

A Love Forgotten Chapter 1

“It hurts, Elijah. Let me go!

“Will you regret this if I die, Elijah?”

“Don’t leave with Jocelyn, Elijah. I love you so much...”

I jolted awake and gasped for breath like a fish out of water. I couldn’t breathe, and my throat hurt so badly that it felt like it was about to tear in half.

I struggled to open my eyes. The white lights above me were blinding, and I could hear machines beeping beside me.

“Mrs. Linden is awake, Mr. Linden. The doctor said she fainted due to a head injury and agitation. Other than that, she’s fine.”

Someone was talking on the phone in a low voice near the bed. I finally realized that I was in a hospital ward. Was I sick?

I heard a cold voice ring out over the phone. “Everything’s fine as long as there aren’t any problems with her. I have a video conference to attend so I won’t head over.”

The woman wore a formal outfit. After hanging up, she sighed. Then, she turned around. She was startled to see me staring at her. “You’re awake, Mrs. Linden?”

I was about to ask her something when she continued, “Mr. Linden has a video conference today, so he can’t come over just yet. You can speak to me if you need anything.”

I was lost. “Who is Mr. Linden? And I’m not Mrs. Linden. My name is Ariana York.”

The woman was taken aback at first before laughing scornfully. “Mr. Linden is busy, Mrs. Linden, as am I. I don’t have time to play games with you. Also, you don’t have to feign amnesia when you only knocked your head a little.”

She scoffed. “I’d advise you against reading too many of those dumb novels. Playing hard to get isn’t going to work on Mr. Linden.”

I frowned. “I don’t read dumb novels, and I feel uncomfortable with how you’re talking to me.”

The woman didn’t exactly have a pleasant attitude when talking to me, and I didn’t like her. She carelessly threw a phone at me, saying, “This is your phone. Contact me if you need anything. I’m heading back to work.”

She turned, wanting to strut out of the ward, looking haughty.

Just then, the ward's door flew open, and another woman ran in, her hair in a mess. "How are you, Ariana?"

I was shocked when I saw her. "Why have you ended up like this, Teri?"

The woman before me was Teresa Stuart, my best friend. We'd started playing with each other since childhood and had gone to the same kindergarten, elementary school, middle school... We were like conjoined twins who remained by each other's side even during university.

But why did Teresa look so much more mature than I remembered? Her hair had been dyed maroon, and she wore a black form-fitting dress that showed off her curves. She looked familiar yet unfamiliar.

When she saw me like that, her eyes reddened. Then, she shouted, "You're a fucking idiot, Ariana! I told you to leave Elijah, the scumbag that he is. But you didn't listen! Look at what you're like now! You almost died after threatening suicide. You scared the hell out of me!"

She burst into tears toward the end of her rant. I couldn't understand what she meant, but my heart twisted painfully, and my eyes turned red, too. I didn't know why it had happened.

Just then, the woman in the formal outfit turned back, looking upset as she said, "This is the hospital, Ms. Stuart. Keep your voice down, please."

Teri seemed familiar with the woman. She pointed at her and snapped, "Call your precious Mr. Linden and tell him to come to the hospital! His wife is injured and lying in a hospital bed, yet he's still in the mood to attend some dumb charity dinner with Jocelyn Cornell!"

"Doesn't he think he's gone a bit too far? Jocelyn, the bitch, dumped him and fled abroad when he was almost bankrupt. Who saved his company? The York family! Now that he's made a comeback, Jocelyn's returned to suck up to him again."

"One is a bastard and a scumbag, while the other is a slutty gold digger. They make a perfect match!"

The woman's face turned red when she heard Teri's rant. Meanwhile, a nurse hurried over and persuaded Teri not to cause a scene. Only then did the woman hurry off like she was fleeing from something.

When silence descended upon the ward, Teri wiped her face and growled, "Listen to me, Ariana. You've been involved with Elijah and pestered him for seven years, but he doesn't love you. He doesn't respect you or your family at all."

"There's so many fish in the sea—why must you be so obsessed with him? You've threatened suicide so many times that he doesn't buy your act anymore."

She paused, looking exasperated as she continued, “You’re rich and pretty, Ariana. Why do you have to be such a hopeless romantic?”

I finally found the chance to ask her something. “Who is Elijah Linden, Teri? I don’t remember anything.”

Teri seemed taken aback. Then, she chuckled. “Elijah’s assistant is gone now, so you can drop the act. I know you’re only feigning amnesia.”

I rubbed my head, which was still swollen. I smiled bitterly. “I’ve really lost my memories, Teri. I don’t know who this Elijah you’re talking about is.”

She fell silent and stared at me dazedly. After staring into each other’s eyes for two minutes, she shrieked, “The heavens have finally made you see sense! You’ve forgotten all about that asshole!”

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After a series of checks, the doctor diagnosed that I probably had intermittent amnesia. The brain was a precious organ, after all, and it seemed that I’d fallen down many steps at the villa. For all everyone knew, something had been knocked loose in my brain when I’d hit my head.

I looked at myself in the mirror. My oval-shaped face and straight nose were the same as always, but my lips were pale. It was indeed my face, but there was something unfamiliar about it.

In my memory, I’d always been lively and joyful. But the woman I saw in the mirror had eyes that were devoid of joy. In fact, I looked bitter.

Had Teri been telling the truth? Had I really been entangled with Elijah for seven years? And was I really married?

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I didn’t want to believe it, but Teri showed me the photos and videos on her phone, proving that I really was married. To my surprise, my husband was Halton University’s ice god—Elijah Linden.

I saw how I was beaming in the photos and videos of the wedding and sighed deeply.

Teri said, “You fell head over heels for Elijah when we were in our sophomore year, even going so far as to neglect your studies for him. You waited for him outside his dormitory building every day, wanting to give him the breakfast you’d bought.

“Whatever sport he played, you would buy boxes of drinks for him and his teammates. On his birthday, you hired someone to float a banner using balloons to confess your feelings for him. When he fell sick, you’d sleep on the floor by his bedside to care for him around the clock...”

Her words were a torment to my ears—it was so humiliating. “That’s enough…”

Teri had no intention of letting me off the hook. She continued, “You even bribed the student council members to let you take someone else’s place in Elijah’s artificial intelligence club as an errand-runner. It was all in the name of pursuing him.

“You knew nothing about programming and became the club’s free labor. When you were 20, you confessed your feelings to him again…”

I clamped my hands over my ears, not wanting to hear anymore. Teri sighed. “You spent 200 thousand dollars to play a recurring video on Halton City’s tallest building—the video was of you asking Elijah to marry you. The whole of Halton City was stunned.”

I sighed and lowered my head. “What happened in the end?”

Teri’s expression turned odd. “He agreed to your proposal.”

I was silent for a while before saying, “It’s because of what you told me, right? That the Linden family was about to go bankrupt. He wouldn’t have married me if he had any other option since he didn’t love me, right?”

She looked like she didn’t want me to be hurt. “That might not necessarily be the case. Maybe it was because your persistence in pursuing him finally paid off… I guess.”

Silence descended upon the room again. I sighed. “How embarrassing…”

I looked at myself in the mirror again and saw how wan I was. I smiled self-deprecatingly. “To think I, the proud heiress of the York family, ended up becoming the laughingstock of Halton City.”