

2.

"I find myself grappling with a whirlwind of emotions – anger, disbelief, and profound sadness – that threatens to consume me whole"

Estelle's world came crashing down as she took in the sight of her husband's lips entangled with the woman who had dumped him years ago. The woman who made her endure her wedding night alone, the same woman who made her endure the cold shoulders of her husband for a good two years and when she finally, just when she finally got to get his attention, she came out from nowhere all of a sudden and took him away, right in front of her without even trying.

Gasps and murmurs filled the air just as Estelle's heart ripped noisily and painfully in her chest. The reporters' attention shifted from Estelle to Hunter and Carla.

"Oh my god! Isn't that Carla, Hunter's ex-girlfriend?"

"What is she doing here?"

"OMG! They look perfect together."

"Could they have been secretly dating all this while, behind Estelle?"

Ethan balled his fist in anger and then turned to his sister. He took hold of her hand and tried pulling her away from the situation, but Estelle didn't budge, she stared lifelessly at her husband, not caring about the reporters and their bickering. For Estelle, it felt like a rope had been tied around her heart, and it had been tugged tightly, she found herself gasping for air.

This must be her hallucinating. It can't be real. That couldn't be her husband sucking another woman's face a few feet away from her, right in front of the whole world. Hunter wouldn't do that. But he was, even as she rapidly blinked away her tears, she could still see him vividly, holding the woman lovingly, his arms cradling her face, as he deepened the kiss.

Shaky sobs escaped her lips just as a hand grabbed her, and dragged her trembling body out of the scene and, a few minutes later, she sat on the floor in the hall with both of the families excluding her husband. By this time, the hotel had been deserted; all the guests and hotel staff, including most of the reporters, had left.

Although her parents begged her to leave, Estelle couldn't bring herself to. She stared lifelessly at nothing, mumbling to herself. Earlier, she had caught a glimpse of Hunter pulling Carla out of the premises and into the same car they both used to transport to the hotel. Now she was sitting, completely out of state. Her hair, which had been perfectly arranged, was now dishevelled from continuous pulling. Her beautiful face was now adorned with streaks of tears mixed with mascara trickling down her face. She was a complete mess. A day which was supposed to be perfect and the happiest day of her life turned into a nightmare in a matter of seconds.

"Estelle, dear, get up. Let's go home. You can't continue sitting here". Her mother, Anna Brown, who had been crying in the arms of her husband, stumbled towards Estelle. Her cold hands reached out to wipe off the black tears trickling down Estelle's face. She couldn't bear it. She couldn't bear looking at her daughter who was miserable and helpless.

"Home?" Estelle's ears perked up at the word. Home? Home is with Hunter, she thought.

"I need to go home. Hunter is home, he must be waiting for me" she murmured, stumbling to her feet. Her mother burst into tears along with her mother-in-law at Estelle's behaviour but Estelle didn't seem to notice the painful look everyone was giving her as she whirled around for a few minutes in search of nothing before heading towards the large door, but before she could take two more steps, her father, Christian Brown grabbed her hands and shook her hard.

"Get your act together, Estelle." He snapped at his daughter angrily, staring into her wide eyes which were staring back at him but weren't exactly focused on him. "That bastard left you standing outside the hall because of another woman, and you want to go home to meet him? Snap out of it, for god's sake" He snapped again, his heart beating hard with rage, not giving a damn if calling Hunter an asshole while his parents were present seemed disrespectful because he was an asshole and the next time he set his eyes on the aforementioned man, his corpse had better be lying below his feet. However, right now, all he cared about was bringing his daughter out of this mess.

"No, no. He promised me." Estelle murmured, her glassy eyes staring wide at nothing as she shook her head and took a step, then a few more steps back from her father. "He promised not to leave me alone" she murmured again. Her emotions and sense of reasoning were a jumbled mess as her body trembled in sync with the rapid flow of tears trickling down her face.

Hunter would never leave her like that. He had looked at her with so much love these past few months, and although he had never said he loved her, she was certain he did. He was totally in love with her. It was clear in the way he looked at her, kissed her, and made love to her. It was clear and Carla showing up wouldn't change anything.

Estelle shook her head rapidly, her arms wrapped around her tiny frame, "No, you don't get it. I need to go home. I need to see Hunter. He must have been waiting for me." She made her way to the door again and this time, her father grabbed her hands roughly, pulled and pushed her to the floor.

"Enough!" he screamed, his chest rising and falling rapidly. Estelle's mother ran to her daughter in tears, her arms wrapped protectively around Estelle's stunned and trembling body.

"Enough!" Christian repeated, glaring at his wife and daughter. "I've had enough of this. You will not disgrace me any further, and you will certainly do what I ask and come home with us right now, it is." He may love his daughter and family so much, but his reputation has been tainted enough. She doesn't need to go back to that bastard.

"Handling her like that won't help the situation." Hunter's mother, Sarah, voiced out in a calm voice that irritated Christian. She sniffed then dabbed her face with a handkerchief. "I apologize for my son's behavior, but Estelle is currently in a panic state. Raising your voice would do more harm than good." Her eyes, filled with motherly love and regret, were fixed on Estelle. She had formed a deep bond with the girl and seeing her so dim and completely out of sorts, hurt her to the core. If only she could get her hands on her son and show him-

"No one asked for your opinion, Mrs. Gray. I wouldn't have treated my daughter like that if it wasn't because of your son's infidelity."

"Christian..." Hunter's father started in a warning tone to his friend, but was immediately cut off.

"Your son disrespected my family in front of the entire world, Paul." He shouted, his glare fixed on his friend, Hunter's father.

"Estelle?" Estelle's mother called in a panicked voice and all eyes drew to her. Estelle's lips were moving, but no voice came out, and so was her skin, turning pale. "Estelle, breathe!" Her mother coerced in a panic tone, but her words seemed impenetrable to Estelle who kept mumbling and hyperventilating. She cupped her face and turned around to face her husband in panic. "She's turning cold, Christian. What do I do?"

Christian bent down to his daughter's level, "Estelle, baby." He said in a calm voice, caressing his daughter's cheek even though his stomach was tightening in panic. "Are you okay?"

"Hun...Hunter!" She gasped out before her brown orbs rolled back into her head and shut close into darkness.