

## Love the Second Time Around Chapter 51 - 55

### Chapter 51 | Agree

“So, you’ve given up running? This conference room is huge anyway. You can go ahead and continue. James will not open the door without receiving my call anyway, so we can take our time.”

I suddenly had the urge to slap Dominic’s smug face.

“You have time, but I don’t. I have nowhere to run anyway. Why don’t we talk it out?”

He pulled out a chair and sat opposite of me, crossing his legs. “Go ahead.” Damn... Why is he so arrogant!

I was really, really unhappy. However, fighting with Dominic would only end up with me being angrier.

I took a deep breath before saying, “Dominic, last night, I already repaid everything I owed you. From now on, we will not have anything to do with each other anymore.”

I had already given him more than enough — I don’t owe him anything anymore.

However, the man clearly thought otherwise.

He chuckled as his eyes gleamed, looking as if he could see right through me.

“You don’t owe me anymore? Liliana, do you think you are valuable enough to compensate for everything with just one night?”

“What do you mean by that? What happened yesterday was not consensual. You should be happy I didn’t file any charges against you. What more do you want?”

I really hated him for being pushy. It was obviously his fault, but he acted as if everybody owed him.

How could such an unreasonable bastard even exist?

Dominic suddenly stood up, like a towering giant looking down upon me.

Screw you... long legged bastard.

“Don’t come over. We’ll talk like this. We have to be at least five meters... No, ten meters apart.”

When he started walking, I started to back away.

Being close to him felt oppressive.

However, he didn't seem to heed my warnings; he continued to approach me at a fast pace without care.

I continued backing away as much as I could. Unfortunately for me, I didn't realize the wall behind me. When my back hit it, I knew I had no way to escape.

Great, he's pinned me against the wall.

But why am I not feeling the fleeting heart and excitement that happens in dramas?

"Dominic, If you dare to do anything crazy to me, I will... Mhmm..."

He... We're here to break off all our relations... Why are you kissing me!

I immediately attempted to push him away, but he wouldn't budge.

When Dominic finally let go of me, my lips were swollen.

He lifted his eyebrows and chuckled, "Why are you resisting? Didn't you enjoy it?"

"I didn't! Not one bit! Dominic, when did you turn into such a person? Why are you being so forceful towards me? What happened to your pride and self-control!"

Having heard what I said, the smile on his face suddenly vanished. His face became ice cold.

He twisted my hand behind my back and squeezed my jaw, prohibiting me from moving even one inch.

"You have no right to lecture me." Dominic's eyes were so cold as he spoke,

I closed my eyes, suppressed my fear, then opened my eyes again to look straight at him.

"Fine, I won't, then. But don't you think you're going overboard? Dominic, it's been five years. No matter what happened between us, it is already in the past. Now, let us go back to our own respective lives, okay?"

I didn't know why, but my voice suddenly choked up.

No matter how deep our love was before, it's all in the past now. He's got Camille now, and I... Having myself is more than enough.

Dominic brought his face closer to mine, causing the tips of our noses to be almost touching.

“Back to your own life? Sure, as long as you agree to my terms, I’ll let you go back to your own life.”

“Tell me what they are,” I said that solely out of curiosity — I knew nothing good would come out of him.

He tilted his head and stared at me for a long time, letting out a sly grin after a while.

“Did you not understand what I said? You have only two choices. Agree, or don’t agree. If you agree, I will tell you my terms. If you don’t, we’ll just continue our wild ride together and see where the world will take us.”

I... How is this different from not having a choice? I’m still being threatened.

“The countdown starts now. Three!”

I bit my lip and didn’t say a word as he was clearly forcing me.

“Two!”

“Dominic...”

“Three!” he yelled, interrupting me.

Forget it. I’ll agree with him. He’s just going to make a fool out of me in the end, and it won’t be the first time he’ll do so anyway. I’ll let him have his fun and forget about it after.

“I’ll agree!”

Dominic was instantly smiling gleefully. He had been very sure that I would agree.

He let go of my hand, took out his cell phone, and made a phone call. He only said three words on the phone. “All’s good now.”

I demanded while rubbing my wrist, “State your terms.”

I wanted to end my suffering as early as possible.

I had already expressed my agreement, so I was expected him to speak up. However, Dominic went silent.

“Don’t worry. In time, I will tell you.”

Damn it! My heart is already out of control; it's pounding anxiously, yet you still want to torture me like this?

At that moment, the door opened. It was James.

"It's over? That was pretty quick. I expected the both of you to go on until tomorrow."

As soon as I saw his happy, smiley face, I could no longer suppress my anger. I rushed at him with my fist.

James immediately avoided me and hid behind Dominic while protecting his face.

"Buddy, I'm just here to help you. Why don't you do something? Do you have any idea how many beautiful young girls will weep if I broke my handsome face?"

I can't do anything to Dominic right now, but I need to vent my anger on James no matter what.

"Get out of the way." I waved a hand at Dominic angrily.

He became surprisingly cooperative, immediately stepping aside for me to rush at the man behind him.

I strode over to grab James on his sleeves and pinched the flesh on his waist.

"Tell me, will you ever trick me again?"

I pinched him with all my strength. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't have to agree to Dominic's terms hopelessly.

James let out a cry in despair. "F\*ck! Let go! Let go of me! Dominic, I help you, and you treat me like this? Damn... It hurts!"

As I said, Dominic was inhuman. He didn't react to the man's cries at all, even after hearing James screaming in pain. He just stood by and watched.

That wasn't enough for me, so I twisted my hand even further. Try tricking me again, and I will rip off your flesh.

"Liliana. You're like a sister to me. Stop pinching. It's painful. I was wrong, okay?" James' face turned bright red.

I glared at him and scowled with a cold voice, "Do you dare to help him again in the future?"

## **Love the Second Time Around Chapter 52**

## Chapter 52 Do You Believe Me

James rubbed at the area where I had pinched him and shook his head feebly.

I shot daggers at him again. When I turned back, I heard him muttering, “Why are you so fierce at me. He’s just right there, so I dare not do anything...”

Upon hearing that, I stopped moving, turned around, and raised my hand.

“Ahem... I have a meeting soon. So I better leave. I will leave the both of you to yourselves.” As soon as James finished, he fled the room in a hurry.

After watching him leave the room, I looked towards Dominic again. “What do you want me to agree to? Say it quick. I’m in a hurry.”

I don’t want to stay here anymore. I’ll go back and clean up before I rest early. If nothing happens tomorrow, then I’ll go home.

“Come home with me. I’ll tell you once I think of it,” he stated, reaching out his hands as if to grab me.

I hurriedly put my arms behind me and said, “I will not go back with you. Before this, you wanted me to take care of you. Now you are standing here, with fine limbs. You don’t need me anymore.”

He squinted his eyes. I was afraid he would disagree, so I added, “Call me after you think about it. I won’t back down.”

“You blacklisted me.”

He even found out about this... To avoid going back with him, I took out my phone and unblocked his number in front of him.

“Okay? Now you can call me,” I told him softly.

To be honest, I didn’t know why I had complied with him. If he actually did force me to go home with him, I could call the police or even apply for a restraining order as they did on television.

There were many solutions I could turn to. However, I compromised.

Dominic stared at me quietly; I didn’t know what he was thinking.

Just when I thought he wouldn’t accept my proposal, he spoke, “Address.”

“What address?” I was stumped.

“Your current address,” he said nonchalantly.

“It’s not like I will run...” I had more to go on, but I didn’t say it with him staring at me. I eventually gave him my new address.

I was sure that I somehow owed him something in my past life.

“If there’s nothing else, I’ll be leaving.” I really didn’t want to linger around him any longer. The feeling of being threatened by him made me feel helpless.

However, he extended his arm and stopped me again. “What’s the hurry? I’m not finished yet.”

Upon hearing that, I grew a little angry. I raised my head and yelled, “Are you done? You’re so annoying.”

“Bad temper will only make you age quicker. Not that you’re pretty to start with, and you still don’t have the sense of crisis. Be careful, or you’ll end up dying alone.

I ground my teeth at that, wanting to bite the bastard to death.

“That’s my problem. You don’t need to worry about it. Is there anything else? Please make it quick.”

He smiled and shrugged. Though he didn’t dwell on that topic anymore, he asked that I always answer the phone whenever he called.

Although it was a domineeringly unreasonable request, I nodded.

As long as I could go home right now, I was willing to accept anything.

I soon left the building and stood outside by the road. The air felt incredibly refreshing.

The time I spent with Dominic had almost suffocated me.

I returned to my newly rented house, did some simple cleaning, ordered takeout, watched a few TV series episodes, and went to bed early.

I woke up early the following day, so naturally, I also left home early. It wasn’t yet noon when I arrived in Dellmoor.

I thought of what my parents said, and I felt a little unnerved.

I was their daughter, but they willingly believed the words of an outsider, not willing to listen to my explanation.

No matter what, blood is thicker than water. I am now divorced; it is a fact that I can no longer hide.

I looked around the house as I got home and saw that my mom was the only one there. Dad should be at school right now.

I came home today without calling ahead, so my mom was surprised to see me. "Lili, why are you home all of a sudden. Why didn't you call?"

I pursed my lips and said, "Mom, I have something to tell you."

Her expression changed when she heard the seriousness in my tone, and she sat me down on the couch. Before I could say anything, she asked, "Is it about you and Julius?"

"Yes. Him and I are already divorced."

My mom was a little startled by the news. She let out a long sigh before saying, "Lili, you're so foolish. You're a married woman; why can't you just live a good life? Why trouble yourself? Back then, if you didn't want to get married so soon, your dad and I wouldn't have said anything."

She continued sadly, "Now you've done it. You've only been married for half a year, and you cheated... You're really trying to upset us."

Before I came home, I had already known they would lecture me, but I didn't expect them to actually believe the lies Julius told them.

I grew anxious and angry. "The one who cheated was Julius, not me! Everything he told you was a lie!"

I thought my mother would take my side after I explained myself. However, I was wrong. She still defended my ex-husband.

"How could that be? He treated you well. He was so considerate of you even before the marriage. When you both came home after marrying, he had always taken care of everything for you. He would also call us every now and then to ask how we were doing. How could he have been cheating?"

I immediately felt myself be overwhelmed in despair. They're my parents. Am I not the person they should believe in the most?

Perhaps Julius cast a spell on them to make them trust him this much.

I rubbed my sore nose and steadily looked at my mother. "Mom, I came home to explain everything clearly. If you would rather believe an outsider instead of your daughter, then I have nothing to say."

I proceeded to tell my mother everything that had happened between Julius and I. When I was about to finish, my mother was utterly stunned. Once I finally finished speaking, she took a long time to react. "Is this... true? Julius, he... That boy. He doesn't look like someone who would..."

Oh... You're still not willing to believe me?

I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

I looked at the clock on the wall. It was almost twelve; my dad should be home soon. Looking at my mom's reaction, I couldn't imagine my dad's.

I didn't want to upset him, so I picked up my bag and stood up. "Mom, I'm going now. Take your time and think about what I've told you. As for dad... do as you see fit."

Seeing that I was about to leave, my mother took my hand and said, "You're leaving just like that? Don't you want to see your dad?"

I gave her a bitter smile and said, "If you don't believe me, do you think he will? He'll be angry once he sees me."

"Lili..." My mom looked worried.

## Love the Second Time Around Chapter 53

### Chapter 53 The Worst Is Over

I couldn't move my legs after seeing my mom in that state. She was afraid, and she must be bewildered as well.

In fact, I really wanted to stay. But upon thinking of my dad's temper and his illness, I felt helpless.

I stood there contemplating what to do for a few minutes. Before I had made up my mind, I heard the sound of keys opening the door.

My mother and I were startled and exchanged glances.

I turned around to look at the door, and it was my dad who had come home. I turned nervous instantly.

My mother squeezed my palms assuringly. It felt somewhat soothing. Then, she approached my dad.

My dad seemed to be having a good mood when he entered the house. But when he looked up and saw me, he froze.

"Dad," I called out to him softly.

He ignored me. My mother helped him with his briefcase, trying to ease the situation. "Darling, it's rare for our daughter to come home. Don't be so stern. Let's calm down and talk. How could father and daughter harbor overnight grudges?"



After that, my mother signaled at me with her eyes.

Catching onto her meaning, I walked over and said, "Dad, I'll make you a cup of tea."

"Yes, quickly. Remember to let the water boil before you pour it in. Darling, come, let's sit on the couch."

My mom took my dad to the sofa, as I put some tea leaves into a clay teapot and went into the kitchen.

I was in a daze while waiting for the water to boil. I was afraid of my dad not believing in my words. The last time I left, we argued, and it wasn't pleasant. Now...

The whistle of the kettle brought me back to my senses.

Forget it. Since I can no longer hide the truth, I should make things clear to him.

If they remain doubtful, I will bring the divorce papers back and show them everything. I'll also invite Julius and Benjamin to confront them in person.

Julius seemed to be afraid of Benjamin back then. If the other man were here, Julius wouldn't dare to deceive my parents.

After I got myself together, I brought the tea to the living room. My mom and dad were sitting together.

I put the tea in front of my dad, saying, "Dad, have some tea."

My dad intimidatingly stared at me in silence, causing my heart to thump anxiously. He won't chase me out without giving me the chance to speak, will he?

"Is what your mother said true? You and Julius are divorced? The things you say about Julius cheating on you and taking your money, is it all true?"

I did not expect my mother to tell him everything while I was boiling water.

I silently nodded, keeping my eyes glued to the floor.

Every word I said was absolutely true, but I was still afraid that I would hear their doubts again.

My dad was silent for a moment, and I could feel his eyes burning me.

"Darling, I know it sounds outrageous, but she is still our daughter. She wouldn't..."

My mother looked worried as she tried to defend me. However, my dad slammed the tea table aggressively.

The glasses on the tea table clashed with each other due to the tremendous impact.

My mom and I were instantly frightened.

My dad stood up, looking grim. His voice was trembling with rage. "Wow. Julius, that brat. He dared to do this to you. I must settle the score with him!"

I was dumbfounded by his reaction. Dad... He believes me?

My mother grabbed him and yelled anxiously, "Hey, why are you acting so recklessly? What are you going to do? Fight him? You're in no condition to do."

"Is it because of my age? He bullied my daughter! So what if I beat him up? What can he do to me?" My dad's voice was deafening; he sounded furious.

I ran over and grabbed his other arm as well. I then asked him with doubt lacing my tone, "Dad... Do you actually believe me? Last time, weren't you..."

Last time, he made me think about the mistakes I made, but now, why...

"Of course I do! Why didn't you tell us earlier? If you had told us earlier, that mother and son wouldn't have had the guts to come over and trouble us. Not only did you hurt yourself, but you also embarrassed us."

My dad lectured me fiercely, but I was too happy at the fact that he believed my words over Julian's to care.

Happiness filled me so suddenly, and tears gushed out of my eyes. They were all tears of joy.

"Why are you crying? Let me ask you, how did he agree to the divorce? Did you actually give him money? If that's the case, let's call the police and sue him. We don't want a single penny from him, but we cannot let him take advantage of us. He needs to know his place!"

At that moment, my dad seemed very manly in my eyes. He's so cool and awesome.

I held back my tears and told them everything about how Benjamin helped me and Julius's promise to give money.

My parents' mood improved after knowing that Julius did not bully me, but my dad still had some rage lingering in him.

I didn't want him to settle the score for me in fear that something terrible would happen to him if he did so.

As long as they were willing to believe my side of the story — the truth — it was more than enough. Besides, Julius was also in trouble, so I felt no need to attack him.

I carefully thought about what to do. Previously, we weren't calm, and Julius had taken the opportunity to deceive us. He influenced everyone.

My dad didn't have a good attitude back then, and I had left home with a heavy heart and a negative impression of him.

If I had been able to calm down a little back then or maybe take a breather, things might have been different.

I felt guilty, and so I apologized, saying, "Dad, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have fought with you before."

He sighed, "I shouldn't have said those words either. You're my daughter. I should've believed you no matter what."

The touching moment made my nose runny again, and I rushed forward to hug my dad.

My mom started wiping her tears beside us, weeping silently upon knowing that my dad and I had made up. My dad comforted her upon seeing her get emotional.

Now that Julius and I were divorced and my parents believed me again, the two of my worst problems are over. To say I was relieved would be an understatement.

National Day was coming in more than a week. My mother asked for me to stay until the festival before leaving. Louis would also be coming home.

There was nothing for me to do if I went back anyway, so I agreed.

Back at home, I could eat my mother's cooking every day. I didn't have to worry about anything. Life was good.

Once "The Wind And Cloud" production starts, and I've joined the film crew, I probably won't have time to come home anymore.

I lazed around my home for four days; it felt so good to take a break.

My parents probably felt guilty about what had happened earlier, as they let me do as I pleased. I could do whatever I wanted.

To my pleasant surprise, Dominic didn't call me once throughout my stay there.

I thought I could relax until National Day was over. However, on Monday before dawn, I was woken up by the annoying ringtone of my phone.

## Love the Second Time Around Chapter 54

### Chapter 54 Two Possibilities

I binge-watched dramas till the wee hours of dawn at home since I had nothing better to do. Consequently, I never got up before ten in the morning.

I was rudely woken up by the ringing of my phone one night.

Fumbling for the offensive device on my bedside table, it took a while for me to crack my eyes open and look at the caller ID.

Louis Zanetti, you little asshole! Why are you calling me at such an ungodly hour?

Accepting the call, I immediately bellowed into the receiver, "Dude, what's wrong with you? Why are you calling me in the middle of the night? If you can't fall asleep, don't drag others down with you!"

There was silence on the other end of the call. It lasted for so long that I had to check my phone to see if the line was still connected.

I raged at his seemingly senseless prank.

"Louis Zanetti, you-"

"Hello ma'am, am I speaking to Liliana Zanetti?"

My brain screeched to a halt at the voice that greeted me. Pulling my phone away from my ear, I confirmed that the number was indeed Louis', despite the stranger who had just spoken to me.

The stranger continued asking about my identity. Confused, I inquired, "This is Liliana Zanetti speaking. Who are you, and where is my brother?"

I got an explanation immediately. "Ms. Zanetti, your brother's run into some trouble. Could you make your way down to the station? I'm referring to the police station, by the way. It's the one near your brother's school."

My sleepiness was gone once I heard about the police station. I sat up in a rush.

Having been detained in one myself not too long ago, I knew firsthand how devastating it felt.

How did Louis get himself stuck in the police station? He's been a straight-A student since young, and his track record is squeaky-clean.

Another thought invaded my mind; I wondered if he had fallen for a scam. They're getting more common these days, after all.

“May I speak to my brother, please?” I had to figure this out.

I could tell that the person on the other end was hesitating. Eventually, she agreed to my request and put me on hold. A moment later, someone spoke into the phone.

“Lili.” Hearing my brother’s voice on the other end of the line fueled my panic.

“Lou, where are you? Are you really at the police station? What happened?” My questions tumbled out in a rush.

“Lili, could you come here? Don’t let Mom and Dad know, please.” His request made my heart sink. Something’s very wrong.

Before I could ask more questions, the person who had spoken to me earlier had come back on the line.

“Ms. Zanetti, please hurry.”

Left with no other choice, I could only agree to go over to meet them.

I hung up and hopped off the bed, getting dressed and packing as fast as I could.

It was barely six in the morning. Louis did not want to worry my parents, and neither did I, so I didn’t approach them with the shocking news.

I did not want to throw them into a tizzy before we had sorted things out.

Before setting off, I left a note on the coffee table, letting them know that I would be gone on urgent business.

My brother was a university student at the Jadeborough Institute of Science and Technology. To get to Jadeborough city, I had to take a flight.

I bought the earliest flight to Jadeborough once I arrived at the airport. It would depart at half-past seven.

I touched down two hours later and took a cab to the Jadeborough Institute of Science and Technology.

It was my first time visiting Jadeborough and my brother’s university, so I had no idea where the police station was.

I had to ask several locals before I managed to locate the station.

“Hello, is there a Louis Zanetti here? I’m his sister,” I asked a young woman clad in police uniform at the front counter.

She moved her mouse rapidly like she was checking the station records.

About half a minute later, she said, "Yes, he came in yesterday, right? You can head over there; they'll bring you to him."

I thanked her politely and walked in the direction she had pointed out.

I soon reached a set of office doors and pushed them open. Two policemen were sitting in the office. Confused about who I was supposed to talk to, I repeated my question to the room.

A square-faced policeman stood up once I finished my question. He approached me and said, "Ms. Zanetti, we've been expecting you for a while. Would you like to meet your brother first?"

I recognized his voice as the caller from yesterday.

"Yes, please. Sorry for the trouble." I was dying to meet Louis, and I felt relieved that this policeman seemed friendlier than the others who had questioned me earlier.

He brought me to a room and gestured for me to enter.

When I opened the door, I saw Louis slumped in a chair. The lights in the room were painfully bright.

I knew the lights were meant to keep him awake.

"Lou." My heart ached at his suffering.

He immediately lifted his head at my tone, looking dazed. It seemed to take him a while to recognize me. His voice shook as he pleaded, "Lili! Save me, Lili! I didn't rape that girl. I don't even know who she is!"

Rape? I was stunned. He was detained for rape?

The severity of the situation struck me then. Lou's future will be ruined if this goes on his record. Our parents will be devastated.

He was, however, my brother. I knew his character too well, and he was too honorable to ever carry out a crime as beastly as rape.

Clasping his hands, I tried my best to comfort him. I needed him to calm down and explain the situation to me.

"Lou, tell me what happened. Don't worry; I'll get you out of here."

My tone must have reassured him as he visibly relaxed.

According to Louis, he had gone to a karaoke bar with his classmates last night. Everyone had drunk a fair bit and gotten tipsy, and at some point, he decided to go to the restroom.

Once he exited the restroom, some people dragged him off.

I asked if they were his classmates, but he had no recollection since he was tipsy.

What happened next was a blur. It ended with a girl screaming about being raped and naming him as the culprit.

“Lili, you’ve got to believe me! I didn’t do anything. I just ended up in the wrong room! I don’t even know who that girl is.” Louis began to panic as he recounted the incident.

I had the utmost trust in my brother’s character. There were only two possibilities in this situation; a simple misunderstanding or premeditated sabotage against Louis.

Falsely accusing someone of rape is too much.

“Don’t worry. I believe you. Let me ask the police some questions.”

My head was a mess as well, but I could not reveal my fear to Louis, who would only feel more hopeless.

I left the interrogation room and bumped into the policeman who had brought me here.

## **Love the Second Time Around Chapter 55**

### **Chapter 55 Something Is Amiss**

I approached him said, “Thank you for calling me.”

He had been kind enough to let me and Louis talk for as long as we needed in the interrogation room.

Smiling, he replied, “We’re obligated to contact their family. I guess your brother told you everything.”

I nodded dejectedly. Just then, a thought crossed my mind. “Can I meet that girl? My brother would never do something like this. There must have been a misunderstanding.”

The whole situation felt off, and I knew that the girl held an important clue.

The policeman shook his head and informed me that she had gone home. I could only visit her residence if I wished to meet her.

I wrangled her address out of the policeman despite his initial reluctance. He was probably worried that I would pull some funny tricks.

I swore up and down that I would not harm her — I only wanted to talk to her.

Only then did he give me her address on a piece of paper.

I failed to bail Louis out, and I could only comfort him and assure him that I would be back once I cleared things up. I vowed that I would save him.

At the exit of the police station, the policeman handed me a note and told me that I could contact him if I needed help.

I learned that his name was Xavier Tyrrell.

The only thing I could do was to track down the alleged victim. Following the address the policeman had given me, I hailed a cab to a quaint residential area called Landonville Gardens.

I found myself outside unit 407 of Tower A in the fifth block of the place. I knocked on the metal door and heard a rustling sound.

Soon after, a girl's voice drifted out, "Who is it? Give me a moment."

I kept quiet, fearful that she would refuse to open the door once she learned of the purpose of my visit.

The door swung open and revealed a beautiful young woman.

"Who are you looking for?"

"Hi, are you perhaps Queenie Young?"

She hesitated before nodding, her face filled with suspicion.

My words came tumbling out in a hurry. "Well, here's the thing. I'm Louis Zanetti's sister. You said my brother raped you, and I wanted to know—"

Before I could finish my sentence, the woman's expression turned downright ugly, and she interrupted me angrily.

"There's nothing left to say. Your brother raped me, simple as that. Please leave."



“That’s impossible. My brother would never do something like that. Ms. Young, perhaps there was a misunderstanding?” I asked desperately.

Her mind was, however, made up. She insisted that Louis had raped her and slammed the door in my face. No amount of knocking would make her reopen the door.

I settled down hopelessly at the stairs. Oh well, I guess I’ll wait out here. I’ve got to speak with her.

I had been sitting there for about half an hour when two policemen entered my sight, one of whom was Xavier.

He looked at me awkwardly, and I realized with a jolt that they might be looking for me.

“Ms. Zanetti, you should leave. Ms. Young has reported you to the police for harassment. I’m sure you don’t want to end up in the station yourself before freeing your brother.”

I did not expect Queenie to report me to the police over my visit. Though I was reluctant to leave, I knew it was in Louis’ best interests for me to obey their orders.

Begrudgingly, I followed the policemen out of the building.

Once we were outside the residential area, Xavier advised me not to seek out Queenie again. Well, not for that day, at least.

I agreed since any objections would be futile.

To stay near Louis, I returned to the vicinity of the Jadeborough Institute of Science and Technology and got myself a room at a nearby hotel.

Once I checked myself in, I lay sprawled on the giant bed with my pile of tangled emotions.

As Jadeborough was a foreign place to me, I did not know who I could reach out to for help.

My confidence in Louis’ innocence grew after I met with Queenie; something was definitely up.

The woman had not behaved like a rape victim, and her rush to kick me out seemed like an act of guilt.

After some contemplation, I decided to get some help. I chose to call Benjamin. Even if he could not travel to Jadeborough, he knew more about law and crimes than I did, and it would be good to seek his opinion.

When I pulled out my phone to call him, I realized that it had remained off since the moment I boarded the plane.

Switching it on, I immediately received a call from my mom. I pretended nothing was wrong, fibbing about my rush to leave over some issues with my manuscript.

I called Benjamin after ending the call. To my dismay, my call went unanswered for a long time.

Impatient, I waited a couple of minutes before calling him again. Someone eventually picked up after the line had been ringing for a while.

“Liliana? What’s wrong? Is your ex-husband giving you trouble again?”

I rushed into my explanation. “This has nothing to do with him. It’s my brother. He’s in trouble. You’ve got to help me.”

Benjamin put me on hold for a minute before he returned to the call.

“Your brother? What happened?”

I felt myself calming down as I recounted the situation to him. It was possible that I felt reassured by his profession as a lawyer and his excellent handling of my divorce. Instinctively, I knew I could trust him.

“Are you sure your brother is telling the truth?” Benjamin sounded exceptionally calm on the call, bordering on the point of indifference.

His suspicions were unexpected, and my anger reared its ugly head once more.

“What are you implying? Do you think he’s lying to me? Lou is my brother, and I believe in him! If you don’t want to help me, I’ll find someone else.”

I was about to hang up when Benjamin halted me. There was a loud sigh before he said, “Why are you so agitated? When did I say I wouldn’t help you? Where are you now? I’ll come over. It’s better to have this discussion face-to-face.”

“I’m in Jadeborough city. My brother’s enrolled in a university here.”

He paused for a moment before swearing. “Damn, couldn’t you have picked a closer place? Forget it, wait for me there. Oh right, did you tell Dominic?”

My hope reignited at his promise to travel to Jadeborough. I was, however, perplexed by his question about Dominic. I could only tell him that Dominic was unaware.

He hung up soon after, telling me that he would call me once he arrived in Jadeborough.

My gut instinct told me that Louis would be fine once Benjamin came to the rescue.

I spent the rest of the day waiting for his call in the hotel. The wait was excruciating.

At about four in the afternoon, I finally got a call from Benjamin. In response to my offer to fetch him, he only asked for my address.

Half an hour later, there was a knock on the door. I jumped up and flung the door open.

I immediately froze in surprise. Dominic, Benjamin, and Mitch were all there.

Mitch's arrival was not wholly unexpected since he was a lawyer like Benjamin.

Dominic, though, made me surprised. I stared at him and asked, "Why are you here?"