

A Fateful Chance

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Chapter 1: DEANDRA BURLINGTON

Deandra's POV

I entered the room and my sisters came rushing towards me. They all looked very excited as they showed their open palms at me.

"Did you have something for us, our dear sister?" Dina asked in a very polite manner.

"You're all adorable! How can this older sister resist all your cute, little charms?" I can't help but to giggle after they showed me their pleading eyes.

"Yeah, of course. How can I forget all of my sweet little darlings?" I entered the house and I put all the food that I bought after working for many hours. I can't help but be happy because her smile took all my tiredness away. She smiled from ear to ear as soon as she saw me.

"You're all too adorable for me to forget. You deserve all of these foods." She smiled as she put all the foods on the table for them to clearly see.

"Yippiee! Thank you sister! I love you!" She hugged both of my feet. She's still very young but she's very sweet.

"Where's mom?"

"She's in the room already."

"Where's Dee and Dina?"

"They are in their rooms too, sis."

"Thank you so much for the information my cute Dahlia." I even pinched her cheek as she smiled sweetly. When I let her cheek go, I noticed that she massaged it while getting the fried chicken from the paper bag I bought a while ago.

I slowly entered mom's room and I can see her massaging her head. There's still a towel wrapped around her wet hair, obviously she took a bath just now. She's closing her eyes but when she felt my presence, she opened her eyes right away.

I can see her eyes glistened as soon as she saw me coming towards her.

"Where's the money?" She said while opening her palms in front of me. I met her eyes but I won't give her what she wanted.

"M-Mom, I already gave you the money the other day, right?"

Her facial expression suddenly changed. She frowned right away as she looked at me with an icy stare as soon as she heard what I said to her.

"So, what do you want to say? I took the money away?"

"Mom, it's not what I mean." I looked down. I don't want to look at her and offend her.

"Then what?" She got off from bed and came near me as she put her hands on the side of her hips. I can see her raising one of her eyebrows.

"I am just asking if where's the money I gave you. It's almost five thousand pesos."

"I already paid it to Mrs. Leeway's for our debts."

"Huh? What debts?"

"Why are you asking nonsense questions? Give me the money now!" She's already mad. I really stopped myself from crying as I secretly closed my fists.

I slowly put my hand inside my pocket as I get the two-thousand peso bill from my salary this afternoon.

I wanted to get angry at her, too. I want to tell her right in front of her face that I am the one who paid our debts to Mrs. Leeway when I was on my way here a while ago.

flashback

I can't wait to go home and give money to my mom. Dahlia also wanted to eat some fried chicken. I knew she wanted to eat that food for a long time. I even promised her to buy one when my salary will be given to me. I was happily walking on the footwalk when someone stood in front of me all of a sudden.

"Deandra..." Mrs. Leeway appeared in front of me like an unwanted ghost. She's folding her arms as she gives me an angry look.

"Good evening, Mrs. Leeway."

"My evening will only be good if you will pay the debts of your mother to me."

"W-What? Debts?" I admit, it's kind of surprising because I know I never had any of it myself. How come we had debts all of a sudden?

"How could you not know? Are you stupid to not know that your mom has been borrowing money from me ever since that mahjong started across our store?"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Leeway. I have no idea about what you're talking about."

"No idea? Your mom told me that if I will just tell you about her debt to me and you will be the one to pay it for her."

"S-Sorry, Mrs. Leeway. I never knew about it. I will pay you now, don't worry."

"You are full of dramas. You will pay the money but you blabber a lot." She said while frowning. She took the money bills from my hands in a swift motion before I even knew it.

end of flashback

Those words still echoed my mind. I paid three thousand pesos to Mrs. Leeway right away because there were people who started to listen to what we're talking about. Because I consider myself as a good daughter that wants to avoid any form of scandal, I paid a debt I don't even know.

I am facing my mother right now and I am looking at her palms that's opened in front of me while she's getting very mad. With shaky hands, I am able to give him another two-thousand peso bill.

"You will give me your money and yet you're asking me a lot of nonsense questions. Don't be an idiot, Deandra. Use your common sense. You're already ugly, use your tiny brain at least."

Those words crushed my heart into millions of pieces. How could my own mother say this to me after what I am doing for this family? I've been working the whole day. I've been waiting tables, ran endless errands and even stood long hours as a receptionist. I am physically tired and now? This tiredness even added up to the disappointment I am feeling because she couldn't even appreciate the efforts that I am putting into my job. I am doing my very best to give the money that she wants.

Is this how my mom shows her gratitude to me? Does she really care for me or the money that I give her? When I entered the house, I even noticed there's no cooked rice. No food is placed on the table and the house is a real mess.

"I will eat with Dahlia, mom." I excused myself as I got back to our small dining room and kitchen in one.

"Dee, Dina...let's eat." I gently called them. I turned my gaze to the door of the room where my twin sisters are sleeping. It opened and Dina's head peeped outside the window while she's still rubbing her eyes.

"Dear Deandra, Dee's forehead is hot."

"What?"

"She's only lying on our bed, sis." She said while showing her weary look. My heart suddenly beat fast as I looked at my younger sister's face.

The twins are aged twelve years old now. I know if Dina looked weary, something is also wrong with Dee. I tried to look calm as much as possible. I smiled as I let her come near me. She only looked down as she stepped forward. When she's in front of me, I lowered my body to her height as I kissed her forehead. I can see that she's about to cry while touching her stomach. I closed my fist again as I can't help but grit my teeth.

What is mother doing all along this time?

"Hello my beautiful Dina. Please go to Dahlia and eat with her. I will go to Dee and give her a half bath so that she'll feel fine."

"Yes, dear Deandra. Do we have fried chicken?" My sister asked innocently. I can't help but bitterly laugh. With this scene, I noticed the tears already streaming down my cheeks as I looked at her. I wiped it right away with my hands as I smiled at my skinny-looking sister.

"Yes. I bought a lot for all of us." I said as I tapped her shoulders.

My sister responded with a weak smile. She went to the table where Dahlia is eating now. I could hear them giggling while eating the crunchy fried chicken I bought for them. If mother can't be a mother for all of us and my siblings, I'd gladly do it for her.

Chapter 2: BLOOD SISTERS

Deandra's POV

I gently knocked on the door where my other twin sister Dee is resting right now. When she's not answering, I twisted the doorknob and entered while holding a small basin half-filled with warm water and a towel inside it.

I saw her lying on the bed, facing the ceiling while opening her eyes.

"Hello, dear Deandra." Her cute voice greeted me as soon as she noticed my presence.

"Hello my beautiful Dee. How are you?"

"My head is aching and I don't feel well."

"Don't worry my dear sister. I am here now." I sat beside her bed and placed the basin on the chair next to me. I pulled the towel from the basin half-filled with water. I wrung it by removing the excess water. I placed my palm on her forehead.

I am surprised that she's too hot. I felt my knees shaking but I stayed calm as much as possible. What if she'll know I am more worried than her? She'll be sadder for sure.

"You know what, dear Deandra...when I grow up, I want to be like you."

I chuckled because my sister said that out of the blue.

"Why? I am ugly and fat. You should be like Karina Wiss. She's a popular superstar."

"But I want to be like my eldest sister. You know what, dear Deandra...you're my best, favorite person ever!"

I shook my head and chuckled. Dee is really the talkative one. She's never running out of words.

"You're the only one who bought us fried chicken. You're the only sister in the world who takes good care of us." I smiled as I wiped the damp towel on both of her arms.

"Someday, you will have your own favorite person, dear. I am not the only one who will do these things to all of you."

"But dear Deandra, you're the first person to do this to us."

"Of course, I am your sister. I suppose to do it for all of you, right?"

"Well, our mom does not do duties like that of a real mom." I chuckled as I felt the sarcasm that my sister showed our mother. I can't blame her, though. It's her own opinion that just came out her mouth. I knew Dee as the tough cookie and Dina as her opposite in nature.

"Please love our mother, Dee. I know she's been through a lot. That's why we can't easily blame her for acting like that." I calmly explained to her. As the eldest, I know I have a voice to advise my siblings what to do.

"You know what, sis? If only all people think the way you do, we'll all make the world a better place to live."

I looked at Dee's expression as she said those words. I am older than my sister for fourteen years and yet her being matured when it comes to expressing her ideas amazes me so much.

I pulled her shirt off and with her baby bra on, I wiped the damp towel on her back and her lower abdomen as well.

"Are you feeling better now?"

"Yeah. Better because you're the one taking care of me." She said as she cupped both of my cheeks.

"Good. Now, I want you to eat dinner with your sisters." She smiled weakly as she stood up. I even pulled both of her hands to assist her to stand up. Dina and Dahlia haven't started yet. I know we can still join them for dinner.

We both went outside and sat on the two vacant seats Dina and Dahlia reserved for us. I am not in the mood to call mother for dinner because she got most of my money. I guess she can sleep with a sly grin on her face even on an empty stomach.

"Dear Deandra, please eat now." Dahlia suddenly exclaimed as she held a leg part of fried chicken and offered it in front of me with her hand. She's too charming as she smiled. I can't help but to accept it. When it comes to my sisters, I am becoming incredibly soft. I never thought that after what I have encountered from Mrs. Leeway, I could smile again. I thought I lost my appetite for my dinner. I am expecting that the three of them will eat their favorite food while I am looking at them with a contented heart.

I bought ten pieces of fried chicken for all of us but now, I can't see any single fried chicken on the plate. It made me look at the one that I am holding right now.

I saw Dahlia cry right away after she noticed that I discovered that there's only one left.

"Dahlia, did you eat three?" Dina whispered to her aloud in a shocked voice. I chuckled as I could see their reaction.

"Dahlia dear? What happened?"

"I'm so sorry dear Deandra! I never intended to eat three pieces. I was just hungry and I love fried chicken so much."

"Yeah, she loved it that she barely ate rice with fried chicken, see? I told you."

"Dina..." I smiled as I called Dina's attention. She seemed to be provoking Dahlia more that's why her cries are getting louder.

"Sorry..."

"The three of you, please come here." Dahlia was the first to rush on my seat as she hugged my waist as she stood up. The twins stood up on my both sides.

"You know what? It's okay." I held Dina's arm and smiled at her.

"It's fine. Remember, Dahlia is the youngest. She's supposed to be happier if we support her of the things she loved the most. Would that be okay, Dina?"

"Okay, dear Deandra. I'm so sorry."

"Don't be sorry to me, say sorry to Dahliah."

Dina stepped beside Dahlia. She's still not letting go of hugging me tight.

"Dahlia, next time you can eat half of my other part."

"Really?" Dahlia's eyes glistened as she let go of my waist right away and turned her gaze to Dina. She winked at her that made us all laugh out loud.

"My dear sisters, don't worry. Your eldest sister Deandra will always buy you fried chicken whenever I have my money again. Please don't ever fight over a fried chicken. Our relationship is more than that. Let's be generous to one another as much as we can. Life is always beautiful in harmony."

They all smiled at me. As I look at their contented gaze, I still consider myself lucky for having a happy family. It is despite the things that we encounter everyday, I am still thankful.

Chapter 3: BEHIND THE SCENES

Deandra's POV

After that delicious dinner, I was able to tuck all my sisters to their respective rooms. The twins sleep together in one bed. With the mattress cover on their chest, they both smiled as they looked at me.

"Which one is Dee?" I asked in a cheerful tone. They both giggle at the same time.

"Here." She dryly replied as she raised one of her arms. She even rolled her eyes because maybe she finds me silly for treating them as children.

"Which one is Dina?" I smiled as I pointed fingers to either of them.

"Here! I'm here! I'm Present!" Dina cheerfully answered. I saw Dee poked Dina for moving excessively as she did the "present!" gesture using her hands. She even grinned from ear to ear.

"Yeah, she heard you," Dee whispered to her twin but it was a bit loud, enough for me to hear. I can't help but to smile because of their cuteness.

"Very good! Now I will not mistook which one is which."

"Eh, dear Deandra, you knew it already. It's easy. It's like finding Elsa and Anna in 'Frozen'. Dee said that made me laugh as I pinch her nose. She smiled a little as she put my hand away from her nose. "Of course, I'm queen Elsa and you will be Anna."

I saw her frown as she looked at what Dee told her.

"Okay, fine great girl. Dee and Dina, sleep very well. I love you both." I kissed their foreheads and they started to close their eyes. I slowly shut the door behind me and sighed with relief.

I went to my room with Dahlia on my side for always. I saw her sleeping with her head at the foot of the bed and her feet touching the head board. I giggled at the cute sight of her. I gently carried her and placed her sleeping body on the ride side. I covered her with a blanket and put a soft pillow where she can rest her head on.

I slowly caressed her hair as she's sleeping right now.

"What a cute face for a youngest sister. I am so lucky to have you dear." I whispered to her ear. I started to get on the bed as I carefully moved beside Dahlia. I am afraid I might interrupt her kind of sleeping right now.

I am the eldest sister among the four of us. We are all girls. The twins were born fourteen years after I was born. I remembered my mom had a lot of adjustments since she never expected that my sisters would turn out as twins. Not only that, identical ones. Dahlia was born out of luck I should say. She was born five years after the twins were born and our mom is already turning forty years old at that time. It was risky but later on, I realized it was all worth it.

I remembered a time clearly. That pregnancy is already too risky for her, she was advised to stay in bed for two weeks before she will give birth to Dahlia. She will also drink numerous medicines just for Dahlia to hold on to her womb because of the old age. Good thing she was able to give birth to a beautiful, healthy girl. I also admired mom for still being pretty even if she only gave birth at the moment, unlike other moms.

Even if mom gave birth to the four of us, her relationship with dad never changed. I have observed, it worsened when Dahlia was born because mom almost lost herself in the process just to keep our sister.

My dad is known for being a womanizer. Mom thought that he already changed when he would get married to her but she was wrong. He never even thought about us for a second. After their endless arguments, dad moved out from our house and we never saw him again.

Well, I would spot him at the malls with different women greater than my mom when it comes to physical appearance. However, whenever I will see him, I would simply not care at all. I guess he taught me how to forget and move on to the things that happened in our lives from the past.

That's why no matter how I wanted to hate mom, a part of me still wants the best for her. It is even if she doesn't show that she cares anymore. Even if she already got hooked on playing mahjong with her friends, she doesn't take a bath for many days. I understand where she's coming from. Maybe, she can't accept that dad will leave her easily.

Maybe, she also blamed the four of us for her present misery and what she's experiencing right now. I never knew but I hope she will not entirely abandon us like the way dad did. I will always understand her addiction and whatever she's doing just to keep herself happy. For as long as she will never leave this house and show to my other younger sisters. I don't want them to feel that they are unloved and alone.

"Dear Deandra?" My thoughts were interrupted by Dahlia just now.

"What do you need my baby princess?"

"Why are you not sleeping yet?" She innocently blinked that made her long eyelashes move gracefully.

"How will you know I am sleeping if you're also not doing it?"

I looked at my youngest sister as she smiled at me.

"Okay. Let's play a game. I will count one up to three. When you hear 'three', we should both close our eyes because we will sleep now, okay?"

"Deal." She nodded.

"One..." She giggled because of too much excitement.

"Dahlia, we're going to sleep and not chase each other tonight, alright?" I smiled that made her giggle even more. I love hearing it from her so much. She smiled but she started to close her eyes. At times, she's slowly opening a little to observe what is happening while I am counting.

"Two and three!" I saw her shut her eyes very well.

"Good girl, Dahlia." I tapped her head and kissed her forehead. I started to close my eyes because I should be waking up at five in the morning because of my day job.

Chapter 4: STARING DREAMS

The next day, I woke up the next day feeling tired and yet I should really get going. I have to go to work and do the usual routine that is expected of me.

If I won't work, we will not have any money to buy essential things needed in our house.

I saw my siblings chasing each other while I got up from bed. I shook my head because they're supposed to be sleeping because they stayed up late the other night.

"I guess I could handle it this time. Please go back to bed, my dearest sisters. I know you still need some sleep."

They both look at me at the same time as they grin from ear to ear.

"We will help you, dear sister! We really set our alarm clocks to wake up early to help you prepare!" Dina exclaimed in an excited, hyperactive manner.

"We're fine. As long as we could help you with anything." Dee said as she stood up as if pretending to be some kind of superhero as she grins.

"Well, I hope all your cuteness will be converted to cash so that we'll not have bills anymore."

"I'd gladly do it for our dear Deandra." Dahlia said as her head appeared from their backs. They chuckled altogether.

Dee and Dina were preparing the table, while Dahlia got some glasses of water from the cupboard to the table.

We had fried eggs with corned beef and rice. We're all good at eating food. I am so lucky that my sisters are just content to whatever food they'll have on our table. I am thankful that the training paid off for a long time. They even remember it one by one. They usually move without being told. They have reminded themselves without waiting for me to do it for their self-improvement.

"I will go to work now. Please behave. The three of you. I will go back as soon as possible." I stood up and Dina told me that she'll be the one to wash the dishes. I nodded and rushed with a clean uniform as I held my bag.

I entered the newspaper shop and as usual, they asked me to deliver the newspaper door to door which I gladly did. I am earning one hundred pesos per hour for this one. I did my job and when I logged out, I noticed that I already had more than four hours of duty. When I came back, they gave me four-hundred and fifty pesos as my earnings for that day. I took a deep breath as I secretly gave

my paper bills a smooch. Thinking of the things I could buy for my family through this money will be a great feeling for me.

I happily smiled as I tried going home now. I inserted the money in my pocket. I also went to the supermarket to buy groceries and meat for my sisters. I know they are waiting for me like how they wait for our mother. But of course, our difference is, she would never come back again. Sometimes, it made my sisters really hungry.

My money was four hundred bills and another fifty-peso bill. I went to the fruits section to buy some fruits. When I attempted to put my hands in my pocket, I could only find two-hundred and fifty.

I looked around in confusion. Something is odd and wrong. How can it be only two-hundred fifty when I checked my four hundred fifty pesos? When I spotted a guy running away, that's the time I realized that he's the one who indeed snatched my money. My heart started to race. This can't be!

"Hey, you moron! Come back!" I stopped myself from crying while chasing after him. I am already very tired and it is almost lunch time. I won't accept it when somebody will easily get the money he didn't work hard for.

I am somehow lucky because I knew the narrow road where he's heading to. I guess this thief is a stranger to our place. He's just running without any direction at all.

"Soon, he'll be in a dead end." I murmured to myself as I grinned.

He stopped running when he saw a tall wall in front of him. As I look at the wall, it is double his height and it won't be possible for him to escape, unless he's good at parkour. He slowly turned his back and he saw me right away. I am holding a piece of wood and I even tapped it to my palms. I gripped it like I am gripping on my dear life. I gripped it like my life depends on it.

"Bring back my two hundred pesos." I firmly said. I saw him swallowed and gave me an icy stare. He's also standing as if he'll accept my challenge of beating him to death, well, the slightest version I knew of.

"What if I don't?"

"I'll kill you."

"For two hundred pesos? You can't be too serious, miss. Are you sure you will do that to other people?"

"Wow, did you think of that first before you get my money? Did you know what I did just to earn that?"

"Get out of my way because you're wasting my time." He warned, but I don't care about it. I am more than determined to get back the money that he stole from me. It was all the money I have hardly earned for this whole morning alone.

I pointed my palms to him and showed it to him openly as I moved four of my fingers back and forth as if inviting him for a challenge made of real weapons.

"I will give you a last chance. Give my money back to me or I will kill you first before you even lay a finger on my skin? You choose."

The guy looked at me, very amused of her reasons. He sighed and pulled something in his pocket. When I followed my gaze to what he's been pulling, my eyes almost widened with shock. It was a five-hundred peso bill!

"I don't know how to solve math. I was born not knowing numbers that much. However, I can feel that you need this more than I do."

I could feel the sarcasm to his tone. He gave it to me as I directly looked into his eyes.

I was left speechless and dumbfounded.

"Can I go now? You're blocking the way." I supposed to hold him for a while, right? I can see him sigh as he chuckled while he went away.

I sighed and I even slapped one of my cheeks because of what happened. I supposed to punish the guy but instead, he gave me what?

I slowly put the five hundred peso bill on the left pocket of my pants. I went back to the store that I bought fruits with.

"Ma'am, here's my--"

I widened my eyes when I found my two hundred peso bills on the right hand of my pants. I even rushed as I slid my hand inside my left pocket and I got another seven hundred fifty pesos. I looked at the fruit vendor as she also looked at me directly into my eyes...

Oh shit! The man didn't steal anything from me in the first place!

Chapter 5: THE SAME THING TWICE

She's holding bags of fruits and vegetables but she's staring at nothingness. She didn't even notice how she got back to their house after that incident.

She was greeted by her three sisters giggling and showing their happy faces at her.

"Deandra?" Dina noticed my mood.

"Sissy!" Dahlah excitedly hugged my waist as soon as she saw me.

"Yow..." Dee came near me as she looked down, looking at a different direction.

"My goodness. You're calling me with three different names. It's okay if you will all call me dear sister." She tapped all their heads as they got the bags from her hands.

She smiled as she looked at them getting busier with the things she bought. However, she can't help but to feel guilty.

"I don't know how to solve math. I was born not knowing numbers that much. However, I can feel that you need this more than I do." These are the exact words of the guy she mistook as a thief.

She could feel the sarcasm from his tone. She can't help but frowned at what she did. She pulled her hair with her fingers as she gritted her teeth. That scene repeated inside his head again and again. It made her feel really bad having wronged that guy. She felt really sorry for him and what she did to him. She groaned lightly as she stomped her feet many times on the floor.

"Dear sister? What happened to you?"

"Huh? Ah, I'm okay." She bit her lower lip as she avoided her gaze to her sisters. She slid her hand to the pocket where the five-hundred peso bill is. When she felt it from her pocket, she felt her heart pulsating. She closed her eyes when she realized that the five-peso bill is real and everything she did to the guy is epic.

If only she could bring back the hours from a while ago and started to think wisely. She might think straight and analyze the situation first before jumping to worthless conclusions.

"Are we going to cook the meat? We know how to cook the one you taught us last time, dear sister." Dina insisted. It made her worries slowly fade away as she looked at her younger sister's face. That innocent-looking gaze made her feel a bit well even after that epic moment of her life.

"Yes, dear. Make sure Dee and Dahlia will help you too."

"Aye, aye, capt'n." Dee winked as she showed a salute pose to all of them. Dahlia clapped her hands because of excitement.

Deandra went to the kitchen and her three sisters followed her right away. She prepared all the things and ingredients needed to cook the food. The three of them observed very well.

"Hey, Dahlia, don't touch that, it's a knife." Dina whispered to her sister. She handed it with care to Deandra who is wearing an apron now.

"Okay. Watch me first and then I will let you all take turns as we cook the stewed beef meat with vegetables. Are we all ready?"

"Yes!" They all chorused with smiles on their faces. Deandra only had an extra apron. That means, she will let her sister try to cook on the pot one by one. As one will cook, the rest will have to observe what she will do.

She washed the potatoes, carrots and cabbages and drained them. She's glad that all her sisters observed her while doing it.

"Who will be the first to try slicing the potatoes?" Deandra raised her hands a bit as she looked around her. She chuckled when Dahlia raised her hand first.

"Okay. Looks like someone's too hungry for knowledge." She looked at the twins who were looking at each other with hesitation.

"Come here my little bunny." Deandra let Dahlia sit on her lap as she clapped her hands as she grinned. She gave her a little knife to slice the small potatoes that were already peeled. She started to slice the potatoes the way she instructed her.

"Wow, I am happy that Dahlia is a fast learner." Dina nodded as she looked at Dahlia who is also proud of what she's doing. Deandra is holding her hands as she guides her in slicing the potatoes carefully. Dahlia looked very happy and willing.

She instructed the twins to help them in the other steps in cooking their lunch. As soon as they are done with it, their mother arrives from her mahjong session. They all stopped and stared at her looking at all of them, too.

They all look at each other because their mother is frowning again. She could hear her mother silently cursing to herself. Maybe because of what happened to her Mahjong session. From her facial expression, you could see that she lost the game to her group of friends.

"M-Mom, lunch is ready." Deandra greeted their mom with an awkward smile.

"We all helped Deandra in cooking it." Dina cheerfully added. She only looked at the four of them with a blank expression. She's still wearing her night dress with the towel on her hair, already

dried up. She looked messy and miserable at the same time. Deandra could notice the dark circles around her eyes too. She looked down and she went to her room again, without a word. She never even answered or acknowledged Dina for telling something to her. Despite her daughter being proud of what they did, she didn't care at all.

"Uh, Dee, Dina and Dahlia, please set the plates. Get some rice and meat, too. I want you all to help one another." Deandra told them to at least shift their attention.

They all agreed right away. They moved in a swift motion. Deandra could see that they were already hungry. After setting up the table, they all sat quietly while looking at her. It's like they are all waiting for her signal for them to eat. She chuckled a bit. They prayed and thanked God for the meal and they already started eating.

"Please eat well, I have to get mom to join us."

"As if she did that." Dee said with sarcasm and she rolled her eyes. She frowned as if not liking Deandra's suggestion at all.

"Dee, it is an inappropriate thing to do in front of a meal. Please tell your sisters to eat well. I will be right back real quick."

Deandra stood up and wiped her mouth with the table napkin after taking many spoonfuls of rice with meat.

When she's outside their mom's room, she knocked gently before entering her room.

"Mom?"

"Don't mind me. I will eat later after all of you are done with your meals." Her mom answered while laying on her bed like a bedridden woman. She turned her back to her, not even minding to talk to Deandra face to face.

"Mom?" She said one more time as she gently pulled her mom's body that's facing sideways, turning her back at her. She made her turn to her slowly as she faced her. However, she noticed her mom's eyes were shut. It's as if she's closing it on purpose but she noticed a damp on her left cheek.

Was her mom crying?

As soon as she saw her in that situation, she gently slid her hand on her pocket and got the five-hundred peso bill.

"Were you lost to your game again?" She had no response. "Here, I have five hundred peso-bill, mom. It's for you to keep. Do whatever that makes you happy."

Chapter 6: A NEW LIFE

Deandra's POV

She looked at me and she also shifted her gaze to the 500-peso bill that I am giving her.

"I don't mind if you will spend it on something that makes you happy." I said in a cheerful manner. I saw her swallowed. She looked at the money that I am offering her. She's like having second thoughts to accept it.

"Do you still have your allowance?" She said in a cracked voice. I noticed her lips were dry and her eyes looked gloomy.

"Yes, mom. Don't worry about me too much."

"If you offer it to me willingly, I will accept this. Thank you Deandra." She slowly got the bill from my hand and put it inside the pocket of her loose dress right away.

"Please eat after we're done if that's what you want." I stood up from beside her bed. She stayed motionless, her gaze still follows me even if I am stepping out of her room already.

When I went back to the table, my sisters were almost starting their meal. However, I noticed that they were talking to one another as if discussing an interesting topic. They lean their heads near each other as they giggled.

"Oh my! I thought you're all done eating." I said as I sat down beside Dina. Dee lost her smile as she noticed me without mom.

"Dear sister, Dee said we need to wait for you because mother might eat with us." Dahlia confessed. I saw Dee cleared her throat as she raised one of her eyebrows.

"I never said that," She turned her gaze at the other direction.

"She's tired. She said she wanted to rest for a while."

"See, I told you..." Dina frowned as she looked down. I noticed that she's playing with her spoon. She used it to mix her bowl of meat as if she had lost her appetite already.

"Dina, don't play with the food. Let us eat now. Please finish your food because not everyone can eat something as delicious as that one." I held her hand to prevent her as she continued what she's doing. Her sisters nodded as they were holding their spoons and fork.

"She's always like that. We should never wait for her." Dina muttered while trying to eat now.

"Dina, stop it. Finish your meal and we will talk." I looked at her with a serious expression. Dee and Dahlia looked at them as they paused eating.

"Let's eat. Let mother rest for a while." Deandra is looking at Dina who is concentrating in eating her meal.

When we're done eating, I let Dee and Dahlia play in the living room while I let Dina stay with me. She looked down as she faced me.

"Dina, why do you say those things?"

"Mother is not keeping her promise. I do not like her anymore."

"Please do not hate our mother, dear."

"Why not?" She can't even look at me because she's still disappointed because our mother didn't join us for lunch.

"Because she loves us so much."

"Love? Really? Are you sure about that?"

"Dina, love comes in many forms. It so happened that we can't easily see it from her now."

"Can we see it soon, then?"

I nodded and hugged my twelve-year-old sister. Her small arms hugged me back and I can feel that she's sobbing. I simply wiped my tears with my hands that's streaming down my cheeks.

It's a bit sad but I don't want my younger sisters to see that I am also feeling weak. As the eldest sister, I must be tough for all of them.

I let her go and let out a sigh of relief. I am forced to smile in front of her as she looks at me in the eyes.

"You can play with Dee and Dahlia now. They are waiting for you."

"Will I tell them about what you said, dear Deandra?" She smiled as I cupped both of her cheeks.

"Yes. Please tell them if they will ask you what we talked about."

"Okay dear sister."

She went to the living room right away after what I told her. I looked at mom's room again. The door opened slowly and she went outside even without acknowledging my presence. I followed her and as she sat in one of the chairs, I got her a plate and rice in a bowl. I also got her a bowl of meat.

"Did you eat with your sister?"

I shook my head as I met her gaze. She got up and went to the cupboard again to get a spoon and fork, as well as an extra plate and a glass of water. She put it all in front of me as I lifted my chin to look at her facial expression.

We ate in silence but I glanced at her and what she's doing. In my peripheral vision, she's focusing on eating the food and nothing else. She looked at the meat and chewed it like a hungry horse.

"Mom, I'll be adding another part-time job tomorrow."

She looked serious as she faced me.

"You already have three. Can you still handle it?"

"I guess." She put her utensils and held my arm, when I relaxed my limbs when I ate, she touched my arm and caressed it lightly.

"I'm so sorry..." She started to droop her shoulders and I could hear her sniffing her nose. Was she crying? I also put down my utensils and held her hands that were holding my arm.

"I will do my best for you to be prouder of me." A smile curved her lips.

"Whatever makes you happy dear, I will support you."

I could see the heads of my three sisters peeping from the door, looking really curious as they looked at each other. They just observed silently from afar.

"Dina, Dee and Dahlia, come here." They nodded as they heard the voice of mom calling them to come near her. She smiled as she tapped their heads as they stood in front of her.

"Have you all been doing good to your sister Deandra?"

"Yes, mom. We are being nice to our dear sister." They all chorused in a cheerful voice that I can't help but chuckle. Dahlia came near me as she showed a cute smile. I held her and let her sit on my lap.

"Mommy, please eat with us starting today, please? Please?" Dina said as she tugged her shirt. She even hugged mom that mom couldn't help but laugh. She nodded that made the three jump for joy.

I am hopeful that mom will change for the better this time. She will really make my siblings happy. If I will search for another job, I am confident that she will take good care of them.

Chapter 7: LESS OF A TIME

Deandra's POV

I am still tired when I wake up the next day. Sleeping at ten in the evening last night and waking up at four in the morning is not enough for me.

I am up and about as I slowly prepared my cup of coffee. I went back to the room and Dahlia is still showing me her awkward sleeping position. Her feet on the headboard of the bed while her head on the foot of the bed. I can't help but giggle in a softer tone of my voice. I am amused at her but I don't want to wake her up at the same time.

I tapped her head and kissed her forehead. I also lift her up to put her in a correct sleeping position. I lay her down with her head on the pillow near the headboard of the bed; the right way of sleeping this time.

I exited our house without them even knowing it. I don't want to disturb them as much as possible. I am sure most of them are still sleeping including my mom. As a result, I just cooked rice in the rice cooker and topped it with eggs and sausages I had bought yesterday. I know as I do this stuff everyday, they are getting used to it.

I opened our entrance door and slowly closed it for me to not create any noise. I know they are still sleeping. If ever they will wake up, I am confident that their breakfast is prepared now.

I get on the bus, still not in my full mood because I am sleepy and tired at the same time. I sat next to the window of the bus and closed my eyes to have a little nap. When the bus stopped on the West Hill station, I felt quick steps coming to where I am sitting right now. When somebody sat next to me, I couldn't help but open my eyes to take a peek of who that person is out of curiosity.

My heart started to race wild as soon as I saw him...it was the guy whom I thought stole my two-hundred peso bills! I covered my face with the books I am holding right now. What is he doing here in our school? Is he trying to follow me?

I looked over my book and he seemed to not care about me because he's wearing his headset while bobbing his head. I think he's enjoying his music. He doesn't mind who is beside him. I swallowed as I closed my eyes. I bit my lower lip as I continued covering my face with my books.

Gosh I really hope I am only dreaming. I have a feeling that we are attending the same University. I am really thankful that I am wearing my uniform this time around, and not looking so ragged. I guess that's the reason why I'm not being familiar to him. I really hope so.

As soon as the bus stopped in front of our University gate, he got off right away. I breathed out a sigh of relief as I also got off the bus just minutes after him. I noticed him coming to the CAS building in a hurried manner.

Wow, I think he's really cool. I know students from that building are very intellectual. Is he a lawyer in the making? I know most of the students who study that course will eventually take law.

I went to our building to attend some of my units. I am taking up a business administration course so that I will be knowledgeable to run a business someday.

Hours passed by swiftly. I am so excited for my fourth part time job that I never noticed how the time flies fast. I am happy that I have a friend who gave up her duty slot in the library. As one of the student assistants, I was given the chance to take over her place. She recommended me to the librarian right away.

I was deeply humbled because she described me as hardworking and dedicated to any form of work, regardless of how difficult or easy the nature of work is.

"Ma'am, thank you. I will do my best." I even bowed down in front of the senior librarian that she couldn't help but chuckle.

"Oh this silly girl, you must be. I don't need promises. I am looking at how you work. I will give you a week as a probationary for this part-time job. If you do the job well, you'll be the student assistant assigned here up until your final year here in the University."

"Wow! Thank you so much, ma'am. Thank you!" I bowed many times that she can't help but laugh because I think she's amused with what I did.

"Alright. Please ask Arianne for additional questions. I will be busy for the next two hours."

"Okay, ma'am. Thank you." I smiled as I stood up, bowed a little again and went out of her mini-office inside the library.

In my every step, I feel like I am on cloud nine.

"Ari, I talked to Mrs. Libby Seo already."

"Welcome to the family then!" She grinned as we did the high five.

"Why did you prefer the library among others? I think the medicine lab pays more than the library."

"I wanted here the most because this place is quieter, plus I can study if there will be less students."

"I will not agree entirely with you. It is always busy here, especially during exams. You have to brace yourself."

"Really? Thank you for informing me ahead of time." I shrugged as I showed her my weak smile.

I went with Arianne, one of my library colleagues. She introduced the different aisles to me where different bookshelves stood. There were thousands of books and I have to familiarize myself to every genre of books she's introducing me.

The left side were academic books while fiction and non-fiction books dominated the right side. While we're walking on one of the aisles when somebody caught my attention. I panicked and moved fast that I was able to hide myself from behind Arianne when that guy passed in front of us.

"Huh?" Arianne turned her back and looked at me while I covered my face with a book entitled, "Keeping up with the nerds".

"I'm okay, don't worry." I grinned in a very awkward manner.

"Are you hiding from that guy?" Arianne referred to the guy using her thumb while closing the rest of her fingers from her left hand as she raised one of her eyebrows.

"Do you know him?" I asked her back that made her chuckle.

"Well, who doesn't know him? He's even my crush!" Arianne said while giggling. What shall I do? Wherever I will go, our paths always cross. It's a small world after all!

Chapter 8: SOMEONE SPECIAL

She's almost speechless. Arianne looked at Deandra, confused and amused at the same time.

"You know what, Deandra, as I observe you looking at Andrew, it's like you're seeing a ghost. What happened?"

"Well, don't mingle with guys. The reason is that, I am too shy to even look at any male available around me."

"Oh I see. Don't worry. Andrew is nice and friendly. He's popular here among girls because he's really studious." She giggled as she tapped my arm with his hand.

'Oh, so his name is Andrew...' I kept these words to myself.

I nodded in awe as I listened to Arianne.

"Well, I don't see you as a threat," Arianne added while looking at me from head to toe while grinning. What was she even thinking about?

"...so I allow you to talk to him. Please get used to his presence."

"What do you mean, 'get used to his presence?'"

"Well, he's a daily visitor here in the school library. He loves studying more than anything, you know."

"Oh, that's why."

"That is one of the reasons why I wanted to be assigned here because he's only mine and mine alone." She said as she winked.

"The reason I also recommended you, well, aside from you, being a trustworthy friend, I don't think you'll be his type so I agreed. I recommended you instead of those trying-hard girls."

"What? Gosh, you're crazy!" I exclaimed and she laughed at my reaction.

"Please? Take good care of him. Don't worry, he's harmless." She chuckled and winked at me as well. Somehow, I am hurt because of how she looked at me as if I am not desirable at all.

"Are you both in a relationship?" I whispered near her ears that she chuckled right away.

"Well, not as of the moment but don't you worry. It will be sooner than you expect." She replied as she winked at me.

Arianne is beautiful and petite. She's fashionable and I am not wondering anymore. As a tourism student, she can handle herself very well.

"Do you still have questions, my dear?"

"Nope. I guess that's all for today."

"Okay. If you don't have questions, I will leave you here. Please go home by 7:00 PM. Kelly will still have her duty until the end of this week at 7:00-9:00PM. I nodded and smiled in a very awkward way. I am still thankful that Arianne is a bit friendly to me. I noticed she's comfortable with people whom she thought isn't a threat to her.

I looked at her as her hair swayed following how she walked. I sighed as I stood on my post. I am now assigned at the library baggage counter.

It's a bit lonely but I have to endure it for my siblings and for our mom as well.

"Miss, here."

I smiled as I looked at the number 65 printed in number tags. I lifted my head to see who it was, I turned my back right away.

"Miss? Can you give me my backpack now? I am in a hurry." I glanced at him and I can see him looking at his wristwatch. I can feel that he's getting impatient.

I grabbed the number tag as I avoided my gaze on him as much as possible. I found the 65th slot box and placed his heavy backpack on the counter table.

"H-Here." I let my hair down to the bigger part of my face as I look at the other direction.

"Thanks." He grabbed it and put it on his shoulders and started to walk away as he whistled. I can still smell his scent that seemed to stick on my clothes.

I sighed with relief after I am sure that he's gone already. I am happy that somehow he's not interested in looking at my face.

So his name is Andrew. It's just sad that I haven't gotten his family name. I want to search him on facebook. At least, stalking him there won't make me accountable for a crime.

I put my hands on my cheek as I put my elbows on the counter table as I am waiting for the other students to get their things or to put it here for a while as they go inside the library.

I think I have a problem now. How long could I hide from him when he's a regular student here? I feel like having an unwanted shadow whenever our paths will cross. Can I avoid him forever?

Minutes turned into hours and it is already 7:00PM. I got ready to go to my last part-time job for today, as one of those part-time waitresses in a popular fast-food chain. I am thankful that somehow they are accepting students as their waiters or waitresses that could work for them at least a minimum of two hours per day.

I changed my uniform into the restaurant's standard collared-shirt uniform and brown khaki pants. I also wore a hairnet and a visor too.

"Wow, girl, are you still okay until 9:00 PM?"

"Yes, Kylie. I am still up," I smiled at her in a cheerful manner, and even showed my two thumbs up to her but my eyes wanted to close already.

"I really admire you so much. You're a tough cookie dear. Eat this first before you wait tables." She handed me a clubhouse sandwich and a glass of cold soda.

"Wow, thank you so much Kylie!" I opened it and munched it right away. I never felt hunger until she offered me some food and it felt really good.

When I finished my snack and dinner at the same time, I started to go to the isle of tables as I tended other people's orders.

I started to scribble the name of orders and even the table number when someone caught my attention.

It's a beautiful girl wearing a floral tie-waist flounce dress that emphasized bohemian fashion. The dress blended her fair skin effortlessly. She also matched it with a pair of brown low-cut cuban heels. She seemed to be waiting for someone. She roamed her head around the room in a very graceful manner.

I am not a man but I feel like I am being a tomboy for five minutes straight by just staring at her physique.

"Deandra, many are calling you now, what are you doing? You're not even moving there." Kylie said as she came rushing to me while carrying a tray full of burgers and pastas.

"S-Sorry. I will go to other tables now." I nodded as I replied to my co-worker. When that woman noticed me staring at her for long, she smiled at me as she raised her hand. I walked near her as I took the fast food's order form.

"Hi, I wanted to order a piece of cheese burger and one bottled water, please. Thank you."

"Okay, ma'am. Coming right up." I scribbled her order on the order form that made her chuckle as if she's feeling amused.

"Honey, sorry I'm late." When I turned my back to the woman, I was able to hit on something. I felt it was the chest of a man. When I looked up, I felt like not moving at all, that I wanted to evaporate into the thin air...

It's Andrew again, for the third time!

Chapter 9: ENCOUNTERED SCENARIOS

Deandra's POV

I avoided my gaze right away as I rushed to the counter.

"Kylie...please can you give the orders to table number 8? I am quite busy with the other tables."

"Sure." She smiled as she walked past me. I sighed with relief. At least I saved myself to another encounter with him. I bit my lower lip as I slightly frowned while taking a peek at them.

I could see that he sat down in front of the beautiful girl. He's like explaining himself while the woman just gave him an amused look as she smiled. Is she his girlfriend? They look good together I should say.

She looked really kind, I am feeling glad about it.

I saw Kylie coming to their direction as she carried a tray full of food.

Andrew and her girlfriend looked cute together. They are supposed to be in a fancy restaurant but I noticed that the girl is enjoying herself very well.

"You're late again." She said as she smiled at him. He wanted to avoid his gaze but she knew he couldn't do it. She's just too beautiful for him to not lay his eyes on her beauty.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart. I came from school because I have to review."

"Well, how can I even relate? I know being a prosecutor in the near future should be very challenging." She replied with a sigh. She placed both of her elbows on the table as she let her chin rest on her clasped hands.

"You've been very patient. Thank you so much. What time did you arrive from America?" Andrew gently pulled and kissed her hand. She touched his cheek.

"I arrived at five in the morning yesterday. I've had a good night's rest so don't worry about me."

"I miss you so much."

"I miss you too. I can't wait to go anywhere with you." Kylie almost spilled the glass when she placed it on their table. The woman giggled at Kylie's reaction. She also glanced at Deandra who seemed to observe what they were doing from a far distance.

"Well, let's eat? I really miss the food from this restaurant. I can't see these foods in America." She grabbed the spoon and fork right away. He could see the excitement in her eyes. The sight of her reacting to foods like that makes him adore her more.

"How's your studies?" She said after chewing some pasta.

"It's getting tougher."

"Hmm, I think even if you feel like that, I know you can handle things pretty well."

"Yeah. I know I can. I have one of the strongest support systems ever!" She chuckled as soon as she heard his compliment. They even talked for more than one hour while eating. Deandra worked and tried her very best to go unnoticed for Andrew. She knew that if he'll recognize that it is indeed her, she'll be dead for sure.

As she entered the employee's room, she slid her hands from her pocket. It's the 500-peso bill that she got as her salary for that day. She peeked at Andrew again from the peep hole of their door. She wanted to approach him, and tell him who she is. She wanted to apologize and return the money he'd given her, but how?

How is she supposed to do it when she's not in the right timing as always? She gathered a lot of strength before she opened the door of their employee room but she can't see the couple anymore.

"W-Where are they?" She asked Kylie who was dashing towards her carrying a tray full of dirty plates and glasses. She handed them to her carefully.

"Who?"

"The people sitting on table 8."

"Oh, they went outside about five minutes ago."

She groaned as she shook her head. Kylie noticed her facial expression right away.

"Why? Do you know them? Do you have something to tell them?"

"Oh, no, nothing. I am just admiring the two. They looked good together." She smiled in a very awkward manner that Kylie also got confused by her sudden weird actions. Deandra glanced at her wristwatch and it was already 8:38PM. She's somehow thankful that she'll be going home soon.

"Deandra, let's go home together."

"Oh, I thought you'll be having a date with your boyfriend?" Deandra grinned as she poked her waist using her elbow.

"Eh...sadly, he had a lot of activities to attend. I don't even know if I am still included among his priorities." She smiled as she said that but it's as if she's about to cry already that she turned her back all of a sudden. Deandra heard her soft sniffing as she wiped the tears from her eyes using her hands.

"Thanks." When Deandra offered her a tissue, she got it right away.

They walked in silence on one of the lonely roads as they were on their way to their houses. Good thing Kylie is one of her neighbors. She's renting a boarding house five houses away from her house. Deandra thinks being with Kylie eased another three-kilometer walk. Kylie is also a working student like her. They usually discuss random topics but tonight, she's quieter and it's bothering Deandra already.

"Kylie, you can share it to me to somehow ease what you feel."

"Oh, it's nothing." She forced a smile when she could almost see the tears flowing from her cheeks again.

"The more you will suppress it, the more it will hurt you."

She stopped and hugged Deandra tight while sobbing uncontrollably. She patted her back in a circular motion as if massaging her as Deandra's way of comfort.

"There, there."

"Girl, please don't you ever rush into a relationship if you're not yet ready." She chuckled as her way of response. Deandra let her go and held both of her shoulders.

"I can't have a boyfriend when I look like this. I feel like I don't have the right to do it yet because there's a lot of people who look up on me as if their life depends on it."

"Yeah I know what you mean. My point is, you have to get a boyfriend that will simply love you for who you are."

"Thank you so much dear. I will do that."

"If you follow this advice, you will not suffer a lot like what I am experiencing right now."

"Huh?"

"Deandra..."

Kylie cried in front of her again. In almost a year of their friendship, it's the first time that she saw her cry like this. She gently swallowed as their eyes met.

"He broke up with me after I confessed that I am pregnant."

Chapter 10: TIME FOR BEST OR WORSE

Deandra's POV

"What?"

She nodded and cried. I felt sad for my friend but what can I do? I am too shocked that it made me shut my mouth. To somehow comfort her this time, I went with her to her house and cooked a noodle soup for her. I looked at her as she gulped his last bite. It is better for her to feel that someone is concerned about her so much. It will make her feel that she's not all alone facing this kind of challenge in his life.

"I'm okay. Thank you so much." She glanced at me in a timid way. She couldn't even maintain eye contact with me. We're friends for a long time but it's like her system is telling her to be awkward to me all of a sudden.

"After this, what are you going to do?"

"I don't know, honestly." She said as she took a deep, difficult breath.

"Please don't stress yourself too much dear."

"I will. Before I confessed to my boyfriend, I have decided to keep the baby for myself." I hugged her tight and it made her cry a little. I massaged her back as I said reassuring words for her to feel relieved as well.

"I will visit you often. Please don't think about a lot of things that will affect you and your baby. Please stay strong. Communicate to me often from now on."

I left her sleeping soundly. She also told me beforehand to lock the door before I leave their boarding house.

As usual, I expected that my siblings had fallen asleep when I reached home. I went home at exactly 9:30 PM. I put all my bags and went to the kitchen to brush my teeth and wash my face. I also had my quick half-bath and put my pajamas on.

I kissed Dahlia on the forehead as I slept beside her. What a tiring and stressful day. I am dead tired that I didn't notice how I fell asleep that easy.

The next day, I did my usual routine. Surprisingly, my sisters woke up really early for them to eat with me during breakfast.

"We missed you, dear sister!" Dahlia smiled sweetly as I spooned her with rice and egg. She chewed it as if it's the most delicious food for her.

"I miss you too, our baby Dahlia."

Dina and Dee giggled as they also sat side by side with me while Dahlia was sitting on my lap.

"You should all get ready for school, okay?"

"Yes dear sister." The three chorused altogether. They helped me wash the plates as I got ready for school. It is only Tuesday but I feel like it is the end of weekdays already. I am still tired but what can I do? I still have to compensate Andrew for what I have done. I have his 500-peso bill with me. At least, if ever our paths will cross again, I will not be ashamed to face him anymore.

I have to apologize for what I did. Whenever I remember it, I want to vanish into the thin air. That's the most embarrassing moment for me, especially the words I told him that made him give me his money. Gosh, that day was really unforgettable!

"Here's your bag, dear sister!" Dahlia carried my heavy bag with her. I chuckled because she looked really cute even if she's having a hard time.

"Here's all your books, too." Dina handed my three thick books using her arms as a support.

"Here's your packed lunch." Dee avoided her gaze while holding a plastic tupperware stuffed with packed rice, fried meat and stewed veggies in her one hand. I smiled at her as I got the plastic from her hand. I also tapped her head.

"Dee, please take care of Dina and Dahlia."

"Dear Deandra, I should take care of Dee and Dahlia." Dina insisted that I can't help but chuckle.

"Well, I am two minutes older than you for the record. I am still older than you, remember that." Dee replied as she grinned.

"Okay, okay. Please take care of one another. I will be going now, I am late already." I glanced at my wristwatch as I rushed to the door. I can still hear Dahlia shouting 'goodbye' to me.

I arrived at the University at exactly 6:00 AM. It is my first day of duty at the library, that's why I have to really do my best. The time of my duty is exactly 6:00 PM but I have to go to the library at exactly 6:00 AM so that I can study for at least an hour, as well as to familiarize myself to the aisles. That way, I can instruct students where to go, which sections can they visit to get their desired book, etc.

I entered the door and surrendered my library card to Mrs. Seo, our librarian. She reminded me of certain rules again for my duty later on.

"Thank you, Mrs. Seo."

"Thank you for your dedication too, Deandra."

I sat down on one of the chairs and started reading my books for today's lesson. Even if I have a lot of part-time jobs, I should never neglect my study time and sacrifice my grades as well.

Afternoon came. I arrived at the library at exactly 5:30 PM. Even if Mrs. Seo told me that it is okay for me to arrive at 6:00 PM, I just told her that it is fine with me. I am thankful that I am assigned inside to be Mrs. Seo's personal assistant. I have my own small table outside the mini-office of our librarian to assist the needs or inquiries of the students.

I am writing some assigned tasks on my table. I lowered my gaze a bit as I focused on my notebook, scribbling to one of the pages using my black pen.

"Miss, here are the books that I will borrow for today."

"Uh, okay." I continued doing what I do when I realized that I am almost forgetting I should hide from someone. I am working in the library but I should not let him see me, but now...

My heart almost stopped when I heard that familiar voice. Good thing my hair is naturally falling, covering my forehead a bit. I could feel my hands shaking uncontrollably this time.

"Miss, are you from yesterday? What's wrong? I noticed you keep on covering your face every time you see me."

Now, this is what I meant. He will really be curious of the weirdness I keep on showing him. I swallowed and slid my hair sideways as I rested it on my ears. I feel like my knees started to shake but I have to face what I did. It's all or nothing.

I gathered all the strength within me as I let him see my face. I even smiled widely to cover my being anxious. He looked at me for more than two minutes. I can see his blank facial expression transitioned into a shocked one.

"You?!"

Chapter 11: CHANCED ACTIONS

Deandra's POV

"Yeah, it's me. Hi!" I smiled in a very awkward manner as I wrote all the books that he's going to borrow to the logbook. I can see that he's borrowing six thick books in total.

"Tell me, why are you here?" His voice sounded stern that sent chills down my spine.

I could still see the shock in his facial reaction. It's as if she never expected someone like me to be in here because of what I did to him.

"I'm a student." I whispered as I pulled his arm and we went to one of the tables. He sat in front of me, not avoiding his gaze as if wanting to roast me alive.

He chuckled but in a mocking tone. He's looking at me with slight resentment. I can't help but to look down.

"Wow, of all places, why did I ever get to see your face here? Were you trying to bribe more students this time?"

"You really want me to roast you alive?" I said in a sigh.

"Oh, I can't believe this university is accepting students who simply bribe someone they don't even know."

"Please forgive me. It's not my intention to do it to you last time."

"It is not your intention? Did you forget what you do? Didn't you know that I was in a hurry that time?"

"Look, I am so sorry, okay? It was just a misunderstanding..."

"Prove it." His words are penetrating my skin that scared me. I slid my hand to my pocket and pulled the 500-peso bill and put it on the table in front of them.

"That was just a mistake. I apologize for telling those things to you. It is not my intention to bribe you or anything like that."

He sighed as he looked at me but I can feel that he's still not convinced of what I am trying to explain.

"I accidentally put my two-hundred fifty peso bill on my right pocket. When I was buying some fruits in the market, I thought someone stole it from me, that's why."

"And do you think that I will just go easy on you?"

"I am trying to explain what really happened. I admit my mistake and I am returning your 500-peso bill, Mr."

"Andrew Meyers," He replied as he raised his left hand for a handshake. I bowed down a bit as I accepted it. He grip my hands firmly and let it go after a minute.

He looked at the 500-peso bill and shifted my gaze on me. I swallowed and observed what he's going to do next.

"Keep this one. Like what I said, I felt you needed that money that's why I gave it to you."

"But--"

"I don't take back what I already gave. If you want me to let this pass, don't make me remember that scene again."

"Okay." I looked down as I grabbed the money back and returned it inside the pocket of my skirt.

"Good. Thank you for this by the way." He showed the books and I noticed those were Political Science and Pre-law books.

"Please feel free to go to my table if you have any concerns about the library. It will be a pleasure to assist you."

"Okay." He said but his eyes and focus are into the books he's reading now. I slowly stood up and walked towards my table as I assisted other students as well. Even if I am busy, I can't help but glance at him time to time.

After our encounter today, I am at ease compared to yesterday. He's indeed good and approachable to everyone around him. I think I know one of the reasons why his girlfriend loves him so much.

A while ago, as we sat in front of each other, I couldn't help but admire his physical appearance. He's fair and tall, standing about 5'11 in height. He has dark brown eyes, pointed nose and divided lower lip that's luscious and attractive. I think that's one of his great assets aside from having a slightly muscular body.

"Hey, I noticed that you look so happy today." Kelly, one of the student assistants greeted me as she handed me his library card.

"Wow, it's a bit early, why are you here? You're supposed to be here before seven in the evening."

"Well, I have to study here. I need to cope up with studies." She winked. I smiled as I got her library card and put a tiny stamp on it. I also gave her the logbook for her to sign.

"I do that first thing in the morning."

"Whoah, I can't do that. I can't force myself to be here as early as 6:00 AM. That's why I just go here in the afternoon instead. So, what makes you happy?"

"Of course, I am enjoying my job here."

"Gosh, that's me during my first week of duty here. I hope you can cope with the stress of library work."

"I wish. I guess you're also happy now that it's your last week of duty here."

"Yep, it's the kind of happiness I felt when I set my foot to this place."

"I wish you the best for your future endeavors, dear."

"Thanks." She smiled as she also showed her library card to me. I nodded and she started to get lost through the aisles of the library.

I followed her with my eyes and sighed. At least now, I am thankful that everything is being settled this time. I also proved that Andrew is a nice man. I shifted my gaze on my own books as I started to scan and study my notes, too.

I can see Andrew approaching my table. I suddenly don't know what to do.

"Hey, I have to go." He said as he smiled at me. What is this? Why does he need to say goodbye to me like he has an obligation to me? He's funny I should say.

"O-Ok." I avoided my gaze at him but he's not yet leaving that I wonder why.

"Do you still need anything?"

"My library card, please."

"Oh, sorry." I quickly searched for his library card inside the long, wooden box of library cards arranged alphabetically.

"It's okay." He said as they nodded. I can see from my peripheral vision that he's looking at me as if feeling amused.

"Here." I said, I can't even look at him because I am being silly for five-minutes straight.

"Oh, I forgot something." He grinned that made my heart beat fast.

"W-What is it?" I can't help but to stammer because of his mere presence.

"I already introduced my name but I haven't got yours yet."

Chapter 12: TWO-FACED MOMENT

"Oh my! I am so sorry! I am Deandra Klay." She responded as she accepted her hand for a handshake again. He smiled at her as he nodded. Finally, after Deandra cleared things out, Andrew became comfortable talking to her this time.

"Nice name you got."

"Thank you. You're one of those people who appreciates my name."

"Yeah. I liked how it sounds. By the way Deandra, I have to go. I still have to go to my class. See you around."

Before she could respond to him, he left already.

She looked around and she couldn't see the trace of him already. That was a swift brisk walk she assumed he did. However, she felt happy that she couldn't help but to cover her face. Deandra doesn't want other people to see her blush. She felt like her encounter with Andrew already made her day complete.

"Wow, it's like somebody is really enjoying the work here." Kelly saw her blushing and smiling again as she passed by her table.

"W-Well..."

"Hmm, never deny it, my dear. I can't blame you. That's my exact emotions too during my first week here."

"Really?" Deandra faced her with glistening eyes. She's paying more attention to Kelly now.

"Of course. Who wouldn't be inspired by those pre-med and pre-law students spending almost 75% of their life here? I have longer hours of gazing at those gorgeous faces."

"You do?" Deandra can't help but chuckle as she covers her mouth. They both took a glimpse to the mini-office of Mrs. Seo. When they both noticed what they did at the same time, they did the high-five.

"Shhh...it's my secret you should keep." Kelly giggled. Deandra winked at her as she raised her left thumb.

"Okay! Everyone's secret is safe with me. Anyway, you'll be graduating so don't worry about it."

"Please don't remind me of my graduation. It's really epic you know."

"Why?" Deandra leaned closer to Kelly.

"Of course, everything will never be the same again. I will miss my daily routine here inside the University."

"You have to understand that change is the only constant in this world."

"Yeah, thanks. Of course I have to. But you know what? Sometimes I don't like the feeling of going back to zero again."

"Back to zero?" Deandra asked back. Kelly smiled weakly at her.

"I have to face a huge challenge which is to find a real job in the outside world." Deandra could feel the gloomy atmosphere between the two of them talking.

"Are you not trusting yourself? If you're able to find a job while studying here, how much more if you graduate already? I know there will be a lot of opportunities for you."

"I hope so dear. Thank you for these uplifting words. I guess I need it so much."

"You can count on me. We could still see each other until this Friday, right?"

"Yeah. You're right."

"Don't be shy. You can talk to me while we have our duty here."

"Sure. I will also teach you some of the things you should remember while working here. Remember, the library is too big for you to work on."

"Thank you, Kelly. Thank you for your warm welcome."

Deandra finished her duty as a student assistant in the library. Time flies so fast and she still needs to go to the fast-food restaurant she's working at. Because she has some excess money, she decided to buy some burgers for her sisters and mom.

She smiled as she arrived at exactly 9:20 PM at their house.

"Our dear sister Deandra!" She could see Dahlia running towards her feeling really excited. She's the first to see that familiar plastic bag of the food brand Deandra bought for all of them.

Deandra saw her mom washing the dishes in the kitchen as she kept herself busy.

"Wow! Big burgers!" Dina exclaimed happily.

"There's only four, yours, mine, Dahlia's and mom. Okay?" Dee answered that everything got serious all of a sudden.

"Yes. We get one piece each." Dahlia showed Dee a thumbs up.

"Wow. That's really nice, my love. Dee is right. Sharing is loving. We have to give each one their burgers."

"What about you, dear Deandra?" Dahlia asked me in an innocent manner. She's even blinking slowly that made her look more adorable for Deandra.

"I am always eating burgers at work, dear. I even memorized the taste already."

"Oh, I see." Dina nodded.

"After you all eat the burgers, drink a lot of water and rest well because it is getting late."

"Okay dear Deandra. By the way, mother said she will sleep with us." Dina and Dee did a high-five. Deandra looked at her mom and she saw her shook her head as she smiled a bit.

"Really, mom? Thank you." She nodded as she took a bite to her burger.

"Dee, Dina, you both know what to do, okay? Please make the bed and make way for mom."

"Okay!" Because they're already done with their burgers even after Dahlia opened hers, they raced towards their room. Dahlia hugged both of my feet as she closed her eyes.

"You forgot one thing."

"Hmmm..." She responded, looking tired already. Deandra got her in her arms as they went to the kitchen.

"We have to brush our teeth." Deandra let her sit on the sink and handed her toothbrush and a plastic glass half-filled with water.

"Okay." She replied in a soft voice. Deandra put a pea-sized toothpaste on her toothbrush. She brushed her teeth in a lazy manner as she closed her eyes. She chuckled as she poked her youngest sister's arm gently.

Deandra looked at her own reflection as she brushed her teeth, while Dahlia sat on the sink beside where she was standing. Somehow, Deandra is assured that she'll not fall at all.

When they're done, Deandra carries her in her arms because she's too sleepy to walk inside their room. When she opened the door to their room, Dahlia had fallen asleep already.

Deandra lay her head on the pillow gently and tucked her to bed with their soft, white quilt made of cotton sewn by their mom.

Deandra also lay next to her youngest sister because they only share one bed. Today is not the best day yet but she knew deep down, she's happy that this day happened. After today, she felt like she could face any day fearlessly.

She smiled as she closed her eyes.

Chapter 13: TWICE IN A ROW

Deandra's POV

Yesterday felt really awesome. I am happy that everything is doing really good. I did my usual routine and I am thankful that my three siblings are really supportive of me.

"I hope you will come home early tonight dear Deandra." Dahlia tugged my skirt as she looked down.

"Of course. How could I ever miss my beautiful sister's birthday? I will bring home fried chicken, burgers and cakes tonight I promise."

My three sisters shrieked and yelled with happiness. Yes, they're kids. They love surprises and splashes of colors.

I left home wanting to pull time fast. As much as I want to be absent for my sister's birthday, it's only Wednesday. We all have classes. Dina, Dee and Dahlia will still go to West Ville Primary School while I will still go to our University. I have decided that I will be absent on my duty in the restaurant for today. Good thing our manager allowed me to take a leave for tonight.

I sat on the mini-table inside the library. When I noticed that there were no students requesting my service, I slid my hand on my pocket. I got my new one-thousand peso bill. I grinned because I am so happy that I can feel that I can do any form of work tasked for me.

"Miss, here's my library card."

"Oh, sorry. Let me have it." I smiled as the student handed me his library card. I listed the necessary information and nodded my head. He glanced at my table for a while and then left.

"Miss, here's mine, too." Another student appeared in front of me. I noticed that there were three students who lined up to wait for their turn as well.

I tried to list down all the necessary information for them. After they were all gone, I glanced at my wristwatch. It is almost 7:00 PM. I am too busy that I haven't noticed the time passing by really fast.

I looked around and I noticed Andrew is not yet visiting the library today. That's kind of weird. I sighed as I slid my left hand to my skirt again. I stood up all of a sudden as I bit my lip.

My one-thousand peso bill is missing!

I let my hand feel the pocket of my skirt but it was not there. I am sweating uncontrollably as I look around.

"Hey...Deandra. Here's my library card."

"Oh, Andrew, hi." I avoided my gaze as I got his library card.

"Are you alright? Are you crying?"

I tried meeting his gaze and I can see his worried look. After seeing his eyes, I couldn't stop my tears from falling.

"Yes, I am fine." I said between sobs.

"What? You don't look fine to me." He gently pulled me closer to him. I felt his chest touching my shoulders as he gave me a side hug.

"You shouldn't bother."

"Why?"

"I've troubled you too much, I'm so sorry." Gosh, I can't help but to cry in front of him. It's really embarrassing already.

"No, I insist. If there's anything that I can do, I am willing to help."

I look at him and I can see what he's offering is sincere.

"M-My one-thousand peso bill is missing." I said between suppressed cries. I could hear him chuckle a bit but he stopped it right away.

"Why? Is it funny?" I said as I looked down. What he did made me feel bad even more.

"I'm so sorry...sorry." He pulled me closer to him. He hugged me as he wrapped his arms on my shoulders because he's taller than me.

"I thought your problem is something really serious."

"How does "serious" looked like to you?" I said as I wiped my tears with my hands.

"I worked hard for that money. It's almost my three days worth of salary and now, it's gone in an instant." I added. He gently let me go as she held both of my shoulders. His smile could melt me any time I hate it.

"It's my sister's birthday today. If I can't buy anything for her then I guess I am facing the worst." I started crying again that he got his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped both of my cheeks.

"Okay, so this is what I will do. Since it's your sister's birthday, take this as my gift to her," He got my hand and placed a one-thousand peso bill and another hundred peso bill. "That one-hundred is your fare if you'll buy something for her. Make sure she'll be the happiest for her birthday tonight." He smiled. Many students started to walk towards me that he also nodded and walked away from where my mini-table is located.

"T-Thank you..." I shouted as gently as possible not to disturb other students. He never turned his back, maybe he didn't hear me.

"Miss, I'll get my library card..." A student appeared in front of me, and then another one. I held the money in my other hand while holding a ballpen on the other. That's my last streak of work. I know he's also gone to one of the aisles. He's too busy to even look at me right now.

I slowly slid the hand that held the money bills on my skirt. It would be too dreadful if I will lose it again the second time around.

I really owe him so much, not only what happened today but what happened the first time he gave me that 500-peso bill. As I walk away from the library, I can't help but to smile with misty eyes. He's a real gentleman. I can definitely tell. He's considerate and I can see that he could easily understand the situation of those people that surrounds him.

I bought everything that I planned to buy for my sister's birthday. Twelve pieces of fried chicken, five burgers and one, round cake that has her name on it. When I took a glance at my wristwatch, it's already 7:00 PM. I can imagine her reaction already as I walk on the sidewalk on my way to our house. This day is supposedly epic again but thanks to my lifesaver. I realized he's been saving me twice already.

Chapter 14: BIRTHDAY, FUNDAY

"I am so happy that you made it, dear Deandra!" Dahliah rushed to Deandra as soon as she saw her standing on the door.

"Of course! How can I ever miss this day?" Deandra chuckled as she spread her arms with the bags she's holding. Dahlia hugged her waist, while she hugged her sister's shoulders.

Surprisingly, Dahlia never got the bags. She showed her love to her eldest sister for arriving on time. Dina and Dee was the one to get the bags full of food and they put them all to the table.

"Where's mom?"

"She told us that she will buy some cold sodas." Deandra nodded and smiled. When everything was set up on the table, their mother opened the door. They noticed that she's holding two liters of sodas while grinning from ear to ear.

"I also have some balloons for you!" Deandra pulled a customized mini-balloon that has the shape of a unicorn. Dahlia hugged the balloon right away and kissed Deandra's cheek.

"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday our dear Dahlia, happy birthday to you!" Everyone clapped and sang for her as they put on the candles on top of her cute chocolate cake.

"Thank you so much! This is the best birthday ever!"

"You are a big girl now, dear. You're already ten years old." Their mother tapped Dahlia's head. She smiled as she hugged their mother, too.

"I will always be your baby, mom."

"Of course."

They ate dinner happily. It is also because of Dahlia's birthday celebration.

"Thank you so much Deandra. We ate a lot of delicious food for one day. I hope it will always stay like this."

"Of course. I will always try my best for all of you to eat delicious foods because I love you all." Deandra cheerfully replied to Dina who is busy eating the leg part of her fried chicken on her left hand and a burger on her right hand.

"Thank you. I hope I can eat this everyday." Dina said between munches.

"I will try my best dear."

Deandra's POV

The next day, I rushed to the library early in the morning for me to study for their exams next week. It's only every morning that I had this chance to study because of the demands of my work as a student assistant.

I am in her best mood. I am very happy that I have given my sister the birthday that she wants.

"Hello..." A familiar voice greeted me as he sat in front of me.

"H-Hi, Andrew." I almost stammered after I smelled that intoxicating smell of his perfume again.

"I never thought I'll see you here. It's too early yet."

"Yeah, it's the only time that I can study my lessons."

"Why? Are you that busy?"

"Yeah, I have a lot of part-time jobs."

"Oh, I see. That's nice."

"I'm so sorry again for bothering you. I know I have a lot of debts already."

"No, I don't mind. Just manage your money well and take care of it. I know that's your hard-earned money." I nodded and smiled in a very shy manner. He excused himself to be silent for a while because we're studying right now. I agreed and we both read books in silence.

As he sat in front of me, he was focused on reading the pre-law books. Me, on the other hand, can't help staring at him and on how gorgeous he is. I can see that his physique is perfect for my standards and tastes. I admit his physical appearance attracted me the first time. Now that I am getting to know his personality as well, I can't help but to feel happy deep down.

It's the first time that a guy is friendly to me and they mean it. Mind you, this is not another random type of guy. He is Andrew Meyers. He's the boy that every girl's dream in the University.

Even if he's aware that a lot of people are looking at him, especially girls, he's not easily distracted. I love how he maintained focus during difficult or awkward situations. Well, I guess I know the reason. I think nobody could ever replace his girlfriend in his heart. I already concluded this one based on what I have observed from the restaurant where I am working a few days ago.

After more than forty minutes, he stood up and bid goodbye to me as if I am his girlfriend. I smiled as I waved my hand, too.

Because I study with a happy mood, I had a perfect mark on my exams. I am too happy because my morning started great. I really love it!

After I attended the long hours of classes, I rushed to my duty at the library. After Andrew sat in front of me this morning, I wanted to see him again.

As soon as I reached my mini-table and attended to many students, I could see Andrew approaching me. He's smiling from ear to ear.

"Hello, Deandra! Here's my library card."

"Coming right up!" I smiled back at him as I got the library card that's inserted between his pointing finger and index finger.

"Thank you." I nodded as I avoided his gaze. I might melt if I continue to stare at his gorgeous pair of eyes. The way he would look at me is so addicting. He has a pair of appreciative eyes which I liked the most. Also, his pointed nose and naturally pinkish lips.

He left in front of me while I stared at him dreamily. A hand waved in front of my face that brought me to my senses.

"I guess I know why you're happy lately." Kelly grinned as she raised her eyebrows up and down. She's as if teasing me, I am so busted.

"What? Of course it's nice to be happy everyday. Do you have a reason for your happiness as always?"

"Of course. We should have our reason for everything," She inched closer to me. I could feel the air coming from her lips near my ear.

"Well, I guess your reason for your happiness is Andrew Meyers, right?" She said while giggling in a soft voice. I can't help but blush as well.

I hate to admit it but I am busted. My goodness!

Chapter 15: LIFESAVER

Deandra's POV

I am used to Andrew's presence everyday. Especially that he loves going to the library to study a lot. There are times that he would stay there for almost the whole day. Of course, we can't help but to also share random topics to talk about. I have discovered that we also shared some little things in common. That made me become interested in knowing him more.

He is also nice and approachable. I can't help but like his personality a lot. He is silent most of the time but if we will start a topic, he loves to share what's in his mind. He's smart and he loves to share what he knows about, especially about laws and other questions that I am asking him.

"I think Dahlia is the cutest among all of your siblings."

"Why?" I can't help but to smile. Whenever someone will tell me about my sister, it's like complimenting me directly as well. I was able to show him some pictures of them in my wallet. That's why he could say these things.

"She's really sweet and kind. The twins are also adorable but I know twins share distinct characteristics, right?" He sounded sure that I just nodded as an indirect answer while smiling at him.

"Do you have siblings, too?" I asked. He just shook his head as he looked at me. He always smiles at me that I can't help but to avoid my gaze by looking at the other direction. If this is a staring contest, I will surely lose the game because his gaze is too powerful. Even his mere presence longs to melt all of me.

"Wow, I think you're too lucky because you're the only one."

"Nope. Not really. Why did you say that?"

"I don't know. I guess I just assume that your parents never experienced stress more than I do."

"There are things you never knew about. It's not what you think it is."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Yes, I am their only child but they love their businesses more than me. Got used to it all these years doing most of the things by myself."

"Oh, I am so sorry to hear that."

"You know what's even more ironic?" He smiled but I could sense a melancholic vibe as I gaze into his eyes a little.

"I am closer to my nanny more than my mom. That's the sad truth." He added. I couldn't help but to swallow. Yeah, I instantly regret telling him about that. I guess, not all families work the way I imagine. I guess I am used to seeing parents having a strong relationship with their only daughter or son.

"We all have our own struggles. At least you never had problems when it comes to financial stuff."

He just sighed as he smiled at me. However, I can see that he never wanted to talk more about it. Indeed, we face different situations with different reasons why things happen.

"Thank you for this. I admire people whom I can talk with comfortably."

"I never mind. Thank you also for listening. Most people never wanted to talk to me."

"Why? I think you have a nice personality. It's just that some people can't appreciate it."

"Thank you for the compliment. I am happy that someone is making me feel that life is good."

"Life is always better. It's just that people view life on a different point of view. Reading books could make you learn more about life and on how to manage it efficiently."

"Thank you. I will always remember this one." I smiled as I stood up. I glanced at my wristwatch and saw Kelly winked at me at a corner. I blushed as I smiled back at her. She gave me a gesture that she'll take my turn in attending to the students who leave and get their library cards from my post on the mini-table three meters away from the table where I am sitting with Andrew.

"Sorry but I have to go now. I will still have my last part-time job for tonight at exactly 7:20 PM." He nodded and smiled at me. He shifted his gaze to the books that he is reading. I walked towards the mini-table where student assistants are sitting. Kelly flashed a malicious smile that I poked her on the arm.

"I will go now. Bye Keir!" I greeted her as I passed by the mini-table. She nodded and waved her hand, too.

I went out of school with an enthusiastic smile. I am not beautiful or sexy but I feel like one because of Andrew's attention. I can't even believe that we will talk more about ourselves. Well, whatever that attention is, I liked it so much. Even if it is a friendly gesture, he still made me happy that I am so inspired in whatever work that I will do for the rest of the night.

Two hours of going to and fro made me feel light. I usually feel dead tired but tonight is a different one. Whenever I remember Andrew's smile, I feel energized. Maybe my classmates are all right. If you feel inspired, nothing can ever make you feel down. I put off our restaurant uniform and apron

and folded it as I put it inside my bag. I changed to our school uniform because it's more decent. I have a round, collar neck blouse and baby blue slacks.

I walked alone since Kylie's stomach is getting bigger and obvious. She needs to have her bed rest as often as possible so that both her and the baby will not be stressed.

When I tried to pass on the main road on our way to our house, I noticed there were two drunkards walking criss-cross between the road. I heard a lot of dogs barking at them but they seem to not care.

My heart started to race fast when they saw me walking beside the road two meters away from them. I am all alone and the two men have bigger, stronger bodies. I looked around and I noticed that there's nobody passing by this road because it's already late.

I heard a certain cat-calling sound from one of them as he smiled at me. I became really nervous when his saliva started to drool from his mouth as he smiled at me.

"Hey miss beautiful...how are you?" One of them greeted me as they put their arms to both their shoulders side by side, as if supporting each other not to fall down. I did not answer and I started walking faster than the usual.

"Hey, we're not done talking yet baby, why such in a hurry?" One of them grabbed my shoulders and the other one stood in front of me. I shrieked in pain because of what the other man did to me. They were all grinning and laughing like crazy.

"I will go home now. Let me go!" I tried twitching but they tightened their grip on me. I noticed that they are both holding me now. What can I do? They are stronger than me.

"Stay for a while. I am sure you'll enjoy what we are going to do with you." The other man laughed after what he heard from his companion. His laugh is really creepy that I noticed the tears that's falling on my cheeks.

"No! I will not go with you!" I tried resisting but they were stronger than me. They both held my left and right arm. My heart almost stopped when I heard a gunshot.

"Let her go!" Someone shouted from behind us. How can I not know that voice?

Chapter 16: SAVING Deandra

Deandra's POV

That was Andrew! I can't be wrong!

We all turned our backs from where that voice came from. Now that I have confirmed that it was really him, I can't help but to feel weird. I twitched but the two men are still holding my arms on both sides. However, when they saw the gun from Andrew's hand, I could feel that their grip on my arm got loosen a bit. They almost froze because of what they are seeing.

"The next shot will be on your chests if you will not let go of her!" He held the gun firmly, pointing it to their chests, shifting to each one of them.

"Dude, looks like he's a police officer. He has a gun...fuck it!" I heard one of them cursing from his breath. The other man looked at him as they both looked so tense.

They let go of me right away as they raised both of their hands. I can see that they are both sweating heavily as they look at him.

"S-Sir, we're not doing anything. We'll leave now." They scampered right away as soon as they saw the gun in Andrew's hand.

Because I am still shaky, I fell on the ground because it's like my knees were losing their strength all of a sudden. He rushed towards me and he helped me as I got on my feet again. He put both my arms around his shoulders and I am almost hugging him right now.

"A-Andrew..." Because everything just sunk in just now, tears burst out from me.

"Shh, I am here now. Don't worry."

"T-Thank you so much." I softly said between sobs. He slid his hand on his left pocket. I can see that he got his handkerchief and gently wiped the tears away. This time, it's like everything is coming back in my mind right now.

"Now I know the purpose of why I passed this road. A while ago, the main road got closed because it is under maintenance. I was about to pass this road when I saw you walking very fast towards the two men. I went out of my car to double check on you and my instincts were right."

"What a coincidence but I am really thankful for it."

"Don't think about what happened today. The important thing is you're safe now." I can feel his breath because we're almost kissing each other. It's a bit awkward because his face is really close to

mine. I can't help but to close my eyes as he hugged me closer to him. Right now, I can almost feel his skin chest next to mine. I hope it will not be too obvious for him. It's embarrassing to think that he felt my heart beating fast against his chest.

I gently let go of him before things could get worse. A while ago, my heart raced fast because of fear because of the two men who cornered me. However, right now, I am not sure of the reason why my heart behaves like this right at this moment. Of course, it will surely get worse because I don't want to accept the fact that I am starting to like him.

"I will go with you until you will reach home."

"W-Why?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Deandra! What if they will go back for you? My conscience will haunt me forever."

"O-Okay. T-Thanks." I bit my lower lip to stop myself from grinning from ear to ear. I looked down as we started walking beside the road.

"Come here." He grabbed my left hand all of a sudden as he pulled me closer to him.

"If you walk between the road, a motorcycle or vehicle might run towards you. Please learn how to take care of yourself." I nodded as I looked into his eyes. I am really touched because his concern is genuine. I stopped walking in front of our small house. I could see him smile as he let go of my hand.

"I don't know how to thank you. You just saved my life."

"No worries. I just did what I have to do. Please tell me if those guys will bother you again. I'll make sure they will regret it."

"Thank you so much Andrew. I will go inside now. Please take care as you go back."

"I can take care of myself. I also want to remind you of this. As much as possible, get a reliable companion. Also, if you have an option to pass on a safer way in going to your house, please go that way. Avoid dimmed places that had no lampposts."

"I will remember these things! Thank you once again!"

"The pleasure is mine. Next time, please don't you dare walk alone if you'll be passing on a dimly-lit road. You don't know how people think nowadays."

"I will always bear that in mind."

"Very good. Sorry, I guess I have to go ahead. It's getting late. Remember the reminders I gave you."

"I will. Don't worry."

I waved at him goodbye as I followed him with my gaze. I can see him walking back to where we walked on. I can hear a cute sound as if allowing the car to be unlocked. Oh, he had his own car parked on the side of the vertical major road approximately ten meters away from my house.

I am touched because he walked a long way just to ensure my safety from those guys. I thought I'll be in danger but he's a lifesaver. His timing saved me from their wicked plans. I thought I would be raped or gone forever from my family. He came into that scene even before I asked for help. He's really amazing. I can't help but to recall those scenes that happened in my mind again and again.

I took a quick bath and put on my pajamas. As usual, my mom and sisters are all sleeping now. I lay beside Dahlia who is sucking her thumb this time. She looked really adorable and peaceful as she slept. I kissed her forehead in a gentle manner.

From what Andrew did a while ago, I am not sure if I can still sleep tonight. I put my hands on my chest and felt the rhythm of my heart. It is still beating faster as if being really excited.

What is this I am feeling right now? Is this right? I slowly got up and it made Dahlia move a little. Her hand is feeling my body beside her. I lay flat on my back again as I put her hand on my waist. I can see that she smiled a little while closing her eyes.

I am staring at the ceiling as I recalled what happened a while ago. I looked at my hand that he touched. That familiar feeling is still giving me goosebumps all over my body. I realized that his girlfriend is the luckiest girl in the world for having him by her side. For me, Andrew is an ideal man any girl could ever dream of. How I wish I could also find a man like him. For me, he's already perfect.

Chapter 17: CLOSED DEAL

Deandra's POV

I got up with a smiling face. What happened last night still gave me reasons to be thankful for. It's all because of Andrew. As usual, my best sisters Dina, Dee and Dahlia helped me pack everything. Since they will still go to school and it is their Art class.

It's Saturday morning and I am happy that I am granted to work longer hours from the library. I personally requested it because I wanted to earn more. Well, bonus happiness if I can see Andrew studying in the library. My mini-table is just beside his favorite corner so I could talk to him if there's a chance.

I could feel my happy feet happily tapping the ground as I walked in going to the bus station.

I ride on the bus with a humming sound. I am really feeling good that other students smiled as they looked at me. Maybe they find me funny and I don't care. I even tapped my fingers on the side window as I looked through it. The weather is perfectly fine. It's as if it wanted to be happy with me.

I alighted from the bus and I hurriedly walked on my way to the library. I looked around me and I don't see any trace of him. I just walked towards my mini-table and continued my work. I guess I will just be calm first. Maybe he will be here any minute from now.

There were a lot of students going in the library now. Some of them were so busy and some of them are getting impatient already.

"Miss, here's my library card."

"Okay." I received the student's card but I am looking at the entrance door. It's like my neck is getting longer because of anticipating his arrival.

"Miss?" The student is now frowning as she faced me. She's waiting for me to list her information as she enters the library.

"Oh, I am sorry," I am frantically listing down everything."

"Here you go." I gave her library card to her. She left right away.

I sighed because he is nowhere in sight. It's like my excitement is slowly fading away. Did he just forget me after what happened last night? I smiled when I saw Kelly entering the library. I waved at her as she walked towards me.

"Keir! Good to know you're here!"

She just smirked in return.

"Of course. I don't want to miss anything. Oh, by the way, Andrew Meyers is still having a class. I guess he'll be here any minute." She said as she winked at me. Before I could even react, she left as she chuckled. My goodness! That's really something! I was caught off-guard because of it. I don't know but her reaction is so malicious as she looked into my eyes. Before I could even give my reaction, that witch left already.

I touched my chest as I smiled. Here's my heart thumping like crazy again. I guess that information coming from Kelly is enough to make my whole day.

I realized that sometimes, if someone knows your crush, they'll be the ones to update you the most as to where your crush is right now, or what they were doing. Thanks to Kelly for it.

I am just sitting on my mini-table when someone dropped his library card on my table. I look at the hand that did that. That familiar scent made me smile automatically.

I looked up to know who that is and I could see Andrew's gloomy face.

"Hi, Andrew! Goodmorning. Here's your library card." I smiled as I gave it to his hands. He accepted it right away.

"Thanks." He walked to one of the aisles as if dragging his feet. He's not even happy right now. Did something happen while I am gone? Have I done wrong?

I observe him silently from afar. He opened his books and focused to read his notes. He's not even minding me and it is the first time that he didn't greet me. It suddenly made me sad, totally from what happened last night.

I can't help but to focus my attention to him because it's the first time that he's looking sad like this. I saw him sliding his left hand on his pocket. He got his phone and I could see that he's suppressing his annoyance to somebody who's calling him.

"I'm still trying to study here at this moment. Could you please call me later?"

He frowned. Maybe it's the opposite answer of what he's trying to explain.

Are they fighting with his girlfriend? Why is he acting like this all of a sudden?

He stood up as he still put his phone on his ear. He left the library still arguing with whom he is talking on the phone.

I felt so sad because he left with his books opened. He's always here so students assistants would often take care of his books and put it aside for him to use again.

"Would you like to do the honor?" Kelly teased me as she pointed at the books. I nodded right away as I held the book on my arms. I instantly smelled his scent right away. Sometimes I am amazed how his smell stuck even on the books he borrowed from the library. I waited for many hours until my shift would be over. Sadly, he didn't return to get his books.

"Well, I guess he will be getting his books on Monday this time." Kelly shook his head from left to right as she clicked her tongue. It's like she's the one who was sad for what happened.

"Well, the fantasy will just be continued on Monday, you can still see him."

"Is it your last duty today?"

"Yep. I wish you the best, dear. I will promise to keep in touch with you no matter what happens."

"Of course. Please tell me about how work will be for you. I am sure you'll be getting a good one." As soon as she heard it, her eyes glistened. She showed me her proud, beaming smile.

"Thank you for the well wishes, dear Deandra. I will never forget you as a friend."

"You will always be my friend, dear."

"Please visit me often, dear. I hope you will get your dream job really soon."

"Thank you so much."

Kelly and I parted ways. As I walked on the sidewalk, I saw a familiar figure sitting on one of the tables from a popular pub.

Is that Andrew? Why is he inside the pub all alone? Was he drinking before I could even see him?

Chapter 18: NIGHT OF A LIFETIME

Deandra's POV

I can't help but to worry about Andrew. Will he be alright there? He's all alone as he drank in that pub. If only I have a lot of money, I won't work tonight. I will just accompany him because I felt like he needed me the most now. I am very much worried about him but what can I do? I still have to go to my other night job as a receptionist inside a small inn every weekend.

I will start my work at 4:00 PM and I will end there at 8:00 PM. I walked past that pub as I hurried inside the inn for my duty. I can see that the customers are starting to go inside.

I am entertaining guests and answering their queries but my mind is wandering somewhere else. What will happen to Andrew there? Will he be alright?

"Miss...please guide me to the third floor. I am not familiar with this place."

"Yes, ma'am. I will be very glad to assist you."

I was too focused at my work when one of my colleagues walked past me. He looked shocked that he glanced at his wristwatch.

"Hey, are you not planning to go home?"

"Huh? What time is it?" I was shocked as I looked at my wristwatch.

"Well, it's time to go home and take a good rest." He smiled as he winked. I can see that he has already packed his bag and put it on his back. He waved his hands as he walked towards our small exit door exclusively for employees only.

"Bye, Deandra. Take care."

"Bye, Lee! I will also get ready to go home. Thank you so much for reminding me."

"Anytime." He smiled as he walked outside. I sighed as I moved fast. I suddenly remembered Andrew. I have to go back to that pub to check on him. Before I went to work, I noticed that he was already down with three bottles of beer on his table. Is he out of his mind? The way I know him, he's not the type that would drink alcoholic beverages that often.

I am concerned for him because nobody accompanied him to drink. What will happen to him and his wallet and keys? What if he will pass out there all alone?

I walked fast and as soon as I reached the pub, I saw him sleeping on one of the tables. He's resting his head on his arm and I can see no less than eight bottles of beer standing in front of him. I started to worry because I can see that he already passed out because of too much binge drinking.

I walked towards him and tried to shake him but he's not even answering.

"Drew? Please wake up. We will go home now." I murmured but I didn't get any response. It's like I am only talking to myself because he's very hard to wake up because of his situation now.

"Ma'am," One of the waiters called my attention. I never noticed he already followed me as I went near Andrew. When I saw him, he looked at me from head to toe. He shifted his gaze to Drew and then to me.

"Are you his girlfriend?" He asked as if he doesn't want to even hear his own question.

"No, I'm not. I am a good friend of his and I am getting him out of here because I am concerned about what he just did."

"Okay, ma'am. I am so sorry. He already paid for everything." He confessed while taking a glance at Andrew, too.

"I will bring him home." He nodded. I asked the help of the bouncers to bring him inside his car. Thankfully, I can drive and I drove him to his condominium unit based on the address that's on his wallet. I parked his car in his own parking area. I can still feel my knees shaking. His car is too expensive, I'm able to drive it the slowest as I could. I might scratch the car and cause trouble. I can't imagine myself paying for his car or those things I knew I can't afford.

The condominium is really big and classy. It is really obvious that it is only for the wealthy. After a series of interrogation, I successfully got inside his unit with his keys.

He slept like a log that's why I am having a hard time putting him to bed. I looked around and I admire him for being organized. I got a small basin and filled it with cold water. Good thing I was able to find a tiny towel. I walked towards him as he lies on the bed.

I looked at him from head to toe. He looked helpless and peaceful at the same time. He's really drunk. I want to lessen his hangover.

"Oh gosh forgive me please." I touched the hem of his collared t-shirt and pulled it upwards. I swallowed as I looked at his abs. I suddenly have the urge within me to touch it if it is real.

"Goodness gracious..." He's one, hot man. However, I have to give him a cold compress. He needs to recover from what he felt. What if he still had his class tomorrow? From what I knew about pre-law students, they have busy schedules.

I also unzipped his pants and I gasped when I saw his huge bulge.

"This is too much of a temptation for a day." I spent a lot of minutes giving him a cold bath until I could see him moving his eyes as he gently groaned.

"Please don't do this to me. I am trying to save myself from getting tempted." I can't help but to whisper in his ear. I'm shocked when he pulled me on top of him. I got outbalanced that my body lay flat on him as my arms wrapped around his shoulders.

"Please, don't leave me anymore. Tell me that it isn't true. Please, sweetheart." He said as he held my head closer to his. He narrowed his gaze on my lips and kissed me deep. I closed my eyes and before I knew it, I kissed him back. We rolled on the bed and he's on top of me now.

"Sweetheart...I love you so much."

Everything went so wild. As my heart beat really fast, so is his hands in undressing me. Sweetheart? Love? Did he just call me those endearing words? Was it all really intended for me? I want to forget it all for the meantime. As my skin did not miss any of his kisses, I recalled the first time I saw him on that narrow road. On how I blamed him for getting my money but it turns out to be the most epic of all because I put it to my right pocket.

On how he talked to me for the first time as he flashed his genuine smile at me. How will I ever forget his goodness as he gave me a 1000-peso bill for the birthday of Dahlia? He saved me from sure humiliation because I promised to buy food for my sister.

As he kissed me from my lips deep down, I just realized that I didn't just like him for his goodness. I didn't just like him because of his personality but because I am already in love...I am in love with someone I don't even own. He gently spread my legs wide. I don't like how my body responded to his every touch. It's as if I was made for him and he was made for me. I kissed him wild and with passion.

But right now, as he entered me, I am sure I own him throughout the night.

Chapter 19: CLUELESS WENCH

Deandra's POV

I can still feel his heartbeat as I lay on top of him, both of us, naked. I hugged him as I kissed his neck. I felt him gently groan as he kissed my hair but I noticed that he's still closing his eyes. Today, I am grabbing the opportunity to own him my own way. If this is the only way I could enjoy his company and call him my own, I would love to do this with him again and again from this day on.

If he's dreaming, I hope I gave him a great one. I gently put his hands away and I slowly got up. Even if I felt sore inside my core, I put on my clothes as I looked at him.

"Thank you for letting me feel that I am feeling loved even if I am not the one you're calling as we make love."

When I saw him move a little, I got nervous as I moved fast. I left his keys on his bedside table, locked his door from the inside and shut it behind me. I held my chest as I sighed.

A part of me wished that he would somehow remember that it was me, Deandra whom he took for the first time. I couldn't still believe that he was the one who took my virginity and not being aware about it.

I glanced at the clock and it was close to midnight when I reached home. When I did my half-bath, put on my pajamas and lay beside Dahlia, I couldn't help but feel scared and regret it at the same time. I wish that whatever runs in my mind will not happen.

"Dear Deandra?" Dahlia just woke up as she blinked her eyes and rubbed it using her hands.

"Shh...sleep now, dear."

"Did you just go home from work?" She asked in her most innocent look. I felt like crying all of a sudden because of what she asked of me.

"Y-Yes. Close your eyes and have the sweetest dreams, our baby sister." She followed me as she nodded. I tried to smile in front of her as she closed her eyes tightly.

"Relax your eyes. Don't shut it really tight."

She followed me right away. I can feel that she slept in an instant after I told her to close her eyes. This is one thing I liked from my youngest sister.

She follows what I am telling her.

I am trying to sleep but anxiety attacks keep on coming. I am not an overthinker but now, I feel like I am being one. I tried getting up as quietly as possible to drink some water. Good thing Dahlia didn't feel me moving beside her as I get up. I went straight to the kitchen to get a glass of water as I sat on the chair.

I closed my eyes as it is all coming back to me again. The sensations, the warmth of his kisses and the way he held me tight like he owned me from the start.

When he opened my thighs and licked my core, it felt pleasurable that everything I am holding on to, I was too willing to let go. He never stopped savoring my insides until I reached my orgasm. Yep, it felt delicious as all of me anticipated more from him.

Most of the time I am closing my eyes, that's why I never saw his reaction as he kissed and touched every inch of me. The only light that we had is from the rays of the moon shining so bright through his windows. His bed is really soft and as we made love, I feel like I am in a different dimension made purely out of never-ending pleasure.

I was drowned with reassuring and possessive words from him. That he loved me and he will propose to me soonest so that we'll get married and build our own family. I was too hooked on that particular moment that it left me speechless.

But...was it all meant for me? I doubt it. The weekend felt really quick. Last week was my happiest week but this, that I am not sure of. It's terrible and scary. Now, I don't know what to do anymore.

As soon as I reached my first class, everyone went wild when they discovered that our teacher was absent. It made me better somehow. I decided to sit on the mini-forest to clear my mind and breath some fresh air. I walked towards my favorite spot when I saw Kylie smiling as she waved her hands.

"Hey! I miss you so much Deandra!" She exclaimed as I sat in one of the concrete benches in front of the table facing her.

"I miss you too dear! How have you been doing?" As I asked her, I noticed she's wearing a floral dress that's loose on her waist. I knew the purpose of it.

"I am feeling good. Thanks for asking." She smiled as she looked into my eyes. She looked really fine and happy.

"What's the update for your baby?"

"Well, my baby's father is being irresponsible at first but when his parents discovered it, they promised to help me support their incoming grandson or granddaughter."

"Wow! That's really great news! I am happy for you dear Kylie." She hugged me tight and I could see her misty eyes.

"Thank you so much dear Deandra. I am really thankful to you because of the moral support you have given me that night."

"Please do not mind it, that's what friends are for, right?"

"Yeah. I am thankful that you're one of them. If not for your good advice and support, I would've aborted the baby already because of the stress I am getting."

"You shouldn't be. Please be healthy for your baby and love him or her. What did your ex-boyfriend tell you? Did he know that his parents will support his child?"

"She decided to break up with her current girlfriend because her father threatened him to cut all of his allowances and they will disown him as their only son if he will abandon his baby from me."

I laughed as we did the high-five.

"I guess that's one of the reasons why he left what he has right now."

"I just wish he will love our baby more than I do."

"I think he will love you more now because you gave him a baby."

"I really hope so. But I guess it is a long process. But, no matter how long, I promise to wait for him until we can have a family of our own."

Chapter 20: NOTORIOUS HEART-BREAKER

Deandra listened more to her friend Kylie as they sat in front of each other inside the mini-forest. She could see that her friend is more lively this time compared from the last time they met. She could see that her friend Kylie, getting used to the life of being pregnant.

"I am honestly excited of what's in store for you and your baby." Deandra told her as she held both of Kylie's hands.

"Me too. I felt like having second hopes again. Thank you so much my dearest Deandra. I will never forget what help you did for me."

"That's what friends are for, right? I just did what I think I have to do." She smiled at her best friend as she hugged her once again.

"How are you? Are you still working in the restaurant?"

"Well, I have to do it, dear. You know me."

"If you need help, please do not hesitate to let me know. Anyway, I came here to give you my new address. I will not be having my boarding house again, several blocks away from your house."

"Oh, why?"

"My boyfriend's parents wanted me to live in their house so that their future grandson or granddaughter will surely be taken care of."

"Wow, I can say you're indeed lucky, my dear. Your parents-in-law loves you so much."

"At least they are not becoming like their son. They knew how to be responsible."

"I hope your baby will grow to be a good person just like you dear."

"Thank you so much dear Deandra."

She talked more and Deandra also attended her classes. Afternoon came and it was 5:00 PM already. Deandra entered the library with a gloomy mood. She saw Mrs. Seo, their librarian as she approached her.

"Oh, hello there Deandra! I want you to arrange the bookshelf on aisles 9 and 10 please. The books there were disheveled."

"Yes, ma'am." She nodded as she felt a jolt of relief. At least she will not see Andrew for the meantime...although he missed him already.

She went towards the designated aisle that the librarian wants her to arrange. She started to put the books in order not minding the people around her. After a few minutes, she heard a familiar voice coming towards where she's at right now.

"That was an awesome dream, dude." Was that Andrew? Although their voice is not that loud, she could hear what they are talking about.

"I thought you too already broke up?" His friend answered him.

"Yes, but I am not giving up on her. She's the one I love so much. I will do everything for her, dude."

Deandra looked at the many books around her as tears flowed from her eyes. She can't even believe what she just heard. What? A dream? Is it really possible for that night to be considered just a dream?

No matter how she disregarded what he heard, it still broke her heart. She realized he never remembered her, even her face, and what she did for him when he became so wasted that night. He was too drunk to even remember her, even a little and it is hurting her too much right now.

Even if he's too drunk, I hope he somehow remembered her while he is recklessly taking her. All the things that happened that night. Even if he doesn't remember her, every single thing that happened that night is still fresh from her memory.

They left and Deandra just stayed there, arranging the books slowly. It's as if all of her strength left her all of a sudden after what she heard from Andrew. The man she is starting to love. She decided to be absent from her last night job in the restaurant. She packed all of her heavy backpack and got on the bus all the way to her house.

"I'm home," She dryly greeted everyone as she opened the door. All the four of them looked at her in shock. They're all speechless as if they have seen a ghost just now.

"What?"

"Dear Deandra, I thought you're still working?"

"Do you have any fried chicken?" Dee, Dina and Dahlia said these to me in order, and I love the last sentence. I can't help but chuckle as I tapped the hair of Dahlia.

"Are you okay?" Mom asked me as I went near the table. I smiled when I saw my favorite dish: fried fish and stewed cabbages with carrots. I sat right away and grabbed a bowl of rice and dishes. They all giggled when they saw how hungry I am.

"Dear Deandra, you're fat now." Dahlia said that Dina covered her mouth right away.

"I know. But I am the kindest, fat girl you'll ever love, right?" I cheerfully answered and made all of them laugh.

"You're beautiful my dear. Don't mind the physical appearance for it will easily fade away. Mind what's inside of your heart." I nodded as I ate more. They're having their dinner that's why Deandra was so happy as she went home.

After her three sisters went to bed, her mom went near her as she sat on the chair of their dining table drinking a glass of milk.

"Do you have something to tell me?" She touched her hair as she gave her a worried look.

"What should I tell you?" She looked up and gave her a weak smile.

"Well, I am your mom and it is not always normal that you come home early from work. Let me see," She sat next to her as she felt her forehead and neck using her hands.

"Hmm, you're not sick, either. What's the problem dear? Do you need anything, perhaps?"

"No, mom. I am okay. I guess I felt worn out a little, that's why I decided to come home earlier than usual." She nodded as if getting convinced of what Deandra is telling her.

"Okay, but are you sure you're really alright?" Her mom stood up and cupped her cheeks. She smiled and touched both of her mother's hands.

"Yep. I am as okay as an ox. Don't worry mom." Her mother tapped her head and excused herself to go to her room now. Deandra nodded and she also got ready to bed. She did her usual night routine, doing the half-bath, putting on her pajamas and lying down next to Dahlia who is showing her weird sleeping position again. Deandra carried her and put her again to bed, this time, Dahlia's head was on the pillow now, while her feet were on the lower part of the bed.

Deandra looked at her youngest sister. This time, how she wished to become a child again. No stress, no tiresome activities and jobs and especially no heartbreaks.

Chapter 21: THE OTHER ONE

Deandra's POV

I worked in the library and restaurant at the same time as weeks passed by. I would often see Andrew but I always want to avoid him for many reasons.

"Hi..." I gasped as he appeared behind me one day. My heart started to race as I turned around. I could see his smiling face as he reached for the books above me while my back leaned against one of the bookshelves. I looked up and met his gaze.

"H-Hello..." I sounded like an idiot, honestly speaking. He chuckled and this situation made me feel awkward. My heart started to flutter as I avoided his melting gaze. I just couldn't stand it for so long.

"Are you avoiding me, Deandra?"

"Huh? Why would I do that?" He leaned closer to my face and smiled.

"I don't know. I just feel it deep down. Did I do something that made you avoid me?" He is still looking at me as if waiting for my answer to what he asked me. I swallowed and tried meeting his gaze again.

I badly wanted to breathe but he moved closer to me and I felt like I couldn't move a muscle anymore.

"I will go to my mini-table first." I politely told him and it made him step back a little. I sighed with relief as I started to walk away from where we are standing.

"Hey, you didn't answer my question yet."

"No. Why would I avoid you? Don't overthink, Andrew."

"Alright. You're sure about it, okay?" He gave me a curious look. I smiled in return trying to hide what I want to tell him right now.

"Yes. I am just busy with the library work. Sorry if I haven't talked to you these days."

"It's fine."

"I'll go to my table now. Please inform me if you need anything. I'd be more than happy to assist you."

"Thank you so much." He smiled as I started walking to my mini-table near the librarian's office.

'Something happened between us. You're the first to take my virginity even if I am not sure if you even have feelings for me or not.'

Of course, I have to keep these words for myself. I don't want him to think that I am inventing any form of crazy ideas to make him love me back. I don't want to give him a reason to overthink since he's busy with his lessons most of the time.

I sat on my table with a lot of thoughts running on my mind. I look at his corner and as usual, he is drawn to his books more than anything. I just attend to the needs of my schoolmates as they need assistance when it comes to their library cards. There were also students who wanted to borrow books in different genres as well.

Time flies so fast and I am done with the library work. As I went to the restaurant, I felt dizzy all of a sudden. I felt my forehead as I entered the restaurant. I went to the employee room directly and sat down on one of the chairs. The atmosphere is always busy here as soon as you will go inside the restaurant that's why I suddenly felt sick at the sight of it.

"You alright?" Kyle entered the room as he wiped his hands on one of the dried clothes but his eyes were on me.

"I guess so. I think I am just tired from my work in the library."

"You think you can still work?"

"Of course. I was absent yesterday. I can't miss today's duties."

"Good. When you're ready, please wait tables 8,9 and 10 please." He smiled as he went outside the room again. One thing I am thankful of were the people in the restaurant. We all help one another. It's the work that's tiring us all out.

I almost dragged myself as I pushed the door outside. I got the pen and the medium memo of the restaurant as I go to the tables assigned for me. I am stunned for a minute when a familiar woman is sitting on table 9. It was Andrew's girlfriend.

She's wearing a classy pink floral dress that's above the knee, and she did her hair in a messy bun which emphasized her beautiful face more.

"H-Hello, ma'am. I am Ms. M, may I take your order please?"

"Oh, I am sorry. I am still looking at the menu. Please go back after five minutes. Thanks." I nodded and stepped back right away. These are the moments that I missed Kylie the most. She usually saves me if this will happen. Now, I have to face her alone and give her orders this time.

I looked around and Sylvia put the orders of table numbers 11, 12 and 13. I bit my lower lip as I looked at her. She's one of our colleagues but we're not that close. Kyle and Ryan were also busy in

the kitchen. I realized that I should face everything alone. I looked at table 9 again and she raised her hand as if letting me go near her.

I slowly walk towards table number 9.

"One mexican burger and green salad please, no dressing. Thank you." I nodded and smiled at her. I simply looked around and I noticed she's all alone. Will Andrew be late for their date? As I went back to the counter, I did not miss my gaze to Andrew's girlfriend.

I suddenly feel small while looking at her. She looked like one of those top-calibre models compared to what I looked like, physically.

"Are you alright?" Kyle asked me one more time as he put some orders on the counter table to be picked up by some waiters to give to the other tables.

"No. I am not feeling well, actually."

"Yeah, that's what I noticed a while ago. What tables are you going to serve?"

"Tables 9 and 10."

"Okay, give them to me. You can sit down inside the employee's room for one to three minutes for the meantime. If you're okay, I want you to complete the orders of tables 14, 15 and 16 please."

"Thank you so much for being considerate, Kyle. I will never forget it."

"It's okay. I don't want you to collapse while taking and completing orders as well."

I followed what Kyle, my colleague told me to do. I entered the employee room but I was able to look through the peephole about what's happening outside.

I saw Andrew's girlfriend again but this time, a different guy arrived and sat in front of her. I saw her smiling as if showing how happy she is. It was nothing compared to what I saw when she's with Andrew. I was shocked when the guy gave her a smack on the lips, to think this is a public place. What just happened? Are they really over?

Chapter 22: USED TIMES

Deandra's POV

"Dear Deandra? What happened to you?" After I wiped my mouth with a cloth, Dee appeared from behind me.

"Oh, it's nothing. I guess my stomach is just upset." I am still feeling dizzy and nauseated, I feel like vomiting any time.

"Here, drink this." She handed me a cup of warm water. I smiled as I accepted it from her.

"Thank you, Dee." She nodded and walked away with a poker face. Even if Dee is kind of serious, she's the sweetest among all of my sisters. She always wanted to be the 'big sister' after me in taking care of our other two sisters.

I sat down on one of the chairs as I touched my forehead. I can't even understand myself because I was not feeling well these days. Realization hit me hard all of a sudden: it's been more than two months that missed my monthly period.

I closed my eyes as I took a deep breath. I am feeling really nervous by just imagining the possibility that would happen to me. It would be totally out of timing. My heart suddenly races fast. I hope this is not the one I feared to happen to me...

Because it's the weekend, I decided to visit my dearest friend Kylie to the big mansion. I want to ask her something that's bothering my mind right now.

I took a quick bath and wore a plain green shirt and ragged pants. I also wore a pair of black sneakers. I also fixed my hair in a messy bun to complete my outdoor look.

When I arrive at the mansion, I am greeted by Kylie with open arms. Happiness is evident in her eyes and I noticed that her stomach is bigger this time.

"Wow, my future godson or goddaughter is getting bigger this time!" I exclaimed as I handed her a small basket full of different varieties of fruits. Her personal maid got it for her.

"Please put it to our dining table. Thank you."

"Yes madam. Right away." Her personal maid nodded as she smiled while following her orders.

"Wow, I love your life. It's amazing." I whispered that she giggled and nodded.

"Yeah, I feel like I am the queen here because I am well taken cared of."

"I really liked it so much!"

"Yeah, me too. Mom and dad were very excited to welcome the next member of the family in the near future. Let's go to the poolside. I will tell my maid to bring snacks for both of us."

We walked together side by side as she held my hands.

"Wow, you've been very busy, I haven't seen you for more than two months."

"Yeah, things got tough when you resigned from the restaurant. I felt like I lost a foot without you."

She giggled as she hugged me. With the sight of Kylie, I felt really good and relieved somehow. Being with her feels like I am not all alone to what I feel right now.

"How's the early months of pregnancy?" I simply asked her. She smiled as she bit her lower lip.

"Gosh don't ask me, it's too hard. I always feel like sulking, vomiting and I am tired all the time."

"Wow. I guess it's more of a struggle than wanting it."

"But then nowadays, I felt much better. My baby will be three months old by tomorrow."

I smiled as I placed my feet on the side of the pool, wetting it with a little water. The warm rays of the noonday sun and the coolness of the water fused perfectly.

"That's good to know."

"How about you, my dear Deandra? How have you been?"

"I am not feeling well nowadays."

"Yeah, I should agree. Your eyes look really tired."

I looked at her as I shifted my gaze on her baby bump as well. I swallowed as I sighed.

"I think something is bothering you nowadays. Are you okay?"

"Kylie...can you keep a secret?" She gave me a serious look all of a sudden. I smiled as I avoided her gaze.

"What is it? Is it something to be worried about?"

At this moment, I didn't know what to do. I felt speechless. I am too embarrassed of telling everything to my best friend. I can't even tell it to my own mother.

"D-Do you want to go to my room for us to talk about it more?" She looked worried that I bitterly chuckled.

"Please don't worry about it, it is bad for a pregnant woman."

"Yeah right, but you're the one who is making me really worried." She said as we started to walk towards her room. I noticed that her room is just inside one of the guestrooms on the ground floor. She gently closed the door behind her and locked it so that nobody could enter and listen to our conversation.

She is touching her tummy as she sits down to the side of her soft bed.

"Okay, what is it?" She looked straight into my eyes. I can't help but to be scared all of a sudden. My heart started to beat really fast, I didn't know what to do.

"Do you have a pregnancy kit?"

"Am I hearing it right?" She exclaimed out of disbelief.

"Please...just answer me first."

"Why, yes of course. I have at least five of it because I want to test myself and I have to make sure before I assume a lot of things."

"Can you give me two of that?"

"Deandra? What is the meaning of this? Why am I knowing this very late? Do you even have a boyfriend?" She was too shocked to process what I am trying to say.

"Please...can I borrow those?"

"You're joking, right? Well, that pregnancy kit is not a toy for you to try to use it. Do you even know what's the purpose of a pregnancy kit?"

"Yes, I do. Anyway, I will tell you everything today. Just give me two pregnancy kits first." Kylie moved right away in a swift motion, opening her cabinet and got two kits for me. I walked to the CR right away. I followed the instructions of the kit and my intuition got me right. When I saw two red lines from both pregnancy kits, I felt like my knees were shaking. I couldn't help but to sit on the toilet bowl. I was able to stare at the kit for about a minute because I was stunned of the results. I blinked fast and I even rubbed my eyes. Maybe my eyes were lying to me right now.

I took a deep breath and started to move as quickly as possible. I remembered I still have the other pregnancy kit with me. I opened it and used the second one. I was able to read the instructions in a swift manner. I used another brand just to make sure of the accuracy of the kit I am trying on. I started to murmur a prayer while waiting for the results.

I almost fainted because the second pregnancy test showed me the same result. I am indeed pregnant of Andrew's child! How could I have a baby when we only did that for the first time and only that night?

What now?

"Dear Deandra? What happened there? Please answer me." I can hear Kylie knock on the door of the comfort room. With the sight of the two pregnancy kits, I can't help but to cry. I've been praying so hard that what Andrew did will never do something I am scared of having. I thought what I am experiencing these days were just a result of being worn out from work and studies, all at once. Until today, right at this moment...I am really pregnant and I can't easily accept it. The first thing that came into my mind are my siblings and my mom. What will happen to all of us? What will happen to our life, now that the breadwinner of the family is pregnant?

I removed both of my hands that's covering my face. I looked at Kylie's worried face as she opened the door of the comfort room using her spare key.

"Did you use the kits? What's the result?"

"Kylie, it's positive. Both kits indicated that I am pregnant."

Chapter 23: JOB HUNTING

"What? Pregnant?"

"Y-Yes." Deandra looked down as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"How come? You didn't even tell me you had a boyfriend. You're so unfair!"

"Kylie, it's a long story to tell."

"Were you conceived by the holy spirit? My goodness! I really can't believe it!"

"You know what? You're crazy. Don't say nonsense things." Deandra laughed between sobs. She went to bed with Kylie and she told her everything she could remember.

"Did Andrew know about all of this?"

"That was more of a one-night-stand, Kylie."

"My goodness! He can't be too drunk to not remember anything! What kind of jerk is he? Stupid asshole!" Kylie couldn't stop herself from cursing Andrew to the bones.

"I can't believe how things happened real fast. He got you pregnant that easy?"

"I don't know...I can't even believe that everything is really happening right now, I mean everything is real."

"Seriously, Deandra? He had sex with you and he just thought it is a dream? That's totally insane!"

"Yeah, it's hard to believe but he thought it's only a dream."

"What will happen now? If you're not going to tell him about this, what will you do to your baby? Abort it?"

"Oh my gosh how could you say that? Of course I will not do it!"

"I'm so sorry, alright? It's not my intention to say that one."

"My baby is innocent. I will keep this one. I guess I will have to stop studying first and find a job where I could stay-in for a while."

"Do you plan to tell it to your mother?"

"She will kill me but I have to."

"I will see what I can do to help as much as I could."

"Thank you so much Kylie. I am happy that you understood my situation now."

"Of course, you were the only one who cared for me when nobody even dared to help, even give their moral support." Kylie hugged me tight and he let go of me after a few minutes.

"Please go back here after four days. I will see what I can do to help you. I promise to assist you to find a job where you can also stay-in while you're still pregnant with your baby."

I left with a smile on my face. Somehow I am comforted by Kylie when I feel like I am having no one to confide what I am feeling right now.

I worked as planned. I tried to do my usual routine not letting my sisters know that I am pregnant. My mom didn't know, either. I just want three days to be over for me to go back to Kylie's new house again.

If ever that my mother would know that I am pregnant and worst case scenarios will happen, then at least, I have somewhere to stay. I went to Kylie's mansion after three days of waiting. She hugged me tight and let me eat delicious foods that she also ate that's good for pregnant women.

There's a lot of fruits, milk and supplements that are good for the baby.

"Dear, please eat. You have to keep your baby healthy and strong while you are willing to take the risk of finding a job while you're pregnant."

"Thank you so much dear Kylie! I am happy that you are supporting what I wanted."

"Of course, somehow I can definitely relate to you. I also experienced the worst before I found the pot full of gold at the end of the rainbow."

"How I wish we had the same rainbow too. At least in your case, you'll not have a hard time taking care of your baby because of your solid support system."

"You will also have a good future of your own, knowing you? Success will never be impossible in store for you, too."

"Thanks Kylie." I tapped her arms as she also held my hand that's touching it.

"I talked to mom and she told me that Mr. Swiss needs a personal assistant to his mansion."

"Who is Mr. Swiss?"

"He's one of dad's business colleagues. When I asked them about the position, they said that they are more than willing to recommend you to him."

"Wow! Really?"

"Mr. Swiss even offered a stay-in position since he wanted his personal assistant to attend to his daily needs because he's a bit frail already."

"Oh, yes Kylie! I am more than willing to have that job."

I suddenly wanted to cry from what I heard of Kylie. She nodded as she smiled.

"Really? You will do it for me?"

"Of course! You're the only one who was there with me during the darkest moments of my life. Remember that time when I told you I was also pregnant with my boyfriend's child?"

I nodded as I smiled at Kylie. She looked at me with her thoughtful, charming eyes.

"I am more than happy to help. Remember, you're my best friend and I will try my best to do anything for you."

"This is more than enough, dear. You don't know how it really meant for me. Thank you so much!" I hugged her because of too much happiness.

"You have to go with me tomorrow. Is it alright that you will just sleep here tonight?"

"I already told my mom and sisters that I will sleep here."

"That's good. I want you to get yourself ready because Mr. Swiss wants to personally meet you."

"What's he like, by the way?"

"He is strict and meticulous. He wants to get things done perfectly his way."

"Does he know that I am pregnant?"

"Yes. I already told him that and it is totally fine with him. In fact, he's a bit worried and he wants to know more about you."

"I think he will be a good master."

"Indeed. Don't worry about him. He's harmless. He is also a good payer if he's satisfied with your service."

I am excited all of a sudden. With all the information Kylie told me about Mr. Swiss, I want to get myself ready for work as soon as possible. I hope this pregnancy will not be more of a hindrance of still providing for my family.

I don't want them to worry a lot about me. Even if I will be far from them for a couple of months, I will make sure to sustain them with money so that my sisters could still have their allowance in the near future. I don't want them to stop going to school just because we don't have money left.

I will not let them feel abandoned even if I am pregnant already. I will not let my mom feel that I am her failure as well. I should carry everything with confidence because if I will not do it for me, then who else will?

Chapter 24: A PROMISE IN PRINT

Deandra's POV

I was too excited the next day that I got up ahead of Kylie. I was able to lie on the bed and slept right away the other night. It was only 8:30 PM but I already fell asleep. I woke up feeling light as if the baby inside my womb cooperates with my mood.

"Hello baby. It's time for mommy to find a job for both of us. Please be a good baby and behave there, alright?"

I am caressing my womb as I smiled. Maybe this baby needs a lot of communication coming from me because I wanted him/her to be smart like me in the future.

"Hmm..." I felt Kylie's movement as she stretched her limbs.

"Morning," I greeted her right away and she glanced at the wall clock as she rubbed her eyes.

"Oh my goodness! Your meeting is still at 9:00 AM. Why are you up already? It is only 5:00 AM. Go get some more sleep, silly girl."

"Well, I might be late that's why," I shyly replied. I heard Kylie's chuckle beside me. It's as if she's more excited than I do.

"Mr. Swiss will be the one to go here since it is bad for you to go somewhere else. It might stress you and the baby."

"What do you mean?"

"Mr. Swiss will be the one to visit dad and he will interview you as well."

"I see. I thought we'll be going to Mr. Swiss's house and he'll interview me there."

"Nope. His interview with you is just part of his reasons why he will be here. Anyway, he's always here at home. He's a dear friend of dad, that's why he loves to visit here often."

"Oh, I get it now." I smiled as I lied down on the bed next to Kylie again. Now, I can sleep more because I know that it would be easy for me to have the interview. I'll just have to get ready so that I can answer him as accurately as he wanted me to do.

I am awake at exactly 7:30 PM. Kylie got me a simple floral dress that was given to her as well. I guess I could relate to this outfit now since I am pregnant myself. I am thankful that my baby bump is not that obvious yet, my curvy, chubby body was a perfect fit for that dress. Even if I am nervous, I practice smiling in front of the mirror. The first time I looked at my reflection, my smile was a bit

awkward. However, I gathered all the possible confidence within me. I practiced my smile and it looked good this time. With Kylie's light make-up on me, I looked fresh and vibrant with glistening eyes and high hopes, I feel like I am more than ready.

I entered the room where Mr. Swiss is. He faced the bookshelf as he sat on the swivel chair. I just stood in front of him but he didn't even turn his back. When he felt that I had entered the room, he closed the book on his lap as he rested his left leg over his right leg.

"Have a seat," His voice terrified me more than anything. I followed what he said right away, hoping to build a lasting impression.

"T-Thank you sir."

He turned his swivel chair in front of me as he grinned. He looked at me from head to toe. I noticed he's indeed an old man but his fashion sense is never out of style. He wore a gray three-fourth sleeved shirt.

"So, you're Deandra Klay right?"

"Y-Yes sir."

"Oh students nowadays," He murmured as he glanced at my baby bump that's a little evident already. I looked down and I am feeling ashamed all of a sudden. I can see from my peripheral vision that he clasped his hands as he leaned his elbows on the glass table in front of me. I can see that she also hovered his gaze from my head down my feet as if examining my physical appearance. Is he trying to read what's on my mind?

"Don't worry, I knew your situation before you even stepped on that door."

I tried meeting his gaze and I caught him looking straight into my eyes without even blinking.

"S-Sir, it's not what you think it is."

"I know. Don't worry. I just can't accept that one man would ruin a girl's expectation of men in general."

"If you ask me sir, I do not consider what happened to me as cruelty of men. I guess it happens for a reason."

"Be realistic, Deandra. Tell me, do you wish to be pregnant at this age?"

I was left speechless. I never see his frankness coming, real talk. I guess I will never get used to this one.

"What happened to you is a mistake. However, you have to stand up no matter what it takes."

I can't help but to cry in front of him as I cover my face with both of my hands.

"Pull yourself together. Crying will not let you go to places."

"S-Sorry, sir." I wiped my tears using both of my hands. He pushed a box of tissue placed on the table near where I am sitting.

"You're hired. I will give you a written contract for your salary and my own, exact rules that you should follow."

"Y-Yes sir."

"I don't want to hear promises. I want real-time results."

"But, sir...am I capable in handling this position? I am pregnant and I don't think I can meet your expectations."

"Why? Do you doubt yourself even if you have not started yet?"

"It's not what I mean, sir."

"Do you need this job or not?"

I simply nodded as I tried meeting his powerful gaze. He smirked as he leaned his head closer to mine.

"This is the most coveted position for the record. It's the first time that I announced that I will be needing a personal assistant even if I am used to doing things on my own."

He looked really serious as he said those words. From the fine lines of his face, and his sagging skin, I can see a tough man that I think, ageless. Ageless when it comes to his opinion and brilliant ideas.

"But I want to give you a chance. I hope this mistake in your life will never hinder you to chase success." He added as he showed me a timid smile. He even offered his hand for a handshake. When I held his hands, I felt the warmth of his touch.

Knowing Mr. Swiss, I suddenly have a clear vision of what I will do with my life because of what he just said. From the previous days, I was lost with no direction but knowing him, I think everything will just be easy for me and this is just a good start.

Chapter 25: DREAM CATCHER

Deandra's POV

"Are you going to stay there for so long?"

"Yep. I will be gone for a year but don't worry about your dear Deandra, okay? I will be right back before the three of you know it."

"Dearest sister, will you be alright there, promise?" Dee said as she held my hand. I nodded as I gave her a pinky swear.

"I wish you luck. I hope you will enjoy your job abroad." It's the first time that I have seen my mom crying in front of me as she hugged me tight. All of my sisters were crying, too. It's as if they don't want me to leave. I wanted to cry in front of them but I tried to stop myself. I guess this is not the right time to show them how weak I am.

"Your school already knew that you'll be leaving the meantime?" My mom asked between sobs. I wiped her tears as I nodded.

"Y-Yes, mom. I already informed them that I will take an indefinite leave. They could see my reason as valid, that's why."

"I guess nothing can ever stop you from going away, am I right?" That question of mom made me cry so bad too. There, I lost all of what I have been hiding for so long. I hugged them more than the way they hugged me. I am sure that I will miss all of them. I know I will be alone but I have to be strong. After all, I am doing it for them. I want them to experience the kind of life that I always want them to have.

"Dear Deandra, who will sleep with you now? I cannot protect you from the bad people anymore because I can't sleep beside you this time." Dahlia asked me but she never let go of my waist as she hugged me tight.

"My dearest Dahlia...nobody will ever hurt your big sister. I am strong and you know that, right?" With misty eyes, I was able to turn my back to all of them. I don't want them to see me crying because of the decision I will make this time.

"Will you be okay being alone?" Mother touched both of my shoulders as she looked at me.

"I have my colleagues with me, mom. I will be alright."

"Please write a letter to us. Tell us where you live there. Take care my dear." She hugged me tight again as I hugged her back.

"I will, mom. I will always keep in touch. Remember, what I will do will be for all of us."

I am so sorry that I have to lie to all of you. I have to do this. This might sound really selfish but I have to be away from you all for at least nine months. I have to do the job to sustain all of you, at the same time, I have to take care of my baby as well. This baby is not to be blamed for what happened that night. I know if I will accept this job, I will somehow give a good life to my baby without asking Andrew's help.

He doesn't know a thing, anyway. He had no idea what really happened that night...

flashback

Andrew's POV

I woke up with a terrible headache. I touched my forehead as I got up from my bed and sat on it, with half of my body covered with a blanket. I slowly opened my eyes and looked around me as I blinked.

The pain in my head added up to what I am seeing right now. Why is it that I am in my room all of a sudden? I couldn't remember how I even arrived here in my place. All I know, I remembered I went to a small pub last night. I ordered eight bottles of beer and drank alone until I slept.

As far as I know, that is the only thing clear to me I am wasted as fuck I didn't even care what will happen to me that night. I was ready. I expected that many things might be stolen from me again because of my carelessness.

However, how on earth did I ever reach my place? I look around and I can see my bed messier this time. I looked at myself and the next thing shocked my core: I am naked beneath my blanket!

I touched my forehead again to try to remember what really happened last night.

Right. I had a dream. It was wonderful. I had a one night stand with a woman. I could still remember how I entered her. She kissed me back as the entire lovemaking is getting wild. Her moans excites me that I took her roughly. Fuck, that's unforgettable.

I even removed the blanket on top of me and I saw a tiny blood stain on my mattress. Was it really a dream? Or am I seeing the whole thing right this time? Did I really had sex to a woman without even knowing who she is?

I examined my bed and I saw a promotional bracelet from my ex-girlfriend's favorite restaurant. Is this from someone who is working there? Did this bracelet detached from someone whom I had sex with?

I got up from bed and went to my mini-living room. I saw my keys and wallet placed neatly on the glass table. I looked into it one by one and I noticed that there was nothing missing there. I took a bath, prepared a soup for my hangover and put on my casual clothes.

I have to know something. From the sixth floor of the building, I went down the ground floor.

"Hello...good morning."

"Hello, sir. Good morning. How may I help you today?"

"Do you know someone who went with me last night?"

"I am sorry sir, I have no idea. It's only my first day here as a receptionist.

"Oh, I see. Do you know who attended to me last night?"

"I guess the one who received you was a different receptionist who was on night shift."

"Thank you so much. I'll just be right back tonight."

"You're welcome, sir." The receptionist nodded and smiled. I decided to just stay in the library because I have a lot of lessons to study. I also have to meet my classmate there to ask some pointers on what books to buy for the coming semester.

I want to believe that it's just a sweet dream but seeing the blood stains on my bed and the promotional bracelet, I have to accept that it really did happen. I have to know who that woman is.

Chapter 26: LIFE'S GOODNESS

Deandra's POV

Kylie hugged Deandra as soon as she arrived from their house to get her things.

"You'll be in a safer place. That's for sure." Kylie put her hands on both her shoulders as she flashed a beaming smile.

"I hope for the best." Deandra answered with misty eyes. Kylie touched her cheek as if assuring her of the things she could expect.

"Mr. Swiss will be here any minute from now. He's a bit strict but once you get to know him, he's nice."

"Dear Kylie, I will just expect the worst. I should not relax knowing that I will live in his house."

"Yeah, that's really a wonder my dear. Imagine? I just recommended you to him and it happened that you're the best pick. You're too lucky."

"Yeah, I am also wondering why me, of all the recommended ones?"

"Show him what he noticed from you that set you above the rest."

"I will try my best dear."

"I have known you to be hardworking. I know you can impress Mr. Swiss with your dedication."

"My dear Kylie, thank you so much for believing in me." I hugged her tight and Kylie chuckled. She tapped my back as she let go first.

We heard the honking of the car and Kylie nodded. The maids followed us as they assisted me with my luggages. I decided to put on my backpack as we slowly went to the parking area inside the mansion.

"Dear, Mr. Swiss's house is just five kilometers away from here. If you miss me already, you can visit me anytime."

"I will, dear." I got in the car and Mr. Swiss's personal driver was the one who got me, instead of him. I don't know what to feel. I am suddenly terrified I don't know what to do anymore.

"Ma'am...Mr. Swiss is waiting for you now."

"R-Really?" I am honestly stunned from what Mr. Swiss's personal driver told me.

"Yes. He said that he'll wait for you for lunch."

"O-Okay, sir."

"Oh, no ma'am. Do not call me sir. It's not appropriate." His driver chuckled because of what I said. Maybe he thinks I am silly for being too formal.

"Sorry..."

"If you're not comfortable, I prefer to be called Mr. Hart." His driver smiled as he politely told me about it. I awkwardly smiled at him in return. Even addressing some people, I am not even used to it most of the time.

"Okay, I will remember it Mr. Hart. Thank you so much for the ride." I said as soon as we stopped in front of a grand mansion, much bigger and spacious compared to Kylie's parents-in-law.

There's a wide lawn filled with Bermuda grass, the walls are filled with different kinds of flowers and orchids that's well taken-care of. There's also a porch swing that is inviting you to sit down and relax already.

"Wow! The house is really beautiful!" I can't help but to be amazed by the lawn's landscape.

"Indeed, ma'am. I am sure you'll be comfortable living here with your baby." I am a bit surprised that I couldn't help but look at Mr. Hart. He chuckled as he winked.

"Mr. Swiss met all of us and told us your situation, ma'am. He reminded us to also help in taking care of you and your baby."

"Thank you, Mr. Hart. I really appreciate it so much." He smiled as he walked inside a quiet hallway inside the house. When he opened the door, a spacious living room greeted us. Since the house is made of glass, you can still see the view of the lawn from the living room.

The living room has a walnut floor with a simple and plain sofa accented with few blue pillows. This is the best thing to see, after that narrow way in going to our house.

"Ma'am...this is the way to the dining room. Everything is ready."

"Thank you so much, Mr. Hart." We walked past the living room, a wide, spiral staircase going up to many rooms on the second floor. As I looked up, there were even different minimalist chandeliers hanging that made the house classy.

We arrived at the dining room. I saw Mr. Swiss sitting on the other end of the long dining table. He's sitting while the table napkin is on his chest. He is also clasping his hand while looking at me with a serious look.

I look at the table and it is filled with different kinds of meat and fresh vegetables. There were also fruits and salads that I only see on TV. It made my stomach rumble all of a sudden.

"Please wash your hands and let's start eating. I am starving already." He said in a serious tone that I quickly moved right away. I sat on the other end of the table as what Mr. Hart instructed me. He nodded as he noticed it. The maids started to serve us with soup. It's a corn soup with crabmeat. As I am savoring it, I noticed Mr. Swiss observing me from a far distance.

I have seen Mr. Swiss a couple of times and yet I think I will never get used to his presence. It is so intimidating that I feel awkward whenever he's near. I started to be amazed of the volume of the food in front of my table. All my life, I have never seen such much food being served to only a few people. I haven't expected to experience this one because this is too much.

"Just enjoy the food. You need it so that your baby will be healthy."

"T-Thank you, Mr. Swiss."

"There's nothing to be thankful here. Remember, it is paid because you worked for it."

"I'll keep it in mind, Mr. Swiss."

We ate in silence. I admit the foods are all delicious and tasty. As I have observed, Mr. Swiss is strict even when it comes to the quality of foods. I am also impressed because several maids were serving us whatever we wished for.

So this is how wealthy people eat. I admire the sophistication and class that I am seeing right now. I also realized that if you have a lot of money, you always have the option to let others serve you. It makes life convenient, honestly speaking.

He wiped his mouth with his table napkin as he looked at me.

"If you're done eating, please follow me in my study room. I'll have all the additional information before you rest."

"Yes, Mr. Swiss." I politely nodded as he walked past me. I continued eating well as I tasted all the foods I've never tasted before. From my experience, I guess I will enjoy my new life here for the next nine months or more.

Chapter 27: ROLL OVER!

"Come in, please."

Rebecca entered the door after she knocked three times. She had seen Mr. Swiss following her with his eyes. She noticed him as he sat down on his table between the numerous bookshelves behind him.

She walked towards him and when she's near, Mr. Swiss narrowed her gaze at her.

"Please sit down." He said in an authoritative tone. She followed what he said right away.

"Did you like the food I picked?"

"Those were too much, sir. I love them." She cheerfully answered that Mr. Swiss couldn't help but form a little smile on his lips.

He pulled one of his drawers and handed Deandra three pieces of paper containing some points to review and read them well. "Can you spare me a few of your minutes to read this one?" He said as he gave me the papers he pulled from his drawer in front of him.

"Sure, sir. I don't mind at all." I politely answered as I received what he's been giving me this time.

"I hope that you will read and understand everything that is stated in every paper that I am giving you. Only then that you'll understand the nature of work that I wanted you to do."

"Remember, I am very particular even at the little details of what is required of you to do. It would be much better to work as accurate as possible."

"I will remember that, Mr. Swiss." Deandra swallowed as she nodded. Now that she's hearing from him and his actual instructions, there's mixed emotions rumbling inside her heart.

"Yes, Mr. Swiss. I will try my best."

"Work ethics and dedication are some of the things I am expecting all my employees to possess." I nodded and smiled enthusiastically.

"There will not be a problem if you will take the job seriously. Always maintain professionalism at all times."

"Yes, Mr. Swiss." I said, nodding.

"When it comes to attire, I don't require you to wear anything casual or the likes. In your condition, I will just allow you to wear maternity dresses for the meantime."

"Really, sir? It will be an advantage for me."

"Just do the paperworks and the job that is required of you. Please don't stress yourself too much. Enjoy the job."

They talked for a minute or more before Mr. Swiss told Deandra to rest in her own room. As soon as she opened the door to her room, she's almost speechless.

"Please pinch me..." She said to the maids who followed her. The two maids looked at each other and then shifted their gaze on Deandra. The maids looked at each other and giggled because of their amused reaction to what she told them.

"Please! Can someone pinch my arm...here! I just want to confirm if I am dreaming or not." One of the maids gently pinched her arm and when she felt a little pain, she shrieked out of happiness.

"Why, ma'am?"

"My room is as wide as our old house!" The two maids giggled as soon as they heard the amazement coming from Deandra. It was a normal reaction since it was her first time to witness a house this big. She couldn't believe how big could this mansion get plus, she will be having a room exclusively for her alone.

"Yes madam. The rooms are also spacious here. Even our rooms are also wide, take note, it's the maid's quarters."

"Wow!" Deandra heard herself gasping in wonder. She never thought the mansion is so wide for a few people.

"Please get used to it, madam. We are also here to assist you as you take care of your baby." The two maids held her hand. She looked at them with misty eyes.

"Thank you. I am always grateful that I am here."

The two maids helped her unpack her luggage as they entered her room. The size of a queen-sized bed truly amazed her. When she looked back the size of her bed from her old house, her bed is only one fourth of this one.

Not thinking twice, she dived on the bed and stretched her limbs that the two maids laughed at the sight of it.

"Ma'am, please be careful. You might hurt your baby."

"Oh, I am sorry." She chuckled as she felt the soft mattress against her back as she smiled.

"Ma'am, I will just put the papers that you need to read on your bedside table. Mr. Swiss told us to remind you to read everything carefully and remember it one by one."

"Yes. He already told me about it." The two maids bid goodbye to her and she is still in her lying position. She couldn't help but to close her eyes because of the comfort her queen-sized bed is giving her.

Deandra woke up to the smell of food and it made her hungry all of a sudden. When she opened her eyes, her smiling maid was standing in front of her, holding a tray of food. When the maid noticed that she's awoken, she adjusted her queen-sized bed by elevating the upper part. It slowly moved that made her look at herself as her back rested against it. She woke up from bed in a sitting position.

"Whoah, whoah..."

"I'm sorry ma'am but Mr. Swiss told us to have you dinner-in-bed tonight. He wants you to have a good rest. Tomorrow will be a busy day because it's Monday."

"Yes. I will read the papers after dinner. Thank you so much."

"Ma'am, please do not thank us. You earn everything that you do here and you receive from Mr. Swiss."

"Is that so?"

"Mr. Swiss told us to work every single penny and not being thankful for it."

"Yeah, that's what Mr. Hart told me too. Now, I will remember it well."

"If you need anything, the telephone is only beside your bed, we're just a ring away."

"Okay. I will remember it." Deandra stopped herself from thanking her maids. She wanted to get used to what they are talking about: earning everything that you enjoy from this house. The maids left and as she chewed her food, she reviewed the papers given to her.

She had a headache all of a sudden. It's like she couldn't understand any single word from the papers because it's all assets and wealth related. She expected a less-stressful work but it turned out to be one of the complicated facts about Mr. Swiss's business.

"What's the meaning of this?" Deandra couldn't help but to be amazed. Even if her job description is not yet clear to her, she's willing to accept any challenge. For her family, her baby and most importantly, to herself. Her growth as an individual. She's also excited at Mr. Swiss and what he's telling her about self-improvement. On how she'll not use her being pregnant as an excuse in letting herself grow as an individual. On how she will turn every mistake as an opportunity to become a better version of herself.

She scanned all the papers. She's thankful that it's only six pages in total. As a business management student, she needs to understand everything before she'll face her boss. She could still remember what Kylie told her...that she must prove herself worthy above all the shortlisted applicants to become Mr. Swiss's personal assistant.

She's almost done reading the paper when a single question greeted her. She was stunned for a moment before she could even blink her eyes...

"What business would you like to venture someday?"

She read the additional information and it says to explain it further as a proposal for tomorrow's meeting at exactly 10:00 AM. She swallowed as she held the papers tightly.

She knew it. Everything will not be easy.

Chapter 28: STABLE, ABLE

Deandra's POV

I am sitting in front of a small table facing him who is also sitting on the table facing mine. We are inside the conference room of the grand mansion. I love the cozy effect it is bringing me because the place is fully air-conditioned. However, I guess I dressed up clothes not suited to his taste because he's looking at me from head to toe.

"I have it taken care of. You need to change the way you dress because you're also representing me."

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Well, I told you yesterday that you don't need to dress up too formally for me to present something. Like what I told you, I understand your situation."

"T-Thank you sir."

"From this day on, you're allowed to wear maternity dresses, alright?"

"I will remember that, sir."

"You can call me Mr. Swiss. I preferred that one."

I looked down as I chewed the insides of my mouth out of anxiety. This feeling of making mistakes repeatedly is giving me a feeling of being sick.

"Shall we begin?" He said as he cleared his throat. I nodded because I am too shy to even speak to him.

"What can you say about the last question on the paper?"

"I am sorry sir but I don't have something in mind." I honestly stated that made his face look serious this time. I began to feel nervous all of a sudden because it looked like I said something that he never expected me to tell him.

"You are studying a business management course. Why are you not having your own answers? I expected something from you."

I cleared my throat as I tried meeting his gaze. "Uhm, Mr. Swiss, I'd like to venture in a food business if you want to know what's on my mind."

"Could you handle it in case I'll let you manage it?" It left me speechless. Right now, I suddenly wanted to know what my job description is. If I will be really his personal assistant or a business partner? I don't understand.

"What do you mean?" I am too puzzled to even respond to him.

"Well, it's a part of my plan. I am just observing if you're letting yourself ready for what's in store for you. I guess I am just expecting too much." I bit my lower lip, suppressing the feelings that want to let out any time.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Swiss..."

"Until when are you going to say sorry? You should be sorry for yourself for not having ideas until this time."

I looked down, feeling humiliated and disappointed at the same time.

"Hmm, I'll give you a chance, though. The next time you'll act like this again...there will be no mercy." The way he talked to me is something I haven't expected. I've had numerous employers before but they've never talked to me like how Mr. Swiss is talking to me right now. He sounded really scary and intimidating at the same time.

"Yes, sir." I breath in and held my chin up. He chuckled for the first time when he saw me doing it. I smiled as soon as I saw his reaction too.

"I want to know your desired business venture. Think of something that you could manage even if you're pregnant."

I nodded and he left me alone inside the conference room. I stood up and came near the computer section, if I am not mistaken, was the latest model of Mac Pro of this present year. It looked so expensive that I am doubting to touch it with my fingers.

I turned it on and I am amazed at how it could multi-task all at once.

"Whoah...it's cool." I couldn't help but be excited on how to search for my desired things. I glanced at the wall clock and I noticed that it is only 10:30 AM. I have to be productive as I search for the things that Mr. Swiss expected of me.

I typed "Paris fashion week" on the search bar. It showed me numerous numbers of videos about what I typed. I couldn't help but smile as I saw many petite women doing their catwalks showcasing a lot of colors and unique gowns based on themes: summer, winter, fall collections were some of the main themes. Others, over a hundred subthemes.

I sighed. Well, that's Paris fashion week...a part of the big four anticipated events of fashion enthusiasts all around the world. If I decide to venture on fashion business, I am sure the competition would be tough, though.

"I know exactly what you're thinking of..." My heart wanted to jump out of my ribcage when Mr. Swiss spoke behind me. I didn't even feel his presence walking back in the conference room again.

"Oh, sorry sir. I am just browsing things on this computer set."

"If you're making the most out of your time being productive, you'll not be sorry about it." He said as he tapped my shoulders. I felt a sudden feeling, it tingled throughout my spine. I turned my back and he let go of my shoulder right away.

"I love to look at the magnificent fashion shows, be it Milan or Paris fashion week."

"Is it work-related?"

"I want to but I guess it will be a long process."

"What exactly do you want to do out of it?"

"I want to set up my own fashion brand...but I guess I'll just fulfill it in my dreams every time I will sleep at night."

"Businesses are all risks to start with. If you're not a risk-taker, you'll never know if your business is a flop or not."

"It would involve a lot of money..." I bit my lip. I reasoned out. I glanced at him and I saw his eyebrows met as if not liking what I have been telling him for the last two minutes.

"Money is not a problem." I turned my back, looking at his face. He doesn't seem to joke around when he says that. That reaction coming from him would always leave me speechless. For one second, I am forgetting that he's a rich widow and a philanthropist.

"Does it fit to one of my job descriptions? Being someone whom you will challenge to venture for a business you're not even sure if I can handle it?"

"That's the secret actually...the risk of being into business hunting is an art you'll have to make for others to appreciate it."

"Do you think I can?"

"Have faith to yourself before someone else does that for you. I guess that's the secret to success. Do not think of failures. Think of the success that you'll achieve no matter how difficult the road might lead you there."

I gazed into his eyes and I can see the unwavering trust that he's investing in me. For the first time in a long time, I have seen a spark in his eyes that's giving me hope. I did not wish for something in my life this big but he's offering it to me without any doubt. How could I ever say no? The opportunity is knocking right before my eyes, a sure one.

Chapter 29: REGRET OF A LIFETIME

Andrew's POV

flashback

(Two months before Deandra got the job offer)

I went with my friend Archie inside the library and knowing him, he will definitely ask a lot of questions about me and Priya.

"I don't know but I guess I had a dream when both of us made love? I don't know." From what I said, Archie laughed out loud that a lot of students looked our way.

"Sorry," He whispered as he grinned on me. What I told him was barely a whisper but he's one, malicious soul that she couldn't stop himself from laughing.

"But that dream was awesome, dude." He grinned as we did the fistbump.

"I heard you too broke up, was that real?"

"Yeah, but I am not giving up on her. She's the only one I love so much. I'm going to marry her someday." I told Archie. When we stepped on aisles 9 and 10, I saw a familiar figure. I glanced at Deandra who was shelving the books from that aisle.

She looked sad as she met my gaze. When she caught me looking to her direction, she avoided eye contact first and concentrated on what she's doing.

I sighed as Archie also asked about the books that I would like him to read. I was able to look at Archie, I forgot her for a while. When Archie went to our table, I looked at the direction from where Deandra is but she's not there already.

end of flashback

I'm on my way to school when I walked past the pub where I spent the night drinking alone two months ago. I preferred to drink alone because I couldn't stand someone interrogating me with endless questions while I am not feeling better. I couldn't understand myself because the dream last time kept on repeating like a broken melody.

I glanced on my wristwatch and sighed. I still have an hour of free time before going to the library.

I walked back and went inside the pub to do some mini-investigation.

"Sir...we are still closed. We'll be open at three in the afternoon. It is still ten in the morning, too early to grab for a drink, I guess?"

"No...I am not here to drink. I just want to ask some questions, can I?" Andrew is looking at the waiter who was busy wiping the tables.

The waiter looked haggard and busy but he's a bit thankful that the waiter is a bit approachable.

"Hmm..." He responded as if ready to listen while busy with doing something.

"Last two months ago, I drank here between 8:00 PM onwards. Have you seen the one who brought me to my unit?"

The guy waiter stopped from wiping the tables as he seemed to think of that exact day that he's talking about.

"Yeah, I was the one who assisted that woman." I can't help but to swallow before I could say a thing.

"What did she tell you?"

"From what I remembered, she told me that you're her friend." Now, I am confused even more. I have a lot of friends and I don't know which one he meant.

"Please tell me what does she look like?" I leaned closer to him, without even blinking.

"She's almost 5'4 in height...fair skinned and chubby. She's average looking."

I tried thinking who he meant by his statement until one woman came into my mind...

"Did you perhaps get her name? I didn't remember anything that night, I want to thank her for sending me home in that state."

"Yes, sir. Her name is Deandra Klay."

"Y-You can't be serious..." I am more than stunned from what he said that I don't want to believe what he told me just now.

This can't be! Does it mean she's the one I had sex with last night? Why am I being stupid and clueless at the same time? As soon as I heard that from the waiter, I ran quickly to school leaving my wits behind me.

Everything is coming back to me now...the bloodstains, the way I held and kissed her like I owned her. Fuck, I thought it was Priya whom I made love with last night but it turned out to be Deandra Klay, a selfless friend that I talked with most of the time.

I gasped as I'm almost catching my breath when I stopped at the library. I looked around and I cannot see any trace of her.

"Here's my library card." The student assistant smiled at me as he returned my library card after she registered it on this day. I slowly looked around. I noticed that there were no students who were coming next in line.

"Miss, may I ask a quick question? If it is okay?"

"Yes, Andrew. You may." He put her hand on her mouth as she blushed a little.

It's not a surprise that she knew me already. I am one of the students who is staying in the library for a long time.

"Do you know Deandra Klay? The previous student assistant here?"

"Yes, Andrew. She took an indefinite leave from school last week. She also had me some reminders before resigning from her job here. She was introduced to me by Mrs. Seo, our school librarian."

"Indefinite leave?" I repeated her words like an idiot. I did not see this coming.

"Yes. She did not disclose the real reason about it. For me, I think she got a work offer somewhere that she also quit school." I looked at her to confirm if she is telling lies. However, this girl seemed to be so updated with everything that this information is too true to be misleading.

After that one, she never left my thoughts. After school, I decided to go to the place where I saved her from the drunk men last time.

"Sir, good afternoon, do you know where Deandra Klay lives?"

"I knew her house, but who are you?"

"Sir, I am her schoolmate. I am just here to ask her about a book she borrowed from me last time." I sighed when the man finally avoided his gaze at me after gazing at me from head to toe.

"I see," He nodded. "I am sorry to tell you but from what I heard from her mother, she applied for a job abroad and got accepted. She will return after a year or so."

That struck me in an instant. Is it my fault that she had decided these huge things herself?

Chapter 30: RAYS OF HOPE

present times

"What's your plan this time?"

"I have to form a brand that represents all walks of life. Fashion should not be only limited to someone that's able to buy it for themselves because they can afford it. I want people to think that fashion could fit for both the rich and the poor."

"That's a good marketing strategy." He nodded in agreement as she smirked.

"How do we start?" He asked Deandra who seemed to have no idea of what he's trying to imply.

"Until now, you're not learning?"

"I don't even know, sir." She looked down and he sighed.

"You should finish what you started. You should give justice to every idea that comes into your mind."

Deandra met his gaze and the next thing surprised her when he held her hand. He nodded as she shared his sincere smile at her.

"Whatever you think of something that will benefit the business that you've started, go for it." Deandra swallowed as she tightened her grip.

"Again, how do we start?"

"How about we begin with a low budget fashion show?"

"What do you mean?"

"Let the common people wear something that they are comfortable wearing everyday. We'll capture that in motion and use that as an advert."

"Sounds good to me. I love it."

"Sir, I don't want you to invest a lot for this. I am just starting this one. I want to prove that low budget businesses could flourish if given proper exposure and advertisement." He nodded as if liking the idea.

"Okay, I'll take note of that. I will support whatever you wish to do as long as you're learning how to put up your business."

"Thank you for the trust." He looked at Deandra as if wanting to remind her that being grateful is not necessary.

"Sir, even if you didn't like it, I'd still do it because I guess it's a good thing to do." He looked at her as if observing what she'll do next. Deandra is unafraid of meeting his gaze that he avoided it as he stood up.

"I will meet you at lunch. This meeting is adjourned." He walked past her and she looked down.

Deandra looked at the door where he went out. She stood up as she slowly walked around the conference room while touching her tummy. She realized that it's been two months since she was hired by Mr. Swiss. If she'll calculate the months, her baby is now more than four months. Since she's well taken care of, she gained weight because of the supplements, fruits and vegetables that were given to her.

Meeting Mr. Swiss day by day is not an effort at all. She's usually asked to do exercises for pregnant women. Also, she's inside the conference room because there were people who were hired by Mr. Swiss to do her make-up, as well as teach her the proper way of doing it herself. He's also paying a lot of people to teach her lessons about self-development.

"Ma'am, let us go to your room now. Mr. Swiss wants to get you dressed up."

"Dressed up? For what?" She gave her maids a puzzled look as she shifted her gaze to both of them. They just smiled in return.

"Ma'am, Mr. Swiss will be the one to inform the reason as you eat with him for lunch." She nodded as she followed them in her room.

"They both opened the wide door of my room for me.

"Well, every lunch is nice but this one is special—"

When Deandra turned her face on her bed, her jaw almost dropped when she saw the bouquet of red roses. It is carefully placed on her bed together with a mini-treasure box full of chocolates.

"Wow!" She gasped and she couldn't help but place both of her hands on her mouth. It's the first time in her life that she received flowers like this.

"We will tell Mr. Swiss that you love it so much!" The maids did their high-five while grinning.

"These all came from Mr. Swiss?" She said in disbelief.

"Yes, ma'am." They said while looking at each other as if they knew something that Deandra didn't know. She looked clueless while the two maids looked really happy.

She was left speechless because she didn't know what to feel. She's thinking of a reason why Mr. Swiss gave her a bouquet of roses all of a sudden? Is he being like this to all of his business colleagues?

She just ignored the crazy thoughts of him and the reason behind the bouquet of flowers. She decided to keep herself ready as she took a bath with the help of her two personal maids. She was also surprised when they handed her several maternity dresses to wear for lunch. This is the most awkward feeling ever. Being at home and yet wearing beautiful dresses every meal. She realized that when someone is indeed wealthy, they follow certain etiquettes when it comes to everything.

She inhaled and slowly let it out as she went down the stairs. Her two personal maids assisted both of her hands as she went down to avoid possible slipping if ever.

"I am sure that baby will grow to be a healthy one someday, ma'am. Just be healthy and avoid too much stress." One of her personal maids advised her when it concerns her diet. She sensed that one of the maids were knowledgeable about it. She winked at her.

"Thank you so much. I always want my baby to grow healthy more than anything."

"Don't worry, ma'am. We will take care of you for as much as we can. Mr. Swiss told us to attend to your needs."

She has learned that one of her personal maids has a background in medical care. She's the one who is personally taking care of the things she might be needing.

But the last sentence of the maid really bothered her so much. Did Mr. Swiss really told them that one? That they will really attend her needs while pregnant? Is he even serious? Now, she's a bit puzzled this time. All she knows is that his personality is so tough Deandra finds it very hard to believe that he will instruct his maids to do it for her.

She arrived at the dining hall. She glanced at the end of the table, she saw him sitting on that same spot of the table again. He wore his usual casual wear, a collared long-sleeved shirt and pants. He's also having a table napkin placed on his chest as he held the fork and the dining knife. If that's what he looked like, Deandra knew that chefs should prepare a rib-eyed steak. His favorite dish for every special occasion.

As secretive and distant as he is, Deandra is now wondering what special occasion does he want to celebrate this time...

Was she even one of the reasons why he is celebrating life every single day?

Chapter 31: LOVE ME, PLEASE!

Deandra's POV

"Please sit beside me this time." I looked at him and from his reaction, I can see no trace of him taking it back and telling me he's only joking.

I just followed what he told me. Several maids started to serve us with food. Because of the foods that isn't healthy for me, Mr. Swiss is the one who personally knew the diet intended for me and my baby.

He chewed silently while I'm also eating and savoring my soup.

"How was the food?" I glanced beside me and he looked at me as if waiting for an answer. I smiled and gave him a thumbs up sign. I heard his chuckle for the first time that most of the maids silently giggled as well.

After eating, we are still sitting on the dining table and he is still looking at me as if expecting something good he'll hear from me.

"Deandra Klay..." I looked into his eyes as he held my hand. He looked at all the maids and signalled to leave us alone. I am amazed at how they started to leave orderly one by one. I can't stop myself as I follow them with my eyes. He is smiling upon looking at how I reacted to things.

"Sir, I am just here."

"I've been a widow for many years now and life has been hard for me." He started. I just look at him with glistening eyes.

"I know your job description is not yet clear. I didn't even know why I accepted you when there's a lot of women who were more suitable for the job." I just listen to what he wants to tell me as I look into his eyes. I want to know if he's sincere in telling me about things.

"However, upon hearing your story, one thing came into my mind...that I should protect you at all cost because a man already failed to prove himself. It almost cost your pride and future as a woman."

I didn't understand why I cried all of a sudden.

"Mr. Swiss, I think this is too much. I don't ask a lot from you. You don't have to do this for me."

"Yes. I always think that I don't have to do this for you. Who are you anyway?" He leaned closer as he gently held my hand and placed it to his chest.

"You made this beat again when I thought it couldn't anymore.

"Mr. Swiss, I don't know what to say..." I couldn't help but tell him this because it's the first time that I have seen him very soft.

"You don't have to force yourself. All you need to do is to open up your heart for me." I blinked as he touched my lower lip. I admit that even if Mr. Swiss is already old, he's still very good-looking and strong. Although at times, he wanted to sit on his wheelchair and let somebody push it for him to relax. He noticed my silence as I looked down without giving him a reaction of approval.

"You need me as much as I need you. You kept me awake every night, I thought I'm just concerned about you and your situation. I just realized that I am falling in love again." He touched my chin and slowly let it up. I tried meeting his gaze and he is not the type that will easily give up.

"You make me happy. From the moment you arrive in this house, you make my life happier. I am more inspired when I will see you day by day." He held both of my hands.

"Mr. Swiss..." I just managed to say his name in a formal manner because I don't know what to say or react anymore. It's just my heart that's beating so fast this feeling is totally new for me.

Is it because I am nervous that's why my heart is acting this way or the feeling is also mutual?

"Please give me a chance. I will even marry you."

"Mr. Swiss, this is too much. I don't want everyone to think that I am just taking advantage of you..."

"For once, I never think you could do that to me."

I hugged him and he chuckled because of what I did. I noticed that he became very happy because of my response.

I became very happy the next few days. He never failed to give me a bouquet of flowers. He even took me to private dates where nobody could easily see us because I requested not to show my face to anybody.

I want everyone to think that I worked abroad and I am giving money to my family for it. Because of my requests, Mr. Swiss would allow me to visit my siblings at school without them knowing it. I am just looking at them at a far distance. I am happy that they looked well and beautiful with the things that they want.

Working at Mr. Swiss, I am confident that I could give them the things that they need or even want at the same time. I also told my mom to have our old house renovated because of the money that I am sending them.

In less than a year, I am able to improve our house and that is making me feel better despite missing my family so much.

I looked at them from afar as Mr. Swiss beside me, holding my hand as he kissed it. I smiled as I kissed his cheek.

"Honey, would you like me to send them a package, say clothes, shoes and even food?"

"Please don't bother, love. The money you're giving me as your personal assistant is more than enough for them." He put the hair that's falling down my cheek beside my ear as he smiled.

"I insist. Please consider this as my gift for them. I hope I will meet them someday, too."

"I will let them meet you, love. So that they will prove to themselves that you are very kind."

He held my hand tight. The engine of the car started and as we walked away from my siblings, I turned my back to them again, assuring they were just fine.

"I really missed them so much."

Chapter 32: LIFETIME BUDDY

Months swiftly passed when I said 'yes' to Mr. Swiss's proposal. In a span of less than five months, I was his fiancée already.

Looking at him, I'm feeling grateful to him instead of loving him. That's the clearest of all feelings that I feel for him. I even accompanied him to Kylie's house because it is also my personal request. He agreed with no hesitation.

"I heard the news my dear! I am really happy for you and Mr. Swiss!"

I blushed a little that Kylie poked my arm as she teased me.

"You know what, Deandra? Honestly speaking, I really love how Mr. Swiss has chosen you to be his next wife. If I were him, I'll also do the same." She added as we sat down on her soft bed. She's now on her last trimester and the doctors even gave her the tentative date of when she will give birth.

"Thanks. Until now, I couldn't believe it myself. Of all people that he could choose, why would it be me, right?"

"I am sure Mr. Swiss had seen something in you that made him so sure about you."

"Thanks, Kylie. You always make me feel better. I can see that you're getting better every time. Look at how gorgeous you are, my dear. You're also in your sixth month or less, right?"

"Don't worry Kylie. You'll be the first to give birth before me. You will experience it as well!"

"Yeah, I couldn't help but to feel pressured and excited at the same time." She smiled with excitement.

"Do you know the gender of your baby, dear Kylie?"

"No. I didn't. I want to surprise mom and dad for their coming grandson or granddaughter. Dad disagreed with this first but mom convinced him that's why he didn't insist."

"I am also excited about your baby, dear. I want to be one of those people who will see your adorable baby."

"Don't worry. I will inform you as soon as possible. I want you to be there in my happiest moment." I hugged my best friend again. Knowing that we share the same situation, everything seemed to be easy now. I am always grateful for her because of her great help for me.

"How was Mr. Swiss, by the way?" As she let go of my hug, she leaned closer to me and whispered as she giggled. I gently poked her on her arm with my elbow.

"He's very sweet and adorable."

"Yeah, and you know what, dear? I noticed him smiling a lot after your engagement. He seemed to be inspired more because you came into his life." I chuckled because of her epic reactions.

"He looked really happy and inspired today compared to the previous months. I really thought at first, he didn't know how to smile."

"Really? Well, I also thought of it, too. He's grumpy most of the time."

"You did the magic trick. I knew it."

"He said he loved me."

"Do you love him?" I looked into my bestfriend's eyes as I sighed.

"Everything can be learned. Mr. Swiss is a good man. I should give back to what he's showing me."

"You should 'give back'? What kind of statement is that? When you love someone, you should give it freely even to the point of you loving and not being loved back."

"Yes, I agree to that. I even experienced that. But then, can love sustain my baby? Sometimes I don't believe love alone is enough. We have to think of the practical side of it." Deandra said as she looked at her best friend's face. Her facial expression seemed to agree with Deandra's point of view since they have the same experience when it comes to love.

"Yep. We should consider ourselves lucky because of what we're experiencing now." Kylie said as she nodded.

"Oh, by the way, how were your siblings and mom doing?" Kylie asked out of the blue. Deandra showed her the best smile she ever had.

"They are in good hands. They were so proud of me because I was able to give them their needs and wants. I even let mom renovate our small house."

"What a development!" Kylie exclaimed as if feeling her bliss as well.

"It's all because of him. I am really thankful that he is supportive of me no matter what I'll do. He also went with me as I went shopping. He's really cool. By the way, how was your ex-,boyfriend?"

"He seldom visits me. I guess he is only forced by his parents to do so."

"Isn't he excited that you're both gonna have a baby in the future?"

"I don't think so. I knew him. When he's tired of something, he'll easily let it go no matter how valuable it is for others."

"At least his mom and dad were full of support to you until you will give birth."

"Mom told me that he'll visit me anytime this afternoon." She said while blushing.

"Do you still love him?"

"Sad to say, yes. Of course he's my first boyfriend and the father of my baby. We've been in a relationship for almost three years even if I am still in college, just like you do."

"Love could really do a lot of things."

"Yeah, and I would agree the most when you say love is crazy, most of the time."

We looked into each other's eyes as we smiled. With the same experience we're having, I could feel we're more than sisters because of how our current situation is molding us.

"I also want to ask you the same question..." Kylie bit her lip as he cupped her cheeks.

"What question?" I asked with a puzzled look. She smiled as she gave me a malicious grin.

"Did you love Andrew, even once?" She said, not blinking her eyes. She's like wanting to not miss anything, even on how I will react to what she just asked.

I just looked at her with a blank expression.

"Sorry, you have your present fiancée now. Please don't mind my question."

"I guess let's leave anything from the past, dear Kylie. I want to move on, that's why I accepted Mr. Swiss."

"I could also see that he's one, considerate soul. The important thing is, he's ready to accept everything in you, including your baby."

"I guess that's what matters the most. He's willing to accept everything in me." She nodded as she gave me a high five.

Chapter 33: LOVESICK GIRLS

"Honey, did you have a great time?" Mr. Swiss asked Deandra as he held her hand. She leaned closer to him as she hugged him sideways as they sat on the backseat of the car. They are now heading home after almost a day of visiting Kylie. Mr. Swiss talked a lot about business to Kylie's father-in-law.

"Thank you, love. We had a great time with my best friend Kylie."

"She's giving birth any time within this week or the next."

"Yeah, I am updated. Thank you for letting me visit her." She looked up to him as she met his gaze. He flashed a humble smile. Deandra leaned closer to his face and planted a smack on his lips. She could see him blushed all of a sudden as he avoided his gaze.

"You know what? You're cute."

He held my hand and kissed it. "I love you, Deandra Klay. I can't wait to call you Mrs. Deandra Reike."

"I love you too. You know that. I will try my best to love you with all my heart."

"Love can't be forced. It should be felt." I suddenly felt embarrassed of what I said just now. It made me speechless for a moment when he held my hand.

"I am not asking you to love me right away. What I want you to do is to just be right next to me at all times."

"I guess you can't love me at all times. I am not beautiful or sexy. I am not even considering myself desirable."

"If those were the only qualities that I am searching for in a woman, I tell you, I should've had a lot of them having those qualities."

I leaned my head closer to his chest as I touched my tummy. Everything seemed to be very fast but I don't mind at all. He's the one by my side and that's the most important for me this time.

"Let's get married." He said out of the blue. I got up and looked at him all of a sudden, without blinking.

"Love, are you serious?"

"I don't want to take everything for so long. I am sure about you and I want to spend my life with you."

"I don't know what to say. What about your two daughters? They're the same age as mine."

"I don't care. As long as I am happy, they can't interfere with it."

I looked at him straight into his eyes. His facial expression is too tough. I want to melt his gaze. The way he would look at me, it's as if he doesn't want to hear 'no' for an answer.

"I love you so much, without any doubt. Will you accept my proposal?" He added that I never saw it coming. However, I could feel the sincerity from his words.

"Yes, love." I answered with misty eyes. He hugged me as he planted a kiss on my lips. We planned the wedding as soon as possible, together with his two daughters. We arrived at their house and we went to his room right away.

He handed me the two pictures of his daughters.

"I think you never knew anyone of them yet. My eldest is Priya and my youngest is Denysse. They both finished their studies in the U.S.A. I was widowed for more than ten years now. I guess they will be happy for me if they will know that I will get married again."

"Will they accept me, love?" I couldn't help but ask him about this one. It is normal that his daughters will doubt about getting married to their father.

"I'm their father. They have no choice but to accept you for me because I chose you."

I smiled as I accepted the picture frame of their family when I'm stunned for a moment.

"This can't be..." I murmured as I looked at his eldest.

"What's wrong?" He looked at me with a puzzled look. He shifted his gaze on the picture frame and my facial reaction. I shook my head from side to side as I met his gaze.

"Is your eldest a model of some designer clothes?" I tried my best to think of an alibi for him to not ask me further about what I just said.

"Why, yes. She's a popular model and a good friend of Kendall Jenner. She's been a Victoria's secret model since her debut."

"Wow, no wonder she's really beautiful." I said with full amazement. Mr. Swiss held both of my shoulders and rested his head on my right.

"You're also stunning and beautiful, honey. Even without any make up. Your smile alone can complete my day."

"You're so sweet." I turned in front of him as I hugged him. I placed both of my arms on his shoulders. He placed his hands on my waist as he pulled me closer to him. When my baby bump reached his stomach, he chuckled right away.

"I guess this baby is reminding us to slow down because he doesn't want to."

We both laughed and he silenced me with a smack on my lips. I closed my eyes and pulled his head closer to mine as I savored his mouth. We let go and I can see him smiling a lot.

"I love you so much honey. I badly wanted to marry you."

"M-Me too." I said as I looked at his eyes that's full of longing.

Days turned into weeks. After a long time, everyone seemed very excited for the arrival of the two sisters, Priya and Denysse. They plan to come three days before their father's wedding. There has been a lot of preparations going on inside the grand mansion.

A lot of our maids and guards were going to and fro because of the preparations. On the other hand, I am more than nervous rather than excited because Mr. Swiss's eldest daughter is familiar to me. I have met her not only once, twice but many times already that I cannot simply get her out of my memory. She's mostly the reason for my misery.

How can I ever forget her? She's the ex-girlfriend of the father of my child.

Chapter 34: STANDING ROGUE

Deandra's POV

I found myself dressed up for our dinner luncheon. Together with Mr. Swiss, I sat beside him acting like his wife already. Several maids were serving us with soup.

"They will be with us in less than five minutes." Mr. Swiss smiled as he said those words.

They had arrived at 5:00 A.M. but since I'm inside my room, I haven't got the chance to greet them. Mr. Swiss informed me that I will just formally meet them at dinner.

I slowly inhaled as I looked at the entrance of the dining hall. I felt his hand holding mine under the table.

"Are you okay?" He looked worried as he looked at my face. I chuckled as I pinched his lovely, pointed nose.

"I guess."

"My daughters were all good and nice. They have met you before this. I already sent them your picture."

"Well, I guess all my intuitions are right." When I lifted my head, I could see her standing tall near the place where we were sitting. She even folded her arms and I can see that she's smirking while looking at me.

"Priya...welcome home, sweetie." Mr. Swiss opened his arms wide that her daughter came towards him and kissed both of his cheeks in a classy manner.

"Hello, Deandra. What a nice coincidence. Of all the places, I have seen you here at my father's house," She looked at me from head to toe.

"You've got high quality standards." She said while slowly clapping her hands. Her golden bangles were making a lot of sounds as well as her gentle chuckle.

"Priya," Mr. Swiss said sternly. It made her stop from what she did. She shifted her gaze at Deandra and then to her father.

"Sorry, dad." She said as she rolled her eyes at me while frowning. I can see how she hated me by the way she sat in front of me and I can see her glaring at me as if she'll kill me any time.

"Hello, I'm Denysse. My 'Deny' is not pronounced by how it is spelled. It is pronounced as 'Deni' and if you read all of my name, it is pronounced as 'Denisse' but with a different spelling." Her

youngest explained as she smiled. However, I could sense the sarcasm in it. Mr. Swiss chuckled as he shook his head from side to side.

"Denysse, why would you explain a lot to her? She could get it with less effort like how she flirted with our father, right our 'mom-to-be'?"

"Priya, stop it!" Mr. Swiss even slammed his hands on the table and I could see it got swollen in an instant. I am able to hold it right away, as the maids got some cold compress and gave it to me. I can see from my peripheral vision that Mr. Swiss is looking at her eldest daughter with a grim expression. Her daughter sighed aloud as she raised one of her eyebrows.

"Ohh, how sweet." Denysse said, amazement filled her eyes. She even put her hand on her left cheek as she looked at us. I shifted my gaze to their father's hand and their faces. He told them to eat dinner before he will make an announcement. I noticed that even if they don't like me, they have to follow their father as if their whole future lies on it. After more than twenty minutes of sharing dinner in a silent manner, Mr. Swiss cleared her throat as he looked at them.

"Ten years has passed since your mother passed away. You've seen what I went through until recently, I came up with a decision. You are both adults already and I assume you know the reason why you're both here."

I could see Priya folded her arms as she looked at her sister, who's also looking at me with a blank expression.

"I will marry Deandra and I want you both to be present in that event." The sisters looked at each other. It's as if they were trying to process what their father told them just now.

"I guess the wedding will be possible even without the both of us, right?" Priya said those words in a very straightforward manner.

"That's not a problem for me, dad. I just want you to be happy above anything else." Denysse looked at me and smiled. However, I am doubting every single word she's telling her father. It's as if she's devising a plan of her own. I am not really sure about it, though.

"There's no way of you missing it. I am also planning to change my last will and testament after the wedding. If any one of you fails to attend my wedding, you will not hear from me anymore."

I noticed how Priya clenched his fist as she turned her gaze to me. I looked at her and she glared at me like I am the one she despised the most. I know that even if she's not in favor of the wedding, she had to attend and witness everything.

I am secretly celebrating deep inside. I recalled the time when I discovered that I am pregnant and blamed Andrew and her ex-girlfriend for the misery that I experienced. Turns out everything happened as a blessing in disguise.

Knowing that Priya will attend our wedding, I felt that my own version of revenge is taking place little by little.

I smiled as if annoying her more. I noticed Denysse observing from a far distance. I guess she's that ultimate sidekick of her sister but she's doing it lowkey. I should know better.

"I guess this conversation is over without any questions, am I right, Priya? Denysse?"

"Yes, dad." They almost chorused as if looking at each other.

"Very well... I want you to go to your own rooms to rest very well for the coming wedding." Priya was the one to stand up and left.

"It was nice meeting you." Denysse came near me to offer a handshake. She smiled as she kissed my cheeks on both sides as well.

"I'm sorry dad. Priya is just stressed a bit because of the long flight. I apologize for her behavior."

"Thank you Denysse. I don't mind at all."

"I will go ahead, love birds." She chuckled as she also stepped out of the dining hall.

I sighed as if feeling relieved. I felt my baby kick a lot of times when Priya and Denysse started to go near me.

Wow, this baby is really sweet. I guess my baby wanted to protect me from the both of them. I can't wait to see you, baby. Mommy is expecting a beautiful or handsome baby for myself.

Chapter 35: TYING THE KNOT

Deandra's POV

The wedding pushed through four days after I met Mr. Swiss's daughters. As much as Priya wanted to talk to me, their father prevented her from doing it.

He believed that when she does, I will be too stressed, I might lose my baby. I can feel that she's really mad at me because her dad will be choosing me over them. I am very thankful that my soon-to-be husband is too advanced in thinking about the possible things to happen.

I guess if I am also in her situation, I will feel the same. However, things need to be this way. I have to take my revenge. So, this is how victory tastes like. It is sweeter once you feel like you're winning the game.

If Andrew gave importance to her, then it is my turn this time. I also need to experience what it's like to be chosen and be given importance despite the simplicity that I am showing Mr. Swiss. So, this is what being really loved feels like. I could see that I am on top of the world already.

I realized that I am their stepmother this time. I became Mrs. Reike. I couldn't believe it myself. This new life that he gave me paved the way for my privilege to have the authority over the house as well.

"Congratulations for making this far. I am proud of you" As I went outside our room, she was able to corner me on the hallway by blocking my way. Everything I heard was sarcasm at its finest. She is holding a glass that has wine in it. She grinned as she looked at my terrified expression.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, stepmom. You're not getting it. Or shall I call you by your true name? Is 'gold digger' enough for you? Or shall I let your name be longer this time?" She grinned in a mocking way.

I closed my fist as I tried letting my chin up. I know she's really tall that I am always looking up to her, but not this time. Totally. If there's someone who needs to respect me, that would be the two of them, especially her.

Even if our ages were almost the same, she should give me the respect that I reserve in this house like how they respect their father.

"If you find it fine calling me 'Deandra', I won't mind at all." I also faced her and smiled at her. I want to also treat her the way she would treat me.

She gave me a sarcastic smile as she slowly hovered her gaze from head to toe.

"Is it fine if I call you Ms. Gold digger?" She is not losing her smile. I also smiled at her in return.

"You were not here when everything happened. You cannot easily judge me."

"I can't say anything anymore because dad already married you. I am just curious of how you did it so well that he easily believed in you. Bravo!" She laughed in a mocking tone. I can't help but clench my fist because I don't like what I am hearing from her.

"Priya..." My husband appeared behind me and a sigh escaped my lips. When she saw her father, she tried to walk away.

"I am not done with you yet. You're not leaving when I am not telling you to do so." He roared that it made her stopped walking away.

She frowned when she stood in front of us while I'm touching my pregnant stomach.

"Honey, are you okay?" He asked and I nodded as I smiled, but I avoided her daughter's gaze by looking down. I noticed that my husband frowned at her daughter because of how she treated me.

"Do you even ask if I am okay, too?" She yelled at both of us. I held my husband's arm to get some courage as I faced his eldest daughter.

"Don't act so immature."

"I'm not, dad. You know it."

"Leave Deandra alone. If you don't like her, avoid her at any cost but do not stress her out."

"I can't believe that you're doing this to me, dad."

"If you want somebody to respect you, at least earn it. You know how rules apply in this house."

She glared at me and shifted her gaze at her dad and turned her back at us as she walked away, stomping her feet.

"I'm sorry, honey. Are you alright?" He held my hand as he examined my face and expression.

"Yes, love." I noticed my two maids are following us to assist me and my husband as well.

"I apologize for my daughter's behavior. I guess they are still under the process of accepting you as their stepmom."

"I can't blame them, love. I am almost the same age as them. I guess it is normal for them to think a lot of things about us."

"But I don't want to. They should know how to respect you as much as they respect me. I want them to follow it."

I was touched by what he said that I hugged him tight. He chuckled because of what I did.

"Oh, look at this sweet babe."

I bit my lower lip as I smiled at him.

"Thank you so much love. I think with you, I am secured and there's no one to ever harm me."

"Remember, I am your real-life hero." I could hear my personal maids giggle behind us. I can feel that they are also happy with what they hear.

"Mr. Swiss, you're so sweet it's the first time we hear it from you." One of the maids couldn't help but to compliment him. He just chuckled in response. I can't help but be happy for him. Ever since I married him, his perspective of everything changed. He became more open and cheerful this time.

"She made me do it. I feel young because of Deandra." He said as he held my hand as we walked side by side.

"Mr. Swiss, we wish you both happiness and blessed married life."

I looked at my personal maids and felt grateful. At least through them, I could feel that they are very kind and caring at me and my current situation.

"Mr. Swiss, time for your midday snack. Please proceed to the dining hall." One of my personal maids updated us. I smiled and felt excited all of a sudden. In the house, midday snacks are special. It's a mixture of my favorite foods but a healthier version of it.

There are salads, fruits and vegetables, cakes and fresh juices.

"Please tell my daughters that we'll be having our midday snacks in bed." Both of my personal maids nodded as they walked towards the dining hall.

"I don't want to stress you out. I just want you to be here. Let's not join them for our midday snack. I will let all the food be here inside our room."

I nodded and smiled. I admit, I liked his plan more.

Chapter 36: WALTER BURLINTON-SWISS

Deandra's POV

Couple of months passed and I gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. My husband felt overjoyed because of the baby. A month after that, we decided to have a simple Christening event for my baby in the grand mansion. We invited a couple of friends and of course, the two daughters were present.

They looked at me as if I am their most loathed person that has ever lived. I can feel that they couldn't accept me as their stepmom until now.

Days, weeks and months went by quickly. My son is now three years old.

"My son is really handsome." My husband hugged me from behind as he rested his head on my shoulders while I let my baby play early in the morning.

"Yes. I know he will grow to be a handsome, fine man because his daddy is also handsome." My husband chuckled as soon as he heard my compliments.

"Walter is really cute." The baby cackled as he smiled.

"Do not spoil him with compliments. He might get used to it." I said as I gently touched the tip of my baby's nose.

"He's adorable, just like you." I smiled as I gently handed my baby to one of my personal maids. We're outside trying to give Walter his daily dose of vitamin D by exposing him to the direct sunlight as he is practicing his baby steps.

I appreciate my husband getting up earlier than usual just to be with me in doing my daily routine with my baby.

At times, I could see my two stepdaughters going out of the grand mansion as early as 7:00 AM. They were looking at us as if mocking. Priya is looking at me as she folded her arms. She also looked at my husband and raised her eyebrows.

"We'll be going ahead, dad."

My husband is sitting on his wheelchair and he lifted his head up as he gazed at both of them. They are wearing a fashionable short and a sleeved crop-top. They also wore a piece of boots that matched their pastel colored look.

"Okay. Please take care."

Priya looked at me again for the last time before she flashed an awkward smile. I know it is not sincere enough for me to believe it. Somehow, I am thankful that she's getting used to my presence every single day, from the moment they arrived from the U.S.

I noticed that my husband is getting weaker every single day. I noticed he only wanted to sit on his wheelchair most of the time. I decided to tell the maids to go back inside the grand mansion for my husband to rest.

"Are you sure you're alright?" I asked, too worried because of what I have observed from him.

"I am feeling a bit dizzy but I guess I'm fine. I'll just sleep for two to three hours. I am still feeling sleepy."

"Sure, love. Do you want me to sleep by your side?"

"That will be awesome, honey." I smiled as I hugged him. His smile alone made my worries fade away like smoke.

I noticed the health of my husband started to deteriorate when her two daughters arrived from the U.S.A. Denysse is a nurse by profession and she took over in telling the maids what medicines her father must take.

I have to retreat because I guess his daughters knew the health of their father more than anybody else. However, right now, I am starting to worry a lot.

When we arrived in his room, I was able to call one of my personal maids who has a background in medicine. I want her to check on the health of my husband right away. She checked his blood pressure and body temperature which my husband agreed after I insisted on it.

"Ma'am, Mr. Swiss is in good condition. I guess he just needs to rest." I sighed as I smiled at him.

"Thank you. That would be all." She nodded and she got all the things with her as she went outside our room.

He laid down the bed, flat on his back. I pulled the mattress up and turned on the air conditioner at room temperature.

"Thank you, honey." He smiled as he closed his eyes. I hugged him as I laid beside him, inching myself closer on his chest.

I also closed my eyes as I listened to his slow breathing that calmed my senses. He's taller than me that's why I could feel his lips on my forehead.

We woke up three hours after we took that long nap. It's almost ten in the morning when we decided to go outside for some snacks.

"Aren't you bored?" He asked me out of the blue. I shook my head from side to side.

"I am," He smiled as he held my hand.

"Let's go shopping then. Don't worry, my treat." Honestly speaking, that made me chuckle. I nodded. We went back to our room and got ourselves ready as we went to the mall.

"I know you miss doing this."

"Yes. It's my first time stepping inside the mall after I gave birth to Walter." He smiled when he felt that I am too excited in anticipating what to buy in the mall.

"I don't want to buy things for our son without your consent. I think I will enjoy buying his things with his mom by my side."

"You're having the right decision! Thank you love!" I hugged him from behind as I buried my head on his back while smiling.

"Anything for the love of my life. I want to make you happy, honey."

"I am happy since the time I met you. Thank you, love." He turned in front of me and held both of my hands. I met his gaze and he placed a smack on my lips that I couldn't help but close my eyes.

"I love you..." I am even shocked from what I just said.

"Do you mean it this time?"

I look into his eyes and I am seeing his melting gaze again. I was left speechless that I also wanted to ask the same question to myself.

Chapter 37: REMEMBERING THE PAST MEMOIRS

"Denysse, any thoughts about the new wife of dad?"

"Honestly speaking, I won't mind at all. If she could take good care of our father, then it's okay I guess."

"You're always acting stupid." Priya couldn't help but to glare at her sister as she rolled her eyes. They were sitting in front of each other as they had their breakfast from Priya's favorite restaurant. She's holding her fork and bread knife as she sliced her pancakes in a graceful manner.

"You know what? If you can't accept her, then don't force others to dislike her, too. You have your opinion, I have mine."

"Okay. I apologize for asking it." She said while pricking the sliced pancakes with the fork. Then, she chewed it slowly as she avoided Denysse's gaze.

"Of all places, you're always going here every time we go home. I am suggesting exquisite restaurants to choose from, yet you've always wanted to eat in here." Denysse said as she hovered her gaze around the place. The restaurant is quite old and out of style. Her sister is wondering what on earth is Priya thinking right now.

"Don't talk when your mouth is full." She answered her sister with sarcasm.

"Why? What I am saying is true. If I am acting stupid for my honest opinion, then you're the one whose acting cheap."

"Shut up." She responded as she took a sip of her favorite strawberry milkshake. A lot of people around them could tell their unique fashion sense. They were almost the only people in the room that's eye-catching because of their beauty.

Denysse couldn't help but look around as she noticed the way other people look at them, especially from the table with most guys seated. She leaned closer to her sister who was focusing to chew her food slowly.

"Gosh look at that...it's too awkward. We're already getting the attention of most people inside this place. Can we just eat somewhere else?"

"Treat that as a compliment. You are just being noticed as a superstar, how'd you like that?"

"I am not like you. You're used to seeing people and admiring you face-to-face while me? I want to melt."

"If you go with me, please expect that you'll experience it as normal as it is."

"Gosh I know what to do next time." Denysse grunted quietly as she continued her pasta and coffee quietly.

As they were eating facing each other, Priya caught someone in her peripheral vision. It's a fine-looking gentleman eating alone on the table. Her heart fluttered all of a sudden.

"What's wrong?" Denysse asked her because she's stunned for a moment as she quickly avoided her gaze at him.

And, no doubt, it was indeed Andrew, her ex-boyfriend! Why is he eating breakfast at this place? Priya couldn't help but think of him not moving on from her yet. Just like what Denysse is asking her, why here? Of all places?

Knowing how her heart acted when she saw Andrew again for more than three years, she realized that she still had feelings for him, too.

"Denysse, please eat faster. We'll get out of here, real quick." She leaned closer and whispered to her sister's face.

"Huh? Why? I never understand you, Priya...a while ago, you didn't even want to stand up from your seat and now, you want me to hurry up? You're totally out of your mind."

"If you're not going to hurry up, I will leave you here." She attempted to stand up and it made Priya pulled her arm all of a sudden. It made her sit down again as she sighed.

Good thing, Andrew's table is a little far from where they are right now.

"I'm done," As soon as Denysse told her that, she pulled her as they went outside to a different exit place next to where their table is.

"What is wrong with you?" Denysse almost yelled at her that made her cry in front of her all of a sudden.

"He's there...a while ago." She said between sobs. Denysse gave her a sympathetic look as she gently rubbed her back.

"Who's who? Who is he?" Priya looked at her in the eyes. She leaned closer to her face. She knew this familiar feeling of melancholy coming from her sister with the same guy almost three years ago. She just wanted to make sure that's why she's asking this question from her.

"Andrew?" Priya slowly met her eyes. When their gazes locked, she nodded. A sigh escaped Denysse's mouth as she looked at her eldest sister. She knew it!

"Now I know the reason why you wanted to eat in that restaurant. Did you assume that he'll appear as soon as you stepped on that door?" She nodded again for the second time. Denysse wanted to laugh because her tough, eldest sister is being soft-hearted right at this time. She's not used to it.

She's used to seeing her eldest sister as the tough cookie. Arrogant, self-centered brat most of the time...who would have thought that she'll act this way? She's acting terrified as if she's hiding from someone right now.

"My goodness, you're beautiful and wealthy. You can even buy a guy for yourself if you wanted." She joked around. She expected that Priya would laugh at it but instead, she received a death glare in return.

She raised her hands as if wanting to give her an 'I surrender' hand sign by opening both of her palms as she showed it right in front of her face.

"You never heard anything from me, ever."

She started the engine as she wiped her tears using the facial tissue placed in front of them. Denysse is sitting beside her on the front seat of her car.

"Fasten your seatbelt...we will fly." She even tapped her hands playfully on the steering wheel as she looked at the peaceful road.

"Hey sis, if you plan to suicide, please don't include me. I still have a lot of patients at the hospital for my night shift." Denysse reminded her. She just grinned in response. In a matter of less than a minute, they were already 60 km/ph.

"Too much love could literally kill us. Please slow down!" Denysse yelled as she wanted to get the steering wheel to control it for Priya. Maybe, she had already lost her sanity from the restaurant that she's acting this way.

The car moved from left to right as the steering wheel was being grabbed by both of them. The car went a zigzag motion on the road as it ran at a quick pace.

When Priya stopped the car, Denysse almost bumped her head on her shoulders. Priya cried in pain as she held her right shoulder blade while Denysse held her forehead.

"What are you trying to do? Do you want both of us to be killed? Are you out of your mind?" Denysse yelled at her as she massaged her shoulders.

"I'm sorry, okay? The important thing is, we're alive right now!"

"Whatever you're thinking, don't you dare try reckless driving! You're also driving me crazy!"
Denysse grunted as she held her head.

"I really hate you when you fall in love. My love advice for you is to stay single and choose to live.
Unlike what you're doing right now, I want to disown you as my sister any time."

Instead of responding, she hugged her sister sideways.

"Thank you so much, Denysse."

Chapter 38: WHAT'S BEHIND THE MASK?

"Denysse, here are the medicines for dad."

She looked at her eyes as she received it. Priya smiled and tapped her shoulders.

"Thank you. You're really thoughtful, Priya. I am sure dad will love it when he will know that you're personally coordinating with our family doctor for his health."

"Our dad is getting old. I know you're also busy with your patients in our family hospital. Deandra is also busy with our brother that's why I bothered myself to attend to dad's supplements." She cheerfully held her sister's hands. Denysse couldn't help but to look at her in the eyes.

"Wait, am I hearing it correctly? Brother? Since when did you consider Walter as our brother?"

"He's adorable. I happened to bump with him while he was playing with the maids on the lawn. Instead of shopping, I played with him almost half of the day until lunch time." She grinned at Denysse. From her expression, she's learning to be fond of Walter more.

"Wow! I am happy to hear that, Priya!" Denysse couldn't help hugging her sister. Priya rolled her eyes as she sighed.

"It's his fault. I am a victim of his being 'too cute to be ignored' kind of look." She jokingly frowned that Denysse couldn't help but laugh at the sight of her.

"Yeah, I consider myself a victim of him, too." Denysse giggled as they did a high-five. Priya went to his dad's room and knocked three times as she sighed. She even put her hand on her hips.

Surprisingly, it's her personal maid nurse who opened the door for her. They're with him and not Deandra. She roamed her gaze around the room because she wanted to find her but she's not there.

"Wow, what a surprise." She said as she looked around. She never expected not seeing Deandra inside, she couldn't help but wonder where she is right now.

"Where's my stepmom?" She gently said to her father that changed the reaction of all the people who were there with him.

"Am I hearing it correctly, my dear?" She can see her dad having misty eyes as soon as he heard it.

"Yes, dad. I realized that she's taking good care of you and you're happily in love with her. Who am I to stop it? If she makes you feel stronger, then I will treat her right this time."

For the longest time, Priya saw her father wear the biggest smile. He opened both of his arms as if wanting to embrace Priya. She walked fast towards where her dad was. They shared a sweet embrace. As her father let her go, his smile is really sweet and pure.

"I am glad that you're thinking about these things."

"I am thinking that it is your happiness that truly matters the most. Who am I to prevent you? Denysse told me everything and I realized I am becoming too harsh for you, dad."

She hugged her dad tight and Mr. Swiss couldn't help but be excited that Priya will accept Deandra at last. He's been wishing for it to happen that it finally came true before his eyes.

"By the way, where's Deandra?"

"She's in the dining hall my dear. She will bake cookies and cakes for the midday snacks."

"Hmm, that's why I can't see stepmom. She should be the one to take care of you, right?" She smiled as she tapped her father's shoulders. Mr. Swiss held both of her hands as she looked up to her.

"She loves to cook and bake. I am letting her do what she loves the most. She'll be happy to know that you're considering her as your mom at last."

"Well, if she's making you happy and in love. Good thing she's learning a lot in baking and cooking, too."

Mr. Swiss pushed his wheelchair towards her as she held both of her hands. That smile never left her face after Priya told him that she will be accepting Deandra as her stepmother at last.

"My dearest Priya, I am thinking of you to become the model of my latest project."

"Wow, really dad?" She smiled as she held both of her dad's shoulders.

"Of course. I know you can really pull that one effortlessly. Remember, you're the ambassador of my beauty products..."

"Of course. I will always be supportive of you, dad. You know I will always be here for you, right?"

"Thank you, dear. It's a joint project I proposed with Deandra." She smiled at her dad but she secretly closed her fist.

"Oh, I see. So, she's also into business, huh?"

"Yes. I can see her enthusiasm when it comes to fashion shows I am thinking of putting up a business that would match her likes."

"Tell me when's the photoshoot. I will have to adjust my schedules to that, dad."

"This is great news. You never knew how you made me happy, my dear."

She just smiled but deep down, it added up to what she felt towards Deandra. A grudge that she thinks impossible to remove from her system. This specific feeling she's only reserving for her stepmom. She's feeling bad about Deandra having all of these things for herself. It's like she's being too lucky that her dad wanted to give a business exclusively to her in an instant. Ironical, he couldn't even trust her with it when she would ask him for it herself.

After two hours, Deandra went back to their room to tell her husband that everything is ready. When she saw Priya smiling at her, she couldn't help but fear what she's showing her. Mr. Swiss told her everything and Priya offered her hand for a handshake. She gasped a bit when Priya grip her hand tight as she smiled.

She let go and showed her smile but she's not convinced about it. As she looked into her eyes, she could sense that something was going on. It's like her motives were opposite to what she's showing right now.

"Shall we go to the dining hall now? I am excited to taste your cookies and cakes, mom." She even emphasized the last word which made Mr. Swiss chuckle a bit. Her husband is a bit happier now but she's doubting everything. She could feel it within her.

They went downstairs and she is assisting her husband as she is holding his hand on the other side while Deandra is holding on the other.

"Dad, how are you feeling?" Priya asked him as they were on their way to the dining hall.

"I feel weak, I don't know why..." Mr. Swiss scratched his head as he chuckled. Deandra could see Priya and her worried face.

"Do you take your supplements?"

"Yes. Denysse is giving them to me but I guess I am not feeling any effects at all."

"Oh dad, I guess you're taking it the first time. Just continue your vitamins. I guess it will take effect after two to three days." As Priya said that, she's looking at Deandra and grinned. It gave Deandra goosebumps like never before.

This easy reconciliation between them is such a bother to her that she couldn't even understand himself.

Chapter 39: OUT OF LOVE

Deandra's POV

"Lilian, do you think we should consult another doctor aside from Dr. McNally?"

"Ma'am, Dr. McNally is the family doctor for more than ten years. I guess Priya and Denysse will worry if we will do that." I looked at my personal maid's expression.

She's right. I know it will create a buzz when I'll do it but seeing my husband, I noticed he's getting weaker as weeks goes by.

It's like he's not getting stronger day by day. Last few months before Priya and Denysse came from the U.S.A, he could still walk like a young man. Now, he's already dependent on his wheelchair. He couldn't walk anymore like he used to. And that's something I worry the most.

"I am worrying about his health. However, he trusted his daughters so who am I to stop them?" Lilian looked at me as I sighed. She held both of my hands as if comforting me right now.

"Ma'am, let us just trust Denysse and Priya. I am sure they only think of their father's health more than anything."

"I understand but then I noticed his health is deteriorating. As I observed, it's not normal anymore because of his age as well."

"Don't worry ma'am, I will ask Ms. Denysse about this one. I will update you as soon as possible." Lilian nodded.

"Thank you so much, dear."

"The pleasure is mine. Do you have anything else before I leave this room?"

"Where's Walter?" I smiled as I asked her. We both looked at the door because someone was knocking three times before she entered.

"Mommy!" Walter exclaimed. Priya giggled as soon as she gently let Walter stand on the carpeted floor of our room. He slowly ran into me and hugged me tight.

"That little baby is disturbing her beautiful sister..." As soon as my baby heard it, he turned his back to Priya who was laughing.

"No, mommy."

"Deandra, don't worry. I never mind at all." She winked at Walter and my baby ran to her again. She gladly carried him in his arms.

"Oh my, Walter is heavy, Priya. I am so sorry."

"Of course, I am taking care of my baby brother. I will never let him get thin." I couldn't help but laugh. I never thought they'll develop that kind of relationship with each other.

We all stopped when one of my personal maids shouted on top of her lungs. It came from our room. Priya left Walter to one of the maids along the hallway. We both rushed to where the sound came from.

"Daddy!" Priya shook her dad's body but he seemed lifeless.

"Ma'am, Mr. Swiss is not moving from his bed. He's not breathing anymore." The maids were all crying while looking at Priya who was wailing aloud.

As soon as I heard it, I felt dizzy. It's like my world is shattering apart and everything went black.

When I opened my eyes, Lilian sat beside me with swollen eyes. I met her gaze as she held my hand. I couldn't stop myself from crying as soon as I saw her.

So it is not a dream, after all. The man who loved everything about me died without me by his side.

"Ma'am, Dr. McNally said that Mr. Swiss died because of cardiac arrest."

"It's all my fault. I never stayed by his side."

"Ma'am, please don't say that. Nobody wanted that thing to happen. We don't want him to die. It's not your fault. Please be at ease."

I hugged Lilian tight. "Please give me Walter right now." My personal maid gave me my baby and he is now sleeping peacefully on my arms. His delicate, round face, cute nose and adorable mouth...these qualities somehow made me feel that I am not alone in this world. I still have my baby after the loss of my husband.

The funeral rites were only attended by one hundred people as my request. Many VIPs and colleagues came to witness as he laid to rest after seven days of necrological service at the grand mansion. The two sisters were distant to me after their father died, especially Priya.

I have this feeling that she's somehow blaming me for the death of their father. Even me, I couldn't believe that he will be gone from me. The times that we shared were quite short.

A month after Khalid Reike, my husband's death, his personal lawyer called all our attention. This is concerning the last will and testament that he left from all of us. We were all seated in front of

each other. The two sisters were seated on the left side of the long table, facing me. While I am seated facing them, with my husband's lawyer beside me.

My heart raced fast when the lawyer finished reading everything from my husband's last will and testament. He left me with fifty percent of all the properties he had, namely the Empire Reike hotels and casino based on Singapore, the Reike Jewelries, coffee shops, banks and telecommunication companies under him. He also left the grand mansion to me. He funded one million dollars for our joint business that still has no name yet.

While each of his two daughters has twenty-five percent of his total properties.

"Can you believe that, Denysse? That whore had more than what we had!" She said, slamming the table with her hand as she stood up. Denysse looked at me with a blank expression while holding Priya's hand to stop her from what she's doing.

"W-Why, Mr. Phelps? Why did father give fifty percent to her? As what we knew, our inheritance will be forty percent each." Denysse calmly explained their side. I am only shifting my gaze to the family lawyer and to the two sisters. They both look at me as if they want to roast me alive.

"He changed his last will and testament three years ago, after he married Ms. Deandra. She is considered his new spouse that's why she has the right to have that percentage of the inheritance. This is already done and irrevocable."

Chapter 40: A STRIFE'S BREATH

Deandra's POV

I still couldn't believe it myself. Why did Khalid do that for me? Did he love me above his daughters? I am holding my baby inside our room as I look at our picture frame.

We had a picture with the three of us: me, my husband and Walter who was six months old that time. I couldn't help but shed a tear. After his death, I had the time to look into this picture more and I can see that he has the sweetest smile.

"Baby, please stay strong because it is only the two of us."

The door of our room opened as Priya entered the room.

"Are you happy now? How dare you to get the wealth of our father?"

"Walter is asleep right now. If you're not going to say something important, you can go out now."

"How dare you to tell me that in my own house?"

"I thought the lawyer made it clear to all of us that I am the sole owner of this house more than you? How can you still do that in front of my face?"

"Priya looked at the two bodyguards that's behind her. It made her pissed off even more.

"I won't get easy on you, remember that."

She slammed the door in front of me. I closed my eyes because of the impact it created. Even Walter cried because of the noise.

"Shhh, baby Walter it's okay dear." I held him in my arms as I tried rocking him to sleep. Honestly, I am not planning to talk back to Priya and everything she does. However, if my baby is involved, I will not hesitate to fight back. As young as he is, I don't want him to get involved in every encounter that we had.

"Ma'am, you can make them leave this house. It is all yours now."

"Lilian, I don't want to do it as much as possible. They are still the daughters of Khalid. I have to give them their freedom in this house has all their memories, especially with their mother.

"Ma'am, they only stayed here for two years, the remaining eight years were in the U.S.A. How come they will have some memories in here? You know what, they only do that to you because you don't know how to fight back."

I looked at my personal maid and cried to her again. She hugged me as she gently rubbed my back. I also noticed that my husband's faithful bodyguards were sympathetic to my situation.

"I will try to be tough for Walter. Thank you so much, Lilian."

"We'll be here, ma'am." The two bodyguards were also smiling at me as if wanting to comfort me right now.

"Thank you so much to all of you. When you talk to me and you'll be on my side, I feel comforted already."

I had a conversation with them until I came up with a decision. I informed my stepdaughters that I will be stepping out from the grand mansion because I want to be at peace. I bought a villa near the beach and I hired everyone from the grand mansion who are willing to go with me. There were a total of twelve people who went with me, together with Lilian and my late husband's bodyguards. I also made sure that Khalid's daughters will never locate where I went for my safety and peace. I wanted a quiet life out of the limelight. I have to continue my studies and support my baby, too.

I am happy that my late husband assigned trusted people to run the business he started. It inspired me to continue my studies, taking up Business Management courses and even related programs abroad to further understand how the business world works.

My two personal maids supported me well. Also, I brought my three sisters and my mom to my villa. I told them everything that happened to me. They thought of me working abroad but then, the experiences that shaped me were more than that. I also introduced my baby Walter to them who is seven years old now. Despite all the pain and the things that happened, they accepted me wholeheartedly and we started a new life.

After seven years, I produced my version 2.0. I even changed my name from Deandra to Dianne Swiss because of safety reasons. I know Priya and Denysse were still looking for me as they insisted that I was the one who killed their father. The resentment that they have planted bloomed within them that revenge will not be impossible anytime. I added some security features of the house, even the number of bodyguards because I am a great prey for them.

"Deandra, until when are we going to live this kind of life?" My mom told us out of the blue while we're having our dinner. I guess it's her first time to experience this kind of life. I assume that she's afraid this life she's enjoying right now will change in a blink of an eye.

"Mom, you don't have to worry. Everything will be alright for as long as we are all staying in one roof."

"We're not going to go back to our old house, right?" Dahlia asked in her worried tone. I smiled as I caressed her long, lovely hair. She is sitting beside me. That's why it's easy for me to hold her hand whenever she feels anxious or worried.

"I will not let this family go back to the way we used to be. For as long as you'll all help me, we will still be enjoying this kind of life."

"Our dear Deandra is the best!" Dina cheered but Dee stopped her as she gave her a blank expression.

"Hey, it's Dianne, not Deandra, okay?"

"Oops, sorry our dear Dianne. I forgot." I giggled because of what Dee did that I stood up to touch her hair. It became messy and Dina chuckled.

"I am still beautiful. Dianne will comb my hair later." She said, still having her blank expression.

"Of course I will." I looked at the table and Dahlia enjoyed a bowl of fried chicken for herself. From the kind of life we're having right now, I promised myself to do my best to be a successful business woman someday.

Chapter 41: OPTIMISTIC AND STATIC

"I have come up with the name...The Reike Trends." Deandra is in front of the investors presenting the brand herself.

"We're always used to high-end fashion but what about the common people? They all have the chance to shine and present the brand even in their daily lives."

She could see that they were all nodding to what she's trying to tell them. Since Khalid Reike, his deceased husband funded the joint business she presented to him years ago, it gave her the confidence to continue it and give it a name it deserved to have.

She also tried her best to bring herself to the top. She worked hard to attend many business-related seminars. She even went to different courses and programs that will develop and enhance her skills in knowing the nature of the business and on how to run it.

"Well-presented, but what about the middle-class and high-class target market? Of course we shouldn't compromise class just because we are considering the pricing of each item that even common people could afford."

She paused for a while, and from that statement coming from one of the major investors who is a fashion enthusiast herself, she secretly bit her lip.

"That's what I am actually presenting here. The Reike Trends will flourish because common people could still showcase fashion themselves that even our middle to high-class target market would be encouraged to try it because it is popular."

"Wow...I love that idea." The other investor agreed to Dahlia right away.

"If that presentation will be a bomb then let's get started. The Reike Trends. Live your everyday fashion."

She received a round of applause to most of the investors from her presentation. Even if his knees are shaking, she nodded to show her being grateful to everyone as she smiled.

They started to plan a world-record longest runway with a lot of people coming from all walks of life, as they wear the dresses, suites, bags, belts, fashion accessories, uniforms, gowns and many others.

As they achieved the world record sponsored by Deandra, she cried with tears of joy. Seeing what her late husband said to her three years ago made her realize that dreams do come true.

Until now, her memory is still fresh on how he has been treating her when he was still alive. He always put his faith and love to her and on what she's capable of doing. Deandra remembered that her husband is already proud of her even when she was still starting from scratch.

She could still recall how he put all of his faith in her in venturing in a business that she only dreamt of having when they first met. He's the only one who told her that she can do it. He reminded her that venturing in a business is a risk but once you're getting there, you'll appreciate how you started. Sacrifices were normal but once you overcome it, it'll be worthy.

"You know what sis? I am always proud of you since then." Dina hugged me as she smiled.

"Why? How?" I hugged her back as I looked at her face. She looked so proud of me for achieving one of my bigger dreams in life.

"I remembered it was the birthday of Dahlia, and she wanted a lot from you. A cake and fried chicken. I never expected that you'll bring those things because it was not your salary day yet."

I started to become emotional again. Yeah, that exact day...how could I forget it myself?

"But then I was surprised when you went home with what Dahlia requested of you. From then on, I realized that no matter what you wish in life, you're able to achieve it because you are goal-oriented."

"Of course. I have to do it because she wished for it. No eldest sister could bear missing her little sister's wish."

"That made you the best sister for us. Not just for giving us what we need but for being a great sister for us. For faithfully loving us with everything you have."

"Aww, thank you Dina. I love you so much and our sisters. I will always do my best to give you all the life that you deserve to have."

I hugged my sister tightly this time. I never thought I will be appreciated this much...although that day was really epic yet unforgettable.

That was the time when my one-thousand peso bill went missing when I was attending to the student's library card. I recalled putting it on the table and when I looked at it again, it was gone. Good thing Andrew came to the rescue. He was able to give me a one-thousand-peso bill for Dahlia's party.

Until now, he's one of the reasons why I am here at the top. I want him to pay for everything he has done for me.

For hurting my feelings. For letting me feel important and yet he's loving another woman who happened to be my stepdaughter. What a coincidence! What a funny life encounter and battle.

However, I am feeling happy because from my experiences, it shaped my life and my mindset to remember the secrets to success my late husband did.

I have to admit that Andrew was the main reason for my misfortune that turned out to be a 'redirection'. If not for him, I wouldn't have met Khalid, my late husband. I wouldn't have the chance to fulfill my dreams.

Moving on, I have to continue what my late husband left and trusted me with. The Reike Trends. Even if I am solely running this business, this one is dedicated to him and on how he gave his full trust.

I called the attention of all my sisters. As we did the midday snacks, I encouraged them to study well. I want them to trust themselves more than I do for them. They promised me that they will do the things I remind them of. I love the enthusiasm of the three.

"I will be a good fashion designer, dear Dianne!" Dina proudly exclaimed.

"I will be a famous chef!" Dahlia stood up as she held her spoon. I couldn't help but chuckle. She really looked funny.

I noticed Dee is quiet in one corner. She's just quietly eating the mini-cakes I baked for all of them.

"What about you, Dee? Anything in mind that you want to be someday?"

She looked at me in the eyes as she sighed. It's like she is doubting if she will tell it to all of us or not.

"C'mon, dear Dee. You have to tell us!" Dahlia insisted.

"I want to be a soldier or a police officer."

Chapter 42: REVENGEFUL MOVE

Deandra's POV

"Dianne?" Someone tapped me on my shoulders. I opened my eyes and I realized I fell asleep by leaning on the table in front of the mountains of papers I have to read and sign inside my study.

"Mom...why are you here?" I smiled at her as I also glanced on the cat-designed wall clock. It was already 6:00 PM. I never thought I will sleep that long.

"I noticed that you entered your study as early as two in the afternoon. You haven't eaten anything yet since breakfast."

"Sorry mom. Got to meet the deadlines."

"I think you will not miss dinner this time. I personally requested that I will cook for dinner." She smiled as she faced me.

"Wow! Really, mom?"

"Yeah. Is it okay that I cooked more than five dishes? I love your fridge. It has everything I need."

"Gosh mom don't do that often our chef might get fired because of you." She burst out laughing as a response.

"Well, I asked him if it is okay. He said that I should feel free to do whatever I want."

"Okay mom. You got me there. I promise I will eat a lot." I smiled and it changed her facial expression.

We had a great dinner. Mom prepared her own version of fried chicken using her secret recipe. She also prepared some fresh coleslaw salad, rib-eyed steak and some mushroom soup. She also paired it with some brownies and red velvet ice cream for dessert.

"I really love it, mom!"

"Of course. Your sister Dahlia helped me in preparing all of these."

"Okay, since it is only 8:00 in the evening, why don't we have our night shopping?"

"Really, sis?" I could see Dina's glistening eyes.

"Why not? I love to shop at this hour because it is not crowded anymore."

"Why don't we just go to your mall? We can close it for our own convenience. That way, I can choose whatever outfits I have without somebody disturbing me." Dina suggested as she grinned at me. I looked at her in a stern way that she looked down.

"Where will the profit go when we're closing it exclusively for us for two hours? We have to think of that before making any move."

"Your sister Dianne has a point, Dina. Business is business."

"We can shop at any mall and keep our profile low-key."

"Oh gosh sis, you know what? It also came to me that I should be a popular businesswoman and a fashion designer so that I can change my name like you." She giggled as I rubbed the top of her head until it became messy. She held my hand and removed it as she frowned. Dee and Dahlia laughed out loud because of what I did.

"Your head looked like a bird's nest." Dee said between chuckles.

"No, a dragon's nest." Dahlia added that they both laughed while doing a high-five.

"Crazy, silly girls." Dina wanted to frown and yet she laughed with them as she fixed her hair.

"It's all final then. We will go to Seri mall." Mother told everyone as she grinned at me. I knew what she exactly meant by it.

I entered the mall and the people who were shopping there almost stopped moving as soon as they saw me.

"That's Dianne Swiss, right?" I looked at the ladies who wore glamorous clothes. It is obvious that they have an eye for fashion because they knew me right away.

I smiled at them and wink. I saw them giggle and blush because I gave them a second of my attention. A lot of people rushed near me but they were stopped by our bodyguards.

We walked and roamed around the mall. Honestly, there's never a dress that impressed me in Seri's. Most of the clothes were only designed for petite women, which is a big no no for The Reike Trends.

I should thank my stepdaughter for the things to avoid and improve at The Reike Trends.

"Mom, do you think I should release L,XL and XXL sizes for next month's Reike Trends fashion show?"

"What a clever idea, honey."

"You think so? This place is too depressing. If I will go shopping here with the body I have seven years ago, I will be sad because there's not a single cloth or pants that would fit my size."

"Yes, dear. I agree. Malls, especially fashion malls should consider sizes of all ages."

"Thank you for supporting me, mom."

My mom is beside me because my sisters ran to different aisles discovering rubbish. I hope they find something valuable out of all those things. I sighed as I looked around. Well, I should admit that Seri Mall has an excellent infrastructure design. That keeps the mallgoers visit their mall. I am never impressed because it is the idea of my late husband.

After the media and paparazzi covered me shopping at Seri Mall, the sales went up in one day. It made my stepdaughter Priya pissed off even more. She owned Seri Mall but in a few months, it will declare bankruptcy because it is not being visited by most people because of its costly and heavy clothes.

"You are unstoppable, my love." Mom clapped her hands as she saw my face being flashed as the popular news anchor had me in an exclusive interview about my thoughts for Seri Mall.

"Yes. This is only the start."

"You're going to be the major investor of Seri's, right?"

"Yes. I also wanted to own Seri blooms."

"All of Priya's properties?"

"If I could make it big, why not?"

"My dearest daughter, are you being too much?"

"If she keeps on annoying me, I might also do something she'll regret all her life. I am holding her on her neck. If she'll make a wrong move, her company is over."

My mom looked at me as I sat on my favorite swivel chair accentuated with real swarovski crystals. I rested my right leg on my left as I grinned.

Chapter 43: FEELINGS, DEALINGS

Deandra's POV

I continued visiting Seri's mall and the media went wild even more. I encountered my stepdaughter a couple of times. She would meet me in front of many people. She would smile at me but then it is obvious that she's really angry already. She would invite me into her VIP meeting room just to say a lot of harsh words.

I would always decline her offer and it is making her mad even more. I admire her for being professional at all times. I know if she will let her anger out, it is the end of her career and everything in her.

"My dearest stepdaughter, you should try to enroll at an anger management course for you to be a pro in suppressing anger. I hate to say this but you're being obvious at times. You're not looking good at news articles already." I said in the calmest way possible that it triggered her anger more.

"Shut up, bitch. If I will tell the media that I am your stepdaughter and you married my father for his wealth, you would lose shares for sure!" She warned but I just let out a chuckle.

"Try it, I dare you, Priya! If you're going to have something against me, make sure it will not be an aimless shot or else you will only look more like a pathetic loser." I said as I raised my eyebrows. It made her mad even more that she started to turn the chairs down. She just looked at me, as if wanting to hurt me but she's stopping herself from doing it. Gosh, so this is how anger is eating one's sanity. A while ago, she looked sane but now? I am not sure...

I grinned as I enjoyed looking at her as she shouted and cursed me at once.

"You'll regret this! You'll see! Don't be so confident like you own the world."

"I owned it including yours and the ground where you're standing right now." I replied with sarcasm.

"Go to hell, bitch. I know your territory is waiting for you there as well." She hissed that I am starting to become so annoyed at her.

"Are you done? If you are then I should leave. I am wasting so much time already."

I could hear her soft cursing as I exited the VIP room of Seri Mall. I chuckled at the sight of her. I cared about Priya. What I can't last is her attitude and the way she would call me names. I realized that she only 'reconciled' with me because of her dad. Possible, the inheritance she might not be getting if she will treat me like trash, like what she's doing to me now.

I regret hiding myself from her for more than four years. I should've faced her instead.

I strolled around Seri Mall for the last time before I went to my car. I pass by Seri's bestsellers. Those were the designer clothes Priya wore herself during her exclusive fashion shows.

"Madam, you can try this one. I am confident that it will perfectly fit you."

"You do?" I chuckled as I put my hand on my chest while facing the humble saleslady.

"Yes, ma'am. I'm a fan of Ms. Dianne Swiss from The Reike Trends. She's sexy and she looked exactly like you. I know she can slay any outfit, even her rival brand."

"Wait, you didn't know me, did you?"

She shook her head and I couldn't help but laugh.

"Oh, well," I smiled at her. I can't blame her. If I appear in several interviews or fashion runways, I prefer to overdo my makeup. If I shop at different malls, I wear only light make-up so that nobody will recognize me that easily. Just like what this saleslady did. She's cute and I can see that she's still a new employee of Seri's. I looked at her from head to toe. I noticed that her legs were already shaking and that changed my facial expression.

"How long were you standing?" She looked into my eyes as if feeling scared. She's doubting if she will say it to me or not.

"Ma'am, I am so sorry," She managed to smile and she looked down. I felt sorry for her right away. I grabbed my handbag and handed her a piece of card. When she received it, I could see the shock on her face. She looked at the card and shifted her gaze into my face and looked at the card again.

"Madam, it is you!" I know she wanted to shout because of too much happiness. I stopped her before she would do that by putting my pointing finger between my pouting lips as I smiled. She put both of her hands on her mouth as if covering it but she couldn't stop giggling.

I can feel that she's really my fan.

"Madam, I am a fan, believe me."

"I do. Don't worry," I looked around and when I can see that there's no trace of Priya, I leaned closer to her.

"You can resign here right away. I could offer you thrice your salary here when you work for Reike Trends." She nodded in excitement. I left the mall and bought her suggested dress and five of different kinds for her to take advantage of the sales. I just knew the feeling of working hard for the sake of my family.

I am on my way to the VIP parking lot of the mall as I open my bag to get my phone when I bumped at someone.

"Sorry, miss," That familiar, husky voice startled me as I looked down. I felt his body towering me because he's tall.

"Are you alright?" I could sense his worried tone as she gently touched my arm. I tried to let go of his hand when he gripped my arm a bit tighter this time.

"Y-Yeah. And please let me go." I said, trying to meet his gaze.

"Whoah...Dianne Swiss? Is that you?" He let me go right away as he smiled."I am really sorry. Did I hurt you?"

'How I wish you managed to ask me that seven years ago, Andrew...'

I looked into his eyes as I badly wanted to tell these words. I feel like melting because of the way he gazed at me like he owned me at this moment.

"No."

He smiled as he slid both of his hands on my waist, feeling my curves. This time, I lied.

Chapter 44: A CHANCED MEETING

Deandra's POV

I looked at him in the eyes. I noticed he's studying my expression, how my eyes narrowed down to his inviting lips. A smile curved his mouth as he noticed I swallowed at the sight of it.

"I long to meet you in person. Who would've thought I would just bump on you one day? I guess I am the luckiest guy alive today." He said as he grinned. He gently pulled me closer to him. My heart started to act silly as it beat really fast. I couldn't help but to let go of his touch.

"I should go. I have a lot of things to do, I'm sorry." I started to walk away when he stopped me by holding my arm.

"Wait, you didn't know me yet, right?"

"Who are you that I should spend my time with?" I smirked as I looked at him directly in the eye. Two of my bodyguards came closer to me as they looked at Andrew. At the sight of them, he quickly let me go as she sighed. He looked sad all of a sudden. Before I pity him, I turned my back right away as I quickly walked towards my car. One of my bodyguards opened the backseat for me. I glanced at him one more time.

I could see him standing at the area where he grabbed my arm. He didn't even mind walking away because of what I did. Instead, he placed both of his hands on both cheeks.

"I am Andrew Meyers! I am a fan! I hope I will meet you again, Ms. Dianne! Take care!"

He yelled that it created an echo to the whole parking lot and the cars started to sound their car alarms one by one.

Most of the people there also turned their gaze at him. I shut the car and got my handkerchief. I couldn't help but cry. I held my knees and I can still feel them trembling too much. I hugged both of them.

Whenever I met Priya, I never let any of my family members or my personal maids go with me, that's why I instantly regret this moment. I haven't had someone to comfort me because of what happened.

I am now in a roller-coaster of emotions. I don't understand why I feel this way. I felt excited upon hearing his voice. When I gazed into his eyes, I suddenly felt rage and the urge to take revenge. When he shouted those words before I left Seri Mall. I feel like crying because I am deeply touched.

I should be honest. However, I feel pissed because he's not this sweet to me when I was still very fat and haggard-looking almost the whole day, seven years ago.

With the kind of encounter we had today, I want to believe that he's like most men who only wanted to treat a woman right if she's physically attractive.

As soon as I reached the house, I looked around me and I could see my baby Walter playing in the lawn with Dina, Dee and Dahlia. They were chasing my little boy and it made him run fast as he giggled.

"Oh, mommy's here!" Dahlia spotted me looking at them as soon as I entered the entrance gate. Right after my driver parked my car in a separate parking lot beside the villa, I searched for Walter right away.

When he heard Dahlia telling him that I had arrived, he ran quickly towards me and hugged my waist.

"Mommy, aunt Dina, Dee and Dahlia chased me. I am the only one. Please join me and let's chase them too. Please, please?" He pleaded as he pulled my hand while looking into my eyes. I fell for that 'puppy-eyed' look and I accepted his invitation to chase my other sisters. The maids accepted my stilettos and Lilian gave me a pair of running sandals.

I saw my three sisters laugh as they widened their eyes in shock. Walter and I hailed the winner and as a reward, he will be receiving a lot of candies from her dearest aunts.

It happened that Kylie paid a visit, leaving her baby girl to their house because of business-related trips.

We were inside my room and Walter was already sleeping on my bed while I laid sideways beside him, while playing with his hair. I rested my elbows on the bed while Kylie was sitting on one of the chairs beside the bed.

"What? Are you serious?"

"Yeah, good thing he couldn't recognize me anymore."

"Of course. You're slimmer this time. You even lost almost ten kilograms off your actual weight. Your weight was almost sixty-five kilograms when you both became friends seven years ago.

I looked at Kylie and I couldn't stop my tears rolling on my cheeks. She gently wiped it with her handkerchief.

"Walter knew that his father was dead. What if he will know the whole truth?"

"Deandra, he deserves to know it at the right time. You can't keep it from him forever. Remember, there's not a secret that's isn't revealed."

"I don't think he would still need to know who his real father is. He grew up knowing Khalid. For me, that's more than enough."

"What do you plan to do now that you have seen him after seven years?"

"I want to take my revenge for what happened to me."

"Hmm, I guess the right thing to do is to move on. It won't give you peace if you will always think about doing it."

"Yes, all he did was a blessing in disguise for me. What I couldn't accept is the fact that I tried reaching out to him one day but he never came to find me and his own child."

"You did what?"

"I never told you about it but I told him some of what happened to the both of us on a piece of paper. I carefully folded it and I placed it on one of his borrowed books during my last day of duty from the library."

Chapter 45: LAST LOVE STANDING

After a week of that encounter, Deandra expected Andrew's presence at her office. Knowing him, he would do anything just to get what he wanted.

She hired him as her personal lawyer and he's very happy because of it. He invited her to his condominium unit. As she went inside, memories rushed to her like waves of the ocean.

"Sorry, it's kind of messy."

"What's up for our first meeting, Andrew?" I looked at him in the eyes as I put my arms around his shoulders. He also pulled me close to him as he put his hands on my waist.

"You're beautiful, Dianne." He said in a husky voice, tilting his face closer to mine because he's a bit tall. He nibbled my earlobes that made me moan softly.

"Oh, so this is the kind of meeting that you propose?" I smirked as I held his hand that's caressing the thin fabric of my clothes upward, cupping my large breasts. I couldn't help but to close my eyes and moan louder this time as he trailed kisses on my neck.

"I want you...from the moment I laid my eyes on you, I knew I wanted you so bad." He said in a very straightforward manner as he undressed me, yanking the buttons off my blouse as he looked into my eyes. I bit my lower lip as I narrowed my gaze. From what I did, he gently cupped my cheek and savored my mouth, kissing me wild, tasting my tongue. I kissed him back as I helped him undress, too. I stood braless in front of him.

As I looked into his eyes, I could see that he looked at me so adoringly like a piece of art. I stepped back and as I felt my back against the wall, he cupped my mound and touched my sensitive peak with his left hand and tasted the right mound with his mouth.

"Andrew..." I gasped and moaned because of the sensations he's giving me. This is totally unexpected. He's even good when he's not drunk. I didn't notice how he got me into his bed but as I felt the soft mattress pressing against my back, I couldn't help but to close my eyes and feel his mouth tasting, licking, savoring all parts of my body like his favorite food.

He removed my remaining undies and opened my thighs. I almost cried because of the endless sensations he's giving me, tasting and sucking my wet core, damn it drove me crazy.

"Andrew, please..."

"Yes, sweetheart?" He grinned as he lift his head from between my thighs as if teasing me. I could see his mouth is wet all over because of my dripping cunt. I bit my lower lip. Gosh, I want to cum and explode in front of him the second time. The orgasm he's giving me is never-ending.

"Make me yours tonight."

I couldn't believe my eyes when he let me see his hard on. He is huge and erect. I couldn't believe how it entered me for the first time. He opened my thighs wider this time as he grinned. Looking at his body, I think I could die happily any time because he's damn gorgeous. His abs and shaft is a perfect combination to make any woman crazy over him.

He entered me without any mercy. His thrusts were fast and rough that my fingernails were burying on his back because of what he's doing. I am crying out his name out of pleasure as we both reached our climax.

I laid on his bed sideways and I felt his hands caressing my core again. I moaned and I felt his kisses trailing on my back. I turned and I felt his chest right away. He touched my chin and kissed me on the lips, savoring my tongue again. I could feel the budding feeling of pleasure on my stomach again.

"I can do this the whole day." He looked into my eyes and smiled. He looked really sexy without any clothes on. I bit my lip as I let my hand go down and caressed his long, huge shaft. It's now his turn to moan out of pleasure. We made love a lot of times that day. I got tired but it was fun. I never thought I would let him do it to me. However, I know his weakness. I should do it to fulfill what I wanted to happen between us. I will make him fall for me and I will abandon him if he loves me too much already.

"What do you want to eat for dinner?" He asked, distracting my thoughts. I am still lying on his soft bed caressing the mattress and playing it with my fingers.

"Would it be fine if it will be you?" He chuckled as he looked at me. He put on his T-shirt and shorts already for he will be the one to prepare for our dinner.

"Well, I guess that's a great idea. You can do that after I cook for you."

"You do?" I said, pretending not to know the details of his life. I don't want to sound obvious to him.

"I am used to being independent, that's why I learned how to cook to at least save a bit when I was still studying."

"Oh, is that so?" I got up as I also put on my yellow see-through blouse that exposes my cleavage and mini-skirt.

"Why are you up already?"

"Don't you want me to get dressed? I am naked for more than six hours."

"Honestly, no. I want you to be naked when you face me." I threw a mini-pillow as a response as I laughed.

"Don't be like that, you'll never get over me that easy if you keep on thinking that way."

"Well, I don't want to get over you. It is only the beginning."

"Why? What do you mean?"

"After what happened, I realized that I want all of this to get serious."

"Don't joke around, it is not funny."

"Am I sounding like I am cracking a joke? I want you, Dianne. So bad I want to marry you right away."

My heart almost stopped when he said that. Marriage? Is he that serious? He didn't even ask Priya's hand for marriage. I knew he loved her so much seven years ago.

What happened? Do I have to have sex with him every time just for him to give importance of me, too? For me, everything is just plain ridiculous.

Chapter 46: LIFE'S COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

"He's insane." Kylie simply answered when I told her everything.

"He seemed to be serious, Kylie."

"Yeah, and if you fall for that, you'll be dead for sure."

"This is how I should get my revenge. I have to let him fall in love with me and if that will happen, it will be easier for me to leave him."

"Are you sure about this, Dianne?"

"More than seven years of being sure about my plan."

"Do you think of a possible reconciliation with him?"

"Why would I? Kylie, it is already too late for him to think about that. I have to let this one happen for my plans to come true."

"I guess I can't stop you this time. I just wish you will not get into any trouble if you do it."

I noticed that Kylie is looking at me as if observing my reaction. She wanted to make sure that I tell what I really feel and not otherwise.

"Trust me on this." I assured her as I smiled. She looked at me as if not convinced of what I was telling her.

"Dianne, one second. Are you sure there will be no feelings involved here? I mean, looking at Andrew, any woman can fall in love with him." She explained. I smirked as I looked at her. I held my chin up as I smiled. He wished. I know, things are not the same anymore. I could feel that he's head over heels with me this time.

"Well, what do you think of me? That random kind of woman? I am Dianne Swiss, Kylie. You know it."

"Of course. My most successful best friend of all time. A multi-billionaire and a business tycoon. Who wouldn't know you?"

"He will fall into me, fast and I promise you, it will be the most painful and regretted moment of his life."

I invited Andrew inside of my other condominium. We had a lot of client meetings. He's by my side most of the time. We meet clients, discuss ideas and most of the time, sex to almost all of the corners of my unit. He gave me the most thrilling experiences as we tried a lot of things we never had before. I never thought my sex life would never be this active.

I laid by his side without any clothes on, trailing my hands on his chest going down.

"You're learning fast, madam."

"Well, my lawyer is also my best teacher. What will you teach me today?" I looked at his lips and I'm a bit surprised when he planted a smack on my lips. I giggled like a child as he kissed my most sensitive part: my breasts. I held his hand, trying to stop him but it made him feel wanting me even more.

I never counted the number of times we had sex over and over again. It made me wonder if he's also doing this to my stepdaughter Priya last time. This time I want to know which one who was the best when it comes to bed.

I went home to the villa during weekends. I decided to tell my mom about it. She looked at me with that familiar expression when I was still very young.

"Mom, do you think he'll do that?" I said between chuckles. "My father is the only one who does that."

"Dianne, I couldn't help but worry about you above all. What you're planning to do involves a lot of risks. What if the opposite will happen? What will you do? You know what? It is enough that I will only be the one who will experience it and not you."

"Mom, trust me. I am not playing a game if I know I'll be losing it. It is mine this time. Just give it to me."

"I will support you if it will make you feel better. I hope you will not be bargaining it with your heart and your feelings."

"I will remember that, mom." She hugged me as I caressed her back. I know mom only wished the best for me and nothing else.

After four months of courtship, I accepted Andrew's proposal. I am his fiancée now and it made Priya mad even more. That made her my unexpected guest one day while I am inside the villa visiting my family.

"What do we have here? You're like a fly. Are you not getting tired of following me wherever I go?"

"I am here to get what I own." She sternly said. As I looked at her from head to toe, she looked drunk and it is still ten in the morning. I folded my arms as I stood in front of her. If she thinks she could overpower me this time, he's totally wrong.

"You own nothing here, Priya. You may leave now before I forget for a while that you're my stepdaughter and I will report you to the police."

She laughed in front of me in a mocking tone. As I looked into her eyes, I can see the sadness that she might be suppressing for so long. That shrill laugh turned into wailing and I can see the tears in her eyes as she continued to laugh like a madman.

"I cannot imagine what is happening right now. This whore in front of me got married to my father. It so happened that this gold-digger killed my father and then after that, she'll get married to my boyfriend. So, my boyfriend will become my stepfather, too? This world is really fucked up!" She cried and laughed at the same time. Good thing we're inside my mini-conference room.

"Boyfriend? Andrew made it clear to me that you broke up with him many years ago. Can't you get over him?"

"How could you do this to me?" She is wailing like a crazy woman. Looking at her, I am not understanding what has gotten into her mind that she's doing it to herself.

I wanted to talk to her inside because it is sound-proof. Even if she will curse me to her heart's content, she will not be heard by my mom, sisters and even Walter.

"Well my dearest stepdaughter, sometimes that's how things are done. All you need to do is to accept your defeat."

"Fuck you! You should go to hell!"

"I'd be glad if you'll go first." I said as I smirked. It made her mad even more.

"Don't you have money left for consulting a psychiatrist? I think you needed one." She looked at me as her eyeliner started to smudge off her face. She looked like a real monster, honestly speaking.

"You're being too much. Do you think you'll easily get over this one? I don't think you do. You will not always be on top. The world will always be round, Deandra."

"Of course. I am fully aware that the world is round. However, I am stepping on top of the world that you mean. Sorry, you have to accept it."

Chapter 47: FAT LIAR

She looked at Walter who was sleeping soundly on her bed in the villa. She filed a leave telling him that she'll be spending her time abroad.

Andrew proposed to her not knowing her own family members or she'll be doomed forever. She never told him pretty much about her. For Deandra, Andrew knew her being one of the sought-after fashion designers and businesswomen of all time. Most elite people never share much of their information on the news for security purposes.

He understood her for that. However, Deandra, who is known as Dianne Swiss never wanted him to meet her sisters and even her mom. She doesn't want to reveal the truth yet, although she could, any time. She doesn't have the courage to tell him everything. She felt waiting for him all of her life within those years and yet there's no Andrew to arrive and take care of her.

It eventually gave way to Khalid Reike, her former husband who gave her lost trust and hope back to her. He helped her in moving on by pressing forward and accepted challenges to overcome and not to cry over with.

That's why when her former husband, Khalid Reike died, she realized that he has been an important part of her life that she should keep in her heart forever.

The wedding took place inside a garden full of flowers in their full bloom. It was a simple wedding, attended mostly by Dianne's drivers and personal maids. They disguised themselves as relatives and her parents. While Andrew's kin were also there, kissing her on both cheeks. They were indeed supportive because they knew that she is a business tycoon and a popular fashion designer.

"Thank you for making my dreams come true. I love you, Dianne Swiss Scethe."

She just looked at him in the eyes, trying to prove if what he's saying is real. She doesn't want to answer him with answers that I am not even sure of. Upon hearing those words from him, she is more of doubting rather than believing him this time.

They spent their honeymoon in Dianne's suite again. She kept everything lowkey. She doesn't want the media to highlight her wedding to celebrity headlines. Too much media exposure could be toxic as hell.

"You know what? I still can't believe you are mine now." I hugged him and I can feel his heart racing fast. So this is his feeling of being in love? How impressive. I want to believe it is real. How ironic, he's the one who's so in love with me this time. I can't help but to celebrate deep inside. If

only I could forget everything that he did to me, I will believe that he indeed loved me so much. I know he is just saying this things because I am a well-known tycoon.

"I hope so. Thank you for your love." I smiled. I gasped as he pulled me closer to her this time.

"Of course. You are not hard to love, Sweetheart."

Two months had passed. They're only enjoying each other's company without anyone distracting them. If Dianne is leaving the suite, Andrew is not doubting her because he knew that it is purely business meetings and conferences.

However, there are times she feel like taking his revenge in the easiest way for her to do this time. What would Andrew feel if she will hang out with other guys greater than him? She badly wanted to know his reaction and on how she will respond if she will do it in front of him. She wanted to try to hang out by herself. She wore a red backless, satin gown that reached both her feet. It had a long slit that showed her long legs.

Because it's the dinner gala, a lot of her guy colleagues danced with her, most of them were bachelors and they were all good-looking.

"Congratulations on your wedding, sweetie." Richard Greene softly whispered in his ear while caressing her bare back. She smiled back as she put her arms around his shoulders.

"Thank you, dear."

"But not a great thing, though. Because you never accepted my proposal."

"Well, you're more suited to be my business partner for life." She pulled him close as she bit her lip while looking into his eyes.

"What a sweet babe. Don't look at me like that I might take you away from your husband and own you." She laughed as she hugged him even closer.

"Gosh, what a silly man."

"I'm serious, though. You're gorgeous Dianne. You looked perfect." He whispered near her left ear. She can't help but smile because of the compliment she received from a random man at that party.

Deandra didn't know that someone was taking pictures of her and her male colleague while they were enjoying each other's company on the dance floor.

"Long time, no see, babe." Priya straightened the way she sat on the table she reserved for two. As soon as she saw him, her eyes glistened. She admits she missed him damned much.

On the other hand, Andrew looked at her, uninterested at all. He looked impatient and he was able to take a glance at his watch. Priya looked at him in the eyes while smiling. While him? He's simply not in the mood when it comes to her.

"I have no time for this, Priya. You know it already. I am busy." As soon as he sat down in front of her, he glanced at his watch. He couldn't even look at her like the way he looked at her before.

"After this conversation, you will have a lot to be thankful of."

"Please let's not waste each other's time. Tell me, what do you want?"

"Do you know your wife too well?" Priya smirked and that made him meet her gaze. From what she told him, he suddenly had doubts on his wife.

He admits he knew Priya more than Dianne.

"What do you mean?" He said as he gave her a puzzled look.

"I got something very interesting inside my bag that I know you would want to see."

"Don't be ridiculous, Priya. I am not here to play games."

"What do you think of me, doing the same? I will not spend time for something that's worthless."

"Let's go straight to the point. What is this all about?" He looked frustrated as he gazed the way Priya grinned in front of him.

She never avoided his gaze as she opened her handbag and put the pictures she got on the table.

"Here." He looked at her facial expression as he looked at the pictures she had taken. There's a lot of shots where Dianne is hugging another guy while happily smiling with him. It's like everything they are talking about is very intimate. He could also see some shots where the guy she's dancing of is placing his hands on her bare back.

He secretly clenched his left fist under the table while holding some pictures from the other one. Wow, he wanted to believe that this one isn't real. How could his wife do this to him? She acted as if she's single and she's definitely ready to mingle to anyone, especially the bachelors who were present at the party.

When is this? He never remembered Dianne telling him about parties or galas she would attend...and why is it that he's not even with her even if he's her husband? Is this really Dianne whom Priya is showing to him right now?

"Well...what can you say?" Priya is grinning from ear to ear. Upon looking at Andrew's reaction, she wanted to believe that she had convinced him of what she wanted to tell him about.

"When is this?"

"I was invited to the dinner gala tonight. Don't tell me she didn't tell you about this one?"

It made Andrew speechless. How could Dianne do this to him? Is she really treating him to be her husband?

"It so happened that my stepmom was also there. Sorry, I informed you this one. I was just concerned about you because she's planning to hide this one from you, you know." She smiled as she saw the shock on his face.

"Stepmother? How could she become your stepmother even if you're almost at the same age?"

"Gosh, so, that's how bad she is? She doesn't tell you about everything that's happening in her life before she met you? Wow."

"You're crazy, Priya. I don't know what you're talking about."

"Of course. She really intended not to tell you all these things forever. However, you know me. I am the greatest spoiler of all time."

"I can't believe I am hearing all of these things."

"Oh, wow! How foolish of you to have no idea of what's going on with your life? Look, she didn't even tell you about me and her former husband? Why are you getting married to someone you barely knew of?"

"Husband?"

"Wow, poor you. How foolish can you become? Are you even a lawyer for acting that way?"

"Priya, tell me what you know of." He said as if desperate to know everything she's been keeping from him. That made her convince him to stay with her. They talked more about Dianne and on how she got married to her father, who was her former husband. It made him secretly close his fist. Something isn't right this time.

Chapter 48: GOING OUT OF HER LIFE

He arrived at their condo unit full of confusion and anger. How could his wife do this to him? He sat in their living room, his mind clouded with thoughts. He decided to have some work done for the meantime to shift his thoughts away from the possible things his wife is doing behind his back.

When he felt that someone got inside their house, he stood right away to meet her. He looked at her from head to toe and he is wondering why she's not wearing any gown. Instead, she is wearing formal clothes: slacks and a sexy turtleneck shirt paired with a black cardigan.

Wow, how could she change that fast? He wanted to believe that she's a great pretender after all.

"How was work?"

"As usual, I've got many clients to meet. The workloads are getting fuller these days." She said as she walked past him, putting off her cardigan. He's able to get it from her as he follows her to where she's going.

"Where's the food?" Dianne looked at him and he could see disappointment in her eyes. He could hear an impatient sigh coming from her. She looked tired and weary. He wanted to burst out right away. Was she tired flirting a lot of men from that party Priya showed him? Are those activities really included that there were times she couldn't go home as often as he would like her to?

"I'm sorry...I just came home. I haven't prepared anything."

She walked past him and got her cellphone.

"I'll just call someone to deliver food here. I'm starving right now." He was silent for a second because he could see Dianne frowning already. If he will ask about the things Priya told him, they will argue about it for sure. He followed her with his eyes and he could see her getting the TV's remote control.

"I'll watch documentaries first. Are you going to watch with me?" She looked so calm and poised. One thing he liked about her is that, she can manage her anger very well. He looked good even if she's already starving to death.

As soon as Andrew sees her face, he is now in doubt of talking to her and confronting her about the things he discovered. Instead, he just sat with her and hugged her from behind.

"Why? You're extra sweet today." She turned as she looked at his face. He smiled as he planted a kiss on her lips. She closed her eyes as she kissed him back.

"I love you..." He said. Instead of answering, she turned her attention to what she wanted to watch as soon as she turned the TV on. She sighed as she stood up. "Food's ready." She held her cell phone as notification started to pop up.

She rushed to the door as she met the delivery man. Andrew noticed that she's not really into him that made him wonder even more.

She noticed that Dianne ordered a lot of steak and mixed vegetables.

"Wow, I thought you're on a diet?" She frowned as he heard him right away. He couldn't help but chuckle because of her immediate reaction.

"Understand that I have days like this. I haven't eaten rice since breakfast. I want to enjoy myself as I eat this one."

"What? Why haven't you eaten anything since breakfast?"

"I was so busy with my client meetings that I forgot to eat."

Wow, client meetings or flirting with another men? I want to ask her this but I don't want to spoil her mood this time.

"Okay, if that's what you want then I want to support you for it."

He also ate with her. Surprisingly, the food is undeniably delicious. He knew the reason why she's eating the food this way. He saw her mouth full of sauce that's dripping from her lips.

"Why?"

He smiled as he held her chin and leaned closer to her face. He kissed her as he cleaned the sauce around her mouth using his tongue. She's almost breathless as he lets her go.

"Andrew..." The only word that came out from her mouth as she looked into his eyes.

"I am just checking if this steak is more delicious than your mouth. Well, your lips were my number one."

She chuckled as she got the steak with her hands and forced it into his mouth. "You know what? You're only hungry. Eat." She said between chuckles.

"If I eat this, what will I get for dessert?" She looked down and bit her lip as she played the vegetables with her fork.

"I guess I will have to pick it myself." Andrew held her hand that's resting on the table. She smiled right away.

"Let me finish what I am eating first."

"You look so beautiful even without your makeup." She looked at him as he studied her expression. She is only wearing a bathrobe and she's now doing her skincare routine at night.

"Spoil me with those I might give you all that you liked."

"I am still hungry," He stood up and hugged her from behind. She held his hands as she turned to face him. She kissed his lips and smiled. After that kiss, Andrew enjoyed his dessert to the fullest by making love to her all night.

He was awake at exactly three thirty in the morning. He faced his wife and gently caressed her cheek, tracing his fingers to her nose and on her mouth.

"You know what? I am still hungry." She chuckled in response as he touched her wet core down there.

"Love...please,"

"Please what?"

"I can't get enough of you." She whispered back on his ear.

"Hmm..." She moaned as she felt his touch. She slowly opened her eyes and blinked. When she realized that he was looking at her direction, she couldn't help but to smile.

"My goodness, can't you still believe that you got married to one of the most beautiful women in the world?" Dianne said as she tried to mimic the way he would say it to her every time.

Andrew couldn't help but to laugh at what Deandra said to him. He pulled him close to her and kissed her forehead.

"Thank you for letting me experience this." He said in a low voice. She could feel him smiling on her forehead. She also sensed that Andrew is sincere to her right now. However, the more he would say those words, the more it only added to her want of hurting him and leaving him the way he did to her seven years ago.

Whenever she will think of the things that he did a long time ago, her thirst for revenge becomes unquenchable. She wanted him to feel miserable too. She wanted him to also what it felt like feeling rejected and being the last option of the one that you adored and loved the most.

As Deandra looked into his eyes, she's confident that her plans are at work now.

"What? You talked to Drew? Are you out of your mind?" She frowned at her sister. Knowing her, she would really interfere in her plans.

Priya met her sister Denysse again during her day off. She's the only one she knew that could understand her and her rants and frustrations. She folded her arms as she faced her. Even Denysse herself felt the sarcasm in her tone of voice.

"Of course, I wouldn't let Deandra get on my way."

"Dein, please stop it. They are married already. There's nothing you can do about it." She responded at her sister in a calm, worried way. She knew that if Priya is really angry, she does outrageous and crazy things that's out of the box. The bad thing is, she's always included every time she will do those things and she hated it so much.

"I would like to remind you that things don't happen your own way all the time. Live your own life and don't mind our stepmother."

"Oh c'mon Denysse, life is fun."

"It is fun without your plans, sis. Remember, our stepmother is different now. She's not someone that we used to know."

"Why are you so worried? C'mon, enjoy life with me."

"I am out of your pranks and all your plans. Please don't include me. I am very busy at the hospital everyday."

"You're a spoiler." Priya frowned as she looked at her sister.

"Stop it. You might regret the results of your actions forever."

"I have my own plans. I'll make sure Deandra will not get away with it this time around."

Chapter 49: A FAITHFUL BETRAYER

Deandra's POV

The next day, I told Andrew that I will have a client meeting on the coming weekend. He gladly agreed right away that it gave me confidence to spend it with my family in the villa.

I know he will have a lot of meetings, too. I know he'll also be busier with his job, he won't bother me that much.

"Please take care of yourself, alright?" He hugged me and kissed me on the cheek. I smiled as I touched his left cheek as I smiled.

"Yes, for you sweetheart."

He scooped my face and kissed me hard again. Gosh, if he'll continue to do this to me every single, damn time, I am afraid I will fall in love with him before I will have my revenge.

I left the house with excitement because I will see my little boy again.

I got in my car as I drove in going to the villa. It was almost ten in the morning.

"Sis? Where are you?"

"Dahlia, I will be there in twenty minutes." I answered my phone while driving. I use my hands-free phone kit exclusively made for my own personal use.

"Mommy!" I chuckled when I heard Walter on the other line. He's like wanting to interrupt Dahlia to talk to me too.

"I will be there, my munchkin. Wait for mommy, alright?"

"Do you have something for me?" I could hear my son's giggles and excitement as my sister put the phone near his mouth. I couldn't help but to smile because of Walter being very active already.

"Of course love! I have a lot of toys for you." I said, glancing at the empty backseat. My goodness. Now I have to go to the store to buy something for my baby. He wanted a lot of stuffed toys and some robots for himself.

I stopped in front of a toy store. I was humming as I entered the store when a saleslady greeted me while holding her phone. Upon looking at her expression, she seemed stunned and starstruck at the same time.

"Ms. Dianne! Oh God it is you!" She giggled that she caught the attention of another saleslady. I could see at least five of them going to our direction.

"Wow! I am a fan, Miss! You're even beautiful in person!" One saleslady inserted herself in front of the crowding people around me. I smiled when I saw her wearing the signature Reike Trend earrings for this month.

"Wow! It suits you well!" I told her that most of the saleslady cheered for her, too. I could see her blushing too much. She covered her face with both of her hands.

"Miss, this is too much. Thank you so much! I want to cry!" Her two friends clapped their hands for support. I could also see flashes of cameras before me because of most of the sales ladies excitement. I could see that they were starstruck when they realized that it was indeed me.

"I'm sorry girls. I am in a hurry right now. I have to chat with you sometime if my schedule permits." I said as I looked around. I am a little dizzy right now because there were too many of them that surrounded me that the girl I complimented went between us.

"Please respect Miss Dianne's privacy." They obliged right away and apologized to me. I smiled as I nodded.

"Madam, what can we do to help? It would be a pleasure." Most of them agreed to the senior saleslady.

"Really? You'll all gonna help me?"

My eyes sparkled as I hovered my gaze around the people crowding around me. I can really see the willingness in their eyes as they nodded.

"Yes, we have our own car. We can also drive you home if you want, miss."

"Oh no, no. Thank you. I just want to find stuff toys that's cute. Anything that would catch a 7-year old's attention."

"Oh, I see. Is the one you talk about, boy or a girl?" The other saleslady asked as well.

"If possible, I want a stuffed toy for a 7-year-old boy."

"Madam, we will be glad to help, right, ladies?" They all nodded altogether as they spread to different aisles. I chuckled as I thanked them as they stepped inside. Wow, I never thought my life would be so easy.

Plus, I have all the chance in the world to select a toy for my son. I am thinking of buying the toys the salesladies will bring to me. I am sure my baby will be very happy. It's also a compensation of

the lost times that I missed in visiting him. I remembered the last time I went home was two weeks ago.

I realized I was too busy being with his daddy. However, a part of my revenge was to keep Walter away from Andrew. He doesn't need to know about my son. Anyway, he's a Reike now since he was legally adopted by my late husband.

Some came back with toy swords, puzzles and lightsticks. Others came with glow-in-the-dark hero figures. I loved them all that I bought them right away. Other employees started to look for some stuff toys that I want for Walter. They also came back after a few minutes. They brought me a Teddy bear stuffed toy. Others brought a stuffed toy of spiderman, batman, iron man and those pillow stuff toys, other saleslady handed me some from cartoon characters that Walter wanted the most. They were all smiling as they presented all the toys I wanted to buy for my son.

"Thank you so much. I can't thank all of you enough." I shook hands with almost twenty employees who were all my fans. I could see the look in their eyes that they are really glad to help out.

"Madam, are you going to donate it for a charity? We could give all of these for free." The owner was overly enthusiastic as he faced me. He's an old man who is always wearing a smile, I could say.

"No, sir. I will pay for all of the toys. I would also love to invite you and all your employees to join my fashion show for the next two months."

I could see the beaming smiles from most of the female employees as they held hands and hugged each other.

"Wow! You will, ma'am? That would be too much!"

"I don't mind, sir. You've been very good to me. I would really recommend Toy corner to my advertising agency for a thank-you gift." Upon hearing this, the owner was overjoyed, I could feel it. It was really my happiness to see humble people being happy even to small things and victories in life. These people made me recall how simple and contented my life was eight years ago. I could remember my young self when I was working for many part time jobs.

The toys were almost crowded in my car but I didn't care. More than twenty different kinds of toys were inside my car's compartment, some were even placed on the backseat.

I got really excited because of the toys. I am already imagining the reaction of my baby when he will see all of the toys. As I get in the car, I can see a familiar car parked in one corner. I looked at the car as I also put on my sunglasses on.

Well, most of the cars were the same. I guess I am only imagining things.

Chapter 50: WHAT'S BEHIND THE TRUTH?

Andrew's POV

"Please take care of yourself, alright?" I hugged her and kissed her on the cheek.

"Yes, for you sweetheart."

Because of what Priya told me about my wife, I don't know who to believe anymore. I decided to follow her after she left the house. I made sure I could see her car even half a kilometer away from where she is right now. I don't want to get caught.

I made sure my eyes never missed any single trace of where she's going today. I have to verify everything that Priya revealed to me the other night. I stopped at a nearby shop because her car stopped at the nearest toy shop. Now, I am wondering why she did that.

I saw her entering the shop and the usual thing happened. Most of her fans were the employees of the store. I saw them helping her in buying a lot of toys. I even wonder why she did this. Is she having a charity or something? She didn't even mention anything to me about this.

She smiled at most of them. She sat at one of the queue chairs near the exit. I saw that the employer gave her a comfortable chair to sit on. She gladly accepted it and sat cross-legged. Ten minutes had passed and many of the employees flocked to her and gave her a lot of toys. I noticed that he preferred toys that's for boys.

I got inside the car as soon as I saw her coming out of the store. She looked at my direction and paused for a moment while putting on her signature sunglasses.

I did not move a muscle. I hope she didn't see me though. I saw her getting in her car again as if in a hurry. My, it is also the first time that I have seen my wife speeding like this one. She's amazing. Too amazing that I am asking myself if I really knew her too well, or am I only fooling myself.

flashback

"Do you really know your wife, Drew?" She smirked as she gently got the wine glass and inserted it between his middle finger and index finger while moving it in a circular motion.

I swallowed and looked at her straight into her eyes.

"She's Dianne Swiss, the second wife of my old father."

He was stunned in a moment after hearing those words. It's like his ears were clung by cymbals he doesn't want to believe her.

"Well, every lawyer wanted some evidence right? Here, for you to not appear really dumb in front of me." I got the papers in front of the table and even the pictures of my wife being wed to him.

"What are you trying to tell me?"

"This is the reason why I want to hire you as my lawyer. The reason for my father's death is cardiac arrest but I don't think that's really the reason for his death." She said while looking at me straight to the eye. She put another set of papers in front of me. I scanned the papers and I realized it's the list of Mr. Khalid Reike's property. It was beyond what I could imagine. Is Mr. Khalid included as one of the richest men in the world?

I saw his net worth, a minimum of ten billion US dollars. He is even included among the top forty richest men in the world. However, he belongs to those businessmen who kept their private life lowkey even if they were incredibly wealthy.

"Before marriage, my father announced that he will be changing his last will and testament and even blackmailed both of his daughters to not inherit anything if we're not going to attend to his wedding with that whore."

He looked at her as if warning her to slow down on what she's talking about.

"Can you blame me for calling her that? What would you expect me to feel if my dad will marry someone almost the same age as mine? Be happy about it? Fuck her to death."

He just listened to her rants because what he just discovered now is beyond his expectations. Andrew could feel Priya's bitterness. They've been together and yet it is his first time to hear her cussing. She had a beautiful and innocent-looking face and yet those words are coming from her mouth now. That made him feel disappointed too because if not for Priya's revelations, he wouldn't know what kind of person his wife is.

"Do you believe that she was the one who killed your father? Do you know what you're trying to prove here?"

"My father changed his last will and testament last minute. Guess what? He only knew Dianne for less than two years but he already gave fifty percent of his wealth to her. Could you just imagine? My father trusted a stranger more than his two daughters?"

He swallowed and he thinks he couldn't stand every single word anymore.

"That's why I am asking you this. Do you really know your wife too well?" She smirked as she took a sip from her wine glass while her eyes were fixed to his.

"And oh, by the way, bonus trivia. Did you know that she was pregnant when my father found her? Just imagine what kind of woman she is. You wished I was the worst woman you ever met, right? Well, I have a lot of evidence against your wife."

end of flashback

She stopped at the biggest villa I've ever known. It was big, spacious and grand. I noticed that the interiors were vibrant and lively, with glass walls and minimalist furniture surrounding both the green lawn and the living room from the inside. The best thing is, the villa's location because it is beside the sea, overlooking the beautiful scenery during day and night. The waves also brought a calming effect and peace for its owner.

Wait...is my wife the owner of this property? My car was hiding from a distant bush in front of their house. The guards were visible around the villa. I could say the security is really visible from here.

I could hear my wife's car honking the wide entrance gate. The guards opened the gate right away. I saw how happy she is, while getting the car inside the house parking it to a garage near the wide lawn.

I saw a young boy rushing towards her.

"Mommy!" He exclaimed in excitement as he embraced my wife tight. I could see all the maids bringing all the toys in front of the young boy. He jumped for joy seeing all of his toys.

"These are all for you, my sweet munchkin. Mommy missed you so much."

"I love you mommy. Thank you so much!" He hugged him tight. It crushed my heart into pieces. I never wanted to believe Priya and what she told me last night. However, upon seeing these things, I don't know if I could still trust my own wife.

Chapter 51: PARTNERS IN CRIME

Denysse usually visits Walter in the villa. As the younger sister of Priya, she's also attached to his half-brother. Dianne allowed her to visit since Walter is also looking for her sisters too. Aside from his aunts that surrounded him, he's used to Denysse's presence as well.

"How are you my baby brother?"

"I'm okay, my dear sister." He looked down as he approached Denysse. It made her chuckle as she gently pinched both of his cheeks.

"Are you alright? You look sad."

"I just miss my mommy." He looked into her eyes as he slowly blinked. He looked really cute and adorable even if he felt that way.

"Aww...baby, mommy is quite busy. Did you see her on TV?" Denysse held both of his shoulders as she bends down to his height.

"Yes, dear sister. She is always on TV. On the news, on the advertisement. But she never had time for me anymore."

"What? Oh you baby munchkin, come here." She stood up and carried him on her arms. Walter rested his head on her shoulders as he pouted his lips.

"Please do not think that mommy doesn't have time for you, okay? Mommy is only busy but she will come home soon and bring you a lot of toys."

"Wow! Really, dear sister?" Denysse felt the excitement of Walter to what she said.

"Of course! Mommy will give you what you want."

"Really? Even many toys? Robots and swords?" He said as he made a swooshing sound. Denysse laughed because of what Walter did.

"Yes. Everything that you want. Just tell mommy what you like and she will buy it for you."

Denysse felt that Walter became comfortable and talkative now. Usually, if Walter is sad, he will never talk a lot. Instead, he will be silent for a long time and nobody could ever talk to him like the way Denysse does. She will often make him feel that his mother is only busy but she will be back for him. That she will always return back home, because she loved him.

She felt him hugging her tight this time. Denysse moved clockwise and then counterclockwise as she gently stomped her feet to rock his heavy yet adorable half-brother until he had fallen asleep on her arms.

As she looked at her brother, she couldn't help but wonder. She knew she had seen him somewhere. That Walter is looking very familiar to her but she only forgot the exact time or memory that she had with him. The way Walter smiled and some features of his face had a great similarity to someone she knew from the past. The thing is, she's not sure about that person. She knew to herself that she had seen him somewhere...

Andrew's POV

I just found myself walking towards the villa and before I reached the gate, someone stopped me. As expected, it's Dianne's bodyguards.

They have muscular bodies and at least three bodyguards stopped me from stepping forward because they stood in front of me to block my way.

"Sir, you can't enter here."

"Don't you know me? I am Dianne's husband. I have the right to go here whenever I liked!" I couldn't stop my emotions anymore.

"Sir, I'm sorry but Ms. Dianne told us to only allow authorized persons inside the villa."

"But I am her husband! Didn't you know me?"

"Sir, we understood. But we're only following Ms. Dianne's instructions."

"Isn't that reason good enough for you?"

"I'm sorry sir. I am only following the rules here. Please leave this place now or else we will be forced to drag you away from this place."

I can see that my wife went inside the house. I could see it from here. I guess she has no idea of the commotion that's happening outside the villa.

This is way too impossible. I can't be treated like this. I don't want to be disregarded like this so easily. And who is that boy? She was pregnant before she even got married to Mr. Khalid Reike. I wonder who that man is.

I slowly went back to my car more confused than ever. My biggest disappointment is that my wife did not tell all these things to me. For many months that we've been through, she's been keeping

her life very private to the point of keeping secrets to herself. The thing is, I had to know it from someone.

I believe Priya now because she's having a lot of evidence that would prove that Dianne is the possible suspect to the death of her ex-husband.

flashback

"I am telling you all of these things because I know you're the only one that could help me on this." She held my hand that's resting on the table.

"She is my wife. Do you think I will accept you as my client if it is my wife that you are trying to tag as the prime suspect?"

"Andrew, we've been in a relationship for many years now. I am sure you know me more than you know your wife."

"Priya, I want you to find another lawyer. I guess I can't help you with this. I am sorry."

"So, you're trying to defend your wife even if she's making a fool out of you? Could you wake up, Drew? If not for me, you will never know she got married to my father first. Have you ever heard that from her?"

It made me speechless for a moment. What she said is true. Dianne has never been faithful to me. She didn't even bother telling me things.

"I want you to call me if you already made up your mind. I don't want to force you to be on my side now but please, think about this a lot of times."

end of flashback

I sat on the front seat of my car when I remembered my phone. I dialled Dianne's number and clicked on the phone icon.

"Hello, love."

"Oh, hi! Sweetheart, you called. Is there any problem?"

I closed my eyes as I massaged my forehead a bit.

"Where are you right now?" In a low voice, I gathered all my strength to have the courage to face everything I discovered.

"I'm in a meeting right now. I'm so sorry, I will call you later. Bye!" I could hear a young boy chuckling in the other line before she even ended the call.

This time, she's really making me come up with a final decision.

Chapter 52: INNER DEMONS

Deandra's POV

"Madam, madam!" One of my maids rushed to me as she held the remote control of our TV.

"What is it?" She stopped in front of me as she gasped for air.

"Madam, please watch the headlines! This is between life and death! Please?"

I frowned as I turned on the TV. I wonder what is it that my maid is talking about?

"Where is Lilian?" I looked at her face as I stretched my arm as I turned on the TV.

Upon hearing the news, my maid did not say a word because my eyes were glued on the news headlines. It says "Reopening of the investigation for Khalid Reike's death possible, new evidence found." Priya was interviewed by the press.

"I was silent for more than four years but yeah, he's my father. There has never a day that I never think about him."

"What the fuck?" I couldn't help but to react to my stepdaughter's dramatic press conference.

"You see...I don't want to bother Ms. Dianne Swiss. I know she's a reputable woman and I highly regard her as my real mother," She cried even more which made me want to vomit all that I have eaten before this time.

"Ms. Dein, what do you mean?" One of the reporters asked her. She only looked at her as she wiped her tears.

"Do you mean your stepmother is the one who killed your father?" Another reporter bravely rephrased the way she's showing it in front of them.

"No, please. I don't want to point fingers this time. Nobody wanted to be treated as suspects here. Nobody wants that. I just want justice for my father's death that's all."

"Madam, Ms. Priya is too much! Look at what she's doing right now! That is even an exclusive press conference."

I was not able to answer my maid because Lilian appeared in front of us.

"Madam, I couldn't handle the number of incoming calls anymore."

"Why, what happened?" I managed to ask her even if my knees were shaking too much.

"Most of the investors for The Reike Trends were the ones who were asking me about it. I don't know how to answer them anymore. Please help." Her face looked worried because she had seen my reaction as well.

Because of what I saw, I grabbed the remote control and threw it on the screen. Both Lilian and my maid screamed in horror.

"Madam, please calm down! We can handle this." Lilian hugged me tight as I started to break down in tears. I guess I couldn't handle this one because of too much shock.

"Please call my lawyers and tell them to check on their emails." I massaged my forehead because of the stress that my stepdaughter is doing to me. I noticed that Lilian is looking at me as if not wanting to believe what she just heard.

"Madam, don't you want to call your husband? He's a well-known prosecutor, right?"

"Madam! Please you need to hear this! Madam!" My maid panicked again as she pulled my arm. She grabbed her handy radio as she continued to persuade me so bad, to listen to the ongoing press conference.

"Atty. Andrew Meyers...what can you say about this?"

"You heard my client right. We will have to further investigate this case as requested."

"Andrew?" I can't help myself from gasping as I heard my husband's voice on the radio. Why would he do this to me? How could he do this to me?

"Marie, please put that radio away. Please." My maid obliged right away as she also walked out because Lilian scolded her that she got mad at her for being a nagger.

"So sorry about that, madam. I will make sure that Marie will not disturb you with news like this." I smiled but I couldn't stop my tears from falling.

"Lilian, please make sure that my lawyers will be the one to call the investors one by one. They already know what to answer them." She nodded right away.

"Lilian?"

"Yes, madam? Anything else that you want me to do?"

"Tell Walter to sleep in my room. I will be waiting for him."

"Yes, ma'am. I will." Lilian left me in the living room looking from afar. I couldn't believe Priya will have to go this far. How dare she accuse me of an action that's impossible for me to do? I learned to love Khalid, their father. For the days that we're together, I have learned to love him. I realized that he's always been good to me. I didn't even know what to feel anymore.

The thing is, why is my husband in there? He never mentioned that Priya will be his client. A lot of people didn't know that he's my husband because of my status symbol. I am always keeping myself low-key especially when it comes to my personal life.

A lot of people think that I am still single. Others think that I am only 19 when I am already thirty years old. Thanks to my skincare routines and rigorous training and exercise.

Looking at my husband, I think he's more than a traitor for not telling me. I have to talk to him about what's happening right now for I even have no idea about this one.

I sat on my bed when there was a silent knock on my door.

"Baby munchkin? Please get inside. Mommy is waiting for you."

He opened the door wider this time. I mouthed him to lock the door and he obliged immediately. He climbed on my bed and hugged me right away.

"Mommy, sister Denysse said that you want me to sleep here. Is there any problem?"

Wow. I appreciate how my baby felt about my current situation. At the age of seven, I am so proud of him because he's very observant of my facial expression.

"Work-related, baby. You may sleep by my side this time. Don't leave until mommy tells you to do, alright?"

He smiled from ear to ear. It is because he will be spending a longer time with me.

Baby, look how daddy is making it hard for mommy...Of course he already reached his dream but instead of being her defender, he will become her worst enemy.

Chapter 53: PRIYA'S ASSUMPTIONS

Andrew's POV

"I am glad that you were able to think about things. That exclusive press conference was made possible because of you. Thank you." She grinned as she held my arm. I gently removed her hands from holding my left arm. She looked at me as if she couldn't believe that someone was treating her like this.

"I am just doing my job." I coldly replied while looking at the other direction.

"Yeah, I was wondering why you accepted this job right away. I wonder what made up your mind."

"That is none of your business."

I saw her folding her arms right away as she frowned. She got her cigarette from her handbag and her personalized lighter as she lit it. We're outside of my car, taking up some cool air after that press conference.

She simply invited me to light one too but I refused.

"You know what, Drew? You have changed a lot."

"I guess I have to."

"Even if you're acting like that, please know that I never stopped loving you, even from the time I broke up with you."

I looked at her and the next thing surprised me. She put her arms around my shoulders and attempted to kiss me but I avoided my face. She sighed as she frowned. She let me go right away.

"I am married. Please respect that."

She laughed but I could sense the bitterness on the way she said it.

"Wow, my stepmother is really good at preying for men. She has a great taste, I should say. I first class bitch." She murmured the last word but it never escaped my ears.

"I already read all the new evidence that you presented and most of them were valid enough to reopen the case."

"I have more." She smirked. I can't help but to swallow hard this time. She hated her stepmother so much that she will do everything just to put her to jail.

"Dr. McNally is our family doctor for ten years. He was able to confess to me that it's Ms. Dianne Swiss who was advising Denysse to give the medicines for my father."

I looked at her facial expression and she's really confident about her new evidence that she will present.

"I was the one who also bought the same medicine because she's telling us to do so. If only I am aware that she only wanted to poison my father little by little, I should've killed her first." She started crying again, I couldn't help but feel pity towards my ex-girlfriend.

I noticed that Priya is more attached to her father than Denysse. That's why I am not surprised at all for her to react and feel this way.

"I'm sorry..."

I pulled her close to me and hugged her tight.

"Everything will be alright. The reopening of the investigation will expose the truth. I will do my best."

I went to our condominium unit with a heavy heart. I am sure Dianne already saw the exclusive press conference on TV. I was there not because I personally want it. I want to get involved because I also deserve an explanation. I deserve to know the whole truth, too.

The truth that my wife is not telling me. I am more of a stranger of my own family.

As I went inside our room, I saw a familiar shadow that's reflecting the window.

"Dianne?"

I saw her as she stepped forward. Her face looked miserable and sad at the same time.

"How could you do this to me?"

flashback

"Priya, are you sure you'll be okay in cleaning mom's room? It's a bit dusty here." Denysse gave her a worried look. She just smiled back and nodded. Her younger sister left her as she started to dust the windows. When she's done, she went to the drawers and cabinets.

She could see a lot of papers scattered inside the cabinet but something caught her attention.

It was a picture of a woman holding a new-born baby. She flipped the picture and she was able to see the message.

"Please take care of Angela."

It's like her whole world shook when she noticed the name 'Angela' was deleted by a vertical line and changed it to 'Priya'.

She scanned all the papers where she saw the picture and it was included in the information about Angela.

"What is the meaning of this?" She murmured as she covered her hand on her mouth.

She read the papers more and she saw her birth certificate. She noticed that the child 'Angela' is as similar to her birthday. They were even born close. Because Priya wanted to confirm what's on her mind, she decided to hire a private investigator to locate the midwife of Angela.

It was exactly seven days after she did that. The private investigator called her and told her about the location of the midwife.

She went to their house right away. The old midwife greeted her courteously. They sat facing each other on the table. Priya gave her the documents for her to read. The midwife looked terrified as she shifted her gaze to Priya and the papers that she's holding.

"I want to know the truth. Please tell me everything. I am willing to pay you. Just tell me what happened when I was born."

"Ma'am..."

"My mother is already dead. I can't ask her some questions anymore. I know you're the only one that could help me with the things that's bothering me right now."

"Ma'am, I knew your mother. She even warned me that our secret must be kept forever or else, she will kill me."

"My mother died ten years ago. She couldn't touch you anymore."

She gently swallowed as she looked into Priya's eyes.

"The real Priya Swiss was dead before she was born. Because Mrs. Reike feared that her husband might know what really happened, she asked for my help."

Priya felt that her knees started to shake as her heart beat very fast. She can't believe she's hearing a lot of things that she didn't expect to hear from her.

"I guess it's Mrs. Reike's lucky day because a woman also gave birth to a baby girl that's born at the same time as you are. Since that woman cannot afford to sustain the baby because of poverty, she agreed that Mrs. Reike will buy the baby from her."

She felt like gripping on something for strength because she's about to lose it any time. What she heard was too much for her to handle. Of all the possible news she would hear all her life, something like this was the least she expected the most. This can't be! She doesn't want to believe at all!

She swallowed as she tried gathering all the strength that's left of her that time. She tried gathering her courage because she wanted to know the truth before someone else will.

"Tell me, am I that baby?" She couldn't stop herself from crying this time.

"Yes, ma'am."

Chapter 54: FEARFUL DESOLATION

"Dianne?"

Andrew saw her right away as she stepped forward as her face looked miserable and sad at the same time. She managed to look into his eyes despite what she's feeling at the moment.

"How could you do this to me?" She said in a low voice but he could sense every bitterness in her tone. He stepped forward and faced her. He attempted to hold her arms but she suddenly took his hands off her arm as she looked at him in the eyes.

She could still remember his facial reaction as Priya had that public press conference. He looked like her personal superhero. She badly hated what she did. It's like a direct slap on her face since she's the wife.

"Don't touch me."

"Are you jealous?"

"What a stupid question!"

"Priya is a client. I just granted her request because of the years that we both had together."

"What are you trying to say? If I will let you choose between the two of us, you'll choose her?" She replied in a high, cracked voice. She can't even believe that her husband could do it to her.

She's very sure that she'll never cry in front of him. She promised herself that she'll never get jealous of Priya and Andrew...however, she realized that not everything can be predicted.

"Dianne, stop being so immature. This is nothing personal, believe me."

"So, you're still going to help her even if I don't want to? Do you know how I feel right now?" Dianne started to break down into tears that Andrew hugged her right away.

Now that they are legally married, she's very sure that she has all the right in claiming him to be hers and hers alone. Maybe, she also has the right to act what she truly felt about the situation.

"The reason why I accepted Priya's offer is because I also want to know the truth for myself."

"What?" She gave her a puzzled look between sobs.

"Priya told me more about you. The things that you're never telling me that I should know about."

"Drew...you're not giving me time for everything. You always put me in a situation where I couldn't do anything about it. Can't you wait that I will have to personally tell you about everything?"

"Look, I am sorry. I will do everything to fix the mess that I've done."

"You're not going to sleep with me. Sleep with Priya the hell I care." She slammed the door in front of him. When he turned the doorknob, it was locked.

Dianne slept inside their bed while Andrew chose to sleep on the couch. He felt guilty because of what he did. All the while he thought he could go against his wife. Now, he finds himself regretting the hasty decision he had.

He failed to remember that he has to consider her feelings above anyone else. Now, it's too late for him to even say sorry because their door was locked by her. She suddenly missed kissing and touching her. How could he comfort her when he's being jammed outside their room?

The next morning, Andrew went to his office to work on the case of his wife and what Priya wanted to do with the reinvestigation and the possible reopening of the case.

"Atty. Andrew, someone sent this tape on my table. It was addressed for you." As he examined it, he noticed that it was a CD disk. Maybe somebody wanted him to watch it. He went inside his office again. He was stunned for a moment. He knew this man. He's been very famous because he's the family doctor of the Reike family. He was familiar because Priya went with him in his office. She was very sick that time and she needed a consultation from him.

As he played the CD player, He saw Dr. McNally facing the monitor screen.

"H-Hello," He started, he is obviously feeling nervous because he is also looking at someone who was filming the scene.

"I am Dr. McNally, the family doctor of the Reike family for more than ten years now. As their doctor for many years now, I knew most of the health problems that each of the family members have, most especially Mr. Swiss's condition. I apologize to everyone who was affected by the sudden loss of the family because of his death. However, in my end, my nightmare had just started from the time that he died. I was wrong when I agreed to the plans of Ms. Priya Swiss, the eldest daughter of Mr. Swiss. She was the one who personally asked a favor to prescribe numerous supplements for her father.

At first, I never agreed to do so because of its side effects that might harm Mr. Swiss. However, Ms. Priya sent me death threats. She even told me that she will make sure to kill every member of my family if I will not agree to her terms,"

He said as she started crying in front of the monitor. He looked miserable and regretful of anything that he did for the past seven years ago.

"I apologize for my wrongdoing. I know it is not wrong but I don't mean to hurt anybody. I am also a victim of what really happened back then. I am sorry, Ms. Dianne Swiss. I hope you'll still forgive me."

He closed his fist as he gritted his teeth. From what he heard from Dr. McNally, he couldn't believe Priya could do that to her own father. He paused the video message because someone is knocking at the door that's loud and urgent.

"Atty. Andrew...you need to know this."

It is Sam, one of his colleagues in the office. One of their legal researchers.

"What is it?"

"Have you heard the news? Dr. McNally was found dead inside his house."

"What?" He stood up as he leaned both of his palms on the table. Did he hear it right?

"He killed himself by pulling the trigger right on his head. There was no foul play, atty."

He sighed as he looked at the video again. He's sure that it was Dr. McNally who sent this video to him.

Poor guy. Andrew knew that Dr. McNally will be put in great humiliation if everything will be made public. As he continued the video, Dr. McNally asked a favor to never involve his family members from what he did. Sam and Andrew looked at each other and nodded. Their faces looked sullen as they witnessed the last moments of Dr. McNally.

"Let's find out more about this. Please go with me."

"Yes, sir."

He got his things ready. He knows that he's the only one who has the copy of the video message of Dr. McNally. Although Dr. McNally will not be convicted of the crime anymore because of his death, Andrew wanted to investigate the motive of Priya and the reason behind everything.

What made her do it? If she really wanted Dianne to put to jail, then why did she have to kill her own blood for the sake of blackmailing Dianne?

Chapter 55: IN HIS OWN EYES

Deandra's POV

After that night of confrontation, I slept inside our room. I told Andrew to sleep on the couch in our living room. I have fallen asleep with a heavy heart. I decided to leave him a letter that I will be going somewhere for the meantime.

Somewhere far from him right now. I want to go to the villa for the meantime to get the peace that I wanted. Seeing him would make me feel bitter again and it would lead to another argument. As much as possible, I don't want it to happen.

As soon as I arrived at the villa, I decided to sleep inside my room with Walter near me.

"Mommy? Are you alright?" He looked at me as I welled up with tears. I almost forgot that I'm with Walter. My poor baby has no idea of what his mommy have been through these past few days.

"B-Baby?" I smiled as I lift him up and pulled me close to me as I sit on our comfortable bed. He was still looking at my face as he helped me wipe my tears with his tiny hands.

"Why are you crying?" He asked in the most innocent way. I smiled at him as I kissed his forehead.

"Well, there are things that mommy can't tell you this time."

"Is it about your job, mommy? Is it very hard for you to do it?"

I chuckled as I heard these words from my son. He's really smart. I guess that's how he observed the situation I'm in now.

"Wow, how did you know, my dear munchkin?"

"Of course I know it. It is just like my homework. Aunt Dee will teach me how to do it. When it gets difficult, I can't help but to cry because I can't answer it anymore."

"Awww...come here baby," I hugged Walter really tight. I never thought he could think of these things and connect to certain situations already. It made me feel proud of him as my son. Although the main reason why I cried was his father.

My poor baby slept beside me, hugging me close to him. I couldn't help but shed a tear because of this priceless sight. As soon as I woke up, Lilian followed us to the dining hall. It was time for the midday snack that I invited her to eat with us as well.

"Madam, the private investigator for Priya just called me."

"What about it? I am actually deciding to stop investigating about her because I guess she's learning her lesson now."

"Well, all the lawyers did what they needed to do. Good thing, that exclusive press conference did not affect 'The Reike Trend's reputation.

"Yes. The business that I worked hard for can never be trampled by her easily."

Lilian nodded and sighed. Deandra saw Lilian's smile.

"Spill the beans."

"Would you like to know more about Angela?"

"Angela?" I gave her a puzzled look.

"Turns out, Priya's real name is Angela. She's not the real daughter of Mr. Swiss."

"What?" I almost spilled the water from my mouth because of what I just heard. How could it be possible?

I can see my baby Walter gazed at my direction. He also gave me that weird look as he stopped from eating too.

"What did my private investigator tell you this time?"

"Madam, I know you're not trusting Nicko that much. However, he called me before you arrived. He even had some evidence to prove that Priya is not the real daughter of your husband."

"I couldn't believe it." I can't help but grin because of what I just discovered. Priya badly wants to give me bad publicity? Well, what if I will return the favor this time?

"Madam...I am getting the point of why Priya is trying to blame Mr. Swiss's death to you. Is this a possible cover up?"

"You know what Lilian? You can really read my mind."

I grinned as we exchanged meaningful looks. Turns out what they have been telling is really true. A puzzle is meant to be put together to be solved.

She lit her cigarette as she opened the letter from her mailbox. It was a mystery for her since there wasn't a name of the one who sent it to her. She went to her room to check on the letter and she crumpled it right away with rage.

It says: "Hello, Angela...nice to meet you. Why would you come visit your stepmother sometimes?"

"You can't do this to me, Dianne! You'll regret everything! I swear!" She couldn't help but to throw away the things that she could see inside of her room.

She started to look for her phone. She needed to talk to someone who could understand her right now.

"Denysse?" She felt her fingers shaking as she held her phone. She held it firmly this time to somehow stop what she felt.

"W-Where are you?"

"I went to the mall with Walter."

"R-Really?"

"Yes. I need to go back to the villa to accompany him back home. Why? Do you need anything?"

"Well, I was wondering if we could meet right now. I need to talk to you."

"I have to return to the villa as soon as possible. Lilian might search for Walter and she will get angry if I return Walter home late. I will go to the hospital afterwards."

"Would you mind if I will return Walter instead? You seem to be busy right now."

"Yeah, that's right. I'm kind of busy right now. Would it be okay for you?"

"Yeah, I am the one offering so it's really okay." Priya grinned about what she had in mind.

Denysse went to Priya's condominium. Since the hospital is near to her place, Denysse bid goodbye to Priya as she handed Walter to her.

"Aunt Deni, aunt Priya will go with me to the villa?" Walter was hesitant to go near Priya because of her makeup.

"Walter my dear, it's just me okay? Don't worry I will drive you home now."

"Priya please take good care of Walter, alright? Send my regards to Lilian. Please tell her that I needed to go to the hospital because there's an emergency."

"I will, my dear sister." She winked at her. Denysse kissed Walter's cheek and tapped his head.

"Walter, be good to auntie Priya, okay?"

"Y-Yes." He nervously answered, afraid of letting go of Denysse's hand. She gently let go of him and she let Priya held his hand instead. She eventually walked away because she's in a hurry.

"Come here, baby boy." Priya tightened her grip on Walter's hand. Walter groaned with pain as he resisted Priya's way of holding him.

They are on their way to the parking lot and she is almost dragging Walter that he's almost stumbling.

"Aunt Priya, it hurts!" Walter started crying. They stopped walking and Priya let go of his hand in a very harsh way that he cried even more. She bends down on his height as she widened her eyes on him.

"You will be hurt even more if you will not behave. Keep quiet!" Walter looked at her and wiped his tears between sobs. He kept silent as they went inside the car. She let Walter sit beside her as she put a seatbelt on him. On the other hand, she sat on the driver's seat next to him.

Chapter 56: HOVERING GAZE

After what Dianne discovered hours ago, she decided to call her husband. They have to talk about Priya and what she did. The wounds of the past started to haunt her this time.

She couldn't even believe that Priya isn't the real daughter of her late husband.

She went back to their condominium unit. She knew that her husband returned home after finishing his work hours in their office.

"You need to know something."

"I also want to tell you about Priya." Dianne interrupted him. He looked at her in the eyes and swallowed.

"Priya is not the real daughter of Khalid Reike." Dianne said as she met his gaze, unafraid of the next reaction he will give her.

"What?" It was disbelief and shock at the same time. Andrew ran his fingers through his hair and gently pulled it. He couldn't help but to sit down on a nearby chair as he looked at the other direction.

"My private investigator forwarded this information to me just this morning. Priya's real name is Angela Reynolds."

Dianne started to tell Andrew everything in detail. He just listened and nodded. He even sighed because some facts were just too complicated to handle.

He shook his head as he held her hand.

"Now that you told me about this, I realized that Priya is really the culprit to everything."

"What do you mean?" She gave him a puzzled look this time around.

He swallowed as he looked at her innocent face. Those attractive brown eyes and the feature of his face...as much as possible, he doesn't want her to cry. However, Dianne also deserves to know the truth.

He turned on his laptop and played Dr. McNally's last video confession before he killed himself.

"Oh my god!" Dianne held her mouth as she wailed as she wept. She couldn't stop her tears from falling as Andrew hugged her tight. Dianne couldn't help but burst into tears. She knew Dr. Rhimes in person and it's the loss of the Reike family now that he's gone.

"I don't know what to say...it's..." She said between sobs. As Andrew held her, she started to feel dizzy and everything just went blank.

She opened her eyes and she could see everything was covered with light. She looked around and she could see a man facing his back on her, all dressed in white in a faraway distance.

"Khalid! Love! Can you hear me?" She shouted as loud as she could when she realized that it was Khalid. The man turned at her and smiled. He waved happily as if saying his last goodbyes.

"Khalid! Please!"

"Dianne? Dianne, please wake up..." She could feel that someone was shaking her as she opened her eyes all of a sudden. It was then that she realized that it was all a dream. An almost vivid dream that showed how Khalid wanted her to let go of everything and move on. It's like he's telling her to move on and heal from past experiences.

As she looked into the eyes of the one in front of her, it was Andrew who was trying to wake her up.

"You are shouting a man's name while closing your eyes. I was too worried I am trying to wake you up." She hugged him tight that stopped him from explaining further.

She finds herself crying again as she grasps Andrew's hands. This was the truth that is even hard for her to accept. Now, it was clear to her that Priya was really the prime suspect. She strongly believed that she could do it to him easily since they are not even blood-related.

"I am really sorry, Andrew. I am sorry for not telling you everything about me."

"It was understandable since you're an icon."

She slowly got up as she stretched both of her feet on the bed. Andrew caressed her hair down to her rosy cheek.

"Khalid Reike was my former husband. That's why I got Priya and Denysse as my two stepdaughters even if they were almost my age."

Andrew just listened to her quietly. This is the moment that he's been waiting for. Now that she is starting to confess everything, all she needs to do is to listen to her. She paused for a while as she looked into his eyes.

"Because I personally wanted to keep everything private, Khalid agreed that our relationship will be kept lowkey as much as possible. Everybody knew that Khalid got a new wife but he never let the press know everything about me before I gave birth to my baby."

"Your baby? What do you mean?"

"I was pregnant before I met Khalid, Andrew."

He looked at Dianne as if trying to study her facial expression.

"Can't you not really remember me, Andrew?"

"Dianne...why would I remember you? What do you mean?"

"I am Dianne Swiss because I got a new name for myself to protect my family and my baby. If I use my old name, I know everything will be messed up."

He gave her a puzzled look.

"I don't understand..." He replied, feeling anxious all of a sudden. He suddenly felt like this mind game will kill him any time starting from this moment.

"Do you, perhaps, know Deandra Klay?"

He felt silent all of a sudden. All the memories with her started to recall in his mind again, on how they met, how they became friends, even close friends. Until something happened that night that changed everything. She walked away without a trace. He searched for her somewhere but she couldn't find her.

He was even forced by his parents to transfer schools far from where they lived because of his father's business. As a good son, he obliged without questioning their decisions.

She told him that she even sent him a letter telling him she's pregnant, and he's the father. Andrew realized that the reason why he transferred school was because of his mother. His mother did read the whole thing without informing him. His parents were the ones who decided to bring him to a faraway place so that the girl who sent him the letter will not know where they will live if they transfer location.

"I am glad that even destiny brought us together. I realized that I would never love anyone as much as I love you."

Dianne hugged him tight as she cried, this time, with tears of joy. Finally, her family will be complete this time. It was a revenge-turned-forgiveness and love. At the end of the day, all Dianne wanted is to have a complete family of her own. After so many years of living in regrets and hatred.

"I couldn't wait to hug my baby boy." Dianne smiled but a phone call interrupted them all of a sudden.

"Ma'am?"

"Hello, Lilian. What is it?"

"Madam, Walter is not yet home."

"What?!" Dianne and Andrew looked at each other.

"Madam, I called Denysse and she told me that Priya will be accompanying Walter back home but it's been almost five hours since then."

"Did you call Priya? What did she say?"

"She's out of reach, madam. That's why I am calling you right now because I am a bit worried."

"What the fuck?" Dianne started to cry again as Andrew held his hands.

"From what she's doing, she will be facing a lot of charges for this. I will make sure she will rot in jail!" Dianne added as she started to panic that Andrew pulled her close and hugged her tight.

Andrew instructed Lilian to call the police as soon as possible. They have to search for all possible locations where Priya would flee with Walter.

"Andrew, please help me...I already lost Khalid, I don't want to lose my baby this time."

"Please don't be scared, everything is well taken-cared of." He caressed her back as she rested her head on his shoulders.

Chapter 57: RUNNING FROM WHERE YOU ARE

She held the steering wheel while her hands were already shaking. She glanced at Walter that is napping right now. She could see the tears running on his cheeks while he's closing his eyes.

She couldn't remember how long she's been trying to convince the child to shut up. Every time Walter cries, she becomes anxious even more. They've been driving around in circles too. Honestly, she doesn't know what to do right after she came up with the decision of kidnapping Walter. She even turned off her phone so that nobody could ever locate where they are right now.

She sighed. There's definitely no turning back. She will send Walter away from Dianne. She smirked about the idea of Dianne being miserable. She's getting thrilled because Dianne will finally feel what she's been troubling all this time. Losing everything she loves. Her ex-boyfriend Andrew, her fame and identity, her possible inheritance. These were the facts that made her feel insane right at this moment.

She knows that if Walter is away from Dianne, it will break her heart. The way she exactly wanted it the most. She badly wants revenge and she's excited that she's finally doing it right now.

Where could she go with Walter right now? She looked around until she pulled the car right through the driveway going to a carpark beside the train station.

"Wake up, Walter." She shook Walter in a rough way that he woke up crying again.

"Will you shut up? You're too loud I can't even think straight!" She said as she hit the child on his arm with her bare hands. It left a red palm mark on his arm. He cried even more as he opened his mouth. It was too loud that Priya put both of her hands on both her ears.

"Keep quiet, okay! I will really hurt your mother if you're not going to shut your mouth!" She almost shouted that it somehow made Walter's sobs subside. He looked at her with pleading eyes as he cried softly this time.

"Auntie...please, don't hurt my mommy." He said between sobs. She frowned as she got the facemasks on the mini-compartment of her car.

"Okay. That's it. Behave or else I will hurt your mom. Wear this." She shoved the facemask on his lap as she wore hers. Walter took the facemask and looked at Priya. He's like observing her on how to do it. His hands were almost shaking as he tried to follow Priya.

"Ahh,don't be stupid! I will do it for you." She snatched the facemask off his hands in a harsh manner. She put the facemask on both of his ears. She did it tight that Walter put both of his hands on his face to adjust the facemask. It is for their disguise. Priya didn't want somebody to know them. She didn't mind checking how he did it this time. She didn't care at all, anyway. She puts on her black sunglasses, too. She looked at Walter who is really terrified right now.

She opened the car and pulled Walter out by his arm that he almost shrieked in pain.

"Auntie, you're bad. I don't want to come with you! Let me go!" Walter tried to shake his hands off Priya's grip. She bends down to him and whispers in his ear...

"If you're not going to follow what I am telling you to do, you will never see your mom again!" As soon as Walter heard it, he suppressed a soft cry and nodded.

She smirked as she held his hand again, tightening her grip. Walter is obviously in pain because of what she's doing to him.

"Ma'am, please remove your masks and sunglasses for strict security compliance." She looked at the two bulky security guards on duty. She also gazed around her and there were nobody else except from them.

"We're in a hurry, okay? Besides, the train is already there. Why don't you guys let us pass?"

"Ma'am, we're sorry but this is a part of our protocols. Everybody is following it. Please follow the rules. Besides, it will not take that long.

"We're really in a hurry. Besides, this child is sick. Please?"

"Ma'am, we're sorry but you have to follow the rules. I know you're already aware of that, right?" She saw one of the security guards even pointed at the signage indicating strict inspection in that particular area of the train station.

She tightened Walter's grip and tried to run past the security guards.

"Hey miss! Stop right there!" They started chasing her this time as one bodyguard held his radio phone giving instructions to the other guards on duty within the station's vicinity.

She ran as fast as she could but the cops were faster than her. It also happened that one security guard cornered her as they turned left. There were two guards behind her while the other one was right in front of her.

"Please let us go. I will pay all of you. How much do you want?"

"Ma'am, you already violated some rules. Please don't add up to what you have done."

"Can't you hear me? I can pay all of your life's worth! Just let us go!" The security guards noticed Walter as he cried loudly this time.

"Sir, she's bad. She's bad!" Walter said as he pointed his finger to Priya between sobs.

The securities held her arms and put it on her back. They put handcuffs around both of her hands.

"Let me go! I will sue all of you for treating me this way! All of you! Don't you know me? Huh?"

The two guards tried to talk to her in a calm way but she refused and became hysterical even more. Her voice was too loud, it caught the attention of most passengers. The security guards were forced to drag her away.

"Come here, baby boy. I will tell your mom to come here to get you, alright?" He looked at the security guard's eyes as he blinked. Hearing those words made him stop crying. He hugged the security guard as he carried him in his arms until he fell asleep.

Chapter 58: FRESH, NEW MOVE

Deandra rushed towards him as soon as he saw him inside the police office. They've not waited long since a lot of police were already in search of Dianne's son.

"Mommy!" Walter hugged her tight, she couldn't stop her tears from falling.

"Are you alright?" She asked him, examining all of his arms and legs. She noticed that there were red marks on his arm. This made Deandra close her fists as she clenched her teeth.

"Did auntie Priya do something to you, my dear?"

"Mommy, aunt Priya is bad. She's been hurting me." Instead of crying in front of her son, she wiped her tears right away without letting Walter see it. She hugged him tight as he returned the favor.

"Hush now, baby. Mommy's here. Nobody will ever hurt you again, alright?" She stopped herself from breaking down with tears. This time, she needs to appear as the strong person for her son as she carried him in her arms.

They were contacted by the police as soon as they knew the exact location of Priya and her son. They discovered that Priya is trying to escape the city with Walter. She tried to hide Walter from her by train. She thought that nobody could ever notice them. She only thought she could, though.

Andrew stood quietly witnessing the whole scene. He's just there to comfort Deandra and his son. He knew that they were still not in good shape because of what just happened. If only he could do something right away to ease everything, somehow.

"Now that I am here, we could go everywhere and play whenever you want. Is it okay to you?" She could see that Walter's eye lit up upon hearing those words.

"Really, mommy?"

"Anything for you, my baby munchkin. I promise mommy will never leave your side this time."

"What about your work? I know you are busy. Auntie Denysse told me that you work from morning to evening, right?" Deandra looked at Andrew and smiled a little. The kind of smile that's relieved from all worries.

"No, my baby. Mommy is all yours this time. I got my leave so that I could play with you whenever you wanted." Dianne said with misty eyes. Walter was overjoyed, he almost jumped with excitement.

"Mommy, you will help me with my lego puzzles, right?"

"Of course. We will play all day. For now, we will go to the mall and we'll be watching your favorite movie."

"Wow! I couldn't believe this!"

"Yes, you heard it right. I promise you will spend a lot of time with me starting today."

They all went inside the car and Andrew drove for them.

She gently shook her head as she touched his hair with her fingers. Walter looked at her in the eyes and hugged her once again. They went inside the mall as Walter held the hand of Dianne, he couldn't help but to look at Andrew who was smiling at him.

"Mommy, who is he?" He pointed at him as he looked at her. Dianne chuckled a little and she carried her again in her arms.

"He is so dear to me, my baby. By the way, his name is Andrew." Dianne looked at Andrew and he came closer to them. He smiled at Walter that he avoided his gaze and hugged Dianne tightly instead.

"What dear, mommy?" He whispered and glanced back at Andrew. Dianne sighed and gazed at him as if thinking of what to answer to Walter this time.

"Walter, is it okay if I will love your mom?"

He gave him a weird look. Walter shifted his gaze at Dianne and then to Andrew.

"Mommy, do you love him?" Dianne laughed at what had Walter said. Andrew couldn't help but smile, too.

Deandra looked into Andrew's eyes and smiled. "Yes, baby." She answered as she locked her gaze into his. For the first time since they got married, Andrew never felt this much love coming from her. Hearing that single word felt like a dream just came true.

"Really?" Andrew responded with a grin that Deandra couldn't help but chuckle as she nodded.

"Can he be my daddy?" Walter asked in a very innocent way but it made Andrew feel he's already above cloud nine.

"Of course! I am very happy to be your daddy, Walter. Come here," Dianne transferred Walter in his arms. The child hugged him right away as they roamed around the mall. Many people who saw them couldn't help but adore the three of them.

Dianne heard a lot of girls talking about how perfect the three of them as one, big, happy family.

"Mommy, daddy! Look! It is Frozen II!" Walter excitedly sat between them as he pointed at the big screen. Andrew held a bucket of popcorn on both hands while Dianne held some sodas and juice.

"Yes. I love the part one. This part two should be greater than that."

They watched from start to finish. They both feel that their son is overjoyed because of the experience that Dianne let him feel. Walter never felt much happiness before compared to this time. This is by far the longest time he experienced being with Dianne.

"Mommy, thank you for watching movies with me. Also to you daddy Andrew." He hugged them both with his left and right hands.

"Honey, expect that we will always do what you want. I am so sorry for being busy all the time. Mommy will be there for you starting today."

"Will I see auntie Priya again, mommy?" Dianne saw his worried look. She tapped his head and shook hers as an answer. Walter felt relieved that Andrew carried him into his arms. He easily slept as they went inside the car as they went home.

They went inside the condo unit and Dianne tucked Walter to sleep inside their master's bedroom. They were both quiet as they looked at their sleeping son.

"Thank you for raising our son to be the sweetest and the kindest ever. I am proud of you, sweetheart." He whispered. Dianne smiled as a way of response. He held her hand and kissed it.

"I love you," He sealed her lips with a kiss as his way of responding to her.

"Do you mean it?" He grinned.

"Yes, I do."

Chapter 59: A FATHER'S LOVE

flashback

"I guess being a lawyer in the making is really hard, right?"

"Why, what do you mean?" Andrew answered as he scanned the pages.

"Well, I should say it is hard because even if you're talking to somebody, your focus is still on the books." Deandra answered as she chuckled a little. She sat right in front of him. The words coming from her made him gaze at her.

"I'm sorry," He smiled as he eventually closed the book and put one of his hands on his cheek as he leaned his elbow on the table for support. She laughed a little as she simply glanced around her. She sighed when that didn't catch the attention of most students that's inside the library. She blushed a little when Andrew was looking at her right now.

"No, don't be. I apologize for the one that disturbed you this time."

"No, it's fine. In fact, I appreciate you for being there for me even if there are times I feel like I need to be silent because of these."

"It's a pleasure. I am the one who wanted to thank you the most because you've been very kind."

"Not a problem."

"How could I ever repay you for all the money that you gave me? I promise to pay for all of it when my salary will be available." Deandra almost had a heart attack when Andrew held her hand and smiled.

"Please, don't ever think about how to repay me. As long as I know it is making others happy, I am also happy for them, too."

"Thank you so much." Dianne felt her cheeks reddened. How she wished that Andrew didn't see it!

"Yeah, that's the tenth time today." He chuckled as he grinned. He held her hand tightly before he let it go. "It's always a pleasure to help."

end of flashback

Dianne is smiling as she is looking at her husband eating in front of her.

"You can't help but to adore your handsome husband, right?"

Dianne chuckled as her way of responding. She just couldn't believe that the only best friend she had from the past is her husband now.

"I guess so. I just couldn't help myself but to recall those wonderful times when we're still best friends in college. Those were the best years of my life."

Walter is sitting beside her and he is also looking at his mom as he shifted his gaze at Andrew, too.

"Mommy, where are we?" Dianne's thoughts were spoiled in a moment because of her son's questions. She held his tiny hands and smiled.

"We are in our other house, baby. We will stay here for a moment because this is the safest place yet."

Walter nodded as he looked at Andrew, too.

"Is it okay that I will call you daddy?" He asked with hesitation. Andrew looked at him as he chuckled.

"Of course baby. Come here," Walter came to Andrew as he let him sit on his lap. He hugged him from his back. Deandra noticed that Andrew is holding back his tears. She could feel how happy her husband is, now that Walter is accepting him with all of his heart.

"You know what, sweetheart, this is a dream come true. I can't believe that this handsome, little boy wanted me to become his daddy right away."

"Walter is really cute and kind. Of course, he's my male version, right, sweetie?" Walter smiled to both of them that Andrew hugged him tight as he kissed his cheek.

"Well, if you're his male version, then I am his copycat. He looked exactly like me when I was little." Andrew proudly stated it made Dianne chuckle.

"Well, should I say more? I won't argue on that one." Dianne bit her lip. Andrew saw it and he couldn't help but smile, too.

They let Walter play in the playroom with some basic computer games. Since he is also fond of books, Dianne already stocked some books for Walter to read. It is exactly nine in the morning.

"Mommy, I will be here for a while."

"Are you sure you'll be okay here?" Dianne asked him and he nodded. Andrew wrapped his arms around her waist as he nibbled her earlobe.

"Are you busy today?" He asked in a husky voice. It gave Dianne goosebumps all over her body. It gave a tingling sensation down to her spine.

"No. I guess I should be the one to ask you that," She replied as she stepped back, closing the playroom where Walter is at.

"Yeah, I guess I will be busy because I need to work on convincing Walter's mommy to give him a sibling this time."

"You're really silly, you know." Dianne blushed as she chuckled.

"I'm damn serious. I love you so much." He turned her to him and he scooped her face as he gave her a kiss. She kissed him back, hungrily, as if making the most of the times they have lost.

"Come here, sweetheart. We'll let our son play in the playroom, because we're also going to play in the master's bedroom."

Dianne couldn't help herself but to burst out laughing that Andrew put his hand on her mouth.

"What game would it be?" She said between chuckles. She bit her lip in a seductive manner that she saw Andrew swallowed hard.

"Baby-making game."

"Silly!" She chuckled again as she poked his arm. She gasped when Andrew carried him in a bridal style manner as they went to the master's bedroom. It's two rooms away from the playroom.

They spent the next few hours making love, touching, feeling, needing each other's warmth. They both reached the peak of orgasms like never before, as they did it again until they fell into each other's arms. They're physically exhausted but they both enjoyed tasting each other's love. The love that they could prove and still give for each other.

"Happy?" Andrew said as he lay from behind her. He trailed his fingers on her waist to her breasts.

"Uh-hmm..." She answered as she closed her eyes as she enjoyed his touch. Andrew started planting trailing kisses on her neck going down.

"I love you so much."

"Drew..." She softly giggled when he touched the ticklish spot down there.

"I can't get enough of you, sweetheart." He whispered in her ears.

"Mommy? Daddy?" They heard a knock on the door, followed by Walter's voice. The child must've been bored for two, straight hours of playing.

"My goodness!"

"See? I told you..."

They almost jumped out of bed as they put on their clothes. They couldn't help but laugh because everything was like in fast motion.

Chapter 60: EVER-AFTER WITH YOU AND FOREVER

Deandra's POV

Because of what Priya did to Walter, I filed additional charges of kidnapping. From what happened to Khalid several years ago, the retrial was made possible because of the new evidence.

She was proven guilty of the crime and she will serve a minimum of five years in jail for it. It made quite a buzz for both the fashion and business world. However, I didn't want it to last, that's why I used the power and money that I have to let it die the soonest way possible.

I stayed lowkey for the sake of my family, Andrew and Walter. My mom and siblings met Andrew for the first time when we got married the second time around.

This time, it is because we love each other. Looking back, I never thought I could forgive him this easy. Thanks to our son, Walter, these were all made possible.

"I guess I loved you before I even met you," Andrew whispered in my ear as he hugged me from behind. I couldn't help but to smile because of what he said.

"Hmm? How sure are you?" I teased. He chuckled a bit.

"I could still remember how you warned me to even 'kill' me if I'll not return the money that I didn't even snatched from you in the first place." He said as he laughed. I poked him on the stomach using one of my elbows as I frowned.

"Hey, that hurts!"

"You're terrible to even let me recall that. Well, at least we're even now."

"Even? How come?" He sounded as if teasing me again that it gets annoying.

"I paid you with Walter." He chuckled because of what I answered. He pulled me closer to his chest and planted a kiss on my lips.

"Oh, I did not see that coming but you have a point." He winked. We saw Walter rushing towards us. Andrew carried him in his arms and kissed our baby on both his cheeks that tickled him a bit. My baby boy laughed out loud because of what his daddy is doing for him.

"What do you want to do, young man?" Walter grinned as he looked at his daddy.

"Please go swimming with me, dad? Please?" His mesmerizing eyes caught the attention of Andrew, he just couldn't answer 'no' anymore.

"That is, when mommy will go with us." He looked at me, trying to mimic Walter's way of mimicking that cute, 'puppy eye' look. I couldn't help but laugh because of their similar characteristics. I couldn't deny they were really father-and-son in all aspects. I nodded and it made Walter jump for joy. We enjoyed a lot of hours in our infinity swimming pool at the third floor of the villa. Overlooking from where we are, I could see my sisters on the beach at the ground floor. They preferred swimming in the ocean right in front of the villa.

I could see mom grilling on the seaside, I could smell the food from where we are right now.

"Baby? Would you like to join your aunts? We'll swim in the beach with them too."

"Okay mommy!" I held hands with Andrew who stole a kiss when we went off the pool. We walked downstairs, passed by some coconut trees until we reached where my siblings and mom were enjoying right now.

I saw Andrew went with my son, carrying him as he put both of his legs around his nape. Walter shouted in excitement as they went deeper into the water. I chuckled as I looked at them, I never noticed my mom sat beside me.

"Enjoying everything?" She asked as she showed a genuine smile. She offered me a plate full of grilled meat cut into smaller and thinner pieces.

"Yes, mom. I couldn't ask for more."

"I am happy for you too, my dear. Everything that is happening to you right now? You deserve all of it."

"Mom, believe me, you're one of my inspirations why I came this far."

"I know you will soar new heights, dear. Just hold on." She said as she tapped me on my left shoulder. I can see that she's about to cry, though.

"Mom? Are you alright?"

She simply wiped it with her hands as she smiled. "Yeah, I am totally fine. It's just that I couldn't believe how strong you were all these years. We barely knew what you've been through."

"Mom, don't worry about it. What happened in the past was just worth cherishing. I am always using those experiences as my inspiration. Good or bad, it made me for who I am now."

"I am always proud of you, my love. Thank you so much for giving more than what you could offer. You are more than blessed now."

My mom hugged me tight. I hugged her back and I couldn't help but be touched. I admit, my mom is one of those people who inspired me to become better.

"Mom, there's something I want to show you." I could feel that I am blushing hard, my mom noticed it right away.

"What is it?" She looked curious and excited at the same time. I pulled a tiny kit on my mini-pocket and handed it to her. She almost freaked out and chuckled, she covered her mouth.

"Is this for real?" I nodded as she looked at the two red lines that registered on the pregnancy test kit.

"I am so happy for you, honey! Walter will finally have a sibling."

"Did I hear it right?" I turned my back as I could feel Andrew's arm wrapped around my waist. I smiled and hugged him tight. I could see the excitement in his eyes as he turned my body over, facing him as I nodded.

"I will be a daddy again for the second time!" He shouted that all of my sisters rushed to where we're standing right now. They all cheered for me as soon as they heard the good news.

"I am very happy, mommy! How I wish it would be a boy so that I could play with him!" Walter looked at me. I carried him in my arms and pinched his cheek a bit.

"It would be okay if it is a girl so that mommy could play with her, too." He added that made us all laugh. I never thought that he has a unique way of showing his humor.

"I love you so much. I will always love you for as long as I can. I know, forever will not be enough." Andrew proudly said it to me in front of my family. I could see my sisters clapped their hands as they teared up a bit.

"I love you too, sweetheart. Thank you for being there always. Yes, forever might not be enough but I will always love you for a lifetime." Before I could say more, he sealed our promises with a kiss.

I don't know what tomorrow could bring, I only have fate in our love. I know it is not the best out there, but I am sure it will be better as long as love binds it.

---THE END---