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Chapter 91 She Was Lacking In Confidence

Aaron was holding a cigarette 'in one hand, and a can of beer in the other. After taking a sip, he said to me, "From what I've seen, Sybil's love for him was no less than that of Derek's love for her. But she was lacking in confidence, and she was self-abased."

Those qualities sounded like my traits...

Perhaps no matter how excellent a woman could be, she would always feel insecure around Derek, let alone a divorced woman like me.

"Truthfully, before we knew Sybil, she was already a bar singer, and she was a little famous. However, the night clubs ten years ago were still a bit chaotic. Female singers would often get molested by some drunken customers, so their job was usually looked down upon. One day, Derek could no longer stand to see it happen, and fought with a customer that molested Sybil. That was how they got to know each other."

His words reminded me of the violent incident I had witnessed in Blue Sky.

That meant, at the time, Derek wasn't angry just because one of Layne's drunken men had spoken ill of Sybil, but also because he had molested Cindy. Seeing that drunken man do that to Cindy reminded Derek of his past with Sybil.

Their relationship must be so unforgettable that his emotions would still be easily ignited by a similar scene after so many years.

"When Derek was admitted to the medical school at the same time that I did, he was actually forced to do it. Grandpa was a doctor, so he hoped that all his children and grandchildren could learn medicine as well. Personally, I liked learning about medicine, but

Derek wasn't the least bit interested in it. He was passionate about music more than anything else. Thus, he set up a band and played gigs during his

spare time. He even insisted on letting me join them as well."

My eyes widened with surprise as I stared at Aaron. "You were also a member of

Thorn Birds?"

Perhaps due to my overreaction, he was somewhat embarrassed. Afterwards, he flicked the ash off his cigarette and said, "Yup. I was the drummer and the lyricist." "Wait! You're the one who wrote 'Live On'?" I exclaimed.

Aaron smiled at me and nodded.

I had always been moved by that song. It gave me the power and strength to continue on my path for growth. That song had always been there for me, giving me the motivation I needed to push through. And now, the lyricist was sitting right in front of me. I was so surprised by this. I truly admired him. As of this moment, I had temporarily forgotten all that was making me upset.

"Damn, Aaron! That song is my favorite song of all time. I kind of get the feeling that it was made for me, you know?"

After taking a drag on his cigarette, he glanced over at me with gentle eyes and replied, "I'm just glad someone liked it."

"Don't take this the wrong way, but you don't look like a drummer," I said frankly.

Aaron raised an eyebrow at me and chuckled. "Is that so? Then what kind of musical instrument do you think fits me?"

After a moment of contemplation, I replied, "I think a violin, or a piano would suit you better. Maybe not exactly those two, but something similar could work just as well. I've always pictured drummers to be wild."

"Wild?" He seemed to be amused by the word.

He picked up the can of beer and drank the remaining half of it. While he was drinking it, his Adam's apple was bobbing up and down. After putting the can down, he said, "You never know, I might have a wild side that you just haven't seen yet."

I pictured him playing the drums with a wild appearance, and it made me frown. I shook my head and responded, "It's kind of hard to imagine."

Aaron chuckled and leaned forward, resting his elbows on the table. Then, he looked at me with renewed interest.

"So, based on what you've said, that means I chose the wrong hobby, huh? Derek is an incredible guitarist. Do you think it suits him?"

When he mentioned the guitar, it reminded me of a bad memory.

That guitar was the reason Derek frowned at me for the first time. Now, I understood that Derek got upset seeing the guitar because it reminded him of Sybil.

Once more, I felt saddened. "I've never seen him play the guitar before. He told me that he could

Aaron crushed the cigarette butt in the ashtray and let out a sigh. "After Sybil died, Derek never wanted to play the guitar again, so the Thorn Birds disbanded."

So... Derek still hadn't moved on from Sybil, huh?

Shane had told me that Derek wanted to bed his woman, because he had slept with Derek's woman. But weren't Sybil and Derek in love with each other? How could she sleep with Shane?

"What happened between Sybil and Shane? Why did she end up committing suicide?" I asked.

Aaron shook his head this time. "Derek is the only one who knows anything about that, but he doesn't want to tell us. But he beat up Shane the day after Sybil died. We just assumed that her death had something to do with Shane. He almost broke every bone in Shane's body at the time. If the other students hadn't called the school administrators over, Derek

probably would've done something worse to Shane. Due to the gravity of the matter, Derek ended up getting expelled from the school."

Hearing the story only saddened me more. I opened another can of beer and drank all of it. Once I put down the can, I realized that Aaron had been staring at me with a complicated expression. It was as if he was staring at someone familiar.

"Do you love him?" he asked me.

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Chapter 92 I Should Have Seen It Clearly

Truthfully, I had been wanting to ask myself that same question.

I had been wondering if I did love Derek. But if I didn't have feelings for him, I wouldn't have been this hurt. And if I did love him, since when did I start to love him? Honestly, I had no idea.

Despite the fact that I didn't answer, Aaron seemed to have guessed my answer. A faint smile appeared on his lips as he fiddled with the pull ring of a can of beer.

"In fact, when Derek got expelled from the medical school, he wanted that to happen. Like I said before, he's not really interested in medicine," he said.

"But he didn't continue working on music either," I said with a forlorn voice.

Aaron opened another can of beer, but he didn't drink it right away. He then hung his arm on a chair next to him, exposing his attractive neck.

I wasn't sure how high his alcohol tolerance was, but I realized that his face had already turned red after drinking just one can of beer.

"Derek has always been quite talented at doing business. At present, he's a very successful businessman, so I guess he made the right choice," said Aaron.

But what about Derek's dream? I didn't ask Aaron that question. Perhaps that dream was already gone after Sybil was gone.

Oftentimes, young people would hold onto their dreams dearly in their hearts. But as time passed by, their passion would slowly dissipate. After they experienced a lot of things, the impulse to fight for those same dreams might never come back again.

And now, I could feel how distant Derek was from me. I should've seen it from the start, and I never should've expected anything from him. 1

This whole fiasco made me think that I must be so damned pathetic if men couldn't treat me seriously.

Later on, I drank a lot. Aaron probably understood how bitter I felt, so he didn't stop me from drinking. He even helped me open some cans of beer.

By the time I could barely see his face because of how drunk I was, the people at the next table began to quarrel. Not a minute later, they started a fight. One of them even smashed a bottle.

Since we were sitting close to them, when the bottle hit another person's head and broke into pieces, the shards of glass sprayed all over me. I blocked them in time, but unfortunately, some still grazed my face, and many of the shards fell onto my body.

Aaron reacted quick enough to pull me up from my seat, keeping me away from the fighting. "Are you okay?" I saw him frown when he removed my hand from my face.

"Have I been disfigured?"

Soon, I felt dizzy. My legs grew weak, and I couldn't stand firmly. But I was more worried about my face.

Aaron kept on staring at me as though he wanted to laugh.

"No, but there are shards of glass on your body. I'll have to clean them up. Don't move."

Having said that, he helped me sit on a chair by the side, and then he concentrated on picking up the glass shards by hand one after another. Some of them were all over my arms, the others were on my dress. He was very careful when he was doing it. Probably because he was worried that I might get hurt while he was removing the shards.

I froze, feeling embarrassed.

Once he was done cleaning me up, he draped his suit jacket over me and led me away from the commotion.

The food stall had been thrown into disarray. Once we were far enough from the stall, I heard the buzzing sound of police cars coming straight to where the fighting had ensued.

Aaron helped me towards the roadside and hailed a cab.

After I got in the cab, I leaned against the back seat, feeling feeble. Aaron followed me inside and sat next to me.

"Where are you heading, ma'am, sir?" the driver asked.

Aaron glanced over at me and asked, "Where do you want me to drop you off? Derek's house?"

I shook my head and replied, "No. I'd rather not go there."

Then, I heard Aaron say to the driver, "East District." Afterwards, he told the driver the specific address of the alley where my house was located. 1 Soon, the cab's engine started. I turned to Aaron, trying to see his face clearly.

"How did you know where I live?"

The light in the cab was dim, so it was hard to make out his face. I was still a little dazed, but I felt like he was smiling.

"You told me where it was," he replied flatly. "Did I?" I patted my head, wondering if I did. I couldn't seem to remember saying anything about my address. He grabbed my wrist to stop me from hurting myself. "You did." After getting off the cab, Aaron helped me walk into the alley. I wasn't sure if it was the ground's problem or it was just me, but I felt like I was walking over cotton. If he weren't there to help me, I probably would've stumbled onto the ground already.

I knew at that moment that I was hammered. I regretted getting this drunk, because I was so useless whenever I was like this.

Fortunately, Aaron was here to help me. It was incredible how I could trust him even though this was the first time we had met.

Suddenly, something that Derek had told me occurred to me.

"Derek told me that I shouldn't get drunk in front of strange men." I had no idea why I could remember his lessons so clearly.

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Chapter 93 I'm Not A Strange Man

"But I'm not a strange man," said Aaron. I <u>gigg</u>led at his answer. "I know. You're Derek's cousin."

Suddenly, he stopped in his tracks to look me in the eye. "Eve, do you not remember me?"

Just when I was about to stagger my way up the staircase, I halted; not because of Aaron's question, but because I could see a beam of light illuminating the dark stairway.

Even though I was drunk, my intuitive sense was working fine.

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I knew that it must be Derek.

A few seconds later, the light fell to the ground, and was soon overshadowed by his leather shoes.

Derek slowly made his way towards us.

Instinctively, I took a step back. And because I couldn't keep my feet steady, Aaron continued to support me.

"She is drunk," he said.

"I see," Derek muttered. "Thanks for your help, Aaron. You must be tired. You haven't had any rest since you got off the plane. You should go home and get some rest now."

While he was speaking, he took me from Aaron's embrace. I reacted violently, trying to push him away. But because I couldn't stand firmly, I collapsed. Fortunately, Aaron held me up just in time.

"I should escort her upstairs. If there's any misunderstanding, you can explain it to her once she sobers up," said Aaron.

"I don't think that would be appropriate," replied Derek. He still tried to embrace me.

"Go away!" I roared, leaving him stunned. Soon, I got rid of Aaron, staggered towards the staircase, and leaned against the wall.

"Both of you go. I can go upstairs by myself."

I thought I really could do it by myself, but before I could even take one step forward, my legs collapsed from beneath me. Derek held me just in time with one arm, lifting me up without saying another word.

I began to struggle to break free from his grasp. "Let go of me, Derek!" But he didn't. Instead, he held me tighter and said in a patient voice, "If you don't want to see me any longer, I'll leave as soon as you enter the house." Thus, he carried me upstairs, took out the key from my purse, opened the door, and put me to bed.

I wasn't unconscious. Truthfully, I just didn't want to look at him, so I kept my eyes closed.

He sat on the edge of my bed for a while before he finally walked out. I thought that he was leaving already, but he soon came in with a cup of water in hand.

"There isn't any warm water, so I just heated some. I blew on it already, so it's not hot anymore."

He helped me up in order to get me to drink some water, but I kept my mouth shut. I could sense that he was annoyed, since his breathing seemed to have gotten a little heavier.

Since I refused to drink water, he drank it himself.

But when he finished drinking, he put down the cup and got on top of me. He started kissing me and delivering water into my mouth through his.

I choked on the water and coughed violently because I didn't want what he was

doing

He helped me up and patted me on the back to alleviate my discomfort.

After I stopped coughing, I tried to push him away again. "Didn't you say that you'd leave as soon as I've entered my house? What are you still doing here?"

Derek grabbed my shoulders, glaring at me. "Do you not remember what I told you before? You shouldn't get drunk in front of strange men. Why did you do it again?"

He must've heard my conversation with Aaron.

I smiled, but I wasn't sure if it was mockery or bitterness that I felt.

"Strange men? Do you mean Aaron? If that's your definition of a stranger, then you're also a stranger to me. I married you without even getting to know you. I am so damned stupid!"

Derek swallowed his agitation. "Do you regret it?"

I nodded, resisting my desire to cry. "I do regret it. I didn't have to get married. I never should've married a man who didn't love and just wanted to use me!"

Soon, I fell back down on the bed, and I could feel that my tears were about to fall.

Derek leaned over, cupping my cheeks with his hands. He seemed intent on trying to kiss me again.

I turned my face away to avoid him, but I was so drunk that I couldn't escape him. He quickly got on top of me again, as he jammed his tongue into my mouth eagerly. It was as if he was trying to make me submit to him, one way or another.

I couldn't breathe because of his kiss. I had no idea how long it lasted, but when I finally had the chance to breathe, I chuckled wryly at him. "Right. You not only wanted to use me, but you also wanted to sleep with me. I'm just a tool to fulfill your desires!"

Right after I finished speaking, I sensed that Derek was stupefied. He pinched my chin, glaring at me. "Eveline, do you really have to do this?" he asked.

I shook off his hand and stared at the ceiling.

"Derek, I don't want to see your face right now. If you don't want me to hate you even more, just leave, okay? I'm having a migraine right now, and I don't want to talk! I just want some God damned sleep!"

He fell into silence. After a while, the weight on my body disappeared, and I soon heard him leave the room. Moments later, he seemed to have come back, followed by the sound of a cup being put on the table. "I'm leaving, Eveline. Once you wake up, let's talk about this properly."

He stood there for a while longer, waiting for my answer. And since I wasn't responding, he finally walked out the door and closed it behind him.

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Chapter 94 I Want To Talk To You

When I was the only one left in the room, I finally opened my eyes and turned my head. I noticed that the glass of water on my bedside table was still steaming. My eyes felt moist, as if the steam was causing me to shed tears.

What did he want to talk about? The divorce? Maybe he would apologize to me and say that he shouldn't have taken advantage of me?

The following morning, I woke up early with a scathing headache. Fortunately, I managed to get up.

The moment I turned on my phone, I received a message from Seagull. "Eve, I hope that each time you cry in the future will be due to tears of joy," he said. Truthfully, I wasn't sure if I would ever have the fortune of crying with joy again.

The glass of water that Derek poured for me last night was still sitting on the bedside table. I poured some warm water into the glass and drank it up. Afterwards, I went to work without having anything for breakfast.

As soon as I arrived at the hospital, Derek called me. I set my phone on silent mode, tossing it aside and ignoring it.

While I stood at my post, I took a few deep breaths to perk myself up.

Each time a woman would get hurt because of a relationship, it would serve as a motivation for her to become stronger and more independent. Even without a man, a woman must learn how to live well.

Moments later, the emergency line rang and I guickly answered the call.

"Hello, this is the emergency hotline of Wonder Hospital. What's your emergency?"

"I need help!" I could sense from the voice of the man on the other end of the line that he was panicking.

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As soon as I heard his plea for help, my heart skipped a beat. I hurriedly tried to calm him down. "Sir, please calm yourself down. Could you tell me exactly what's going

on?"

"Several of my friends have been killed. I'm hiding right now. I'm so scared," he replied.

"What?" I sprang to my feet as sweat broke out of my forehead. "Could you please tell me your location right now? How are your friends doing? We'll send an ambulance and call the police for you right away!" The man seemed to be trembling as he spoke. "I'm in WarFrame. I'm so scared. Save me!"

I was stunned by his statement. And when he sensed my silence, he began to break into laughter. It was then that I realized that I was speaking to Felix.

Realizing that I had been fooled, I was so angry that I threw curses at him. "Go to hell!" With that, I hung up on him.

Brenna stared at me, shocked by my reaction.

When I noticed the way she looked at me, I turned my head, only to realize that the director of the human resources department was standing behind me with a long face.

"Eveline, your attitude is problematic for customer service. This is the emergency hotline. All the calls being made here are calls for help. Why are you telling people to go to hell? What do you think the patient's family would feel if they heard you just now? Your terrible service can and will affect the reputation of Wonder Hospital!"

"It's not like that, sir! He was..."

"Enough. I don't want to hear your explanation. Write a self-evaluation before you get off work. I want to know how dedicated you are to your job," the director commanded before turning around and leaving.

And so, I sat back on my chair, leaned against the backrest of the chair, and let out a sigh.

"Eveline, it really is your fault. You need to acknowledge that." Brenna was usually very kind and considerate towards me, but even she was blaming me for what happened.

With pleading eyes, I replied, "But, Brenna, that man was prank calling me."

Then, she broke into laughter. "It's natural that people would prank call us sometimes. I've worked for so many years here, and I've seen all kinds of people. Even if they're rude, troublesome, or just downright annoying, we need to maintain our composure and be professional. It's our job, Eveline. Remember that."

I put my hand on my forehead, and placed it down right afterwards. "I understand. It really was my fault, huh? I shouldn't have lost my cool. I'll write a self-evaluation later."

After a while, the phone rang again. I adjusted my mood and made sure that I was prepared before answering the phone.

"Hello, this is Wonder Hospital."

"It's me."

A familiar voice resonated from the other end of the line. I was so surprised that I immediately hung up.

As Brenna sat beside me, she frowned and asked, "Eveline, what's the matter? Are you still not feeling well? You don't seem like you're fit to work right now."

Before I could answer her, the phone rang again. I didn't even dare to reach for it. Brenna looked at me, seeming as though she had no intention of answering it either. Thus, I had to answer the call.

"Eveline, wait!" Derek shouted anxiously, seemingly afraid that I would hang up on him again.

I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and said, "This is the emergency hotline of Wonder Hospital, not a private number. Could you please stop holding up our lines? What if there's a real emergency happening right now?"

"Eveline, I just want to talk to you," he replied. "There's nothing left for us to talk about," I responded. Brenna probably understood the context of our conversation from my words. Thus, she smiled at me and went to do something else. "Eveline, listen to me. If you hang up

on me again, I'm going to keep calling you until you agree to talk to me," Derek remarked. I didn't expect him to be this stubborn and thick-skinned.

"Just come home and let's talk about this, okay?" he pleaded.

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Home, huh? I used to think that his villa was my home.

I knew that escaping this problem wasn't a solution so I finally agreed.

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Chapter 95 How Much Do You Want

After I got off work and got out of the hospital, I heard someone calling for me. I looked towards the person uttering my name and saw Timmy.

"Ma'am, Mr. Sullivan is currently preoccupied at the moment, so he asked me to pick you up after work," he said.

I sneered. If he was so busy, then why did he keep on calling the emergency hotline? Did he even have the time to talk to me?

Despite my annoyance, I got in the car. Once I was inside, Derek sent me a message.

"Honey, I have an important meeting right now, so I might come home a little late. Wait for me, okay? I'll come back no matter how late it is."

I could feel his sincerity from this message alone. I had no idea what sort of explanation he would give me. It made me wonder if he would finally tell me the truth or just continue weaving another web of deception.

When I got back to the villa, I sat on the sofa, waiting for him. I wasn't in the mood to cook right now, and I left the lights off. About an hour later, dusk had fallen, but he still wasn't home.

As I began to feel restless, the doorbell suddenly rang.

Didn't he bring a key?

When I went to open the door, I was stunned.

The person standing at the door was none other than Derek's father, Gifford Sullivan.

The first time we met, my only impression of this man was how stern he was.

I knew that he was not very pleased with me.

In my opinion, Derek had no need to doubt the legitimacy of his relation to Gifford. He seemed to have inherited his good looks from his father. And whenever he was being serious, he would exude a daunting pressure that could overcome the people around him, much like his father did.

At the moment, Gifford wasn't saying anything. He was just staring at me from head to toe, but it was enough to humble me.

"Dad," I uttered, merely out of politeness and respect.

He averted his gaze from me and walked forward. I had to make way for him, so as not to bump into him.

"Do not call me 'Dad'. I will not accept you as my daughter-in-law, since you married my son without my approval."

Despite the calmness of his voice, it still left me stunned.

When I finally got ahold of myself, he had already sat down on the sofa.

As he looked around, examining the place, it made me think that this might be the first time that he had come here.

No matter how terrible my relationship with Derek was at the moment, I was still his wife. And even if Gifford refused to acknowledge me, I couldn't just let him feel like he was left out in the cold at Derek's house.

Thus, I poured him a glass of water and carefully placed it in front of him. However, I didn't dare to call him "Dad" again. "Please, have some water, sir," I said.

He raised his head, examining my face again. Upon feeling his oppressive gaze, I lowered my head like a person waiting for the verdict of her trial.

"How much do you want?" he asked.

Stunned by the question, I looked back at him and asked, "What? What do you mean?"

Slowly, he lit a cigarette, showing his undisguised contempt for me.

"Eveline Stone, twenty-six years old, a nursing graduate from Sousen Medical School. After you graduated, you worked as a nurse for Virtue Hospital. Your ex-husband used to be a doctor for the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department of Virtue Hospital, but he was fired not long ago," said Gifford.

As I looked at him in surprise, I asked another question. "You had me investigated?"

After taking a drag on his cigarette, he chuckled. "Your father was a truck driver, but he died in a car accident over a decade ago. Your mother, as a result of the accident, became an invalid. She died in Virtue Hospital in June just this year. You've been poor since you were a child, so you probably know how important money is. In order to survive, poor people like you usually just pursue money."

He was right. The rich desired to live a lavish life, but poor people like myself just wanted to survive.

But that didn't necessarily mean that we would earn money by hook or by crook! Even though we were poor, we had pride and dignity.

"Do you think I married Derek for his money?" I asked, enduring the pain in my

heart.

Gifford broke into a hearty laughter, seeming like he had heard something preposterous.

"So, if it's not for money, do you mean to say you married him for love? Miss Stone, you're not just from a poor family, you're also a divorced woman. But I'm not looking down upon you or anything of the sort. Derek hasn't gotten close to any woman for years, but here he is, suddenly in a relationship with you. That just means you're not so simple."

I couldn't help but laugh at his remark. "Do you think I'm trying to deceive your son?"

Gifford leaned against the sofa and seemed like he was savoring his cigarette. "Perhaps you're not just after his money, but also for other purposes. Derek is a businessman, and doing business is similar to fighting on a battlefield. Even though he doesn't like it when I meddle in his affairs, he's still my son. I will not allow people with ulterior motives to stay by his side."

I scoffed at him and responded, "You've already convicted me of a crime that I did not commit! I can tell that no matter how hard I try to explain myself, you'll never believe me."