

## Chapter 500 Live Your Days Well On Your Own

Edwin's words, unashamed and bold, left Laura blushing.

She rested on her side, her head nestled into a snow-white pillow. Edwin's warmth enveloped her from behind.

She sensed his longing for her, yet she lacked the courage for such intimacy in his home. As the night deepened, his warmth intensified, becoming almost fiery to the touch.

Facing him, Laura lay down.

In a soft voice, she inquired, "Do you need to go to the bathroom and take care of that?"

"Do you pity me?" Edwin teased. He drew her close, gently covering her eyes with his hand. "Let's get some sleep. We need to rise early tomorrow."

Laura thought little of it and soon drifted off, her head resting on his shoulder.

Before dawn, Edwin stirred her awake.

"What's the matter?" Laura, rubbing her eyes, murmured sleepily, "It's still so early."

Edwin rose to dress.

He had bathed the previous night and now, bare-chested, he began to don his trousers and shirt. His lean, muscular form caused Laura to avert her gaze.

Fully dressed, Edwin approached the bed, leaning over with hands braced on the mattress.

He affectionately pinched her nose. "Today marks my Grandma's death anniversary. Our family tradition is to rise early for the rituals. Dad will be cooking breakfast, and Olivia is likely already up."

Laura was unaware of this tradition.

She became anxious, clumsily getting ready. She softly asked Edwin, "Is my presence here a bother?"

Edwin chuckled. "After sharing my bed, you still wonder if you're a bother?"

With cheeks flushed, Laura quickly dressed. Slipping into a sweater, her black hair curled within, her complexion glowed. Edwin watched, unable to resist, and leaned in for a kiss. He softly said, "I'll head out to help. Join us after freshening up."

Laura nodded in agreement.

With a gentle smile, Edwin left the room.

Once alone, Laura hastened to get ready. Despite her nerves and clumsiness, she felt a deep contentment. What mattered more than being with the one she loved?

She stepped outside, prepared for the day.

Dawn was breaking, casting a gentle light over Evans Gardon, awakening it to life.

The kitchen buzzed with activity.

Mark was at the helm, preparing breakfast, with Olivia lending a hand, showcasing her affectionate side.

Edwin, ever helpful, joined in the preparations.

Laura greeted them.

Mark looked up, his expression warm. "Good morning, Laura!"

Feeling a bit shy, Laura hummed her greeting, offering to help.

Edwin, however, suggested, "Why not water the marigolds in the yard? The kitchen's all smoky, not a place for ladies."

Olivia retorted, "I've been here all morning, and you didn't mention the smoke to me."

Edwin responded, "You insisted on staying. I couldn't stop you! But remember, one day your husband will look out for you."

Olivia playfully complained, "You get a wife and forget your sister."

She pulled a face and led Laura outside.

As they watered the flowers, Olivia, feeling the chill, decided to use hot water, thinking it would keep the plants warm.

Mark noticed and was aghast. "Hot water on plants!"

He lamented, cradling a flower pot. "These were your Grandma's favorite. Today's her day, and now her flowers are ruined."

Olivia blinked innocently, and Laura watched in silence.

After a pause, Mark repotted the flowers, regretfully saying, "I'm not sure they'll survive." He warned Olivia, "If they don't, you're getting a spanking."

Olivia wrapped her arms around his, gazing up at him. "Dad, I was also Grandma's favorite. Aren't I more important than some flowers? If you spank me, Grandma would be heartbroken. If you don't listen to her and cherish me, that's disrespectful."

Mark chuckled at her logic. "Where did you learn such nonsense? You neglect your studies but pick up these silly ideas easily."

Unperturbed, Olivia snuggled closer.

Mark sighed, embracing her.

With both a young and a grown child in the house, he often felt overwhelmed.

Laura watched them, envious.

Mark caught her gaze, reminiscent of her childhood longing for fatherly affection.

Now that she was grown and his son's wife, he had to maintain a respectful distance.

Mark offered a gentle smile.

Laura felt a hint of embarrassment.

After breakfast, Edwin checked on Laura. "What's wrong?" he asked softly.

Laura shook her head. "Nothing."

Edwin affectionately ruffled her hair, whispering, "Once we've paid our respects to Grandma and eaten, we'll set off."



Laura nodded.

Cecilia, the last to rise, descended the stairs. Her late awakening, usually inconsequential, seemed more apparent with Laura up and about. Cecilia greeted the day with a slightly embarrassed smile.

During the tribute to Zoey, Laura stood beside Edwin.

Mark spoke sincerely to Zoey, causing Olivia to giggle softly.

Mark, indulgent of Olivia, swiftly concluded his words, eager for breakfast and the day's journey.

Olivia, however, wished to stay longer.

Mark, considering his son's desire for privacy, raised no objections.

Post holidays, the house filled with festive goods and specialties. The butler and servants loaded these into Edwin's car.

Mark then beckoned Laura to his study.

Nervously, Laura followed. Inside, Mark smiled gently. "You're not afraid of me now, are you?"

He paused, then tenderly touched her head, just like in her childhood.

Laura obediently entered the study, closing the door behind her.

Inside, Mark poured tea, filling the room with its aroma.

Laura sat opposite him, visibly tense.

Mark observed his niece, remarking, "Peter and Lina have taken good care of you!"

Laura responded with a quiet "hm" and after a moment, added, "Back then... I understand."

Mark could only muster a wry smile. He lit a cigarette, holding it without smoking, his gaze distant, lost in thought. By the time he returned to the moment, the cigarette had burned halfway.

He softly said, "In the end, we still end up as family."

Looking at Laura, he remarked, "Edwin is quite fond of you. He's stubborn, just like me. He wouldn't have brought you here if he didn't truly care."

Laura listened in silence.

Mark then opened a drawer, revealing neatly arranged items: two property deeds, a jewelry box, and a bankbook.

He explained gently, "These apartments are in Duefron and Czanch, both prime locations. There's also two hundred million in this account. Think of this as my welcoming gift for you. And this..."

He opened the jewelry box to reveal a ruby set, its deep red hues rare and exquisite.

Mark spoke softly, "Cecilia received this from Rena. She adores it and only wears it on important occasions, but when Edwin brought you home, she said it would suit a young girl like you better."

Laura sniffed quietly.

Sensing her turmoil, Mark stood and gently patted her back, his voice kind.

"Cecilia doesn't hate you or anything like that. She's just too shy to give this to you herself."

Laura hummed her thanks.

She murmured, "Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Evans."

Mark stroked her hair, sighing, "You've grown so much."

Then, snapping back to reality, he said, "Go to Edwin. He's waiting."

Laura, clutching her gifts, found Edwin by the car, dressed sharply in a white shirt, grey trousers, and a sleek black wool overcoat.

She handed him the gifts from Mark.

Edwin stored them in the car, and then caressed her face, teasing, "About to cry?"

Laura denied it.

But Edwin glanced at the house and saw someone fleeting. He warmly suggested, "Go say goodbye to my Mom. Okay?"

Laura, often appearing younger around Edwin, promptly went upstairs.

Cecilia, hearing her approach, inwardly cursed her son but quickly masked her emotions.

Laura knocked gently. "Mrs. Evans."

Cecilia feigned surprise. "Leaving already?"

Laura nodded.

Cecilia, returning to her book, spoke detachedly. "Tell Edwin to drive safely. I'm tied up with the family and Mark... I can't watch over you two. You two need to fend for yourselves."

Laura kept nodding, torn between tears and snickers.

Cecilia dismissed her. "Alright, off you go."

Laura hesitated, prompting Cecilia to ask, "What's wrong?"

Suddenly, Laura hugged her, wordless.

Cecilia, naturally tender-hearted, felt her defenses melt. She softly said, "Alright, Mark told you everything. Be happy with Edwin. I'll talk to Lina about formalizing the wedding date and everything else."

Laura remained silent, crying in Cecilia's embrace.

She recognized Cecilia's deep-seated pain, yet her acceptance for Edwin's sake was touching.

Laura lingered, not wanting to leave.

After a prolonged silence, Cecilia's voice broke through softly. "If you feel guilty towards me, just stay with Edwin and never leave him."

She understood her son's nature; once he committed his heart, it was unchangeable.

This was the only promise she sought from Laura.

Tears filled Laura's eyes as she nodded vigorously. "I will!"

Cecilia, her voice rough with emotion, wiped her own tears away. "Once you're married, you're my daughter too. Let's forget the past. I have, and you must too."

Laura's eyes brimmed with tears, reflecting her sorrow and gratitude.

Suddenly, footsteps sounded from the stairwell. Edwin had arrived.

Noticing their tears, he chose not to interrupt, instead stepping outside to



When Laura emerged from the room, he wrapped an arm around her in a comforting gesture, whispering softly, "Wait for me in the car."

With a nod, Laura leaned into his embrace for a moment.

Edwin patted her back reassuringly, watching her descend the stairs before he entered his parents' room. Cecilia, hiding her emotions, dismissed him briskly. "Go on, Edwin. Today we remember Zoey, not me."

A mix of laughter and tears escaped Edwin.

He sighed, a lightness in his voice. "Okay, I'll ask Dad to come and cheer you up."

Cecilia shot back playfully, "I'm perfectly capable of cheering myself up."

Edwin made his way downstairs and joined Laura in the car.

He glanced at Laura, her eyes still red, and tenderly wiped her tears, smiling softly. "You look like a little rabbit when you cry."

Laura turned her face, a hint of embarrassment in her gesture.

Edwin chuckled, rolling down the window to wave at Mark.

As they drove off, Mark's figure shrank in the distance. Edwin held Laura's hand gently, asking in a soft voice, "Do you like it here?"

Laura nodded in response.

Edwin talked about Evans Gardon, his family, and young Olivia.

Then, he spoke softly. "Dad can't manage forever. In a few years, I'll need to return to Czanch. It's quieter than Duefron. Would you be okay with that?"

Laura agreed internally but hesitated to express it openly.

They drove for three hours to another city, stopping for a meal before continuing their journey.

That night, they stayed in Tashkao.

Instead of a luxury hotel, they settled into a quaint guesthouse, surrounded by local eateries. After checking in, Edwin took Laura out for dinner.

Holding hands like any couple, they enjoyed a leisurely dinner.

Around ten, they returned to their room for a movie.

Laura cuddled against Edwin, drawing closer during the scary scenes. Edwin responded with a kiss...

But they restrained themselves.

He whispered, "We have a long drive tomorrow."

Laura felt a warm glow in her heart.

Over the next four days, they leisurely enjoyed their road trip back to Duefron.

Edwin parked under Laura's apartment, carrying up their belongings. The Evans men were known for spoiling their women, so Laura followed him around, her hands empty, as he did all the work.

A neighbor complimented Laura. "Your boyfriend is very handsome! When's the wedding?"

Laura smiled, not correcting her.

Edwin, carrying the last small box of homemade sausages, shared some with the neighbor and politely said, "Soon, within the next half year!"

After entering the apartment, Laura slowly closed the door, pondering the idea of marriage.

But as soon as Edwin set down their belongings, his demeanor changed.

Laura found herself pinned against the door, caught in a passionate kiss. Her coat fell away, revealing a silk blouse and a fishtail skirt.

Edwin kissed her deeply, his voice husky. "Laura... You're so beautiful."

Laura's heart raced, overwhelmed by the sudden intensity.

Edwin, the gentleman of the past few nights, had transformed into a hungry wolf. Laura was unprepared for this change.

His fingers slipped under her clothes, and after a moment, he whispered, "You want this too, don't you?"



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