

## **Not today**

### **Ward R – Day Time:**

For the first time in months, the couple waved their insomnia goodbye. Seven hours of sleep felt like a fantasy for someone who could barely get through three of them without being trapped in endless nightmares.

Lucy woke up soaking wet in her partner's arms and her heart was beating fast. She tried to put her mind around last night's events and the memories slowly shaped themselves inside her head : RM's past was no longer a mystery, part of it anyways. She wondered how she could be so sticky when the weather wasn't as hot as the night before. Upon checking up on her roommate, she eventually understood that neither the sweating nor the pounding was hers in the first place.

At some point during their sleep, RM held her tight, which she didn't seem to mind. She enjoyed being in his arms knowing that he was finally getting some rest after a never-ending struggle of trying to remember who he was. Her serenity was cut short when RM started hallucinating in his sleep, almost seizing. Since he was a tough guy, it was pointless to try and hold him down. His heavy sweating heightened as he kept mumbling repetitive lines: "I'm sorry ... I didn't mean to".

## **15 months ago**

### **Main residence – Day Time:**

The first heat wave of the summer stroke the city that morning. It was unbearable to sit through it at home, let alone leave the house and carry on with the daily life activities.

It was a hectic day at work. It wasn't his first, but it was about to be his last. He stormed into the house in fury and threw his car keys on the coffee table. Upon hearing his footsteps, his wife ran towards him in joy. She was about to welcome her husband home and ask him about his day, but his stiff face already let her know that this day wasn't going to be any different than the previous ones.

She knew that he didn't like being spoken to when he was in this state, but she couldn't just ignore him. She walked towards him and lovingly threw herself at him "Sweetie, you're home!"

He stood still, unwilling to meet his wife's eyes or reciprocate the hug. Taking a few steps back, he reached for his tie to loosen it but she beat him to it "Here, let me ..."

She didn't finish her line before getting her hands pushed away by him "Not today. I just need some time alone".

She knew what all of this was about. She knew that he needed to go through it alone yet again, but she grew tired of it. This has been his routine for the past two years and she wasn't ready to live through it for another year. His process was simple: isolating himself, letting out his anger on futile matters and "forgetting" about it the next day like it never happened.

"Not on my watch" she thought to herself before walking towards her husband once more.

"Babe, this can't go on like this" she pleaded "Please, let me help you".

Her constant interfering set him off "And how are you going to do that exactly? Can't you see that I am in enough mess on my own? Do you want to add to it?"

He was a gentleman, but his angry tone was one of the scariest things she has ever witnessed and she always tried her best to avoid it "Talk to me, babe. What's on your mind?"

"What's on my mind?" he flipped the coffee table in front of him "The endless unfinished business I have to face every day at work is what's on my mind. The paperwork piling up on my desk is what's on my mind. Losing the one thing that was keeping me sane is what's on my mind".

"I-I'm sorry ..." she eyed the floor, as the sight of his suffering was unbearable.

"You'd better be" he pointed at his wife "You're partially at fault for what's happening to me".

And that was it. The one thing she always thought wasn't going to haunt her for life, because the pain itself was lethal, but to have her husband remind her that she had a hand in it killed her inside.

"You don't mean that" she fought her own tears "Calm down, please".

One sentence was all it took to unleash his hideous temper. He started going on and off from the kitchen to the living room, breaking everything that crossed his path and crushing every fancy china to pieces. The house's new scenery was a full sabotage, and it was not pretty to see.

After his mental episode, he grabbed his keys from the floor and headed outside. In the midst of all the horror in front of her, she still managed to race him to the door "You can't drive in this state".

"Get out of my way, woman" he said as he held onto his temples.

"There is no way I'm letting you leave the house" she blocked the door "Fine, I will let you be but just stay home".

Her stubbornness was working up his nerves "If you don't move, I will remove you myself".

“Be my guest” was the last thing his wife ever said to him. Unable to control his anger, he grabbed her from the arms and threw her to the side. He was about to leave the house when he realized that she didn’t react to his violent act. Turning back to see where she went to, he was petrified by the horrendous act his loss of temper caused: on the floor was his wife, lying in her own blood.

The scene before him freaked him out. He only meant to move her out of the way but his strength betrayed him as she ended up landing on the broken glass that was scattered on the floor. He rushed to his wife to check her vitals: her breathing was slowly fading and she didn’t seem like she would regain consciousness anytime soon.

“God damn it, WHAT HAVE I DONE ?!!!” was all he kept repeating while waiting for his emergency call to be answered.

“119, What’s your emergency?” a voice spoke via the phone.

“H-help me please ... my wife ... my wife is unconscious and bleeding” he mumbled, not believing his own words.

“Calm down, sir. Give us your address and we’ll be shortly with you” the voice replied.

After the call ended, he sat on the floor next to her. His wife was probably catching her last breath and he couldn’t do a thing about it. He tried to stop the bleeding but it didn’t do much effect as the sharp parts were still inside her.

Once help arrived, the paramedics rushed to the open house. Seeing all of that mess made them question the reasons behind the accident. While transporting her inside the ambulance, one of the paramedics asked about the circumstances of the incident “Was it burglary?”

“No” he responded in shame “It was me”.

Both paramedics were taken aback by his confession “We should call the police, then”.

He grabbed his phone as soon as he heard their comment “I know. I’ll do it myself”.

### **General Hospital – Night time:**

The husband spent the next few days going back and forth between the hospital and the police station. Being his wife’s only guardian, he visited her daily and took care of any requirements for her treatments, but he wasn’t allowed to enter her room since he was still being investigated. He made sure to keep an eye on her through the window glass, and he hoped to be able to hold her in his arms again.

"It's been three days, when is she going to wake up?" he asked her doctor as he left her room.

"We don't know for sure" the doctor filled him in "The cuts were deep so she has lost a lot of blood, but her vitals are stable. Let's give her a few more days".

The news weakened him at the knees as he took a seat on the chairs outside her room. Although her recovery was promising, he couldn't hear anything that came after the doctor's first line. All he kept thinking was that he put her in this state. His blind rage finally got the best of him, and his wife was the unlucky recipient.

His moment of guilt was soon interrupted by a police officer "Sir, if you are done with the hospital paperwork, we would like to ask you some questions".

"It was all me" he confessed "All she was trying to do was comforting me after a bad day at work but I took it all out on her. I didn't know what I was doing back then, I wasn't myself. I didn't realize what I have done until it was too late. I wish I could take it all back".

"We'll take your statement into consideration. Normally, we'd have to take you in but since you're her only guardian, we'll give you more time in case the hospital needed you. In the meantime, we hope that she will wake up and give us her own statement" the officer issued "Accidents do happen, but domestic violence is also a thing".

"I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT! I LOVE MY WIFE, THERE IS NO WAY IN HELL I WOULD EVER THINK OF HURTING HER!" he suddenly lost himself after hearing the officer's briefing.

"Sir, this is a hospital, please calm down. We're merely speculating. We need your wife's statement to clear this misunderstanding once and for all" the officer tried to calm him.

"YOU'RE NOT THE ONE WHOSE WIFE IS BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH IN THAT ROOM! YOU DO NOT GET TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO!" he shouted uncontrollably.

"Security!" the officer called upon the staff to contain the frustrated husband.

Soon, a group of male nurses joined the bodyguards and sedated him "Hold him tight!"

He kept resisting until the injection kicked in. Still fighting to remain by his wife's side, he mumbled a few words before he blacked out "I love her ... I never meant to hurt her... I'm sorry ... I didn't mean to ..."

A few hours later, after the sedation had worn off, the husband opened his eyes to a very unfamiliar place “What ... What is this place? Where am I?”

“You’re at the general hospital” the nurse replied “Do you recall what happened?”

“The hospital?” he checked his body for injuries “What for?”

His reaction worried the nurse. She left the room in a hurry to alert his supervising doctor “Doctor, I think we have a problem”.

Upon hearing her claim, the doctor rushed to the room. He checked his pupils and reflexes before pushing the examination further “Do you know where you are?”

He looked at the doctor in confusion “The nurse told me I’m in the hospital, but I don’t know why. I feel fine”.

“Do you know who you are?” the doctor wondered, hoping that his answer would refute his theory.

“I’m ... I- I don’t remember” he replied, even more dazed.

“Nurse” the doctor called “Call back the police. We have a bit of a situation”.

One felony, one victim, one culprit. It took a whole day for the doctor to explain to the officer in charge that the husband cannot be taken into custody in this state “The guilt from recent events must have worked him up. He woke up with full amnesia. He doesn’t even remember who he is. You can’t take him in while he’s like this, it wouldn’t be fair”.

“What if all of this is a hoax? He could be faking it” the officer questioned.

“With all due respect, Officer” the doctor initiated “Ever since his wife was admitted, this man spent every single day outside her room, barely getting any sleep. He even openly acknowledged being the reason behind her hospitalization. He didn’t lie, hide, or run. I doubt that he’ll wait this long to fake losing his memory and escape his punishment”.

“But we can’t just let him go. He might have forgotten, but we know what happened” the officer argued.

“I never said he should be set free. There is a way where we can both make sure that he isn’t faking his amnesia and keep an eye on him while waiting for his wife to wake up” the doctor suggested.

“Let me hear it” the officer complied.

### Present day

"I'm sorry ... I didn't mean to" RM mumbled in agony.

Listening to his painful cries ached Lucy's heart. She left her bed and grabbed the glass of water placed on the bedside table "Here goes nothing".

The water splash snatched RM out of his longest nightmare. He opened his eyes and kept looking around him in stupor, unsure of his whereabouts.

"Hey there sleepy head, it took you long enough" she greeted him with a smile.

"Wh-Where am I?" he wondered.

Taken aback by his question, she took a minute before answering "You're in my room, silly. Do you remember what happened last night?"

Her question was left unanswered. Lucy realized that all of her efforts went down the drain. Not wanting to make the situation any more awkward than it already was, she rerouted the conversation.

"You weren't feeling well yesterday, so you spent the night in my room. You were a bit feverish and didn't want to let the staff know".

Trying to escape his heavy headache, RM slowly sat on the bed and held on to his head "Lucy?"

"Hmm?" in an effort to hide her disappointment, she drew a fake smile on her face to which he responded with a declaration "I think it's all coming back to me".