

The Epic BD 261

Chapter 261 Seeking Help

"Ms. Warren, I must say you're braver than I gave you credit for Xanthe caid with an indifferent smile. "but let me tell you this quality alone won't secure your place in the Russell family"

She took a tissue from her bag and meticulously wiped her fingers clean, one by one, before discarding it in the trash bin "We're likely to cross paths often in the future I wish you all the best in life."

Josie had anticipated Xanthe's anger, but instead, she remained calm and composed, adding to Josie's mounting pressure

In response, Josie mustered a smile and said. "Happy New Year to you!"

Xanthe turned and walked away. Just as she was about to enter the car, she glanced back and said. "You know what Dexter told me yesterday at the family estate?"

Confused, Josie looked at her with a puzzled expression.

Xanthe smiled again. "Never mind, it's probably best if you don't know. Knowing would only make you sad"

At nightfall, Dexter returned home, looking a bit dusty. He spotted Josie sitting on the sofa, lost in her thoughts. "Something bothering you today?" He asked.

Josie glanced up and sighed. "Your mom came to me earlier."

Dexter paused, his expression revealing no surprises. "What did she say?"

"She mentioned how you owe me and another girl, and she hopes I'll be the one to call for divorce."

A smirk formed on his lips as he listened. "Don't let her words get to you."

Knowing Xanthe's true nature, Josie didn't take it to heart, but she couldn't shake off the pressure. She sat up and held onto Dexter's waist. "Dexter, if the time comes and you have to choose, would you choose me again?"

Her intuition told her not to ask this question, but she couldn't resist prying.

Dexter allowed Josie to cling onto him, placing his hand gently on her head as he reassured her, "I would."

Despite hearing the answer she wanted, Josie didn't feel the expected joy. It felt as though his response wasn't entirely genuine.

She smiled and looked up. "What did you talk about with your mother for so long yesterday?"

The man motioned for her to help him loosen his tie, and she skillfully obliged.

"She wants me to help her return to the domestic market."

So, Xanthe had her own ventures to take care of as well.

“Can’t she do it herself?”

Dexter sneered mockingly. “If she could, why would she come back to me? I’m probably the last person she wants to see.”

Josie’s heart softened. She could sense that this man had yearned, or maybe still yearned, for a mother’s love. It must have been tough for him to endure such treatment from his biological mother.

The holiday whizzed by, and as work resumed after the New Year, Josie received the first news of the year. Kevan had been transferred to another branch!

Their colleagues were preoccupied with fervent discussion on Kevan’s transfer, “He’s a freshy, and getting transferred to a branch for regularization is a big deal. Not many of us have had that chance.”

Josie glanced at the transfer order. Kevan had been moved to a branch in the neighboring city of Rivonia. This meant he was even farther away from his hometown.

As a seasoned employee at the company, she understood the implications. It was presented as a promotion, but at best, it was just a lateral move. Although he was being regularized, the resources at the branch couldn’t compare to those at the headquarters.

“Ms. Warren, thank you for caring for me these past few days. If you ever visit Rivodia, I’ll treat you to dinner,” Kevan said, bidding farewell to Josie, holding onto his few belongings with a faintly bitter smile.

Josie felt a sense of unease. “I’m sorry, I didn’t expect such an arrangement from the higher-ups. Have you thought about quitting and finding another design company? I believe in your abilities.”

“Ms. Warren, what are you saying? This is already the best opportunity available to me. Even though Rivodia is far, the salary is high. I have no complaints.”

Chapter 262 It Had to Do With Her

Kevan had a lean frame, and his youthful eyes shone with admiration when he looked at her.

But Kevan knew he had to stop here.

She didn’t know what to say. Josie’s heart sank as he walked away, his shoulders slumped in despair.

He was a passionate employee but was forced to leave under unfair circumstances. She felt bad for him.

Alice sighed as she saw Josie’s downcast eyes. “Don’t feel bad,” she said. “This has nothing to do with you.”

Does it really have nothing to do with me? Josie wasn’t sure what to believe.

Kevan was chosen for the new department even though other employees were more suited for the role. Josie couldn’t help but feel that the decision was fishy.

If only she didn’t watch the movie with Kevan that time.

She was lost in thought when she felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned around to see one of the employees standing there, holding a stack of files. “Ms. Warren, there’s a meeting on the top floor at

three thirty in the afternoon. Mr. Russell will be hosting the event personally. Remember to be there on time!"

Josie's eyes widened in shock as her words registered. She had totally forgotten about the event.

As she mulled over her thoughts, the employee hurried away to inform someone else about the event.

The Russell Group was generally fast and efficient in their pace of work, which made the design department under Josie's leadership seem sluggish in comparison.

The heads of each department were already in the meeting room by the scheduled time. They were seated at their computers, looking serious and professional

Dexter wore a white sweater. He looked exhausted and disheveled as if he had rushed over from another appointment in the cold weather.

"Mr. Russell."

He nodded in greeting, opened his file, and tapped his pen on the table. "Let's get started," he said, his voice strong and confident.

He balled his fist against his lips and coughed into it, muffling the sound. Josie had a feeling that he was coming down with a cold.

Everyone's eyes were on him. He had a commanding presence that made it impossible to ignore.
him.

Josie only knew how busy he was after she got closer to him. She had seen how packed his schedule was. He spent most of his time traveling from one point to another. The total distance he traveled for his appointments would most probably be the same as the circumference of the earth.

It had been a week since she had last seen him.

However, he didn't notice her in the room.

It Had to Do With Her

She sat in the corner of the room, doodling absently on a piece of paper.

A man in his forties leaned in close to her and spoke in a low voice, his tone filled with worry. "How did your team do this month? We didn't meet our target, and Mr. Russell didn't look like he was in a good mood. I think we're in for a lot of trouble..."

The man still had more to say, but his voice caught in his throat when he noticed the drawing on Josie's paper. His pitch rose as he asked, "What are you doing?"

He leaned in closer to get a better look. It was a lifelike drawing of a pig.

He was flabbergasted by what he saw.

Josie glanced up at him; her mouth gaped slightly when her attention was brought back to the meeting.

She then stared at the man sitting at the head of the table. "How do you know he's not in a good mood?" Josie asked. "According to the rumors, he has great news to share soon."

His eyes widened in surprise as he gave her a thumbs up.

Josie was dumbfounded by his reaction.

She felt a pressuring stare in her direction, and her smile faltered as she looked up to see Dexter staring at

her.

His lips tightened into a straight line before turning away.

A short while later, the man beside Josie was called to update the progress of his work. As he was speaking, Dexter interjected, his voice stern, "Why haven't you resolved it yet? It's been a month."

Chapter 263 Taking Over the Project

An uncomfortable air of silence swept through the room.

The person reporting was visibly shaken. His eyes were glassy and red, and it looked as if he was about to

cry.

"The government plans to acquire the land to build a new park in Althem City. While the development ostensibly benefits the city, the government's involvement has complicated things more than expected."

The Russell Group acquired a large piece of land to build new villas, but the government wanted to reclaim it at a lower price. This put their plans at a standstill, as it was difficult to stand up against an official government project.

A heavy silence hung in the air as everyone in the meeting room contemplated the challenging project ahead.

Dexter's face darkened, and his eyes narrowed into a cold glare. "Have you found the residents?"

"Yes, but they aren't willing to compromise."

While selling the land at a lower price would have helped improve their reputation for collaborating with the government, the Russell Group hadn't yet fully acquired the land. This was the critical problem.

Several households weren't willing to move.

Josie raised her hand tentatively and spoke up, "Our team hasn't received any new projects in a while. Could we take on this one?"

The silence was thick and oppressive.

All eyes were on Josie as she commanded the room with her unexpected suggestion.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread...

Dexter raised his eyebrows in disbelief. "Your team?"

Josie was not happy with the way he doubted her abilities. She capped her pen and spoke with determination. "Since the project has already been delayed by a month, there's no harm in letting us take

over."

Dexter was taken aback by her sudden change in demeanor.

The meeting ended with a satisfactory outcome. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief as Dexter turned his attention to Josic.

The man beside Josie had tears welling in his eyes as a relieved smile formed on his face, "I'll send you the details very soon."

Josie's eyes were drawn to the white silhouette of his back, standing tall and proud. He exuded an air of resoluteness and confidence.

Within an hour, the news of Josie's bravery spread like wildfire throughout the office. Employees from all

Taking Over the Project

levels talked about her courage in standing up to the CEO,

Words of Josie's drawing of a pig also circulated quickly. Alice was stunned when she found out what happened. "Do you know what you've done?"

Josie and Alice planned to visit the residents unwilling to sell their homes.

Frustrated by the additional workload, she asked, "Jo, why did you do this?"

"For the money, she answered without any hesitation.

Alice met Josie's gaze with disdain, rolling her eyes as she did so.

Most of the houses on the acquired land had already been demolished, leaving the wreckage behind covered by layers of snow. The residents gathered together when they heard that people from the Russell Group would be there.

Josie's assistant handled the discussion with the residents while she observed the houses in the area. She noticed that they were all in a terrible state.

Still, they clung to the small piece of land, hoping for more benefits.

Her assistant reported that the amount compensated was already more than generous.

Despite their humble status, they demanded an exorbitant amount of compensation in an unyielding and ungracious manner.

After a short moment, her assistant's eyes flashed red with anger, frustrated by their rude attitude. "Their eyes are bigger than their belly!" she exclaimed.

Josie held her assistant back and inquired, "How much do you want?"

They told her their desired amount.

At that moment, Josie felt pity for Dexter, who had to sacrifice a large amount of money to acquire the land from the unreasonable residents, only to turn it over to the government without making any profit.

He was facing a significant financial setback due to this project.

The residents were unwavering in their demands, clearly having discussed their position beforehand.

Josie stared at the residents with a collected and calm expression, her hands in her pocket. "We can pay you this much," she finally said.

Chapter 264 Hitting a Wall

Her voice cut through the hostile air in the room like a bell. "You can't stop us from demolishing your homes," she said. "We'll wire the compensation as promised. So, what are you going to do? Sue us?"

"We have legally acquired this land and paid the agreed price. Is it really worth it to continue this dispute?"

Her eyes scanned the room with sharp intensity. "My father is of a similar age, so I understand your concerns. I would love to receive as much as possible, but I would never sacrifice my dignity for money."

Her voice was laced with exasperation as she berated their behavior.

Josie took a deep breath, her face growing grim. "This is our final offer. We are willing to negotiate on the rates, but we will not be flexible if you are unwilling to compromise."

The residents were taken aback by Josie's bluntness. Their expressions hardened as they listened to her ultimatums.

A man stepped out of the shadows and shoved Josie. "Don't listen to her!" he shouted. "She's just trying to trick us! Look at her! She's wearing expensive clothes! She's not one of us!"

The man shoved Josie with such force that she almost lost her balance. She was wearing heels, making it difficult to keep her footing. She stumbled backward, and for a moment, it looked like she was going to fall into the deep hole behind her that the excavator had dug.

Alice cried out, "Jo!" and reached out to catch Josie just before she fell.

Josie's face turned ashen pale as she looked behind her in shock..

She felt a sharp pain in her shoulder blades.

The man who had shoved her was also stunned.

Josie let out a deep sigh and shook her head. "Let's end it here," she said, defeated.

Everyone else sighed in relief. The man who had shoved Josie smirked. "I told you she was only pretending!" he said.

Josie's rage boiled over. She stopped in her tracks and glared at the man. She wanted to throw a brick at him but knew it would only worsen things.

"What do you want to do? Hit me?" he shouted. The man's arrogance and insolence were baffling.

Alice immediately stepped in to defuse the situation. "Don't get riled up," she said and continued, "you've misunderstood our intentions."

Josie removed her coat and examined the bruises on her arms and shoulders as she got into the car.

Alice waited outside. "I told you that the people here are as stubborn as mules," she said. "You'd get a heart attack from trying to convince them otherwise."

The news of what had happened with the residents spread quickly within the company. Everyone knew about it before she even returned to the Russell Group.

Hitting a Wall

When she returned to the office, her subordinate's concerned voice stopped her in her tracks. "Ms. Warren, are you alright?"

Her face grew grimmer with each passing second as she mulled over what had happened. Her subordinate's question was met with a strained nod, and she quickly made her way to the elevator. She jabbed the button for the top floor, and the doors snapped shut behind her.

She had already prepared the proposal for Dexter to approve. It would force the demolition of the houses

in that area.

The secretary nodded at Josie with a knowing smile.

Josie suddenly remembered that Ivy hadn't been around lately. "Ms. Moore, hasn't Ms. Miller returned to work? I haven't seen her in a while."

"Mr. Russell has encouraged Ms. Miller to take some time off," Ms. Moore explained to Josie. "she's been working tirelessly for the past few years, and he thinks she needs a break."

A capitalist like Dexter wouldn't hold such noble intentions. Josie furrowed her brows as she guessed that something unusual must have happened.

She raised her hand to knock on his door but paused. She took a deep breath and let it out slowly. She knew that talking to him would only make her angry.

She leaned her head to the side to try and take a peek at what he was doing inside, but the curtains were drawn. I'll think of a way when I'm back home.

When she turned around, she bumped into someone's cold, hard chest. "Go inside if you're curious," the man said in a deep, composed voice.

Chapter 265 Holding a Grudge

Josie felt a sharp pain in her head as she bumped into Mr. Russell. She stumbled back, but she quickly regained her composure. Josie looked up at him, her eyes watering from the pain. "Mr. Russell," she greeted him indifferently.

Dexter held a cup of coffee in his hands. His knuckles were red and chapped from the cold outside

He wore a black windbreaker that hugged his tall frame. He had the kind of figure that would turn heads wherever he went. If he walked down the street, he would be sure to catch the attention of many admirers.

Dexter didn't look into her eyes. He pushed the door behind her and uttered coldly, "Come in if you have something to say."

Josie hesitated at her spot, unsure if she should follow him inside. She tightened her grip on the proposal, mulling over her thoughts.

He paused his footsteps and looked over at her with a scornful stare.

"I'll only give you ten minutes."

Josie had no choice but to follow behind him.

Dexter was flipping through a newly printed document as the scent of the ink spread through the room.

Just minutes before, Josie stormed into her office, still enraged by the events that had unfolded at the construction site. She had been running all the way back and was starting to let out a sweat. She tossed her scarf aside and marched up to his office on the top floor, clutching the proposal in her hand.

Her bare neckline was exposed, her skin pale and smooth as the snow outside. Her deep, dark eyes shone with intelligence and wit. She looked breathtakingly stunning. However, she had a bruise on her collarbone due to the incident that happened earlier.

Dexter placed the proposal on his desk. "The government will only be using this land two months from now on. I suggest you continue to persuade the residents while it's still winter," he said, dismissing her proposal.

He had flatly rejected her proposal.

Josie stood in the spotless office, staring at the untainted man before her. The muscles in her face tightened, and her fists were clenched so hard they left marks on her palms.

She raised her eyebrows, and Dexter braced himself for her to lose her temper. But instead, she said icily, "Alright. I'll go there a few more times."

She knew that forcing the demolition would be a risky move. If anyone were harmed, the Russell Group would face serious consequences.

She swept out of the room, leaving the proposal behind.

Dexter's deep, gravelly voice rumbled in his chest as he spoke, "They'd do anything for the right price. If this route doesn't work, try approaching their associates."

Josie paused and turned around, her eyes narrowing as she took in the man who had picked up his cup and was leisurely sipping on his coffee. He seemed completely unfazed by the situation

"It's my fault. I should have learned those tricks from Mr. Russell sooner, she scoffed, an icy stare piercing into his figure.

Her words dripped with venom and frustration.

He didn't even glance up at her. The fluctuating figures on his computer were far more interesting.

There was no point arguing with him.

Josie regretted not dumping the coffee on his face and taking a picture to humiliate him.

They were both on edge when it came to work matters. Neither of them was willing to back down.

Josie still held a grudge against him because of Kevan.

Dexter knew why she acted this way, but he didn't say anything.

He took out a document and passed it to her. "Wyatt is coming next month. You'll be in charge of welcoming him."

Josie's eyes blinked in incredulity at the sudden announcement. Her eyebrows furrowed as she asked, "This early?"

Only at that moment did they radiate the familiarity of a married couple. Dexter raised his eyebrows. "Is it too difficult for you?"

Josie glared at him. "Why would it be difficult? He's Mr. Russell's family member. I'll make sure he is well taken care of."

She turned on her heel and walked away, leaving Dexter with a wide grin on his face. He watched her go, his expression a mixture of affection and bafflement.

Chapter 266 You Owe Me a Favor

Dexter gave a presentation on the research being carried out by the Russell Group to a packed function room of media personnel and company executives.

With free time on her hands, Josie accompanied Alice to the thirty-second floor of the building to watch the event.

She saw many familiar faces there.

Among the crowds, she spotted the main character of the day. Dexter, a man with a respectable and noble demeanor, stood out from the rest. His eyes were sharp and watchful, and the corner of his lips curled up in a forceful smile.

"Have you seen the rumors about Mr. Russell living together with a woman? Remember? The one that looks like you? I'm so jealous of her. What does it feel like to be loved and cared for by Dexter Russell?"

Josie felt a wave of unease wash over her. Loved and cared for? Not by him. He only knew how to torture her.

Josie watched from the sidelines as Dexter confidently answered the media's questions. He used highly professional language to highlight his intelligence and wit as he stood under the spotlight.

Dexter's outstanding presentation had Josie spellbound. She was brought back to reality by the thunderous applause of the crowd. She clapped along with them, a corner of her lips lifting in a smile of admiration.

As he finished his presentation, Dexter glanced around the room and caught sight of Josie standing in the

corner.

His eyes

widened in disbelief, but he quickly regained his composure, knowing that the crowd was watching him.

After a short moment, Josie felt a buzz from her handphone. You're not allowed to drink!

Upon receiving the text, Josie switched her red wine to a cup of orange juice.

Josie wandered aimlessly around the room, her mind elsewhere. She noticed several of the executives. Dexter introduced to her at the last event they attended together.

As she passed by, the executives locked eyes with her and smiled respectfully. They were unable to greet her personally, but they raised their glasses in a silent toast.

Josie's phone buzzed again. She glanced down at the screen and saw a text message from Dexter: 'Don't go too far. I'll pick you up after the event.'

Josie typed back, 'Alright.'

On the other end of the line, Dexter's lips curled into a warm smile as he imagined incurring Josie's irritation.

Indeed, Josie's face was a mask of disdain. Arnold had noticed her knitted eyebrows from across the room.

He was captivated by her commanding presence in the crowd.

He walked over and sat down at her table. "What a coincidence!"

Josie was startled to see him here. "This is the Russell Group"

"I know," he said with a mischievous grin. "you've become even more beautiful than I remembered"

Josie rolled her eyes at Arnold. "What are you doing here?" she asked, her voice dripping with contempt.

"Josic, don't be such a party pooper," Arnold slurred as he loosened his tie.

Josie lifted the corner of her lips into a knowing smile as she called for the server. "I don't think I'm the type to spoil the mood," she said. "What can I get you to drink? My treat."

Arnold ordered the most expensive drink on the menu. Josie maintained her composure.

He felt a sense of awe and wonder as he gazed into her pure and profound features.

"Dexter Russell is personally presenting today. With every prominent figure in the industry in attendance. at the Russell Group event, I couldn't miss out."

Josie decided not to pry further, but Arnold's behavior became increasingly mysterious. "Since you came to watch my husband's presentation today," she said, "doesn't that mean you owe me a favor?"

How did she come up with this idea? Arnold's curiosity was piqued as he asked, "What do you want?"

"You could tell me why Xanthe returned to the country."

"Didn't your husband tell you why?" he scoffed.

Chapter 267 Making Her Happy

Josie was taken aback by his condescending tone. She felt her voice catch in her throat but forced herself to remain collected. "Are you going to tell me or not?" she asked.

The wine arrived at the table. "Are you threatening me?" he asked, pursing his lips.

Josie didn't know how to reply. She was struggling to understand his behavior. At times, he was easygoing. But other times, he was cold and distant. She took a deep breath and said, "It doesn't matter if you don't feel like telling me. Who knows? I might not even be interested to know anymore by the time you feel like telling me, Mr. Carter."

Her witty attitude made it hard for anyone to get mad at her.

Arnold placed his glass on the table and leaned forward. "What happened to your neck?" he asked, his eyes narrowing.

She wore an off-the-shoulder top that exposed her rosy, wind-chapped shoulders.

"I went to battle." Josie wasn't interested in continuing this conversation.

"Did you win?"

Josie stared scornfully at Arnold. "Mr. Carter, I suggest you focus on drinking your overpriced wine," she commented.

Arnold smirked at her. He then turned to the man who had just opened the door, his lips curling into a knowing smile.

"Arnold, I've been looking for you everywhere. Turns out you've been hiding here this whole time."

His voice sent a shiver down Josie's spine. She didn't dare to turn her head around.

Arnold wasn't surprised to see him. He leaned back in his chair and said, "Your speech was a hit. There was no room for me to join in the crowd. Luckily, Mrs. Russell was kind enough to buy me a drink."

“Really?” Dexter leaned closer to Josie and wrapped his arms around her shoulders. His stare was cold and aloof. “That’s generous of her.”

Josie tilted her head and peeked at Dexter’s face. “I thought I would accompany Mr. Carter,” she said. “He seemed bored.”

She wanted to dispel his suspicions about her relationship with Arnold, fearing that he would get angry again if he thought she was still involved with him.

Dexter smiled at her. “You did great.”

“Mrs. Russell sure knows how to make me happy,” Arnold commented, staring at Dexter with a smile. “Everyone was worried that the sudden change in the Russell Group’s stock market trends would be disastrous, but you proved us wrong. Dexter, you did a fantastic job!”

Dexter lifted his glass of dry red wine and commented, “I remember Arnold doesn’t like this kind of wine. It doesn’t suit you.”

“I love it now,” Arnold replied with a wry smile. “It’s funny. I thought the Russell Group would never get involved in the e-commerce business, but you eventually proved me wrong. Isn’t that right?”

Josie sensed the underlying meaning of Arnold’s comment and was startled by the revelation. The Russell Group is entering the e-commerce business? She had never heard of such a thing before.

He got up from his seat and whispered to Dexter, “I feel sorry for you. Why do you care about him?” before leaving.

He said what he needed to and left without turning around.

Josie overheard Arnold’s last words and turned towards Dexter, probing, “What did Arnold mean?”

Dexter stared at the glass of wine resting on the table, his heart pounding and his eyes twitching.

As he caught a whiff of her scent, with no intention of answering her directly, he veered off-topic and inquired, “Did you pick out your outfit today?”

It was a mesmerizing fit for her.

Josie furrowed her brows.

He put his coat on her shoulders without delay to keep her warm. He embraced her tightly as the warmth enveloped her body. Not a trace of alcohol lingered on her breath.

“Why didn’t you tell me you’d be here?”

Josie assisted him in loosening his tie. He asked, “Why bother informing you? I’m just an ordinary employee here to see the match among the top executives.”

Dexter held onto her slender fingers and asked, “What do you think about my presentation?”

Josie responded indifferently, “I guess you could say you’re a big fish in a small pond.”

Chapter 268 Taking a Stroll at Night

She was still holding a grudge against him.

Dexter chuckled and held her firmly. "Let's go home," he said.

Josie had not had a drop of alcohol, but Dexter had consumed his fair share.

When they were nearing their home, Dexter requested that the driver pull over the car. "Follow me for a short walk," he requested.

Josie was wearing heels, but Dexter had brought an extra pair of sneakers in the car. He helped her into her sneakers, and then they stepped out into the night.

It was already eleven o'clock at night, and the moon was shining brightly overhead.

The moonlight was so bright that it shone on the road, revealing the layer of frost that had formed on the pavement. The shadows of their locked hands were long and distorted.

He felt the discomfort in his chest lift with the wind. The sound of the cars and the busyness of his daily endeavors were replaced by the sound of the wind in the trees. He felt calm and at peace.

Many prominent households resided in this affluent neighborhood. Sports cars frequently drove by, carrying young adults. One of them was smoking a cigarette, her hair blowing in the wind. She shouted bravely to Dexter, "Hey, you look handsome!"

She looked barely out of her teens. "Stop your nonsense, the boy beside her said sternly as he pulled her back.

Dexter's lips curved into a smile, but it was met with an annoyed glare from Josie. "Is she pretty?"

His smile widened as he replied, "Not as pretty as you."

Josie didn't pry into Dexter's troubles, but she could tell something was weighing on his mind. She suspected it had something to do with Xanthe, but he refused to talk about it.

She held his hands tightly and followed him. "Dexter Russell, am I your wife?"

He looked down at her and smiled. "Of course," he replied.

The corner of her lips lifted into a warm smile. "That's right," she said. "At least on our marriage certificate, we're officially married. So no matter what's going on, you can share it with me. I won't tell anyone else."

Her smile was warm and genuine, and her eyes shone in the streetlight.

Dexter took a deep breath and held her hands tightly. "I have to help her," he said.

Josie understood what Dexter meant, and she wasn't against his idea. "I understand," she said.

They spotted the same car they saw earlier on the side of the road with burst tires.

The two young adults appeared relaxed as they sat by the road, humming along to songs without any sense of urgency.

Taking a Stroll at Night

The corner of Josie's eyes crinkled as she observed their carefree behavior.

The girl recognized them. She patted the dust from her pants and took out a cigarette. She offered it to Dexter, "Handsome, do you know how to fix a car?" she asked.

Dexter didn't take the cigarette. He folded his sleeves and crouched down next to the car. "Did your car break down?" he asked.

The driver following behind them stopped the car when he noticed his boss signaling him to get down from the car.

"Give them a hand," he instructed.

The driver brought out a box of tools from the trunk of the car.

The girl's eyes were filled with admiration and awe. "Wow, handsome," she said. "Do you have a girlfriend? Or a boyfriend?"

The driver staggered as he was startled by her comment.

Josie understood what she meant and leaned in to whisper in Dexter's ear. "She's implying that you wouldn't be into girls if you're so good-looking."

Dexter wasn't satisfied with her assumption. He lifted his hands, which were still holding Josie's, and announced proudly, "She's my wife."

A strange thud hit Josie's heart as he announced his relationship with Josie so openly in front of a stranger. It felt surprisingly good to have their relationship acknowledged like this.

The girl's eyes instantly lost their glint. She pouted, discontented, "Why are you showing off your relationship in front of me?"

After a while, she lifted her eyes and looked suspiciously at Dexter. "You look familiar."

A ringing silence surrounded the night.

The girl racked her brain, trying to figure out where she had seen him before. She had seen his face before but couldn't quite place it. A peaceful silence filled the air as the girl pondered.

Suddenly a call from Josie's phone disturbed the silence. It was Matthew.

Josie hesitated for a moment, unsure of whether to answer the call. "Answer it," Dexter said in a calm voice.

Josie took a deep breath and answered the phone. "Hello, Matt," she said.

There was a moment of silence before Matthew spoke, "Josie, I called to see if you've made a decision about Mr. Warren," he said. "I've settled everything here, and I'm ready to take him back to the hospital if that's what you want."

Paul's condition had been improving steadily in Mason Garden. Josie and Dexter had discussed this possibility earlier and decided to give Paul a little more time to recover at Mason Garden.

Chapter 269 Lovey-Dovey

"Matt, my father's condition has been gradually improving. I don't think I'll be sending him to the hospital. Thank you for looking out for us."

Her tone was polite but distant. Matthew could sense that she was pulling away from him.

"Alright. Are you facing any problems with him?"

The "him" he referred to was obvious. He was asking about the man standing next to her, the man who had been staring at her with undisguised suspicion.

"No, Matt. It's my own decision."

Matthew didn't press the issue. He could tell that she didn't want to talk about it. Soon after, he replied, "Be safe and take care of yourself. Good night."

He spoke warmly to her.

"Good night."

Josie hung up the phone and met Dexter's suspicious stare. It was a simple conversation with her friend, but she felt guilty nonetheless.

"Are you always this sweet with your friends?" he asked, his voice laced with jealousy.

Josie wanted to run away. "It only shows how good I am at socializing," she said, trying to sound nonchalant.

She took two steps away from him, but he grabbed her arm and pulled her back into his embrace.

Josie tried to free herself, but he was too strong. "There are people around," she whispered, her cheeks burning with embarrassment.

The girl who stood beside the road quickly covered her face and frantically commented, "I didn't see anything. You guys can continue."

She wanted to disappear into the ground...

Josie pushed him away with all her might and quickly scampered away.

"What are you doing standing there?" The girl who witnessed what happened removed her hands from her face and blurted. "Run after her, McDreamy!"

The night breeze rustled through the trees while the skies rumbled with the sound of airplanes overhead. Her eyes sparkled under the streetlights as she ran like a teenager, her face still flushed with annoyance at his unexpected behavior. It felt like a scene from a movie.

He chased her down the street while his breath quickened. He caught up to her, gripped her wrist, and slowly slid his hands down to clasp hers.

Josie was already twenty-two years old. She had been through a lot in her life and matured a lot as a result. But the scene unfolding before her eyes was something out of a teenage movie. She felt like an outsider,

watching two people play out a love story she could no longer relate to.

She slowly turned around, and her eyes met his. She felt a jolt of electricity run through her body as she gazed into his gleaming eyes.

As Arnold was leaving the event hall, his assistant hurried after him. "Mr. Carter, there are still several partners you haven't had a chance to toast with," she said.

He glanced at his watch. It was getting late.

Arnold waved his hands dismissively and staggered over to his ride.

The driver wasn't sure where he wanted to go. "Do you want to go to the Carter Mansion or..."

Arnold shut his eyes, feeling frustrated. "The apartment!" he groaned.

The driver kept his eyes on the road, his face expressionless.

Lillian was staying at the apartment. She was the only person who could keep Arnold entertained for over a month, but that was it.

She sprained her foot the other day, and he couldn't force her to leave.

Arnold casually looked at the convenience store near his apartment when an idea suddenly struck him.

"Stop the car," he demanded out of the blue.

When Arnold returned to the car, the driver was startled to see him carrying a brightly colored bag of candy and snacks. These particular brands of candies and snacks were popular with kids.

The apartment was dark and silent. He flicked on the light, and his eyes widened in shock. The dining table was a mess; the disastrous scene before him sobered him up immediately.

When he entered the bedroom, he saw Lillian sleeping soundly. She was mumbling in her sleep, tossing and turning, almost falling off the bed.

Arnold's heart swelled when he noticed how close she was to the edge of the bed. Thank goodness she didn't fall off the bed.

After confirming that she was still asleep, he gently picked her up and carried her to the middle of the bed. He carefully tucked the blanket around her, careful not to wake her.

She felt so small and fragile, yet her warmth and softness enveloped him when he held her in his arms.

Arnold sighed as he patiently cleaned up the mess outside. He couldn't help but look away from the mess, disgusted by the sight of it. What have I done to deserve this?

Chapter 270 Get Out

Her pink laptop was left on the sofa, the screen still glowing.

Arnold hovered the mouse over the game icon, and the main page immediately popped up. He was stunned to see she was still using his account to play.

Arnold had invited her to play games to pass the time at the office. She laughed at his gaming skills, which baffled him. He challenged her. "If you're so good, help me get into the next league."

Hence, he gave her his account details.

Arnold glanced at the screen, surprised that she had already leveled up.

Arnold closed the gaming webpage and tried to access the files on her computer, but they were all password-protected. He tried to unlock them, but he was unsuccessful.

She was a true professional, but only at the things unrelated to her work.

The following day, Lillian woke up early, limping out of the bedroom and into the living room, where she saw Arnold asleep on the sofa. He was clutching her laptop to his chest.

Her eyebrows lifted in surprise and delight at the sight of the candies on the table.

He brought candies!

Lillian was about to open the bag of candies when Arnold's phone rang, startling her so much that she almost jumped out of her skin. She quickly ended the call, hoping the noise didn't wake him.

Lillian crept towards the bag of candies, her movements slow and deliberate. She reached in and carefully withdrew a strawberry-flavored candy. She slowly tore open the wrapper and placed the candy in her mouth, savoring the sweet taste.

Lillian smiled as her eyes wandered over to the sofa. Her smile faltered when she met his dark, clear eyes staring back at her. She gasped and stumbled backward, nearly falling over.

"F*ck!"

He swiftly caught her as she stumbled, and she fell into his arms. She winced in pain as her nose bumped against his chest.

Lillian caught a faint whiff of Arnold's cologne.

She could tell he was feeling annoyed as he had just woken up from sleep. His voice was hoarse and gravelly as he asked, "What are you doing so early in the morning?"

The alcohol smell still lingered in his breath.

Lillian was feeling foggy in the morning, her mind still half in dreamland. She wasn't sure how to answer him, so she simply stared at his thin, slightly rosy lips.

"I... I'm going to prepare my breakfast."

She moved away from him and hopped towards the kitchen like a rabbit.

Arnold was fully awake. He groaned and covered his eyes with his hands. "I'm begging you, he said, his voice thick with lethargy. "Stop walking around"

Lillian was taken aback by his sudden plea.

Arnold made breakfast for both of them while Lillian played games on her laptop. The sight of his broad back silhouetted against the morning light as he cooked in his comfortable daily clothes was extremely captivating.

Arnold was very carefree in his house. He was dressed in comfortable clothes, his hair was disheveled, and his long pants were folded at the ankles. He had just finished breakfast, and he felt his energy draining. He went back into the guest room to take a nap. As he was leaving, he turned to Lillian and said, "Leave your bowl on the table. I'll clean it up later."

Lillian's surge of happiness took a turn witnessing his reluctant behavior.

He sounded distant and aloof as if she had forcefully clung onto him, and he needed to put up with her.

Lillian's heart chilled as she froze at the dining table. Later, she limped slowly towards the guest room, but Arnold was already asleep. A picture on the headrest of the bed caught her eye as she walked in softly.

That person was Summer Olsen.

The photo captured Summer in high school, reading a book at her desk. Her back was straight, and her dark hair was tied neatly into a ponytail.

Arnold woke up with a start, his heart racing. He saw Lillian standing over him, holding a picture in her hands. His face turned grim as he realized what it was. "What are you doing with that?" he demanded, snatching the frame from her.

Lillian stumbled backward, feeling startled by his unexpected rage.

"I was looking."

Arnold's face hardened, and his voice was cold as ice. "Get out. Now,"

Lillian feared him, but she still hoped to accompany him and bring new excitement into his life.

But she didn't manage to achieve what she had intended to.

She grappled with the situation with a heavy heart. Slowly, she limped away on her crutch, and Arnold's deep, gravelly voice followed her. "I want you out of my life."

His last words froze her on the spot.