! There's no one in it at all. Not to mention Brendan Brighthall, there isn't any human in it at all. For Brendan Brighthall to join forces with the bodyguards to hide it from you, isn't this ironclad proof?"

"What did you say!?"

Charlene immediately rushed back to Brendan's ward, her mind blank.

Brendan was not in the ward?

He had just had an operation, and his body was so weak that he couldn't support himself anywhere, so where did he go?

Thinking of Deirdre, Charlene was filled with hatred. She threw her sunglasses on the ground and crushed them with her high heels.

As Charlene approached the door, she suddenly realized that no matter how angry she was, she could not rush into the ward bluntly. She called her mole to send those bodyguards away. Following that, she appeared, turned the doorknob, and pushed the door in.

She saw... The bed inside was clean and had no wrinkles at all!

After a few days, Deirdre didn't hear any news about the photos.

She heaved a sigh of relief while sprinkling the washing powder on her hands and rubbing Kyran's underwear.

Declan and Kyran were still chatting outside. After she rinsed them clean, she held the bucket out, greeted them, and went outside to dry the clothes.

As she took a few steps, the phone in her pocket rang. She freed her hand, pressed the answer button, and put the phone to her ear. "Hello, who is it?"

There was no response.

Deirdre doubted and wondered whether someone had made a mistake.

She was about to hang up when a voice came from the other end. "Miss McKinnon, it's me."

It was a familiar woman's voice, which sounded kind and gentle. At that moment, Deirdre was frozen to the spot. She uncontrollably recalled some scenes in her mind, all about this woman.

It was about the kindness and tenderness of the woman and how she cried helplessly when the woman

turned out to be a liar.

Deirdre had to take a few deep breaths before she could calm herself down. While clenching the phone tightly, she asked, "Madam O'Keefe, how could you have my phone number?"

“Because I’m also located in Wisley. When I saw the news, I thought I was wrong. I’ve never thought that you’re really here... So, I asked my relatives working in the hospital to ask for your phone number through the nurse.”

Deirdre shivered and closed her eyes.

As soon as she heard this woman’s voice, she couldn’t help but remember her mother and Brendan’s sugar traps and deceptions. She felt suffocated and had to take several deep breaths to calm herself down.

Chapter 461 Please Help Me

“So what can I do for you?”

“Miss McKinnon, can you help me? I’m sorry for lying to you that time, but Mr. Brighthall forced me,” said Maeve, her voice filled with sobs. “I shouldn’t have called you, but I can’t think of anyone else who can help me right now...”

Deirdre frowned at the woman’s sobs and felt a pang in her chest.

One of the reasons was that Maeve’s voice really sounded like her mother’s, and the second reason was that she could feel that Maeve was genuinely good to her at that time. Although it all turned out to be fake, no one in this world could fake their feelings.

This was also why she could not treat Maeve as she treated Brendan.

She bit her lips and asked, “What happened?”

“My daughter was diagnosed with cancer a while ago. For the past few months, I’ve sold my house and all my valuable things to pay for her expensive medical bills, but I can’t hold on anymore.”

“So, you want money?” Deirdre’s face turned pale, and she lowered her head. “I’m sorry, Madam O’Keefe. I’m afraid I can’t help you. I’m no longer living with Brendan. But even if I still lived with Brendan, I wouldn’t have money to give you either, so I’m sorry.”

Maeve covered her face and cried, “Then what should I do? Do I have to sit by and watch my daughter die? She’s my daughter! I can’t give up on her...”

Deirdre clenched her fists tightly and asked, “How much money do you need?”

“I can’t say for sure. This kind of thing has no end, but I need at least 7,000 dollars right now.”

“7,000 dollars?” Deirdre placed her hand on her forehead. She did not even have 70 dollars, let alone 7,000 dollars, but she just couldn’t bring herself to watch Maeve in pain.

She took a deep breath and said, “Just give me some time. I’ll figure something out, but I can only give you 7,000 dollars. I can’t give you more...”

“That’s fine too,” said Maeve, her voice thick with exhilaration and sadness. “7,000 dollars is enough to keep my daughter alive for a while. Thank you so much, Miss McKinnon!”

“Give me your phone number. I’ll let you know once I’ve got the money,” said Deirdre.

After Maeve gave Deirdre her phone number, she hung up the call. Her brain was a muddled mess right now as she stood as firm as a ramrod on the spot.

The first person she could think of that could help her right now was Kyran, but she just couldn’t bring herself to borrow money from him.

“Miss McKinnon?” Declan’s voice rang out behind her. “I thought you were drying the clothes? Why are you still here? Is there anything wrong?”

Deirdre calmed herself down and turned around. “Nothing. I was just wondering if I should go to the laundry room later since I’m pretty sure it’ll be packed with people.”

“Well, I’m sure it’ll be quite crowded right now. What clothes do you have in the basket? Maybe I can help you dry them at the hotel.” Declan took a step forward.

Deirdre blocked it, but Declan still saw it anyway. A meaningful smile appeared on his face as he said, “I see. So, they’re Kyran’s undergarments. You just hang them up. I’m sure he’s fine with it.”

“Okay...” Deirdre felt embarrassed and picked up her pace.

After finishing her task, she returned to the ward and found that Kyran was sleeping.

She couldn’t fall asleep while thinking about how to help Maeve. She turned around and woke Kyran up.

He picked up his phone and asked, “What’s the matter?”

“Huh?” Deirdre was stunned. “Did I make too much noise and wake you up?”

Chapter 462 You Can Depend On Me

“No, I wasn’t sleeping as I was waiting for you.”

A smile appeared on Deirdre's face, and Kyran asked, "Is it too cold? That's why you can't sleep?"

Deirdre was stunned and lowered her head. "No"

"Then what is it? Did something happen? Your voice doesn't sound right to me."

Thinking about Maeve's plea and since it was related to Brendan, Deirdre did not know how she should tell Kyran about it.

Kyran could see that something was troubling Deirdre, so he said, "Deirdre, I've told you before not to hide anything from me again, right?"

Deirdre made up her mind and said, "Kyran, c-can you lend me 7,000 dollars?"

Without waiting for Kyran to say anything, she continued "I'll pay you back! After you've recovered, I'll go work as a piano performer and pay you back all the money, including the interest"

Kyran fell silent.

Deirdre bit her lips and thought, "Did I ask for too much?"

They had only gotten together not long ago, and now she was asking for 7,000 dollars from him.

"It's okay if you don't want to lend the money to me I can look for someone else"

"Who are you going to borrow the money from? Tobey again?"

Deirdre did not know why, but she could sense that Kyran was not happy right now through the phone's mechanical voice.

She was stunned for a moment and did not say anything in return. After a long while, Kyran sighed and typed, "Deirdre, it seems to me that you still don't treat me as your boyfriend. If not, you wouldn't say something like that. You would've asked for the money from me instead of saying that you're borrowing the money. Or could it be that you still don't see me as your boyfriend from the bottom of your heart?"

Deirdre could sense disappointment and sadness in the voice. She looked at Kyran and said, "No, Kyran, it's just..."

She clutched tightly at the bedsheet and continued. "It's exactly because I'm treating you as my boyfriend that I don't want to leave a bad impression. We got together not long ago. I can't just take advantage of you and ask for money from you. I didn't agree to be your girlfriend because of money..."

“But you’re in trouble now, right? Otherwise, you wouldn’t have asked me for help.”

Deirdre nodded.

“Since you need help, you’re not taking advantage of me. Besides, if you ask for help from Tobey instead. of me, then I’ll have failed as your boyfriend.”

Deirdre was rendered speechless. She did not think of any of these at all.

“How much do you need? Are 7,000 dollars enough?” he asked.

He had full faith in Deirdre, so he was not going to ask what she was going to do with the money.

“Yes, yes. It’s enough,” replied Deirdre.

Kyran told her to wait and texted someone. After a while, he typed, “Declan will bring you a bank card

tomorrow. You can do whatever you want with the money inside. It’s getting late now, so you should get some rest.”

Deirdre felt a lump forming in her throat and mumbled, “Thank you so much...”

“Deirdre, give me your hand?”

Although Deirdre did not know what he was going to do, she still did as she was told and stretched her arm forward.

Kyran grabbed her hand into his palm and typed, “You don’t have to say thank you to me, Deirdre. You just need to remember that you can always depend on me if you need any help.”

Deirdre was stunned. Brendan had said the same thing to her before. It was just that he had been talking in a high and mighty manner. He had made it look like he was doing her a big favor while Kyran was saying it out of his heart.

She pressed her lips thin and made up her mind.

“Kyran, I’ll tell you something after you’ve recovered.”

She was going to tell him the things about her and Brendan. After all, he had the right to know it.

Deirdre did not know when she had fallen asleep, but it was already the next morning by the time she woke up. She found that there was a bank card on top of her phone.

"There are 40,000 dollars in this card. I'm not sure if it's enough or not. The password is your birthday." "It's enough," replied Deirdre, lowering her head in embarrassment.

Chapter 463 Wait For Me

"Don't feel embarrassed, Miss McKinnon," said Declan. "Your pay for taking care of Kyran for the past few months should be more than this, so you deserve it."

The first thing that Deirdre did after getting the card was to go out and make a call to Maeve.

"Madam O'Keefe, I have 40,000 dollars with me right now. It should be able to pay for your daughter's medical bills for a while. Can you come to the hospital now? I'll pass it to you."

Maeve fell silent for a while before saying. "Miss McKinnon, I can't come there."

"Why?"

"I can't leave my daughter alone. Your hospital is too far away," said Maeve.

"That's simple. I can hand it over to your relative and ask you to give it to you."

"No!" Maeve replied nervously. "I owe her a few thousand dollars. If she learns that you're giving me money,

she will... Miss McKinnon, I'm sorry, but can you come over to my place?"

"What?" Deirdre hesitated. She was not familiar with the place here.

"Please, Miss McKinnon. You just need to take a cab here. Besides, I have something to tell you about your mother."

Deirdre's heart skipped a beat. However, before she could ask Maeve more about it, someone called her, and she hung up the call after giving her the address. Deirdre's head was blank right now.

'About my mother?'

Declan was still talking to Kyran when she returned. He said, "I need to go back to Eastgene for a while."

"Eastgene?"

Deirdre was surprised. "It's going to take about five hours to drive from here to Eastgene. Did something happen? Why do you have to go back out suddenly?"

“My sister-in-law just delivered her baby, so my father called me and told me to return to meet up with the rest of my family,” Declan said with a smile on his face.

Deirdre was stunned. She knew the things that happened between Declan and his sister-in-law.

She wondered what it would be like to see the person he loved give birth to a child with his elder brother.

However, it seemed to her that Declan had already gotten over it. After all, he was calm, and there was a smile on his face when he mentioned it. “It has been over half a year since I went back, so I may stay for a day at my house. I might need you to take care of Kyran in the meantime.”

“It’s okay,” said Deirdre. “Kyran isn’t a kid. I’m sure he’ll be fine. Just take care of yourself since you have to drive a long way. You don’t have to worry about him.”

“Alright.”

Declan stayed a while and told Kyran something to Kyran about their business before he left.

After Declan left, Kyran typed, “I think he stayed up all night. There are two big dark circles around his eyes.”

“Really?” Deirdre was dumbfounded, “Well, she was the woman he loved in the past. Maybe it’s not that easy for him to move forward.”

“Yeah. So, we should cherish what we have right now.” Kyran typed with a serious voice

‘Cherish what we have now, huh?’

Deirdre’s cheeks became red with embarrassment “Dr. Engle is coming later”

“Why is he coming here?”

“He said he wants to check your face’s condition.”

As soon as they had finished speaking, Dr. Engle knocked on the door and came in.

Deirdre sat on the chair while Dr. Engle opened up the bandage. While he was changing the dressing, Deirdre couldn’t help herself and asked, “Dr. Engle, how is it?”

“What’s the matter?” Dr. Engle chuckled. “Are you nervous?”

“No...” Deirdre replied, lowering her head, “I just want to know if it has any effect or not.”

"Don't worry. Your face is recovering very well right now. I think you can remove the bandage in another week," Dr. Engle said with a smile.

"Really?" replied Deirdre, her voice thick with exhilaration.

If her face had recovered, she would have had more confidence when Kyran brought her to meet his parents. If not, she would feel indebted to Kyran's parents if she continued to stay with him with her current appearance.

Chapter 464 Do You Want to Come With Me?

Dr. Engle realized something and asked, "Judging from the smile on your face, could it be that you two are getting married soon?"

"Dr. Engle..." Deirdre's face turned red with embarrassment. As she was talking, she glanced at Kyran. "Stop teasing me."

"Hahaha!" Dr. Engle laughed. He had a lot of faith in both of them. After giving them some wishes, he left with a smile on his face.

Deirdre turned around and explained, "Please don't take it to heart, Kyran."

She did not want to give Kyran too much stress. "Dr. Engle likes to tease us ever since he learned we're together. I hope you won't mind it."

"Am I the reason you wish your face can recover?"

Deirdre was stunned when she heard the question. She nodded embarrassingly and said, "Yes. It's because of you..."

A smile appeared on Kyran's face, and he stretched his arm forward. "Come over here, Deirdre"

Deirdre walked over and held his hand. He pulled her over to his bed and wrapped his arms around her. He closed his eyes and relished the feeling of having her body scent tickling his nostrils.

After a short while, he released her and kissed her forehead. "I have something to give you."

"Huh?" Deirdre was surprised. "What is it? I'm not going to take it if it's too expensive."

Kyran laughed. "Well, it's expensive."

He placed two air tickets into her hand and typed, "It's something related to my future. These are the air

tickets to Germia.

“Deirdre, are you willing to come with me and live with me for the rest of your life?”

Deirdre froze. Her hands were shaking as she felt the two air tickets in her hands. She felt there was a lump in her throat, and her eyes were wet with tears.

She did not expect Kyran to have two air tickets ready for them.

“I’ve been planning this ever since you agreed to meet with my parents,” typed Kyran. “I have almost recovered, so after you remove the bandage on your face, we can depart to Germia.

“I also found you the most reputable ophthalmologist to heal your eyes. I’ve talked to him about your condition, and he told me there’s a high chance you’ll regain your eyesight. At that time, no one will know. you. No one will know about your past. You’ll just be a normal person. You can start a new life and won’t have to live in suffering anymore...”

“Everything will be over? I won’t have to live in suffering anymore?”

Kyran healed all of the wounds in her heart with his kindness and gentleness. Did this mean that the world was starting to treat her better?

“I’ll bring you to meet my parents. I’ll marry you and give you the most beautiful and grandest wedding. You will never forget it.” Kyran continued. “I also bought a villa for us. It’s named after you. There is a big courtyard where you can plant a lot of flowers and plants you like.

“When we have kids in the future, we can turn one part of it into a children’s playground. If you don’t like children, we can raise some pets. You can keep cats, dogs, or whatever animals you like.

“What do you think, Deirdre? Are you willing to entrust the rest of your life in my hands?”

‘He’s asking me...’

He was asking her with such sincerity and honesty. Deirdre’s lips trembled, and tears began to fall from her eyes uncontrollably as she nodded profusely.

She found no reason to reject him. She was happy and glad that she met Kyran in the darkest period of

her life.

Kyran smiled and hugged her even tighter. He pressed his lips beside her ear and mouthed, "Thank you."

Deirdre hugged him back tightly as well. She hoped that her life from today onward would go smoothly and peacefully.

There were only two words to describe her life-exhaustion and pain. Everything was finally going the right way, and she finally found the man she could rely on.

Her eyes were red as she said, "Thank you, Kyran. I'm very happy now."

Kyran wiped the tear off her face and typed, "Me too. My life finally became whole from the moment you appeared."

What she did not know was that he had been waiting for this moment for a long time and how much he wanted to bring her away from here.

Deirdre kept the air tickets away. Her heart was still pumping rapidly as she felt like everything that had happened just now was like a dream. It took her a long while to calm herself down and remember the

bank card.

Chapter 465 Abduction

Deirdre had to go to meet with Maeve since she said she had something to tell her about her mother. It was just that she needed to inform Kyran since she was going to leave him alone here.

"Kyran."

"Yeah?"

Deirdre sat on the bed and said honestly, "I need to go out for a while today."

"Where are you going?" Kyran asked in a serious manner.

"I'm going to see a woman. Her daughter has been diagnosed with cancer, and she needs money right now, I need to give her the bank card so that she can pay her daughter's medical bills. It's not going to take long. I'll be back in about half an hour."

"You borrowed money from me because of her? Is she your close friend?"

"No..." Deirdre shook her head and lowered her head. "I wouldn't say we're good friends. It's more accurate to say that we don't know each other. It's just that..."

“It’s just that you don’t want to see her daughter get tortured by cancer?”

“Yeah...” said Deirdre, smiling mockingly. “You think I’m being a bit nosy, right? I can barely take care of myself, yet I still want to care about other people and don’t want them to live in suffering.”

“What would you think that?” Kyran looked at her gently. “It isn’t wrong for you to have a kind heart. Honestly, I’m happy that I can be of use to you on this matter.”

Deirdre’s eyes turned red around the rims, and then Kyran continued. “But it’s too dangerous for you to go out alone. I think you should ask Reily to go with you. She works for Declan.”

Deirdre remembered who Reily was. When she was attacked, she was the first one to show up. She also helped her a lot in daily life.

She nodded. “Don’t worry. I’ll be back soon.”

“Okay.” Kyran smiled. There was a big smile on his sickened face, and his gaze was gentle. “I’ll be waiting for you.”

After Deirdre left the ward, she went to look for Reily. The latter agreed and followed her after she changed her clothes.

“I didn’t bother you, right?” asked Deirdre.

“Nope! You’re not bothering me, Miss McKinnon. Besides, it’s only half an hour. I’m sure it’ll be fine.”

“Alright then,” replied Deirdre.

After that, both of them went toward the elevator. They arrived at the ground floor, flagged down a cab outside the hospital, and gave the driver the address Maeve had told her.

When they arrived at their destination, Deirdre made a call to Maeve. “Madam O’Keefe, I’m here. Where are you?”

“You’re already here?” Maeve sounded a little surprised. “W-Wait for me for a while. I’m still upstairs. I’ll come down right now”

When Maeve ran down, she saw Deirdre standing in the wind with a mask on. Although she was still as thin as the last time she saw her, she looked healthier now.

Maeve felt as if someone was cutting her heart with a knife. Then, she saw the woman standing beside Deirdre and was stunned. She walked up to Deirdre hesitantly and asked, "Miss McKinnon..."

Deirdre pulled the bank card out of her pocket and handed it to her. "There are 40,000 dollars here. The password is 1218."

Maeve did not accept the bank card.

Deirdre stuffed it into her hand and asked, "You said you have something to tell me about my mother, right? What is it about then?"

"This isn't the right place to talk. It's too cold." Maeve glanced at Reily and looked around before continuing. "Let's go over there, okay? And I don't think we should let other people join our conversation..."

She was talking about Reily.

Deirdre hesitated for a moment and nodded. She turned around and said to Reily, "Can you wait here for a while? It won't be long."

"Sure, Miss McKinnon. Just let me know if you need anything."

"Okay."

Deirdre then followed Maeve to an alley. She couldn't help herself and asked, "Stop beating around the bushes, Madam O'Keefe. Both of us don't have the luxury of wasting our time here. I hope you can tell me the thing about my mother quickly."

Chapter 466 Charlene, Is That You?

Deirdre wanted to go back to Kyran's side as soon as possible. What if he was thirsty? There was no one who could bring him water.

Maeve's eyes were red around the rims as she stammered, "Miss McKinnon-"

"What took you so long, you slowpoke!> Don't you know that we're rushing for time?"

Suddenly, a voice erupted behind Deirdre. The voice sounded like that of a thug, and once he got closer, Deirdre was assaulted by a strong smell of cigarettes.

The man observed Deirdre and asked, "Are you sure she's the one? You didn't simply find a woman to fool us, did you?"

"T-There's no way I'd do that," said Maeve, her voice shaking "She's Deirdre. She's the one you guys are looking for."

Deirdre was stunned, and her brain turned blank. When she realized what was going on, she shouted at the top of her lungs, "Help! Somebody help!"

She did not know that they had also sent some people after Reily. After she shouted a few times, the thug pinned her to the wall, and the rock that stabbed into her palm caused her to wince in pain.

"Shut the f*ck up!" snarled the thug. "If you don't stop shouting right now, I'll break all of your teeth."

When Maeve saw what they did to Deirdre, she rushed over and shielded Deirdre. "Miss McKinnon! Miss McKinnon, are you okay?"

After that, she turned around and glared at the thug, her eyes red. "Can't you guys be gentler? She's blind! She can't see anything!"

"Who do you think you are?" The thug looked at her in contempt. "Get the hell out of here now, you old h* g! I suggest you act as if nothing has happened here, and you'll see your daughter tomorrow. If not...."

The thug let out a cold snort. He kicked her away and stretched his arm forward to reach out for Deirdre.

"Stay away from me!" Deirdre fought back, but the thug slapped her across her face. Her ear buzzed for a moment, and she fell to the ground.

In the next second, the thug covered her nose and mouth with a piece of cloth. She realized what he was going to do and hastily held her breath. However, the pungent smell still found its way into her nostrils, and she felt light-headed.

Before Deirdre fell unconscious, she heard Maeve crying, "I'm sorry, Miss McKinnon. If I didn't lure you here, they'd kill my daughter..."

That was the last thing she heard before she completely passed out.

By the time Deirdre came around to her senses, she could still hear Maeve's cries in her mind. She took a deep breath and sighed at her misfortune.

'Just because she wanted to save her daughter, she lured me there? Does she not know that she might kill me this way too?' she thought. It took her a few seconds before her consciousness finally returned to her. It was only then she realized that she was tied to a chair.

She felt numbness in her limbs and couldn't move. She tried to struggle but to no avail. Then she gave up the struggle.

Suddenly, she felt a sharp pain in her head. She couldn't help herself but think how long she had been tied

up here and what Kyran would do when he found out that she was abducted.

He was bedridden. Would he get up from the bed and come out to look for her when he realized that she was abducted?

And where was Reily? Was she abducted as well? If she was not abducted, would she tell Kyran about what happened to her?

Before she could get answers to those questions in her mind, the door in front of her was kicked open from the outside. A group of people walked in, and from their footsteps, Deirdre assumed there were at least three people.

Initially, she thought they were the same group of people who had followed her the other day. She thought they wanted money but soon dismissed the idea. After all, they would not have had to ask Maeve to lure her out if they just wanted money. Apparently, they were coming for her.

"Charlene, is that you?" Her throat was so sore that she felt as if something was burning in her throat with every breath she took. However, her voice was unexpectedly calm.

After all, other than Charlene, she couldn't think of anyone else who would treat her this way.

Just as she expected, she heard the knocking sound of Charlene's high heels approaching her.

Charlene grabbed her by the cheek and slapped her across the face.

Charlene slapped her with so much force that Deirdre's face turned to the side. She frowned in pain.

Chapter 467 They're the Same Person

Gnashing her teeth, Charlene chuckled coldly. "Well, well, well, it seems that you still remember me, my old friend. I thought you had already forgotten about me."

Deirdre did not say anything in return. She just clenched her fists. She could not fathom Charlene's anger

at all.

By right, Charlene was the winner in life.

She got together with Brendan. They were going to get engaged soon, and she could stay with Brendan all the time. Everyone knew that she was the future Mrs. Brighthall, so Deirdre did not understand why she was so angry.

“If you didn’t make such a big fuss and abduct me, I would have already forgotten about you. After all, we’re two people from two different worlds. There’s no way our paths would intersect.”

“Two people from two different worlds?” Charlene’s pretty face was contorted with anger. She stabbed her nails into Deirdre’s face and snarled sarcastically, “If that’s what you think, then you wouldn’t have appeared in this hospital.”

“Deirdre, since you chose to fake your death, then play your role well and stay dead! Why did you come out again? You disgust me! If you think you can make Brendan go back to you if you give him that puppy-eye look of yours, then you’re terribly wrong!” she shouted, her voice filled with anger and hatred.

Deirdre was momentarily stunned and frowned. She did not want to die, so she explained, “Did you misunderstand something. Miss McKinney? Brendan isn’t the reason I came to this hospital.”

“Hah! Do you think I’ll believe in your bullsh*t?”

“I’m not lying!” Deirdre took a deep breath and continued. “I came to this hospital to take care of Kyran. If you don’t believe me, you can go check it yourself. Before this, I didn’t know Brendan was in this hospital. It’s purely coincidence.”

“Kyran?”

“Yes!” Deirdre nodded.

Charlene let out a sarcastic smile and said, “Deirdre, do you think I’ll believe in you if you make up a fake name?”

“Fake name?” Deirdre shook her head and said seriously, “Why don’t you go and check with the hospital yourself? I’m sure you’ll know if I’m telling the truth or lying after that. Taking someone else’s life is a great felony. The men we love are different people. If you let me go, I can pretend that nothing has happened. Unlike you, the last person I’d like to run into is Brendan!”

“Shut up!” Charlene slapped Deirdre across her face. Her face was distorted by rage as she hissed. “Deirdre, are you really stupid, or are you just pretending to be one? I’ve been in the hospital for so many days, so I’ve already checked everything.”

“There is no such person as Kyran in the hospital!”

Deirdre was dumbstruck. She refuted, "That's not possible!"

"Not possible? Only one patient is in Room 1106, and that person is you. Can't you see it now?" Charlene looked at her in contempt. "Brendan is Kyran!"

Deirdre felt as if she was struck by lightning. Her eyes were wide open. Her blood was turning cold, and there was nothing in her head now other than the things that Charlene had told her.

'Brendan is Kyran? This is impossible!'

Deirdre's lips were trembling. Her face turned as pale as a sheet of paper as she shook her head.

'There is no way they're the same person. Kyran is so gentle. There's no way he could be that cold-blooded Brendan!'

"You're lying! I don't believe in you!" said Deirdre, her brain a muddled mess.

"Why should I lie to you?" Charlene looked at her with disdain. "Well, I can't understand why you don't know about it. After all, you're blind. He just needs to put on an act, and you won't be able to know who he truly is. But do you know why he doesn't want to reveal his true identity to you?"

Chapter 468 They've Been Best Buddies Since Childhood

Charlene remembered something, and a glint flitted across her eyes. She let out a cold smirk and said, "Maybe he's just playing you! He promised that he'll marry me. He doesn't want to be responsible to you, so he faked an identity to get closer to you. This way, he won't have any guilt when he leaves you. Your whole life is a joke, Deirdre."

A chill rushed down Deirdre's spine as she felt there was an invisible hand stabbing her in her heart.

Her unfocused eyes were filled with pain, and she kept shaking her head in denial. "No... This isn't possible! There's no way Kyran could be Brendan! He grew up in Eastgene. That's what Mr. King told me, and he'd never lie to me!"

"Mr. King? You're talking about Declan, right?" asked Charlene, stunning Deirdre.

"How does she know about Mr. King?"

"So he's in Wisey too. No wonder he looked so familiar that day, so this is it." Charlene smiled coldly. "Do you know who Declan is to Brendan?"

"No, I don't know."

“They’ve been best friends since childhood.”

“What? But Declan grew up in Eastgene...”

“Yes, Declan grew up in Eastgene. But his mother is his father’s second wife, so he wasn’t welcomed in his family. They sent him over to Neve when he was a kid, and that’s how he got to know Brendan.”

This time, Deirdre felt as if her entire world had turned dark.

If she could see now, her vision would certainly turn dark, and she would fall unconscious immediately.

‘If they’ve been best friends since childhood, why did Mr. King act so cold toward Brendan? And what’s with Kyran? A made-up person?’

As myriad questions flitted across her head, her memories with Kyran also appeared in her mind. When she recalled the day Kyran confessed to her, the day they shared their first kiss, and those days they spent together, she just felt disgusted at those memories.

There was a stabbing pain in her heart as well. It was so painful that she wanted to kill herself to free herself from the pain..

“I’ve been wondering why I couldn’t find out the person staying in Room 1106 and the person that protects you from the shadows. So, it turns out to be Declan and Brendan. If it were both of them, then it makes sense why I couldn’t find out anything. Not only did he keep me in the dark, but he has been keeping your in the dark too!” Charlene’s anger had already ebbed away.

There was a joyful smile tugging at the corner of her lips as she continued. “But I can understand why Brendan is keeping me in the dark. Apparently, he’s just playing you. That’s why he lies to you. This way, he can marry me after he has had enough of you. You’re nothing but a toy for him to pass his time!”

Deirdre’s head was blank. She couldn’t think of anything right now. Her tears flowed down her cheeks and dried up before reaching her chin.

Her eyes were filled with despair. She had lost all of her will to stay alive.

There was a smug smile on Charlene’s face. She did not know why, but the mask that Deirdre was wearing stung her eyes. It was probably because that mask made Deirdre’s eyes look particularly attractive.

“You purposely put on a mask because you know how ugly you are after being disfigured. But do you think other people will see you as a beauty like this?” Charlene said scornfully.

However, Deirdre did not give her any reply.

Charlene did not understand why Brendan couldn't forget a disfigured woman like Deirdre.

It would make her a laughingstock if other people learned that an ugly woman had stepped into her relationship with Brendan!

The more Charlene thought about it, the angrier she became. Driven by her rage, she stretched her arm forward and reached for Deirdre's mask.

Chapter 469 Destroy Her Face

"You should know your own place, you ugly b*tch. Come, show everyone that wretched face of yours!" Charlene shouted maliciously as she stretched her arm forward to take Deirdre's mask away, causing Deirdre to lower her head in pain. Charlene pinched at her cheek and forced her to raise her head.

"What's the matter? You know how ugly you are, so you don't have the guts to show your face in front of everyone? Hmph! You should just pee on the ground and look at your-"

In the next second, Charlene came to an abrupt stop. She looked at Deirdre's face, and her eyes were filled with disbelief.

Most of the appalling scars on her face had healed, save for a few stubborn scars left. Coupled with her dewy eyes, one could see past those scars how pretty she had been in the past.

Charlene's face contorted with jealousy. She couldn't believe that Deirdre was even prettier than her. She clenched her fists so tightly that her nails stabbed deeply into her palms.

"When did your face recover?" Her eyes were red. She had not looked at the photo closely when Blake showed it to her last time. Besides, it was too dark in the photo, so she had not managed to see the scars on Deirdre's face. She had been under the impression Deirdre was still the same as she used to be. She did not expect she was recovering.

The alarm in Charlene's heart blared. At that time, her jealousy surged whenever she looked at her face in the mirror and thought of her effort to make herself look like Deirdre through plastic surgery.

One's appearance was one of the most important assets for someone like her nowadays. Deirdre was already pretty enough before she fully recovered. When all her

wounds were gone from her face, and she regained her pretty face, it would be the end for her!

Charlene would never allow something like that to happen!

When that thought surfaced in Charlene's head, she was overwhelmed by her jealousy.

"Quickly! Get me a knife!"

She had to do something. Since she could send someone to destroy Deirdre's face in the past, she could do the same thing to her now as well.

After someone brought a knife, she pointed at Deirdre's face and shouted hysterically, "Quickly! Destroy her face now!"

The man was stunned. He did not know that he had to do something like that at all.

Seeing his hesitance, Charlene snatched the knife from his hand and said, "Useless! You're such a wimp!"

Her face was distorted with anger, and her eyes were bloodshot. She grabbed the knife and walked toward Deirdre. Suddenly, someone came up to her and whispered something into her ear.

"Are you sure about that?" Her face sank. She threw the knife away and pointed at a man. "You stay here and get rid of her. Remember to make a clean work of it. Throw her body under the mountain. The rest of you come with me."

It seemed to Deirdre that Charlene was running away as she could hear her flustered footsteps.

"She's such a b*tch. She never rewards me with anything and always asks me to stay back and clean her

mess," cursed the man.

He rubbed his hands and dragged Deirdre down from the chair. He threw a gunny sack over Deirdre as he was going to throw her into the river below the mountain. However, just as he reached out for the rope,

his eyes were attracted by Deirdre's chest.

Even though Deirdre was wearing her clothes, her collar was torn open when she was struggling, and her skin was fair.

The man turned his head to look at Deirdre's face. Even though her face was still filled with scars, he could see that she was quite a beauty as well.

Only now did he understand why Brendan would fall in love with her. Once all the scars were gone from her face, she would certainly regain her beauty.

Not only did she have a good body physique, but she also had a pretty face. It was such a waste to kill her.

The man could barely hold himself back. It had been a long time since he had touched a woman, and just getting close to Deirdre made his heart race into a gallop. Since there was no one around here, he untied Deirdre and flung her on the grass.

Chapter 470 Escape

"What are you doing?!" By the time Deirdre realized what he was going to do, it was already too late. The man had already pressed his lips on her neck, and she shouted in despair, "Get away from me!"

"You should quit acting now. Everyone knows you're a whore who has slept with many different men, so why can't I join the party? I'm sure that a man like Brendan can't satisfy you, right? It's okay. You're fortunate to have come across me today. I'm sure that you'll very much enjoy it."

Deirdre was disgusted. If she could see now, the first thing that would appear in her vision would be the man's face, which was distorted by lust and desire.

The man continued to tear her shirt apart, and Deirdre just wanted to kill herself. Suddenly, she stopped struggling.

"You said you want me, right?" said Deirdre, her voice shaky and raspy. Anyone who heard her voice would be incited.

The man stopped and grinned lecherously. "Of course. You're so beautiful. Since there's no one else here, we might as well do it now."

"So why don't you untie my hands first?" said Deirdre, her face turning red with embarrassment. "This should be something that both of us will find enjoyable. If you don't untie me, you'll feel uncomfortable too. Untie me now... There are many things I can do..."

She had a sweet voice, and when she tried to seduce someone, barely anyone could say no to her. The man's eyes glowed with excitement, and a big grin appeared on his face. "Okay! I'll untie you now!"

He hastily went forward and untied Deirdre.

"You truly are one fine woman. I can understand why Brendan would choose you over his beautiful fiancée."

As he was talking, he took off Deirdre's clothes.

After removing all the ropes from Deirdre's arms, the man pressed his lips against her skin. She bit her lip tightly and forced down the urge to vomit while her hands were fumbling around.

As she grabbed a brick, she heard the man taking off his trousers. She saw her chance and hit the man's

head with the brick.

The man screamed out in pain and fell to the ground.

Deirdre's face was filled with anxiety and fear.

'Did I just kill someone!?'"

She did not know about it, nor did she have the time to check if the man was dead or alive. She grabbed her tattered clothes and dashed toward the entrance.

The good thing was that she still remembered where the entrance was, and the gate was still wide open. The moment she came out, she was welcomed by a gust of cold breeze and shuddered.

She remembered Charlene saying that they were in a mountain right now, so how was she going to find the right direction on such a steep road?

'Could that man have something on him that can contact the outside world?'

As soon as the thought surfaced in her head, Deirdre turned around, and then she heard the pained cries from the man inside the building. As the man shouted, he rose to his feet. "You damned woman! How

dare you hit me!? You must have a death wish! Stop it right there!"

Deirdre's heart skipped a beat.

'He's still alive?'

The man scrambled up from the ground. His face was filled with blood, and he could barely see anything. He just wanted to catch Deirdre and kill her to vent his anger.

"D*mn it! I'm going to kill you!"

He found his way to the door by supporting himself with the wall.

Deirdre knew he was coming for her, so she threw all caution to the wind and ran toward the front at her top speed.

Deirdre could hear nothing but the man's shouts behind her and the whistling of the wind. Blasts of cold wind were invading her chest, causing her a lot of pain. Her face was filled with tears, and she quickened her pace.

'Run! I need to get out of here!'

The wind whistled across her ears. Suddenly, she lost her footing and fell headlong down the cliff.

Chapter 471 He's Just Kyran

Declan found a woman crying with her face covered in the room when he rushed to the hospital overnight. He knew that the woman's name was Reily Grant.

Reily saw him at the same time and acted as if she had found her savior. "Mr. King!"

"I'm aware of the situation. Where's Kyran?"

"Mr. Reed is at the police station."

"Has he lost his mind? He should be resting in bed!" Declan furrowed his eyebrows tightly and made a call while he headed to the police station.

The call was not picked up all along. Declan arrived at the police station's entrance to find Kyran standing inside by himself, holding his phone and wearing a hospital gown. He did not have a jacket on but a police officer's coat. 1

Enter title...

All of the police officers were rather respectful to him.

In fact, one of them had even served him a cup of hot water. "Sir, have this..."

Declan walked over swiftly and grabbed the man's arm. "What are you doing, Kyran!? Didn't I tell you that I've already sent someone to look into this? You shouldn't be on your

feet for a prolonged period since you just recently had surgery. Go back, quickly!"

The man did not move. His initially ailing face appeared even paler at this moment. His flawlessly handsome face appeared sallow, and his dark eyes were lowered. In the end, he struggled and pulled his arm free from Declan's clutch.

"I must save her!"

His voice was hoarse. This time, he did not speak through his phone but right from his lips.

Yet, the people at the scene did not find it strange.

Meanwhile, the police officer came and rifled through the document. "Don't worry, sir. We're already investigating and monitoring the situation. We've also sent our people to search for her. I believe we'll be able to locate Miss McKinnon soon enough."

Declan looked toward Kyran. He had never seen Kyran behaving like a zombie like this. "It was my fault for putting her in harm's way." Kyran spoke in an unusually hoarse voice due to his prolonged dehydration. "I should have stopped her when she told me that she wanted to go out. I should have known that it was a trap."

“How can this be your fault?” Declan’s expression grew even more solemn, and he spoke in a deep voice. “No one could’ve known that this would happen.”

“Yet, it was supposed to be avoidable.” Kyran clutched the object in his hand tightly. Declan looked over and discovered that those were two flight tickets to Germia.

Kyran said in a self-mocking tone, “I had it all planned. I would take her with me a week later and give her the life she wants. She can plant plants in the garden if she likes gardening and can keep a house full of pets if she enjoys having pets. I’m going to marry

her, take care of her, and ensure that she will not be in pain for the slightest bit in her life.

All she will have is me.”

Declan choked up. He found his voice after a long time. “Are you serious? How about the project in Eastgene? How about your

goals? Do you know what it means to go to Germia with Deirdre?”

Kyran’s dark eyes did not change at all, and even his expression was very calm.

“It means that I’m going to give up on everything that I fought for, but I’m willing to do it so I can have a fresh start with her.”

He had already been prepared to leave everything from the moment he got together with her.

Declan said with a bitter smile, “You... I wanted to say that you’ve lost your mind, but I changed how I think and figured I’m not much better than you. This may be karma. The things we did in the past were too harsh and hurtful, so this is the punishment we get now.”

Kyran did not move from the start, only that his eyes were moist with tears. “Yet, I don’t even stand a chance of receiving my punishment now.”

“It’s going to be fine...” Declan was uncertain, but he comforted Kyran by saying, “I’m sure that someone abducted Deirdre because she has something they want. It will be easy if it is money, but they will need adequate time if it is for something else. Only then can they take action.”

The police received information and claimed they found something through the surveillance footage when Declan’s voice died away.

Chapter 472 She Could See

Kyran’s eyes lit up. He hastily approached the police officer and moved so strongly that his abdomen twitched in pain. He let out a few coughs and asked with bloodshot eyes, “Where is she?”

The police officer pointed at the lower right corner of the computer screen. “The woman that is taken away here, is that Miss McKinnon?”

The front of the woman’s face could not be seen where the police officer was pointing, but her outfit coincided with what Deirdre had been wearing.

Kyran clenched his fists tightly and said, “That’s right!”

“We’re investigating in the right direction, then. If we can extract the main roads1 surveillance footage and track the black sedan’s whereabouts, we can find out where they have taken Miss

Enter title...

McKinnon.” The police officer dialed the phone to retrieve more surveillance footage. A location was found at last.

It was on a mountain nearby to Rivstate Road.

There was an abandoned backyard, and the road to the mountain was steep, so it would

be easy to cover up the abduction there. The police began the rescue operation without allowing a moment’s delay.

Kyran could not keep quiet for a moment upon receiving the news. The police officers were in a car while he followed behind in Declan’s car. He held the tickets so tightly along the way that the tickets were almost crushed. He prayed for Deirdre’s safety over and over again.

The journey was supposed to be half an hour long, but they arrived in ten minutes. The police had already taken action, and Kyran wanted to go along, but Declan stopped him.

“That’s enough! Your body is just recovering. If there is another problem, not even God can save you. It would be best for you to wait in the car. It’s the police’s profession to rescue her. Our participation will only alert the enemy more.”

Kyran could only get back in the car, yet his thoughts had already drifted to the mountain.

He felt an intense feeling of restlessness in his heart for no apparent reason.

More than ten minutes passed, and the police returned from afar.

Kyran got out of the car by force, disregarding Declan’s obstruction, and approached the

police step by step with great effort.

The leading police officer had an unpleasant expression on his face when he saw Kyran approaching him. “Sir.”

“What’s going on?”

The police officer told the truth, “We can basically confirm that this is the first crime scene. There are ropes in the yard used for binding and also... traces of blood.”

‘Blood?’

Kyran’s pupils constricted abruptly, and he felt the vision before his eyes darkened. He gnashed his teeth strenuously to calm himself. “So... where’s Deirdre? Where is she?”

“Miss McKinnon has yet to be located for the time being. A brick caused the blood stain found in the yard. Hence, our preliminary conclusion is that Miss McKinnon possibly attacked the abductor and fled. Of course... we don’t rule out that the blood stain is possibly Miss McKinnon’s and that she has already been transferred elsewhere.”

Kyran felt his chest wrench in pain. All of a sudden, a police officer called out from afar, and someone ran over. “Captain! We found a woman’s shoe by the cliff.”

‘That hurts...’

Deirdre felt as if the bones of her entire body were crushed. Every move she made sent a piercing pain through her body.

She touched her forehead and realized that it was sticky. She could smell the stench of blood.

She had been running with all her might earlier and missed a step because she could not see. She rolled down the mountain and was slowed down along the way after crashing into a few trees before finally landing on a flat surface alive.

She opened her eyes with great effort. Light spots suddenly appeared in her vision that

was supposed to be pitch black.

Deirdre was stunned. She stretched out her hand and discovered that she could see the outline of her five fingers within her blurry vision.

She... could actually see!

Deirdre's face was drenched in tears. 'Is this what it means by there's light at the end of the tunnel?'

Her head hurt from the trauma, so Deirdre looked around her with her teeth clenched.

Steep woods surrounded her, and the flat ground she was on was a rock. She could not see the area below clearly but could hear the sound of the river indistinctly.

Chapter 473 Quarrel With Your Boyfriend?

If Deirdre were to fall, she would be drowned to death even if she survived the fall.

Deirdre felt a shiver down her spine. She stretched out her hand to grab the vegetation roots next to her and found that they were very sturdy.

She took a deep breath and prepared physically and mentally before grabbing the vegetation and moving to the right on the slope, which was almost 90 degrees.

A few wounds opened up on her hands from the friction, and there were countless scratches on her body as well. She felt the burning, piercing pain in her palms, but she did not have the courage to slow down at all. She loosened her grip only when she finally arrived at a not-so-steep path.

Her palms were covered in blood.

Enter title...

Deirdre wanted to cry from the pain but endured it with her teeth clenched and continued

to walk down the path.

She was afraid that the man would come after her. She had already lost the strength to run, even though she could see the place a little clearer now.

She lost count of how long she walked, her head feeling muddled until a piercing light swept toward her. A vigilant voice asked, "Who's there?"

Deirdre widened her eyes and spoke in a pressing voice. "Save me! Please help me!"

The middle-aged woman was still muttering when Deirdre was brought to her house down the mountain, "Silly girl, why did you go to such a dangerous mountain? You fell from the mountain, and it's fortunate that you survived the ordeal. Look at your body.

Not

a patch of your skin is unscathed, and your face..."

Deidre smiled. "My face was scarred from the start."

"Is that so?" The woman heaved a sigh out of sympathy and prepared a bath for Deirdre to wash up.

"There are too many wounds on your body, and you will certainly be in a lot of pain if you

wash in warm water. Just sponge yourself with cold water, and I'll dress your wounds in a while."

"Alright..."

Deirdre walked into the bathroom, removed her clothes, and soaked her entire body in the tub. The water was cold, yet it allowed her to feel lucky to be alive.

She soaked her head in the water, and the memory of Kyran surged into her mind

frantically. She stuck her head out, choking on water.

Coincidentally, the woman entered the bathroom and was startled by the sight of the scene. She hastily dropped the clothes in her hands and approached Deirdre. "What's going on? Is the water too cold? Would you like me to add some hot water?"

Deirdre teared up from choking and shook her head with all her might. "I... I'm fine. I put my head under the water accidentally and choked."

"Ah ah. Come out quickly. The bath is only for you to wash up. It's not good for you to soak in cold water."

"Hmm."

The woman passed some clothes to Deirdre. "The clothes are from when I was younger.

They are outdated, but they should do just fine keeping you warm."

Deirdre got dressed, and the woman asked while she dressed Deirdre's wounds, "Do you

remember the phone number of a close family member? How about your relatives?"

Deirdre was caught in a daze. When she was jolted back to reality, the woman asked again.

"I don't have a family, and I don't have relatives either."

"They..."

"Are all dead."

The woman heaved a sigh. "You still have someone that you can reach out to, right?"

Deirdre could not help thinking about Kyran, yet she began to hesitate when Charlene's remark surfaced in her mind. She could not confirm if what Charlene had said was true. However, it was enough to stir fear in her, even if there was only a slim possibility.

At the thought of this, Deirdre's face turned ghastly pale, and she felt her insides churning.

The woman assumed that she had said something wrong, so she said cautiously, "Why do you look so pale all of a sudden? Is it because of your boyfriend? Did you quarrel with him?"

'Boyfriend?'

Deirdre found it absurd. Before her abduction, she had been dreaming about going to Germia with Kyran, but she did not expect she would actually be stepping into a dangerous situation.

She did not understand what Brendan's goal was. 'Is he trying to mess with me? Why is he disguising himself as someone else to be with me?'

"No. I've just been caught off guard, and I can't think of who to reach out to."

Chapter 474 Your Punishment for Falling in Love With Me

Deirdre spoke softly as if she was sad. The woman pitied her even more. She kept her head lowered while she bandaged Deirdre's hands and then said, "You can stay at my place for a while then. My son and daughter are working elsewhere anyhow, and I don't have anyone to keep me company. You're not going to eat much anyway, so we'll just set the table for one more person. We'll talk again when you remember who you can call."

"Thank you." Deirdre was grateful.

The woman waved her hand dismissively and said, "It's fine". Then, she prepared the room next to her and put up some warm sheets for Deirdre.

"It's cold under the mountain. Just make do with the current bed, and when the sun is out

tomorrow, I'll hang the blankets in the closet in the sun so I can add another layer of
Enter title...

blanket for you."

"Sure."

The woman left after reminding Deirdre.

Deirdre could not sleep. She heard Kyran's voice as soon as she shut her eyes.

She heard his promises, confession of love, and tender words for her...

She fell asleep in the end but still had a nightmare.

In the dream, Kyran's blurry face gradually grew clearer until his well-chiseled facial features were shown. His dark eyes were icy cold, and he looked at her arrogantly the way he did when he got down from the third floor in the past with hidden contempt and exploratory behavior.

He said, "Deirdre, I told you that you'd never escape from my control."

Deirdre felt her throat swollen and in pain. She could only speak after exhausting every ounce of strength in her body. "Why? Why won't you let me off!?"

The man approached her step by step, and she could feel his cold gaze on her. "It's very

simple. I will not allow you to live such a happy life because I enjoy seeing you in pain. I'll

show you my true identity once we're in Germia. The more terrified you are, the more delighted I am.

"Deirdre, don't even think about breaking free from me for the rest of your life. This is your punishment for falling in love with me in the past!"

Deirdre woke up in fear and found that her surroundings were still blurry. Her body was drenched in a cold sweat, and she clenched her fists tightly. She opened the curtains and found that the light peeking through the curtain was very bright.

She could not see the scenery outside the window, no matter how hard she tried. Her vision could only reach as far as centimeters, and she still could not see clearly—even the outline of an object looked blurry to her.

She let out a cough and opened the door to walk outside. The woman had just placed a basket at the door when she realized that Deirdre was awake. She asked, "Why are you up so early? Is it because you're hungry?"

Deirdre rubbed her belly and answered truthfully, "Still okay."

"Then you must be so famished that you don't feel hungry anymore. Wait for me. I just foraged some wild mushrooms from the mountain. I'll pan-fry them, and they'll taste great. Moreover, mushrooms are rich in anti-inflammatory components."

The woman walked into the kitchen with the basket while Deirdre followed her and helped prepare the wood-burning stove.

"Oh right." The woman said as if she was making a casual conversation, "There were many police officers on the mountain when I was out foraging today. They were holding some tools and bustling about by the cliff. Are they looking for you?"

Deirdre's movements of adding firewood stopped for a moment.

"How can that be?" She calmed herself and said with a nonchalant expression, "I'm not important enough that a bunch of police officers would come looking for me. No one would even frown if an orphan like me were to die."

"Yikes, you shouldn't say that, silly girl."

Deirdre raised her head and said smilingly, "Hmm. I was only saying it as a metaphor."

The woman cleaned and pan-fried the mushrooms, but she continued to mutter, "Frankly, it looks like a huge lineup. If it really is you that they're looking for, they will most probably find you here. The village is right under the mountain."

Deirdre did not answer. She waited for the woman to serve the mushrooms before going

ahead to help the woman to bake some sandwich bread.

Chapter 475 She Is Colder and More Hopeless Than I Am

The woman could not help feeling surprised after seeing how skillful Deirdre's movements were. "You're skilled in this as well?"

"I can do many things, and people would compliment my cooking." Deirdre smiled, but her smile faded after a short while.

Afterward, she cooked for one person solely. She would try all sorts of ways to please the person and would constantly perfect her skills for him.

Then, she lost her sight and stopped cooking in the kitchen.

"Is that so?" The woman chuckled and said, "I found myself something precious, haven't I? Cook something from scratch so I can have a taste when you're well."

"Sure."

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"How long has he been standing there?"

Declan stood at the door with his gaze fixed upon the inside of the room. Kyran stood near the window, his face so pale he looked unreal.

Reily said softly, "He has been standing there since he got back and hasn't slept for a night."

She could not stand it anymore, yet she was worried that Kyran might attempt to leave the room. Thus, she could only force herself to guard the door.

Declan observed the scene and said, "Thank you for taking the trouble to do this. Go get

some rest first and leave the rest to me."

"Sure." Reily took one glance at Kyran before she nodded and left.

Declan entered the room after Reily left, his eyebrows tightly furrowed. "Are you planning

on being this way? When Deirdre is found, will you still be around to see her?"

Kyran was oblivious. He looked in the direction of the window stubbornly, hoping that Deirdre would get out of a cab safely and return to him in the next moment.

He had been unable to sleep for the whole night because of this.

"Speak!" Declan took a step forward and grabbed Kyran's shoulder. "Do you think tormenting yourself like this will ensure that

Deirdre is alive? Do you think that you're suffering for her just by doing this? You're only punishing yourself! Besides giving yourself some psychological comfort and making the people who care about you feel uneasy, you won't change anything!"

Kyran's body was so weak that he was swaying after Declan nudged at his shoulder. He raised his head, his lips cracking severely. "I figure she is colder and more hopeless than

I am now."

Declan was stunned for a moment. He heaved a sigh and said, "So, you're going to make sure to recover soon so that you can look for her in person. Even though there is no news from the police, it is good news indirectly because they haven't found a corpse. This signifies there is a 50% chance she is still alive."

Kyran kept quiet. He was not a fool. It was very apparent that Deirdre had already fallen into the river in view of the lack of updates from the police.

The probability of surviving a fall into the deep river was very minute.

Meanwhile, Declan's phone rang. He picked up the call, and his eyes lit up with a glint in the next moment. "Are you serious? We're coming at once! "

Kyran responded by saying, "What happened?"

"They captured one of Deirdre's abductors in the hospital. The wound on the person's forehead and his identity matched the profile of the blood stain. The person admitted to it

as well."

Kyran was emotional. "I'm coming!"

He had a coughing fit from being agitated. Every time he coughed, it was more violent and painful to him than the previous coughing fit.

Declan could not bear to watch anymore. "Wait for me in the room. I'll inform you right away as soon as I get an update."

Kyran shook his head. "No."

"You haven't slept for a night."

Kyran was still stubborn. "Let me go. Otherwise, it will be even more tormenting because

I can't sleep."

Declan heaved a sigh and relented. He went to the police station with Kyran.

They were not allowed to meet the abductor, so they could only watch the interrogation from another room.

Chapter 476 She's Not Coming Back

The man's mannerism was casual and carefree when the police inquired about the scene of the incident, but he became unprecedentedly angry when Deirdre was brought up. "That b*tch! She screwed me over! I almost died in that yard! "

"Watch your words!" The detective knocked on the table and asked, "What do you mean by you almost died in the yard?"

The man pointed at his head. "Can you see this? This serious wound is all her! She hit me with a brick, and I almost lost consciousness. I wouldn't have made it to the next day if not for my good physique."

"Where is Deirdre?"

"She got away!" The man was furious and sneered. "However, I saw with my own eyes when she ran and fell off a cliff. I didn't

Enter title...

even manage to reach out and grab her at the time. I suppose you can say that she

deserves it for running despite being blind. If only she were to behave herself..."

The man suddenly stopped speaking and smiled.

The detective furrowed his eyebrows. "Behave herself and what? We found the ropes that were used to bind her. What happened? Did she free herself from the restraints?"

"No, I loosened the rope."

"Why?"

The man looked around and said, "Because she wanted to sleep with me. She was constantly seducing me, so I removed the ropes and took off her—"

Before he could finish his sentence, Kyran ran into the room and threw a punch ferociously at the man's face, disregarding the people who tried to stop him.

The man fell with his face down, and his face was stinging in pain. He pointed at Kyran, scared out of his wits. "Did you see that? He hit me! Capture him, quickly!"

Police officers were sent to stop Kyran. The man just realized that a man had hit him.

He

could not recognize Brendan, but he was convinced that Kyran must be Brendan because he was furious. "You're Brendan, right? You can't even protect your woman. You're having an affair, yet you still have the audacity to hit me! It's no wonder Deirdre's face turned pale at the mention of your name."

Kyran's head was buzzing, and he could not process the information he had just heard.

"What are you talking about?"

The man changed the topic of conversation. "She wouldn't have been reduced to her current state if not for what you did. She must hate you, right? You're the one who caused her death! "

Kyran's eyes were bloodshot from anger. He wanted to break through the restraints, but Declan hastily stopped him. "You've lost your mind for beating up someone in the police station! You're not allowed to do that!"

Kyran did not have much strength, so he stopped struggling after Declan approached him. He was then brought out of the interrogation room by force.

The police officer said, "Don't act rashly, sir. He will be punished accordingly. If you were

to hit him, you'd be duped by him. He is trying to make someone influential an accomplice now."

Kyran's fingers were shaking when he clenched his fists forcefully, but his chest was hurting.

Declan could not bear to watch anymore and said in a comforting tone, "You can't believe everything that the man said. It's obvious that he is trying to provoke you. If you believe him, you'll be duped by him. Perhaps, Miss McKinnon didn't fall but has been transferred elsewhere. She will be back for sure as long as she is still alive."

"She's not coming back..." Kyran's face was ghastly pale, his cold eyes were shut, and his eyelashes were batting. "She's not coming back."

He repeatedly chanted, his voice hopeless.

Declan could not figure out why Kyran would be so convinced that Deirdre was not coming back.

"There's always a possibility."

Kyran did not reply. On the other hand, the two flight tickets in his chest pocket felt blazing hot, like burning paper. They burned so hot that his heart was in unbearable

pain.

'I will only need some time, just a little longer, and she will go to Germia with me. No one

else will disturb us anymore.' However, even his trivial wish could not be fulfilled.

Chapter 477 Apply the Ointment for You

"Deirdre, I'm going foraging in the mountain. Go harvest some vegetables from the backyard so we can eat when I'm back."

"Sure."

Deirdre nodded. She held the door frame and shut her eyes comfortably in the bright sunlight. It had already been three days since she lived strictly following a routine.

The wounds on her hands had yet to heal for the time being, but the scratches on her body were starting to fade.

She believed that the piercing pain radiating from her palms occasionally would reduce not long after.

It felt as if life had returned to the way before she met Kyran.

Enter title...

She carried the basket and walked on the path step by step. The vision before her eyes would turn dark frequently, so she could not see the path clearly. Hence, she was always

very careful on her journey.

She harvested vegetables when she arrived in the backyard. Before she could carry the basket, a pair of huge hands were extended to her.

"I'll do it."

Deirdre raised her head and saw a man with a dark complexion. He looked rather handsome based on his outline. He was the village head's son, Hoyt Leigh, and he helped her when she fell yesterday because he was there coincidentally.

"Thank you, but it's fine. It's just a few steps away." Deirdre was embarrassed and stretched out her hands in an attempt to take back the basket.

Hoyt avoided her. "You cannot see very well, so it will surely be quite inconvenient for you. The basket is heavy, so it's tough for a girl like you to carry it by yourself."

Deirdre smiled and thanked him.

Hoyt lowered his head and blushed when he saw Deirdre's face. He was afraid that Deirdre would notice his reaction, so he walked ahead of her. "Follow me and be careful."

Mrs. Cox was not home yet when Deirdre returned to the house. Hoyt was not in a rush to leave, so he asked Deirdre, "Are your hands better?"

Deirdre's hands were still wrapped in bandages, and she was reminded of her pain when she heard Hoyt's question. She said, "Much better."

Hoyt pulled out an ointment from his pocket shyly.

"I bought it from the market, and it can reduce pain and inflammation. Give me your hands, and I'll apply it for you."

"It would be rude of me..."

Hoyt's face was flushed as he said with his head lowered, "How is this rude of you? You're a guest, and my father is the village head. I'm supposed to take care of you, so you don't need to be so modest. The ointment doesn't cost much anyway."

Deirdre did not wish to cause more trouble to Hoyt, but it would be inappropriate for her to decline. As such, she could only stretch out her hands. "Thank you for taking the trouble to do this."

Hoyt did not speak. He removed the bandages from Deirdre's hands cautiously. He was fine before Deirdre's wounds were exposed. When the bandages were removed, Deirdre's wounds appeared to be badly mutilated and very deep, while the skin around the wounds was wrinkly from the moisture.

"Uh..." Hoyt inhaled sharply. "Aren't you in pain?"

Deirdre behaved as if she was just reminded of her pain by saying, "It's slightly painful." She did not wish to cause trouble to Mrs. Cox, so she always claimed that her hands were healing. Now that she looked at it, she could still see that her hands were swollen and red despite her blurry vision.

Looking at Deirdre's wounds, Hoyt felt a shiver down his spine. He applied the ointment carefully, while Deirdre did not express her pain throughout the process. Hoyt would not have realized her pain had he not seen the beads of cold sweat on her forehead.

"It's painful, huh?"

Deirdre nodded.

Hoyt asked, "Why didn't you express your pain?"

Deirdre chuckled. "What's the point of expressing my pain? You're still going to apply the

ointment. If expressing my pain will help in reducing the pain, I'll surely do it more."

Hoyt was rendered speechless. He admired the woman's ability to endure pain in his heart. She had the grace and quality of an heiress born of a wealthy family but did not act spoiled at all. She was actually still capable of joking at this point.

"Let's not cover the hands for the time being. The humidity will exacerbate the inflammation. I'll head to the market tomorrow and help you ask if you'll need stitches."

Chapter 478 Strangers in the Village

"Alright, thank you very much."

Hoyt wanted to say something but stopped himself. He wanted to say, "Don't mention it",

but he did not manage to utter the words and ran home instead.

He muttered as soon as he arrived at his house's entrance, "Mother, where is our bicycle?"

"What's going on?"

Madame Leigh walked out of the kitchen, wiping her hands on her apron. "Where are you going with the bicycle when it's almost night?"

Hoyt said, "Don't mind that. I have something to do at the market. Where's the bicycle?"

Enter title...

"It's in the house. It's going to rain heavily tonight, so I keep it indoors to prevent it from rusting."

Hoyt nodded and went for the bicycle.

Madame Leigh said before he left, "Come home soon! Get your father at the village entrance too, while you're there so he can come home for dinner earlier!"

"Okay!"

He rode the bicycle to the market in a rush. He crossed the village entrance and found

his father standing at the front with two luxurious cars parked next to him. He got down from the bicycle to approach his father, just when the person in the car got out as well.

He met the man's cold gaze. The sight of the man left behind a profound impression that

could not be ignored in Hoyt, even though the man was wearing a coat over his hospital gown. His entire body exuded an elegant yet oppressive presence.

It appeared as if the man was severely ill, and his face was ghastly pale.

He approached the village head while the man was still talking to the person in the car and asked, "Father, why are there strangers in the village?"

"They're looking for someone."

"Looking for someone? Who are they looking for?"

The village head said while he smoked a pipe, "A woman a little over 20 years old?"

They

claimed that the woman has wounds on her face and looks emaciated."

Hoyt's mind was alerted, and he hastily asked, "Why so? Who is that woman to them?"

"I'm not too sure about that." The village head said, "They told me about that and sought my help to look for the woman. They claimed that they would pay 72,000 dollars for her safe return."

"72,000 dollars!?"

Hoyt widened his eyes in surprise. The monetary offer was a large amount in a place like

theirs.

"Just a woman is worthy of that handsome reward?"

"Perhaps she is their friend. All in all, you can stroll along the beach when you're free in the next two days. They claimed that it's possible for her to be floating on the sea, and they would like her person if she is alive, her corpse if she is dead."

"Ah..."

Other than him and Mrs. Cox, no one else knew about Deirdre.

Firstly, it was due to Mrs. Cox's remote residence. Secondly, there were few people in the village. The young people were all working in the cities while the elderly people stayed in the village. Very few people would venture to the beach.

Hoyt felt his heart racing, and he took an extra glance at the man in a coat.

He had a cigarette between his fingers, his dark eyes were empty, and his lips were purplish. He was looking around at all times, and when his eyes met Hoyt's, the latter felt

the domineering presence of the man and could not help trembling.

'What is the relationship between this influential man and the gentle Miss McKinnon?'

Hoyt's mind was a mess with thoughts. He refused to ride the bicycle and was oblivious to Madame Leigh's conversation with him when he returned pushing the bicycle. He lay on the bed under the blanket as soon as he entered the house.

When the village head returned home, Madame Leigh was still muttering, "Something's wrong with him. He rushed over to the market at dusk, and when he returned, he became so distracted and indifferent."

"Don't mind him. You should take a stroll on the beach in the next two days. We have a guest today claiming to..."

Deirdre was still cooking in the kitchen when Mrs. Cox arrived home late. She heard the commotion and stuck out her head. "Why are you home so late today?" Mrs. Cox was in a great mood. She came to the kitchen, took over Deirdre's task, and said smilingly, "I foraged many precious things from the mountain today. I should be able to sell them off at a good price, so I will have the money to fund my son's wedding in the future." Deirdre was happy for her too.

Chapter 479 You Have Feelings for Someone Else, Right

"Oh right, I found a tube of ointment on the table. Who gave it to you?"

Deirdre added firewood to the burner and said, "Mr. Leigh."

"Hoyt?"

"Hmm."

Mrs. Cox's expression turned into a meaningful look at once. "I know that he doesn't have this in this house. Tell me he didn't just get acquainted with you yesterday and went

to buy it from the market today?"

Deirdre nodded, hesitated for a moment, and asked, "Why?"

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"We don't have cars in the village, so one will need to ride a bicycle to get to the market. On the other hand, it takes about four hours in total to get to the market by bicycle and back. There's nothing important happening in the market today anyway. What do you think?"

Deirdre was stunned.

Mrs. Cox beamed widely. "Hoyt has fallen for you."

It was rather preposterous to Deirdre, and she said, "How can that be possible? He's just a nice man."

"No matter how kind a person is, there's always an ulterior motive. I wouldn't go to the market to buy medicine for someone I just recently got to know, especially not in the middle of a summer day." Mrs. Cox smiled joyously as if she was delighted to be a matchmaker. "However, that's pretty good too. Hoyt is a great person and takes care of people. You won't live a hard life if you marry him."

Deirdre did not answer, so Mrs. Cox came to realize the situation and said shyly, "Yikes, what's wrong with me? I haven't even asked for your opinion before I made a decision for you. You have feelings for someone else, right?"

"No..."

"You don't need to deny either. I can see that you look different when I mentioned that you were quarreling with your boyfriend at the time. Afterward, you'll be distracted as soon as you're free, an obvious sign that you're thinking about someone else." Mrs. Cox served the meal with a spatula, paused for a moment, and said, "You don't want to go back because you're in a fight with him?"

Deirdre appeared to be overwhelmed with emotions. "He's not my boyfriend anymore."

"Did you guys break up?" Mrs. Cox heaved a sigh. "No wonder..."

Deirdre did not wish to talk about it. She got up to serve the freshly -baked dinner rolls

and said smilingly, "It's in the past. Let's eat."

"Sure."

After dinner, Deirdre showered. She covered her hands in two plastic bags due to her injuries and dried herself with a towel. Afterward, she shut her eyes but could not fall asleep when she lay on the bed.

She needed a very long time before she could make peace with everything related to Kyran.

The following day, Mrs. Cox went foraging in the mountain as usual and instructed Deirdre to dry out the items in the basket in the sun.

Deirdre poured out the contents of the basket on a flat ground after Mrs. Cox left. She was arranging the items one by one when a shadow enveloped her.

Deirdre raised her head and identified the person roughly based on the outline. "Mr. Leigh?"

"You can call me Hoyt." Hoyt pulled the items he had purchased out of his pocket cautiously with bags under his eyes.

There were bandages, medicine, and disinfectant liquid.

"I just got these. Let me help you to dress the wounds on your hands."

Deirdre's movements halted to a stop, and she was overwhelmed with emotions. "You must have spent quite a lot of money on these, right? How can I accept your favor..."

"I told you not to be modest with me anymore. Mrs. Cox takes good care of me on usual days. She helped me, and I'm helping you in turn. We should all help each other out."

Upon saying that, Hoyt glanced at Deirdre before hastily looking away. "Please allow me

to dress your wounds first?"

Deirdre heaved a sigh in her heart, turned around, and returned to the house.

Hoyt was stunned. It did not take long before Deirdre walked outside with a brown coat in her hands.

"This is a luxury brand of clothing, and I'm unsure of its price. However, you should be able to get about 100 dollars if you sell it at a flea market. Consider it as my gift for you in

return for your favor."

Brendan had given it to her, so it could not be cheap clothing because Brendan had no lack of money.

Hoyt hastily waved his hand dismissively. "Isn't this your coat? How can we sell your coat!?"

Chapter 480 What Is Her Relationship to Him?

Deirdre stuffed the coat into Hoyt's hands and said calmly, "This is a gift from someone to me. However, I'm not planning on wearing it anymore because out of sight, out of mind. It would be great if you could handle it for me too. If you really think that it's too much, you can take 70% of the sales profit and give the remaining 30% to Mrs. Cox."

Hoyt still wanted to decline, but Deirdre said, "Just think of it as a favor to me. Will that be alright?"

Hoyt could not bring himself to decline again. He folded the coat and said softly, "However, I don't want it. I'll help you to sell it. You're a girl and need some money. You can use it to buy stuff for yourself."

Deirdre smiled but did not comment further.
She would figure out a way to get the money to Hoyt by then.

Enter title...

Hoyt felt his heart racing as soon as he saw her smile. He lowered his head further instantly because he had never seen a woman with such a beautiful, gentle smile. The wounds on her face that were almost scabbing over did not ruin her beauty in the slightest.

"I... I..." He stuttered. He could only calm himself after pinching his thigh. "I'll dress your wounds now!"

"Sure."

Deirdre stretched out her hands. Hoyt did not leave for a long time after he was done dressing her wounds.

"Is there anything else?" asked Deirdre.

Hoyt appeared hesitant. "Uh..."

"Hmm?"

"Forget it. Nothing, I shall make a move first."

Hoyt left with a muddled head. He wanted to ask Deirdre about her relationship with the man from yesterday. However, he thought about it closely and figured that Deirdre did not want to interact with that man since she had chosen to stay here.

If he were to bring up that matter, it would only dampen Deirdre's spirit.

He returned with the coat and found the luxury car from yesterday parked at the door of his house. He furrowed his eyebrows and stuck his head into the house.

The two people from yesterday were in the yard. Hoyt wanted to sneak away, but Madame Leigh noticed him at one glance. She said loudly, "Hoyt, where are you going? What did you do at the market today? You didn't help me get the 3 dollars worth of pork

I asked you to!"

The man from before cast a look at Hoyt instantly. His gaze was cold as before.

Hoyt hid by the door and stuffed the coat into the carrier strapped to the backseat of the bicycle while he said, "How am I supposed to get it when I don't have enough money with me?"

Madame Leigh caught up to him and said, "Don't have enough money? Where did the 15 dollars you had with you go?"

Hoyt thought that the money was enough to treat Deirdre's hands.

"Don't mind that."

"What's in the bicycle's carrier? You can't be buying some indecent stuff secretly with the

money, right?" muttered Madame Leigh. She was about to grab the coat from the bicycle.

"That's enough!" The village head stopped them impatiently. "Both of you, go back to the

house. We have guests here. Why are you making a fool of yourselves by clamoring here?"

Madame Leigh pulled Hoyt into the house to deal with him while the village head said in embarrassment, "There are too many family affairs here. Sorry for that."

Declan chuckled and said, "A family is only lively when there are quarrels. There's

nothing to be embarrassed about. On the contrary, your wife is quite enthusiastic and doesn't treat us as outsiders, at the very least."

The village head was rather embarrassed, yet he felt comforted by Declan's remark. He glanced at the indifferent-looking Kyran and went into talking proper business. "There are very few villagers who fish nowadays. The older ones can't stand the cold from the sea wind, so they forage for food on the mountain to sell. However, I believe that they will report to me at once if they find something. They won't keep it for themselves."

"So, you're saying they haven't even found a pair of shoes, huh?"

The village head was slightly hesitant. "They don't really want shoes, anyway. They may throw them away after finding them. I shall ask around again today."

Chapter 481 A Similar Coat

"Sorry, but once you find the original for these designs, please inform us." Declan gave these photos and left with Kyran.

Kyran's gaze turned to the direction of the bicycle. It prompted Declan to ask, "What's wrong?"

He looked away. "Nothing."

He felt hollow. Not having enough rest only exacerbated his unrest-he frequently looked as though he was a soulless husk wearing a pale, lifeless face.

Declan could not watch his friend any longer. "You gotta stop following me around, I think. You've only just recovered, and... now is the critical time to rest up."

"I can't," Kyran replied candidly. Just the thought that Deirdre might have fallen off the cliff and died broke his heart. "I don't know if she's dead or alive! Even if she were dead... Even if she were dead, I would leave only after seeing her lifeless body right in front of me!"

The rising tides would gradually bring any flotsam to the shore, would it not? Even a dead body would end up here one day. He simply needed to wait. If all else failed, he would wait for her corpse.

Declan thought he was hopeless. "So what if you see her body? Are you so sure you won't break down at the sight of it?"

Kyran froze. He said nothing, pulled open the car door, and got inside.

Declan sighed haplessly and drove away.

Hoyt and Madame Leigh's quarrel lasted for quite a while. It was only after he stormed inside his room- which gave her the space to clean up-she wheeled her bicycle into the yard and remembered something. She opened the box.

She expected anything but a woman's coat. Judging from its fabric, she could immediately tell how superior its quality was compared to her 60-dollar whatever-which was already a luxury to her.

She could not help but think about Hoyt's frequent trips to the market. "Is that kid... trying to win someone's heart or something?" she asked aloud and blushed.

Madame Leigh climbed upstairs and softly talked to the village chief, "Honey? You won't believe this. Our son has finally moved on from that incident and decided to try his hand at love again!"

The chief's head was still revolving around the clothes in the photos, so he did not care much about what his wife said. "Pfft, as he should be. How long has it been? What's the point of obsessing over a girl the way he is? It's almost pathetic."

"Jesus, will it kill you to care about our son a little bit more?" Madame Leigh snapped, frustrated. She snatched the pictures away from him and added sourly, "What's so important about these that you'd rather look at them than talk about our son?"

The man frowned. "Give them back. This is more important than you might think. If we find her, we'll get at least 72,000 dollars!"

The amount only fanned Madame Leigh's interest. She examined the photos, and they were all feminine clothes, though one of them... Something about it seemed familiar the longer she stared.

Before she could recognize it, the village head snatched the pictures away and turned away from her on his bed. "You should go to sleep. I'm going to talk with everyone tomorrow," he said. "Tryna prepare breakfast early, okay?"

"Okay."

With that thought still buzzing in her head, she lay down and sank into a slumber.

She got up the next morning to find Hoyt all groomed and ready to leave. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"The market."

"Again?" Madame Leigh questioned, "Why aren't you helping your dad sell his sea products instead? Who are you seeing in the market?"

Hoyt wolfed down an unwarmed slice of bread. "Who would even be interested in me?" he replied

between munches. "I just like looking around. It's nothing you should care about. I'll buy some meat to bring back home if you want."

With that, he rode away.

Madame Leigh's suspicion kept growing. As soon as he finished making breakfast, she hid under the shade of a tree near the village entrance and waited.

Time went by...

She had to wait for a while before the young man finally returned.

Hoyt had failed to notice his mother. He parked his bike around their house and walked away.

Madame Leigh followed him quietly as she wondered about what could drive the young man to be so... energetic. She remembered the coat and, as her suspicion peaked, she opened the box and found it gone.

Chapter 482 Don't Let Her Run!

She hurriedly followed Hoyt without the young man ever catching notice. He seemed almost too taken in by the money in his pocket. He stopped by Mrs. Cox's door.

Hoyt immediately noticed Deirdre, who was drying some herbs outside the door. He paced toward her and greeted her. "Hey, morning!"

She raised her head at the voice. "Mr. Leigh."

Hoyt scratched his head bashfully before producing all of the money from his pocket. He stuffed the bills into her hands. "Here. 300 dollars from selling your coat."

Deirdre took 90 bucks and gave the rest to Hoyt. "Here. You deserve this."

"D-Deserve what?" Hoyt stammered and inhaled sharply. "I didn't do anything to deserve this!"

"No, you help me a lot. You deserve it." Deirdre stuffed the money into his hands. Her tone was sincere. "It was you who helped me with my injuries, and it was you who had to spend four hours these days to buy medicine for me. If it weren't for you, I wouldn't be able to liquefy my coat. I'll give 90 dollars to Mrs. Cox while you hold onto the rest. Think of it as consultation and medicine fees, okay?"

Hoyt was hard-pressed to argue against her, so he accepted it in the end. Still, he was quietly against hoarding the money for his own and plotted to buy some cream for Deirdre's face, which had turned ruddy from the exposure to the sea breeze.

"I... All right, all right."

She smiled. "That's the spirit!"

Her smile was as beautiful and mesmerizing as the sun.

Hoyt could not stop himself from blushing. All he could do was to cast his head down as hard as he could to hide it from happening-exactly as his mother bumped into the scene.

Her son was acting like a shy schoolboy as she stood next to a woman she had never seen before. She looked pretty enough, but the poor thing had quite a few scars that seemed to have not recovered.

'Wait a minute. Scars?'

Madame Leigh's heart skipped a beat. A grim expression shadowed her face.

'Is this not... the young woman... those men were talking about? The one who got lost?'

'The coat belonged to her, did it not? No wonder it looked exactly like the one in the pictures! But how could it have anything to do with Hoyt?'

She turned around and began to head to the village head. Hoyt heard her, turned around, and his face turned pale. After hastily comforting Deirdre, he bolted behind her.

"What are you doing here, Mom!?"

"I should be asking you!" Madame Leigh snapped, incensed.

Realizing belatedly that her volume could alert the woman and cause her to run, she lowered her voice and added, "You know your father is looking for this woman, so why didn't you say anything? The reward, son, is 72,000 dollars! Do you know how much that is? With money like that, we can live in an actual house in a town-a house made of bricks! A girl will finally want to marry you, and that family won't look down on you anymore!"

Hoyt frowned in exasperation. "This isn't about money, Ma! If Miss McKinnon wanted to see them, don't

you think she would have rushed out to do just that already? I'd have happily told Dad about it! But she wanted to hide, Mom. It's obvious she doesn't want to see them! I can't sell her out!"

"Bless your heart, son, you're unbelievable. You can't sell her out?!" Madame Leigh was livid. "They know each other. Otherwise, they wouldn't be looking for her! Any issue they

have between them is between themselves and the Lord. Ain't got nothing to do with us! The money is the only thing worth going after!

"So you watch her and don't let her run! I'll talk to your father, and he'll get those two men now!"

Hoyt grabbed her arm. "Please, Mom, don't..."

Her eyes watered. "D*mnit, son! Did you forget what happened while you were trying to see that girl? Did you forget how much they looked down on you, how much they laughed, how much disdain they had for you!?"

"It was my fault for not giving you a better life or a background you can be proud of. My fault that no girl finds you a man worth marrying. My fault that you have to watch your own sweetheart become someone else's wife. But now all that can change, Hoyt. All that can change this is money! And you're throwing that away!?"

Chapter 483 Who Sold This To You?

Dogged persistence settled onto Hoyt's face. "You mean getting some false glory and fortune in exchange for Miss McKinnon's misery, Mom! I won't be able to live that down! No matter how good it sounds, I don't want an ill-gotten opportunity!"

"You stupid-" Madame Leigh was about to drop some colorful choice word when a thought snuffed it out. Reeling in realization, she turned back to Hoyt with disbelief in her eyes. "Be frank with me. Hoyt Leigh, have you fallen for that young lady?"

The tips of Hoyt's ears turned scarlet. He became flustered-the way one would be when their innermost

secret had been revealed.

A mother would immediately understand her son's character tick, so her disbelief turned into

bewilderment. "Have you lost your marbles, son!? Who do you think you are, and who do you think she is? You can't fall for her!"

Hoyt was quiet. "But I did... I do. Not that you need to worry about anything. I have no thoughts on acting upon my feelings."

He lacked many conventional things, but self-awareness was not one of them. He knew exactly who Deirdre belonged to. It was that handsome, imposing, frigid man yesterday. The kind who would not blink at proposing a reward as high as 72,000 dollars. The kind who drove his luxury car and wore his high- cultured brands and never knew what it meant to stress about money.

Hoyt would never have a chance.

“I just feel bad for her, Mom.”

“Instead of yourself? Son, those men are filthy-damn-rich! How much could she suffer if she lived with them!?”

“Doesn’t matter, Mom. If you care about me as your son, help me keep this a secret from Dad,” muttered Hoyt. “Or else, so help me God, I will run away with Miss McKinnon and never return. I can do as much, and I will! Don’t try me!”

“For the love of God, I can’t deal with you sometimes!” Madame Leigh moaned helplessly. Since she had no other choice, she could only agree. “I can help keep it under the rug for a few days, but once your father knows... You know nothing’s going to stop him.”

“He won’t. He... won’t.”

Kyran snatched up the coat with so much force his knuckles turned white. “Who sold this to you!?”

The saleswoman could not stop blushing at the sight of two good-looking men. “A young man who looked about in his 20s?”

“How does he look like?” Kyran followed up hastily.

The saleswoman tried to concentrate. “He was... kinda dark-skinned and tall. As tall as you two. Maybe 180 cm like that? Came here on a bike.”

Kyran sank into a frowning silence.

Meanwhile, Declan regaled her with a smile. “Did he make any conversation?”

The saleswoman blushed again. “He had no idea how much this coat is worth, I can tell you that! This could have been sold for 15,000 dollars even if it was secondhand, but that young man wanted to sell it

for 150 bucks! 150! I could feel God watching me when I gave him that paltry amount, so I added another 150 in the end. He didn’t talk much, though.”

“I see. Thank you for your help.”

Declan’s smile faded, and he went out of the shop with Kyran, whose features were practically covered with a sheet of ice. “I think I know who sold that coat.”

“Let me guess. The village head’s son?”

“Exactly.” Something stormy was brewing in Kyran’s black eyes. “He was riding a bike with something shoved in the basket when we met, remember?”

Uncovering a clue to further a search would have lightened anyone’s mood, but it somehow only upset Kyran more. “Did he salvage her coat and sell it off, or... is she alive but hiding because she doesn’t want

to see me?”

“It’s the former. Why doesn’t she want to see you? She already promised you she’d live in Germia with you,” Declan replied reassuringly. “Don’t let your head go into unnecessary dark places. I’ll send someone to gather some intel, and we’ll know. Since our young fella isn’t going to tell us the truth, we shouldn’t let him know we’ve set our sight on him.”

A clasp of thunder echoed, followed by a downpour. Deirdre was startled awake from her sleep, and as she listened to the sound of the rain against the roof, she felt strangely troubled.

She climbed out of her bed and headed to the kitchen for a glass of water. That was when she bumped into Mrs. Cox.

Chapter 484 It Wasn’t His Fault

Mrs. Cox was just as surprised to see her. “Aren’t you up early, sweetie? Having trouble sleeping?”

“I just got up. I am feeling a little thirsty.”

“Well, let me get you a glass of warm water. Wait here by the door,” said the kind woman, pouring a glass for her before setting her sight on the pouring rain outside. “Damn, it’s raining again.” She sighed. “The roads are going to be wet and slippery. Straight up a hazard to use.”

Deirdre took a sip. “You should stay at home today, Mrs. Cox. You might get hurt if you go out despite the condition. I’ve got 90 bucks you could us-”

“Oh no. Heck, no. You can’t see well, it’s not easy for you to get a job, and you can’t afford not to have money with you. You can’t buy anything if you don’t have money!” Mrs. Cox protested. “All you’ve been wearing these days are my old clothes. It doesn’t matter if you’re the goddess of beauty herself. These rags are bringing your shine down, sweetie. No, you should go to the market with Hoyt and buy at least two nice outfits for yourself.”

Deirdre’s eyes twinkled. “But I like these clothes. I’m not picky about my outfits. You should hold onto the money, too. Just think of it as funding for our meals.”

Mrs. Cox had no plan to accept it at all, but a new thought popped into her mind. "Hey, wait a minute. What happened to the coat you hung in your room? It's gone!"

"I sold it," Deirdre said placidly.

"You sold it!? Is that where that 90 bucks came from!?" Mrs. Cox gasped in disbelief. "I don't know how much it's worth, but there is no way it's worth only 90 bucks! Have you gone mad?"

Deirdre flashed her teeth. "It was just secondhand junk. Besides, I'm never wearing that thing ever again."

Wearing it would always invite thoughts she did not want-thoughts she wished could just be banished to the depth of her brain. It made her think of the ward, the times she had spent with Kyran, the kiss in the amusement park....

His scent was embedded in every inch of that coat. It was that same scent that caused her mind to go haywire.

Mrs. Cox understood immediately. "It was a gift from your beau, wasn't it, sweetie?"

She did not let Deirdre answer. "What grave sin did he commit to earn his girlfriend's hate? To the point that she doesn't want anything to do with something he gave her?"

Deirdre froze. If Kyran was Brendan all along-then yes! He had committed sins! He had killed her mother! He had sent her, an innocent woman, to prison! He had fabricated an entire identity from the ground up and duped her for his entertainment!

Were none of these counted as sins?

Her heart ached. She flashed Mrs. Cox a mirthless smile.

The woman could tell she was reluctant to dwell on it, so she held her hand. "Hard to take it out of your chest, huh? Well, you don't have to. It was definitely his fault!"

Deirdre stiffened. Then, she laughed. "Are you sure?"

"H*ll yeah, I am!" Mrs. Cox declared firmly. "You are sweet, kind, and a precious little doll! I bet you don't even have a temper, do you? That jerkwad must have done something mighty crappy to upset you like this!"

Deirdre was moved.

"And you know what? He was just a boyfriend! He was no husband yet! So leave that no-good trash to his miserable life and move on. I'm glad he's not hoarding a

sweetheart like you to himself now! In fact... You could give Hoyt a try. He's a good soul, I tell you. He's just... unlucky."

Deirdre caught the subtext and asked, "What happened to him?"

Mrs. Cox sighed. "He had a childhood sweetheart he really liked. They were so close together when they were in school. They even talked about marriage and making a family together. Her father didn't approve of it, so he introduced the girl to some fat cat in his 50s as his mistress or whatever. Poor Hoyt was begging on his knees outside their house for an entire day, but that family just wouldn't open their door to let him in.

"You know why he didn't stay any longer? Because he fell unconscious outside, and his family had to take him away! From then on, Hoyt never looked for love again. Sure, he says he's over it and isn't looking anymore, but I know the truth. He looks down on himself. He thinks he doesn't deserve to be loved." Deirdre had no idea. She frowned slightly. "But none of it was his fault."

Chapter 485 Hang Tight

"Damn straight, but... It's different for him. He directs it all to himself, thinking that if he could just be better somehow, the girl of his love wouldn't have ended up with that fat cat. The more he dwelled on that thought, the more he hung his head and just... couldn't straighten his spine and look ahead no more."

Pity colored Deirdre's eyes.

"Money is the Devil, ain't it? You can do whatever you like when you're rich, but live by your shoestrings if you don't have 'em."

Mrs. Cox continued. "That's why I'm happy to see Hoyt this happy when he helps you. Maybe you won't date each other, but it doesn't matter. What matters is that you brought him out of the shadows. That's the point of these relationships, isn't it? Forgetting the pain of the last one is a blessing. Finding a new person to try again is another."

The rain stopped.

Mrs. Cox went back to sleep while Deirdre sat on the edge of her bed, her eyes blank.

'Try again with a new person, she said.'

That was not what Deirdre had thought back then-until she met Kyran. He was gentle, kind, and attentive. He had broken every wall she had built around her heart.

Any sentiment she had against Brendan had begun to fade-even hate.

She was ready to start over... only to have God reveal that it was a prank all along.

It was a fool's full circle. She had fallen for the same man twice, after all.

She closed her eyes groggily. A while later, she heard sounds, people talking.

Deirdre opened her eyes, put on a coat, and walked toward the living room. There were two people there. One of them was Mrs. Cox, and the other was vague as his features were-Hoyt.

The young man seemed rather flustered to see her. Hanging his head, he greeted, "G-G-Good morning, Miss McKinnon."

Deirdre stared at him absentmindedly and nodded. "Mr. Leigh! Morning."

Mrs. Cox was wearing the widest grin she could muster. "Looks like all of our main characters are here. Let's get the show on the road!"

Deirdre was confused. "Sorry, the what?"

"To the market, sweetie! Ours is a seaside town, and none of your cotton shirts right now can fight against the nipping sea breeze. That's why I asked Hoyt to bring you to the market today for some new clothes."

"New clothes?" Deirdre pulled her coat tightly around her. "I'm good, Mrs. Cox. It can't be a short trip to the market, right? I would rather not impose on Mr. Leigh."

"I-It's not a problem!" The young man sprung at her comment as though he had been meaning to talk for a while and yet had not had the chance. "It's g-getting colder tomorrow, so you need to buy some clothes. You w-won't be able to leave the house otherwise."

"I know what you're wearing now is fine for now, but it won't help you tomorrow," said Mrs. Cox. "It's going to be below zero, missy! Freezing! If you catch a cold or get frostbite, there is no doctor around this part to help you! You'll only way is the market, and that's a whole other round-trip!"

"Huh..." Deirdre mused about it in her head and decided that they were right. Embarrassed, she said, Well, sorry to trouble you, Mr. Leigh."

The tips of Hoyt's ears turned red. "N-Nothing at a-a-all!"

Deirdre did a quick wash-up and got her hair up in a simple bun. She stepped outside the house and into

the sun.

The sweet morning rays bounced off her fair, radiant skin like an aureole. Her scars were healing too, and the beauty she had always been was inching closer to hatch.

Hoyt pushed his bike, saw her, and immediately looked down. "M-Miss McKinnon, there's no car, so... I'm sorry. A bike is all we have here. B-But I'll be as slow and steady as I can, okay? And tell me if it gets too cold."

"Sure thing."

Deirdre climbed into the backseat gingerly. Hoyt set his foot on the pedal and began a slow ride to the market.

The road was rather bumpy. Deirdre held onto his shirt, and as the bike trembled, she fell forward and leaned against his well-toned waist.

Hoyt immediately fumbled his handle and caused the bike to shake even harder than the road would have made it. It took him a little too long to steady his bike again.

Deirdre held her breath. "What was that? Was the road that bumpy?"

"Mm... Mm-hmm!" His answer was oddly muffled. "A lot of rocks around here, Miss McKinnon. Hang tight." "Okay."

She moved both of her hands to his shirt, and Hoyt rode to the market with a face as red as a tomato.

Chapter 486 Hoyt Leigh's Ex-Girlfriend

They finally reached their destination, though neither of them expected a crowd today. The place was so jam-packed that they had to step down from the bike and finish the rest of the journey on foot.

Hoyt could not stop repeating every once in a while, "Please follow me, Miss McKinnon. Don't get lost in the crowd!"

He kept reminding her enough that Deirdre could not stop teasing him. "Heehee. I'm an adult, you know. Not a kid?"

Hoyt turned and caught her gentle smile, and his cheeks burned... again. "I... I didn't mean I meant, you're not familiar with this place, and your eyes aren't very good, so if you get lost, you won't know where

to find me!"

"It's going to be fine. If I get lost, I'll just stand where I am. I know you'll locate me again until you find me."

“T-True.” God, Hoyt felt like he was walking on air.

He sped up his pace a little and led Deirdre to a shop. Parking his bike in its front, he said, “Here you go. Check around and see if there’s anything you like. Just pick it when you find something you want.”

“Okay.” Deirdre pushed open the door and scanned the blurry interior of the shop. She walked near the racks and carefully felt each clothing’s fabric. All of them seemed sturdy enough to weather the cold.

She was about to ask for the size when she heard a woman cry, “Hoyt? It’s really you!”

She raised her head and saw a woman shoving her way through her. Deirdre’s vision made discerning her features impossible, but she could tell the woman was wearing a lot of gilded jewelry. The light bouncing off the edges was practically blinding her.

Hoyt’s face paled. “W-Why are you here?”

“Uh, to buy clothes? And what about you?” The woman turned to Deirdre and examined her. Her initial vigilance phased into contempt. “Oh my God. Your taste just keeps reaching for the bottom of the barrel after you left me. Now you’re actually dating a woman with so many defects?”

Hoyt’s face turned red. He frowned. “Don’t say that about her!”

“Why can’t I?” The woman snapped. “Seriously? You’re getting mad at me because I spoke the truth about your new girl? Jesus!”

Hoyt was in no mood to quarrel. “Come on, Miss McKinnon. Let’s go somewhere else.”

“Hold it right there! Why are you avoiding me? After all these years, we finally met for the first time, and your response is to run? And I thought you were still mad at me, but it turns out you changed your heart and found yourself a new girl after all. God, it’s almost as if you’ve forgotten all about the promise you made! Remember that? You said I’m the only girl you’d ever love!”

Hoyt was at his wit’s end. “Please, stop this. You ended up with someone else, okay? That promise is void.”

“Oh, I get it. You’re sulking!” She laughed. “That’s why you feel so bad about this. Gosh, Hoyt, I have been meaning to explain myself to you, okay? My parents forced me. I’ve always loved you, but you’re just... poorer than us. You left me no choice, but things are different now. Come on, Hoyt. Let’s get back together.”

She shot a smug glare at Deirdre, who remained silent. She could not see very well but knew what was playing out.

Hoyt was stunned. “B-But aren’t you with Mr. Sach now?”

The woman’s eyes twinkled. “Yes, but we haven’t been speaking for a long time now. It’s times like these that make me miss you. I miss the times when we were together. When you would treat me right. So, how about it? We’ll put the past behind and start over again, okay?”

Before Hoyt answered her, Deirdre suddenly spoke airily. “Are you willing to be his wife?”

“What the h*ll?” The woman’s expression darkened, and hostility colored her tone. “Excuse me, who are you supposed to be? Why are you commenting on our business?”

Deirdre smiled. “It’s just a question for clarification. I think Mr. Leight is thinking the same as well. You want to start over again with him, right? So, are you divorced?”

Chapter 487 That’d Be Degrading to You

The woman was doing a crappy job of hiding her lack of confidence. “We’re not, like, speaking anymore!”

“But you didn’t say the two of you are divorced, did you? Why wouldn’t you answer the question?”

The woman’s indignance turned into rage. “Who the f*ck are you? Why are you getting in between our business?”

“No, Miss McKinnon’s completely right.” Hoyt suddenly spoke up. Frigidness had shadowed his face. “Selma, are you and Mr. Sach split?”

Selma could not answer him. As her silence grew, Hoyt’s cold suspicion turned into a scowl undergirded by quiet disappointment. “Now, what? You just want to have it both ways, don’t you? Make me your side- chick, or whatever the h*ll you call it?” 1

“I’m not trying to make you a side-anything!”

“Then explain why you’re asking us to start over when you’re not completely split from Mr. Sach!”

“I just want to be with you, okay?” Selma cried in frustration. Her eyes were red. “Yes, we aren’t divorced, so what? We were supposed to be together! The thing that stopped us was your poverty. My parents wouldn’t let me marry you because you’re poor, so we didn’t!

“Do you really think I’m happy to be some 50-year-old man’s wife!? If only you could be an entrepreneur, industrialist, or...”

H

She burst into frantic tears. Hoyt's indignance and ire slowly subsided into helpless guilt. "Look, I'm sorry I wasn't a better man for you. But all that is in the past now, okay? The only thing we should do now is to look forward and move on."

"You're asking me... to move on? Why, because of her!?" She snapped, exasperated, and trained a finger at Deirdre. "You're unbelievable! Did she charm you with voodoo, or are you that down-bad, huh? You're not honestly thinking I'm anywhere lesser than her, are you!?"

"Enough, Selma!" Hoyt cast his eyes to the floor. "You don't understand. I think... I think we should never see each other again."

Selma showed no sign of backing down or disengaging. She was about to throw another tantrum when Deirdre suddenly broke her own silence. "Excuse me, but where were you when Hoyt was kneeling outside your house that day and night?"

The young woman froze.

"You must have been at home when it happened, right? Maybe even in the living room, watching him scraping his knees outside, waiting and waiting for you to come to see him. You saw him faint from fatigue and didn't even feel anything about it.

Then, when Hoyt finally gave up, you got to marry the wealthy man just as your parents wanted you to. In other words, you're the one who gave up on him, not the other way around. So, why are you pretending that he was the one who abandoned you?"

Selma's expression darkened. "The f*ck do you know!? If it weren't for-"

"For him being poor, you mean?" Deirdre cast her eyes low to the floor. "I get it. His financial status isn't the best. But you know he has the capability to provide you a decent, happy life. It was your greed that killed this relationship. Your insatiable greed. You're the one who wanted to be a rich man's wife, so don't blame it on him at all.

"And now, you feel lonely and ignored. Suddenly, you want him to start an affair with you if it means someone will love you. Don't you see? You're degrading yourself. You're degrading the love between the two of you."

Selma's eyes were beet red. Livid, she raised her hand. "How dare you, b*tch!?"

Hoyt caught her wrist in mid-air.

"Hoyt?"

He took a deep breath. "Don't, Selma. Stop embarrassing yourself already."

“What the hell are you saying?”

“Were you at home? That day when I was outside. Were you?”

Selma’s eyes shifted. “I was locked inside.”

“But then again, while I was lying in the hospital for a week, you never came to see me.”

“I...I wanted to, okay? But... But I...”

She could not even finish her own sentence, so Hoyt said the quiet part aloud for her, “You were afraid that I’d hold onto you and tell you to stay with me? Afraid that I’d hinder your life as a wealthy man’s wife? Was that it?”

Selma’s silence was deafening.

Weariness settled deep into Hoyt’s bones. “Selma, I know how much you went through when you were with me. For that, I’m always thankful. I felt indebted and guilty to the young woman you used to be for falling short of your standards.

“If you’re coming to me for help, and it’s something I can provide, then I’ll do what I can. But you’re asking me to rekindle our past relationship... Then, let’s never see each other again.”

Chapter 488 We Need to Talk, Deirdre

Hoyt’s face was still tense by the time he walked out of the shop. Concerned, Deirdre asked, “You alright?”

He wiped some light sweat off his face and said bashfully, “I’m so sorry, Miss McKinnon. The point was to buy you some clothes, but I ended up dragging you into our drama and made you watch all that... embarrassing stinker.”

“Nonsense,” Deirdre replied reassuringly and gave him a small smile. “There was nothing embarrassing about it. It’s what relationships are like, dramatic and complicated.”

Just like her own. No one would have known the lengths she had gone through for a man-to be willingly used as an impostor for two years, be incarcerated, disfigured, blinded, and lose the child she so wanted to bring to the world.

Her relationship story was the biggest stinker of them all.

“A word of advice, Mr. Leigh,” she said. “Sometimes, blaming yourself for everything that has happened only prevents you from moving on when you should.”

Hoyt blushed and nodded. “R-Right. You’re right.”

She smiled. “Any other clothing shop I can go to?”

“Y-Yes! Of course! This whole street is lined up with clothing stores! I’ll bring you to another one.”

“Alright!”

Deirdre walked beside him until, suddenly, she felt someone watching her. She turned, but her recovering eyesight made it impossible to identify that onlooker.

“Miss McKinnon? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.” She smiled. It must be her oversensitivity acting up again.

They entered a new store where she quickly found a suitable coat for herself. She took it to the counter and immediately tried to foot the bill.

“Er, don’t you want to put it on first?” asked Hoyt.

The saleswoman chimed in. “Yeah, try it on! It’s okay. We like people trying things out. Some of these clothes might look good on their own, but it takes putting them on to really see how well they match you!”

Deirdre was hard-pressed to argue with the saleswoman, so she complied. She took off her coat and passed it to Hoyt. Suddenly, she heard the chime hanging by the entrance ring.

She froze. Her instinct told her that a man was standing two meters away from her. Then, a mechanical voice said, “Come here, Deirdre.”

The voice was so familiar that it seeped into her bones and made her quiver. The interior of the store was warm, yet she felt her limbs chilling exponentially. She saw a completely black, humanoid shape in the distance, and all of her colors were drained out of her face. She shivered.

Kyran showed no sign of anger at her reaction. He shot a hostile glare at Hoyt before patiently typing again, “Hey, over here.”

He showed very good manners, yet she instinctively tugged on Hoyt’s shirt and began to inch behind him. Kyran stepped forward. Before he could grab hold of her, Hoyt shielded the young woman completely. The latter recognized the former. Of course, he was the man who was looking for Deirdre in their village. He was imposing and domineering, and Hoyt’s knees were turning to jelly, but the thought of how pale

and afraid the woman behind him was bolstered his mettle.

“G-Get a clue, m-m-mister! Miss McKinnon doesn’t want to see you!”

Kyran had to swallow the rage the young man had ignited, but he was very well near throwing a tantrum. His fury had been building up since he watched Deirdre and Hoyt walking side-by-side, laughing and chatting with this unforgivable hint of intimacy. He practically had to summon all of his patience to keep his snarling beast of a temper down.

He looked at them calmly and continued to type, “Please, Deirdre, be good and come over here. If you have any opinion or misunderstanding about me, just tell me so I can explain it all to you.”

‘Misunderstanding, he said?’ Deirdre clenched her fists and widened her eyes as hard as she could. She wanted to see him, but all she could see was a blurry, vague mien showing him to be a man. There was no other detail she could glean.

She just... could not unreservedly trust him anymore.

She would not even come close to him.

“Deirdre, we should talk.”

She shook her head at that soulless, mechanical voice. Her pale lips were trembling when she rejected him. “T-There’s nothing to talk about, so please g-g-go back to where you belong.”

Chapter 489 Stop This Charade Already!

“Deirdre.”

Hoyt mustered his courage and interjected, “Didn’t you hear what the lady said? She wants you gone,

mister!”

A patina of steel seemed to form in Kyran’s eyes. He typed, “This is between Deirdre and me. Please don’t meddle in our affairs.”

He managed to put up the exterior of courtesy, but the glare he wore betrayed an unyielding, domineering aura hellbent on making sure nobody could look him in the eyes.

It was a lot for Hoyt—a country bumpkin with zero brush with the rich and powerful—to take. Any little confidence he had was imploding fast, yet he was stubbornly nailed to the floor between Deirdre and Kyran.

“A-A-All I know is that M-Miss McKinnon d-d-doesn’t want to t-talk to you.”

“Ten minutes is all I need, so please step aside,” typed Kyran. He was furious. “Move or be moved.”

Deirdre acutely sensed escalation and finally spoke up. “What do you want, Kyran?”

“First, he should step out.”

Deirdre was familiar with the depth of his brutality and knew better than to drag Hoyt into this chaos. “Mr. Leight, please step out of the store for now,” she said quietly.

“But Miss McKinnon!” he cried out hesitantly.

“It’s going to be alright. You’ll stay outside for me, okay? He’s not... He’s not going to hurt me.”

Hoyt knew he did not have much power or authority to stay. Gritting his teeth, he finally left.

Deirdre waited for Hoyt to go, did her best to battle her fear, and gazed straight ahead at the man. “What do you want now?”

“Nothing,” typed Kyran and gazed softly into her. “I just want to be by your side, remember? I promised you that I’d take you to Germia, and I’ve been keeping those tickets with me this whole time.

“You want to touch them now? I even bought us a house. All it needs is you, pushing the door wide open, and it is ours forever. So why... Why didn’t you tell me you were okay when you survived? Or do you resent me because I didn’t come to save you first thing?”

“Shut up!” shouted Deirdre, clapping her hands on her ears as hard as she could, shutting her eyes in a painful wince. “Stop... Stop all of this... Bullsh*t pretension, stop it, Kyran!

“No, that’s not your name. Your real name is Brendan Brighthall! How long do you want to fool me, Brendan? How much longer do you want this charade to go on?!”

Kyran frowned.

Declan came just in time. "Miss McKinnon! Did you just mistake Kyran for Brendan again? Kyran is Kyran. He's not Brendan!"

Deirdre laughed mirthlessly. "Good timing, Mr. King! I was about to ask you. What's your deal with Brendan, huh?"

When she heard no answer, she continued. "The two of you have been 'brothers from another mother' since you were kids, right? So why didn't you say that? You were in the same hospital as he was, so why didn't you check him out? When Kyran and Brendan had surgery on the same day, why didn't you show

any reaction? What kind of 'best friend' would treat their friend like that, no matter how long time has passed? I don't believe it! What's your answer?!"

Deirdre felt her heart bleeding. "You don't even have to say a word because I know why. Kyran Reed... is Brendan Brighthall!" she snarled, enunciating every word as though she was pushing the sound off her locked jaw.

"You're his sidekick, a second lead in this sick reality show. They were the same person all along, which is why you never needed to check on him when he was sick or undergoing surgery. I was the only one who was in the dark this whole time! I have been the punchline this whole time!"

"Miss McKinnon!" Declan took a deep breath. "Look, I don't know who told you about my past with Brendan, but I admit, I should have explained it to you. I'm sorry I hid it from you, and yes, we were friends. We used to be good friends, but that was before I returned to Eastgene.

"Not every friendship lasts forever, right? And ours crashed and burned about 6 or 7 years ago. His company improved, and the man himself became crueler and crueler. I couldn't stand how he conducted himself and his business anymore. That was especially since his companies started working with my brother more than he did with mine. In the end, we stopped talking and went our separate ways."

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Declan chuckled self-deprecatingly. "It was more than just 'not talking.' We give each other stink eyes when we see each other, too. So, why would I care about someone who hates my guts? Why would I eagerly visit him? Why would I even tell you we knew each other as if it was something I should be proud

of?"

Deirdre shook her head. She was not going to let herself be duped anymore.

Kyran extended his hand toward her, and she slapped it away. “How about the fact that there isn’t a guy called Kyran Reed in Room 1106? What about that?”

Kyran stared at the hand she rejected, his expression darkening. He typed on his phone, and the mechanical voice said, “Because I’m trying to keep a low profile.”

“What?” She was perplexed.

Declan gave a mirthless laugh. “It’s because of me. My brother’s an irritatingly exacting man. He makes sure I can never, ever surpass him in anything, so any cooperation or work I have with Kyran is done in

secret.

“My brother doesn’t even know Kyran has returned from Germia, so naturally, I am not going to let my brother catch on. That’s why I had to register your name as the patient instead.”

Deirdre’s lips trembled. ‘Is that it?’

Kyran stepped forward slowly, and she backed away as though she sensed it. “Don’t you get one step closer!”

Her instinctive defensiveness made Kyran’s face turn pale. Nevertheless, he ignored her and held her hand softly.

Deirdre felt a wave of sentimentality gushing into her chest. She tried to struggle out of his hand, yelling, “Don’t touch me!”

Kyran gently lifted her fingertip and let it graze his face. “Deirdre, you want to know who I am, Touch me.”

don’t you?

Deirdre widened her eyes. He was so close to her, yet it was as if she was peeking through a fog. She could not see. Her fingertip trembled.

She shut her eyes and allowed herself to touch the man’s features-his cheeks, nose, forehead... The more she traced, the faster her heart raced in shock.

‘Not Brendan. This is not Brendan’s face...

‘The features are wrong... Or rather, they are of the wrong shapes and places. They are just... different from Brendan’s.’

A tear rolled down her cheek. ‘So, he... is not Brendan, after all.’

She could not be sure of it. She had been losing so many nights of sleep just to accept this cruel reality, and now she had to brace another topsy-turvy twist again!?

It was then that she heard the TV. “Now breaking: Brendan Brighthall has returned to Neve by December 7th late evening and is now putting out a statement regarding his health. Here he is, speaking to us live.”

There was a commotion and then the sound of a reporter. “Mr. Brighthall, why did you leave Neve to recover? What are your comments on the allegation of you avoiding someone?”

“When is the engagement party between Miss McKinsey and you?”

“There are rumors regarding how poor your health is. Are those rumors true? Is it true that you’re basically holding yourself by a thread?”

“Mr. Brighthall, are we witnessing the fall of the Brighthall empire?”

Their relentless questions suddenly ceased.

The heavy footsteps-no doubt from the man of the hour-stopped, and Deirdre heard that dreaded voice she would avoid to the edge of the Earth. “I’ll address the last question about the Brighthall Group’s future. only once. Rather than dreaming about the day it crumbles, I think you should wait for the sun to fall down on Earth. Would have made better live entertainment, too.”

Deirdre’s expression froze. She turned mechanically to the saleswoman and asked, “What date is today?”

The saleswoman had become the unwitting witness to the entire ordeal, which gave her quite the fright. Still, she dutifully answered, “December 7th?”

This was a live broadcast, right? Unless Brendan could somehow make a copy of himself or something, how was he supposed to be here with her while simultaneously being there at Neve?

“Do you believe me now, Deirdre?” typed Kyran. “Do you believe me when I tell you I’m not the man you hate?”

Deirdre’s eyes were wide. She thinned her lips. She could not say a word.