

After Death 15

Chapter 15

Olivia shot Keith a grateful look, and he nodded at her in acknowledgment before turning around to help her with the hospitalization matters.

The nurse patiently explained the process to her, “Ms. Fordham, you will need to receive treatment over the long term. We will inject the chemo drugs into your body each time, but all the injections and the drugs will further harm your veins.

“In some serious cases, you will experience exsmosis. Just so you know, the drugs used are corrosive. To avoid those complications, we’d recommend inserting a medical port in your arm. We usually insert the port in advance to make sure that the drugs travel through your veins and into your organs.”

She continued, “The good thing is that the nurses won’t struggle to find your veins down the road—it’s convenient and safe. But on the flip side, you can’t lift heavy weights with this arm in the future.”

Olivia agreed with the nurse and went under a minor surgery to insert the port in her arm. As she was allergic to anesthetics, she turned down anesthesia. When the blade slit through her thin skin, she merely frowned without so much as making a sound.

The doctor couldn’t help but comment, “It’s rare to see someone who can take the pain.” To that, she sighed. “Well, it’s not like I have anyone who would care if I was hurt anyway.”

The conversation brought her back to a year ago when she had to undergo emergency surgery after falling into the water and suffering premature labor. Even after she was given anesthetics, she could vividly sense the pain when the blade sliced through her abdomen.

That day, she fainted from the excruciating pain, only to wake up to the same sensation. Throughout the ordeal, her screams fell on deaf ears because Ethan chose to stay guard in front of Marina’s delivery room.

From then on, she learned not to make a sound even when she was in pain.

The second day after chemo, she was besieged by an array of side effects. It was Keith who helped her to get discharged.

Even the short distance from the inpatient department to the underground garage made her gasp for breath, resulting in multiple breaks in between. Any slight movement would make her dizzy and nauseous, and all her energy seemed to seep away.

Keith sighed and got down on his knees to scoop her into his arms. Panicking, she rejected his help, "Keith, don't—"

This time, he sternly insisted on helping. "Your body is weak now. If you refuse my help, I will have no choice but to call your family for your safety. And right now, Ethan Miller is your only family who could drop by. Am I right?"

It was an absurd situation. Without the signed divorce papers, Ethan remained legally her spouse and the only family member who could take care of her.

"Don't let him know about my condition."

Olivia was already a mess. Ethan would only feel gleeful upon hearing about her diagnosis. The last thing she wanted was to be laughed at.

Keith cautiously saw her back to her apartment and advised her, "Olivia, you need a caretaker. You can't even take care of your meals now."

She nodded. "I know. My friend's going to return from abroad. She'll take care of me. Keith, you still need to work your shift, don't you? I shouldn't take up too much of your time."

He checked his wristwatch and agreed it was about time to head back to work since he had some major surgeries scheduled. He gave her a few words of advice before leaving.

After he left, Olivia lay in her bed alone as she grappled with the indescribable pain. She felt pain in every inch of her body. As she fought her dizzy vision, her abdomen roiled, and she was suffering from nausea. Even the wound on her arm was thudding in dull pain.

Hellish was the only word she could describe it with. To her dismay, the only person she missed was Ethan.

Back when she was suffering from acute appendicitis, he rushed her to the hospital in the middle of heavy snow. Still fussy and squeamish, she cried when she was wheeled into the operating theater, but he held her hand tightly and followed her into the room. In the end, the doctor performed the surgery under Ethan's gaze.

This many years later, and she still recalled his expression when he soothed her. He said to her, "Don't worry, I'm here."

After the surgery for her appendicitis, she could not walk for a month. Ethan was next to her the entire time and was attentive to all her needs.

Years later now, he was with another woman, taking care of the children she bore for him.

Olivia had to repeatedly remind herself of his infidelity and his cruelty to forget all the lovely memories she had of him. Fighting the debilitating pain, she stumbled down the bed and gritted her teeth, telling herself that she could do this. She would not let death get in the way of her pursuit of the truth.

Her tears fell onto the pasta she took out to boil. The worst pain wasn't physical—it was the pain that he had inflicted on her.

It felt like thousands of blades were cutting through her body, and the pain was suffocating.

For three whole days, she writhed in pain on her bed. When she woke up on the fourth morning, she was glad to find that the pain had decreased, and her nausea seemed to have died down a little.

Suddenly, she heard someone drawing the window curtains. It was Keith, who had regularly dropped by after work to take care of her.

He brought some fresh produce and a bag of chips that she had been craving. His black wool coat was a little damp when he showed up in a hurry. Even his hair was a little moist.

When he lowered his gaze to check on her, she spotted a snowflake in his thick and long lashes.

“Is it snowing?” she muttered feebly.

He nodded. “Yeah, it snowed for the whole night yesterday. When you feel better in a few days, we’ll go check out the snow.”

“Great. I’m not in much pain today.”

Olivia sat up in bed, all huddled up in her thick pajamas. However, she was devastated to see a bunch of hair on her pillow when she turned around. Even when she had cut her hair short to prepare for this moment, she was taken aback by the sight.

She hurriedly pulled her blanket to cover the pillow to avoid exposing the sad and embarrassing truth. A little floored, she mumbled, “I’ll wash up.”

Keith had seen countless cancer patients who found it harder to cope with the loss of dignity than death itself. “Sure, take your time.”

She shut the bathroom door and stared into her sickly face in the mirror. A chunk of hair easily fell out when she pulled on it tentatively.

As a young lady in her prime years, she felt grim when she witnessed the hair loss. Before she knew it, she’d lose all her hair.

That was when Olivia decided she had to finalize the divorce as soon as possible. It would be a nightmare to meet up with Ethan to settle the divorce after she went bald. Finally, she switched on her phone and, ignoring the piling messages, went on to call Ethan.

Little did Olivia know that he had been searching high and low for her in the past few days. She did not even have to wait more than three seconds for him to pick up. She could hear his seething voice from the other end.

“Olivia Fordham, where the fuck were you?” Ethan had tried to locate her for four full days.

Instead of explaining herself, Olivia said to him with urgency, “Ethan, I’ll wait for you at the City Hall in an hour. I don’t want to drag this out. Let’s get a divorce.”