

The Epic BD 441

Chapter 441 Let's Meet Over Tea

Josie picked up the hair tie and saw a strand of long hair. It was blonde and curly, so Josie was certain it didn't belong to her.

This must have been left behind by someone who entered our hotel room. Besides, this person is likely to be close to Dexter. Otherwise, she wouldn't have left her hair tie behind.

Julie asked. "Is there anything wrong?"

Josie put down the hair tie and shook her head with a smile. "Nothing

She slowed down her steps and went downstairs to see Dexter bending his body to arrange the plants.

Josie sank into deep thoughts. Ever since he rescued her that night, she had not heard the news of Eileen being implicated. However, the incident caused a sensation in the city. Dexter seemed to no longer avoid the topic of his wife and even appeared to have the intention to reveal Josie's identity.

What about Summer? Is he not concerned about her anymore?

When Eileen's father discovered that Eileen was involved in Norman's incident, he threw a fit. Nonetheless, they were surprised that the consequences did not involve them and were relieved after the storm subsided.

That night, after learning that Josie had been rescued, Eileen immediately went to her father and begged him on her knees for protection. She knew she would be doomed since Josie didn't die.

However, there were no actions taken against her even after a few days, so Eileen was finally at ease.

One day, she received Arnold's invitation to meet on the top floor of the Carter Group. Arnold uttered gently and charmingly, "Eileen, I owe you an apology for the previous incident. Let's meet over tea, so I can apologize to you personally, alright?"

Eileen's heart pounded heavily as the grievances she had been suppressing the past few days surfaced. "Arnold, do you... mean it?"

"Of course."

The Carter Group's office was equipped with top-notch facilities. A professional secretary was assigned to show Eileen the way. "This way, please, Ms. Shaw."

There was a spacious lounge inside Arnold's office. Eileen cautiously entered the lounge to

Let's Meet Over Tea

see Arnold, who wore gold-rimmed glasses, sitting in front of his desk while brewing tea

Eileen suddenly felt like crying. The gentleman seated there was someone she had admired for years.

Hearing the movement. Arnold smiled and took off his glasses. "Come here."

Eileen snapped out of her daze and walked over nervously. She bit her lips and hummed. "Hey, Arnold."

"These tea leaves are imported from The Azores. Although they're not from the most precious tea plants, they're rarely seen in recent years."

Eileen received the cup and took a sip. It was slightly astringent but tasty for some reason.

After finishing the cup, Eileen wore a pitiful look with her eyes turning red-rimmed. "Because of you, there have been rumors flying around these days!" She squealed.

Arnold filled her cup and held her hand. On her wrist was the Cartier bracelet he had given her, and it covered her faint scar.

Arnold gently caressed the bracelet while Eileen trembled slightly.

He looked at Eileen with a half-smile. "You somewhat hate me, don't you?"

Those who knew Arnold well knew that he was naturally cheerful and was rarely infuriated. Even if he became angry, it wouldn't show on the surface. Such emotion was like a slow-acting poison that seeped in gradually. By the time the other party realized it, it would be too late as he would have already put the person to death.

The business circle was full of bizarre happenings, and it was inevitable to encounter a few who challenged Arnold's authority. As such, he would punish those few heavily as a warning to the others.

In fact, Arnold had personally taken action previously, and only Andy was aware of it.

He approached that person's wife and child. Due to his outstanding appearance and shrewdness, no woman could resist him if he intentionally pleased her.

It didn't take long before he took down that person's wife, who betrayed her husband lightning-fast.

Chapter 442 Three Strikes Law

When the person discovered it. Arnold was playing with his child at the park. Wearing a pair of glasses, he smiled maliciously like a snake. "You have one day to write a public apology and announce your bankruptcy. Then, leave Wavery"

The man was scared out of his wits when he saw Arnold casually holding the child's neck without exerting force. The child thought he was playing with him, but of course, the man could tell Arnold was threatening him.

"Mr. Carter, if I reveal this matter to the public, my family will be ruined!"

Arnold replied mercilessly, "If you rather see your family die in Wavery. I won't force you."

That man nearly fell on his knees. Thereafter, he left Wavery and stayed away from the business circle. He started anew in a foreign place and could only look back at his previous achievements in remorse.

It was a gray area. Arnold had his dark ways but rarely made a move. Once he was irritated, the

consequence could be dire.

What Eileen did had undoubtedly provoked Dexter, but little did she know it Arnold too.

enraged

Arnold didn't bring up the past matters previously because he felt indebted to Eileen and thought she had a clear conscience. However, what she did to Josie crossed Arnold's bottom line.

In California's three-strikes law, a convict who repeatedly committed serious felonies would receive a life sentence without parole. The same principle could be applied to other matters in life. Obviously, Eileen had received more than three strikes from Arnold.

Suddenly, Eileen had a dizzy spell and felt uncomfortable, even more so than when she drank alcohol.

She didn't allow herself to lose consciousness. Instead, she boldly fell into Arnold's arms and grasped his collar. "Arnold, Arnold... Josie Warren is a bad woman. Don't fall in love with her, okay?"

Arnold's smile faded as he caressed Eileen's delicate face without expression. "Mm-hmm. Go on."

Eileen saw a glimmer of hope and blurted a sharp remark. "She's a b*tch!"

"Aah!" Suddenly, a piercing scream emerged from the lounge, sending a chill down the spine of those outside.

Three Strikes Law

Awakened by the pain, Eileen finally regained her senses as she slumped to the ground, looking incredulously at the enraged man.

Later, Andy came in to take care of the rest. The lounge was in disarray. Arnold restored his lofty manner and threw away the napkin he used to wipe his hand. "Call the police. Ms. Shaw is using drugs. He ordered apathetically.

Andy was shocked when he saw Eileen, who collapsed on the ground miserably. She was trembling and muttering, "No... No... I didn't! Arnold, you can't do this to me!"

Arnold left resolutely as if the matter was unrelated to him.

Eileen was in immense pain and let out a desperate cry, "Aah-"

Soon, everything was cleaned up.

Arnold was in his private lounge, standing in front of a row of wine bottles while being lost in thought. He could see the entire scenery of Wavery from the lounge.

Andy walked in and reported, "Everything has been taken care of. Ms. Shaw will soon receive the punishment she deserves."

Arnold hummed in response and pulled out a napkin to wipe his hand. "Go inform Dexter."

“Yes, sir.” Dexter hesitated briefly and asked, “Actually, we didn’t have to do Dexter this favor. He can’t take action against Laxir Corporation and Eileen due to his promise, but we didn’t have to help him either.”

“He knew I would definitely help him,” Arnold spoke in a bitter yet aloof manner. “He’s well aware of Eileen’s feelings toward me and... my feelings toward Josie, so he knew I would do it.”

Chapter 443 Starting a Studio Together

Andy was surprised. “Mr. Carter, with all due respect, with Josie’s identity now, she’s useful, but not in this.”

Arnold poured out a glass of wine. His expression made it difficult to see if he agreed. “I know what to do.”

“Several of our projects are under Mark Olsen. He has plans to hinder Russell Group’s development. Besides, he’s showing us favor now. Summer is our best option at this moment.” Andy continued.

“I’m still unsure what’s on that old man’s mind. Let’s wait and see. Arnold paused. “Make an appointment with Summer for me tonight. We’ll meet at Sky Palace.”

“Yes, sir.”

Andy turned to leave, but Arnold called out. “Did Josie go for the interview?”

“No, sir. She requested an extension when the incident with Eileen Shaw happened.”

“Keep a close eye on them.”

Josie did not go to the design company that had extended an olive branch to her. The first reason was that her body forced her to put it on hold. The second reason was that Laura suddenly came to her and invited her to start a studio together.

“I took some time recently to observe your design styles. Although they are completely different from mine, the aura it brings fascinates me.” Laura was still acting like a diva, although she was the one making a request.

Josie flipped through the document Laura brought. She was very interested but had some concerns. “You’re married into the Olsen family. Will they allow you to appear in the limelight?”

Laura’s expression turned unnatural when the family was mentioned. “They hardly care about Zach, much less me. I’ve been saving up this money for a long time. I didn’t use any of it to have my own business one day. This could be greater if my family didn’t go bankrupt.”

Josie believed that Laura had skills. “Why did you choose me?”

“You’re affordable and useful.”

Josie did not know if she should laugh or cry at her blunt words. “What I mean is that I’m in a tight spot. Are you not worried about the backlash you’ll get if you work with me?”

Laura averted her eyes. She knew that Josie was referring to Summer. "She's been unhappy with me many times before. This does not make any difference."

Josie contemplated. She was interested. Laura would oversee the funds, and she would provide the skills. Laura even promised to give her half the dividends of the studio. They would both be owners. It was far better than being a corporate slave.

"There's not many that I can trust nowadays. I've never imagined you would be one of them." As Laura said those words, her voice was cold.

"It's my honor." Josie put the documents back in order. "Give me two days to think about it. I'll give you my answer as soon as possible."

Toward the end of their discussion, Laura sipped the cup of coffee the servants had prepared. She observed the house. The well-kept space felt like home.

"Dexter treats you well," she said matter-of-factly.

"Only the one who's involved would know the truth."

Josie stared at the scar on her wrist. She hesitated but did not ask the question.

"It looks like someone's dream is going to shatter." Laura smiled and got up to leave. But when she raised her head, a man was coming toward them.

The tall, slim body was in a white shirt. The man was rolling up his sleeve as he headed toward them against the light. "Laura."

"I see you're here, Mr. Russell."

He hummed in reply but turned to Josie with a questioning look.

"Laura's here to discuss work. I'm sending her out." Josie began heading out, but the man held her arm as she walked by.

"Wait. There's some soot on your forehead." Pulling her nearer naturally, he cupped her head and gently cleaned the spot. The tender look in his eyes was not something one could pretend to have.

Chapter 444 Liana Olsen

Josie felt embarrassed with others watching. "There are people around...."

Dexter smiled. "Laura's one of us. Why are you embarrassed?"

Laura smiled. "Wow, Mr. Russell. You're making me jealous. In that case, I should call her my sister-in-law."

"Then why haven't you?"

Josie choked when she heard them. She pulled Laura. "I'll be back soon."

As they stepped into the front yard of Mason Garden, Laura's expression turned grim. "Do you know they arrested Eileen?"

Josie's smile froze. "I didn't hear that. When did it happen?"

"Yesterday. They took her in under suspicion of ingesting drugs."

The weather was bright and sunny. But all Josie felt was the chills on her back. "Did she really?"

Laura stared straight at her. "No one knows if it's true. But that's what happened."

Josie could see the spots they were standing in just moments ago. Dexter's tall figure bent down as he cared for a potted plant. The rays of sun shining down on him made it a pleasing scene.

Laura noticed and looked back. She sighed. "You shouldn't completely trust the words of the men in this circle. It's best to leave, but if you can't, just turn a blind eye. Don't end up like her."

Josie could not identify her own feelings. It was the truth that Eileen had hurt her. But she did hurt Eileen before that. It was a never-ending cycle of harming each other.

Laura was already in the driver's seat and switched the engine on. Josie suddenly remembered something and stopped the door from closing. She leaned closer. "Laura, do I look very similar to someone?"

Laura's actions became stiff. She pressed her lips into a thin line. "What?"

"When Dexter and I got married, one of the reasons was because I looked like someone. All I know is that she's called Leanne. But that's probably not a secret." Josie continued slowly, "I'm wondering if this person is the same one Mark has been missing."

Laura slowly released her foot that was on the accelerator. She squinted as the sunlight gleamed at her.

She said slowly, "You didn't know? Leanne was an Olsen. Her full name was Liana Olsen. She was Mark's eldest daughter."

A sharp humming started in Josie's ear. Laura's mouth kept moving, but Josie could not hear anything else. She could not move her body as though it was paralyzed from being electrocuted.

"Liana disappeared when she was very young. Mark and his wife were devastated. They only had Zach and Summer a year later. Now that you say it, your eyebrows and eyes look the same. No wonder Dexter has a soft spot for you."

Not only Dexter but even Mark was also particularly caring for Josie.

Summer must have known, or she would not have asked me to change into the dress when I met Mark. I must have looked identical to Liana at that time.

"Josie! Are

you listening?" Laura raised her voice, and Josie was pulled back to reality.

She forced a smile. Thanks for telling me. Now I know."

Laura hesitated. "Did you meet Mark?"

Jodie continued smiling without a word. She took a few steps back. "You can go now. Drive safe."

It turned out that Leanne was the Olsen's missing daughter. It was not surprising to see a valuable gem being cared for attentively. People have different lives, regardless of how similar they may look.

Josie stood at the same spot and could not help but smile bitterly. It felt like she had stolen another person's place in their life.

Chapter 445 He Got Married Because It Was Her

When they returned to the Mason Garden, Josie's face was a mask of shock and confusion. Her eyes were wide and unblinking; the color all drained from her face.

Dexter noticed her distress and put down his newspaper. "What's wrong?" he asked, reaching out to touch her forehead.

Josie forced a smile and lifted her phone. "I just got a notification that the daughter of the CEO of Laxir Corporation was caught taking drugs," she answered.

Dexter's face was thundercloud, but he quickly regained his composure. "Wavery is a city that has a zero-tolerance policy for drug use," he said. "She deserves to be punished."

Josie stared at Dexter, her eyes full of doubt. "Is it simply a coincidence that the daughter of the CEO of Laxir Corporation was caught taking drugs?"

Dexter's face turned to stone as Josie's words sank in. "It's not me," he said, his voice calm without a hint of uneasiness.

She couldn't shake the feeling that he was involved in the drug bust, even though she had no evidence. Hence, she could only rely on his expressions to give away the answer to her doubts.

Josie lowered her head in shame. "I'm so sorry for suspecting you," she said. "I know you would never do anything like that."

"Dexter," Josie wrapped her arms around Dexter's waist and held him close. "I just don't know how to repay you," she said. "You've been too good to me."

Although he had broken her heart before, Josie's heart thawed through spending time with him. He had his guard up most of the time, but she knew he loved her.

Dexter stroked Josie's hair lovingly, his touch like a warm blanket. "Isn't it good like this?" he asked. "I've never expected you to repay me for anything."

Josie's eyes started to well up in tears as she cautiously whispered, "Are you nice to me because I'm Josie? Or is it because I look like Leanne?"

As soon as these words left her mouth, Dexter's muscles went rigid, and his eyes narrowed like daggers.

"Who told you that?"

Josie felt her eyes sting with a sense of overwhelming despair as his reaction was evident to his true thoughts. "No one needed to tell me anything. Mark told me I looked like someone

He Got Married Because It Was Her

he knew, but it couldn't be his past lover as he had a stable marriage."

"It would be rare to have three people looking identical in your social circle. Therefore, he must be referring to the same person. Leanne is Liana Olsen, the Olsen family's daughter, right?"

Josie spoke slowly. Dexter's face turned grimmer at every passing second.

"So? You think that I got married to you because of Leanne?" he asked, his voice cold and his words demanding through his clenched jaws.

"Isn't it the truth?" Josie couldn't shake off her doubts. "The main reason you treated me so well was because of Liana, right?"

Dexter was stunned by her straightforwardness, unable to utter a single word in response.

Josie took his silence as an affirmation of her suspicions, and she started to walk away when he pulled her back tightly. The edges of his face hardened, stinging with fresh fury as he led her outdoors and into the car.

"What are you doing?" Josie wanted to run away, but he pinned her down onto the car seat with his strong arms, pulling the seat belt over her.

Dexter's arms rested on the car door when the corner of his lips lifted into a smirk. "You can never be satisfied," he scoffed.

He took hold of the steering wheel, leaving Mason Garden.

Josie wouldn't let him have his way, especially when her mind was a whirlwind of emotions. "You couldn't deny that you've only been nice to me because you saw me as a substitute for Liana, her words were like daggers to the heart, evidence of the weight of emotions she had carried in her heart.

Remembering that he had lost his temper towards her because of Leanne in the past, anything she said couldn't have strayed far from the truth.

The edges of his features were tensed but showed no hint of what was going through his mind. He drove with one hand on the wheel and sent a message on his phone.

"Where on Earth are you taking me?"

Chapter 446 Giving Her a Tattoo

Dexter wouldn't answer her. He brought the car to a stop at a rather vibrant area away from the city that bustled with noise.

Despite the late hour, the place was buzzing with crowds of people.

Josie stood still, completely bewildered.

She had stayed in Wavery for two years, but she never knew they had a night market here.

What was even more startling was that Dexter would take her there.

"Get down," he uttered coldly.

Josie wasn't sure what he wanted to do. Josie's frustrations were building up inside her like a volcano, ready to erupt at any moment.

Dexter was dressed in a crisp white shirt and black slacks; his casual and easygoing look was a stark contrast to the poster-filled walls and shouting of vendors.

Josie followed behind him without knowing their destination.

When they walked toward the end of the alley, they reached a small, rundown parlor. An old vintage bicycle was lying by the side.

Inside, the shop was lit with a warm yellow glint.

The people inside were either lying down fully or sitting on a chair, their faces contorted in pain as they cried out in agony. The tattoo artist stood in front of them, their needle moving quickly and efficiently as he drew on their skin.

It was a tattoo parlor.

Dexter walked in casually and was greeted by an old man who was hunched over. The man smiled politely at him. "Everything is ready," he said.

Josie didn't understand why Dexter had brought her here. Their screams were like nails on a chalkboard, making Josie's skin crawl.

She stood at the entrance, afraid to enter the tattoo parlor.

Dexter wouldn't make her get a tattoo here, would he?

Dexter turned around and glanced toward Josie. "Get in here," he demanded.

Giving Her a Tattoo

Josie shook her head, her legs rooted to the ground.

With an icy glare, he commanded her to go in.

Josie could hear her pulse throbbing in her ears. "I don't want to go in," she answered timidly.

Dexter marched to her and carried her up by her waist.

"Let go of me! I don't want to get a tattoo!" Josie exclaimed in shock and fear.

Dexter stayed silent and tossed her on the bed. His eyes were like two empty sockets, devoid of all emotions. Without delay, he wrapped her arms and legs with the ribbons attached and closed the curtains around her.

Josie's mouth dropped open in shock, and her heart pounded against her ribs. Dexter looked like an executioner, ready to carry out a death sentence on her.

"Don't come near me!"

Josie's voice twinged with desperation as she feared his merciless acts.

Someone wrapped an apron around Dexter's waist and placed the tattoo supplies beside him.

Josie struggled to free herself, but she was pinned to the bed.

"Dexter, I admit I was wrong to doubt you," she whimpered. "Please let me go. I'm afraid of needles.

What if Liana had a tattoo, and Dexter wanted to give her a similar one because she angered him?

Dexter bit his lower lip, his eyes narrowing as he saw the fear in Josie's eyes. "Calm down. This won't hurt as much as you think," he remarked.

Josie was terrified of the pain.

Nonetheless, Dexter was unmoved by Josie's reaction. He picked up the tattoo needle and unbuttoned her blouse, revealing her bare skin.

Josie closed her eyes tightly, her body shaking with fear. She could feel the needle getting closer to her skin, and she knew that there was nothing she could do to stop it.

The needle pierced her skin, and Josie gasped in pain. She slowly opened her eyes.

Dexter's face was lowered, his eyes fixed on Josie's waist. He held the tattoo gun, carefully drawing lines on her waist. Ouch! It hurts really bad. However... the place he was tattooing was over her scar.

It was where she suffered a slit from the knife attack. Although Dr. Monte had given her an ointment to help fade the scar, it stood out starkly against her pale skin.

Josie had never talked about the scar before. She was self-conscious about it, and she didn't want anyone to see it. After all, anyone would be devastated to have such a big scar on their body. It also meant she couldn't wear any tops that exposed her waist.

She finally stayed still, and Dexter clearly knew what thoughts were going through her head. "A girl shouldn't have a scar this big, Dexter muttered.

Chapter 447 Thorns

Josie felt her heart swell at his words, but she couldn't help but find fault with him. "Are you saying that I look ugly with this scar?"

Dexter froze, his eyes narrowing as he looked at her. "If you don't want to suffer more pain, stop saying nonsense," he warned, his voice cold and threatening.

Josie had no intention of stopping there. "Liana never had a scar before, right? Why are you going to such an extent for me?" she asked, her eyes challenging him.

Dexter kept silent, his jaw clenched. He was not going to give her the satisfaction of answering her question. Josie felt bored talking to herself.

She could feel the needle pricking her skin and bit her lip to keep herself from crying out in pain. She looked down at the bedsheets and noticed her hands were clenching the fabric tightly.

"Let go," Dexter said, his voice sharp.

Her fingers were red, almost bruising from holding on too tightly.

"It hurts!" Josie cried out, her voice filled with pain.

Dexter threw a sponge at her. "Hold this," he demanded.

She did not expect Dexter to show consideration for her situation, and she was surprised by his sudden act of kindness.

"Why do you know how to tattoo?" she inquired.

"I learned it a few years ago."

Josie's fear and frustration began to manifest as she couldn't see what he was tattooing on her. "I want a nice tattoo," she started mumbling, her voice increasingly agitated. "Do you even know how to draw? Are you good at drawing? Are you sure you can do this?"

Dexter ignored her anxious questioning, his focus unwavering.

Josie's skin was as pale as porcelain. The blood seeped out as soon as the needle touched her skin, leaving a satisfactory visual contrast between the deep red blood and bright skin.

Dexter's Adam's apple bobbed up and down as he swallowed hard. He wanted to torment and make her tears fall as she moaned in pain.

"I heard that a tattoo had to be something meaningful so that you can remember it for life,"

Josie said. After a pause, she continued. "Dexter, do you want me to remember this scar forever?"

Dexter finally looked at her. Her face was all scrunched up from enduring the pain

After mulling over his thoughts briefly, he said, "I didn't marry you because of Liana."

Josie stared at him, unsure of how she should respond.

"I did get the two of you mixed up at the start. It had already been twenty years since I last saw Leanne. No matter how close we were when we were young, I wouldn't let that friendship affect my relationship with you."

His voice washed over her doubts like a warm wave, banishing them from her mind.

Dexter continued to work on the tattoo.

"I feel indebted to her, but to you, I feel every other emotion there is."

"Can you please believe me?" his eyes met hers warmly as he pleaded.

Josie's heart was hammering in her chest as she stared at the face inches away from hers.

His attention was unwavering when he was hard at work. The angles on his face were sharp and chiseled as if they had been carved from stone. His dark, profound eyes gazed straight into hers as if he was focusing on his work with laser-like precision.

As he was afraid she would whimper in pain from the piercing of the needle, he tried to be as gentle as he could.

His face was so close she could see the peach fuzz on his face.

And at that moment, she got carried away.

"Can I believe you?" she asked.

"Definitely," he replied. His answer was concise, with an air of resoluteness and determination. It was simple but deeply significant after what they had been through together.

Two hours.

They stayed in the same position for two hours.

"It's done."

After it was completed, Dexter organized the tools beside him.

Josie immediately bounced out of bed and looked into the mirror.

He had tattooed green thorns on her waist, covering her scar.

She couldn't see clearly as her skin was still red, but she knew it would look beautiful after it healed.

Dexter took off the apron and stared at her. When he noticed how her lips had curled into a smile, he slowly expanded his lips into a wide grin.

"What does this tattoo mean?"

"Mine," Dexter hugged her from behind, pulling on her blouse as he leaned closer. "You're mine this lifetime," he answered with conviction, clearly insinuating that the thorns were to keep her by his side.

Chapter 448 Uncle Owen

The curtains opened, and the boss entered. "Are you done?" he asked.

"Yes, thank you for helping." Dexter answered, his voice respectful and deferential.

Owen waved his hands dismissively. His curiosity was piqued as he asked, "And this is?"

He was asking about Josie.

„Josie's eyes shifted with uncertainty, pondering how to answer this question.

Should I say I'm his girlfriend?

She subconsciously stepped back as she felt pressured by the situation.

Suddenly, Dexter grabbed Josie's wrist and pulled her to the front. "I'm already married, Uncle Owen. She's my wife, Dexter said nonchalantly.

Josie felt a shiver run down her spine.

Feeling incredulous over his blunt statement, she blinked repeatedly in shock.

“You’re married? That’s great!” Owen chuckled in delight and patted Josie’s shoulder, then proceeded to say, “Let’s go! I’ll take you guys for some good food.”

“Ah?” Josie’s eyes bulged from the abrupt invitation.

Dexter signaled her to follow Owen.

Josie wouldn’t have believed it if she hadn’t seen it with her own eyes. She never thought the man who made important decisions with millions of dollars at stake would be sitting by the roadside, savoring food from a food truck.

He also didn’t look disgusted or unwilling to be there at all.

Owen ordered a few bottles of beer, clearly excited to see Dexter. “I’ve watched Dex grow up since he was a boy. It’s been so long since then,” he said to Josie.

The sudden revelation of Dexter’s past caught her off guard.

Dexter poured some beer for Owen. “I’ve been really busy these few years,” he answered coolly.

“Do you think I’m a fool? You don’t have to keep your guard up in front of me,” Owen replied.

Dexter fell silent.

He was really tall, and he barely fit into the small bench by the food truck. The man’s legs dangled awkwardly off the side of the bench.

As she munched on the tacos, Josie asked, “What happened? I’m really curious to know

Owen gave a knowing smile and didn’t say anything.

“It’s good as long as you’re here to see me,” he answered, swiftly changing the topic. “You’re the first lady I’ve seen around him. How long did you guys date before you got married?”

“You’ve only seen one because we rarely meet,” Dexter interjected with a hint of mischief.

As soon as he said that, Owen knocked on his head with his knuckles. “Are you proud that you’ve had so many ex-girlfriends?”

Josie chuckled loudly at their friendly banter.

Dexter shot an icy glare at her.

“What’s your name?”

Josie Warren.”

Owen looked closely at her face as he uttered her name. “You look a lot like..” he mumbled.

“Uncle Owen, she’s not Leanne, Dexter chimed in, his voice calm and composed. “She’s my wife, Josie.”

Owen froze for a short moment before downing his beer. “Alright! It’s good that you’re no longer stuck in the past. Treat her well, Dex!”

Dexter frowned, but he had no choice but to comply with his advice. "I understand," he answered indifferently.

The sky was a vast canvas painted with a million stars. The crescent moon hung like a teardrop, dangling from the edge of the sky, its silver light glinting off the stars like diamonds.

They caught a whiff of the mouth-watering aroma of grilled beef as the wind blew through the alley. The place they sat was bustling with activity, the chatter of the people filling the air like a symphony. They looked as if they belonged there.

Owen was drunk, lying on the table with his eyes closed.

The silence at the table hung heavy, and she felt uneasy sitting there.

"Do you want to play a game?" Dexter asked enthusiastically.

Josie tilted her head slightly. "What game?"

"Chemin de fer, best of five wins, and the dealer is decided through drawing lots," Dexter explained and requested a deck of cards from the food truck owner. He then swiftly shuffled the cards.

Josie wasn't too familiar with the game.

She rested her head on one of her palms and nodded. "What's the bet?"

Dexter didn't have anything in mind. "We'll try one round first."

Josie dealt the cards. She already thought of what was on the line for the game. She was sure Dexter would never agree to it, so it would leave him no choice but to compensate with money.

Chapter 449 Card Game

When that moment arrived, she would say, "We'll see how sincere Mr. Russell is.

During the first two rounds, Dexter gave her some tips and lost miserably to her.

"

Josie couldn't hide her joy as her eyes lit up with excitement. She was intrigued to see Dexter getting defeated, forgetting all about her rage toward him.

Dexter was unfazed by the situation, signaling her to continue with a wide grin on his face.

Dexter won the next round, and as Josie was slowly warming up to the game, he won another round.

Josie started to panic as she stared into his eyes. "Did you cheat?"

Dexter opened up his palms before her. "Don't you think you're underestimating me too much?" he scoffed.

It seems so.

Josie felt uneasy as she dealt the last round of cards. She held her breath as she stared intensely at Dexter's hands.

Dexter placed his cards down. "Are you afraid I would win?" he snorted.

I'm afraid you would play tricks behind my back, she replied as if she had zero intention to do so.

Dexter stayed silent as he peeked at his final card, his fingers tapping on the table.

Josie's nerves were on edge. She hated how calm and composed he looked as if he had everything wrapped around his finger. His expression seemed to be indicating that he was about to win.

Dexter peered at her shaking hands for a moment, then tossed his card on the table with a smirk.

It was the three of spades.

Dexter lost!

"You lost!" Josie's eyes gleamed with a glint of triumph. She almost shot up from the table, feeling overjoyed by her win.

She couldn't stop smiling from ear to ear about her win against Dexter.

"I lost." Dexter admitted calmly. "What do you want me to do?"

How many people longed to hear the CEO of the Russell Group utter the words "I lost"?

After contemplating what she wanted, she asked, "Would you do anything I ask?"

"As you wish.

Before she could answer, Owen woke up from his sleep and yawned. "It's getting very late. You guys should head home now."

It didn't feel right to have Owen treat them, so Dexter eventually paid for their meal.

When Dexter left to pay the bill, Owen held Josie's hand and muttered, "Dex hasn't come here in a long time, nor has he brought any woman here. He must really treasure you. I hope you guys are happy.

Her excitement from before immediately died down, as she felt a heavy weight in her chest from his words, as if he was making a request to his daughter-in-law.

Owen continued to hold her hand. "I understand that he has a powerful standing and feels distant at times. Even as his uncle, I can't do much to help him. Jo, you have to help me keep an eye on him."

"He has always been a rebellious kid who would do anything to reach his goals. You have to make sure he never does anything that breaks the law."

Owen's face was flushed from the alcohol, but his eyes were unwavering.

Josie wanted to say that she had no control over Dexter's actions. She knew more or less about the illegal activities he was involved in and that he was also an expert at it.

But she couldn't say anything when she saw him making an earnest request.

The elderly man still saw Dexter as a pure, innocent young boy he wanted to protect. He couldn't bear to see him do anything that would hurt himself or others.

Owen sighed as he looked at the sky. "If he ever mistreats you, you can come here to find me, and I'll give him a lesson," he said firmly.

Josie let out a big chuckle.

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When Dexter returned to the table, Josie lifted her head from her arms and stared drowsily into his eyes.

His lashes were dark and long, and he bore an air of calmness.

They looked into each other's eyes, and Josie felt a wave of love and understanding wash over her. She knew Dexter understood her, and she felt safe and loved by her husband.

After a long while, Dexter held her up by her arms. "Let's go home," he uttered.

Josie leaned on the wall filled with old vintage murals with her arms folded. She stared warmly towards Dexter, who was holding Owen's arms, sending him back home.

From where Josie stood, she noticed Dexter placing a card into Owen's pocket.

The two of them knew each other's boundaries, and they respected those boundaries. Hence, they showed their care in small, subtle ways.

Owen held Dexter's hands and stared knowingly at him with a mischievous smile. Josie, standing behind them, was oblivious to their exchange.

"I saw everything."

"What did you see?" Dexter asked.

"I saw you exchanged your cards to let her win."

He witnessed the moment when Dexter exchanged the cards in his hands and how his lips curled into a warm and genuine smile when he saw her jump in delight at her win.

Without denying his words, the corner of Dexter's lips lifted into a smirk.

"She's my wife. I'll be happy as long as she's happy."

Owen held his hands and patted them. "Your mother came here a few days ago."

Dexter fell silent.

"She said you're a good kid, and you helped her when she needed it. Dex, have you forgiven her?"

"A good kid?" He repeated the words through his gritted teeth. "I might be a good kid, but I'm not a good son."

Letting Go of the Past

"Dex, you should try to understand her. She might have things she couldn't tell you directly."

"It has nothing to do with me," he said with a dismissive wave of his hand as they reached the tattoo parlor. He turned and walked away, leaving Owen standing there.

When they left the alley, Josie turned around and glanced at the sign, trying to remember the name of the road.

"What's your relationship with Owen?"

"Uncle Owen was our butler. He's the cousin of Xanthe, and he has taken care of me since young.

That's the reason he's called Uncle Owen...he's Xanthe's relative.

Dexter didn't come to see him because he had a grudge against Xanthe....

"After Xanthe left, Uncle Owen also left as he didn't know how to face us."

"So you brought me here because you've let the past go?"

Dexter tightly gripped her hands and smiled warmly, agreeing silently.

There's no point holding a grudge against someone innocent." He lifted his head and looked at the sky. "Everyone has to let go of the past eventually."

Josie also lifted her head up with her hands behind her back. "I could never imagine that I would be in a place like this with you, getting my body tattooed, playing card games, and drinking beer."

Dexter lowered his head and looked at her. "Do you know that you left out one more thing?"

"What is it?"

He bent down slightly and leaned into her ears. "Doing it."

An air of silence filled the tension between them.

With a simple phrase, it made their minds race with imagination.

He kissed her lightly, then after getting a grip of his conscience, he asked, "I lost. What do you want me to do?"

Josie froze and tilted her head back slightly to answer him. "I haven't thought about it," she responded truthfully.

Dexter lowered his head to kiss her again, this time with even more passion.

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As they hugged tightly, Josie gasped and gripped his arms. She felt a stinging pain at her waist. The man trailed his lips along her body, tracing the outline of the thorns he had tattooed on her waist.

Dexter was a person who took the sexual tension to another level, leaving her with no resistance. His eyes were like a dark flame, burning with desire.

Josie felt herself melting under Dexter's gaze. She knew that she was powerless to resist him.