

Love Until Death Do Us Part

Chapter 18

She thought, “This kid, how **come** he kinda looks like Athena did as a tot?”

Anna got booted out of the country **by** Athena five years ago and never laid eyes on Kevin.

Kevin came to, still a bit out of it.

He thought, “Where the heck am I?” He actually dozed off in Devil’s territory.

Right now, Kevin’s only thought was to book it back to his mom.

Anna squatted down in front of Kevin, all smiles and sweetness.

“Mr. Payne, my name’s Anna. I’m looking to fix you up, could ya let me cop a feel of your hand? Wanna check your pulse.”

Anna’s mind was buzzing. She thought, “Kids that are easy on the eyes probably all look alike. Athena was this cute as a kid, anyone who saw her just couldn’t help but hover around.”

Kevin tucked his hands behind his back, “I ain’t letting you touch my hand!”

Anna then shot Newman a look that screamed help me out here:

Newman whispered some instructions, “Payne, stretch out your hand, let the doc take your pulse.”

Kevin’s cheeks puffed out, and under Devil’s intimidating presence, he grudgingly put out his little hand.

Anna touched Kevin’s pulse and her sweet smile froze in place!

She looked at Kevin, cheeks flushed with embarrassment. The kid had this youthful face, skin fair as snow, **with** a healthy pink glow on his cheeks, and his pulse thumping strong—not at all what you’d expect from a kid supposedly born with a cold

constitution.

What in the world?

Mr. Payne from the Bradshaw family was in tip-top shape!

Was it the magic of Mystic Ridge Spring? Just a few days and Mr. Payne's chronic cold was cured?

Kent, standing by, couldn't help but ask, "Miss Anna, how's Mr. Payne's health now?"

Anna was at a loss for words.

If she said the kid was healthy as a horse, wouldn't she be out of a job as the family doc?

No way!

She had to stick around!

Simon Dempsey had originally set Anna up for a managerial position at the Dempsey Group.

But Athena had the run of the place, and just yesterday when Anna showed up at Sunrise Building to report in, the HR director handed her a janitor badge and said if she worked hard, in three months' time, she could get promoted to a senior janitor.

Anna was so livid, she chucked the badge straight into the trash bin.

She was going to be the Bradshaw family's doc, and once she got some **clout** there, she was going to show Athena a thing or two! "Mr. Payne is still quite weak. It's getting colder, so he needs to keep warm. I've discussed it with Mr. Gellar, we'll give Mr. Payne three medicinal baths. While he's soaking, I'll massage him to unblock his meridians."

Kevin's frown was a spitting image of Newman's. He pouted and protested, "Weak? Me? I could take on ten guys single-handed!"

Kevin thought for sure he'd be busted after one pulse check that he's not the real Mr. Payne.

But

that this woman had the gall to lie to Devil.

Bad news, this one!

Anna, all tenderness, cooed at Kevin,

"Mr. Payne, you were born fragile, with a chill in your bones and a weak pulse. But I will stick by you and cure the cold you've been carrying since the womb."

Kevin blurted out. "Bullcrap! I ain't sick, why **you** gotta stick around treating me?"

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Newman furrowed his brow, wondering where Payne picked up such language.

Newman reached out and grabbed the kid's wrist.

His son was sick, and Newman had hit the books hard, earning a degree from a top-notch medical college in just five years.

His fingers on Kevin's pulse, Newman's face turned to ice.

Without showing any emotion, he asked Anna, "What did you say his pulse was like again?"

Anna, sticking to the script Jerry gave her, showed off a bit, "Mr. Payne has cold energy stagnation with an inner imbalance, a slow and weak pulse, indicative of an internal deficiency."

Before she could finish, Newman let out a snort, "Are you really Jerry's student?"

Anna was flabbergasted, "Mr. Newman, of course, I'm Jerry's student!"

The man's voice dripped with scorn, "Jerry's really lost his touch taking you on! Payne's pulse is nothing like you described! Kent, **show** her out. And don't bring this ruff-ruff to me again!"

Kent called in the Bradshaw family's security detail pronto.

Anna had never seen such a show of force, her knees buckled and she shrieked in her defense:

"Mr. Newman! I've studied medicine under Jerry for ten years, I didn't get the pulse wrong."

Newman's piercing gaze was like an arrow, sending chills down Anna's spine.

"Shall I bring in other doctors to take Payne's pulse? Then I'll have the Dempsey family's security toss you out of Mystic Ridge

Villa!

Anna's voice vanished, but quickly she cried out again, "Mr. Newman, did I get the pulse wrong? Let me take it again!" Newman didn't give her the chance, motioning security to drag Anna off!

Kevin had just heaved a sigh of relief when Newman's voice landed on him,

"Payne, time to eat."

“Oh, okay.”

Kevin turned around, but his mind was on plotting an escape.

“I gotta use the bathroom.”

Kevin slipped away. He came to Mystic Ridge Villa every year and knew the layout like the back of his hand.

He headed towards the villa in the West District, and from a distance spotted Anna, who'd been kicked out of Cozy Retreat, chatting up the Dempsey family's security guard.

Kevin sneaked behind some bushes, peered through the leaves, and saw Anna hand over her wristwatch, worth a pretty penny, to the guard

“Figure out a way to toss Mr. Payne into the pond.”

“Miss Anna, I really can't bring myself to do anything to Mr. Payne!”

Anna said with a twang. Im not asking you to hurt anyone; I just want Mr. Payne to catch a cold. Once he hits the water and flails around a bit, you'll swoop in to save him. That way, you'll even be his hero.”

Kevin **was** so mad his cheeks puffed out, and he silently cursed “Wicked woman!” in ventriloquist style.

He turned his head and saw a kid who was the spitting image of himself, squatting next to him with his backpack on his back!