

Love the Second Time Around Chapter 31 - 35

Chapter 31 A Failed Negotiation

The man in front of me stared at me with dissatisfaction and hatred.

Unperturbed, I stared him back indignantly.

“That’s enough! I don’t want to waste so much time on you. Hurry up and give me an answer.”

“Liliana, you—” As soon as Julius spoke, someone called his name.

A man dressed in a white suit with a name badge and black trousers came up to us.

“I wonder why you left the office just now. Anyway, I understand now that you’re on a date. Hello, Mrs. Keaton.”

The man looked familiar, for we met during the wedding. If I wasn’t mistaken, he was Julius’ colleague, and they were close to each other.

Julius looked displeased when his colleague addressed me as Mrs. Keaton. Right then, I realized he hadn’t told others that we were getting a divorce.

Nonetheless, it wasn’t a surprise to me. Since our marriage was short-lived, Julius would understandably want to save himself from embarrassment.

After forcing a smile at Julius, I turned to Julius’ colleague and said, “I remember you. Aren’t you Brayden?”

“Mrs. Keaton’s memory is impressive. I am Brayden.” He was delighted because I still remembered him.

I smiled and continued, “Brayden, please don’t call me Mrs. Keaton from now on. Julius and I…”

“Darling!” The next moment, Julius yelled aloud on purpose and put his arm on my shoulder.

Brayden and I were both startled upon that.

“Brayden, she was saying that you don’t have to be that polite. By the way, why are you here?” Julius interrupted and deliberately changed the subject of conversation.

I pulled his arm away and took a step to the side.

After that, I made a mental note to shower at least three times to get rid of whatever germs transferred from Julius' filthy arm.

As the two looked at me, they each exhibited a different expression.

A few seconds later, Julius let out an awkward smile. Brayden probably sensed that something was off between us and chose not to dwell on it.

"I'm here to buy a drink. Anyway, I'd better head out to work. You two carry on, then." With that, Brayden turned around and left.

After Brayden left, Julius glared at me as though he was preparing to murder me.

Unperturbed, I pretended to grab my bag, straightened my clothes, and gazed at the entrance. "It appears that we can't make a deal today. Since you're probably busy, I can come to your office next time to talk."

"Liliana, don't you dare push your luck!" Julius said coldly and gripped my arm.

However, I wriggled free from him and glowered at him scornfully. "Am I, though? You cheated on me first and threatened me afterward. Now that I'm willing to return the betrothal gift to you, why aren't you satisfied? Julius, how can you be that shameless?"

Screw it. There's no use trying to reason with someone obsessed with money.

"Just wait for the subpoena issued by the court." With that, I took out some notes from my bag and put them on the table. "Here's the money to pay for my drink. Let's not take advantage of anyone."

Then, I ignored Julius' ferocious gaze and walked toward the entrance right away.

I took a deep breath as soon as I exited the café. At this point, I had no choice but to look for a lawyer.

Hence, I scrolled through my contact list, but I soon realized that my friends probably didn't know any lawyers.

Although Dominic knew good lawyers, I didn't intend to ask for his favor to avoid being ridiculed by him again. Besides, given that he had helped me a lot, I didn't want to owe him more.

At that, I decided to visit the commercial district on my own. Since there were a lot of office buildings there, I thought I could easily find some law firms.

After arriving at the commercial district, I went straight to the well-known Wisteria Building.

As I entered the lobby on the ground floor, I saw some receptionists and a signboard.

Without hesitation, I came up to them and asked, “Hi, may I know if there are law firms upstairs? I wish to look for a reliable lawyer.”

“Ms. Zanetti?” Someone called my name once I finished asking. I turned around and realized that it was James, the president of Galaxy Corporation.

“Mr. Dalton, what a coincidence. Are you here for business matters?” I greeted him smilingly because he was the reason I could settle the scores with Julius.

James was wealthy and even possessed an entire office building that his company built on its own.

Besides, he was rather friendly, unlike Dominic, who always pulled a long face.

“Yes. Ms. Zanetti, are you here for business matters as well? Which company are you visiting? I know this place quite well if I dare say so myself.” James probably could tell that I came here the first time and wished to lend me a hand.

As I didn’t want to trouble him, I replied, “It’s fine. Mr. Dalton, you must be very busy. I can just ask the receptionists.”

“If you’re worried about owing me a favor, there’s no need to. I can get all the favor I need from Dominic anyway. Just feel free to tell me where you would like to go.”

What he said made me confirm my decisions even more—I should not seek help from him at all, if ever.

If James asked for a reward from Dominic just because he helped me, Dominic would most definitely get something from me in return!

In that case, it would be the worst deal ever.

“Mr. Dalton, it’s okay. I’ve got something to do, so please excuse me.”

I planned to wander outside the building for a while and come back only after he left.

Much to my surprise, James blocked my way and dragged me to the receptionist counter. Then, he even instructed the receptionists to tell him what I asked them.

Once the receptionists explained that I was looking for a law firm, he said to me smilingly, “Well, it’s just a trivial matter. Why were you hesitant to tell me? Chance and Associates law firm is on the twenty-seventh floor. Let me bring you there.”

Before I could react, he had already dragged me into the elevator.

As the elevator was rising, I thought I couldn't escape anymore. Since James recommended the law firm to me, I believed their lawyers were top of the line.

"By the way, why were you looking for a lawyer?" James asked curiously.

"It's personal." I didn't reveal it to him, for I wasn't exactly proud of it.

James nodded in response and didn't dwell on it.

After thinking for a while, I asked, "Mr. Dalton, may I know who is the best lawyer in that law firm?"

"Well, it depends on what kind of troubles you have. Anyway, Benjamin Chance and Mitch Lucas are among the top lawyers who always win in courts."

As such, I hoped I could appoint any one of them that James mentioned.

After the elevator opened, James brought me to the office of Chance and Associates.

"Why are you here again?" A man who wore glasses with a metal frame asked James shockingly.

James pushed me to the front and answered while pointing at me, "I'm bringing a customer to you. Besides, she is close to Dominic. So, do as you see fit."

The next moment, both the man in glasses and I were equally startled.

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Chapter 32 Cannot Lose Out

The bespectacled man scrutinized me in disbelief. Moments later, he asked, "Are you with Dominic?"

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I hurriedly denied, "No, no, I've got nothing to do with him."

At that moment, James chimed in, "Just go ahead and resolve her problem. You won't lose out."

It's the same remark again. If everyone is afraid of losing out, will Dominic be taken advantage of? Will he hit me in a rage?

At that, I wanted to back out.

"Thank you, Mr. Dalton. I..."

He had probably figured out my intention. Pointing at the bespectacled man, he said, "He is Benjamin Chance. Whatever the case is, he can definitely tackle it. Are you sure you don't want to discuss with him?"

What a tempting offer! I must win this divorce case with Julius. Otherwise, God knows what excessive demands will that jerk make.

After contemplating, I decided to heed James' advice. I could not be bothered about Dominic at the moment. Worse comes to worst, I'll just do a little extra to please him.

Having made up my mind, I requested, "Mr. Chance, do you have time for a chat?"

Instantly, Benjamin agreed and ushered me into his office. "My room is over here. This way, please."

I then trailed behind him.

As soon as the door was shut, we sat opposite each other, and Benjamin asked right away, "How should I address you? What's the case about?"

I briefly introduced myself and shared about Julius.

After hearing me out, he pondered for a moment. "This isn't a difficult situation. According to what you've told me, your husband is at fault. As long as there's evidence, I'll be able to help you divorce him and ensure that he doesn't get a single cent. Also, I can help you claim an amount from him to make up for your mental distress."

Instantly, his words and placid demeanor gave me confidence. I do have proof. Does that video count?

"Mr. Chance, I have a video of him and another woman," I reported honestly.

"That's great! Did you bring it along?"

Suddenly, it dawned on me that I left Julius' house without taking anything with me. When I said everything, I meant everything—including the video.

"I'm here for an inquiry today, so I didn't bring it with me. Can I show it to you the next time we meet?" I must return to the house to obtain that video and pack some of my personal belongings.

Benjamin nodded in response.

Since I was determined to let him take charge of my divorce case, I had to pop the question.

“Mr. Chance, may I know about your attorney fees?” I had three hundred thousand with me. It should be sufficient... right?

Unexpectedly, Benjamin waved his hand and said, “Don’t worry about money. I’ll ask it from Dominic.”

I was perplexed. Why Dominic? Are Benjamin and James friends of Dominic, or are they enemies?

No, that’s not the main point. It’s my personal matter, so why should Dominic foot the bill for me?

“Mr. Chance, my divorce case, as well as my request to have you file a lawsuit on my behalf, are all my private affairs. It’s got nothing to do with Dominic, so I’ll pay for all the legal fees myself. If you refuse to take it, I’ll take my leave now and find someone else to do it.

“I just wanted to emphasize that I’m not related to Dominic in any way. Please don’t equate me with him. Mr. Dalton just had a misunderstanding that’s all.”

I was afraid that there would be no end to this had I not made it crystal clear at this point.

Benjamin was taken aback by my response. To be honest, I wouldn’t blame him as he probably did not expect such a big reaction from me. Anyhow, he recollected himself a few seconds later.

“Sure, I’ll explain more about the fees when you bring the video here at your next visit.”

I smiled at his reply.

After thanking him, I was about to leave the firm but ran into Dominic outside of Benjamin’s office.

Why is he here?

Subconsciously, I gazed at James for an answer. He shrugged his shoulders and let out an innocent smile.

Darn it, why did he tattletale? Did Dominic give him any benefits?

Meanwhile, Dominic was staring daggers at me in his wheelchair.

All of a sudden, I felt a cold chill down my spine as if I had committed something very wrong.

Bracing myself, I grinned awkwardly. "Hi, Mr. Hartnell, what brings you here?"

"Mind your own business," he retorted.

As if I care? Scr*w it, I'm happy to leave anyway.

"I'll take my leave now. Have a good one."

"Did I say you can go?"

What the hell does he want? I almost could not control my anger. He doesn't want me to speak, so why can't I just leave?

Holding back my frustration, I asked through gritted teeth, "May I ask if you have any further instructions for me, Mr. Hartnell?"

"Come over here and push the wheelchair. We shall leave together," he commanded nonchalantly while narrowing his eyes at me.

Why can't he just cut to the chase and indicate his intention right from the start?

Rolling my eyes, I walked toward him and took over the handle.

The stares from James and Benjamin reminded me of my words to them earlier, that I had nothing to do with Dominic. Well, look at me...

Loss for words, I quickly pushed Dominic out of the law firm.

Upon entering the elevator, Dominic requested to get to the parking lot in the basement.

I could easily locate his car under his instructions. Calvin was already there, waiting for us, so I greeted him with a nod.

After driving us home, Calvin left.

Seeing that it was almost time for dinner, I asked, "Mr. Hartnell, I'm going to cook. What would you like to have tonight?"

"Why did you go to James for help when you needed a lawyer?" Coldly, he threw a question at me.

Stunned, I tried to explain myself, "I didn't purposely look for him; I just bumped into him in the lobby. Mr. Dalton was kind enough to offer to help."

Crap. Did I say something wrong? Why do I feel that the tension in the air has thickened?

“Liliana, do you always regard a man as ‘kind’ as long as he’s slightly nice to you? Just like how you were so eager to marry your scumbag husband because you’ve tasted something good?”

What gives? Why did he make such a comment when I didn’t offend him? As soon as he said that, I could feel my blood boiling and the heat in my ears.

“Are you done talking? Why are you meddling in my choice in men or from whom I asked for help? What rights do you have to judge me?”

I went ballistic as I could not believe that that was how he perceived me.

Those words were a hundred times more hurtful than those he said to me on a regular basis.

At that moment, we were glaring at each other with a fiery temper blazing within us.

Love the Second Time Around Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Enduring It

Livid, Dominic’s face turned into a stony grey.

He deserves it for being so mean. Argh, he drives me mad!

After a while, he let out a skin-deep smile and asserted, “You’re right, it’s none of my business. However, it’s important for me to remind you not to bring back any diseases.”

F*ck you! You’re the one who’s sick. Your whole family is sick!

I’m not surprised if Dominic has been taking classes these few years to master spewing hurtful words without cursing. Everything that comes out from his mouth gets on my nerves!

Refusing to be verbally abused by him, I turned away and strode toward my room.

“Where are you going? Hurry up and cook. I’m hungry,” he uttered indifferently.

I rebutted without looking back at him, “Please go ahead and request for someone who’s staying in the pink of health to cook for you.”

Does he expect me to prepare dinner for him after insulting me? Hah! Dream on!

“Fine. Since you no longer want to play your role as the caregiver, you can pack up your bags and leave my house right now.”

Provoked, I turned around. "Sure! Do you really think that I love being here?"

Is that a threat? I've been wanting to escape since day one. It's never my will to stay.

Casually, he continued, "Before you go, let's settle our scores one by one. First, call up Galaxy Corporation and inform that the author refuses to sell the copyright."

I was dumbfounded. Wait, isn't this tantamount to breach of contract?

Gah! I should have known better. He's definitely not the kindhearted type who will let me go so easily. Upon hearing his first statement, it already made my knees weak.

As if that was not enough, he was urging me to do as he had ordered, "Time is ticking... So you'd better pick up the phone and call them now. Then, we shall continue with other items."

Taking a deep breath, I forced myself to hold it together. I must endure this.

"Mr. Hartnell, please tell me what you would like to have for dinner, and I'll cook for you right away." I had to pinch myself when saying so.

Seeing that I caved in, he smirked wickedly. "Why? Have you decided not to leave anymore?" That man knew how to push my buttons.

"Why would I do that? It's my utmost honor to serve you, Mr. Hartnell." I plastered a grin on my face.

"All right, I'm not a calculative person. Just make me a five-course meal."

Staring at him feeling smug after his win, I wanted to give him two tight slaps so badly.

Ironically, I went to prepare dinner.

While cutting the vegetables, I visualized I was actually cutting Dominic up to pieces in order to make myself feel better.

As soon as dinner was served, Dominic attempted multiple ways to show his disgust and find faults with me.

Annoyed, I was extremely close to screaming at him at the top of my lungs.

After eating, I cleaned up the dining area. Finally, it was all peace and tranquility when Dominic went back to his room.

It had been quite a challenge to live with him under the same roof.

After that, I left a lamp switched on in the living room and made my way back to my room.

Opening up my laptop, I planned to complete the illustration soonest possible.

The only good thing that Dominic had done for me ever since I moved in was gifting me with a laptop.

Otherwise, I would never be able to work.

I tried to draw for the past one hour, but things did not go well for me. All thanks to Dominic, his harsh words kept playing in my head.

Dreading the mess that I was in, I was so perturbed about the divorce.

I persisted for another hour and could only come up with something that I was not satisfied with.

Achieving nothing for the entire day, I turned off my laptop and retired for the night with the hope that tomorrow would be a better day for me.

The alarm clock woke me up in the morning. Routinely, I made breakfast and then returned to my room to avoid meeting Dominic because I had nothing to say to him.

Suddenly, I heard him knocking at my door. I can't completely avoid him, can I?

Reluctantly, I opened the door with a sigh. Calvin was standing behind Dominic, who was on the wheelchair.

As soon as I saw them, I faked a smile. "Good morning, Mr. Hartnell."

He gave me the once-over while asking suspiciously, "Why? Do you loathe seeing me?"

In my mind, I answered in affirmative.

However, I lied in reality. "Why would I be? Anyway, I'm having a tummy upset, so I couldn't eat breakfast with you."

However, he did not buy my excuse. "There's nothing I can do about it even if you don't want to see me around the house. I allowed you to leave yesterday, but you're determined to stay on. Who is to blame for this?"

His response almost made me faint in exasperation.

What did I do to deserve this? If this continues, I'll meet my maker sooner or later.

“I’m going on a business trip for a few days. You’d better tidy up the house and report to me in advance wherever you go. You’re not allowed to stay out at night. In case of a burglary, you’re fully responsible for all the losses incurred.”

I was over the moon when I heard the news, but the second half of what he said made me feel dejected instantly.

He was implying that I had no freedom despite his absence. Why should I report my daily activities to him? Is he scared that I’ll run away?

Clenching my jaw, I acknowledged and sent them off.

The smile on my face melted off swiftly once the door was closed behind me. It was such a chore to put on a happy face.

After that, I could finally draw peacefully without his presence.

Other than drafting the poster, I also planned to retrieve the video from Julius’ house tomorrow afternoon.

I recalled him having to work on Saturdays, whereas Coraline had to attend activities organized for the elderly at the community center. She usually hung out there till the evening.

It was the best time to enter the house when no one was around.

That night, my phone rang when I was having my dinner. It was Dominic.

He first asked me where I was, to which I replied honestly that I was at home. Feeling dubious, he requested me to switch on my video to prove to him my actual location. After confirming, he hung up.

What an absolute lunatic!

The next day, I spent the morning working and only left the house after lunch.

Obliging Dominic’s request, I sent a text message to him and informed him about my plans.

I anticipated a response from him. Yet, he did not call or text me back. So, I kept my phone and went ahead.

Before this, I had it all planned out. There were not a lot of people in the residential area in the afternoon.

Standing at the entrance to my former residence, I knocked. Subsequently, I yelled a few times to check if anyone was inside.

Seeing that no one answered the door, I heaved a sigh of relief as I fished for the key from the mailbox.

One time, I went out without bringing my key. I ended up waiting at the doorstep for half a day because Julius and Coraline were not at home.

Since then, I placed a spare key in the mail box for emergency use.

The mailbox was there only for decoration purposes. Thus, I was very certain that no one had ever noticed the key inside it.

Thankfully, the Keatons did not change their lock, so I could enter the house almost effortlessly.

I headed straight to the study where my computer was kept.

Previously, I worked in the study in order not to disturb Julius' rest time.

After turning on the computer, I went to the bedroom and looked for a bag to pack my stuff.

Right then, I heard the sound of the door unlocking from the outside.

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Chapter 34 Lifesaver

Immediately, my hand came to a halt as I panicked. Why would someone return at this hour? Wait a moment, why does it matter if someone is here? After all, this place used to be my home. I'm just here to take my own belongings. There's nothing to be afraid of!

Right at that moment, the bedroom door was pushed open, and Coraline's shrill voice echoed behind me. "Why are you here? Liliana, you thief! I can't believe that you have the guts to return!"

At that, I immediately zipped the bag shut and slung it over my shoulder before turning around to give her a cold glare. "Shut up. Who are you calling a thief? Shouldn't it be you or your son?"

In a fit of rage, Coraline slammed the door where it connected against the wall with a loud thud.

She strode toward me and raised her hand to strike me. “You b*tch, I’ll make you eat your words!” she yelled furiously.

However, I anticipated her movements and dodged her hand when she attempted to hit me.

At that, Coraline nearly lost her footing when I moved away from her.

“I can’t be bothered to talk to scum like you anymore.” Now that I’ve taken what I needed, I don’t have to waste my time here anymore.

With that, I tightened my grip on my bag and made a move to leave. Yet, Coraline hindered my exit by clinging onto my bag stubbornly.

“Liliana, you should just spill the beans! Were you here to steal something? You aren’t allowed to leave until I check your bag!” Coraline insisted.

Due to Coraline’s meddlesome nature, I wasn’t surprised when she mentioned that she wanted to go through my bag.

I grasped onto my bag without any intentions of letting go. “Who do you think you are to check my bag? Your son hasn’t signed our divorce yet. Therefore, this is still my home! Don’t you dare forget that!” I snapped back.

Thus, we were both locked in a struggle over the bag.

“You b*tch, you hooked up with another man despite being engaged to my son! What happened to the other man? Did he abandon you too? Did you finally realize that this is your home?” Coraline sneered and said, “I wonder how your mom managed to raise such a b*tch. The two of you must be cut from the same cloth. Did she cheat on your dad too? Your entire family must be—”

“That’s enough! I’ll make you regret it if you say another word!” Rage swelled in my heart when I heard Coraline’s insults.

I didn’t mind it when she berated me. However, I couldn’t believe she crossed the line by insulting my parents. I wish I could seal her mouth shut!

A flash of shock crossed Coraline’s face when she saw my outburst. However, her astonished expression was quickly replaced by an arrogant laugh. “What’s the matter? Were my words true? You and your mom must be shameless sl*ts! Your dad must be a b*stard too!”

The filthy words that spewed out of Coraline’s mouth drove me to the brink of insanity. Unable to hold back my anger anymore, I lashed out and kicked her in the stomach with full force.

Coraline let out a scream of pain when my leg hit her stomach.

At the same time, she let go of my bag and covered her stomach.

The sudden movement caused Coraline to lose momentum as she stumbled backward and collapsed to the ground. Her head collided against the table when she fell.

Despite witnessing her fall, I had no intentions to offer my help. Instead, I remained rooted in the spot as I glared at her. With a cold voice, I said to her, "I don't mind it if you talk about me. However, you've crossed the line by mentioning my parents!"

If she uttered another word about my parents, I swore that I would kick her to death.

However, Coraline was silent. She remained on the floor and did not react to my words.

I looked at her suspiciously before nudging her body with my foot. Yet, Coraline did not even stir.

Then, I shifted my gaze to the table. To my horror, there was crimson blood dripping off the corner of it.

My heart skipped a beat when I noticed that blood had begun to pool across the floor.

Immediately, all of my anger vanished into thin air. I tossed my bag aside and knelt before Coraline. "Coraline, wake up! Don't play dead!"

I reached forward to cradle her in my arms as I cried out in panic. All of a sudden, I felt something wet coat my palms. Crimson red blood filled my gaze when I looked down.

The frightening image of my hands covered in blood drained my body of any energy as I sank to the floor in disbelief. I murdered someone...

Abruptly, the loud ringtone of my phone startled me out of my daze.

Shakily, I rummaged for my phone. The notification on my screen was like a lifesaver.

Due to my trembling, it took me several tries before I could click on the button to answer the call.

"Liliana, did you—"

"Dominic, I—" Dominic's voice caused me to burst into tears as I lost control of my emotions.

"What happened? Where are you?"

His questions caused me to realize the severity of the situation. "I-I killed someone. Dominic, what do I do? There's blood everywhere!" I stuttered in between my sobs.

The heady stench and the feeling of blood all over my hands amplified my terror even more.

Over the phone, I could hear Dominic's loud yell. Subconsciously, it caused me to stop sobbing profusely. However, my tears continued to stream down my cheeks.

"Calm down. Are you in Julius' home? Who is the one bleeding?" Dominic asked.

Although Dominic spoke in a very rough tone, the sound of his voice seemed to quell my fear.

"Yeah. I came to collect something, and Coraline knocked her head. She..." I stammered hesitantly.

"Alright, don't do anything right now. Don't touch Coraline too. Wait there." Dominic hung up the call after he finished speaking.

The moment Dominic's voice vanished, I started to panic again.

Yet, I recalled his words. Don't touch Coraline too. His warning caused me to freeze up as I sat motionless on the floor.

Doesn't her death mean that I'm the murderer? Am I going to jail? What about my parents? They will hate me for eternity! I won't be able to face them at all.

Fear began to fill my body the more I dwelled on these thoughts. It felt like the terror was going to consume me.

All of a sudden, there was a loud bang accompanied by the sound of hurried footsteps that snapped me out of my dismal thoughts.

"Ms. Zanetti."

James' voice sounded like a hallucination.

Yet, I realized that he was actually standing by the entrance of the bedroom.

My face was covered in tears and snot. Additionally, the blood splattered all over my shirt must have given me a very disheveled appearance.

Nonetheless, James made his way toward me and yanked me to a standing position.

My legs were utterly numb because I had sat down for such a long duration. I stumbled and nearly lost my balance when James hauled me upwards.

However, he supported my body and guided me aside. A group of people adorned in white coats filed into the room with a first-aid kit and a stretcher in tow. Amongst the crowd, I noticed Yvonne.

Her presence left me stunned. Why are James and Yvonne here?

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Chapter 35 Right And Wrong

James then shifted his gaze to me. "Dominic will be here later. Don't worry; nothing bad will happen."

His words left me baffled. Dominic asked them to come here?

Coincidentally, my phone began to ring with a call from Dominic himself.

"Is James there?" Dominic asked the moment our call connected.

"Yeah, he is here." The fear in me had subsided immensely. It must be due to the presence of other people in the room. Additionally, Yvonne and the group of doctors were busy inspecting Coraline's wound.

Dominic's baritone voice sounded especially fierce as he said, "That's good. They will settle the incident. You should head home right away. Don't take any more detours and don't cause any more incidents."

I can't believe him! I was utterly terrified; yet, he didn't even try to comfort me. He even told me not to get into any more incidents. Did he think that I wanted to do this on purpose?

In the blink of an eye, his harsh words caused a cold feeling to blossom in my heart.

"Got it," I said curtly and ended the call.

I shouldn't be overthinking. Dominic is just cleaning up my mess so that it won't inconvenience him. After all, I'm now his caregiver. It would tarnish his reputation if I'm labeled as a murderer.

After they finished inspecting Coraline, Yvonne instructed the doctors to carry her out on the stretcher.

"Don't worry; she isn't in a critical condition," Yvonne explained.

I nodded in acknowledgment. "Okay, thank you so much."

Even Yvonne treated me better than Dominic did. At least she knows how to offer her comfort!

As we went downstairs, I noticed that Coraline had been carried into the ambulance.

Initially, I had plans to head to the hospital too. However, James stopped me from following the ambulance. "Ms. Zanetti, let's go. I'll send you home," he said lowly.

His words caused me to recall Dominic's warning from earlier, and I dismissed the idea of going to the hospital.

It was just after lunchbreak; thus, there were a group of elderly men and women gathered downstairs as they chatted amongst themselves. Amidst the group, I saw many familiar faces.

"It's been such a long time we saw you!"

"Ms. Zanetti, what happened to Coraline? Why is the ambulance here?"

One by one, they bombarded me with countless questions.

They looked at James with a suspicious gaze as he was someone who they didn't recognize. They even sized him up.

With the current situation, I had no wish to complicate it any further. Thus, I played along and answered a handful of questions before dragging James away from the crowd.

On the other hand, Dominic did not ask me about my destination. Likewise, I did not give him a location too. Nevertheless, he sent me to Dominic's mansion.

"Go inside and take a shower before you rest. You don't have to worry about anything. He should be back tonight," James said as he handed me my laptop and bag.

I accepted my belongings and thanked him before I entered the house.

After leaving my things in my room, I stripped my clothes and walked into the bathroom.

The stench of blood that clung to my skin was extremely nauseating.

To get rid of the smell, I showered for over two hours.

After I got dressed, I walked to the balcony and took a seat on the chaise longue. Next, I pulled out my phone and sent a text to Julius. No matter our relationship, I felt a responsibility to inform him about the incident with Coraline.

Although I had only met Yvonne twice, I held great trust in her words.

Yet, the imagery of Coraline lying in the pool of blood kept resurfacing in my mind.

Even though I'd just showered, it felt like I could still smell the stench of blood on me.

I closed my eyes and leaned against the chaise longue. I'm feeling a little tired; maybe I should take a nap.

Not long later, I fell into an uneasy slumber. However, I was roused from my sleep when my phone rang.

The caller was none other than Julius.

I hesitated for a brief moment answering the call.

Immediately, Julius' angry voice echoed through the phone. "Liliana, I can't believe you! How dare you attack my mom?" he roared.

I tried to defend myself against his accusations. "I didn't do it on purpose. Your mom—"

"Don't give me any excuses! Come to People's Hospital right away! You'll be a murderer if something bad happens to my mom."

Julius' harsh words caused me to panic again.

Didn't Yvonne say that Coraline will be fine? Was she lying?

Promptly, I forgot about Dominic's warnings as I grabbed my purse and rushed out.

Once I arrived at the hospital, I couldn't find Julius anywhere. Hurriedly, I called him.

He instructed me to head to Ward 504.

I heaved out a huge sigh of relief when I realized that Coraline was at the ward. Since she's at an ordinary ward, nothing life-threatening must have happened.

True to my assumptions, Coraline was on the bed with her head wrapped with several bandages.

Despite the fact that her face was pale and gaunt, she seemed to be in perfect condition.

Julius, on the other hand, was seated beside the bed as he looked after her dutifully. After all, he had always been a very obedient son.

Aside from Julius and Coraline, I noticed that there were other patients in the ward too.

At the same time, I realized that there was something odd about their gazes. It seemed like they were glaring at me with a mixture of anger and disdain.

Julius strode toward me when he noticed my presence. There was a look of anguish painted all over his face.

He even reached out to grasp my hand. The words that spilled out of his mouth left me utterly stunned.

“Darling, you know that I’m in love with you. Despite your actions, I never pressed you for any questions. As long as you are willing to return home, I’m more than happy to spend the rest of my days with you. If you are looking to ask for a divorce because you fell for someone else, I’ll gladly fulfill any of your requests. All I want is for you to be happy.”

I stared at him in a dumbfounded manner. Before I could respond, Coraline spoke up. “Julius, it’s all my fault. I’ll move out as soon as possible to ensure that the two of you can live in peace,” she sniffled and said pitifully.

Finally, I realized the true meaning of their words. They are putting on an act to gain pity. It’s no wonder the other people in the ward looked at me with such distaste when I entered.

All of the guilt that I felt toward Coraline disappeared into thin air.

“Julius, it’s true that I hurt your mom. I will not hesitate to pay for her medical fees. However, I’m sure that you know the truth of the scenario. How can you say such a blatant lie?” I replied in a cold voice.

A look of hurt and sadness flashed across his face. “Darling, you know how much I love my mom. Please don’t blame me for doing this. However, I can’t overlook your actions anymore.” The tone of his voice seemed to waver as he spoke. It seemed like he was about to burst into tears.

Before I could fully comprehend his words, two figures appeared behind my back.

Suddenly, I felt something cold clamp around my wrist as I looked down. Are those handcuffs?