

## After Death 231

### Chapter 231

My head felt dizzy as I stiffly sat beside the bed, my ears buzzing for quite some time

\*Stephie?

“Stephany?”

I could hear Michael calling my name but I was in a state of dizziness.

When I abruptly stood up, the room spun before my eyes.

“Stephie?”

Before I lost my memory, I suffered from psychological illness?

Was that the reason I had forgotten about the orphanage, about Steven Lincoln?

What exactly happened?

“Stephie... Erase me. I won’t blame you. Erase me from your memory...

“Don’t be scared, Stephie. I’ll always be by your side.

“If your current life is more comfortable without me, then erase me from your memory...

“Stephanie, what am I to you? Am I a forgotten remnant of your past?

“Stephanie... Don’t die, please, I beg of you. Don’t let me become a remnant of your past.

You know I can’t live by myself.”

A voice was roaring, crying, and screaming in my mind.

“Stephie, don’t leave me behind.”

In my blurred consciousness, it seemed that I had returned to the moment before I was dead.

Under the moonlight, I found myself cornered by those tramps in a dark alley. I was disheveled.

A tall, terrifying figure with a stick in his hand was mercilessly striking those tramps.

“Touch her and you’ll die.

“Don’t worry. I’ll always be here.

Stephie... Why did you forget about me? Am I part of your painful memories too?

“I don’t blame you.”

In the alley, the figure draped his jacket over me and let me rest on his lap when I fainted from low blood sugar. He stayed by my side through the night.

Steven...

It was Steven!

The blurry figure slowly became clear.

Steven stood before me in the dim light and slowly turned to face me.

His face was streaked with tears, and his hands were bloodied.

With reddened eyes, he looked at me and said, “Stephie... What a disgusting world this is.”

“Steven... Steven.”

As Steven turned away, a beam of light burst before my eyes.

While others might perceive him as a lunatic or devil, he had always been my redemption-  
my sole salvation.

He was my salvation, mine alone.

In my memory, I joyfully embraced Steven and placed the gift my mother had prepared for him on the table.

“Steven, this is a gift from my mom, but I personally picked this outfit for you. Mom said you’re still growing, so we got a bigger size for you.

“Steven, if you weren’t a genius; what would you want to do most?”

“Keep loving you....

“Even if I weren’t a genius and even if I became a fool, I’d still love you.

“Loving you is the only thing I want to do.”

“You’re pregnant?” The doctor’s question brought me back to reality.

I found myself in the treatment room, tears soaking my hair. But I had no memory of crying.

Perhaps my desperation to recall memories from the past was overwhelming. Even the slightest fragments of Steven’s memory inflicted such heartache that breathing became difficult.

The doctor examined me and instructed the nurse to administer glucose. “Please exercise greater caution in the future. Hormonal fluctuations during pregnancy can lead to dizziness, although it may always be the primary cause. We’ll keep a close eye on your condition.”

I asked softly, “Doctor, is there any way to quickly retrieve memories?”

The doctor was startled. “Amnesia? Have you experienced any serious injuries before? | don’t see any history of major injuries in your records, though.”

Michael, who stood holding a cup of water by the door, froze in place. He quickly rushed over and crouched in front of me. "You're Stephie, aren't you?"

As I looked at Michael, my gaze trembled. My fingers tightened so much that they went numb.

"Mr.

1. r. Ford, I heard your mother is trying to exorcise you. It appears that you've truly lost your mind." I gritted my teeth and pushed away Michael's hand.

"I'm not Stephanie. And even if Stephanie were alive, do you think you're worth her attention?"

## Chapter 232

Michael's eyes reddened. "I can make it up to you. At least give me a chance..."

"You don't deserve it..." I pushed Michael away and walked out, fighting back the anger. You're nothing but a liar."

I had considered a thousand reasons why Michael had stopped loving me, but I had never imagined that I was the reason.

I was the one who had been confused. I loved the wrong person, and I was deceived.

Struggling to contain the fire raging in my chest, I felt like losing my mind. I was shaken to- the point where I could barely walk.

As tears flowed uncontrollably from my eyes, all I could think of was Steven.

I saw the image of him standing in the backlit mist, turning back to look at me.

How could you, Stephanie Carlson?

How could you forget about him?

How could you erase him completely from your mind?

And how could you... fall deeply in love with another man without the slightest hesitation?

How could you...

Tears streaming down my face, I rushed to the emergency exit and delivered a hard slap to my own cheek.

"How could you..." I questioned myself.

How could you not remember anything? How could you?

"Ah!" Overwhelmed by despair, I collapsed into the corner, grabbed my hair, and groaned.

low.

Why couldn't I remember anything?

Why had I forgotten about Steven?

Why did I mistake Michael as someone to count on back then?

This was the reason I died, wasn't it?

Because I had betrayed Steven by mistaking Michael for him.

If Steven was the one who murdered me, I should just accept it because I deserved it.  
deserved it!

Stephle...

On the stairs of the emergency hallway, Steven stood there in his patient gown, his fingers dripping with blood.

I looked

up at him, feeling tears welling up. I lowered my head and continued to sob.

"Are you abandoning me again?" Steven walked up to me, his voice hoarse.

I looked at him as if I were gazing at a god.

He wasn't a devil; he never was.

"Steven..." I reached out to him.

Steven anxiously grasped my hand, his gaze darting around.

"You're such a fool..." No genius would act like him.

He pulled me into his arms, holding me tightly. "Mm-hmm, I am a fool... As long as Stephie won't abandon me."

"The nurse said you're not supposed to get out of bed," I said with tears.

"Sorry, I didn't listen," Steven apologized softly, his words soothing me. "You can punish me ...Just don't abandon me. Don't go with him, and don't trust him..."

"Did you pull the needle out yourself?" I asked, noticing his still-bleeding hand.

I quickly pressed down on the wound while wiping my tears.

"It doesn't hurt at all..." he said softly, wiping away my tears for me.

"Silly," I chided him.

"Why are you crying?" Steven cradled my face, asking gently, "Did he upset you? I'll kill him

I shook my head as tears continued to flow. "It's just... Why can't I remember anything?

Why?"

No matter how hard I tried, all I could recall were little fragments of memories.

Why had I forgotten about Steven?

I hated myself.

As I continued to blame myself, Steven's fingers stiffened for a moment. His fingertips turned cold. "It's okay... You don't need to remember."

He lowered his head, gently kissing away the tears from the corner of my eye. It was as if he were cradling his most precious artwork...

Suddenly, memories flooded back of the basement filled with glass display cabinets and taxidermied animals. It was the place where Eason had taken me.

"Steve... why did you collect those animal corpses? Did you kill those small animals and insects?" I asked softly.

A flicker of panic and evasion crossed Steven's gaze.

Nervously, I looked at Steven, afraid he might admit to having killed those taxidermied animals displayed in the glass cases.

"No... they were gifts from someone." Steven lowered his head, gripping his fingers tightly.

I was startled, wondering whether Steven was lying or if they were indeed gifts from a friend.

My first thought inexplicably went to Simeon, whom I had almost completely forgotten.

Judging from the photo I saw at Carol's place, it seemed that Simeon, Steven, and I had a decent relationship—at least enough to take photos together.

Despite this, I had absolutely no memory of him.

## Chapter 233

"Was it Simmy who gave it to you?" I asked softly, peering anxiously into Steven's eyes.

Steven avoided my gaze and deflected, "Stephie... How's Grandma Rosie doing?"

He was changing the subject.

I always knew that there were too many secrets surrounding Steven. I had initially drawn close to him to unravel those very mysteries. Otherwise, Eason wouldn't have been so fixated on him.

Yet, the deeper I delved into our connection, the more I realized that not only did Steven harbor numerous secrets, but my original host, Stephany Larson, did as well.

To compound matters, I even began to question myself.

What hidden truth lay buried within my lost memories?

Why did Michael say that I had a psychological illness before? And what kind of illness was that?

Was it a mere coincidence that I found myself reborn into Stephany's body?

The more I pondered, the more terrifying the things seemed to me..

I brought Steven back to his ward. The nurse scolded him severely and resealed the punctured needle of the IV.

After ensuring Steven could get out of bed and move around, I held his hand and headed to Grandma Rosie's ward, only to discover Michael had been there all the while.

"Have some water, Grandma Rosie," Michael said, attending to her.

I frowned, feeling somewhat annoyed.

I remembered Michael as a spoiled rich brat, accustomed to having everything handed to him on a silver platter. He could barely take care of himself, let alone others.

Yet, here he was, being attentive in the ward.

"Mr. Ford, this is my grandmother. I can take care of her myself. You can go now," I said, firmly as I walked over and snatched the glass of water from Michael's hand.

Michael lowered his gaze and remained silent.

Grandma Rosie, who was awake, leaned against the head of the bed and gazed at Michael dearly

Stephy, how could you talk to Mike like that? He's a nice, kind-hearted man.

"Not only has he been taking care of me during your absence, but he was also the one who found out that I was sick and sent me to the hospital in time. If it weren't for him, I might have never been able to see you again..."

I was momentarily startled, frowning as I stared at Michael.

It seemed he had already ingratiated himself with Stephany's grandmother long before this.

What exactly was he up to?

Standing at the doorway, Steven scrutinized Michael with cold eyes. It was as if he had encountered someone even more skilled at acting than himself.

"Stephie... Steven called my name softly.

I pulled Steven over and introduced him to Grandma Rosie, "Grandma Rosie, this is my husband, Steven Lincoln. You can call him Steven."

Grandma Rosie glanced at Steven, looking somewhat displeased.

“You’ve been married to Stephy for so long, yet you’ve never bothered to come visit me. Instead, Mike was the one who has been taking care of me all this time.”

“Grandma Rosie, Steve suffers from an illness. He probably can’t even take care of himself, let alone you. It’s best that he doesn’t come and upset you,” Michael whispered, clearly trying to sow discord.

Michael was well aware of my character, understanding just how much weight I placed on my family’s opinions.

But the person he knew was the me that he had “killed“, or rather, the me who had lost an important memory after the car accident when I was 18.

Back then, I was immersed in the grief of my parents’ death. My restless and depressive emotions shrouded me like a dark hell.

I could barely live independently at that time and badly needed a warm shelter where I could call home.

Therefore, even though I was already 18 and legally an adult, I was still grateful to Lois for

taking me in and giving me a home because I simply couldn’t live by myself at that time.

Though I had indeed forgotten a lot of things, I had never suspected it once.

It was as if my memories didn’t disappear out of thin air but were erased...

“Such tragedy...” Grandma Rosie reluctantly glanced at Steven, lamenting that a person with a mental illness couldn’t provide a better life for her Stephy.

Initially, it was her biological granddaughter, Ann, who was supposed to marry Steven, though.

“Stephy, has Annie mentioned when she’ll come to see me?” Grandma Rosie cared about Ann a lot.

Before I came, I had worried that Grandma Rosie, who had raised Stephany, would see through me and realize that I wasn’t the real Stephany.

However, it seemed that my concerns were completely unfounded.

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Grandma Rosie seemed to care more about her biological granddaughter, Ann, than about Stephany.

“Grandma Rosie, Ann’s not coming to see you,” I told her straightforwardly, shattering her hopes.

Grandma Rosie sighed disappointedly. "Oh well, never mind."

Michael glanced at the time and said, "Grandma Rosie, I have to return to my ward now. Call me if you need anything, okay?"

Grandma Rosie nodded with a smile. "Will do. Stephy is so lucky to have met you, Mike."

Steve stood by silently, his expression cold. Oddly, he didn't try to please Grandma Rosie as he usually usually would do with others.

Something told me that he didn't like Grandma Rosie.

"Stephy, how could your parents force you to marry into the Lincoln family? How many wedding gifts did they receive?"

"Remember, don't give all your money to your parents. I'm the one who raised you, so you should let me know in case you've got money, okay?" Grandma Rosie said lovingly.

Although Grandma Rosie sounded as if she was genuinely concerned about Stephany, I was taken aback. I sensed something off about her.

She was completely different from how I had imagined.

I had thought she truly cared about Stephany, but... apparently not.

"Stephy, could you give Annie a call and ask her to come visit me?" Grandma Rosie requested softly.

Perhaps still assuming Steven was an idiot, Grandma Rosie completely ignored him and continued, "Also, before I was hospitalized, your brother, Felix, mentioned wanting to buy at house.

"Even though he's not your biological brother, your Uncle John did raise you well when you stayed with our family, didn't he?"

Seeing me silent, Grandma Rosie said again in a hushed tone, "Stephy, does this dimwit Grandma Rosle seemed to care more about her biological granddaughter, Ann, than about Stephany.

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“Even though he’s not your biological brother, your Uncle John did raise you well when you

stayed with our family, didn’t he?”

Seeing me silent, Grandma Rosie said again in a hushed tone, “Stephy, does this dimwit have any money? Maybe he can buy Felix a house? We won’t ask for too much, Just a 1,000-square-foot house at Huma 2nd Avenue will do. It’d be great if he could throw in a car too. looked at Grandma Rosie dumbfoundedly.

A 1,000-square-foot house at Huma 2nd Avenue? The most basic house in that area would cost at least 41 grand per square foot!

And she thought Steven was the one out of his mind? Had she looked at herself in the mirror?

Why would Steven buy a house for someone completely unrelated?

“Grandma Rosie, Steven’s broke. He’s got no status or standing in the Lincoln family due to his incompetence. We’re treated poorly in that family,” I said, feigning grievance.

However, Grandma Rosie didn’t seem to give a damn about the bullying I endured.

Instead, she remarked, “So, he’s not as capable as Mike, is he? Mike is the president of a big company, so he definitely can afford a house. He seems quite interested in you. Why don’t you talk to him about this?”

“Grandma Rosie, Steven needs his rest, so I’d better take him back to his ward now. You should get some rest too. I’ll visit you another day.”

Ignoring Grandma Rosie’s request, I left the ward with Steven.

“Stephany, have you grown arrogant now that you’re back with your biological parents?” Grandma Rosie snapped furiously.

What was this old lady’s problem?

I had always believed that Stephany was being manipulated by Charles because she felt indebted to Grandma Rosie. But after seeing Grandma Rosie’s true nature, Stephany should

have just let her be.

“Do you know how Stephany’s foster parents died?” Steven asked in a low tone as we walked down the hallway.

At that moment, he seemed perfectly normal, nothing like a fool.

“Huh?” I genuinely had no idea how Stephany’s foster parents died.

“They died in an accident while resisting arrest,” Steven said in a low tone. “They were human traffickers.”

That was the reason Steven had initially despised Stephany. Her foster family were human traffickers, including Grandma Rosie.

Grandma Rosie used to take Stephany to mingle with the homeless children, pretending to be friendly and kind. But in fact, she was waiting for buyers to make their move.

I looked at Steven in shock, unaware that he had done a background check on that family a long time ago.

As I had suspected, Stephany carried a multitude of secrets with her.

“Stephany! Are you okay?”

As we stepped into the elevator, a nurse greeted me and asked if everything was alright. It seemed that she knew Stephany quite well.

“Huh?” Feeling a little confused, I glanced at her nametag and replied, “Um.... I’m fine... Judy.”

“You really gave me a fright! I was worried that you’d do something silly when you came to me the other day asking for so much quinine!” Judy sighed in relief.

“You told me it was for your grandmother, but when I checked with the doctor later, they said your grandmother had already collected her medication. I was scared to death!

“I tried to reach you, but you didn’t answer my calls. I was worried that you might do

something silly again...”

Quinine? I was stunned upon hearing that term.

“Do you remember what day it was?” I quickly asked.

Judy was taken aback. “Last month, on the 17th.”

I instinctively glanced at Steven.

That was the day Stephany died, the day I was reborn,

Stephany’s death wasn’t an accident?

She died because she had/intentionally taken a large amount of quinine, which caused a fatal toxic reaction in her heart?

Stephany had died by suicide.

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Based on the clues I had gathered so far, it was evident that Stephany had intentionally Imitated me to marry Steven.

In that case, why would she choose to take the pills and attempt suicide on her wedding day after achieving her goal?

Meanwhile, Steven didn’t seem as surprised as I was. Was he aware of Stephany’s suicide?

“Stephany, I have to get back to work now. Call me if you need anything, okay?” Judy said before heading to the second floor.

I nodded, then asked Steven in a hushed tone, “Weren’t you surprised? Why did Stephany get so many pills from the nurse?”

Steven lowered his gaze and tightened his grip on my hand. “Who in their right mind would marry me?”

I was startled by his words. It had almost slipped my mind.

Before I was reincarnated, Steven was just some dirty, crazy tramp. Of course, no ladies would want to marry him.

But then again, why had Stephany gone to such great lengths to imitate me in order to get close to Steven?

After taking Steven back to the ward, I told him I was going out to buy dinner. That gave me the chance to slip away and meet the nurse on the second floor.

Judy, who happened to be at the nurse’s station, was rather surprised to see me. Stephany, I thought you had gone home.”

“Well, actually... About the medicine you gave me the other day... I took it...” I whispered to her.

Judy’s expression turned pale with fright. “I—I didn’t give you those pills myself. They were prescribed by the doctor for your grandmother’s heart condition. Don’t get me in trouble.”

I waved my hands. “That’s not what I meant. When I woke up the other day, I had forgotten a lot of things. Do you know why I would want to kill myself?”

Judy was taken aback for a moment before asking in a hushed tone, “Have you lost your memory, Stephany?”

nodded.

“Well, you mentioned that your grandmother was making you do things you didn’t want to and your biological parents were forcing you to marry someone against your will. It seemed like everyone was threatening you, but you didn’t tell me the specifics...”

was startled for a moment. Nodding, I said, “I see. Thank you, Judy.”

“No problem, Stephany... But don’t keep all of that bottled up inside. You mentioned before that you like to write in your diary when you don’t have friends to confide in.

“Why don’t you write down everything that’s bothering you and let it out? These difficult times will eventually pass,” Judy comforted me gently.

I replied with a smile, “Okay.”

With that, I left the hospital and headed to the Larson residence.

Charles sat on the couch. Glancing at the newspaper, he casually asked, “Why are you back today? How’s everything at the Lincoln family? Why didn’t you answer my calls when I tried to reach you before? Are you aware that the Lincoln Group has sent your sister, Annie, out to oversee projects?”

Ewan actually sent Ann, the princess of the Larsons, to oversee projects under the sun? I could foresee her fragile skin peeling off every three days.

Ignoring Charles, I headed to Stephany’s room, only to find that all her belongings had been replaced by Ann’s clothes and shoes.

Furrowing my brows, I came out of the room and asked, “Where are my things?”

Charles replied indifferently, “Oh, since you’ve married into the Lincolns, Annie took over your room. Your mother had someone move all your belongings to the garage.

I felt a lump in my throat, finding the way these people treated Stephany unbelievable. It was no wonder she chose to end her life.

Nevertheless, there were still mysteries awaiting me to solve.

Who had forced her to imitate me?

What happened to those homeless children?

How did she know Simon?

And did she have any connection with the murderer?

“My, my, if it isn’t my sister who married into a wealthy family?”

When I was heading out of the house, I bumped into Ann, who strutted in wearing high heels. Her skin was clearly tanned.

Ann questioned in an arrogant tone, “Why haven’t you and your dimwit Steven gotten stable positions in the company? You useless thing! Do you know I was targeted because I mentioned that dimwit’s name?”

“Poor Annie, she’s been through a lot lately,” said Stephany’s mother, Nadia.

Judging by the mountains of luxury items being carried by the nanny, it seemed that Nadia had taken Ann out shopping to alleviate the stress of her recent harsh work life.

As Nadia passed by, she didn’t even spare me a glance. She treated Stephany as if she didn’t exist.

How ironic. She cared so little about her biological daughter, Stephany, but pampered her adoptive daughter, Ann, like a princess.

Worrying that my emotions might cause low blood sugar, I took a deep breath and retrieved a few pieces of gum from my purse to chew on.

Heading to the garage, I rummaged through piles of junk until I found Stephany’s diary.

Flipping through its pages, I began to read, “Today was cloudy. Grandma Rosie asked me to send some buns to Uncle. I was so scared. Uncle made me take off my clothes when no one was around.

“I ran and told Grandma Rosie about it, but she said not to tell anyone or I would be worth

less in the future.”

“Today was rainy. Grandma Rosie mentioned taking me to Huma City Center to find my biological parents and demand the money they had supposedly spent on me over the years.

“Grandma Rosie took me to feed the homeless children again. Although she appeared kind, like a saint, I knew deep down she was a devil—a monster who harmed children.

“Then, Grandma Rosie declared those children were all sick, worthless, and unlucky. She wouldn’t feed them anymore, so I must save some money to buy them food.”

## Chapter 236

“Today was sunny. Grandma Rosie suddenly announced that she had found my biological parents. She’s going to send me back to them.

“I’m so happy. Finally, I can leave this scary place behind.”

I continued flipping through Stephany’s diary.

Today was sunny. My biological parents don’t seem to like me. They despise me because I grew up in the countryside. Ann dislikes me too.

“She looks down on me and refuses to ride with me because her classmate would laugh at her if she did. She, along with my classmates, isolated me.”

“Today, Ann had someone trap me in the restroom again. They took off my clothes, forced” me to drink toilet water, and mocked me as rubbish and a fool from the countryside.

“Hang in there, Stephany. Just hang in there a little longer. When I graduate, I’ll leave this house immediately without going to college. I thought the countryside was hell, but it’s even scarier here.”

“Today, Ann had the nanny give me spoiled sandwiches while she enjoyed nutritious meals specially prepared by our chefs. I was too hungry, so I brought the matter to Mom and Dad.

“However, Mom and Dad were displeased to hear about my complaint regarding the sandwiches. They said I should be grateful for them because I used to have worse food back in the countryside.

“Ann retaliated against me for reporting her. She brought several male classmates to trap me in an alley on my way home from school. They took off my clothes and filmed me,

forcing me to kneel and beg for mercy. I was so scared.”

“Today, someone discovered that I was secretly feeding those homeless children. He claimed he could help me escape from this hell and even assist me in getting rid of those

who have harmed me, on the condition that I follow his instructions.

“He instructed me to observe and imitate a woman named Stephanie Carlson.

“He requested a list from me, assuring me that he would eliminate the people on it. But I only had one chance/I didn’t believe him, but I still wanted to give it a try. So, I wrote down

the name of a boy who often bullies me in class—Harvey Stone.”

Today, Harvey Stone was absent from class. I learned after school that he died in an accident. He was struck by a flowerpot thrown by an 80-year-old man suffering from dementia while walking on the road. I’m terrified. Could it be because I gave his name to that person?”

“He approached me again, urging me to impersonate Stephanie Carlson so that I could take her place. I feel Stephanie is just as unfortunate as me. I’ve been secretly observing

her for a while now. I don’t want to hurt her.”

‘Today, I heard that Stephanie went missing. I know that man is making his move. I’m terrified. I want to report it to the police. I went to the police station three times, but I couldn’t muster up the courage to go in.

“Will Stephanie die? He says he wants me to marry a fool from the Lincoln family in her place. I’m scared. I don’t want to replace anyone.

“Will Stephanie die because of me? I never wanted to hurt anyone. Why does it have to be me? Is death my only escape from all this? If so, then I’ll take my chance.”

Stephany’s diary filled every page of the notebook, its thickness a testament to the depths. of human depravity she chronicled.

As she collapsed under the weight of the burdens imposed upon her by these individuals, none were exempt from the taint of sin.

The Larsons, Ann, and the man lurking in the shadows... All were manifestations of human wickedness.

“What are you doing here? Why is Mrs. Wealthy rummaging through trash at my house?”

Ann sneered as she stood at the entrance of the garage.

I turned to look at her, my gaze icy.

Step by step, I approached her, seizing her by the hair and pressing her against the wall.

A nail in the wall grazed her face, drawing blood.

At that moment, a chilling thought flashed through my mind. “If I were to kill her here, I’d better make sure I stuff her...”

Releasing her abruptly, I recoiled in panic.

What was I even thinking?

“Mom! Stephany’s gone mad! Mom!” Ann screamed in tears, trying to run away.

Almost instinctively, I yanked her hair and forced her to the ground.

In the next instant, my hand picked up a rusted nail, poised to silence her for good... Ann stared at me in horror, as though confronting a demon.

## Chapter 237

“Scream if you dare,” I sneered, yanking Ann’s hair and slamming her hard onto the ground.

“We’re in the garage now. Your parents can’t hear you cry or shout... Will you believe me if I say I’ll ruin your pretty little face?”

Ann was terrified, her voice tre Stephany, a

you out of your mind? If you hurt me, Mom and Dad won’t forgive you that easily. Don’t think that just because you’ve married a lunatic-”

“Ah!” Ann suddenly screamed in pain, the rusted nail in my hand piercing the skin on her face.

“Have you forgotten how you treated me in high school? Huh?” I questioned, feeling my blood boiling as I recalled those painful memories written in Stephany’s diary.

For some reason, an uncontrollable surge of emotion boiled within me.

It felt just like when my blood sugar was low.

I always thought I had a hypoglycemia problem since I was a kid, but was it really just low blood sugar?

Why did it feel... rather exhilarating, as if I was experiencing an adrenaline rush?

Shocked by my own realization, I swallowed hard and pulled Ann up.

“I remember you had people beat me, strip me naked, and force me to drink toilet water, didn’t you?” My blood boiled again as I recalled what Stephany had written in the diary.

It felt like something long-sealed within me was struggling to break free.

Ann stared at me in terror. “Is madness contagious? Stephany, are you insane? How dare you threaten-

Gripping her hair tighter, I landed a sharp slap across Ann’s face.

With each attempt to speak, I silenced her with another slap until she dared not to utter a single sound.



“Oh, by the way, Ann, your Grandma Rosie misses you a lot. She’s at the Huma Hospital, so don’t forget to visit her while you still can. After all... she might not be around much longer.

I sneered.

Since Steven had found out that Stephany’s foster family was all Involved in human trafficking, he probably had evidence with him too.

Despite them being Stephany’s foster family, I intended to take justice into my own hands and send all these people to jail.

Because of these lowlife scumbags, many families were ruined... They had to pay for their deeds...

‘As for you, Ann... Soon enough, I’ll make you... nationally renowned,” I said to Ann with a smile.

Then, I stood up, took a deep breath, and stretched my neck.

Since I had taken over Stephany’s body, I should repay her by seeking revenge for her, shouldn’t I?

After all, she had sacrificed her life to prevent that person from killing me and replacing me

Although I didn’t know why I woke up in her body, since she had a conscience and didn’t want to hurt anyone, I should take care of these scumbags for her—starting with the ones, mentioned in her diary.

No one would be spared!

“Stephany, what are you going to do- Ann simply couldn’t stop talking.

Suddenly, I felt a ringing in my ears.

It was irritating; so irritating that I somehow started to lose control of myself.

I didn’t know how long the ringing lasted, but when I came to my senses, Ann had already been tied up with a rope. She was hanging from the beams of the garage. I did this to her.

Ann cried out in terror, probably thinking that I was crazy.

I was somewhat shocked myself, wondering where I found the strength to hang her up there.

Noticing the round barrel table on the ground, I remembered how I had used it to pull her

1. up.

Ann was tied up there, her mouth gagged and her skirt soaked.

Though she was alive, she appeared almost frightened to death.

Perhaps this experience would haunt her for the rest of her life.

Then again, this was still nothing compared to what she had done to Stephany.

According to the diary. Ann had people beat Stephany until she wet herself. While everyone laughed at her, Stephany was forced to kneel and lick the floor clean.

Those people were beyond evil.

I had never imagined humans could be so malicious and despicable.

Because of jealousy and the fear of Stephany potentially taking away the wealthy life she believed she deserved, Ann turned her envy and fear into malice. She tormented Stephany every day

“Enjoy the view and try not to fall down from there. You might end up killing yourself.

I hammered a few long nails into a wooden board and positioned it under Ann.

If she struggled and landed on those nails, she would likely experience some pain.

Ann whimpered and murmured something. “Coo purr lice

I presumed she intended to call the police to arrest me

I chuckled. “Is there any surveillance here? Any witnesses? I’m pregnant. How could I possibly have the strength to pull you up?

Besides. I’m pregnant with the heir of the Lincolns. Even if your parents find out about this, do you think they’ll call the police to arrest me?”

These people still needed me to take over the Lincoln Group, didn’t they?

In other words, they had no choice but to swallow their aggravation silently.

Chapter 238

In order to satisfy their own greed, The Larsons would swallow nails if they had to, let alone aggravation!

Ann looked at me in horror, shaking her head desperately.

It was evident she was shocked. In fact... even I was shocked too.

What was I doing?

As I walked out of the garage, I locked the door and saw the nanny throwing out garbage at the backyard gate.

She didn’t say a word or greet me when she saw me.

“I

“There’s a rat in the garage,” I said nonchalantly. “I put out rat poison and locked the door. You’d better not go in there today. The rat might escape. Come back tomorrow morning to see if it’s dead.”

“Got it,” the nanny replied impatiently.

Obviously, Stephany’s status at home was no different from that of the nanny. She was expected to do chores like a nanny too.

Hence, the nanny had gotten used to treating her with such an attitude.

I couldn’t help but smile.

It was all their own doing.

Some evil was beyond the edges of the law, beneath the line of morality.

But was there really nothing to restrain such evils?

Everything had its consequences, as if it had been calculated in advance by some formula.

Whatever seeds were sown, the final fruits would be reaped.

Thus was fate, a vicious cycle with unrelenting retribution.

“Leaving already

Make sure to butter up that fool when you get home and step up your game in securing the Lincoln Group. Can’t even handle a simpleton, can you?” Charles Impatiently reminded me as I was about to leave.

“Got It,” I replied with a smile.

“Stephy, your sister is getting mistreated at the Lincoln Group. They’ve got her working at the construction site every day. It’s wearing her out. You need to step in and get her a better position,” Nadia complained.

“You’re her older sister. It’s your duty to look out for her. She’s younger than you and hasn’t faced any hardship like you.”

I raised an eyebrow and fixed Nadia with a stare. “Blood ties sure are overrated...”

Nadia was startled. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Have you ever heard a saying?” I smiled meaningfully, making a gun gesture with my hand. “The bullet you fire will, sooner or later, end up hitting you in the back.

“Bang!” I mimicked the sound of a gunshot and blew on my finger with a grin.

Then, I turned away, heading for the door.

Unable to understand my meaning, Nadia turned to Charles and said angrily, “Charles, did you see her attitude? How dare she lecture me?! Where’s Annie? She’s such an angel compared to Stephany.”

“Oh, I just saw Ann leaving,” I replied Nadia with a smile as I got into Ewan’s car. He had

come to pick me up.

I wondered if they would go crazy and come running to attack me when they saw their precious daughter hanging in the garage. I couldn’t wait!

“Mrs. Lincoln, the sir has returned home,” Ewan reported as we headed back.

“Didn’t the doctor say he needed to stay in the hospital for a few days?” I asked, glancing

out the window.

Thinking of how Stephany's suffering had finally ended with her life, I couldn't help but choke up.

"We have a family doctor with us, so everything is taken care of," Ewan assured me.

Leaning against the car window, I felt a pounding headache.

Who would have thought that death could bring such growth? I had actually learned how to fight back... Wasn't that something?

I dozed off in the car and woke up in bed.

Steven stood before my eyes, dressed in only his underwear. His bandages covered his wounds.

"Stephie, shower," he said with puppy eyes.

Feeling that I had woken up at the wrong time, I turned over to continue sleeping.

"Stephie, Grandma Rosie has been identified by the police as the number one wanted human trafficker, Mayflower. She's been taken away by the police for investigation,"

Steven said innocently.

"Oh, and Stephany's brother has been arrested for molestation, theft, robbery, and rape...."

Steven paused to think whether he had missed out anything, then added, "Oh, their whole- family is involved in human trafficking. Stephany's uncle took a bystander hostage while resisting arrest and was shot dead on the spot."

I was dumbfounded for a long time upon hearing the news.

That was it? It was over? But I hadn't even made a move yet! Was all of this just a coincidence?

## Chapter 239

"Oh, and... Ann is a human trafficker's child. Grandma Rosie intentionally switched her with the Larsons' child. It wasn't an accident! She wanted her own granddaughter to live a life of luxury," Steven reported seriously.

Still reeling from shock, I picked up my phone to check the hot searches.

"Ann Larson, the heiress of the Larsons, is revealed to be the daughter of human traffickers.

"A life swapped between the false heiress Ann and the real heiress Stephany."

"Insiders revealed: Ann led the bullying against Stephany in high school to drive the real heiress away, with evidence of abuse exposed."

Ann made headlines, suddenly becoming famous.

A large number of insiders suddenly emerged, revealing evidence online.

I believed that the Larsons would try to suppress the hot searches with everything they could now.

After all, Ann was the living brand that they had carefully cultivated. She was the socialite. of the Larsons. She was also their bargaining chip for a marriage alliance with the Greysons.

And Stephany? She was nothing but a pawn.

However, the hot searches had been continuously rising since the previous night, seemingly impossible to suppress.

This news couldn't have gained such momentum unless... someone with powerful backing was supporting it.

I looked at Steven suspiciously.

He was pulling the corner of his underwear, muttering softly, "Stephie doesn't care about me... My wounds hurt."

Clearly, he was feigning a sense of pity, but it still worked on me like magic.

"The doctor said you can't get your wounds wet," I warned softly, pulling him into the bathroom to wipe his body with a damp towel. "If I don't clean you up, do you plan on wandering around the house naked?"

Steven remained silent, his gaze fixed on me intently.

"Stephie, where were you?" he suddenly asked.

I rolled my eyes at him. "How could you not know where I was?"

I strongly suspected he had installed some form of surveillance on me, aside from the tracker.

Steven smiled and wrapped me in his arms. "Stephie, kiss."

"Don't play dumb with me," I retorted, inwardly convinced that he had been feigning ignorance all along.

Then again, he looked like an angel when he was with me. I simply couldn't doubt those eyes.

"Stephie, Ann is famous now..." He kissed the back of my neck and whispered in a low voice, "As she wished."

Sensing a tingling sensation spreading throughout my body, I replied, "Yeah..."

Ann had always wanted to be famous. Now, her dreams finally came true.

I wondered how that scoundrel Kelvin and the Greysons felt about this.

They should be calling off the engagement soon to cut their losses, shouldn't they?

As I was reading the negative online comments about Ann while having my breakfast, I almost choked on my food.

Steven patted my back, a hint of disapproval in his gesture. "Eat properly."

I was startled. Did he just scold me?

Whenever he turned cold and distant, he exuded dominance. He gave off an air of coolness.

However, this facade of coolness never lasted more than three seconds.

"Stephie..." Steven kissed the corner of my lips. "So sweet."

Feeling somewhat irritated, I couldn't shake the feeling that he always took advantage of me whenever we were at home.

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"There's quite a show unfolding at the Larson family. I wonder if they've found Ann already?"

I chuckled as I took a bite of my pancake.

"I hung Ann up on the beams and locked her in the garage," I whispered to him.

Steven gazed at me with a hint of indulgence, his voice soft as he replied, "Mm-hmm, I left some for you to play with."

"Huh?" When I looked up at him again, he turned silent.

"Sir." Before I could finish my breakfast, Ewan rushed in anxiously.

"The Larsons... they're causing a scene at the Lincoln residence," Ewan said in a hushed- tone, eyeing my reaction.

Steven frowned indifferently as he placed a nicely shelled egg on my plate. "Breakfast first.

Ewan quickly stepped back, looking apologetic.

## Chapter 240

I couldn't help thinking that Ewan was exaggerating. Was Steven that scary? Ewan's respect was a little over the top.

I didn't lose my cool. If the Larsons wanted to cause a scene, so be it. There wasn't anyone else at the Lincoln residence aside from Ignatius, who could only get mad since he was paralyzed in bed.

“Mr. Lincoln... there’s also some trouble with the Lincoln family. Mr. Dax has been arrested under the suspicion of being involved in an abduction and murder-for-hire case. But...”

Ewan hesitated. “I’m sorry about this, sir. The weeds are too entangled to be cleared in one  
1. go.

If one didn’t make sure to thoroughly exterminate the pests in one’s life, the pests would eventually return.

“We’ll just have to make sure the gardeners clear them more frequently. Even if we can’t uproot them, we still have to scare the weeds and let them know they’ll be removed if they grow too quickly,” Steven said softly.

I could tell he was insinuating something, but I was a little embarrassed to ask with him and Ewan being so open around me.

After dinner, Steven leaned on my shoulder and asked, “Do you want to watch a show?”  
ny self.

Now that Ewan wasn’t around, he was back to being his clingy

“Well, I have a show for you.” I raised an eyebrow and held his hand. “I bet Charles and Nadia want nothing more than to rip my throat out now.”

They had to be furious over their precious Ann being dangled from the beams for a whole night.

“I’m here for you,” Steven said seriously as he brought me away.

I followed him, blurting out, “Your legs are so long.”

Had he taken steroids over the years? Based on my hazy memories, he’d only been around six feet tall when I gifted him some clothes. He was at least an inch taller now.

22

He turned to give me a silly grin. Then, he winked and said, “My legs aren’t the only things that are long.”

It took me a while to realize what he was saying. His gaze was as innocent as ever, but his words were far from that.

As soon as we entered the Lincoln residence, my “mother“, Nadia, pounced on me. Steven stood before me, keeping me safe behind him. He looked at Nadia icily.

She didn’t manage to stop in time, but Steven pulled me along with him as he dodged her. She fell on her face.

He said seriously, “You don’t have to get on your knees before us so early in the morning.”

Nadia looked murderous. She pointed at me and screeched, “You’re a fucking psycho, Stephany! You must’ve caught it from someone else! How dare you hang Ann from the beams for a whole night? I’ll kill you!”

She wanted to hit me, but Steven caught her wrist and shoved her away. There wasn’t any hint of his usual silliness as he stood there. In fact, he looked downright handsome. “Who allowed you to touch my woman?”

Nadia was stunned. She subconsciously turned to look at Charles, who was still trying to test whether Steven was a dimwit. “Stephany is our daughter, Steven. This is a family matter.”

“Your daughter? Didn’t you sell her to me after asking my grandfather for that 200-million-dollar investment?” Steven held me protectively. “Since you sold her to me, she doesn’t have anything to do with you anymore. I dare you to lay a hand on what’s mine.”

Charles frowned. He wondered how an idiot could be so oppressive. Was Steven putting on an act, or were these his true colors?

I was equally surprised as I gaped at Steven. Which side of him was the real him?

“Stephie, you’ve crossed the line this time. You can’t blame your mother for getting so mad. How could you hang Ann from the beams like that? That was so dangerous.” Charles lowered his voice, not daring to do anything rashly because he couldn’t read Steven.

“What are you gonna do about it?” I leaned against Steven. “Call the cops if you want.”

“Why, you!” Charles and Nadia pointed at me with trembling fingers.

“Get the hell out here, Stephany! I’m gonna kill you!” There was a ruckus outside the door. It

was Ann and Kelvin.

Ann’s face wa

bruised and battered. She had some gauze on it. She looked like she was beside herself with hysteria as she stood there with several people. She was obviously here to get revenge on me.

I could laugh at how dumb she was. This was the Lincoln residence, and I was pregnant with the Lincoln family’s heir. Did she and Kelvin think the Lincoln family was beneath



them?

Or did they have a death wish?

Steven's eyes darkened. He glanced at Ewan, who nodded and stepped away.