

Love Until Death Do Us Part

Chapter 5

At the restaurant, with a clatter and a bang. Newman burst into the kids' room. He scooped up Payne, checked his complexion, and reached into his pocket, whipping out a box of meds.

Kent immediately grabbed Newman's hand.

"Mr. Bradshaw! **You** popped Scorpion less than 24 hours ago. If you hit another one now, your veins are gonna blow!"

Payne had been **stuck** with this incurable chill since day one, and Scorpion was the **magic** bullet cooked up by Jerry Gellar, the bigwig doc of Everglade City

Little Payne was too weak to handle the kick of Scorpion, so Newman had been downing it long—term, mixing the drug's mojo with his blood, then drawing his blood to use as a primer for Payne's treatment.

Five years on the Scorpion train, and the side effects just kept ramping up for Newman. But right now, he couldn't care less!

"Keeping Payne alive is what counts."

Newman wasn't fussed about overdosing, about his veins going kaboom. If it meant stabilizing Payne's condition, he'd lay everything on the line, even himself!

Kent dropped to his knees with a thud, bowing his head in panic, "Mr. Bradshaw, if you go down, how long you think his gonna last?"

Newman had cracked open the medicine box and only when he heard Kent's words did he pause.

Kent's brain went into overdrive, desperate for a way to save Payne. The chill Payne had wasn't something a hospital could fix. Kent blurted out in a rush, "The Dempsey family's Mystic Ridge Spring!"

Newman's eyes, shadowy slits, commanded Kent, "Fetch the coat."

Kent dashed to the cloakroom, came back with the coat, and Newman wrapped Payne up tight. He ordered Kent, "Get everyone together, we're hitting the Dempsey family's Mystic Ridge Spring."

Tying the knot with the Dempsey family, part of the reason was Newman had his eye on their Mystic Ridge Spring.

Mystic Ridge, a dormant volcano, that spot was the Dempsey family private property. They used the spring water for cosmetics and meds, but only Dempsey folks got to soak in the hot springs.

Newman had it all planned out, once he'd settled things with the Dempsey family and Zoey was hitched into their family, **he'd** borrow Mystic Ridge Spring and set up shop in Stardale City with Payne.

But now, before Zoey's deal with the Dempsey family was even sealed, Payne's chill flared up! Newman bolted outside, cradling Payne in his arms!

Mystic Ridge, out in the burbs, Newman, with Payne in his arms, hopped on a chopper from the hotel rooftop, beclining to Mystic Ridge Spring Estate.

The estate's gates were shut tight, Newman alighted from the chopper, clutching Payne. The sky was dim, clouds hanging low, hair flying across his forehead, a fierce glint in his eyes.

Kent, worried, said, "Boss, the Dempsey family's muscle won't let us waltz in."

Newman spat out, "Then we bust through!"

When Athena got the call, she was having breakfast with Kevin.

The news that Newman and his crew had stormed Mystic Ridge blew up within the Dempsey family!

Inside Mystic Ridge, the Dempsey family's security lay on the ground, a chorus of groans. And Newman had already made it to the hot spring with Payne in tow.

He shed his coat, in just his thin shirt, the soaked fabric revealing a hint of pale pink skin and sharply defined muscles beneath. The spring's waters lapped at Payne's neck, the kid's eyes shut tight, out cold, limbs stiff, fists clenched.

Newman gently massaged Payne's skin, trying to ease him back to comfort. His lashes drooped, the air thick with the scent of sulfur. Wisps of steam curled around his chiseled features.

Five years back, he'd hit the scene of a car wreck, saw nothing but wreckage and a baby curled up in a pool of blood

Everyone said the kid was a gorger, no chance of pulling through. But not Newman, he wouldn't buy it!

—

He held Payne's frozen, bruised body, **kept** CPR and mouth-to-mouth going non-stop, rubbing the kid's back and limbs.

Chapter 5

After a grueling night, eyes bloodshot, dawn broke, and he heard the baby's faint cries. That moment, Newman felt like he'd pulled Payne back from the reaper's grip! This child, he'd snatched from Death's own clutches!

For five years, he'd given his all to keep Payne alive. Now, injuring the Dempsey family's guards, storming Mystic Ridge Villa, to Newman, it was nothing! If need be, he'd take more measures to snatch more life for Payne!

Kent rushed in, "Mr. Bradshaw, the Dempsey **people** are here."

Newman, back to him, stood in the spring, all his focus on the kid in his arms.

Kent kept on, "That person from the Dempsey family who showed up, she's Ms. Dempsey. I had this feeling that I've seen her

before.

Before Kent could finish, a ruckus of footsteps echoed from behind Newman.

Outside, Athena was getting scrappy with the Bradshaw family's bodyguards. Kent poked his head out and only caught a glimpse of Athena's slim silhouette. Then, bam! He watched as Athena pulled off some slick moves and sent the Bradshaw family's bodyguards tumbling to the ground.

Kent shrank back, instinctively taking a few steps back. This Dempsey lady was fierce!

Athena strutted in with a posse of Dempsey family bodyguards in tow, her black patent leather boots clicking on the ground as she entered through the main door of the hot spring

Circling the screen, Athena laid eyes on the man soaking in the hot spring.

"Newman, you playing bandit or what? This is the Dempsey family's Mystic Ridge Villa. If you wanna dip in these springs, you gotta give us a heads-up. Beating up the villa's bodyguards and barging in here, what's that all about? We Dempseys ain't some little bugs you Bradshaws can **just** stomp on!"

Her voice cut through the air with a sharpness that seemed to slice right at Newman.

A buzz rang in Newman's head. The desperate plea of a woman in the darkness last night, begging the man to stop, was now overlapping with Athena's voice in the present.

Newman's striking brows furrowed, while Kent's jaw dropped in shock, exclaiming: "You ...you're that model from yesterday?!"

Newman turned his head, his gaze landing on the woman behind him. Athena just chuckled, paying no mind to Kent. She looked down from her lofty position at Newman in the hot spring, her dark eyes now cold and unforgiving.

"I'm the woman who tipped your boss 25 bucks yesterday. Didn't have a chance to introduce myself in the hurry. The name's Athena, the daughter of the Dempsey family."