

Spring day

Ward R – Day time:

The pair sat awkwardly next to each other on the bed after their first peaceful night of sleep in months. RM seemed more confused than ever, and Lucy started regretting to have opened up to him in the first place.

“Listen” she abruptly broke the silence “All of this happened in the heat of the moment. You don’t have to comply accordingly. You were weak. We were both weak. Mistakes happen”.

“You think this is a mistake?” RM inquired.

“Don’t you? You look like you’ve seen a ghost” she replied “I didn’t know I was this unpleasant”.

He stared at her, bewildered “What are you talking about?”

“Come on, now” she caught up “You don’t have to drive me through a mental stress, we had a moment but that was it. I’m a big girl, I can handle myself”.

“Babe” he shushed her “You don’t have to deny it anymore, I remember”.

The two words that Lucy has always wanted to hear finally came out of his mouth. He remembered. She didn’t know how far his memory went back, but she was glad her efforts finally paid off.

While she was trying to process the sudden news, RM held both of her hands and knelt to the ground, resting his head on her lap “I am ashamed of even asking for forgiveness because what I have done was unforgiveable. I caused you so much pain for years and to top it all, I almost lost you to my anger. There is nothing I can do to redeem myself in your eyes, and I will do whatever it takes to give back what you have sacrificed for me then and still do now. I am a disgrace of a human being and I shouldn’t have been allowed a second chance inside this asylum. I don’t deserve to be saved, I don’t deserve you. I don’t even understand why you bothered putting up with me for another year where you could have started over freely and away from me, away from this monster. I deserve to be punished”.

His apologetic confession took her by surprise. She struggled for months to get to this very instant, but she didn’t expect that one intimate moment would trigger his memory this fast. Most importantly, she didn’t think over what was going to happen once he remembered who he was and what he did ... to her.

While he squealed at her feet, she anxiously clenched her hands, unsure of her reaction regarding the matter. She was both happy and sad, free and caged, at ease and perplexed. She wanted her husband back more than anything in the world, but she wasn't prepared for the post-trauma confrontation. Remembering the happiest memory they once shared, Lucy took a deep breath and rested her palm on his damp hair.

"You have been punished enough" she sighed "Living without identity is the worst thing that can happen to a human being. Every time I looked at you, I remembered the trauma and my heart ached to the point of burning but along the way I kept telling myself: he has someone to come back to. I am not justifying your deeds because we both know that it could've cost you dearly. I know so because I was in your shoes once, and I know that it's a staining guilt that I'll have to live with my whole life; but you don't have to. It's been over a year darling, you've been punished enough. It's time to come back home".

Her words were supposed to bring him comfort but it added to his misery. Remembering that he assaulted his wife was one thing, but recalling that she's been patiently locked up with him flustered him to the core "I may be in no place to ask for clarifications at this point, but I need to know what happened. How did we both end up here?"

The husband was slowly but surely getting back to his old self. He has always been curious about random things, which was one of his wife's favorite traits about him.

"I woke up a week after you were admitted. When I realized what happened, I entered a state of shock. I stayed in the hospital for two more weeks and underwent various check-ups. During that period, the supervising doctor who admitted you, the officer and the institute all contacted me to come visit. I wasn't ready. On the day I was released, I rented a flat in the suburbs. I didn't go back to our home ever since. I just couldn't.

A month later, I finally succumbed to their pleas. I wasn't sure of how I'd feel when I'd see you after the incident, but I couldn't blame you at the time since you simply didn't remember anything. I stopped by three times a week, and you couldn't recognize me in either one of them. You were heavily sedated and my presence didn't shake a thing, not your memory, not your feelings, nothing.

Two months afterwards, I decided to take a stand. That's when I consulted the staff and we agreed on inserting me into the institute as a fellow patient. I thought it would take half a year tops to get you to remember me, but you were blocking it with all your might. Last night changed so many things, but it also brought up other issues".

RM stood on his feet and offered Lucy his hand. Reluctant at first, she ended up taking his hand. Carefully, he pulled her closer and stroked her hair while she rested her cheek on his chest.

“You’ve been through all of this for me. I don’t deserve this, I don’t deserve you” he let out.

“You know what they say” she held onto his shirt “Love makes you do crazy things”.

He was always fond of her wit, but recalling her gags as his wife’s instead of his roommate’s felt a hundred times better. Tenderly holding her face, he placed a peck on her forehead “Thank you for not giving up on me Liliana, thank you for everything”.

It took him a long year to remember her, but hearing her name being called by her husband was everything she has ever wished for “Welcome back, Namjoon”.