112- Family

Marwick told me softly. There was a strange calmness in the room. Only Sarah was the one beside me whose soft weeping sounds could be heard in the room. And me? Ashley Walters? I was dry-eyed.

Ashley Walters pov "She made me promise that I will find you one day. I have been looking for you since I was sixteen, Ashley."

"Does this mean..." Justin spoke for the first time, "that her birthday is not fake. According to orphanage rules her date of birth is

not the one when they found the baby."

'Yeah, that's what they told me." Marwick spoke, "Sister Mary Ann told me everything. When I met Ashley in Arguli and came to know that she was Justin's wife and came from an orphanage, since then I hired another detective to look for clues. My one

detective had already been working on the trails of Leigh Walters. Unfortunately, there was another Ashley who had left for Ghana. So, our attention was diverted for a while. My detective started keeping tabs on her. A few months back we were back on track. Then I got lucky to accompany Ashley from Arguli beach. That was when we had tea and I collected it for DNA sample." I looked up at that. It was hard to digest that Sarah, the devil, was my sister, and Marwick, the handsome, was my brother. Ever since we met, he had been nothing but kind and compassionate.

Now they all were quiet maybe for processing everything and digesting it.

"Ashley!" Sarah touched my arm lightly, "Say something."

I just shook my head. It would be an understatement if I would tell them that I was shaken to the core.

A man who took advantage of a young woman, got her pregnant, and then left her all alone to fend for herself. Instead of taking his child's responsibility, he let her go all alone on a rainy night, with full-term pregnancy.

She got ra*ped but managed to reach the orphanage to keep her unborn child safe. Taking a deep breath, I propped up on my palms and got off the bed.

"Ashley! Wh...what happened?" Sarah asked me and started struggling to stand up from the bed. "Love! What is it?" Justin came to me in a jiffy, "you alright?"

"I... I need to leave, Justin. I need to go back." I said without looking at anyone's face.

"We can go tomorrow morning when ..." he said touching my forehead.

"No, Justin. I want to go now. I ... I have got classes... and there is this very important presentation..." I started blabbering without realizing that the next day was supposed to be Sunday.

"B...But Ashley." Sarah tried to speak when Marwick interrupted,

"Sarah!" his voice was laced with a warning for his sister. Well! For his twin sister. "Ok. Give me five minutes. Let me freshen up." Justin said after kissing my forehead.

"Justin," I held his hand. He looked at me quietly waiting for me to speak further, "I can go back by bus ... It's ok..."

From my peripheral view, I could see Marwick shaking his head violently to let Justin know that I should not be sent alone.

was talking about. I held it to my cheek and sniffed it. I wanted to feel the smell of my mother and ... maybe Marwick's smell too. Ever since I met him, I did feel a connection. Unlike Sarah, he had always treated me well. Placing it on my nightstand, I made

The bag that I brought from the orphanage was placed in the corner of the room. It was the same one I got at Justin's place. And

the only one too. For two years, it was there under my bed. Last night, I took it out and got the cute brown woolen cap, Marwick

Dark circles were visible on my face that I tried to cover with concealer and then some loose powder. "Evelyne! I am leaving!" I called my friend and closed the door beside me. The weather was warm and sunny, unlike my heart which had coldness all around it.

Thankfully, nobody got clingy as how they show in movies. You know? The emotional drama and the stuff.

The first man I met after crossing the university gate was Gerald.

I came back to Arguli three days back. Justin dropped me off but didn't stay. And I understood. All of them were giving me space.

"What?" I touched my face if there were some food scraps stuck to my face.

"Different? As if?"

"As if... you are upset."

"Let's go cafe and catch up?" he suggested meaningfully.

"Hey, hun." And then he stopped and frowned at me.

Urgh! I would ask Evelyne to let me know about a good brand that can give the best coverage to dark circles.

When I didn't say anything, he spoke again, "Something happened?" "Ah. A lot." I chuckled and rolled my eyes, 'Where to start?"

"Hmm. So, that's why you are upset. Well! Smart pants. You are ... smart. Intelligent. I know you will get around the truth quite soon. Think of it this way. After getting married you came into a family that already had ties with your birth family. Your father..."

"And what about that Ashton?" I still could not bring myself to call him my father.

Gerald was calming me like a true friend. I was lucky to have him in my life. That day we didn't take classes but kept talking to each other about our shitty stuff. 'What about your parents?" I asked him, "Are they still forcing you to take over their business and get married?" "No. Nowadays mom is sick, so my issues are off their mind for the time being." He said while taking a sip of his coffee.

"For the time being just ignore him. Your family that is ... your siblings are sensible and understanding. Otherwise, nobody gives

When I returned home Aniya and Evelyne were again arguing about something but then they became silent as soon as they

"Should I bring you something to eat? Coffee?" Aniya asked me but I shook my head. "No. Today I spent the day with Gerald. By now I am full." I said kicking off my sandals. A look passed between them before

room. In the confines of my bedroom, I started working on the upcoming projects and was so engrossed in it that I didn't realize my

I stretched my body and yawned loudly. Argh! My body had gotten stiff.

neck hurt from sitting too long in front of the laptop.

I fell back on my bed and looked at the ceiling. The faces of Marwick and Sarah were dancing before my eyes. Sarah trying to convince me and Marwick trying to stay quiet. But I could see it in his eyes. The fear of losing me. The fear that I might reject him and his sister. I mean my sister. Like ... it's our sister. Yeah.

Sarah was my sister. Oh, God! My sister made my life a living hell initially. Even Justin didn't contact me all this time. The

She curved down her lips and nodded her head.

I was missing Justin Deluca and all I wanted right now was, him to make love to me just like we did in the hospital. And then the hospital reminded me of granny and Steward.

"Sarah and Marwick are not bad people. It was not their mistake if their father did sh*it to my mom." Evelyne again nodded her

'You can go now, Eve. I need to sleep." Without waiting for her response, I turned and held a pillow in my arms, clutched to my

I bent down to take out a baseball bat that was lying under the bed. Holding it in my hands, I pasted my ear to the door and tried to listen.

It seemed like an argument and some muffled voices. Oh, brother! I hoped my friends were safe. Gripping the bat tightly I

On the floor, there were two mattresses where Marwick and Sarah were arguing. Sarah wanted to use the mattress while

opened the door less than an inch and found something hilarious.

Marwick wanted her to use the couch because of her heavy belly.

darted towards me. Marwick was the first to answer me, 'Well! I think we have given you enough time, little one. Time to get to know your family I guess!" he gave me his cutest dimpled smirk. I was trying my best not to let that smile show on my face. But all of them were

He started walking towards me with his eyes on my face, "I would sleep beside my wife." He announced happily.

Justin was standing there silently watching the show, with his hands placed on his hips and Keith looked bored from the argument and was lying on one of the mattresses with half-closed lids. "Quiet! This is not the way to tell a girl that she has got a supporting family." Poor Eve was trying to put some sense in their heads. 'What are you people doing here?" the moment I fully opened the door with a bang and asked the question, several pairs of eyes

my hair and applied a lip gloss.

'You look different!"

"Umm. Must be my makeup," I smiled, and he started walking beside me, hooking his arm through mine. "It's not makeup, smart pants!" he said unconvinced, "It's in your eyes."

Gerald paused for a moment when I gave him a killing look, but he, however, continued, "Your father might be a pu* ssy but you have got siblings now. They both adore you and can't wait to announce it to the world."

time to a lost sibling like that."

The word no more felt alien.

This was our third coffee cup there. Ever since I returned, I could not confide in Aniya or Evelyne and chose to stay in my room most of the time. My guess was, Justin must have told them about the whole picture and my sweet friends were giving me time. Just like my sib... siblings. Yeah. Siblings.

spotted me.

Evelyne cleared her throat and tried to speak. "Ash..." "I know," I took her by surprise by not letting her complete, "I should give them a chance. That's what you were going to say. Right?" When I looked up, she nodded her head at me like a little fool. Gosh! My both friends were cute. I chuckled and headed to my

irritation inside me was growing gradually and was peaking at the ceiling of my room. "Hungry?" Evelyne's head appeared in the doorway with a smile pasted on her lips. I knew that smile. The girl wanted me to spill whatever was boiling there inside me. "It's ok to give me space..." I told her without looking at her, "But why Justin is not visiting me? He could at least make a call or send a message."

head.

chest.

I mean... my grandfather was having an affair with Justin's grandma. Ha-ha *** I woke to some strange noises coming from the living room. It seemed as if people were talking ... no, not talking, but arguing about something in low voices. Were there muggers in the house? Oh, God! What to do?

Aniya was looking at Marwick with that silly drool on her face and I could bet she wanted him to sleep with her. Aniya had a crush on my brother. Woah!

looking at me with so much solemness that I couldn't help it when I cracked up. Sarah and Marwick started beaming. Eve and Aniya sighed. And Justin?