

Let Me Love You

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Let Me Love You

by [SEETVerse](#)

Summary

Norman feels undeserving of love after everything that has happened to him. Especially of what happened 13 years ago, even if all of his friends say it's not his fault.

Emma just wants to enjoy her life for once – not that she's not happy with her children, they're the best things that's ever happened to her. . .

What happens after one play of tag makes their lives upside down, and finally, Phil and Carol will have a father they can not be afraid of, and Sherry can finally know what it means to have a loving mother.

Chapter 2 is out!

Notes

Another work! I hope you all join me in this adventure as well as my other fic 'A Sicky Promise'!!

I would apologize in advance for the grammatical and typographical errors! Enjoy! God bless!

Phil and Sherry

LET ME LOVE YOU

CHAPTER ONE: Phil and Sherry

Just a few seconds in, Norman already marked this day as his worst one yet.

What already transpired the last few hours really ticked him off:

1. He woke up late for God knows why.
2. Sherry had a tantrum.
3. He almost forgot some documents.
4. Said documents were wasted because an employee of his bumped into him.
5. Said employee has a cup of coffee in his hand.
6. His favorite shirt got stained.
7. Someone brought him the wrong documents (this is another document)
8. One of his reliable employees is absent today.
9. Etcetera.

Of course, when all of this transpired he still forgave that employee that stained his favorite shirt and ruined his documents, the employee that gave him the wrong documents, understood the reason why his reliable employee is absent, and still loves Sherry all the same.

He doesn't think about waking up late though. That is definitely not like him and Ray, his childhood friend and roommate (or housemate, whatever) teased him a lot for it until Sherry smacked him with her princess book that she loves to read all the time.

Sherry is his daughter.

Blood-related or not, that will never change.

A knock interrupts his state of peace, he hums in reply, “Come in.”

“Boss,” Ah, it's Vincent. He looks bothered and concerned. He's also holding a phone in hand, “It's from uhh. . .Sherry's school.”

“Sherry's school,” Norman repeated and signals Vincent to give him the phone, which the latter complied and took his leave after giving him the phone.

“Yes?” Norman starts, playing his pen as he waits for the caller to answer.

[I – Is this Miss Sherry's parent, Norman Minerva?]

“ . . .yes. What's wrong?”

[Uhm. . .] The caller sounds nervous all of the sudden. Norman can't help but try to hypothesize why while spinning his pen. This is the first time Sherry's school called him without warning, and he knows that Sherry is well-behaved, so she can't be in a fight. . .unless. . .

[This is Sherry's teacher, Keira.] Norman nods even though he knows she can't see him.
[And. . .Sherry, along with her classmate Phil—]

‘Phil?’ Norman narrowed his eyes at the name before recognizing the name, ‘Oh. . .*the kid that Sherry doesn't like. . .*’

[—we can't find them.] Miss Keira finished.

The pen breaks in half.

“What?”

“Don't you have a project to do, Ray?” Anna said to the black haired man who's just lounging around the hospital sofas, “Norman will be mad if he gets a word that you're just laying around here.”

“Who cares,” Ray tiredly groaned, turning to his side, “His daughter smacked the hell out of me for just teasing him. Let me get a break.”

Anna chuckled, “I could, but I have a job,” She said, straightening out her coat, “Please sleep somewhere else. You're disturbing some people.”

Ray groaned, “They don't know me anyway, just let them think that I'm mentally ill or something.”

Anna giggled at that, “They would but you're not wearing the hospital pajamas,” She says, “Plus, you do know the nurses here has a crush on you. . .you don't want them to touch you or something while asleep, yeah?”

Ray grunted in irritation, “All right, all right. . .” He sat up, scratching the back of his head irritably, “Don's been pestering me about having a reunion or some shit—”

“Language!”

“—please tell him that I won't go,” He yawned, ignoring her slight scold, “I'm too tired. . .but if Norman and his little girl are going then maybe I'll go too.”

Anna softened at that, smiling at Ray, “You really have a soft spot for Sherry, don't you?”

Ray rolled his eyes, “Knock it off, Anna,” He says, “She's just too noisy.”

Anna nodded, unconvinced, “Gilda has been sewing some clothes she wants you and Norman to try. . .she actually asked for the whole family to try some. Would you?”

“I don't have a choice, do I?” Ray sighed, “Yeah, yeah.”

His phone suddenly rang, and he rolled his eyes in irritation as he searched for his phone.

“Any idea who is it?” Anna asks.

“Don't know, don't care,” Ray answered Anna as he swiped his phone without looking who the caller is, “Look, sir. I know my deadline is within the day, I'm working on it. So please ___”

[Ray.] Oh shit, it's Norman, *did he already find out—?*

“Oh, uh, Norman,” He restarts nervously, “What's wrong—”

[It's Sherry.] Ray hears a door closing, *a car door?* And that tone. . .this looks serious.

“What about Sherry?” He asks carefully.

[She's missing, along with another kid, Phil. You remember him?]

Ray blinked, Ray frowns, he opens his mouth, closes it, then spoke – growled, “Sherry and another kid is *what* ?”

Emma's used to exhaustion.

Ever since 13 years ago, Emma's used to constant work, constant runs, constant compliants, constant stress—

“Emma!” The call of her co-worker alerts her to reality, “Here's the order from table 11!”

She nods enthusiastically, “Okay!”

“Emma!” Another co-worker called, “Please get the orders from Tables 12, 15, and 19!”

Emma just took the tray for table 11, but nodded, “I will!”

“Emma!” Another one popped up from the kitchen, holding a spatula that has soup on it, “Please taste this one! Say if it's okay or not!”

Since that co-worker of hers is in the way out of the counter area, she tasted it, “Too much salt, Ma'am.”

“Oh, okay!” The cook said, “Better go finish your shift! You haven't slept yet, right?”

Emma only smiled, “Thank you, Ma'am Milet!” She says, “But it's fine.”

The cook – Milet, only shrugs as Emma went out to go to table 11 and get the orders from tables 12, 15, and 19. After that, her shift is almost ending—

“Ah, Emma!” She turned to the owner of the voice, another co-worker, “Help Tain carry out the boxes from the truck, will you?”

She nods, “Sure, Ma'am!” She scurries off, not realizing that her phone is already vibrating.

“Sorry for the inconvenience, Emma,” Tain panted, exhausted from what they've done, “Actually, you're the one who carried more boxes than me. . .”

Emma chuckles, “Oh no, it's fine!” She exclaims, “I'm always happy to help!”

Tain smiles at her, “Your shift's over right? What will you do now?”

“I'll pick up Carol first before Phil,” Emma sighs, arranging the boxes they just carried, “Mama – I mean, Miss Isabella's out of the country, so Carol's just on a daycare center right now,” She explains, “So, yeah. Bye, Tain! See you tomorrow!”

Tain nods with a smile, “See you!”

Emma sighs as she closes her little locker in the changing room. She immediately thought about her next job in the next few hours.

'I wonder if Carol's okay. . .' She worriedly thinks, *'She's not used to other people unless it's me, Mama Isabella, or Phil. . .'*

A buzz from her phone interrupts her thoughts, she quickly fished out her phone from her pocket and registers that the one who messaged her to call was the daycare center.

This made her anxious, she quickly calls the number, “Hello? This – This is Emma. Emma Grace, Carol Grace's mother?”

[Miss Emma! Finally!] The voice on the other line, Meia, one of the caretakers there, exclaims. *[Miss Emma, it's Carol. She started fussing three hours ago—]*

“Three hours ago?!” She repeats, now panicking, “Why am I just being notified now?”

[At first we thought that she just misses you—] Emma lets her talk while she's furiously putting everything she owns on her bag. *[—then when we felt her temperature, it's high and her temperature the last time we checked is 39°c—]*

'39°c holy fuck,' Emma suppressed a sob and blinks back her forming tears in frustration, *'She might've caught a cold! I knew I should've dressed her up in warmer clothes. . .stupid Emma, you're the worst mother ever.'*

[—and we are asking if we'll be the ones to take her to the hospital or—]

“I'll be the one to take her,” Emma cuts her off, “I'm on my way there. Please take care of her til then!”

She hurriedly exits the restaurant, ignoring the 'bye's of her co-workers.

Carol's wails are the first thing she hears once she enters the nursery room.

“Miss Emma!” She saw Meia, trying to calm Carol down by rocking her, “Finally! You're here!”

She hurries over to Carol, who brightened up when she saw her, holding up her arms, a sign she wants to be carried by Emma, which Emma does, “How are you?” She softly asked Carol, who sobbed as an answer.

“Carol's things are beside her assigned crib there,” Meia said, pointing an orange crib, “She's been crying nonstop. I'm sorry for not calming her down—”

“No, no, no, it's okay!” Emma cuts her off, “You did a great job! Thank you for notifying me!” Carol began to throw a fit, and Emma takes this as a sign that she doesn't want to be there anymore. Meia looks at her sympathetically, and Emma understands, “I should go now, thank you once again!”

Meia nods, “Take care, Ma'am! Take care, Carol!”

The ringing of bells was the signal that the two orange-haired people are already gone.

The nearest hospital was called Goldy-Graciens Hospital. By this time, Carol already fell asleep in the comforts of Emma's arms. Seems like besides her fever, Carol did miss her too.

‘I'm so sorry, Carol. . .’ Emma apologizes to her, kissing her forehead, feeling the heat of her body through it, *‘I'm so, so sorry. . .’*

She took notice of a doctor (finally!) and immediately ran to her, “Ma'am! Doctor!”

The doctor turned to her quickly in response, Emma instantly noticed the woman's beauty, but quickly regained her composure, “Ma'am. . .can I please check up my daughter? Please.”

The doctor looked at Carol in worry and nodded, “This way please,” She beckoned for her to follow her, “What's your name Ma'am?”

“Emma,” Emma answers, “Emma Grace.”

The doctor nods, “Okay, Ma'am Emma,” She greets, “Please call me Mujika.”

After a few minutes of waiting at the waiting area (because thankfully, the service here is fast) Emma finally enters a doctor's office, and she's not that surprised that it'll be the doctor earlier who'll check up on them.

Thankfully, Carol's still in deep sleep, so the doctor, Mujika, didn't have a hard time checking her.

“A high fever,” Mujika says, “She seems to have caught a cold,” She removes her stethoscope, and smiles at Emma, “But don't worry, a little rest and a child's dosage of ibuprofen can bring her fever down. Also, you can give her a 15-minute bath in lukewarm water to bring her fever down and breastfeed her or bring her her baby formula often. Extra water is recommended too,” Mujika's smile grew in comfort, “So it'll be okay, Ma'am Emma!”

Emma sighs in relief, “Oh, thank God,” She exhales and smiles at Mujika, “So, uhm, how much—?”

“Oh no!” Mujika exclaims, waving her hands at Emma, “It's free! It's only a check up after all, Ma'am Emma!”

Emma blinks a few times at that, “Wait, really?”

Mujika nods, “Yes.”

Emma cannot believe this. All her life, everything has a price. All her life, she needs to pay to do something.

It's not that she's not grateful, she's very, *very* grateful, in fact. . .

Emma was about to say something when her phone suddenly rang. Mujika jumped a bit in surprise that made Emma smile in apology, “May I. . . ?”

Mujika nods once again as she decided to do her business while checking up on Carol just in case she moves.

Emma answers the call, “Hello?”

[Miss Emma? Emma Grace?] Emma immediately recognizes the voice, Keira, Phil's teacher.

“Yes, it's me, Miss Keira,” Emma confirms, “What's wrong, Ma'am?”

[Something happened—] Okay, now that made her anxious once again, what happened to Phil— *[—Phil and his friend, Sherry, is missing. We'll explain more about the situation, Miss Grace, but please come here immediately—]*

Emma short-circuits once again, “Mis – Missing?!”

Oh no, oh no, oh no, Emma bit her lip so hard that she's surprised it's not bleeding. She fears her heart might palpitate because of how fast it's beating and she feels that she can't breathe properly—

“Ma'am Emma?” Mujika's worried voice snapped her out of her thoughts, “What's wrong?”

Emma finally feels that Mujika's by her side now, rubbing circles on her back, “Breathe, Ma'am, breathe.”

She mouthed thanks to Mujika before replying to Keira, “I'll – I'll be right there. Please wait for me.” After that, she ends the call and she exhales out the breath she doesn't even realize she's suppressing.

She needs to go to Phil's school, but she can't risk Carol's fever. It might go worse to the point she might have an infection or something.

‘Oh, Phil. . .’ She whined mentally in worry, *‘Where have you gone. . .’*

Emma realizes that Mujika's still rubbing circles on her back, so she turns to her and smiles a smile that doesn't reach her eyes, “Thank you, Ma'am Mujika, I—”

“It's fine,” Mujika cuts her off, worry still lingering in her eyes, “You. . .almost had an anxiety attack. . .”

Emma sighs once again, “I'm sorry. . .”

Emma tries to think of a solution. She needs to go to Phil's school, but she also needs to take care of Carol and not risk her fever. If only she could leave Carol for a while to someone she knows. . .

Mama Isabella's not here, she's out of the country, so she's out of the question. The daycare center is probably closed now—

“Uhm,” Mujika's voice snapped her out of her thoughts once again, “I can't help but slightly assume your situation but. . .” She trails off, smiling to Emma in comfort, “You can leave Carol to me. I can take care of her, I promise.”

Emma opens her mouth, closes it, until she can finally muster up a coherent sentence, “Doc, I – I don't know how to thank you, I—”

“You can thank me by just calling me Mujika, Ma'am,” She cuts her off, Mujika fishes out something from her pocket, a piece of paper, “This is my number. You can call me later. I promise to take care of Carol.”

Emma hugs Mujika, that made the purple-haired woman squeak in surprise, “Thank you, thank you, thank you—!”

Mujika chuckles, “You're welcome,” She softly said, “You should go now. So that before Carol wakes up, you'd be there.”

Emma removes her hug and nods, “I – thank you. . .thank you Ma – Musica.”

Mujika chuckled, “It's 'Mujika'.”

Emma panics, “Ah! Sorry! Mujika—!”

“It's okay!” Mujika laughs, she feels light with this orange-haired woman around, she feels warm and happy to be with.

After a few more 'thank you's from Emma, she finally leaves with some tips just in case Carol wakes up. Mujika takes all information with a nod and a smile. Once Emma finishes,

she went out of the room quickly.

Mujika, rested her back on the backrest of her chair, “I wonder what happened. . .”

A knock from the door interrupts her thoughts, “Come in!”

The door opened, revealing Anna, “Oh, Anna,” She said softly, not wanting to startle Carol who's still sleeping on the mini-patient bed beside her, “What brings you here?”

“Ray was here earlier—” Anna noticed Carol, “Who's that?” She asked softly, minimizing her voice once she realizes that Carol's sleeping.

“Carol,” Mujika answers, “I let her be left here because something happened and her Mother's torn whether to leave her in a safe place or to bring her to somewhere that may risk her health.”

Mujika notices the way Anna was analyzing Carol, and she can't help but ask, “. . .what's wrong?”

“Uh,” Anna starts, “She looks like someone. . .”

Mujika blinks at that, “Well, she looks a lot like her mother—”

“No, I mean—” Anna cuts her off, “Can you *see* ?”

Mujika narrowed her eyebrows a bit, not knowing what Anna meant and looks at Carol, “She looks like her mother.”

“I don't know what her mother looks like,” Anna says, “But she looks like someone we both know.”

Mujika stares at Carol more. After a few seconds her eyes widen a bit, “Oh!”

Emma's running. She bumps into a few people – she apologizes right after – but she doesn't really care right now. All she's thinking about is her son – Phil, and whatever happened to the school, what happened to Phil and his friend, Sherry, she really, *really* hopes they're safe.

‘Phil. . .’

[E A R L I E R]

It was playtime, Phil and Sherry are playing tag along with the other kids when they decided to venture out on their own in the garden, forgetting they're in a game.

Phil and Sherry are close, but Sherry has a one-sided rivalry with Phil because she hates the fact that he is smarter than her, and she wants to impress her father!

Phil, oblivious to this, is happy for Sherry whenever her scores are higher than the last.

“Phil!” Sherry calls out to her friend, “Where are you going? We're not supposed to go there!”

“Well, yes, but—!” He suddenly shows her a bunch of flowers – marigolds, “I found some flowers!” Phil declared with a grin, he continues to do his business, “I’ll take home some for Mommy!”

“Hey. . .” Sherry starts, sitting beside him, watching what he's doing, “I never saw your Mommy before. What's she like?”

“Beautiful!” Phil said in a heartbeat, “Best Mommy ever!”

Feeling a pang in her chest when she heard the last part, she ignores it as she moved on to another question, “What about your Dad?”

Phil stops moving at that, blinking at the flowers in hand before shrugging, “I don't know,” He answers, “Never seen him for a year or so.”

Sherry tilts her head in confusion, “You don't know who your Daddy is?”

“I know who he is,” Phil said in an almost harsh tone, “I just don't like him,” He continues, “How about you, what's your Daddy like?”

Sherry grins at this, “Best Daddy in the world!” She makes a big circle motion, “He's so intelligent too! More intelligent than you are!”

Phil was curious at that, “I wanna meet your Daddy then!” He grins, “Now that you mention it, I never see your Daddy too. . .”

Sherry smiles shyly at this, “He's busy. . .” She mumbles as she looks away, a little embarrassed.

That confused Phil, “No need to be embarrassed,” He said to Sherry, who perked up at that, “Mommy's always busy too. But I don't mind because I know she's doing it for me and

Carol,” He shares, smiling brightly when he mentioned the name, “Carol's my sister! She looks a lot like Mommy, to be honest!” He continues, “So don't be shy that your Daddy's always busy. It's not like he hates you, right?”

Sherry frowns at that and shook her head aggressively, “No! Daddy would never hate me!” She exclaims, “He said so himself!”

“So don't be embarrassed,” Phil stated, “Our Mommy and Daddy are busy because they love us and want the best for us. No need to be embarrassed by that.”

Sherry pouts, “I know that but. . .” She mumbles, fiddling with her fingers until she grumbles in frustration, “Waaaaah! I don't know! I understand Daddy but I don't know!”

Phil tilts his head to the side a bit, eyebrows a bit narrowed, “You don't know wha—”

CLANG!

Both kids immediately turned to the source of the noise that is very near to them.

“What's that?!” Sherry exclaimed in panic, ready to run, “Phil—”

“Shh!” Phil covered her mouth, he seems alarmed and quick to move, “Quiet!”

Phil quickly looked around to find a place to hide, and moved there with Sherry, who was trying to tell him something but he can't really understand it because he's blocking her mouth.

“Tht'w bot xheue schosel prendehsis!” *That's not within the school premises!* Sherry tried to say.

When Phil removed his hand on her mouth, she tried to restate it, but was silenced by him once again, “Shh! Someone's coming!”

Someone is coming.

“Hey, asshole. You shouldn't just shoot!” One gruff voice said to someone. Phil and Sherry simultaneously covered their mouths, as if to silence them more, “We don't even know if the daughter really goes to school here!”

Phil squinted at this, *‘Daughter?’*

“The spy already said who the fuck the daughter is,” Another deep voice was heard, the two kids are making themselves smaller so that they would have more chances of not being seen, “Spilled the whole fucking info about the little brat too. And it says that she goes here—” The other man pointed the whole area, “—in this fucking public pre-school. Is Minerva careless?”

Phil narrowed his eyes now, *‘Minerva?’* He glanced at Sherry who looks terrified, *‘Isn't Sherry's last name 'Minerva'?’*

The first guy rolled his eyes, “What's her appearance again?”

“Short, blonde hair, blue-green eyes,” The second guy who always looks angry said, “She doesn't really even look like Minerva. Is she adopted?”

‘They're really describing Sherry!’ Phil concluded, panicking a bit.

“I don't know,” The first guy answered, “We've never even really saw the guy.”

“I know. But, that's what our spy says,” The second guy says, grunting a bit, “He said that she doesn't look like shit from the man.”

The first guy shook his head, “So what's the plan?”

“Go in there and kidnap the girl,” The second guy answered in a heartbeat, “That's what our boss said. Keep the girl hostage.”

Phil and Sherry stiffened at that.

“Man,” The first guy groaned, “It's easier if it's a woman, but a child?” He 'tsk'ed in annoyance, “It's going to be noisy and annoying as hell while we take the brat to headquarters.”

“Unless—”

“—Boss said we shouldn't hurt the child,” The first guy cut the second one off, “We're gonna be dead if we did.”

The second guy rolled his eyes, “Ugh,” He grunted, “Can we just barge in now? So that this will be finished quickly.”

The first guy shrugged, “Yeah, sure—”

Rustle.

The first guy narrowed his eyes at the source of the slight sound (the place where Phil and Sherry were hiding!), he turned to his companion, he's now frowning deeply unlike before. They nodded at each other. Agreeing that they should look at the origin of the sound.

The second guy cocks his gun, and when the first guy signalled, the both of them bolted to the place, expecting someone.

“Who are — huh?!”

The only thing they saw there was *Marigolds* .

“Ph – Phil—” Sherry panted while running, “Phil—! Wait—!”

“Just run!” Phil exclaimed, running as fast as he can, “They're gunna kidnap you!”

“But—”

“Your last name is Minerva,” Phil restated what the men said earlier, “You're short, blonde, and have blue-green eyes.”

Sherry frowns at this, “Are you—”

They heard a bang from where they came from that made the both of them squeak in fear.

“We need to hide!” Phil exclaims, now holding Sherry, “ *You* need to hide!”

“But where?!”

“We'll see!”

Emma, Norman, and Ray

Chapter Summary

[Daddy we're in La – Lacus! I don't know where this is but Phil says this is near to our school area – I don't know—! Please hurry up, Daddy! We'll continue hiding but we don't know this place—!]

Chapter Notes

Hello! Sorry for the wait! Work, work, work (π_π)

Here's Chapter 2 for Let Me Love You! I hope you enjoy!

So sorry for the grammatical and typographical errors you may see! I wrote half of this at 2am here in my country with no sleep...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CHAPTER TWO: Emma, Norman, and Ray

“Phil!” Sherry whisper-shouted to her friend, who's currently looking out to see if the men earlier has followed them, “Phil! Why can't we just go home? We can go to my house!”

“Uhm,” Phil started, not looking at Sherry, “You do know that they're looking for you, right. . .?”

Sherry slightly groaned at that, “Yes. . .”

“Then you must know that they will automatically check your house,” Phil reasoned.

“But still. . .” Sherry mumbles, then brightened up, “Oh! Maybe we can call Daddy!”

Phil considers the idea, “Do you have. . .money?”

Sherry blinked, “Money? For what?”

“To pay for the phone,” Phil answered, tilting his head for a bit, “Those have fees. . .”

“Oh. . .” Sherry realized, then shyly looked down, “I. . .don't have any with me. . .”

Phil searched his pockets, his hands felt some coins in it, “I have. . .” He fished them out, counting them, “5 cents.”

Sherry's shoulders slumped, “That's little. . .”

“We only need 5 more to be able to rent a call,” Phil enthusiastically said to Sherry, “Mommy said there's 1 out 10 chance that we may find dropped coins!”

Sherry looked at him in disbelief, “That's too small of a chance!”

“It's still a chance!” Phil exclaimed, smiling widely, “But. . .we need to go somewhere, we can't stay here. . .they might find us.”

“Where though?” Sherry asked once again, before fidgeting, “I'm scared. . .”

‘I'm scared too,’ Phil wanted to say, but he kept it to himself, not wanting Sherry to be more afraid about the situation. Then he suddenly thought of something.

“Sherry,” He asked the girl, who looked at him when he called her, “What does your Daddy do?”

Sherry tilts her head, “Huh?”

“What's your Daddy's job?” Phil rephrased.

“Uhhh. . .” Sherry pondered, “All I know is that he's a . . .uhhh. . .C. . .C.E. . .C.E—something?”

“C.E.O.?” Phil asked.

Sherry nodded at that, “Ah, that!” She said, “People call him 'Boss' too. . .”

Phil was perplexed, “C.E.O. of what?”

Sherry went back to being confused, “I don't know, actually. . .”

Phil refrained from sighing, instead, he's now thinking on where they should go.

“Phil. . .”

“Hm?”

“Are we. . .” Sherry trails off, thinking of that word that her Uncle Ray always said to censor bad words, “. . .screwed?”

Phil blinks at that, “I . . .” He says, “I don't know. . .”

Then they heard a gunshot near them.

The moment Norman parked his car at the pre-school, Ray woke up beside him.

“Oh,” Ray groaned, “We're here. . .”

Norman seemed to be deep in thought as he took his phone and keys, “Are you coming with me?”

Ray sighed, “Can I stay here? I'm still a bit groggy. . .”

Norman absent-mindedly nodded, getting out of the car with a neutral look, still deep in thought.

Ray sighed, “What a doting father,” He muttered to himself, taking out his cell.

Ray missed to see the orange-haired woman, looking as troubled as Norman.

Emma noticed a car parked on one of the parking spots at the pre-school. She can't help but narrow her eyes at it for a bit. She's never seen that car before.

She decided to ignore it, she entered the building in a haste. She noticed the teachers recognizing her the second they saw her. Some greeted her, and some only looked at her in worry.

'Phil. . .' Emma thought once again in worry.

After taking a left, she found the principal's office. Keira said they'll meet there. She kind of ran to the door, not noticing a platinum blond haired man aiming for the doorknob too.

Instead of the cold, metal touch of the doorknob, Emma instead felt a warm hand.

Warm hand?

She whipped her head to see whose hand it is, ready to apologize when she caught sight of their eyes.

Beautiful blue eyes. Tinted with violet. She loves it. She can see the universe in it.

Emma didn't notice the way Norman was shocked to see her, instantly withdrawing his hand in shock, his heart hammering in his chest (he doesn't even know *why*), "I – sorry, Ma'am."

"I – huh?" Emma became flustered, she can feel herself blushing and she immediately broke the eye contact between them, looking anywhere but this hot guy – man, in front of her, "I – uhm—! Sorry! I didn't mean to—"

"Ah, no, it's okay, I didn't see you too—"

The door suddenly opened, startling both adults. They see the person who opened it, who is also shocked to see the two of them, but her face contorts into a professional expression.

“Mr. Minerva,” The woman, Keira, calls, “Ms. Grace,” She continues, “We. . .were waiting for the two of you. Please come in.”

Norman let Emma in first, making her feel shy for a bit, but decided to focus on the matter at hand. Phil and his friend are not here. So she assumes that the hot guy – man is Phil's friend's parent.

‘Is he single?’ Emma mentally slapped herself the second she finished that thought, *‘Oh God, I’m so sorry, Phil. I shouldn’t be thinking about this right now. . .’*

When they entered the room, they see the principal sitting behind their desk, their name engraved on the desk nameplate, Mrs. Tizerro.

“Mr. Minerva, Ms. Grace,” Mrs. Tizerro greeted, a nervous smile on her face, “We're pleased to see you here today.”

“Please cut the pleasantries,” Norman immediately shut down the future sentences the principal thought of. Emma senses the edge and coldness in his tone, and she doesn't understand why she thinks that it's *attractive* , “Go straight to the point.”

Emma finds herself agreeing, her son and his child are missing, they might be in danger, “What happened?”

Mrs. Tizerro and Keira looked at each other before nodding.

“All I can say is, Sir, Ma'am,” Mrs. Tizerro said, gaining the attention of both Emma and Norman, “Is that we're glad Phil and Sherry are not here,” She turns to Keira, who's also looking at her, and nods. Signalling her to start.

Keira shakily exhales before starting, “After lunch, we let the kids have their playtime as always,” She said, fidgeting her fingers, “Then suddenly, two armed men came in, looking for—” She gulps, glancing at Norman nervously, “—looking for Sherry. . .we lied that she

didn't go to school today. They didn't believe it,” She inhales a bit, “Before the other man could do anything bad – he seemed so angry that Sherry's not here – his companion said something, I don't know what, but that made the both of them leave.” She continues, “Minutes after calming the children down, Ariel, one of the kids, cried to me saying that Phil and Sherry went to the garden earlier to hide. Me and the other teachers went there in hopes of finding them hiding, safe and sound, but we didn't.”

Emma feels like she can't breathe. *‘Armed men? Armed. With guns. Phil – Oh Phil, where —?’* She feels her breath hitch, mixed emotions swarming over her, anxiety, fear, panic—

A warm hand rests on her shoulder.

She whipped her head to the side to see Norman was the one who put it on her shoulder, immediately recognizing that it's for comfort. He looked into her eyes as if he's asking for permission, she nods a bit to let him.

His hand pats her back comfortingly after that. He turned to the teachers who's distracted at the display of comfort, “After that, I assume you called us?”

Keira nodded, “Y – Yes, Sir.”

Norman was thinking deeply, ever since he heard the words ‘Armed Men’, he already has a good idea of who they are and who sent them.

He glanced at Emma, who's still looking anxious and might have an attack, he can't help but curse himself for being so careless.

Not only his daughter's gone, another child – this woman's child too.

However, “Did you inform the police about this?”

Emma perked up at that, eyes wide, ‘Police. . . ? No. . .no. . .’

~~“Bitch!”~~

painpainpainpainpainpainpainpain

“You're hurting Phil!”

pain—screech—painpainpain—phil—!

~~“Don't care!”~~

~~“!”~~

~~“No one will be able to hurt you because the police are in my dog’s!”~~

*mocklaughmocklaughmocklaughpolicedogsmocklaughmocklaughmocklaughmockl
aughpainpainpainpain—*

“—we haven't,” Mrs. Tizerro's voice snapped Emma out of her thoughts, “Should we—?”

“No—”

“No!”

Both teachers looked at them in confusion while Norman was surprised at Emma's reaction and answer.

Emma was surprised at herself too, she automatically said it in a habit, “I – uhh,” She turned to Norman who was still staring at her, analyzing.

He instantly went to her aide, “Informing the police will endanger the kids more,” He continued, his hand still on Emma's back, “If those men are people who has a grudge on me, informing the police will only result to unwanted chaos. You don't want your school to be featured on tomorrow's news, don't you?”

Mrs. Tizerro gulped at that.

‘Grudge on you. . . ?’ Emma thought.

“But how will you—?”

“I will take care of it,” Norman cut Keira off, “I will find both Sherry and Phil before the night ends,” His gaze returns to Emma, who's staring at him with a mixture of hope and shocked expression, “I know a few private people who'll help me. But first,” He continues, “May you please guide us to the garden?”

Keira reluctantly nodded.

Norman looks around the state of the garden. A fallen pot, moved chairs, moved tables. He assumes this is where those men entered also. The state of it being not cleaned must be because they wanted to report this to the authorities. It's a good one that they still haven't. If Norman's correct, the police will not be much of a help.

Emma, on the other hand, went towards the open door at the back, seeing some footprints that went inside the garden. She ignores it, instead, going out of the garden. Out of the school premises now. Not noticing that Norman's also going out.

Keira was just at the back, staring at them anxiously.

Emma immediately notices the fallen Marigolds. She narrowed her eyes at this, going there.

The marigolds looks like it's stepped on, but Emma notices that the marigolds was picked.

She was about to pick up one broken flower, when she accidentally picked someone's hand instead—

— *Oh!*

“Ah!” She yelped a bit, startling Norman also.

He gave her a comforting smile, “Sorry,” He apologizes. His face turning serious after as he picked up one broken flower, analyzing it before looking around the area.

Emma can't help stare at him in worry before deciding to stand up and look around also until —

‘*Huh?*’ Emma practically ran to the tree where she noticed something shiny. It's a—

“Bullet?” Emma gasps. Norman rushed over to see it.

“We have a lead,” Norman mutters, turning his heel as he fished out his phone.

Emma follows him, “Wait—! Uhh, Sir Minerva?!” She ran to him in a hurry. Not realizing there's a rock, thus tripping over, “Ah!”

Norman turns around at the call, “Yes, Miss—?!” He caught her in time. Still shaken that the woman almost fell because of him.

However, Emma ignores what happened, gripping his elbows tightly, she says what's on her mind, “Please! Let me help!”

Ah, the dreaded question, “Miss Grace—”

“Just call me Emma,” She cuts him off, “Please. Let me help,” She begs, “It's – It's my child too. *Please* .”

Norman gulps. He understands. He really, *really* understands why she would want to help. He's a parent too. He loves Sherry, and he's positive that Emma loves Phil too. He feels – *knows* Emma's more of a responsible parent than he is to his daughter, she has the right to help. She has the right to look for her child.

But he can't risk another person's safety. He's the one at fault here. He endangered his own daughter for pete's sake. Now, even Miss Grace – Emma's child is in danger too.

“Miss—” Norman stops, noticing Emma's glare, “Em – Emma.” He rephrased, not used to using a stranger's first name, “I already endangered your child, Emma. I can't risk your safety too.”

“Even more of a reason to help!” She reasons, “I understand why you don't want to, but my child is in danger too!” She continues, “Our children are missing, Sir Minerva. I don't know why some armed men are looking for your daughter, but it seems like Phil helped her not get taken, and now that they might be hiding somewhere – I don't know where! I want to help!”

She begs once again, “Please.” Then glares, “Even if you say no. I’ll be damned if I won’t follow. I will be looking for them *even* if it endangers me in the process!”

‘A woman’s tenacity never bothered me,’ Norman thinks, staring deep into the beauty of Emma’s emerald green eyes, *‘But this one. . .Emma, huh. . .’*

Norman released a breath he didn’t know he was holding in, “Okay.” He mutters, “But—”

“I can defend myself!” Emma said, slightly shaking Norman, “I promise!”

“Sir, Ma’am, what’s—” Keira’s eyes went wide when she saw Emma and Norman, her face all red as she turned away, “S – Sorry! Please carry on!” She ran away.

Both Emma and Norman narrowed their eyes in confusion before realizing their position.

In others’ eyes, they look like they were about to kiss—

“Oh no!” Emma immediately stood properly, releasing her hold on Norman, blushing profusely, not noticing that the man is redder than she is, “I’m sorry! I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to—!”

“Ah, no, it’s fine!” Norman squeaks a bit, shyly assisting her to stand, even if he knows she can handle herself, “I’m sorry.”

“Ah, eh,” Emma doesn’t know what to say next, apologizing would make him apologize more, so she changes the topic, “I’ll just talk to Miss Keira later. . .”

Norman nods slowly, not sure what to say next.

“So,” Emma breaks the sudden uncomfortable air between them, “I can? Sir Minerva—”

“Norman,” Norman exhales, smiling a bit at Emma, “Please just call me Norman.”

Emma smiles at this, “Okay! So I can help, right, Norman?”

His heart skipped a beat when she called him.

He sighs, silently surrendering, “Yes, yes.” He says, “Please take care of yourself.”

“I will! I won't let you down!” Emma reassures with a grin.

“Wow,” That was the first thing Ray said the minute they saw him. He's currently leaning his back on the car, keys on his right index finger – looks like he's been spinning it – and he is currently looking at Emma with interest and amusement at Norman, “Never thought that you'll come back with a girlfriend, *Guardian* .”

Emma immediately reacted, “Wha—?! No! We're not—!”

“Good afternoon, Ray,” Norman greeted Ray, going to the driver's seat, “Don't stress her out.”

Ray rolls his eyes, “What's she doing here?”

“I'm here, you know,” Emma sighs.

Norman clears his throat, closing the door of the car, “Ray, meet Emma Grace, Phil's mother,” He smiles at Emma, “Emma, meet Ray Nadameru, a family of mine.”

Ray narrows his eyes a bit, “You're Phil's mother?”

Emma blinks in confusion, “Uhh, yeah. You know Phil?”

“I've seen the kid,” Ray answers, still analyzing Emma, “You. . .”

Emma immediately knows why, “I don't look like him, don't I?”

Norman and Ray stares at Emma, Ray slowly nods.

“I'm guessing. . .he looks like his father then,” Ray states awkwardly, now removing his weight to the car, standing properly.

Emma sighed through her nose, uncomfortable at the subject at hand, “. . .yeah.”

Norman sensed her uneasiness and spoke up, “Let's go inside the car.”

“Already have an idea where your children are?” Ray asked Norman.

“Hmm, no,” He answers, earning shocked expressions from both Emma and Ray, “We have a lead, though. And if it's really *them* ,” He throws Ray a knowing look, “It's best we start searching *now* .”

“Wait,” Ray exclaims in a haste, “ *Them* ? Then why is she here?!”

“Because I want to help!” Emma shouts, full of determination, “My son is missing too! I want to help in searching for them! I don't care if I have to wound myself for that—”

“—No—!”

“—I will help you find them!” Emma ignores the reaction of both men with her previous sentence, “I will help you whether you like it or not!”

Norman silently sighs, already expecting that, while Ray shakes his head in disapproval, sighing loudly.

“Look here, Missy—”

“It's *Emma* ,” She cuts him off. Norman is now getting worried.

Ray resisted the urge to roll his eyes, “Look here, Miss Emma,” He rephrased, “I don't think you know the dangers of who might be chasing your son and his daughter—”

“Ray—!”

“I already know and I can already feel how dangerous it is!” Emma cuts Ray off, ignoring Norman's call for his friend also, “And I will still help you! *Whether you like it or not !*”

Silence engulfs them, only hearing honks and children's laughter from a distance.

Ray sighed with a disgruntled groan, he turned to Norman who's giving him a look that translates to 'don't-even-try'.

He sighs, “Ugh,” He opens the door to the front passenger seat, he turns to Emma once again, “Get in.”

Both Emma and Norman smiled at this.

Emma enters the car, as do both men.

As soon as Norman did his seatbelt, he spoke up, “Ray, message the others. Let them also help. Tell them to search around the area of Goldie Pre-school.”

Emma turned to him, “I thought—?”

“We're not asking for the help of the police, I promise,” Norman reassures, smiling at Emma, “They're just friends.”

Ray rolls his eyes at this, but is slightly amused.

‘And here I thought Emperor would never have a girlfriend. . .’ Ray smirks, beginning to type on his phone, *‘I’ll tease him a lot for this. . .after we find Sherry and Phil though. . .’*

“ —*Waaaaaaaah !*”

“Sorry, Carol, I know you don't know me—”

“ *Waaaaaaaahaaaaaaah !*”

Mujika sighed for the third time ever since Carol woke up. She continued to rock Carol in hopes to comfort the toddler.

“Mommy. . .” Mujika starts, “Mommy just needs to do something. She promised that she'll be back after.”

Carol continued to cry, and Mujika hummed in hopes to comfort her, “Shh, shh. It's fine. . .I know you don't know me, but I promise you, you're safe here, Carol. . .”

Carol hiccups, sniffing also, “Mum—” *Hiccup*. “—ma—” *Sniff*. “Ma—” *Hiccup*. “—ma. . .”

Mujika softened, “I know. . .you miss Mama,” She hums, “She'll be back. I promise,” She says once again, patting Carol's head. Carol continued hiccuping as she decided to rest on Mujika's shoulder, still sad, but calmed down a bit.

“Mum—” *Hiccup*. “—my. . .” Carol calls.

Mujika was now rubbing circles on the toddler's back, “I know. . .” She mumbles, “While Mommy's gone, let's get you feeling better, okay?”

As if she understood, Carol nods, surprising Mujika, “Mum—” *Hiccup*. “—ma. . .”

Mujika smiles at her fondly, her hand patting her head once again, “She'll come back.”

The door opens, revealing Anna who's currently carrying bottles of milk.

“Here're the warm milks she needs,” Anna said in a shushed tone, before realizing that Carol's awake, “Oh. . .can I. . .?”

Mujika nods. Anna rushes to see Carol, and she immediately smiled at her in comfort when she saw that the toddler's crying.

“Hello,” Anna softly greeted the toddler, she holds out her hand to pat her, but Carol scooted closer to Mujika, her grip on the other doctor turning tight.

Both women were shocked at the way she reacted, it's like. . .

It's like she's being cautious.

Nevertheless, Anna smiles, “You miss. . .your mommy, don't you?”

Carol sniffs, her tearfilled eyes staring at Anna.

Anna nods, “It's okay,” She reassures, “While Mommy's gone, you're safe here. We promise.”

Carol hiccups. Anna remembered the milks. She went to get one and returns to Carol and Mujika.

She holds out the warm bottle, “Here. You're probably hungry by now, aren't you, Carol?”

Carol stares at the bottle for a few seconds before reaching out to take it and put the nipple in her mouth to suck. She's still sniffing as she does that, meaning she's still sad that Emma's not here.

Anna and Mujika smiles at the toddler.

“She'll come back, baby,” Mujika repeats, “She promised.”

“Where are we going?” Emma asked Norman, who's now currently driving once again.

“Since the kids probably ran through the extended garden outside the school premises,” Norman starts, his eyes on the road, “If we took account that they hid somewhere after getting out of there, they should probably be in our neighboring town: Lacus.”

“That's like—” Emma counts, “—30 minutes away from Graciens!”

“Our kids ran,” Norman seriously says, his tone has a little edge on it, “They're desperate to get to a safe place. And I'm also assuming that they were tailed by the men right after.”

Emma shakily sighs, “Oh God. . .”

Norman softened his eyes, “I'm sorry for the trouble—”

“No, no. It's not you,” Emma cuts him off. The car stops for the red light, “It's just – I'm worried. Just from you guys, I can feel how dangerous those men are, you said they have a grudge against you?”

Norman stills at that, “. . .yes,” He answers, “I'm—”

“Don't,” Emma stops him, “I don't know what your work is or whatever it is that you did that made some angry, armed men tailing for you and your daughter. But the fact that you care enough for your child and *mine* let's me conclude one thing:” Norman blinks at that, “You're a good person, Norman. And for that, I'm thankful.”

Norman's mouth opened, then closed, not sure on what to say.

He stares at her eyes once again, as if he's searching that somehow, she's just lying to make him feel good. But there's none, there's only pure honesty there. Pure. . .like her.

“I—” Norman found his voice, gulping, he smiles, “. . .thank you, Emma.”

Emma smiles at him also, ignoring the fast beating of her heart when he called her name fondly—

“Hey, lovebirds,” Ray interjects, “It's already a green light.”

That made Emma and Norman look away from each other. With a fake cough and a slight blush, Norman maneuvers the car.

Chaos was the first thing they encountered in Lacus.

After parking the car in some fast-food restaurant. The three adults stepped out of the car. Emma rushing to the crowd.

“What happened?” She asks one person. Norman and Ray was behind her, looking around to also see the situation.

Before the person Emma asked could answer, one man in his 50s spoke up.

“Some bastards gunned down my store!” He angrily shouts, pointing at the store where some police are investigating – just the sight of that blue uniform makes Emma shudder a bit – the convenience store looked like a tornado swamped over because of the broken glasses and all.

Norman was staring at the store, analyzing it with the help of his good eyes, with the help of the old man's complaints and loud ramblings, he already knows what happened, but what really took his attention is that—

'Why are all of the payphones have bullet marks?' He thinks to himself, before deciding to ask it to the store-owner.

“Sir,” He calls the owner, “May I ask why your payphones are precisely gunned down?”

“Huh?! You can see that from this distance?!” The man exclaims, then scoffs, “Those bastards did it for all I care! The poor kids who are using it instantly ran away when they—”

“Wait, wait, Sir—!” Emma cuts the man off, “Kids? What do they look like?!”

“Huh? What's it for you?!” The man asked, confused.

Ray grunts, “Just tell us.”

Norman nods, “Are they perhaps around the age of 5?”

“I don't know! Maybe?! ” The owner exclaims, “They only have a dollar on them, those poor kids. So they got the phone where their call is pre-recorded and would be delivered to the ones they're calling after an hour!” He takes a glance at his watch, “Whoever it is, they prolly already got the call!”

As if it's on cue, Norman's phone rings.

Emma and Ray turned to Norman with wide-eyed expressions. The store-owner realizes it immediately.

“Wait,” He says, “Don't tell me you're their pare—”

Ray immediately distracts the store-owner to whatever topic he might get to distract the man.

Norman answers the call and Emma looks at him expectantly.

“Sherry?”

[Daddy—!] His daughter's panicked voice was the first thing he heard, [I wish this would get to you, Daddy, some men are chasing us—!]

[Sherry, hurry up—]

[BANG! BANG!]

Norman jolts at Sherry's scream, Emma notices this, “What happened?! Are they all right?! Phil?! Sherry?!”

[Daddy we're in La – Lacus! I don't know where this is but Phil says this is near to our school area – I don't know—! Please hurry up, Daddy! We'll continue hiding but we don't know this place—!]

[BANG! BANG!]

Sherry screams again, and Norman can hear Phil's panicked voice in the background. He clenched his fists in hidden anger.

They don't deserve this—!

[Daddy, I'm scared! We're scared! Please find us—] She hiccups. His heart clenched at this.
[I lo—]

*[**BANG!! BANG!!**]*

[—static—]

“Norman? Norman!” Emma's worried voice snaps him out of his dark thoughts. He sees worry and panic in her eyes, he didn't even realize that she's cupping his face, “What happened?! Are they—”

“They almost got them,” He cuts her off, his previously clenched hand now holding one of Emma's hands that are on his cheek, *it feels warm*, “They're around this area. They almost got them. They're scared—”

“Norman. Norman,” Emma cuts him off, “Breathe.”

Norman followed her breathing, calming him down a bit before smiling a bit at Emma gratefully, “Thank you, I. . .” He sighs, not realizing he's still holding her hand. He turned to where Ray is, who's currently looking at him also, he nodded.

He turns to Emma once again, “Let's find them.”

Emma nods, “We will.”

[A N H O U R A G O]

After running for a long period of time ever since that gunshot, they stopped in front of a fast-food restaurant, panting harder than when they took a break earlier.

“Sherry—” Phil pants, his hands on his knees, “—are you—?”

“I’m fine—!” Sherry pants. Then her eyes went wide when she saw something on the ground
—

—*A dollar!*

She immediately ran to the place where it is, “Phil! A dollar!”

“There’s also a payphone there!” Phil pointed at the convenience store near them, “I told you we would find money!”

Sherry giggles, but before she could say something, they hear the distant shouts of the two men. Both kids has their eyes wide.

Without saying anything, they rushed to the convenience store, startling the old man that looks like the owner.

“Kids!” He says, “What will you be getting?”

“Uhm, uhm—!” In a hurry, Sherry can’t say anything but points at the payphones.

“How much you got there with you?” The old man asks, Sherry holds up her dollar. The old man nods in understanding, “Follow me.”

Sherry follows the old man to the payphones, with him explaining that she'll get the one that's sadly won't reach out to the person she'll call until an hour later, but she doesn't care anymore. She just wants to call her Daddy!

Phil, on the other hand, went to the maps section in a hurry and quickly took the map for Lacus town. Silently apolo

gizing to the owner.

'I promise I'll pay you, Sir!'

The old man returns to the counter, while Sherry is now dialing her Daddy's number.

Phil's heart is hammering, he can see the two men!

The beep is gone, Sherry speaks up, "Daddy—!" She starts, tears forming in slight relief, "I wish this would get to you, Daddy, some men are chasing us—!"

The men saw us—! "Sherry, hurry up—"

BANG! BANG!

Sherry shrieked in panic and fear, the old man was startled also, but began to yell at the men. The two kids ignored it.

Sherry continued, "Daddy we're in La – Lacus! I don't know where this is but Phil says this is near to our school area – I don't know—! Please hurry up, Daddy! We'll continue hiding but we don't know this place—!"

BANG! BANG!

Sherry screams again. Phil immediately realizes that the men are aiming for the payphones —!

“Sherry! Hurry up!” He calls in fear and panic.

Sherry still wants to talk, “Daddy, I'm scared! We're scared! Please find us—” *Hiccup*. “I lo —”

BANG!! BANG!!

The pre-recorded call ends.

Sherry was about to cry outloud but Phil pulled her to hide. beside the shelves near them—

BANG!!

“Son of a bitch!” They hear the old man curse, “Hey!”

Phil looked around them and saw the backdoor, he nudges Sherry and points at the door with his eyes.

Sherry shakily nods, sniffing a bit. And as if they were counting, after three seconds, they rushed out of the convenience store with the use of the back door.

Kudos and Comments are very, very appreciated! Please do! I hope you enjoyed this one! Please check out my other fic 'A Sickly Promise' too! So sorry for the grammatical and typographical errors once again (π_π)

God bless~

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!