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Chapter 151 - 160

The moment I opened the door, Catherine Grace hurriedly entered the room. There was an unusual frown on her beautiful countenance as she sat on the bed and placed the laptop on her lap.

Seeing the urgency on her face, I quickly closed the door. With long, hurried strides I reached her side. "Cat, Is there a problem??" I asked. My eyes surveying her expression wondering what bothers her.

When there was no response, I slowly sat in the space beside her. My eyes surveyed the laptop she opened on her lap.

"Look at this, Phoenix." She pointed at the building in the picture. "Do you see what I see?" She asked, her tone suddenly filled with excitement.

My eyes squinted at the corner as I focused my undivided attention on her laptop screen.

The said picture was an old two storey building that looked as if it needed some heavy renovation. There are some cars parked in front of the building. There was nothing remarkable in the picture, I thought to myself, unable to fathom what Catherine Grace wanted me to see.

"I don't actually get what you mean." I replied, giving up after minutes of scrutiny. I just couldn't get what she's referring to.

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"This is Angela's car. This is where she was last seen before her death."

Catherine's response stirred my interest. This time, I leaned closer and stared at the sky-blue ford parked in the parking area just in front of the two storey building. Then my curious gaze shifted to the building wondering what Angela was doing in that place.

St. James. It was the words written on the building. The words sound so familiar. I'm sure that I heard it before but I forgot where.

I blinked my eyes several times without tearing my gaze off from the screen.

"St. James." I read the words aloud. This time I finally realized where I heard it before! It was written on the painting which Samantha destroyed!

My eyes widened, my brows shot to the ceiling as I looked at Catherine.

"Based on my investigation, St. James is an old orphanage situated outside of town." Catherine explained as she clicked on another image taken from the exterior of the rundown orphanage. "When I looked deeper into the records of the kid's orphanage I discovered that Angela was a major sponsor helping run the orphanage."

Catherine Grace took a deep breath before she continued. "After what I discovered, I arrived at the ultimate question, what was she doing in that place before her death?"

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"I think I know the answer." I replied. After rising from my seat, I folded my arms beneath my breasts and paced back and forth. There is a single logical reason which I could think of why she was there.

Catherine looked at me, her eyes wide with curiosity. "Did she have relatives there?"

I shook my head as I finally stopped walking. "I can't answer that. However, I have an idea why she was there. I have a feeling that it concerns her child."

Catherine's eyes went wide, her eyebrows shot to the ceiling, and her lips parted open. For a moment, she was unable to speak.

When she recovered from shock her eyebrows scrunched in concentration while wrapped in her own thoughts.

Unexpectedly, after a long moment, Catherine Grace closed her laptop screen and rose from the bed. There was a mysterious glint in her eyes.

She hastily made her way towards the door. "We are leaving." She said as she reached for the door knob.

"Leaving? Where?" I asked, puzzled.

"To St. James of course." She replied and closed the door giving me no time to say no.

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After two hours of long journey, Catherine's car finally skidded to a stop in front of the St. James orphanage.

A huge sigh of relief escaped my lips after I pulled the car door open and stretched my numb legs.

I heard the other side of the door open and close. Afterwards, Catherine stood beside me and surveyed the building just like I do.

The St. James Orphanage was a two storey building situated in the middle of a farm. The strange location was understandable since the orphanage was run by nuns.

The place was old, and shabby looking, and it looked worse in broad daylight compared to the pictures. But despite its appearance, the old building stood proud and tall under the hot blazing sun.

The gates were rusty and it looked as if it would fall off from its hinges anytime soon. Obviously, the establishment doesn't have enough funds to maintain the place.

I walked across the pebbled ground and nearly tripped a couple of times in the process. I assume that the pathway wasn't paved and cemented due to lack of funds.

Catherine Grace followed behind me, muttering unintelligible curses for wearing her high-heeled shoes.

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I was glad that I was wearing rubber shoes at the moment.

When I reached the gates, I pressed the buzzer twice and waited for someone to come. I didn't wait long before I heard footsteps coming from inside. It was followed by the squeak of metals as someone unlatched the lock.

The sound of the rusty gates creaking open pierced my ears. Then a woman wearing a black habit emerged.

"How may I help you?" She asked in a very angelic voice that nearly made me close my eyes.

I was taken aback when my eyes shifted to her face. Her exquisite amber cat eyes caught me off guard as it met mine.

Catherine Grace had fallen silent too as her gaze landed on the nun's face.

Even though her head was covered with the habit, it cannot be denied that she has a stunning face that deeply reminds me of a chiseled statue of Virgin Mary.

"I am Sister Bella Rose," The woman in front of me finally introduced herself with a slight bow of her head.

"I am Phoenix." I introduced myself then turned towards Catherine, signalling her to introduce herself.

"I am Catherine Grace, Phoenix friend." She finally introduced herself after she found her words.

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"I am pleased to meet you both." Her shapely lips curled into a smile that lit up her whole face. What a stunning face, I thought to myself eyeing her deep-seated eyes, chiselled nose, and her enviable high cheekbones. "Please come inside for some refreshments. I know both of you are tired after hours of journey."

Sister Bella Rose pulled the gates wider making the hinges squeak once more. I was so afraid that the whole gate would collapse, that's why I hurriedly entered. Catherine Grace followed behind me.

"I apologize for the poor condition of the orphanage." Sister Bella said apologetically as we slowly entered the main entrance of the building. "We don't have enough donations to repair the whole building. The ample donations we receive are just enough for the children's food and clothing." She added with a heavy heart.

My eyes swept over the broken ceiling, to the walls peeling with paint, and to the floor. The sight made my heart ache. Those poor souls living in this place deserved a more comfortable life.

I wonder if I could encourage my father to become one of the orphanage's major sponsors. For sure, it would benefit all the children.

"It's okay Sister Bella. Don't mind us please." I told her and gave her a soft, reassuring smile in which she reciprocated with equal warmth.

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"As you could see, it's quiet here since the children are inside their classrooms on the second floor. They wouldn't bother us for now and we could drink tea for a while."

Sister Bella stopped in front of a door and pulled it open. "This is the area where we receive our visitors."

We entered the small room that looked like a library except that it has more empty shelves than it has books. There is a single window inside but it was broken and a transparent tape was placed to the broken part of the window to prevent it from further damage.

"Please sit down for a while and I will fetch tea for you both." Sister Bella gestured towards the table near the window before turning towards the door to get tea.

When she was gone, I hesitantly sat on the wobbly chair made of wood. I was afraid that it wouldn't be able to carry my weight but luckily it didn't collapse after receiving my weight just what I expected.

Catherine Grace sat on the opposite chair across from me. Her face twisted with worry when the chair squeaked with the burden of her weight. She just calmed a bit when the old-looking chair did not fall apart.

We sat there in silence while observing the room.

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A few minutes later, Sister Bella Rose returned inside the room with a tray in her hand. She carefully placed the contents of the tray on top of the table then filled the cups with scalding hot tea before she sat on the last vacant chair.

Chapter 152

"Now that we are settled, may I ask why you came here?" The nun's voice was soft and sweet and very reassuring. I could listen to her for hours while she spoke. "I mean, this place is a two hour drive from town and that makes me think that you came here for a very important reason." She added, her amber eyes peering through exquisite eyelashes.

She gracefully picked her teacup and brought it to her lips. Patiently, she waited for a response. Her curious eyes swept on our faces.

A momentary silence draped over the room as we observed each other.

The nun calmly sip on her tea as if she was giving us enough time to express our intention.

I took a deep breath as I constructed the words inside my thoughts before speaking them. The best thing I should do now is to tell Sister Bella Rose about the truth. She's a good person and she wouldn't judge us.

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My instinct tells me that I could trust her. She's trustworthy not just because she's a disciple of god but it's because it's what my intuition had been telling me.

Also, if there's someone who would willingly help us to give information to help point out Angela's killer then it would be Sister Bella Rose. Undoubtedly, the nun would want to seek justice for Angela's sudden death.

St. James Orphanage was indebted to Angela, without her, the charity could have collapsed a long time ago. That would be enough reason why Sister Bella would wish to cooperate.

Sister Bella must have felt my doubts, she captured my eyes and gave me a soft and reassuring smile. The sparkle of kindness in her eyes melted my doubts instantly.

"The truth is.... We came here to ask questions about Angela..." I said at last. A heavy burden was lifted from my chest when I said the words aloud.

Sister Bella didn't even flinch at my admission. Even her facial expressions remained calm and composed. Perhaps she already saw it coming. Carefully, she lowered the cup to the table. "Are you by chance her friends?" Her curious gaze swept our face once more as if she's trying to recall if she'd seen us before.

"We aren't close to hers." I honestly replied as I shook my head.

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The truth is Angela has never been a friend of mine. We are not even close. We are miles and miles apart and the only thing that could define our relationship is the word 'enemy.'

I sighed thinking that whatever happened between us was all over. Angela's gone. She was murdered by her mother in law. I don't have any hidden grudge against her. She wronged me in the past but I had forgiven her already.

I'm not hard-hearted and I forgive people who wronged me because it's the only way to set myself free.

Catherine Grace cleared her throat. My gaze instantly landed to hers. She picked her tea cup and slowly lifted it to her lips.

I picked my cup on the table and drank the contents. The delicious taste of turmeric tea spread through my mouth.

After Catherine took a quick sip of her tea, she turned her gaze towards sister Bella's direction and looked deep into her eyes.

"We are not so close to Angela nor do we belong in her circle of friends. We could say that we are someone concerned about her death. I am Catherine Grace and I worked as a Private Investigator who's is helping solve Angela's murder case. My friend here, Phoenix, is involved with the case too. We are doing our best to seek evidence to find out who killed her and so the liable person would pay for her death. We are hoping you could help us."

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Catherine was very professional. She appeared to be well experienced and she knew exactly what to say during situations like this.

Sister Bella's eyes fell to her cup as she lowered it on the wooden table. Sadness clouded her exquisite amber eyes. Her eyes were so expressive that she was the type which could be easily read no matter how hard she kept her emotions to herself.

"A day before Angela was stabbed to death she came here. If I knew it would be the last time I would see her alive I shouldn't have allowed her to leave." Her lips trembled as she spoke, tears formed in the corner of her eyes while they were filled with regrets.

"It's not your fault she died." I whispered gently, trying to ease the heavy weight on her chest.

I wish Samantha could feel that guilt for mercilessly killing Angela. Unfortunately, in her twisted mind she was feeling the opposite.

"But... But... If only I stopped her from leaving that day, her life would be spared." She stared at me unblinkingly, her eyes red from trying to suppress the tears.

"That could be true." I reasoned and looked deep into her eyes. "However, if you stopped her from leaving that day it would not mean she would be safe forever. Her killer would eventually find a way to dispatch her. The situation could not be helped and the culprit couldn't be stopped. So please stop blaming yourself."

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I reached for her hand and pressed it reassuringly. Her fingers were soft and smooth and it reminded me of rose petals.

"I know it's not my fault but I feel so frustrated that I couldn't do anything to save her." She whispered, wiping the tears at the corner of her eyes.

I swallowed the lump that suddenly formed on my throat. I never liked Angela but it doesn't mean that I feel no sadness about her death. People naturally die but it's hard to accept that she died a brutal death.

To think that the culprit who mercilessly stabbed her multiple times was still on the loose was making me even more frustrated.

"By any chance, did Angela come here at the orphanage to deliver her monthly donations?"

The conversation was so intense that I almost forgot about my tea. Catherine Grace continued to sip her tea while listening to our conversation. There was a curious glow in her eyes.

"Yes, partly that's the reason why she came here."

"Partly?" My eyebrows scrunched in confusion.

"The main reason why she came to the orphanage that day was to hand over her son to us."

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"W-whaat!?" I nearly knocked the tea cup in front of me. I blinked several times as I digested the words. The shocking news rendered me speechless for about a minute.

When my gaze shifted to Catherine, she appeared as shocked as me. She quickly lowered the cup she's holding in her trembling fingers before the contents could spill on her clothes.

"S-she handed over her child for adoption?" I asked, recovering a bit from shock.

Angela could definitely afford to raise her child alone and without assistance from her husband or his family. Learning that she handed her child for adoption was a shock to me. Why would she do that?

"Yes, she even said that no one should know that she brought her child to the orphanage."

"But why would Angela do that?" I said the words aloud.

I was wondering if she was trying to hide her child from someone.

Sister Bella shook her head. "I'm sorry but that's the question I couldn't answer. It was only her who could explain that."

My shoulders fell. A deep sigh escaped my lips. The sudden revelation was making my head spin.

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"Haven't Angela mentioned anything before she left? I mean, did her behavior appear so strange?" It was Catherine Grace leaning closer. Her eyes never once leave Bella's face as she calculated the nun's expression.

Bella took a deep breath. She fell into a momentary silence. Her eyebrows furrowed in concentration as she recalled the exact events during Angela's last visit.

I impatiently waited for her to speak while holding my breath.

"Honestly.... There was something odd with her at that time, she appeared paranoid and fidgety and when she opened her bag to take the money I saw a gun inside. Angela never brought any weapon with her before." Sister Bella reached for her cup and took a quick sip to calm herself. "She must be afraid that someone was following her. I want to think that Angela was trying to protect her child from someone."

So my assumption was right. She?was trying to protect her child but from whom? From his mother in law? If yes then why would Samantha harm her grandchild?

I let go a deep and exasperated sigh. Questions continue to pile up inside my head and I wonder If I will be able to stumble upon an answer.

Hopefully, Catherine and I will discover something soon that might help us with Angela's case. As long as Samantha is free my mind will never be at peace. I will constantly fear that I might be next on her list...

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Chapter 153

Surprise hit me when Sister Bella Rose took a deep intake of breath before gingerly vacating her seat behind her.

For a moment, she just stood there with a deep frown forming on her temples, and quietly battling an inner dilemma.

When I thought she's gonna stay that way for a little bit more, her mouth opened.

"There's something which I haven't told you yet," She said in a barely audible whisper that stopped me on my attempt of lifting the teacup to my lips.

Catherine Grace and I looked at each. Without saying a word, I knew she was thinking the same. Perhaps what sister Bella tells us next would help a bit in solving Angela's case.

My gaze shifted back to the nun, patiently waiting for what she had to say.

"Before Angela left she handed me a sealed envelope..." She began, clasping her dainty fingers in front of her and she began to pace back and forth as if she was uncomfortable with the matter. She stopped walking and faced us before she continued, "But she warned me to never tell anyone except to whom the letter should be given! But... but... I don't know where to start. I don't know where I could find that person. I don't know what the letter contains but it must be something of significance."

There was a long pause. No one inside the room said a word.

"I am saying this to both of you because I felt you too could be trusted. I wanted to help you solve Angela's murder case so the real murderer would be

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captured." When she finished her words Sister Bella slowly made her way to the left side of the room where a wooden bookshelves stood.

The books displayed barely filled the spaces and they are very old looking with thick hard bounds. Most of them were educational books. As my gaze swept on the display, I couldn't find a single book for kids

Bella pulled a book on top of the shelves. She placed the heavy book on her palms and flipped through the pages.

When the cover tilted to the side I saw that she was holding a bible. It was thick and very old looking but the pages were well protected by a hard cover.

Her face lit up after she saw what she'd been looking for. She sighed in relief and hurriedly made her way back to the table and sat on her seat.

There was something on her expression when her gaze shifted in my direction which tells me whatever she would say next would change the outcome of the situation.

She cleared her throat. She flipped the book open, revealing a neatly sealed envelope inserted between the pages.

The moment my eyes landed on the envelope, I wanted to reach for it and read the message a dead woman left. But it wasn't meant for me so I stopped all the urge.

"Angela gave this to me before she left." She picked up the white envelope and showed it to us. "This letter is very important and it shouldn't be handed to anyone except to the person whom it was addressed to. Whatever happens you must give it to her—that was Angela's exact words."

I looked at the sealed envelope with growing curiosity. I would do anything just to know what it contains.

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"And to whom did Angela wish to give this letter? We might be able to help." Catherine spoke after a lengthy silence. She eyed the envelope with keen interest.

I guess I wasn't the only one dying to know what was written inside.

"A woman named Beatrix Crawford. Angela said I must give this to her." Sister Bella replied in a determined tone that matched her expression.

I gasped and stared back at her. I was wondering if I heard it correctly.

"P-pardon me? Would you mind repeating the name of the woman that the letter is addressed to?"

"Beatrix Crawford, I think if I remember correctly, she's Angela's acquaintance."

My eyes grew wide while my eyes shot to the ceiling.

I cleared my throat and straightened on my seat. After regaining my composure, I looked her straight in the eye, "You don't need to look for her any further."

"W-what do you mean?" She asked. Her eyes gleaming with hope.

"I am the woman you are looking for.... My real name is Beatrix Crawford," I said, producing an Id so she could look at it.

It was now Sister Bella's turn to be shocked. Her beautiful amber eyes widened and her jaw dropped to the floor.

She grabbed the Id in my hand so she could inspect it. "...I...d-don't k-know what to say.... This is unbelievable..." She gasped in pure disbelief when she read my name on the Id and saw my picture.

"It's really you!" She exclaimed breathlessly, hands clasping her chest as if she could hardly breathe.

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Sister Bella handed the Id back to me.

"I have seen enough proof.... I now believe you."

For the first time since I entered the room I let go a deep sigh of relief.

With trembling fingers, Sister Bella picked the sealed envelope inserted between the book and handed it to me.

I took the envelope from her hand and I held it firmly in fear that someone would snatch it away from my hold.

"T-thank you Sister Bella. You don't know how grateful I am."

"You don't have to thank me.... I was only doing what I must. In return I must ask a single favor from you."

"Anything.... I would do anything in return."

"Find her killer... and whoever the culprit is, make sure he or she pays for the crime committed." Her eyes were pleading as she looked at me.

Even if Sister Bella doesn't ask for it, I'm still determined to do everything to make justice prevail. I will never stop unless Samantha is behind bars. It's the place where she deserved to be.

"Don't worry Sister Bella, I will do everything I can to find her killer." I vowed with conviction.

"That's all I wanted to hear. I feel much better hearing you will."

I stared at the letter in my hand. This must contain the answer I'd been looking for....

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An hour later we said our goodbye to Sister Bella Rose. But before we left the place, Catherine and I promised that we would come back to the orphanage.

Little did Sister Bella Rose know that once we returned, the orphanage would change forever. I decided to become a benefactor of St. James Orphanage.... And that was only the beginning.

However, before we could proceed on the issue regarding the orphanage we have a far more important thing to deal with.

Inside the car, I stared at the envelope in my hand. Catherine Grace sat beside me, her unblinking gaze looking at the envelope too.

I didn't know why my heartbeat quickened the moment I sat inside the car with Catherine Grace beside me. My fingers were cold too.... Fear and excitement swirling inside me.... I don't know what will happen once I finish reading what Angela has to say.

"Please open it... I'm dying to know what's inside..." Said Catherine Grace. She was more excited than me.

Like her, I too was curious to know what it contained. Since I couldn't wait any longer,

I took a deep breath then carefully tore the envelope open.

When I pulled the folded paper inside I suddenly became aware that my fingers were colder and trembling more intensely this time.

I let go of the breath I didn't know I'm holding and unfolded the paper. Angela's sloppy handwriting came to my view. She must have been in haste when she wrote this letter. I thought to myself as my gaze traced the words written.

Catherine leaned closer so she could read the letter too.

Dear Beatrix... I paused after reading the first words.

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A lump suddenly formed on my throat. It was difficult to concentrate on reading knowing that the woman who wrote this was brutally murdered. I couldn't help but become emotional. Angela and I are not close but it doesn't mean I would not feel sympathy towards her just because she's not my friend.

If only she didn't try to murder me several times before then we might become best of friends.... But despite that I feel sorry for her. Even though she's not a good person, she's human too. She has feelings and emotions and she doesn't deserve to die the way she did.

I took a deep, steadying breath and focused my gaze on the letter in my hands. Silently, I wished that this letter would help us find evidence against Samantha so she could be placed to jail where she rightly belongs.

My eyes resume reading...

.... Once you receive this letter it only proves one thing—I was murdered. I know that I would not live long and so I wrote this so everyone would know the truth...

Chapter 154

I swallowed the lump on my throat and forced myself to continue reading the letter.

"Of all people, why you? I know as you read this letter you're asking yourself the same question. To be honest, I don't even know the answer. I just feel that I could trust you.... You are a good person, Beatrix. The overflowing goodness in your heart was something I admired. You are someone I could never be no matter how hard I tried to. I'm just a supporting character who was never meant to be happy.... And that was my biggest frustration in life.

I only wanted to be happy.... But it seems I was never meant for it. I spent my childhood years trying to make everyone happy until I realized it was only an illusion. There's no good things in the world... Only bad people.... I guess I let

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the dark side of life conquer what was left of my light and before I knew it, I became the most hated character in somebody else's story.

If I regret something in my life then it is allowing myself to be an instrument used to destroy you. I became a puppet for so long that I forgot how it feels to feel alive. I hurt you.... Not once, not twice but several times.... And that would be enough reason why it won't be easy for you to forgive me. But I want you to know that I regret everything even if it's too late now. No amount of words would be able to express my endless regrets.

I would ask a favor from you, it's not for my own sake but it's for my son's welfare. I know it's too much but I'm begging you.

Samantha was successful in killing me and soon she would hunt my child and kill him too. You must work fast before she does. I secured the evidence inside my car. The location of the car was drawn at the back of this letter. Please help me.... You know what to do with the evidence.

At this point I have nothing to hide anymore.... Samantha wanted me dead because she knew I would expose the truth that it was not Vince who was the father of my child but Ybrahim Greyson—her husband. She let her husband use and abuse me. In order to protect herself and to keep the truth from spilling she murdered me....

But even after death, I will make sure that she will pay for her crimes. You're my only hope, Beatrix... please help my son

I stared at the paper in my hand, with eyes wide and unblinking. What the heck did I read? I have difficulty digesting them in my mind.

This is... a huge shock to me.

I don't even know how to react after realizing Ace's father is also the father of Angela's son. Basically, that makes the child Ace's younger brother.

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What the hell.... Yeah.... That sounds mind-boggling.

My lips parted open but when I spoke no sound came from my lips. Perhaps, I already swallowed my tongue.

Catherine Grace who was sitting next to me got a funny expression on her face. She was as surprised as I am.

Well who would not be surprised after learning the truth?

I was finally able to determine Samantha's motive. Practically, she killed Angela because she's no longer cooperative. After Angela threatened to spill the truth (that it was actually Ybbrahim Greyson who is her child's?father) Samantha killed her because she didn't want anyone to know that it was all her fault.

My fingers tightened around the piece of?paper. Because of Samantha's doing, Ace was accused of murder!

What now? We knew who the killer is and discovered the motive she has but we are lacking in evidence. We cannot prove anything at all... well unless we find the evidence right away.

"Phoenix?"

When I didn't answer, Catherine Grace held my shoulders firmly as if silently telling me everything would be fine and that no matter what happens she would help me prove Ace's innocence.

I lifted my gaze to hers, I saw worry gleaming in her expressive eyes. We haven't been together for so long but I felt as if I have known her my whole life. Perhaps because she's honest and kind and authentic. She's someone who's willing to protect everyone who's close to hers. I am lucky to have found a genuine friend.

"Are you alright?" Catherine Grace spoke softly. She lifted her fingers to my face and tuck the stray hair on my face behind my ears.

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I opened my lips to say 'yes' but my throat was so dry that the words came out in a barely audible whisper.

Wordlessly, Catherine Grace handed me a handkerchief.

I wanted to ask her what the handkerchief was for when a tear slither down my cheek before falling down to the paper I was still firmly holding around my fingers.

I was surprised to discover that I was crying....

What the heck. I can't even stop my tears from falling.

"T-thank you..." I replied hoarsely, taking the handkerchief from her hand. I used the cloth to wipe the wetness on my flushed cheeks.

Angela is not perfect...and nobody is. I, just like everyone, was born with lots of flaws and imperfections and with that reason, I have no right to judge anyone.

Angela committed a lot of mistakes but it doesn't change the fact that she's a mother and mothers are always over protective of their children. They would do everything to protect them.

As a mother of two, I could clearly understand her and for her sake, I will protect her child by making sure Samantha rots behind bars for killing her.

Embarrassed to realize that Catherine Grace was still looking at me, I quickly dried my cheeks. I don't want her to see me cry.

Slowly, I took a deep breath and released a deep sigh. I repeated the process until my emotions subsided.

After I calmed down, I lifted my gaze to Catherine Grace seated on the driver's seat. "I don't want to waste time anymore. We must find the evidence before Samantha does." I spoke in a surprisingly calm manner.

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"But...how about you? Would you be fine?"

"Yes Cat. Thank you for your concern. I can handle my emotions now." I replied, forcing a smile to her lips as I hoped she would believe me.

She nodded her head. Her eyes were full of understanding.

Catherine Grace didn't argue. She didn't even ask any more questions, which I'm thankful for. She just gave me a soft, reassuring smile that helped ease a bit of my stress.

She turned the engine on and focused her attention on the road.

It took us a thirty minute drive to reach the location drawn into the map. Angela's sketch was very detailed. She also included notable landmarks and it helped us a lot in finding the place. We didn't have difficulty finding the exact spot she referred to the map.

The car pulled into a stop at the vicinity surrounded by trees. As I got out of the car

my squinted eyes surveyed the area wondering if it was safe for us to wander freely. We might be charged with trespassing. But then logic told me that there's no warning sign anywhere so it must be safe.

The location was a perfect place to keep something hidden because of the huge distance from residential houses. Who could have thought that a car was somewhere inside that dense growth of wild plants and thick sprouting trees.

Angela made sure that Samantha would not be able to find it in case she learns that evidence against her exists.

I heard the sound of the car opening and closing. Seconds later Catherine Grace emerged from the car and sat next to me. Her attention was on the map she was now holding.

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"Do you think we got her direction right?" I asked, throwing her a sideways glance before checking my surroundings for the second time just to check we are alone.

"We couldn't be mistaken. This is the place." She replied and moved a couple of steps forward then pointed towards the trunk of an old tree tied with thin red ribbon. " This is the mark Angela was referring to. We just need to follow this."

"I wonder if this is private property... we could be charged with trespassing." she added absentmindedly but she kept moving forward.

Just exactly my thoughts a while ago, I thought as I followed behind her.

We followed the detailed instructions on the map. The instructions were very specific: we just needed to follow the trail of red ribbons tied on trees which were easy but the only problem we encountered was that the trees with ribbons stood wide apart from each other and it was a bit hard to find them at times.

After nearly an hour of tedious search we finally found Angela's car.

Chapter 155

We found Angela's car concealed behind the deserted part of the forest where overgrown grasses stood. The car was safely hidden and in good condition. There's no sign that something was there nor was there any evidence someone tried to steal from the car.

Catherine Grace carefully reached for the door and pulled it open but it won't budge.

The car was locked and we didn't have the key either.

We could smash the window with a rock but it would damage the inside of the car. Shards would fly inside and that might damage an important object.

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But we have narrow options. It's either we smash the window or find another way. But there's no quickest way except breaking the window and forcing the lock open from inside.

"I'll check the window on the other side." Catherine said. Without waiting for a response, she hastily walks towards the opposite side of the car.

"Thank god!" She exclaimed, eyes popping in surprise as it landed on the window.

Curious to see what she meant, I walked behind her and saw that the window on that side was half open. Angela must have left the window open on purpose.

I let out a huge sigh of relief. Angela planned things well. And now, we're only a step away in finding what exactly happened to her.

I watched as Catherine inserted her arms and tried to open the door from inside. There was a 'click' before the door swung open.

Relief flooded inside me as I watch her

excitedly enter the car to search for the evidence Angela mentioned in her letter. Seconds later, she emerged inside the car with phone in hand.

"This must be hers." She said, referring to Angela.

The phone was off and Catherine pressed the button until the screen brightened. The cellphone hadn't been charged for days and it shut down after a second of turning home.

"What's your plan Cat? Should we head to the police station and inform the police we found Angela's car?"

She shook her head, "Someone from the Investigation Agency would do that job. For now, we need to go back home and charge this device."

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Catherine and I started to walk back to the spot where she parked the car.

I pulled the door open and clambered inside. However, she didn't immediately climb in the car. She finished her phone from inside her pocket and called someone, it must be one of the staff from their agency.

As I waited for her to finish the call, my thoughts drifted back to Angela's phone. Just what kind of evidence was she hiding inside her phone? Will it be enough to convict Samantha for her crimes?

My thoughts were shattered when Catherine Grace hopped to the driver's seat and turned the engine. I was so engrossed in my thoughts that I didn't notice her call had ended.

The car rolled onto the rough road. When the car safely reached the highway, I leaned on the cushioned seat and stared at the view outside the window.

We traversed the endless highway in silence until we reached Catherine's house.

"Wrong password..." Catherine Grace?muttered in exasperation. She paced back and forth in front of the large tv screen inside my room. Angela's mobile phone firmly gripped in her hand.

"She left no password though...." I mumbled as I slumped into the bed.?My squinted eyes swept through the letter in my hand for the umpteenth time. Skimming through the contents once more just in case I missed something.

Sighing, I lowered the paper into my lap. I still hadn't found any clue about the password. Perhaps, Angela forgot to mention it in her letter. It's no wonder that it totally slipped from her mind. She's in a hurry when she wrote the letter anyway.

My gaze shifted?back to Catherine Grace when she sat beside me.

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"So what do we do now?"

Catherine flashed me a smile before she replied, "Of course! I'll hack the password. That's my job!"

I admire how Cat could be so cheerful at times like this. I found myself smiling back as I looked at her. "Without a doubt, I know you could do that. It's your forte." I replied and watched her grab her laptop on top of the bed and place it on her lap.

"Give me a maximum of thirty minutes." She said without tearing her gaze off from her laptop screen, her fingers skilfully typing through the keys like robots.

While Catherine worked on Angela's phone, I leaned towards the headboard and took the opportunity to chat with Elisa and ask if Faith and Vien are fine.

I didn't wait long before I received a reply from my best friend. She said in her chat that my daughters are fine. Alexander and Claire are taking good care of them so I don't need to worry.

I swallowed a lump in my throat. Just thinking about my children makes me emotional. I missed them so much that I feel so bad that I have to be separated from them.

But I can't return home yet. We still need to prove Ace is innocent. Aside from that, Samantha should be jailed for the crime she committed. Once this ordeal was over, Ace and I would come home so we could be complete and happy as a family.

After exchanging messages with Elisa I returned my phone on top of the night table. I felt a lot better after talking to her.

"Phoenix!"

I snapped out of my thoughts and quickly slumped beside her at the edge of the bed and saw the phone in her hand. My eyes widened in surprise after seeing the lock was opened!

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Catherine Grace is a genius indeed!

My heartbeat quickened. My pulse jittered as I watched her check the files but she couldn't find the evidence Angela was talking about. Just as Catherine turned the data on, a video file automatically began to download.

We waited in suspense until the video was fully downloaded and saved on the files. With fingers trembling in anticipation Cat clicked on the icon and the video began playing.

Chapter 156

My breathing suspends on my throat as I watch the video play.

The video began with the door opening. Vince enters, dragging an unconscious body behind him. When the man's face turns to the camera, it could be seen that the man Vince dragged inside the room was Ace.

Just as he dropped the body to the floor,

the door unceremoniously opens, this time Angela strode inside. Her gaze falls to the floor and her eyes widens when she sees the body.

She rushes towards Vince and confronts him.

The two began to argue as she pointed a finger towards the body. She stomps her feet in exasperation. Vince seems not to listen as she speaks. He turns his head away from her. But she didn't give up just yet, she continued to nag him until his patience snapped. He pushed her hard and she stumbled towards the floor.

Angela was so shocked with his action that it took her a moment to recover.

When she recovered, she got to her feet, curled her fists to a ball, and landed a series of punches on his body.

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He fell back from the sudden attack. His face twisted in an ugly mask of rage and he slapped her so hard that she wasn't able to get up for a while.

Vince strode to the door and slammed the door shut.

Minutes passed by but he didn't return.

Angela gingerly rose from the floor. Her gaze landed on Ace who was still unconscious.

As if making up her mind, she hurriedly strode to the night table where a telephone stood on top.

That moment she reached for the telephone and dialed a number, the door flung open and Samantha entered. She was holding a kitchen knife.

Angela must be in a panic that she hadn't heard the door opening and closing behind her.

Samantha reached her target. She raised the knife to the air.

Before Angela could understand what's happening, the knife dug into her shoulders. Blood oozed from the wound and stained her pristine white dress.

Shock registered in her eyes after she turned behind her and saw Samantha, menacingly grinning at her like a demon.

Her lips opened as she screamed in pain.

She managed to grab the vase from the night table and smash it on Samantha's head. Blood began to flow from the grievous wound on her forehead.

She slumped on the floor rolling in pain. The knife dropped to her side.

She took the opportunity and she ran to the door while her killer was writhing in agony. But she was too weak to even move. Halfway to the door she finally

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collapsed. Her face twisted in unbearable pain as she lay on the flawless white floor which was now stained with her blood.

She didn't give up yet. Even if she was severely wounded she struggled to get up on her feet only to fall back to the floor.

She couldn't move this time. The more she struggled the more blood flowed freely from her gaping wound.

Samantha recovered from the pain of being hit by a vase. She slowly rose and picked up the knife. A sinister smile curled on her lips as she crossed the distance between them.

By the time she reached Angela's side, she was already unconscious by the amount of blood she lost. Samantha raise the knife in the air and without second thoughts, she plunged it again onto Angela's body.

She plunged the knife repeatedly and without remorse. She stabs her again and again as if she was butchering an animal meat and not a human being.

She wasn't content with what she did. She turned Angela's body upside down then stabbed her repeatedly until her hands were exhausted.

No person could survive after her organs were severely damaged by a large kitchen knife. Angela wasn't an exception.

Satisfied for what she'd done, Samantha straightened. She eyed the lifeless body without regrets. A triumphant smile curled on her lips as if she's hadn't just committed murder.

She shifted her attention to Ace. In her evil mind, she knew exactly what to do. In no time, she reached his side. She slowly took his left hand and spread the blood from her gloved finger around his palms.

When she was finished, he proceeded to his right hand and did the same. After covering his palms with Angela's blood, she placed the knife on his hand and curled his fingers around it to make it appear he was the murderer.

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After I finished watching the video, my stomach turned upside down and bile rose on my throat. I have this urge to run to the bathroom and pour everything on the sink.

I swallowed hard and blinked back the tears.

I don't know how to feel at the moment. I was consumed with mixed emotions. There's a part of me enraged at the thought that Samantha brutally murdered her daughter in law without suffering from guilt afterwards. Perhaps she was as mentally unstable as her own son.

To think that she could walk away from murder just like that is what angered me the most. If Angela hadn't left any evidence that points out to her true killer that only means that the real culprit will never be caught.

Thanks to Angela. I owed her so much. If it weren't for her we wouldn't have evidence against Samantha.

I swallowed the lump in my throat and shifted my gaze away from the screen. I will not be able to sleep peacefully tonight, that is for sure. After watching the disturbing video for the first time, no sane person would be able to sleep without suffering from a nightmare.

Catherine Grace gave me a glass of water.

'Thank you,' I mumbled, taking it from her hand and drinking the contents in one go. I feel a lot better afterwards.

I let go a deep sigh. This ordeal would be over soon. The real killer would soon pay for her crimes. This time I will make sure Samantha would rot behind bars forever.

Chapter 157

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Lucas Nicholas sat proudly on his throne—his swivel chair—like the infamous god of the underworld, Hades.

The eerie silence inside his office wrapped through him like a cloak.

The beep on his laptop instantly carved a frown on his forehead. The sound indicates a new message has arrived.

He clicked on the notification bar.

Catherine Grace, his cousin, the OIC of the Investigation Firm he worked at sent him a video file.

He was about to ignore her message when he received another, this time it was written in bold capital letters. It says VERY VERY IMPORTANT!

He let go a deep sigh. He wondered what his cousin was up to. Catherine Grace constantly bothers him from time to time over useless things and says it's important, even though they're not. It's her way of telling him not to overwork.

Left without a choice, he clicked on the video, and it began to play. The video instantly captured his interest. He can't tear his gaze off it this time.

His eyebrows furrowed while his eyes squinted in concentration as he watched what happened next.

His jaw dropped to the floor and his eyes widened with shock as the morbid scene unfolded right in front of his eyes.

The evidence that could prove Ace was innocent was right in front of him!

This time, the real culprit could never escape from her crimes.

After watching the video, he let go of the breath he didn't know he was holding. Even though the video isn't playing anymore, he just continued to stare at the screen as he slowly recovered his composure.

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He was still taken aback after watching the video. He wasn't knew when it comes too murder since it was natural in his line of work. But somehow, the video was very disturbing. Only a mentally ill person would stab an already dead woman forty more times.

His phone suddenly rang on top of his table. He flinched by the sudden piercing sound. As he reached for it, he realized his fingers were trembling. He shrugged his shoulders and turned the answer button.

"Did you see the video Nic?" Catherine asked in a tone filled with excitement.

"Yes," He replied. For the very first time, he was thankful for his cousin who could be annoying at times. "How did you manage to get the evidence?" He asked.

Lucas Nicholas gingerly rose from his seat as he waited for Catherine's response. The swivel chair squeaked in relief when he took his weight off it.

He stood in front of the glass window and stared at the boundless view of skyscrapers and establishments in front of him as sunset swept over the horizon. The scene looked magical—like a scene straight from the painter's canvas.

"Angela was the one who led us to the evidence. She left a letter to Phoenix telling her everything." She explained breathlessly. He could imagine his cousin pacing back and forth as she spoke.

Lucas couldn't help but wonder what could have happened if Angela didn't leave any evidence behind before she died.

Even if Ace was innocent, he would not be able to win the case. The killer—whom he learned was Samantha, executed her crime so well that it was impossible to prove that she was the real killer.

He never knew Angela personally but he was actually very thankful to her. Ace would be proven to be innocent.

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"Is Phoenix with you right now?" He asked, tearing his gaze away from the magnificent view outside the window.

He returned to his table to look for the car key?he kept in the drawer under his table. When he successfully retrieves the key, he grabs it and drops it in the pocket of his pants.

"Yes, she's here with me..." She replied with a momentary pause. "Why'd you ask?"

"Good. I received the information that Vince was back in the country.... If possible, please don't allow Phoenix to leave the house.... It's dangerous. Ace would skin me alive if something happens to his wife."

"Copy! I will make sure she won't leave the house." Catherine said with conviction.

When the call was over, Lucas pressed the end button and slid his phone into his pocket then grabbed his coat hanging on from the wall before heading to the elevator.

When he reached the ground floor, he exited the building and made a beeline straight to the sleek silvery jaguar waiting at the parking lot.

The car was a gift from his grandfather and it became his favorite car since then.

His hawk-sharp eyes darted across the?luxury cars neatly lined up in the spacious parking area. He was alone and he had nothing to worry about someone attacking him. Just in case it happens, he knew how to protect himself.

He climbed inside his Jaguar and turned the engine on. The car moved forward until it was safely moving on the four lane highway.

While he drove, he didn't let his guard down. His eyes carefully observing his surroundings. Years of working in the Investigation Agency taught him to be

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cautious at all times. He will never know when his life would be endangered, at least he's prepared when it happens.

The car skidded to a stop in front of the police station. He pushed the door open and climbed out of it. With quick, hurried steps he reached the building.

Two police officers were already waiting for him inside.

He was able to send them a copy of the hidden camera footage before he left. By now, he was sure that they finished watching it too and validated that it was not fabricated.

He talked to the two officers.

Tonight, the police are planning to capture Samantha Greyson before she could leave the country and Lucas was coming with them.

They were still discussing their plans for tonight when approaching footsteps sounded. When he raised his head, Ace greeted his sight.

He looked at his friend and smiled, "Congratulations you escaped the hangman's noose.... We just proved you're innocent."

Chapter 158

A knock on the door sounded, indicating the time had come. He glanced at his gleaming wristwatch and saw the time was seven pm. Exactly the time Lucas Nicholas and he agreed to go.

He rose from the single sofa. Before he headed to the door he grabbed his leather gloves on top of the glass table, and slid them on his fingers.

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He took a deep breath before he reached for the knob and pulled the door open. His best friend was standing outside the door. He stood straight, legs slightly apart, and arms folded on his chest. He wore a mask of a paper-blank expression.

Lucas Nicholas wore a fitted black long sleeve and denim jeans with the same color. "You ready?" He asked, extending his gloved fingers as he handed him the gun.

"More than you are." He replied as he took the weapon from his friend's grasp. He sheathed the gun on the holster in his hip.

Together they marched outside the house in silence.

The ominous starless sky spread through the horizon like a dark cloak. Even the moon refuses to show up tonight making the sky unappealing.

A gust of cold wind brushed through him. In spite of the thick cloth he wore, he shivered. Perhaps it was an omen telling him that tonight he was stepping on a treacherous cliff and one wrong move he would plunge to his death. That's why he needs to be careful.

He opened the car door and hopped inside. Lucas Nicholas sat beside him on the driver's seat and turned the engine on.

The car traversed the dark and empty highway. He leaned on his seat and stared outside the window where he could see nothing but the weak flicker of lights from the street lights.

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His gaze shifted at his best friend who's eyes were nailed on the road and he remembered their conversation before their preparation began.

Lucas didn't want him to go. It's too dangerous, his friend said. But Ace had made up his mind before he even knew that tonight the police would corner Samantha inside the Greyson Mansion and then arrest her.

He stood his ground firmly and told Lucas whether he liked it or not he was coming with them to arrest Samantha. He couldn't just sit there in the corner and wonder if they caught his stepmother or not.

He must do something. Samantha started this mess and he should be the one to end all of this. For the sake of Vien, Faith and Phoenix he will end everything even if it costs him his life.

If Phoenix knew what he was up to, she would go crazy. That's the reason why he didn't tell her right away that he was out of prison. His wife would never allow him to go and he couldn't go against her wish. It's better that she knew nothing for now.

His thoughts shattered when the car pulled into a stop into a dark corner. "We're here." Lucas said which brought him back to reality.

They climbed out of the car and together they traversed the dark path until they reached the Greyson Mansion.

The regal mansion was clad in sinister darkness. The absence of the moon and stars up the sky made the regal mansion darker.

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As he looked up to the place where he spent his childhood, he felt nothing at all. The house looked creepy. It reminded him of a haunted house straight from a horror movie.

They got inside the property by climbing on the walls.

Surprisingly, there were no roaming guards around the area they were in.

As Ace made his way in front of the mansion, he noticed the eerie silence surrounding the place. The mansion felt cold and deserted as if no one had stayed there for weeks. He turned the knob.

Lucas Nicholas stood beside him, watching in anticipation. Surprisingly, the door was left unlocked. The door creaked open when he pushed it.

His eyebrows scrunched in confusion as he stepped inside the familiar foyer. Only a single light from the ceiling illuminated the spacious area and it wasn't enough to light the whole place.

The deafening silence wrapped around him as he stood there in the center. Chills suddenly run down his spine for an unknown reason.

There's a huge possibility that Samantha already fled from the mansion. He thought to himself as his gaze swept through around him.

"You go search for the second floor and I'll check all the rooms here." Lucas Nicholas said moving to the direction where the library stood.

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He nodded his head and started climbing the elegant staircase of the Mansion while Lucas Nicholas vanished inside the library.

The police would soon arrive in Greyson mansion to arrest Samantha. But just in case she already escaped, she would be unable to leave the country so he didn't need to worry that much.

When he reached the second floor, he headed straight into the rooms and individually checked for a sign of life. He was unlucky and each room he visited were all empty.

Ace took a deep intake of breath and crept into the far end of the hallway where Samantha's room was located. He grabbed his weapon and kicked the door to her room open.

He moved forward with his gun pointed forward.

The inside was dimly lit. Only the lampshade on top of the night table helped illuminate the room.

The queen size bed was empty. It looked as if it hadn't been used for days.

He gingerly made his way to the huge closet and pulled it open. He was disappointed to see Samantha wasn't hiding there.

The closet was filled with clothes and there's no sign that Samantha packed some of her clothes and left the mansion. If she did leave the mansion then

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she should have brought her valuables and jewelry when she left but it was still there in front of the dresser.

That only means Samantha was still inside the mansion.... Hiding.

Chapter 159

True love is meant

to last a lifetime so

??

there is nothing wrong

with being patient

and making sure you

get things right.

Ace retreated out of Samantha's creepy room with quick but careful steps. He pulled the door behind him. It closed with a soft click.

As he fell back past through the cold and sinister corridors that seemed to stretch longer than usual, he heightened his senses, preparing himself from an unexpected attack. Just in case Samantha would suddenly launch at him, he could defend himself.

He still wasn't sure if Samantha left already. But a woman as intelligent as she would not dare to leave, she had nowhere to go and her money in the bank

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were all frozen. If she even has some extra cash with her it would not last long and she would undoubtedly die of hunger.

That reason made him believe she's somewhere out there hanging on the rooms inside the mansion. Perhaps she's lurking behind the darkness while waiting for the perfect opportunity to unleash her evil plans against him.

Now that she had fallen, she would drag him with her. But he would never allow a woman like her to bring him down.

He didn't know how long he'd been walking around the corridors when he heard light footsteps. Then there was a

chilling sensation on his nape. He stopped walking and looked around him. His eyes widened and his eyebrows shot to the ceiling when he realized he was exactly standing right in front of the door of the room Angela died!

What a strange coincidence! Of all the rooms, he ends up standing here. If there was a room he never wanted to set foot again, it was exactly this area.

He didn't want to go inside but he didn't have any option left.

The reason behind is not because Angela died in this room but because the room holds too many unpleasant memories. The room where she was murdered was once Phoenix's and his own marital bedroom. When they are still staying in the mansion, this room belongs to them.

Unfortunately, the room is where their marriage began falling apart because of his cunning step brother. It's the place that brought him sadness and desperation since the day his wife left him. To add to the unpleasant memories, he last saw his daughter Vien inside the room before she suffered a car accident.

Who could blame him for freaking out at the idea of entering inside. He woke up soaked with blood and unable to recall a thing. Everytime he looks into the room, the memories return.

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He shook his head and pushed his burgeoning thoughts away. A resigned sigh emerged from his lips as gingerly stepped forward to the door. When he was a few inches away from it he noticed that it was slightly ajar.

Reluctantly, he reached for the door.... But stopped halfway.

In an instant, the morbid scenes from the video flashed through his thoughts making shivers run down his spine.

He swallowed hard and he had this sudden urge to throw up as he recalled the blood that carpeted the floor.

Until now, he couldn't believe that his stepmother was Angela's killer. Samantha was the epitome of perfection and elegance. It's unbelievable she's capable of such brutality. She just killed someone as if she's an animal and not a human being.

And to think that she didn't feel guilt afterwards and even tried to put the blame on him was unforgivable.

His jaw tightened and his fist curled into the ball on his side while the fragments of the video flash in his thoughts.

Samantha mercilessly killed her daughter in law but before she ended her life, she tortured the poor woman by stabbing her multiple times. Only psychopaths could do that and his step-mother is clearly qualified as a candidate for a mental institution.

He gathered all the courage he could muster and pushed the door open. His eyes instantly narrowed when his gaze landed on the floor.

The moment he stepped inside, a sudden gust of cold wind blew past him. The hairs on his nape stood on ends. What was that unusual sensation? He was slightly creeped out.

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He was now reluctant to enter the room but he must get inside whether he liked it or not. It was the only room on the second floor he was not able to check. So he must get it done as soon as possible.

Fragments of glass crushed beneath his shoes as he moved deeper to the room. He pulled into a stop when he reached the foot of the bed and he looked around him.

By the pale light coming from the lampshade he was able to survey the chaos around him.

The room looked as if a typhoon had wreaked havoc inside.

The expensive linens that draped over the bed were dragged across the floor. It was torn into shreds as if a wild animal reaped it with its dangerous claws and sharp teeth.

When his gaze darted on the bed, he saw a steel scissors sticking under it. It must be the item used in slashing the bedsheets.

Pillows were scattered all over the room, one landed near the door, the other was carelessly tossed at the foot of the bed, and the last one was hurled close to the floor to ceiling window. All of them were violently slashed with the scissors.

Whoever did that must be furious. Without a doubt in his mind he knew exactly who did it.

His sharp eyes swept over the walls where a dozen portraits hung. But the area where his wedding pictures were displayed was now empty. He didn't wonder where it all went, he already spotted them across the floor broken into pieces together with the expensive antique vase he once received as a wedding gift.

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He pulled the huge closet open, peered under the bed, cast the heavy drapes aside, and almost turned the whole room upside down in search of a perfect hiding spot but he still didn't find Samantha.

His intuition nags him like an itchy bug bite. It was telling him to keep looking. Eventually, he will find her soon. He could feel that she was still there somewhere in the mansion. His only problem is how he could locate her.

After minutes of effortless search, he gave up..If she's not on the second floor then she was definitely on the first floor. Perhaps Lucas had found her already. He just hopes his friend actually found her so he doesn't need to worry about anything.

He prepared to leave.

He was on his way to the door when he threw the bathroom door a sideway glance. Suddenly he stopped on his tracks.

How could he be so stupid that it totally slipped his mind to check on that area. He almost forgot that it existed.

The door to the bathroom was slightly ajar. As he stared at it, his pulse jittered, and his heartbeat quickened. An ominous feeling suddenly descended on him.

He kicked the door open but it was so dark inside that he could barely see anything.

He gathered all the courage he could muster and stepped inside the bathroom. He reached for the light and turned it on.

When brightness spreads inside.... He wasn't prepared for the scene that was waiting for him.

Samantha was sprawled on the bathtub, a white foamy substance flowing out of her parted lips. Her eyes bulged out of her eye sockets as she stared to the ceiling. She was as pale as a ghost.

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He didn't need to check her pulse to know she's dead. Her appearance says it all. She is nothing but a cold corpse now.

Just under the bathtub a bottle of sleeping pills had fallen. The bottle was empty. Samantha consumed the drug and died of overdose.

There on the mirror a message was written in red lipstick,

I WILL NEVER ALLOW YOU TO CATCH ME! I SHALL DIE FIRST BEFORE YOU SEE ME SUFFER!!!!

I WILL KILL YOU TOO!!!

Ace fished his phone inside his pocket to call Lucas Nicholas and tell him he had already found Samantha. However, he was just about to dial his best friend's number when his phone started ringing.

His eyebrows scrunched in confusion as he pressed the answer button.

"Ace? Where are you?" Lucas asked, his tone loud and urgent.

"Still on the second floor." He replied, "I already found Samantha's body," He added, glancing at the body in the bathtub.

"Run as fast as you can now.... now!"

His mouth parted open to ask him why but before he could even react, he heard the familiar beeping sound of a time bomb. His jaw dropped to the floor.

Shock hit through him like a sharp bolt of lightning.

Will he die?

No he can't! His family was waiting for him! He can't possibly die right now when their hardships are almost over.

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He ran out of the bathroom as fast as he could. He did the last option he had. He lifted the gun he was still gripping tightly around his fingers and aimed it in the floor to ceiling glass window.

Chapter 160

It took one bullet to shatter the floor ceiling glass window. The ear piercing sound of glass breaking and crashing to the tiled floor shattered the deafening silence of the night.

Jumping off the window is his last option.....

??

There's no other way to survive....

Even if he ran out of the door, the explosion would undoubtedly reach him and he would be roasted before he even knew it.

And so.... He did the only thing he could to survive. He jumped out of the window with his eyes closed before the whole room began to engulf in hellish flames.

The moment he came crashing down, an ear shattering explosion shattered the peaceful night sky. It was so loud that it nearly broke his eardrum. Temporarily, he went deaf.

The flames reached the sky, it lit up the horizon like the sky from the fourth of July except it was not a celebration but a dangerous explosion caused by a bomb.

He could feel the heat from the blast seeping behind his back. If his cloth wasn't made to withstand the heat, he was sure that it could have burned his skin. He was grateful he was wearing protective clothes.

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His heart was in his throat as he plunged downward into uncertainty. Soon enough, he would reach the cemented floor. He wondered if his body could withstand the impact.

If he's lucky he would have a broken knee or a dislocated arm....

If he runs out of luck, he will break his neck. Before he even realized what happened to him he would be dead by that time.

However, the doom he was waiting for didn't arrive. He found himself holding onto the rails of the balcony. He didn't know how the hell that happened but he was just grateful he survived.

Without the balcony, he already plummeted to the cemented floor. When he looked down, he swallowed hard upon realizing the distance between the balcony and the floor was so huge that falling would indeed kill him. Instantly.

That moment, he realized he made a foolish decision. But the foolish decision he made was the only decision he had. If he didn't jump out of the window, he could have exploded with the bomb. At least he was still alive until now.

His fingers clung to the rails for dear life. If he lets go then there would be no second chances anymore. He could not waste this precious opportunity to survive. He needed to live, he said that inside his thoughts as his hands tightened around the rails.

His palms were red and painful from exertion but he didn't give up, he used his other hand to cling tighter. His struggles were draining his strength but he continued?to climb even though he couldn't move further.

The sound of footsteps approaching reached his ears. Hope sprung inside his chest when it came closer and closer until the door was kicked open.

He yelped in relief when his eyes saw his best friend coming in to rescue him. A heavy burden was lifted from his chest.

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When Lucas Nicholas turned towards him, he witnessed the palpable fear on his friend's face.

In no time, his best friend was running towards his direction.

"Goddammit Ace! You scared the hell out of me! Your wife would finish me off if I return home without you!" Lucas exclaimed, grabbing his hand and pulling him up until he was able to climb up the rails.

Ace had never been this grateful in his life. He would forever be thankful to his best friend for saving his life.

If Lucas didn't arrive in time, he was sure that he wouldn't be able to move his arms further and his hold would slip from the rails.

His friend helped him up until he was safely inside the balcony. His knees trembled when they finally reached the floor. As if all his energy were drained from his body he collapsed to the floor.

He lay sprawled on the cold floor, gasping for air. He never felt alive until his near death experience. He was so grateful to be alive... He almost thought he was going to die. He realized how scared he had been....

"We need to leave Ace...." Lucas Nicholas said, waking him up from his deep reverie. He was pulled from the floor until he was back on his feet. "We shouldn't waste time." He added. The urgency in his tone was impossibly hard to ignore.

"I-I don't understand?" He asked while still in the process of catching his breath. Lucas Nicholas continues to drag him to the door.

"Soon this whole place would burn to ashes.... We have two minutes to leave this place before the bombs explode. His friend replied, his expression couldn't be darker.

Ace gulped hard and hurried to his feet. Even if he had difficulty moving he quickened his step.

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Together they moved forward. Just as they are crossing the foyer, a huge explosion from the second floor shook the whole mansion and debris starts to fall from the ceiling.

A police officer waited at the door, when he spotted them approaching, he came to the rescue and ran to them to help him walk faster.

The moment they stepped outside, the last bomb exploded and the whole mansion was eaten by flames.

He let go a deep sigh. He was relieved that they managed to escape before the deadly bomb exploded.

The flames reached the night sky. As he stared at the place where he spend his childhood devoured by monstrous flames, he couldn't feel a thing. True it was the place he grow up with but he never once felt as if he was a part of it. And so watching it burn feels like erasing those unpleasant memories.

He felt free as if a chain had been broken.... Now that his evil stepmother was gone his only problem was his stepbrother, Vince.

He don't know where Vince was hiding but he swore that he would find him and he would never stop unless he's caught.

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